

45th Division News

January, 1992

Published in support of the 45th Division Association and 45th Division Museum.

THUNDERBIRD



LEGENDS

CORPORAL JAMES D. SLATON

(Army Serial No. 34278962), Company K, 157th Infantry, United States Army. For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty in action with the enemy in the vicinity of OLIVETO, ITALY, on 23 September 1943. Corporal Slaton was lead scout of an infantry squad which had been committed to a flank to knock out enemy resistance which had succeeded in pinning two attacking platoons to the ground. Working ahead of his squad Corporal Slaton crept upon an enemy machine gun nest and assaulting it with his bayonet succeeded in killing the gunner. When his bayonet stuck he detached it from the rifle and killed another gunner with rifle fire. At the time he was fired upon by a machine gun to his immediate left. Corporal Slaton then moved over open ground under constant fire to within throwing distance, and on his second try scored a direct hit on the second enemy machine gun nest killing two enemy gunners. At that time a third machine gun fired on him 100 yards to his front, and Corporal Slaton killed both of these enemy gunners with rifle fire. As a result of Corporal Slaton's heroic action in immobilizing three enemy machine gun nests with bayonet, grenade and rifle fire, the two rifle platoons which were receiving heavy casualties from enemy fire were enabled to withdraw to covered positions and again take the initiative. Corporal Slaton withdrew under mortar fire, on order of his platoon leader at dusk that evening. The heroic actions of Corporal Slaton were far above and beyond the call of duty and are worthy of emulation.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Dear Thunderbirds,

I hope this letter finds each of you in good spirits and enjoying the holiday season.

Since our last news letter much has been accomplished as it relates to the preservation of the 45th Infantry in future Force Structure Plans. The Oklahoma congressional delegation is working diligently to ensure the organization is added back into the planning process. In the past three months meetings have been held with all Congressional leaders from Oklahoma, the Director of the Army National Guard, the U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) Commander, General Burba and many other key individuals. It is important to note that each member of the Congressional delegation was significantly impressed with the correspondence received in their offices from Thunderbirds writing from all across the United States. Your efforts are indeed, making a difference. Each of you who has written has made a significant contribution to our effort. Those that have not written, I solicit your letters as the battle has not yet been won.

Another significant event that has happened since our last meeting was the dedication of a 45th Infantry Division Park in Kingfisher, Oklahoma along Highway 3 (45th Infantry Division Memorial Highway). We are encouraged at the number of communities interested in honoring the Thunderbirds in this as well as other ways.

Included in this newsletter is a letter the Association received from Mr. Stephan Ross of Boston, Massachusetts. Mr. Ross' letter is a very moving expression of his appreciation for the efforts of the Thunderbirds and I know you will enjoy reading it.

Additionally, I would like to note the addition of new associations that will be conducting their reunions in conjunction with the 45th Infantry Division Reunion. The addition of organizations such as Company B, 179 (Korea) to the 45th Division Reunion ensures that our activities have the necessary attendance to perpetuate the Reunion and association activities for many years to come.

Our next newsletter will address specifics about our annual reunion. Until then, I want to again thank you for your letters concerning the 45th Infantry and its continued existence. Additionally, I appreciate the other letters and correspondence received with ideas on how to continually enhance our association and ideas for our General Reunion.

Sincerely,
Bill Wilson

COMBAT CHRONICLES OPERATION AVALANCHE 179TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

The Invasion of Italy, 9 to 30 September 1943. For the invasion of mainland Italy, the 45th Infantry Division was slated to be in Fifth U.S. Army reserve while the initial landings were conducted by the 36th Infantry Division, fresh from Africa without combat experience. It was anticipated that the invasion would be virtually unopposed since the Italian government only days before had unconditionally capitulated, but the German high command had other ideas and elite elements of the German army were dug in and waiting on the beaches for the invading forces. It was later learned that the three Allied landing beaches were marked on German maps. The enemy also knew all the Allied movements because of the number of observers they left near our lines. Some Italian citizens were in the services of the German army and used as observers.

If these facts had been known to the Allies prior to the invasion, the outcome would have undoubtedly been much different and slanted in favor of the invaders. The 36th Infantry Division, which landed on D-Day, 9 September 1943, met planned and determined opposition that almost decimated the landing forces. The 36th Division suffered over 500 casualties on the first day of the invasion.

The 45th Infantry Division had been told to load one combat team as floating Fifth Army reserve for the initial landing and load the remainder of the division as fast as transport became available. Leading elements of the 45th Infantry Division were loaded aboard LSTs and LCIs at TERMINI IMMERESE, SICILY on 7 September 1943. These leading elements consisted of the 179th Infantry Regiment (Reinforced), the 157th Infantry Regiment (less 2nd Battalion), Division Artillery Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, the 158th, 160th, and 189th Field Artillery Battalions, plus one battalion of the 540th Engineer Shore Regiment, and part of the 242nd QM Service Battalion.

