



6-1995

## 164th Infantry News: June 1995

164th Infantry Association

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# The 164<sup>th</sup> INFANTRY News

Vol. 33 No. 1

1995 is our 49th ass'n yr

June, 1995

# 3507 64

## 1995 Memorial Day Ceremony / WW II Commemoration

### North Dakota Veterans' Cemetery - May 29th

May 31, 1995

Don & Frank:

Thank you very much for representing the World War Two veterans of the 164th at the 1995 Memorial Day Ceremony & World War Two Commemoration at the North Dakota Veterans' Cemetery on May 29th.

It added a unique quality to the event to have so many World War Two participants on the 50th Anniversary of your victory. We have received so many compliments about the quality of the program and the honors bestowed upon our North Dakota veterans. Thank you for helping to make that day a memorable event for all who attended.

Sincerely,  
Keith D. Bjerke, Brigadier General, NDANG  
The Adjutant General



### Reunion Information

Arrangements for the 164th Reunion in Fargo are well underway and we are looking forward to seeing you all here, **September 29, 30, and October 1, 1995**, at the **Doublewood Inn** located at **3333 13th Avenue South**. The phone # is **1-701-235-3333** or **1-800-433-3235**. A block of rooms have been set aside for our group, so if you call in for reservations, which you should do, identify yourself as part of the 164th Infantry Reunion group. The Motel is located just off of I-29 with easy access from the Airport or I-94. A major shopping center is only a few blocks away and all the activities will be held right at the Motel.

The 164 tickets will be mailed out next month so you will have lots of time to return your stubs.

We have a very active Reunion Committee, so I am sure guys and gals alike will have a great time.

See you at the reunion.

Milton W. Kane, President



# Letters ...

4/19/95

Dear Don,

I can identify 5 of the guys in the attached picture. They were all members of my platoon – the notorious 2nd Platoon of Co. “A”.

They are: Front row: Watson - Dormanex - Kramer - \_\_\_\_\_? Rear row: \_\_\_\_\_? - O’Shaughnessy - Dailey.

Who are the guys with the caps? Good health! Good Luck! Good Cheer!

Ken Schauss

13000 Gallagher Rd.

Saint Louis, MO 63141-6163

P.S. Al Morrone - the sender of the picture was also a member of the “2nd.”

April 27, 1995

Dear Don,

This morning I received a telephone call from a Bill Beamon in Pueblo, Colorado, to inform me that his uncle, Lenard C. McLaughlin of Pueblo had died on April 18, 1995, and was buried in Colorado Springs on April 24. The Fort Carson honor guard was at his funeral and burial.

I do not know either of these people but Bill said that Lenard had told him that when he died he was to call me so I would put it in the 164 paper as he was a proud member. He did not know where his uncle was originally from but said he served with the 164 on Guadalcanal and had received the bronze star. He had worked at the post office in Colorado Springs until his retire-

ment. When his wife passed away he went to Pueblo to live with Bill who was his wife’s nephew.

I looked in the 164 book that was published in the fall of 1940 but could not find his name there nor in the address book which was published in 1990, but Bill said he joined in 1939. I will make one more call before I mail this to see if I can find more information.

With kindest personal regards, I remain,

Yours very truly,

George M. Christensen

15 Fairway

Minot, ND 58701

(701) 852-1923

P.S. I called Henry McLaughlin and he confirmed the above. The deceased is Lenard C. McLaughlin and was a native of Devils Lake and I found his name and picture with Anti-Tank platoon of Headquarters Company of Devils Lake. These people were then transferred to Service Co. I believe. I hope you can take the accurate part of this letter for the 164 newsletter. Thank you.

April 26, 1995

Dear Sir:

When my December issue of the 164 Newsletter came it looked like a dog had tried to take it from the postman. There were parts of it missing.

I try to keep all the copies of the Newsletter for reference. If it is all possible, would you please send me another copy. Thank you.

Ernest “Slim” Arneson was my squad leader when I joined the 164th Infantry as a replacement on Bougainville. I didn’t see his name in the 164 roster that I have. It is the May 21, 1990 roster. Do you have his address and could you give it to me? When I get to attend the reunions, I try to contact everyone whom I have an address for. I try to get as many from Company H to attend as possible.

I plan to be in Fargo for the 1995 Reunion. I was on the phone with Bill Friedewald just this afternoon. He called to see if I would be attending the 95 Reunion. We were in the same squad during all of our time in H Company.

Do they have the date set for the reunion yet?

Thanks in advance for your help.

Yours in comradeship,

Joe D. Feeler

2923 Truman NE

Albuquerque, NM 87110-3033

Enclosed in a copy of our Chapter Newsletter. Feel free to use any part of it is you wish to. On the back page concerns the Purple Heart Convention here is Albuquerque in August.

## MOPH CONVENTION

**The Military Order of the Purple Heart will hold its  
63rd Annual Convention in Albuquerque, NM.**

**Dates are August 8 through August 13, 1995**

Contact person: Remo Giannini

Tel: 505-889-0833; FAX: 505-889-3147; Home: 505-881-4283

Hotel: Albuquerque Hilton, Tel: 1-800-274-6835

Rates: \$69.00 + tax - Jean Peterson for reservations

Hotel: Fairview Inn, Tel: 505-889-4000

Rates: \$54.00 + tax - Brenda Larson for reservations

Be sure to mention you are with the Military Order of the Purple Heart Convention to get the group rates. If you need further information, contact:

ADVA Far West Chapter, Joe D. Feeler, Cmdr. 2923 Truman NE,  
Albuquerque, NM 87110-3033.

April 26, 1995

To Editor: News

This is to notify the Association that my beloved husband, Harold L. Menaker, passed away on April 11, 1995.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Rose Menaker

73 N. Four Seasons Rd.

Palm Beach Gardens, FL

33410

**The 164th Infantry News**, USPS 699-800 is published quarterly by The 164th Infantry Association, Box 1111, Bismarck, ND 58502-1111.

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1994-95 Association Officers are:

President ..... Milt Kane, Fargo, ND

Vice President ..... Neyl McClure,  
Bismarck, ND

Sec./Treas. .... Frank Weisgerber  
Bismarck, ND

Editor ..... Don Robinson

164th Infantry News Bismarck, ND

**POSTMASTER:** Address changes should be sent to 164th Infantry Association, PO Box 1111, Bismarck, ND 58502.



4/15/95

To: Editor of "The 164th Infantry News"  
Subject: Quotes from recent comprehensive book (copyright 1990) of 800 pages incl. index.\*

On page 608 author makes an assessment of how the Marines conducted their operations and also how well the U.S. Army units performed on the "Canal." The author writes that the operations of the U.S. Army units on Guadalcanal present a more mixed picture. On page 608 he writes, "The 164th Infantry surmounted adversities that any unit, regular or reserve, would find the stuff of traditions."

I am sure that those of us who were there will reinforce our belief that we felt we were as good as the Marine units.

Sorry I will not be able to attend the coming reunion due to present and pending surgery. All the very best to you and yours.

Tony Hanner

\*The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle: Guadalcanal by Richard B. Frank, publisher Random House.

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I was one that was on Hill 260. I thought someone would like to see that tree.

This is a short story about hill 260 on the island of Bougainville, a northern Soloman island. I do not remember the names and dates, but I met a good friend who was from the state of Washington. He worked with me whenever they wanted more than one flame thrower, and most of the time they always called for two. I have wished many times that I had kept a list of names and dates.

One morning our company executive officer told me that I would be going to a school on flame throwers. We (one person from each company) arrived at this training area, and after an hour of class we had lunch. Shortly thereafter we were told that we were needed up at the front and had to cut through the thick bush part of the way. This hill 260 was covered with trees of all sizes along with the brush. There was a huge tree right on the top at hill 260 which was used for a lookout post. I would say that tree would measure three feet at the base and 120 feet tall. This post changed hands several times with the Americans ending up in control. This hill was bombed and shelled so much that by the time we left you could have planted a garden. When our unit of 50 enlisted men and officers arrived, we were told to load our flame throwers and be ready to move out. Each man that carried a flame thrower was the squad leader, and five other men made up the full squad which was to protect the person carrying the flame thrower.

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## Etta Fenelon Memorials

In memory of Etta McLaughlin Fenelon, the Mother of James Fenelon, the following people have sent in remembrances.

