

December 2009

The ORION GALLIVANTER



1917 - 1919

Dickebush Sector
Mount Kemmel
Vierstraat Ridge
East Poperignhe Line
Hindenburg Line
LaSelle River St. Souplet
Meuse-Argonne St. Mihiel



1940-1945

Makin
Majuro
Eniwetok
Saipan
Okinawa

2001-Present

Enduring Freedom, Afghanistan
Iraqi Freedom
Noble Eagle

Stars of Orion Return to the Shores of Japan

Aibano Training Area, Japan -- Hundreds of US and Japanese Soldiers took to the wood lines here in a simulated combat field training exercise. Moving simultaneously and parallel with one goal in mind – defeat a common enemy.

Soldiers from the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion 69th Infantry Regiment identified enemy fighting positions and collected information on the makeup and strength of the fictional enemy. This was used to assist both the US Army and the Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) soldiers set up hasty defense positions and attack and defeat enemy forces. Ground and mounted soldiers from both forces crossed steep elevations and rivers, concealing their movements as they denied the enemy the capability to conduct counter attacks on friendly forces.

The ultimate goal was to advance the 7th Regiment, JGSDF, to their appointed objective and secure it. Mission Accomplished!



During the field exercise, which took place from October 16-18, Soldiers put into play many of the combat skills and techniques they demonstrated to one another over the past week, while participating in Orient Shield 10, October 10-17, 2009.

“Orient shield is an exercise we run every year with the Japanese in a bilateral environment to really strengthen the relationship between the US Army and JGSDF,” said Major General Francis J. Wiercinski, US Army Japan/I Corps (Forward) Commanding General, Camp Zama, Japan.

“The 1-69th Soldiers have been training side by side with their Japanese counterparts and sharing their knowledge; not only what they’ve learned in combat, but their Soldiers skills as well,” Wiercinski said.

Throughout the week-long exercise designed to promote regimental and battalion level command training opportunity
(Continued on page 5)

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Commander's Message

Greetings!

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself to the members of the Association who have not met me. I have been in the military for over twenty years and in the Association since 2004. I was sworn in as 3rd Vice Commander by past National Commander Michael Leonardo at the 2004 Annual reunion and since that time, I have gotten to know many of the New York members through our Reunion and winter Board meetings. Some of you may remember me from when I served as the acting Secretary, following Roberta's deployment to Iraq in 2007. At that time, the 27th Brigade was itself preparing to deploy to Afghanistan. I greatly enjoy my part in the Association and I relish this chance to help rejuvenate the membership and member services.

To that end, I would like to state some of my goals as the National Commander for 2010. #1 is to get all National Board functions back on track after a very hectic pre- and post-deployment schedule. The past ten years or so have seen the majority of Board members come from the ranks of the 27th Brigade. While it is certainly nice to see an interest taken in the Association by the Brigade members our operational tempo has played havoc with the running of the Association. Ray Swift ended up serving as National Commander for three years because of our deployment! At our reunion in September we had a very productive Board meeting with good attendance. At that meeting we ended with the following stated goals: Expanded effort on the Gallivanter; improve the Quartermaster store; get Life member cards out in a timely manner; and get a website up and running. If we can get all this done this year, we can set the foundation for a smoother running board in the years to come.

I would like to make some comments on the Gallivanter so everyone knows that the Board considers it the flagship of the Association. As the single thing that each member receives four times a year, sometimes it is the only thing that reminds a member that we are still alive and well. Rob Romano has done a great job trying to keep the quality of content up to snuff. We have recently had to deal with some problems in the mailing out of the Gallivanter after press time. We hope to have this addressed by the time of this issue. We are also looking to get greater unit participation for articles and photos. Our new Historian Geoff Milligan will be working on a Historian corner to help refresh some of our memories of the events and actions of the 27th. So, I would ask that if you have anything you would like to see in the Gallivanter, please write to Rob and let him know.