The 179th Regimental Combat Team began landing in the early morning hours of 10 September 1943 in the vicinity of PAESTUM in the Gulf of Salerno. Although there was some bombing and strafing of the landing force, the Germans were concentrating their firepower on the 36th Division troops stranded on the beach in an attempt to dislodge them. The 179th RCT was attached to VI Corps with orders to attack NE along the SELE RIVER, secure PONTE SELE, Highway 19 and the high ground to the Northeast.

The 179th attacked North on Highway 18 and East toward ALTAVILLA with the British X Corps on their left and the 36th American Division on their right. The RCT encountered the enemy West of PERSANO, where they were entrenched in defensive positions. A small counterattack developed into serious proportions during the night, with the enemy using heavy artillery, mortar, and MG fire. PERSANO was passed but not secured, with 2 enemy prisoners taken.

The 2nd Battalion attacked in the direction of ALTAVILLA under heavy machine gun and 88mm artillery fire from the high ground near ALTAVILLA. They reached positions along the South bank of the CALORE River and knocked out 5 tanks. The 1st and 3rd Battalions passed PERSANO and continued East without opposition, then enemy tanks attacked our tanks, tank destroyers and service units. Heavy artillery fire was received from the direction of EBOLI and positions North of the SELE River. The enemy fire in the 3rd Battalion area increased heavily during the night and enemy tanks infiltrated into the 179th rear in the vicinity of PONTE SELE. The 160th FA poured heavy artillery fire into the enemy concentration of tanks, stopping the counterattack.

German forces fought tenaciously, refusing to withdraw even if bypassed. Portions of the RCT returned to PERSANO, clearing it with tanks and tank destroyers. The enemy front lines ran approximately from TORRE PALLADINO - TOBACCO WAREHOUSE - SELE RIVER - PONTE SELE and they were well entrenched and equipped with much heavy artillery.

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September 13. The 2nd Battalion received high velocity artillery fire and simultaneously engaged by infantry led by 5 tanks, but it did not lose ground. They crossed the SELE River just NW of PERSANO and drove South almost to the junction of the SELE-CALORE Rivers. The enemy began infiltrating into NW and SE of ALTAVILLA and in the ALBANELLA area in an attempt to cross the river. The 158th and 189th Field Artillery Battalions, although their battery positions were fired upon, poured direct fire into the enemy, preventing a river crossing.

All division combat forces were now committed to action in an attempt to stop and contain the enemy, leaving the division without a reserve.

The battle had practically evolved into a battle between artillery and tanks. Naval gun fire was used to assist the division artillery, effectively concentrating primarily on a group of tanks while division artillery was using direct fire to prevent any further attempts at river crossings by the enemy. There was no friendly infantry between the artillery and enemy. The 1st Battalion of the 179th arrived during the evening to reinforce the artillerymen in the front line. 3,650 rounds of artillery ammunition were fired on the 13th of September.

The tank engagement by elements of the 16th Panzer Division on the front of the 179th during the morning of the 14th ended in the afternoon when the enemy withdrew to covered positions. During the day the 179th knocked out 13 tanks. About 40 Germans approaching in front of Companies "E" and "G" under a white flag opened fire when near our lines. They were all wiped out. 6,687 rounds of artillery ammunition were fired at the enemy on the 14th.

On 15-16-17 September it was evident that the enemy lines extended from TORRE PALLADINO-TOBACCO WAREHOUSE-PERSANO and thence to the East toward ALTAVILLA. The 179th moved to the high ground North of Highway 19, SW of EBOLI.

On 20 September, the division was given a VI Corps objective of taking the high ground just South of the OFANTO River. The 3rd American Division was on our left and the 36th American Division was on the right. Our troops were delayed by the many blown bridges and some mines. The 179th RCT moved to an area about 8 km NE of EBOLI.

The enemy selected favorable terrain for defense along the aqueducts West of OLIVETO. They defended the area aggressively, using well coordinated long range artillery, mortars and machine gun fires. They used smoke screens for the first time around CONTURSI. Interrogation reports indicated a continuing low state of enemy morale.

The 1st Battalion 179th RCT passed through 180th RCT in vicinity of OLIVETO and continued North on Highway 91. They entered OLIVETO without opposition, but encountered strong enemy resistance in the vicinity of PICEGLIA Creek, just North of OLIVETO. The RCT captured QUAGLIETTA without opposition and continued the advance up Highway 91. The 179th RCT entered CALABRITTO on 25 September, receiving some automatic weapons and artillery fire.

On the 26th, the RCT continued the advance and occupied its objective, the high ground commanding Highway 7, and organized hasty defensive positions. A patrol reported no enemy opposition in LIONI.