Patricia Erin Hobot  
Kelly Rae Hofstedt  
Theresa G. Fenelon  
Ruth Kindem  
E.F. (Red) & Margret Welch  
Deenie Olds  
Dr. & Mrs. R.A. Heising

Vicki Jean Eriksson  
Christopher T. Eriksson  
James M. Fenelon  
Linda L. Dunn  
Harry & Mary Vadnie  
Dr. Bernard Lowenstein

These memorials will go to the 164th Infantry Regiment Memorial Fund as requested by Jim Fenelon, a 164th Infantry WWII veteran and a life long member of the 164th Infantry Associations.

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### A TRIBUTE TO JAMES FENELON

The eternal icon of the 164th Infantry Regiment, Jim Fenelon, has seen a dream become a reality, when the 164th Infantry Memorial monument was dedicated in Sep 1994. This everlasting edifice now graces the North Dakota Veterans Cemetery in Ft. Abraham Lincoln State Park, south of Mandan, North Dakota. Thru his direction, perservance and determination this Memorial was completed and will forever remain in the history of the United States Army. Jim is a credit to his profession, above and beyond the slings and arrows that are shot at the legal profession these days. We of the Association salute Jim Fenelon and he in turn says thank you to all the people who made this monument possible. "Merci" from Jim. — Editors

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One morning my partner and I were supposed to try to destroy this tree. The Japs had those round fox holes dug around this large tree. My partner and I took five one-gallon cans of gas and two loaded flame throwers and started to work our way to the tree. When we got close enough we took the covers from the cans of gas and threw them into the Jap fox holes and then emptied one flame thrower without lighting it. Then we lit the gas with the second flame thrower. After a few days the tree roots had burned off so the big lookout tree came down. I would say that tree would measure three feet at the base of it while it was about 120 feet tall.

From Marvin Seas  
Mesa, AZ

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April 7, 1995

Dear Frank:

I just finished reading your newsletter, and must compliment you on a great job well done.

The piece by Major Chuck Walker about his Bougainville patrol behind Hill 260 I had read in the ADVA newsletter, and it was just as good second time around. I still remember when I was editing the Americal Newsletter, a picture he sent in of his company lined up in their skivvies for short arm inspection. It was a perfect shot,

and brought many a laugh from the readers.

His thought the Colonel Jim Taylor might still be alive is correct. He is on our mailing list for the CANNONEERS POSTS and has been very generous with his comments for our paper on actions back in those dim days 50 years and more ago.

If you would like to contact Colonel Taylor, here's his address: Colonel James Taylor, Jr., 34 Military Rd., Hilton Head Island, SC 29928.

Keep up the good work, buddy,

Best regards,  
W. J. McLaughlin  
155 River Ridge Dr.  
Marstons Mills, MA 02648

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June 1, 1995

Dear Editor Don Robinson

Included is a \$25.00 check for the 164th Inf. Monument Memorial Fund.

The purpose of this donation is to honor Franklin "Sheff" Schoeffler, former Tech Sgt. of the WWII 164th Inf. Band who passed away at Moscow, Idaho May 30, 1995.

Sheff was a generous contributor to this fund. Sheff was Top Notch as a soldier, a bandsman and a human being.

Very respectfully,  
Doug B. Campbell



# OBITUARIES ...

## Franklin A. Schoeffler

Franklin A. Schoeffler, 83, a retired woodland forester for the Idaho Department of Lands, died Monday of causes related to age at Moscow Care Center.

He was born April 13, 1912, to Franklin and Christina Wicke Schoeffler at Shannon, Ill. When he was 3 the family moved to Lisbon, N.D., where he graduated from high school.

In 1940 he received a degree in forestry from the University of Idaho. During the summers he worked at blister rust control camps near Avery, Idaho and with the Payette National Forest near Boise.

In 1941 he enlisted in the U.S. Army 164th Infantry. He served on Guadalcanal and was awarded the Bronze Star. He was discharged in 1945.

He married Dolores A. Kammeyer July 18, 1947, at Moscow.

From 1947 to 1953 he was employed as the veterans training agricultural instructor in forestry and soils at Lisbon. He returned to Moscow in 1953 where he was employed by the Federal Extension Service.

He also served as conservationist aide for Lewis County and at St. Maries from 1954 to 1957, giving technical assistance and guidance to farmers on construction projects.

From 1957 to 1960 he worked at the UI Forest Nursery, then at Orofino as a farm forester for the state of Idaho. While at Orofino he founded the three-day Clearwater sixth-grade forestry tour and the 4-H Smoky Bear Club.

In 1956 he started Gem State Nursery and grew Christmas trees. He retired as a state of Idaho employee in 1974.

He enjoyed his work as a forester and working with small woodland owners. During NROTC ceremonies in 1986 at UI he was accorded the honorary title of Marine for his service with the First Marine Division at Guadalcanal.

He was a life member of the Guadalcanal Veterans Association, 164th Association, VFW Post No. 2905 at Moscow and the Christmas Tree Growers Association.

He also was a member of the American Legion Post and St. Mary's Church, both at Moscow and the Knights of Columbus.

He is survived by his wife at Moscow, two sons, Charles F. Schoeffler of Moscow and Tracy J. Schoeffler of Aloha, Ore; four daughters; Celia Finn and Mary Schierman, both of Moscow, Susan Jeffries of Tillamook, Ore., and Carol Westacott of Idaho Falls, Idaho; a twin sister, Frances Trione of Kingsford, Mich.; and 13 grandchildren.

A funeral Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 a.m. Thursday at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Moscow by Rev. Joseph Schmidt. Burial will follow at the Moscow cemetery with military honors by the VFW and American Legion at Moscow.

Viewing will be until 9 p.m. today at Short's Funeral Chapel of Moscow.

The family suggests memorials may be made to the Latah County Historical Society.

## John Wiese

John Wiese, 74, Apache Junction, Arizona, formerly a Jamestown resident passed away from cancer on January 10, 1995.

John was born June 9, 1920 in Jamestown, the son of Walter and Eunice (Wynes) Wiese. He was educated in the Jamestown area and worked in Plastering and Stuccoing.

John joined Company H, 164th Infantry in Jamestown and fought during World War II in the South Pacific area including Guadalcanal.

On returning to Jamestown after service, he became a Plaster and Stucco Contractor.

He married May Randall. They had a daughter, Judy. John later worked as Groundskeeper for the Jamestown Country Club. When May passed away, he moved to Arizona.

In Arizona he was a carpenter who built both homes and hand-made furniture. He married his present wife, Marge Olden, on February 14, 1974.

John is survived by his wife, Marge, a step-son, Charles Lucas, six grandchildren, three brothers, Jim-Portland, Oregon, Fred-California, Billy-Washington, and four sisters, June Gilbert-British Columbia, Lila Teigen-Moorhead, MN, Frieda Wacker-California, and Patricia Zimbleman-California. He was preceded in death by his parents, his daughter-Judy Weber, a brother-Wilmont, and a sister, Ruth Paysno.

John was cremated, a Memorial Service was held and he is buried in the Phoenix, Arizona VA Cemetery.

## Leo Hallgren

Leo Hallgren was born March 17, 1917 to Seth and Henrietta (Zelmar) Hallgren on the family homestead near Wildrose, North Dakota. He moved with his family to Crosby where he attended school and was confirmed in the Lutheran faith.

From 1935-36 he was enrolled in the C.C.C. Leo worked various jobs until 1941 when he was sent to Fort Snelling for induction in the army and was later transferred to ACO 164th Infantry at Camp Claraborn in LA for basic training. Much of his service time was spent overseas in the Pacific Theatre of operations.

Leo returned to Crosby in 1945 where he built a home. On March 6, 1947 he was united in marriage to Verna E. Ulledal of Appam, North Dakota. They made their home in Crosby where they raised eight children. Verna passed away in 1976.

Leo worked as a mechanic at the Ford garage, drove truck for Behm's Propane and ended his career at the Crosby Post Office.

Leo enjoyed his family, Sunday drives in the countryside and bowling. He was a member of the American Legion of Crosby for fifty years and also the Veterans of Foreign Wars.

Leo married Melba Howrey-Olson on June 16, 1984 in Williston where they made their home until his passing.