Heavy rains during the night of 28-29 September slowed movement. Retreating enemy forces continued to harass division troops through the use of mines, cutting communication lines, and road blocks. The weather was an ally of the Germans who held most of the high ground, preventing our troops from moving over impassable mountain roads. Every where was deep clay mud that hampered not only the movement of foot soldiers, but made it almost impossible for vehicles to remain unstuck in the thick goo. This was the beginning of the harsh Italian winter where the elements combined with the persistence of the German Army to prevent much forward movement by Allied troops.

THUNDERBIRDS REVISIT KOREA

A group of 22 thunderbirds, wives and widows made a trip to Korea in early October. Most of the group were former members of Company M, 179th Infantry, however, they were accompanied by the former Regimental Commander Fred Daugherty and his wife Betsy. Two widows of former members Mona Uhlenhake (James R.) and Gladys Rice (Terrance S.) made the trip. The Oklahoma group was joined by 33 Korean veterans from various states and organizations.

During the trip Fred Daugherty was presented with a book entitled "The US Military Experience in Korea 1871-1982." The 45th Division received some recognition and was included in the list of major units that have served in Korea together with a depiction of the thunderbird, however, the thunderbird was not included in the organizational insignias reflected on the cover of the book and neither was the 40th Division insignia, therefore, the only insignias on the cover were active army and air force units/organizations.

The following thunderbirds were listed in the book as receiving posthumous awards of the Distinguished Service Cross:

Charles L. Warner, 158th Field Artillery
Russel J. McCann, 179th Infantry Regiment
Jerome F. Sears, 180th Infantry Regiment
Jack Korakian, 279th Infantry Regiment

Camp George, located near Taegu, was named for PFC Charles George, Company C, 179th Infantry Regiment who was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for action near Songnae-dong, Korea.

Camp Sears was named for SFC Jerome Sears, Company B, 180th Infantry Regiment who was posthumously awarded the DSC as indicated above.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR'S TRIBUTE

Dear Liberators of the 45th Infantry Division,

I recently completed a speaking engagement at the Reunion of the 191st Tank Battalion in Louisville, KY. Being there with these men, who were so closely connected to my past rekindled the very strong feelings I have for the American Soldier.

I would like to express appreciation and gratitude to you the men of the 45th Infantry Division for your valiant efforts during the liberation of the Dachau Concentration Camp April 29, 1945.

You deserve so much praise and credit for all your sacrifices and dedication during WW II. As our liberators, you will always be remembered by the camp survivors for your gallantry and for the hope and compassion you provided to us.

I hate to think of what would have happened to us if you had not come at the time you did. You the GI Joe's spoke the first kind words to us in years. You held in your arms our living skeleton's too weak to walk, to eat or to live. You gave us our first bites of decent food. You provided medical help as best you could. You reached out to us with no reservations. To the camp survivors, you came from Heaven. You left your homes and families and at times you were also hungry, cold and disillusioned. We owe you all our gratitude, recognition and our acknowledgement.

I always envision in my mind the way you were 46 years ago. I can see your faces, your helmets, your uniforms, your boots and your weapons hanging on your body. You looked rough and tough and yet you showed so much empathy. You left an indelible mark on a fourteen year old boy that can never be erased. You were the pride of your nation, you preserved the Republic, your civilization, your religious freedom and you set free a suffering humanity. You fought bravely and defeated the most vicious and evil empire the world has ever known.

"LEST WE FORGET", you and I, who saw it all, must forever be willing to bare witness to the authenticity of the Holocaust, which was perpetrated by a so called civilized nation. I will be forever grateful to each and everyone of you for saving my life, the life of my brother and the lives of fellow camp victims.

You gave me an opportunity to become a productive human being in this great country of ours.

GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!!!

Best Personal Regards, Stephan Ross. (Editor's note: Stephan Ross was imprisoned by the Nazi government for a period of 5 years from ages 9 to 14. He spent time in 10 different camps including his final internment in Dachau. He currently resides in Newton, MA and is a licensed psychologist working in the Boston school system.)

In 1978, Steve Ross went with his wife to Germany to confront his past. When they entered the gates of Dachau, he saw for the first time a picture in the museum of himself, at the age of 14, surrounded by other prisoners. The picture was taken 29 April 1945 by troops of the 45th Infantry Division who liberated Dachau.

THUNDERBIRD HAS UNIFORM PROBLEMS

Garland Honaker, 919 Rockland Avenue, Charlottesville, VA, 22901, telephone 804/293-5851, has requested our assistance in locating an enlisted member uniform of the Korean era. He needs an "Ike Jacket" size large or about a 40, trousers size 38 and a size 7 1/4 cap. He still has his old uniform, but said "it had shrunk." He would be willing to trade for one that would fit.

Garland belongs to an association that marches in parades and participates in memorial services and other ceremonies representing all wars back to the revolutionary war, however, to date they have not had a representative of the Korean War. It is Garland's desire to represent the Korean veterans wearing his "Thunderbird" uniform.