He is survived by his wife, Melba; three daughters and their husbands, Linda and John McCauley and Mary and Duane Hagen, all of Center, North Dakota and April and Gary Kringen of Williston, five sons and their wives, Jerome and Karlene Hallgren of Williston, Terry Hallgren of Williston, Vernon and Joanie Hallgren of Tacoma, Washington, Sheldon Hallgren of Mandan, and Dennis Hallgren of Rapid City, South Dakota; thirteen grandchildren; two sisters, Helen Mills and her husband, Art, of Inyokem, California and Dorothy Parish of Kimberly, Idaho; his brother, Don Hallgren of Crosby; one stepson and his wife, Gary Warren and Betty McLean of Rock Hill, South Carolina, one stepgranddaughter and her husband, Wanda and Monte Floyd of Rock Hill, South Carolina and two step-great-grandsons. Leo was preceded in death by Verne E. Hallgren, one infant daughter, Marjorie Gail, his parents, Henrietta and Seth, and two brothers, Wilbur and Raymond.



## James Ulmer

Col. James F. "Turk" Ulmer, 84, 1012 Lake Ave., Bismarck, died April 13, 1995, in a Fargo hospital. Services will be held at 11 a.m. Tuesday at Bismarck Masonic Temple, 1810 Schafer St. Burial will be in North Dakota Veterans Cemetery, rural Mandan.

Visitation will be from 6-9 tonight, and 9 a.m.-9 p.m. Monday at Eastgate Funeral Service, Bismarck. Visitation will continue at the Temple one hour before services.

James Francis "Turk" Ulmer was born Oct. 13, 1910, in Pisgah, Iowa, the son of James H. and Katherine D. (Farmer) Ulmer. He came to North Dakota at the age of 9. He attended grade school in Morton County near Fort Rice and attended high school in Mott. He graduated from University of North Dakota with the following degrees: B.A., L.I.B.&J, Dr. Turk married Lois Adel Wolf of Carrington on May 24, 1942. Prior to entering the service, Turk was executive secretary of Walsh County Welfare Board and chairman of the Young Democrats of Walsh County for five years in Grafton. He was admitted to practice in Federal District Court on Nov. 16, 1955, by the Honorable Ronald Davies. Turk entered the Armed Forces by joining the "C" Company, 164th Infantry (34th Division) of the North Dakota National Guard as an enlisted man. He entered Federal Service on Feb. 10, 1941, and entrained for Camp Claiborne, La. He was commissioned at Fort Benning, Ga. on Aug. 28, 1942. Turk served in the South Pacific as an inspector general. He was commissioned as a major for the North Dakota National Guard on Feb. 11, 1947, and was separated the same year. He was recalled to active duty on Aug. 11, 1948. He was assigned to serve in the North Dakota State Headquarters of Selective Service from 1948-1969. His last position was the deputy director of selective service. During these years, Turk's knowledge of the intricacies of the selective service became an invaluable asset. In 1969 he was transferred to serve General Hershey's staff, at his personal request. He served in the National Headquarters as the forms and records manager for the entire system. For this service he received the Legion of Merit. Turk retired as a colonel in 1971 at Fort Meyers, Va. He received the Bronze Star and several other citations.

Turk was a member of Phi Delta Gamma at the national level, Masonic Lodge, Lewis and Clark Lodge No. 132, serving as its past master. He became a member of the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine — El Zagal Shrine, June 6, 1953. He was invited to be a member of the Mandan Indians Uniformed Unit of El Zagal in 1954. He was also a member of many other civic, fraternal and community organizations. Turk also received the following honors: York Rite Gold Honor Award, Knight Templar Cross of Honor and Samsar Award from the El Zagal Temple for outstanding dedication. He enjoyed his Masonic work, his family and summers at Lake Bronson, Minn.

He is survived by one daughter and son-in-law, Katherine and David Carter, Detroit Lakes, Minn., and their children, Sarah Christopher and Jonathan; and one son and daughter-in-law, James H. Ulmer and Anne Gerlach, Frazee; Minn., and their sons, Jesse and Matthew.

## Ray R. Nelson

Ray Ronald Nelson, son of John and Gundina (Sorenson) Nelson, was born August 23, 1921, at Scranton, North Dakota, one of five children. He attended Dickinson State Teacher's College in Dickinson, North Dakota. He joined the National Guard and when World War II was declared he joined the 164th Infantry, Company K. During the war he volunteered for Merrill's Marauders and served in the China-Burma Theatre. He was united in marriage to Hazelle Brydahl on March 16, 1945, in Lake Park, Minnesota. After their marriage they farmed near Breckenridge, Minnesota for 11 1/2 years. Ray was then employed in grain elevators in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota and later worked as a wholesale greenhouse maintenance man for eight years in Madison, South Dakota. They retired to Estelline, South Dakota, in 1986. Ray died on Thursday, April 20, 1995, at the Brookings Hospital in Brookings, SD, at the age of 73 years, 7 months, and 27 days.

He was a member of Trinity Lutheran Church in Estelline, was a charter member of the Estelline Lions Club, having served as club president and District 5 NE Zone Chairman. He was also a volunteer fireman, a first aid rescue ambulance technician, a member of the American Legion, and was an organizer of the Northeast Grain Dealer's Association, serving as secretary.

Ray is survived by his wife, Hazelle of Estelline; six children, Bette Mae Even and her husband, Larry of Britton, SD, Dorothy Fiegen and her husband, Patrick of Buffalo, SD, Jinelle Craig and her husband, Carson of North Charleston, SC, Darrel Nelson and his wife, Lori of Watertown, SD, Douglas Nelson and his wife, Chris of Brookings, and Robert Nelson of Estelline; 26 grandchildren; four great-grandchildren; one sister, Emily Shuck and her husband, Frank of Seattle, WA; one foster child, Mike Blumeyer and his wife, Dee of Dempster, SD; three foster grandchildren, and several nieces and nephews.

He was preceded in death by his parents; two brothers; one sister, and three grandchildren.

## Randolph Gronvold

Mr. Randolph D. "Randy" Gronvold of 910 S. Colorado passed away Saturday in a local hospital. He was born in Barton, North Dakota, on March 28, 1915, to Torgor and Gertrude (Hagen) Gronvold. He attended school in North Dakota.

He served his country in the U.S. Army from 1941-1945, serving in the Philippines.

He had lived in Butte since 1953, and was a heavy equipment operator for the Anaconda Company. He retired in 1976. He was a member of the Operating Engineers Union, the 164th Infantry Regiment in North Dakota, and enjoyed yard work and gardening.

He married Dorothy Fosness in Barton, North Dakota, on November 8, 1947. She survives. Other survivors include son, Wayne Gronvold, Butte; son and daughter-in-law, Douglas and Tracy Gronvold, Butte; daughter and son-in-law, LeAnne and Pete Steilman, Butte; three grandchildren; brothers, Victor Gronvold, Barton, North Dakota; Phillip Gronvold, Silverdale, Washington; sisters, Nora Gilmore, Marysville, Washington; and Selma Olson, Tempe, Arizona. He was preceded in death by sisters, Geneva, Rebecca, Geneva, Mathilda and Torgina; brothers, Thor, David and Joseph; and a grandson, Cory Gronvold.

## Arthur Christianson

KENMARE — Arthur R. Christianson, 84, Kenmare, died May 22, 1995, in a Minot hospital. Services will be at 2 p.m. Saturday at Nazareth Lutheran Church, Kenmare, with burial at 4 p.m. Saturday at Bethlehem Cemetery, rural Kenmare.

He is survived by his wife, Lena; sons, Dean, Kenmare, Roger, Bismarck; brother, Carl, Minneapolis; sisters, Caroline Hovland, Canby, Ore., and Inga McGillivray, Anacortes, Wash. (Thompson-Larson Funeral Home, Kenmare)



# Letters ...

Dear Don

I won't be at the reunion this fall due to trouble with my legs, but the spirit will be high.

John Wiese and I left Jstn with Co. H in 1941. Oddly enough we came back in June 44 from Bougainville.

Best of luck to all.  
Bob Todd, Mesa, AZ

6 June 1995

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is an obituary that I would like to have printed in the 164th Infantry News.

Franklin Schoeffler died May 29, 1995 at Moscow, Idaho. He had been a life member of the 164th Infantry Association and also the Guadalcanal Veterans Association.

Sincerely,  
Dolores A. Schoeffler

5/30/95

Dear Frank -

Thank you for the copy of the 164th Inf. News. It is a good publication and it brings back many memories.

The 164th was a great combat unit. I worked closely with them on Bougainville, Layte, Cebu, Los Negros and Bohol. Every man there was a real soldier and it was a privilege to be associated so closely with them.

Accept the enclosed check as a donation to the memorial activities of the Association. Thanks again,

Sincerely,  
James Taylor, Jr.  
34 Old Military Road  
Hilton Head, SC 29928

April 11, 1995

Dear Mr. Robinson:

I appreciate very much receiving copies of the 164th Infantry News, and especially enjoy reading letters from members who served with the 164th Infantry in the South Pacific and particularly, the men of Company E (Williston). My brother, Jerry Wilder served with them in "The 164th."

I realized my subscription has long expired, so please find enclosed my personal check in the amount of six dollars (\$6.00) to cover the subscription.

Thank you and all good wishes to you and your staff.

Sincerely,  
Shirley Wilder Sommars  
2221 South Prairie Ave., #67  
Pueblo, CO 81005

April 8, 1995

Dear Don,

Received the 164 News yesterday and am writing concerning the pictures of the fellows from "A" Co.

The picture was first published in the Nov.-Dec. Americal Newsletter. It was sent in by Al Morrone. I wrote him to tell him the names of the fellows I knew. In a few days I received a phone call from his wife telling me he had died in September of '94. He never got to see the published picture.

The names I remember are: front row L to R: Frank Watson, Emler Dorneman, Cramer or Kramer, and the last man I can't recognize. Back row L to R: Unknown, Dave O'Shaughnessy, and Bill Dailey.

I sent Bill Daily an application form to join the 164 Association. I hope you will be hearing from him.

See you all in the fall.

Paul Dickerson

23 May, 1995

Dear Editor-

I regret to inform you of the passing of Maynard Tollefson, a member of Co. L who with the rest of us answered the Federal call on 10 February 1941. Maynard passed May 20, 1995. He was a good man and there is a growing sadness as we recognize that he like so many of our past companions will not be there when next we assemble to recount our days of glory and privation.

Peace be with you,  
Thurston Helson  
Hillsboro, ND

## Contributions to Memorial Fund, as of 6 Apr 95

Eva Tollefson .....	\$100.00
<i>In Memory of My Husband Clarence</i>	
American Legion Post .....	50.00
Forbes, ND	
Kenneth B. Shaver .....	15.00
John M. Panettiere .....	250.00
<i>In Memory of My Father Capt Andrew Panettiere</i>	
James Taylor Jr. ....	25.00
<i>In Memory of the 164th Infantry</i>	
Douglas B. Campbell .....	25.00
<i>In Memory of Sheff Schoeffler, 164th Infantry Band</i>	

Albert J. Luther passed away in October 1994 in St. Paul, MN (one day after his birthday).

His son-in-law,  
Karl Brown

## The Last Roll Call

Randolph "Randy" Gronvold, Butte, MT .....	Mar 1995
John Wiese, Apache Junction, AZ .....	10 Jan 1995
James "Turk" Ulmer, Bismarck, ND .....	13 Apr 95
Harold L. Menaker, West Palm Beach, FL .....	11 Apr 95
Leonard C. McLaughlin, Pueblo, CO .....	18 Apr 95
Ray R. Nelson, Estelline, SD .....	20 Apr 95
Charles E. Schlieve, Leeds, ND .....	6 May 1995
Maynard Tollefson, Milton, ND .....	20 May
Art Anderson, Minot, ND .....	May 1995
Art Christianson, Kenmare .....	23 May 95
Franklin "Sheff" Schoeffler, Moscow, ID .....	30 May 95



# THE JUNGLE FIGHTERS

## *The Story of The Americal Division*

By BRUCE JACOBS

The Americal Infantry Division is a division of distinction. It is the only modern Army division with a name instead of a number, and the only Army division to receive the Navy Presidential Citation for gallantry in action. The jungle fighters who wore the blue and white Southern Cross should patch fought the grinding, wearing battles of the Pacific – Guadalcanal’s Henderson Field, the jungle trail to Numanuma, the tangle of ancient vines and cogon grass in Cebu.

The only Army division formed for combat at an advance base in wartime, the Americal was the first United States Army division to take part in offensive action in any theater of operations in World War II. Rarely, however, did its exploits make the papers back home, and then it was usually identified incorrectly as the “American” Division or the “Miracle” Division.

It would be difficult to imagine more dramatic circumstances than those under which the Division went into combat. Its advance elements reached bloody Guadalcanal just in time to help the Marines save Henderson Field. Like the Minute Men of old, they raced into battle to fight for what appeared to be a lost cause. Though inexperienced in the arts of war, they helped swing the balance of victory to our side at a time when the Marines, who had carved the beachhead and established the perimeter, were weak from battle losses and malaria.

The Americal soldiers were Minute Men in the real sense. For the most part, they were volunteers; National Guard soldiers from the states of Massachusetts, Illinois and North Dakota. How they came to be assembled under the Americal banner in the far reaches of the Pacific is a story that begins with the departure, from the New York Port of Embarkation, of Army Task Force 6814—headed for parts unknown. The date was January 23, 1942. It was 47 days after Pearl Harbor; the day the Japanese invaded the Solomon Islands. Japanese aggression was at its high tide in the Far East. Wake and Guam, key islands in the Pacific, had fallen. The Japanese had won Malaya and Hong Kong and were bulling their way into Bataan. In the “hot corner” of the Southwest Pacific, they streamed down through New Guinea and the islands of Melanesia to menace Australia.

Task Force 6814, commanded by Brigadier General Alexander “Sandy” Patch, was a conglomeration of what the Army calls “miscellaneous units.” There was the 51st Infantry Brigade, whose two principal ele-

ments were the 132nd Infantry Regiment and the 182nd Infantry Regiment. There were old-style field and coast-artillery regiments, assorted ordnance, quartermaster, medical, signal, aviation and light-tank units. They had been assembled on a moment’s notice and had come from training camps in half a dozen different states.

The infantry regiments of the task force were units that had been cut adrift in the 1941 “streamlining” of the National Guard divisions. The Guard divisions had come into

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*They were rushed in to combat so quickly they got a name instead of a number, but before the war was over they made it a name to be proud of.*

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federal service as “square” divisions but were eventually “triangularized.” In the process each lost one regiment. The 182nd Infantry, for example, had been “squared out” of the 26th (Yankee) Division, to the great disgust of the Bay Staters. Its antecedents dated clear back to 1636, and its regimental colors were decorated with streamers from the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, two campaigns of the Civil War and the Meuse-Argonne in World War I. Similarly the 132nd Infantry had lost its place in the Illinois 33rd Division. The old “Second Illinois,” as the 132nd was known prior to World War I, traced its ancestry to 1861 and six campaigns of the Civil War from Tennessee to Atlanta. It carried World War I streamers for Picardy, the Somme offensive, Lorraine and the Meuse-Argonne.

The convoy steamed south from New York, cleared through the Panama Canal and headed into the vast blue waters of the Pacific. It raced southwest to Melbourne, Australia, then north and east, until the soft, shimmering outline of New Caledonia appeared off the port bow one day. The handful of Aussies and French Foreign Legion troops stationed there breathed a sigh of relief as the Task Force moved ashore with its impressive array of trucks, jeeps and weapons. The GIs were stunned to find the city of Noumea a “little Paris” out in the middle of the Pacific. Few, except the stamp collectors, had ever heard of *Nouvelle Caledonie*.

General Patch garrisoned the sprawling island and readied it against the day of attack. He dispatched outposts to the New Hebrides and put the engineers to work building new

airfields to accommodate the U.S. Air Corps, which was beginning to stretch its wings. Soon the Task Force was reinforced by the arrival of more artillery and another infantry regiment—the 164th, a North Dakota National Guard outfit that formerly belonged to the 34th (Red Bull) Division. The old First North Dakota’s regimental colors had seen the Far East four decades earlier, during the War with Spain and in the Philippine Insurrection.