If you can help him, or know of a source, please contact him direct. Honaker joined the 245th Tank Battalion in Chitose, Japan and says the

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"Thunderbirds" were the best men he served with in his military career. He says he was "Born a Virginian", an "Okie at Heart."

KOREAN WAR MEMORIAL UPDATE

Major artistic modifications have been made to the Korean War Memorial, because the Fine Arts Commission objected to the original design. Changes include reducing the number of statues from 38 to 19. The fate of the memorial now rests in the hands of the National Capital Planning Commission.

Most of the required 15 million dollars for the monument in the nation's capital has been raised through voluntary contributions.

Ground breaking is anticipated in early 1992. Dedication is scheduled for 27 July 1993, the 40th anniversary of cessation of hostilities.

(For additional information contact: KWVMA, 18th and C Streets NW, Room 7023, Washington, D.C. 20240 202/208-3561).

KOREAN WAR VETERANS ASSOCIATION, INC.

The Korean War Veterans Association was formed in 1985 with 39 charter members and has now grown to encompass over 8,000 members. The primary purposes of the association are: 1. Raise the awareness of the American people about the Korean war and those who served in it. 2. Raise and contribute funds for establishment of the National Memorial in Washington, D.C. 3. To seek out the truth about our 8,179 MIA's and 389 POW's that did not return.

The mailing address for the organization is: Korean War Veterans Association, Inc., P.O. Box 12205, Baltimore, MD 21281.

45TH DIVISION MEMORIAL PARK DEDICATED

A new 45th Infantry Division Memorial Park was dedicated at Kingfisher, OK, Saturday 5 October 1991. The park is located at the intersection of the 45th Division Memorial Highway (SH 3) and 13th Street in Kingfisher.

Several dignitaries were in attendance including The Adjutant General of Oklahoma MG Tom Alsip, former division commander Fred Daugherty and association President Bill Wilson. The keynote speaker was State Senator and former thunderbird Bill Gustafson.

The 145th Army Band provided music for the occasion and the Military Department Color Guard presented the colors. Battery C, 160 FA Battalion, El Reno, OK fired a 105mm Howitzer gun salute which gave the crowd some sense of the noise and gunsmoke of the battlefield.

45TH DIVISION MUSEUM HOSTS VETERANS DAY CEREMONY

Lieutenant Colonel Larry D. Haub, Commanding Officer of the 158th Field Artillery Battalion, Oklahoma Army National Guard, was the principal speaker for the annual Veterans Day Ceremony conducted at the 45th Division Museum. Colonel Haub's battalion, the only reserve component battalion equipped with the Multiple Launch Rocket System (MLRS), was called to active duty during Desert Storm and was highly commended by top level military leaders for its outstanding performance in combat.

The ceremony was open to the public and featured Color Guards representing military and veterans organizations participating in a "Massing of the Colors" to open the event. Participants included the Governor's Color Guard, US Marine Corps, US Navy, US Air Force, all Color Bearing Organizations of the Oklahoma Army National Guard, India Shrine, Military Order of World Wars, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, 45th Infantry Division Museum, 40 et 8 Organization of WWI veterans and Tinker Air Force Base Saber Team.

Colonel Robert C. Armstrong, United States Property and Fiscal Officer for Oklahoma served as master of ceremonies.

A gun salute was performed by a crew dressed in 19th Century Artillery uniforms and firing an 1881 Hotchkiss Mountain Gun. There was an on-site display of a MLRS vehicle and its support equipment accompanied by personnel to brief observers on the weaponry. A medley of patriotic music was presented by Mark Allen, Edmond, Oklahoma.

A wreath in memory of deceased veterans of all wars was presented by Harry W. Hughes, Lawton, OK a thunderbird veteran of World War II and Korea. Hughes was assisted by Veda Cook, President of the Oklahoma City chapter of the Gold Star wives of America, Inc. They passed under a saber arch formed by the Tinker Air Force Base Saber Team. Appropriate military music was provided by the 145th Army Band of the Oklahoma Army National Guard.

A helicopter flyover by members of Company B, 245 Aviation con-

cluded the ceremony. Refreshments were served and the museum opened for tours.

J. Milton Smith, Norman, OK served as chairman of the event. Committee members included, Pendleton Woods, Harlos V. Hatter, Henry Chavez, Jim Bruno, Mike Gonzales and Dorothy Moore.

TIDBITS

The Pekin, Illinois highschool varsity baseball diamond has been named "HARRY ANDERSON FIELD" in honor of thunderbird Harry C. Anderson of Pekin. Anderson taught and coached baseball at PCHC for 35 years before retiring in 1982.

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Arthur and Kathleen Rinehart, Ponca City, Oklahoma celebrated their golden wedding anniversary 21 September 1991. They were married 13 December 1941 in Abilene, Texas. Their Wedding was moved ahead due to the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Arthur was a World War II member of Company D, 179th Infantry Regiment.