Church bells tolled in thankfulness from Australia and New Zealand to New Caledonia when the Japanese were defeated in the Battle of the Coral Sea. Less than a month later, U.S. naval and air forces again triumphed in the Battle of Midway. Suddenly Task Force 6814 was in the backwash of the war. New Caledonia was no longer under pressure, and the task force soldiers feared they would become

garrison troops, doomed to spend the war far from the thunder of the guns.

Their destiny was dictated in a secret letter from the War Department to Sandy Patch, who had acquired the second star of a major general. Out of the forces then under his command, he was to form a brand-new infantry division. And, in view of the unusual circumstances – the activating of a division outside the United States – it was to be given a name instead of a number. Washington proposed “Necal” Division, since “Necal” was an early code name for New Caledonia. It was decided, however, that the men themselves should have the final say in the election of a name. General Patch cast his vote for “Bush” Division, but in the final balloting, he was outranked by a private first class, David Fonseca of Roxbury, Massachusetts. PFC Fonseca came up with the name that was to become so meaningful in the campaigns that lay ahead — *the Americal*. After all, reasoned Fonseca, the division was to be formed from *American* troops stationed on *New Caledonia*. Fonseca’s nomination for the new division’s name was forwarded to Washington, and on May 27, 1942, the Americal Division became a going concern. Most of the units of Task Force 6814 were absorbed into the new organization; a few were transferred to the island command and remained behind when the Americal moved out of New Cal and plunged into jungle war.

On Guadalcanal where the Marines had landed in August, there was real trouble. As commanding general of the Army forces in the South Pacific, Major General Millard F. Harmon urged upon Vice Admiral Robert L.



Ghormley, the South Pacific commander, the immediate dispatch of a regimental combat team to Guadalcanal. Ghormley concurred, and within a few hours, the Americal's 164th Infantry RCT, under the command of Colonel Bryant E. Moore, was placed on the alert. It moved down to the Nickel Docks on October 8 and began loading into the *Zeilin* and the *McCauley* for the boat ride to the north. It was an uneventful trip, until the convoy dropped anchor near Lunga Point. Then the Japanese rolled out the welcome mat. As their bombers roared overhead, the 164th Infantry went about the business of unloading and setting up shop in the beleaguered perimeter. Colonel Moore reported to the commanding general of the 1st Marine Division, Major General Archie A. Vandegrift, and Vandegrift ordered Moore's regiment of Americal soldiers into Sector Two, the longest infantry sector in the 22,000-yard perimeter. The new arrivals were inexperienced, but at least they were fresh and eager.

Back on New Cal, meanwhile, Admiral William F. Halsey was named South Pacific commander. The 59-year-old "Bull" Halsey put it straight to Vandegrift: "Can you hold Guadalcanal, or do you expect to have to pull out?" he radioed.

"I can hold it," Vandegrift assured him, "if I get more active support than I've been getting."

"You'll get it," Halsey replied. Once more orders began streaming into Americal Division headquarters. Now the Bay State 182nd Infantry was alerted to move out.

On Guadalcanal, the 164th was going through its baptism of fire. It had already withstood fierce naval bombardment and had been under air attack. But now Bryant Moore's soldiers got their taste of the infantryman's war. On the night of October 24-25, they took the full brunt of a Japanese ground assault. It came on a black, moonless night following a day of heavy rainfall. It was clearly the enemy's intent to recapture the vital strips of Henderson Field. The heaviest blow fell upon the sector defended by the 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines, and a "fire call" went out for the 3rd Battalion of the 164th Infantry which was then in regimental reserve about a mile from the front. As the Marines fought valiantly to hold back the enemy tide, Lieutenant Colonel Robert K. Hall marched his Americal Battalion through the dense jungle, and slipped into position alongside the Marines. With the added firepower of the Army, a series of Japanese attacks was thrown back.

At the height of the battle, Corporal Bill Clark, a Nebraskan, and two privates set out to recover a pair of light machine guns that had been damaged when their crews were wiped out. The men with him were killed, but Clark kept advancing under intense fire. By the time he reached the guns, he was less than 15 feet from the muzzles of the Jap guns. But Clark coolly tied up the two damaged guns

with his belt and hauled them back to his own lines. He stripped them down, and by salvaging the usable parts from each, he managed to assemble one machine gun in good working order – all in the dark. Clark's gun spit into action just in time to help hurl back a Jap foray.

At dawn on October 25, the Japs melted away into the jungle, giving the Army and the Marines a chance to realign their battered forces. The lineup, as night fell, found the 1st Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, on the right; the 3rd Battalion, 164th Infantry, in the center; and the 2nd Battalion, 164th Infantry, on the left. Reinforced by fresh troops delivered to Guadalcanal by the "Tokyo Express," the Japanese launched another series of attacks, and continued to hurl themselves at the approaches to Henderson Field on the morning of October 26. After some of the most savage fighting of the campaign, the Japs broke and retreated toward Koli Point and Kokumbona. It was a clear-cut triumph for the Americans and Marine General Vandegrift singled out the 164th for special praise.

Elements of the 182nd Infantry now began to arrive in force. Brigadier General Edmund B. Sebree, the Americal's assistant division commander, was given command of a sector, as the 164th took part in an offensive across the Matanikau River, in November. When an attack of dengue fever kayoed Brigadier General William H. Rupertus, assistant division commander of the Marines, General Sebree took full charge of the march to Koli Point. It was the first time in the Guadalcanal campaign that a senior officer of the Americal bossed a combined force of Army men and Marines. Soon the assault battalions of Colonel Daniel W. Hogan's 182nd Infantry joined the push.

The Marines provided covering fire as Lieutenant Colonel Bernard B. Twombly took his 2nd Battalion across a footbridge over the Matanikau, toward Hill 66. The battalion pushed forward, but advance elements were pinned down near the Water Hole. Led by Lieutenant Colonel Francis F. MacGowan, the 1st Battalion crossed the Matanikau on the following morning and fought a series of brisk skirmishes as it moved toward the objective at Point Cruz. The 182nd attack was momentarily slowed by the terrible heat but it resumed when General Sebree sent the 164th forward to help out. The 182nd stormed the Point Cruz defenses, but the 164th ran into a hornet's nest. Mortar fire in the 3rd Battalion area, for example, killed the battalion surgeon, four lieutenants and a first sergeant.

As plans were prepared for the full relief of the 1st Marine Division by the Americal, a small group of Americal soldiers embarked upon an unusual adventure, setting out in a schooner from Lunga Point under the command of First Lieutenant Frederick T. Flo of the 164th Infantry. In the group were 13 soldiers from the North Dakota regiment, two Marine radiomen, a pair of Marine Na-

vajo "talkers" (the Japanese were never able to master the Navajo language, and it provided a "code" that was never broken) and a member of the native police. The schooner swept out to sea and circled to the west around Cape Esperance. The first stop was at the Tangarare settlement in Beaufort Bay, where Lieutenant Flo chatted with the Reverend Henry De Klerk of the Society of Mary. Father De Klerk who had remained at his mission on the southern coast of Guadalcanal when the Japanese invaded the Solomons, assured the 164th Infantry soldiers that there were no enemy soldiers between Beaufort Bay and Tiaro Bay. The next stop was Tiaro Bay. Here the patrol went ashore and began a thorough reconnaissance of the area. Finding no trace of the Japanese, Flo and his men moved on to Marovo, then Kamimbo Bay and Aruligo Point, in the eight days that followed. From the report turned in by Flo when the patrol returned to Lunga Point in the waning days of November, Division intelligence officers correctly reckoned that the main strength of the enemy lay east of Visale on Guadalcanal's northern coast.

In December, most of the remaining elements of the Americal arrived at Guadalcanal. The 132nd RCT, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel LeRoy E. Nelson, was almost immediately hurled against Japanese positions on strongly defended Mount Austen. Another welcome arrival was the Americal's Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron, under the command of the dour Scot, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander M. George. This colorful unit (later to be redesignated as the 21st Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop) had been formed by Colonel George on New Cal as a mobile striking force, and it now numbered more than 500 troopers, equipped with jeeps and armed to the teeth. For all its proud mobility the squadron was destined to fight on foot in the mud of Guadalcanal.

With the Americal at full strength, General Patch became the commander of all forces on Guadalcanal. The first order of business, he decided, was the capture of Mount Austen. The Illinois regiment marched into the lines and swung into action. Lieutenant Colonel William C. Wright's 3rd Battalion battered away at the approaches of the heights of Mount Austen, but were stopped in their tracks. When Wright moved out in front, trying to search out a trail that wasn't covered by Jap guns, he was killed by machine-gun fire.