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Ron Hall (45 Signal Company, Korea) furnished an article from the "Sacramento Bee" concerning belated issue of combat awards to former thunderbirds. Bronze Star Medals were awarded to Floyd H. Bridge, 158 Infantry (Bushmasters) World War II and Harley E. Sittner, Company I, 279th Infantry, Korea 1952-1953.

(Editor's note: The 45th Division Association has no records, therefore, we cannot confirm or refute personnel or combat actions and/or combat awards)

THUNDERBIRDS REUNITE IN FRANCE

I am enclosing copies of articles in a French newspaper relating to a visit my wife and I made to the Beachhead site of our landing in Southern France during October 1991. Plans for the trip were made with Jean Michel (John) Fuentes during the annual reunion in Oklahoma city in August 1990. Jean and I were both members of Third Battalion, 179th Infantry during World War II.

Jean was a great guide and we visited St. Maxime, St. Tropez, Toulon Naval Base and headquarters of the French Foreign Legion. While there we met a frenchman who was a member of the Algerian 1st Infantry Division that relieved us in December 1944.

An old fort located in the mountains overlooking Toulon had been converted into a museum dedicated to the August 1944 landing and honoring the French and American forces. The thunderbird patch was displayed at three different locations within the museum and a photograph of Major General Eagles was prominently displayed.

MORTON J. RUSOFF, 54 Dubois Avenue, Valley Stream, NY 11581.

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THUNDERBIRD DEATHS

W. CHARLES BOCOCK, Oklahoma City, OK deceased 9 November 1991. Charles was a member of 45th Quartermaster Company during the Korean War. He retired from the United States Postal Service after 39 years as a rural mail carrier. Charles was an avid golfer and fisherman and also enjoyed his many friends at the Moose Lodge.

Survivors include his wife and high school sweetheart Betty, three sons and his mother.

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CHARLES J. CALKINS, Norman, OK, deceased 14 October 1991. Charles joined the Oklahoma National Guard as a teenager. During World War II he served as a combat engineer in the European and Pacific Theaters of War. He was among the first occupation troops to enter Hiroshima at the close of the war. He joined the 45th Division in 1946 and served in Japan and Korea. He was a civilian employee of the United States Property and Fiscal Officer for Oklahoma for 30 years prior to his retirement in the early 1970's.

He was a member of the International Order of Odd Fellows, Sooner Lions Club and the First Christian Church, where he had served as chairman of the worship committee and was a deacon.

Survivors include his wife Shirley, one daughter and three grandchildren. Thunderbird Herbert C. O'Neil was an honorary pallbearer. Burial was in Gracelawn Cemetery, Edmond, OK.

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ARTHUR EARL LARGE, Bethany, OK, deceased October 1991. He was and was employed by Southwest Bell Telephone where he retired after 38 years of service.

He was a member of the 189th Field Artillery during World War II and the Korean War. His many combat awards and decorations included two Bronze Stars for Valor.

Survivors include his wife of 54 years, Helen, two daughters, one son, 9 grandchildren and 5 great grandchildren.

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J. D. MORRISON, Marlow, OK, deceased 1 October 1991. J. D. was born in Buckhead, OK in January 1909 and had lived in Marlow for most of his life.

He attended schools at Marlow and retired from Halliburton Oil Services as a mechanic.

J. D. was a member of the 45th Division throughout World War II and was always highly visible at the annual reunions wearing his neatly pressed WWII Khaki uniform. He was a "LIFE" member of the 45th Infantry Division Association and also a member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion.

J. D. was preceded in death by his wife Hazel. Survivors include one daughter Franke Mae Morrison of Oklahoma City.

Prior to his death J. D. had assured that the tombstone monument at the family burial plot was appropriately adorned with the replica of a thunderbird.

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FREDERICK E. WATKINS, Durango, CO, deceased 17 September 1991. Fred was a member of the 189th Field Artillery during World War II. His wife Mary Helen said he was the Battalion Historian and that he had retained a copy of the file.

Awards and decorations include the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. Mary Helen stated that Fred was very proud of being a part of the "Fighting 45th" and was happy to relate his experiences to any that would listen. She said he enjoyed the 45th Division News and always looked forward to its arrival.

Survivors include his wife, Mary Helen, two sons, one daughter and four grandchildren.

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HARRY K. WILLETT, Crescent, OK, deceased 21 October 1991 after an extended illness. Harry joined the Army in March 1941 and was transferred to the Army Air Corps in October 1941. His P-51 Fighter Squadron operated in close support of the 45th Division in Sicily and Italy. They were operating from a dirt strip at Salerno within the first three days after the initial landing. Subsequent to WWII Harry joined the 45th Division and served in Korea as a member of the 279th Infantry Regiment. He retired from the Oklahoma Military Department after 34 years employment.

Survivors include his wife Ruth Lee, two daughters, 4 grandchildren and one brother a thunderbird Charles W. "Bill" Willett.