During the battle, the Illinois soldiers of the 132nd came up against the *Gifu*, the Japs' stoutest defensive. It consisted of a horse-shoe-shaped line of about 45 interconnecting pillboxes between Hills 31 and 27. The pillboxes were made of heavy logs, and their roofs were three feet thick. Each pillbox contained one or two machine guns plus two or three riflemen, and they were flanked by riflemen and machine gunners dug into the bases of mahogany and banyan trees. The GIs of the Americal were staggered by this



seemingly impenetrable jungle fortress, where mortar fire made no impression, and where even howitzer fire was ineffective, unless there was a direct hit. The 2nd Battalion of the 132nd made the principal assault against the *Gifu*. Under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George F. Ferry, it moved southwest from Hill 11 toward the slopes of Hill 27, shortly after daybreak on New Year's Day.

"This is a helluva way to spend New Year's Day," a corporal from Joliet, Illinois, growled.

"At least," one of his buddies declared, "we won't have a hangover tomorrow,"

By four p.m. the battalion had reached the top of Hill 27, without a single casualty. During the day, however, the regimental commander, who was suffering from malaria and fatigue, was relieved, and Colonel Alexander M. George left his beloved Mobile Combat Reconnaissance Squadron to take over the old "Ever Ready" Regiment. Colonel George at once proved a tonic for the tired soldiers of the 132nd. Arriving at the regimental front in mid-morning, clad only in shorts and a fatigue cap and armed with a brace of .45-caliber pistols and an M1 rifle, he casually commenced an inspection tour.

"Lookit that silly damfool," a GI jeered, "he's asking to get his ass shot off."

Some sergeant, who did not know the new regimental commander, bellowed out, "Hey, fella! You better get to hell away from here!"

George, however, was out to prove to his men that Japanese small-arms fire was generally ineffective against moving targets. He calmly completed his Cook's tour of the front, while the Japs peppered away at him without coming close.

On the following morning, the regiment again attacked. The 1st Battalion advanced to the west and the 3rd Battalion struck at the northern approaches. But once again it was Ferry's 2nd Battalion that enjoyed the greatest success overrunning its objective a little after nine in the morning. As the assault troops reached the summit, they spotted a three-inch mountain howitzer out in the open, its crew sprawled carelessly in the shade. The Japs raced toward their gun, but they were swiftly cut down by the fast-shooting Americal soldiers.

The Guadalcanal campaign drew to a close as elements of the Americal, along with elements of the 2nd Marine Division, pushed toward Koli Point. During the advance, when the Americal soldiers of the 182nd Infantry were under brutal mortar fire, First Sergeant James J. Gaffney of Lowell, Massachusetts, raced 200 yards through the impact area to rescue one of his officers. He brought the officer out on his back, lugged him to an aid station and then sprinted back through the exploding shells to repair broken communications lines.

The important enemy stronghold at Kokumbona fell in late January. As the main U.S. force pushed toward Cape Esperance

along the northern coast of the island, General Sebree (Sebree had become Division Commander January 3, 1942, when General Patch was named XIV Corps Commander) dispatched a reinforced battalion to the south coast, to land in the enemy's rear. A battalion of the 132nd, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel George F. Ferry, was dispatched to make the end run.

Colonel George of the 132nd was in command as Ferry's reinforced battalion moved ashore February 1, covered by U.S. fighter planes. Although Jap bombers roared overhead, none made any passes at the beachhead as Colonel George led his command along the southern coastal trails toward Titi. On February 7, George was wounded and Ferry took command. Major H. Wirt Butler, the exec, took command of the battalion as the landing force continued its march to Marovo ... Kamimbo Bay ... around Cape Esperance ... to Tenaro ... and the long-awaited linkup with the troops who had marched along the northern route. With the juncture of these two forces, the organized resistance of the Japanese on Guadalcanal came to an end. America's first offensive campaign in the Pacific was in the bag and "Bull" Halsey jubilantly wrote to the first commander of the Americal Division; "When I sent a Patch to act as tailor for Guadalcanal, I did not expect him to remove the enemy's pants and sew it on so quickly ... Thanks and congratulations."

Out of the mud and misery of Guadalcanal — the Americal's first-baptism of fire — came the Navy's Presidential Unit Citation, and a few weeks after the conclusion of the campaign, the tired malaria-ridden Americal troopers were relieved. Everyone half-expected, half anticipated a return to New Caledonia but instead the convoy headed southeast to the fabled island of Fiji. The Division set up camp upon Viti Levu, the principal island of Fiji. It regained its health, trained its replacements and enjoyed the niceties of civilization in the crisp, friendly "liberty city" of Suva. The Fiji interlude came to an end in mid-December, 1942. The rear echelon of the Division was dispatched to Guadalcanal, until such time as it could join the bulk of the Americal in a new forward area.

Once again the Division was sent in to relieve a weary, battered Marine outfit. This time it was the 3rd Marine Division at Empress Augusta Bay and the blood-drenched perimeter on Bougainville Island in the northern Solomons. It was two months since the initial landings, but it was still touch and go. The Americal arrived just as the "second battle of Bougainville" was shaping up.

Once again it was the veteran 164th Infantry that marched into combat first under the command of Colonel Crump Garvin, a West Pointer who hailed from Arkansas. Next came the 182nd Infantry led by Colonel William D. Long, a West Point (1920) classmate of Garvin. Then came the 132nd Infantry com-

manded by Colonel Joe K. Bush, who had been an Army private in World War I. The Division itself was now under the command of Major General John R. Hodge, a veteran regular who had earned a commission in the first world war. Hodge decided that steel helmets were more of a hindrance than a help in the jungle so he put the Americal combat infantrymen in green "fatigue" caps. Patrols moved out with orders to shoot at anything wearing a helmet. The neighboring 37th Division, unfortunately did not know of this dictum — until one of its patrols was nearly annihilated by the Americal. The mix-up was settled peacefully, and no casualties were reported.

Mid-January found the Americal battling grimly in Bougainville. This island bastion, which had been overrun by the Japanese in the early days of 1942, was destined to be the Americal's scene of action for more than a year. When Company C of the 132nd, supported by tanks, made a frontal attack to extend the bridgehead across the Torokina on January 30, 1943, the infantry company was stopped cold by fierce mortar and machine-gun fire. The tanks were forced to button up. Back on the main battle line with a reserve platoon in the Company B sector, Staff Sergeant Jessie R. Drowley, a one-time farm boy from Luzerne, Michigan, watched with mounting anger as Company C soldiers toppled to the ground. Suddenly he bolted from cover and dashed through the enemy fire to pull two of the wounded men back to safety, while another member of his squad rescued a third. Drowley then sprinted up to one of the tanks, climbed aboard and hammered on the turret to get the crew's attention. He outlined a plan to them, and the tank commander nodded. One of the tankers gave him a Thompson sub-machine gun, and Drowley handed over his M1 in exchange. Then the engines began to roar. With Drowley riding "shotgun," with the fast-shooting tommy gun and acting as its eyes, the tank headed toward a pillbox whose fire was holding up the attack. When the tank was within 20 feet of the pillbox, Drowley was hit in the chest, but he hung on stubbornly. Bullets crackled and ricocheted around him as he loaded the tommy gun with tracer bullets to help guide the tankers toward the target. The tank plunged forward. Enemy fire from all sides converged on Drowley as he crouched behind the scant protection of the tank turret. Again a Jap bullet found its mark. This time the Americal sergeant was shot in the left eye and he toppled from the tank. He staggered to his feet just as the tank went into action. Only after two pillboxes were knocked out did Drowley go back to an aid station.

As the Americal developed its positions on Bougainville, it was reinforced by the 1st Fiji Battalion; by the 1st Battalion, 24th Infantry Regiment (first Negro combat infantry troops in the Pacific); by the 25th RCT of the 83rd Division, another Negro outfit; and by the 93rd Recon Troop. It fought the Jap on



the beaches, in the jungle and in the hills and ridges of the towering Crown Prince Range. By this time the Americals were "old pros" at the nasty business of war. After Private First Class Sebastian B. Poretto of Brooklyn, New York, a 164th Infantry soldier, killed 14 Japs and wounded two with just 18 rounds of ammunition, he was called upon by his company commander to account for the two "wasted" rounds. "Hell, Captain," replied Poretto, "two of 'em was chicken — they ducked just as I fired."