Harry was buried laid to rest in the Crescent, OK cemetery. burial was with full military honors provided by Fort Sill, OK.

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ROBERT S. WHIPPLE, Hemet, CA, deceased 12 September 1991 at the age of 91 years and 4 months.

Robert was the Commanding Officer of Company F, 120th engineer Regiment when the division was mobilized in 1940 and stationed at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. In 1941 he was assigned to the Army signal Corps and transferred to Camm Hahn at Riverside, CA. He served in the 4th Air Force from December 1941 to January 1944 at which time he was transferred to the 5th Air Force, South Pacific Area. He served in several Island offensives prior to being wounded on Wadke Island, New Guinea in May 1944 and evacuated to the United States for treatment at Hammand General Hospital, Modesto, CA. He was released from active duty in 1945 and retired from inactive status in 1960 with the rank of Lieutenant colonel.

He was laid to rest at the riverside National Cemetery, Riverside, CA with his wife, Genevieve who predeceased him on 3 January 1991. Survivors include three sons, three daughters, eight grandchildren, 17 great grandchildren and one great-great grandchild.

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A. Y. OWEN, Oklahoma City, OK, deceased September 1991. Owen was mobilized with the 45th Division in 1940. He was previously a professional photographer employed by the Oklahoma Publishing Company.

A. Y. was later commissioned and transferred to the Army Air Corps and assigned to a photographic unit command by Captain Ronald W. Reagan.

Following World War II he became a correspondent for Life Magazine. Traveling to many exotic places as he covered their photographic assignments for twenty years. He later operated his own commercial studio in Oklahoma City.

A. Y. is survived by his wife Daphyn and one step-daughter.

REUNION REPORTS

COMPANY A, 120TH ENGINEER (COMBAT) BATTALION (WORLD WAR II) held their annual reunion 7-8 September 1991 at the Amberly Suites Hotel in Albuquerque, NM. Attendance was less than normal this year due to illnesses and travel distance involved. Details for the 1992 reunion will be published when finalized.

AL P. MORAGA, 355 Tyler Rd. NW, Albuquerque, NM 87107

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MEDICAL DETACHMENT, 120TH ENGINEER (COMBAT) BATTALION (KOREA) held our second reunion in Oklahoma City, OK 11-14 October 1991. A great time was had by all, seeing Oklahoma City, enjoying good Oklahoma food and hospitality. Fred Kirby our First Sergeant, and his wife Kirby were our gracious hosts. Eleven members and their wives were in attendance. Tentative plans have been made to hold our next reunion in Atlanta, GA in October 1992.

CHARLES R. RODDY, 2200 Lancaster Drive SE, Space 223, Salem, OR 97301.

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45TH RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY (KOREA). Held their first reunion 11-13 October 1991 in Claremore, OK. The reunion was attended by 66 members and their guests.

Gary W. Henry, Reunion Committee Chairman reported that they began their search for members from a 40 year old roster dating back to the departure from Camp Polk, LA in 1951. The roster contained 177 names and they located current addresses for 109 plus accounting for 22 deceased members. One member traveled from England to attend.

Activities consisted of dinner at the local VFW post on Friday and Saturday nights and a memorial service on Sunday morning.

Former members that have not been contacted by the reunion committee are requested to contact the undersigned.

GARY W. HENRY, P.O. BOX 246, Sand Springs, OK 74063.

LOOKING FOR BUDDIES

I was assigned to Medical Company, 279th Infantry in Korea from February 1953 to March 1954. I was a Supply Clerk and am trying to locate the Supply Sergeant John Detlefson and his assistant SFC Woodward. In November and December 1953 we received the Regimental and Division Best Supply Room Award. I was presented the award each time by MG P. D. Harkins.

I completed 39 years in the Army on 8 October 1991 and will retire 31 March 1992. I am currently assigned to the Joint Medical Mobilization Branch, First US Army, Fort Sheridan, IL.

I would like to contact anyone from my old unit. I really enjoy the 45th Division News and hope to attend a reunion one of these days.

DONALD A. TAYLOR, P.O. Box 452, Highwood, IL 60040-0452, 708/662-4358.

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I was Battalion Sergeant Major with the 145 AAA Battalion in Korea from mid-1952 until April 1953, serving under Colonels Cunningham and Light.

I would enjoy hearing from anyone in the battalion during those years and particularly from a Sgt. Lucas who was in the S-1 section of Division Artillery.

JERRY SMITH, 1590 Pinetree Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15241

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Milton Becket and Pete Gaidosh, former World War II members of Company A, 179th Infantry are trying to locate former veterans of that outfit to organize a reunion. They would particularly like to locate Distinguished Service Cross recipient Frank Best. Please contact Pete at 667 Chelsea Drive, Sanford, NC 27330, 919/499-9315

☆☆LETTERS TO THE EDITOR☆☆

As a long time member of the 45th Division Association and a member of the 157th Infantry Association, I want to say that I really enjoy receiving the 45th Division News.