March brought with it the fury of a Japanese counter-attack. The Americal and its sister division in the XIV Corps, the 37th (Buckeye) Division, were pounded by artillery and heavy-caliber mortar fire. Division and Corps artillery drove the Japs back into their hillside caves. Then the infantry battle started in earnest. The outpost of the 182nd Infantry on Hill 260 was clobbered. Then the main battle line from the hill to Eagle Creek was ablaze. The 2nd Battalion hurried forward to recapture the hill. Company F moved in first to make contact with survivors of the outpost garrison, as Company E tackled the southwest slope. The Company E attack was in many respects the outstanding unit action of the Americal's wartime history. The company smashed its way up a 45-degree slope against enemy rifle and machine-gun fire and withstood a series of brutal assaults that reduced its fighting strength to 35 men. Even with three-quarters of its strength spent, the company gallantly fought on for two days, holding back the furious enemy. When the survivors marched down the hill, their ranks numbered only 24.

During the fight at Bloody Hill it was almost impossible to get the wounded back to the rear. Private Don Blaisdell, of the 57th Engineers, made trip after trip into enemy-held territory on errands of mercy, until he himself was killed. A brave Nisei interpreter, Staff Sergeant Shigeru Yamashita, knowing full well that torture and death awaited him if he was captured, moved boldly into the Japanese lines on Bloody Hill to learn details of Japanese troop organization.

Suddenly the Japanese pulled off Hill 260, and the Americal began to surge forward. In the waning days of March, General Hodge left the Division and Major General Robert M. McClure became the Americal's fourth commander. The grinding war on Bougainville continued through the spring, the summer and the fall.

It was during this period that Lieutenant Raymond Ross formed his famous "Dime-a-Dozen Club." The lieutenant agreed to pay ten cents to every member who killed 12 Japs, with the condition that each kill had to be witnessed by another man. Ten soldiers of the Americal joined what Ross called the "most exclusive little club in the world."

They really hit the jackpot one day when they ambushed a little enemy village in the hills. A force of Japs were relaxing in their huts when the Dime-a-Dozen boys showed

up with rifles and automatic rifles blazing. They sprayed their fire a foot off the ground and stampeded the enemy soldiers, none of whom escaped. The club members accounted for 26 enemy casualties in that single encounter.

The Dime-a-Dozen Club nearly lost its intrepid leader when Lieutenant Ross and his men surrounded a squad of Japs on one of the trails beyond Torokina. The lieutenant had a bead on the Jap officer who was in the lead, but felt guilty about shooting him in the back. So he whistled. When the officer turned around, Ross shot him. But he only winged him, because he had been ordered to bring in a prisoner. The Jap officer played dead until Ross reached his side. Then he leaped up and started to grapple with the American officer. One of Ross' BARmen moved up swiftly and cut down the Jap.

"Rats!" someone growled in the rear, "there goes a bloody case of beer." The rest of the patrol looked on numbly — the prize for a captive was a case of beer.

Midway through 1944, the regimental cannon companies, which had come out from the States to join the three regiments of the Americal, turned in their puny 75mm howitzers and received the big self-propelled 105mm howitzers. The Army terminology for the new weapon was M7, but the troops called it "The Priest," because the machine-gunning mount resembled a pulpit. The 184th Infantry acquired an M7 that became famous in the Americal as "Daisy Mae." Many months later, "Daisy Mae" achieved prominence during the "Battle above the Clouds" on the island of Negros in the Philippines.

In November, Brigadier General William H. Arnold, who until that time was Chief of Staff of the XIV Corps, replaced General McClure as commanding general of the Americal. Its fifth and final wartime commander, "Duke" Arnold was, at 43, the youngest division commander in the Pacific. He was a 1924 West Point graduate. Under Arnold, the Americal finally moved out of Bougainville and moved up to the island of Leyte, which had been invaded by our forces in October. While the major portion of the Americal labored in the mud and jungle of Leyte, a reinforced battalion of the 182nd Infantry was ordered to garrison Catbalogan, Samar. The battalion task force was also ordered to assault the Capul area. Other elements of the Americal, meanwhile, made an amphibious invasion of Biri Island.

The Division overran the islands one by one, and then it was suddenly reassembled on Leyte, where it was assigned to General Robert L. Eichelberger's Eighth Army. The remaining elements of the 132nd and 182nd Infantry Regiments, still in action on Leyte, were ordered to return to Division control. Mid-March found the Division on the beaches of Dulag, loading out for combat once again.

The Americal was sent to attack Cebu. Intelligence estimates had grossly underrated the Jap defenses of this island. It turned out

that it was the headquarters of the Japanese general who commanded both the central Philippines and the island of Bohol. Far more than the estimated 13,000 Japanese combat troops were there to greet the Americal, when it surged ashore five miles southwest of Cebu City. The beaches were heavily mined and strewn with obstacles. There was no cover, no concealment. The assault regiments (the 182nd Infantry) had to march in and take it on the chin.

Brave crews of Americal soldiers with mine detectors worked feverishly to clear lanes across the beaches so that the infantry might begin to move inland. Within an hour, the 182nd had pushed through the beachside town of Talisay one-quarter mile inland, while elements of the 132nd advanced fully 800 yards, 90 minutes after landing. Soon General Arnold transferred his command post from the USS *Spencer* to the shore. In less than five days, Cebu City, its airfield and invaluable dock facilities were in the hands of the Americal.

The tough fight was characterized by bitter rear-guard actions, such as that encountered by the 1st Battalion, 182nd Infantry, in the gloomy butte that became known to the Americal as Watt Hill. With three U.S. tanks firing in support, Company A tackled the steep slopes of the hill. As the Americal soldiers reached the summit, the heavily mined hill erupted like a volcano. The force of the explosion was so terrific that the three tanks were flipped onto their backs like helpless turtles.

The Japs fought back with determination, but "Duke" Arnold squelched them with what General Eichelberger later termed a "sparkling and successful maneuver." He sent the 164th Infantry on a wide 27-mile sweep around the Japanese flank. They traveled for three nights, holing up during the day. By now the Americal veterans were such experienced jungle fighters, that they could beat the Jap at his own game. They made the move without being detected and fell upon the enemy's rear at the same time the other two regiments attacked from the front. That was the beginning of the end for the Japanese forces on Cebu Island.

The Americal was soon ready to move on again. Elements of the 164th Infantry slipped out of Cebu in a convoy of landing craft and moved southward to capture Negros and contain the Japs in the high, rugged Cuernos de Negros. After the Negros campaign and a series of island-hopping jobs, the Division once more reassembled on Cebu.

It was around this time that Corporal Jack Flynn's mother wrote to the War Department and asked that the Army give her son a birthday party. She enclosed \$5 with her request. A kindly staff officer in Washington marked the note with a priority, and it was soon winging its way across the Pacific — into the hands of Flynn's commanding officer. So Cannon Company of the 182nd Infantry tossed a birthday party for Corporal Jack



Flynn on Cebu, complete with a birthday cake. When the festivities were over, the C.O. handed Jack his mother's check.

On the serious side the Division turned its attention to Operation Olympic — the forthcoming invasion of Japan. The Americal, in company with the veteran 43rd Infantry Division and 1st Cavalry Division, was scheduled to forge the XI Corps beachhead at Ariaka Wan in southern Kyushu. Then the *Enola Gay* atom-bombed Hiroshima. The sudden excitement of peace, after 39 months of war, was almost too much for the Americal veterans, who learned the great news while in their camp on Cebu. Private First Class John Cook, a Chicagoan in the 164th Infantry, who had got through the war without a scratch, was shaving when someone dashed by shouting, "The Japs have surrendered!" Cook was so unnerved that the razor slipped, and he got a deep gash in his neck. "Migawd!" screamed a buddy in dismay, "Cook's gone and cut his ear from throat to throat!"