Having served in the 157th from February 1944 at Anzio to Reipertswiller, France where I was wounded and evacuated to England. I have fond memories of my association with both the division and my regiment. I always read the "News" from cover to cover and as usual I enjoyed the last issue (October 1991). The only thing that was unusual was the last page. I thought it best to remind you -- "The Report of my Death was Greatly Exaggerated."

While I do have medical problems, who is over 70 does not? I am not sure how I made the "Taps" listing, but I was informed by some Greek friends not to worry over it. They claim making the deceased listing (while alive) is a good indication of a long life to follow. I sure hope they are right!!!

I will notify Felix Sparks not to close the book on me just yet. JAMES R. ROYLE, 27 Riley Road #21, Readville, MA 02136.

(Editor's note: Royle reported the death of a fellow member of the 157th Infantry and was inadvertently listed in "Taps" in lieu of the person he reported in his correspondence.)

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I wrote to you a few weeks ago telling you that I was twice a member of the 45th Division and asked for assistance in locating a friend who was with us in Japan and Korea (October NWSLTR LTE).

I must have had brain fade that day because I didn't give you his name. The name is Richard Dean Moreland and he lived in Oklahoma City when we were called to active duty and was the personnel Sgt. Major for the 45th Signal Company.

We were very good friends, but I left Korea to rotate to Japan and he left the service and I lost track of him. I would like very much to locate him if anyone in the association can help me.

W. E. TERRELL, 4944 Cass Street #502, San Diego, CA 92109-2042.

REUNION NOTICES

45TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION. Hilton Inn West, 1-40 at Meridian, Oklahoma City, OK 21-23 August 1992. Reunion documents will be mailed on or about 1 June 1992.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

COMPANY G, 180TH INFANTRY. Holiday Inn, McAlester, OK, 1-3 May 1992. Contact: Jim M. Phipps, P.O. Box 347, Clarcona, FL 32710. Telephone: 407/295-6759 or 703/686-5088.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

COMPANY B, 179TH INFANTRY (KOREA). 21-23 August 1992 in conjunction with the 45th Division Association Reunion in Oklahoma city. Contact: Bill Shirey, P.O. Box 1467, Estes Park, CO, 80517, 303/586-0343.

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THE 45TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS ENCOURAGES ALL MEMBERS OF SATELLITE UNITS AND ORGANIZATIONS TO JOIN THE 45TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION AND PARTICIPATE IN ASSOCIATION ANNUAL REUNIONS. THESE ACTIONS WILL ENSURE THE LONGEVITY OF THE DIVISION ASSOCIATION AND THE CONTINUED FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE 45TH INFANTRY DIVISION MUSEUM WHICH IS VITAL TO THE DAY TO DAY ACTIVITIES OF THE MUSEUM.

EVOLUTION OF UNIT SHOULDER PATCHES (The Thunderbird Story)

By Louis Scott

The first recorded use of cloth insignia to identify units of the U.S. Army was during the American Civil War when Major General Phil Kearney had the men of his division wear a red cloth diamond to designate the 3rd Division, III Corps, Army of the Potomac. This became known as the "Kearney Patch." The patches were made out of flannel and usually worn on the hat or cap. The distinctive badge was useful in identifying and reassembling men scattered on the battlefields.

When Major General Joseph Hooker took command of the Army of the Potomac in 1863, he ordered that distinctive unit insignia be devised for each Corps in the Army. Major General Daniel Butterfield of Hooker's staff designed and designated unique patches for each of the 25 Corps in the Army to be made out of flannel, approximately 1-1/2" across, and displayed prominently on each soldier's hat or cap. While the XIII and XXI Corps opted not to adopt a badge, the other 23 corps did accept the badges and wore them proudly. Each division of the corps wore the corp's patch in colors red, white, and blue for the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd divisions, respectively. Green was used if a 4th division was assigned to the corps and orange for a 5th division. Each corps and division had a corresponding flag bearing the same device. Confederate corps had no badges.

Although the patches were issued to the Army of the Potomac in 1863, those in the West didn't get them until the next year. A story is told of how the badge for the XV Corps was selected. A private soldier of the badgeless XV Corps, McGuffy of Co. G, saw the stars on the caps of XII Corps soldiers and asked, "All you boys generals?" When told the star was their badge of identification and when asked about his corps badge, he slapped his cartridge box and replied, "Right here, forty rounds in the box and twenty in the pocket!" Unknowingly, he had created the XV Corps badge, because the Corps commander, Major General John Logan, heard



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

I wish to be a member of the 45th Infantry Division Association. I enclose my dues for:

- _____ \$75.00 for a Life Membership
- _____ \$35.00 for a 10-Year Membership
- _____ \$15.00 for a 4-Year Membership
- _____ \$ 5.00 for a 1-Year Membership

SEND TO:
45th Infantry Division Association
2145 NE 36th Street
Oklahoma City, OK 73111

Your Name (Please Print) _____

Address (Street or P.O. Box) _____

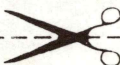
City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Former or Present Thunderbird Unit. _____

World War II _____ Korean War _____ Post Korean War _____

(SPECIAL NOTE: You are invited to submit a paragraph of current information, or a news item about yourself or another former or present Thunderbird, for possible use in 45th Division News. Please submit it on a separate sheet of paper, identifying each person mentioned by present location and former Thunderbird unit.)