The Americal Division took its last look at its last battlefield on the morning of September 1, 1945, when it sailed out of Cebu headed for occupation duty in Japan. They docked at Yokohama, and then the elements of the Division fanned out into the Kanagawa, Yamanashi and Nagano Prefectures. On the whole it was a peaceful occupation, but the Americal was kept on its toes. One day a 132nd Infantry patrol busted up a session at the Yamakita Young Men's School, where a group of students were defiantly going through the paces of close-order drill. Elsewhere, there was trouble when a Japanese Naval Police officer refused to deal with Americans of lesser rank; he was straightened out in a hurry. Then, in a series of surprise raids ordered by General MacArthur, the Americal closed all Japanese banks and financial institutions on September 28. The weirdest adventure of all, however, befell Captain Richard L. Cohen, of Philadelphia, a member of the 3rd Battalion, 164th Infantry. Cohen's outfit was posted as the security force in the Yamanishi Prefecture, an area north and west of Tokyo. One day his C.O., Lieutenant Colonel Howard N. Smalley, sent for him. He made a mark on the map spread out before him. "Seems our people found 102 bars of silver stashed away in a warehouse in Odawara," he said. "Intelligence says that's peanuts compared to what actually was shipped out of Tokyo last spring. Now, if there is a huge silver hoard hidden somewhere — and Intelligence is pretty certain there is — we've got to get our hands on it before it goes underground for keeps!"

Cohen whistled softly. "It should be a job for the cops."

"In this case, *you're* the cops," he was told.

At five o'clock that same evening, Cohen, two lieutenants and a platoon-strength patrol from Company I, hit the road. At ten P.M. they stopped at Kofu, just west of Tokyo, to bivouac for the night. Next morning they

rumbled into Kusakabe and pulled up in front of the police station. Cohen saw the chief, Yoschichiko Oshiba, and explained that the purpose of the patrol was to make a survey of all available warehouse space in the district. In this manner, he and his men were able to inspect every storage place in the city, without arousing suspicion. All day long, motorized details sped from one location to another, duly noting capacity measurements on official-looking documents — and carefully examining each warehouse for some telltale clue to hidden loot. At nightfall, a crestfallen and dog-tired group returned to the City Hall to set up quarters for the night. The first day's work had netted nothing at all.

While chatting with Police Chief Oshiba the following morning, Cohen casually mentioned that he had not seen the well-known Kasugai-Mura Warehouse. The chief appeared to be puzzled by his remark. The GI interpreter turned to Cohen. "He says he has never heard of a Kasugai-Mura Warehouse; that you must be mistaken. He says there is a town called Kasugai close by, though, and that there are several warehouses there that the farmers use for storing the crops. The chief says he would consider it an honor to provide you with a guide to Kasugai."

"Tell the chief I accept his offer," Cohen replied, and he gave the signal for his patrols to prepare to move out.

None of the warehouses at Kasugai contained any suspicious materials, and as the end of the day approached, it looked as if they had come up against another blank wall. Then Cohen got his first break. Late in the day, one of the search party uncovered ten tons of tin in a freight shed near the railroad station. The railroad express manager was not available, so Cohen sent for the assistant manager, a surly character named Oruyama. Oruyama testily told the U.S. captain that he knew only that the tin had been consigned to a farmer named Kashiro Haibara, a prominent man in the village. "Get this straight," Cohen told him. "You aren't to touch so much as an ounce of that metal. I'll be back!"

At eight the next morning, Cohen dispatched Lieutenant Holland with 12 men to continue the probe of Kusakabe and the Higashi-Mura sector. He, himself, led another detail out to the well-kept farm of

Kashiro Haibara.

The Haibara farm could be more accurately described as an estate. It covered several square miles, and a private road off the main highway led up to the main house. The wealthy farmer greeted his visitors courteously. They sparred politely for a few minutes, then Haibara brought out a bottle of wine. When one of the members of the patrol casually admired an exquisite doll Haibara insisted that the American accept it as a gift. He nodded politely when the Americans explained that they wished to look around the grounds and agreed to show the way. Cohen, walking alongside the old man, noted that the estate consisted principally of the main house and two large, barn-like buildings. You could hide an awful lot of silver in there, he thought to himself. But, a thorough search of the buildings uncovered nothing, nor did the mine detectors give a clue to any buried metal. By six in the evening Cohen was ready to give up.

Smiling pleasantly Haibara showed his guests back to the main house. As the patrol prepared to leave, Cohen turned to the farmer, with a casual question. "What are your plans for that shipment of tin?"

"Tin?"

"The shipment at the freight shed," Cohen continued, carefully watching the farmer's eyes.

"Oh, yes," Haibara exclaimed. He smiled again, displaying uneven teeth. His explanation was simple and it seemed quite straightforward. The tin had been consigned to him by the Mitsubishi Warehouse Company in Tokyo, for safekeeping, during the U.S. bomb-raids of mid-April. He understood that the tin was eventually to be used in the manufacture of kitchen utensils. Cohen nodded thoughtfully and asked the farmer whether he had been placed in charge of any other metals. Haibara shook his head forcefully. On that note Cohen took leave of the old man and returned to his base at Kusakabe.

On the following morning Cohen decided that it was time to get the chief of police into the tact. He decided to put his cards on the table. The chief was deferential, but he said he was certain that the Americans had been misinformed. "After all," he protested reasonably, "if shipments of such large value

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had come into this area, surely I would have been notified."

For the first time since their meeting almost two days before, Cohen thought about Oruyama, the belligerent assistant freight manager, and decided to pay him another visit. While Oruyama scowled in annoyance, Cohen, via the interpreter, continued to throw questions at him. Several of the soldiers, meanwhile, rechecked the goods stacked in the freight warehouse. In an innocent-looking corner, behind a flimsy partition, they uncovered 43 tons of tin. Cohen was summoned immediately. "I don't understand the writing too well, Captain," he said, "but I do understand the figures, and here's a funny thing."

In April, 43 tons of medical supplies arrived – all consigned to Oruyama.

"Forty-three tons of medical supplies!" Cohen said incredulously. "Hell! That's more medical supplies than there are in all of Japan. I think we've got these babies now." He gave the order for the men to pile in the trucks as he headed for his command car. "Let's pay that friendly old farmer another visit," he told the driver.

Racing toward the Haibara estate, Cohen rapidly reviewed the events of the day. He was puzzled over the old farmer's cordiality and confidence. It probably meant that the silver had been removed – that he was too late.

When Haibara greeted them this time he seemed ill at ease. "You want to look around again?" he faltered. "I fear that will be quite impossible." He explained that his foreman had left for the day and had accidentally taken all the keys with him. There was cold silence when the interpreter finished relaying his words to the captain.

"Tell him he'd better produce another set of keys," Cohen said menacingly. "We know he's got the silver and we're going to find it if we have to tear this place apart."

The old man listened stonily, then sighed. From an inner fold of his Oriental robes, he produced the keys and handed them over to Cohen.

Once again the search party started scouring the vast estate. Every inch of the barns was investigated – the earthen floors were probed and spaded – to no avail. Now the young infantry officer felt his worst fears had been confirmed. Haibara must have removed the silver. Still if he had, why had he been so jumpy when they arrived?

Cohen's eyes roved over the great estate, and then a wide grin creased his face. Beckoning for the men to follow him, he strode purposefully down the private road toward the dilapidated gatehouse. Old Haibara stumbled along behind him, weakly protesting as they broke down the door. When their eyes became accustomed to the inky blackness of the cramped interior, they saw a

number of canvas and straw-covered mounds. Cohen walked over to one of the mounds and tore aside the wrappings. A gleaming stack of silver bars met his eyes.

Operation Treasure Hunt was in the bag.

Now Farmer Haibara was in a sweat. He was headed for serious trouble and he knew it. He admitted to Cohen that he, and other farmers in the neighborhood, had been entrusted with varying amounts of precious and semi-precious metals. He produced a record that enabled the Americans to recover enormous stores of copper, tin, zinc, lead and antimony.

When Captain Dick Cohen completed his inventory for Colonel Smalley, he found himself in possession of exactly 2,660 ingots of silver – over 100 tons. His haul was valued by the experts at \$1,343,000.00.

Soon after the conclusion of Operation Treasure Hunt, the Americal was alerted for movement to the States. In December, the veteran Pacific division was disbanded at Fort Lawton, Washington. It finished its wartime career as the only U.S. Division without a number, only a name. But it was quite a name.

Courtesy of Artillerymen of the Americal Division, World War II.

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