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(cont'd on page 8)

the story and selected the cartridge box with "forty rounds" as the Corps insignia.

After the Civil War, distinctive unit insignia were not used regularly in the Army until 1898 when the War Department prescribed a new system of badges. Enlisted men continued to wear them on the cap, but officers wore them on the left breast.

Division insignia were not worn on the shoulder until World War I. The 81st Division was reported to be the first to wear a shoulder patch. The men sewed cloth wildcats to their uniforms before embarking for France. General John J. Pershing liked the unauthorized insignia so well that he authorized every division in the AEF to adopt a distinctive unite insignia to be worn on the left shoulder. In 1920 the War Department established the principle of authorizing distinctive shoulder insignia for all units of division size and higher.

When the 45th Division of the National Guard was organized in 1923, the division insignia was approved on 11 August 1924 and officially described: "on a red square approximately 2-3/8 inches on a side, a yellow swastika, approximately 1-1/2 inches in size. The elements of the swastika approximately 1/4 inch in width and at 45 degrees to the edges of the square, the square to be worn point up." The four sides of the patch represented the four states that formed the 45th Division, Oklahoma, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico. The swastika was a well-known Indian good luck symbol and represented the Indian heritage of the four states.

When Adolph Hitler proclaimed the swastika as the sign of the National Socialist Party in Germany, it became an odious symbol and was abandoned as the insignia of the 45th Division and a board of officers representing the four states began researching for a new division insignia. After many months of deliberation, three designs were selected for consideration that best represented the division and the heritage of the region. First choice was a Thunderbird; second choice was a Colt Revolver, calibre .45, of the type worn by frontiersmen in "winning the west"; third was the figures "45" in various configurations. The Adjutants General of the four states decided upon the Thunderbird, a fortuitous selection. In April 1939 the Thunderbird insigne was adopted as the distinctive insignia of the 45th Division. Again, each side of the square-shaped patch represented one of the four state (Oklahoma, Colorado, Arizona, and New Mexico) from which members of the division guardsmen came. This insignia closely represented the traditional Indian Thunderbird good luck symbol. The red depicted the Spanish heritage of the region and the golden Thunderbird, the Indian heritage.

The Thunderbird is a portentous symbol of Indian culture; most tribes from the Arctic Circle to Panama have portrayed it in their art and wearing apparel. It was the "giver of rain" and, as such, was highly regarded by the Indians of the American Southwest. The Thunderbird was a gigantic creature who, according to Indian lore, not only brought the rain but also provided the thunder and lightning accompanying it.

The methods of producing these phenomena were simple. The lightning emanated from his piercing eyes, the thunder was caused by the flapping of the giant creature's tremendous wings, and the rain was a portable affair, being carried in the form of a lake on the great bird's back. When

the bird was favorably inclined toward a certain territory, it would go into a wingover and the valleys below became fertile and green with abundant moisture.

Because rain was so essential to the dry Southwest, the Thunderbird became a symbol of good luck, and because of its tremendous size and capability to create thunder and lightning, it was regarded with awe. It was wise to placate the Thunderbird since it could either prevent the fall of rain entirely or drop so much there would be flood and destruction.

In 1940, after the Germans had adopted a spread-winged bird insigne for the helmets worn by members of their Army, consideration was again given to changing the insignia of the 45th Division. A new design was commissioned that consisted of crossed old-style frontier caliber .45 revolvers. The plan was dropped when it was decided that the proposed design too closely resembled the branch insignia of the Military Police and also did not properly represent the rich regional heritage of the division.

It was fortunate that the Thunderbird remained as the distinctive insignia of the 45th Division, because the division was soon to become the nemesis of the German Army, whose members developed great respect for the division and called it the "Bird" or "Falcon" division when the thunder and lightning of the Thunderbirds were unleashed against them. The mighty Thunderbird has earned its place in the proud tradition of the famed 45th Division. The deserved military reputation of the Thunderbird, now almost legendary, has been earned by the blood, sweat, and courage of its fighting men.

LIFE MEMBERS

SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

Harvey L. Brown
Joseph A. Landry

Frank Scagnelli
Roscoe W. Pfrimmer

Sarah E. Witcher

NEW MEMBERS

SINCE LAST NEWSLETTER

10-YEAR

Arnold Michelsen

Charles Edwin Morgan

Henry P. Schwinn

4-YEAR

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Dan Johnston

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