Finally, my #2 goal is to have the 2010 reunion in Buffalo, NY. In doing some research, I have found that there hasn't been an Association function here since the early 1970's. I am trying to "share the wealth" and get the western part of the state involved in the Association. We don't have an active post here in Western New York and I think a Reunion would be a great way to get former members re-involved. I will be presenting my sales pitch to the Board at the Winter Board meeting, so keep your eyes peeled for more news in my column in the next Gallivanter.

Here's to a great holiday season, a great new year, and seeing many of you at the Reunion!

Paul Hujer
National Commander



Editor's Corner



Mailing Addresses:

27th DIV ASSOCIATION **MEMBERS**

- Unit & Personal Remembrances
 - 80 Plus Club to the Editor
 - Historical stories
 - Reunion Notices
 - Mailbag items
 - Taps
- New Membership application
- **Membership Dues—\$15.00**
- Memorial Fund Donations
 - Gallivanter Donations
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(The Post Office does not tell us you have changed address, you must let us know.)

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Fellow Orion Veterans,

It's rather hard to believe, but it will soon be a year since the 27th has returned from our deployment to Afghanistan. I know the year for me has flown by as I've gotten back into the daily routine of life. Of course, as we get settled in, there's the thought that at some point in the future the 27th is expected to deploy again. As we did during the previous "ramp up", the Gallivanter will keep you informed of our progress and give you insight into what we'll expect when we head overseas.

In this issue Geoff Milligan continues his history page and from talks I've had with him, he has an endless supply of memorabilia to share with all of us. Its great to know that someone is as energetic and involved with preserving the Division's history as he is and I'm sure you'll appreciate his efforts in the future.

Speaking of history, this issue also details the 1-69th IN training mission to Japan. Its been 63 years since the Stars Of Orion were on Japanese soil—this time as partners in defense instead of adversaries.

September saw the changing of the Association Officers, most notably Paul Hujer as the new commander. I've known and worked with Paul for many years most recently serving together in the same section during the Afghanistan deployment. He's hard working, enthusiastic and dedicated to the 27th DIV Association and will certainly put every ounce of effort he can into helping to improve and grow the organization. Additionally, another new officer who is a bit of a newcomer to the Association is the new Treasurer, Jared Kausner. He's an energetic young man who symbolizes the new growth that we continue to strive for to keep our organization vibrant and growing.

Lastly, continue to send in your Mailbag items and any stories or pieces of history to help fill up the Gallivanter!

Sincerely,
Your Editor
Robert Romano

Veterans Day Message from the 27th BDE Commander

Through time, from generation to generation men and women have left their homes to become Soldiers.

Though countless millions have done so over the centuries, the act of becoming a Soldier, particularly in time of war, is a bewildering thing to many of our countrymen.

Soldiering is potential sacrifice. In our culture of self gratification and “me-centric” behavior few see Service – especially risky service – as making much sense.

You have – by the act of your Service – set yourself apart from the majority. In a country of nearly 350 million you stand proudly and bravely in an Army – active, Guard, and Reserve – of only 1,067,000 people.

This equates to roughly 1/3rd of 1 % of the American population. 1/3rd of 1%.—*You are a small band.*

Why then does America honor you? I suspect it is because of your long legacy of selfless sacrifice. It must also be because you step forward when they do not.

In time of war America sees, on TV and in the movies, the price our Army quietly and even humbly pays.

America is amazed, proud, saddened, helpless, and even angry because they see that you are doing what they have chosen not to do and paying a price for their freedom.

Yes, you are unique and worth paying homage to. As an Army you are all that stands between America and the hurt many around the world would wish to inflict on our people.

America knows it.

You are worth honoring because you do go to places no one else will go to – no matter how dedicated they are to peace and helping others – and help the helpless.

America knows it.

Unlike Memorial Day, when we pay our respects to our fallen, today, Veteran’s Day, is a day to pay respect to you – the living.



So my dear friends - if no one else today says thank you to you for your months, years, and even decades of service permit me to do so now. Thank you. God bless.

Geoffrey J. Slack
Colonel
27th IBCT
Commanding

(Continued from page 1)

nities, combat readiness and tactical level training, US and JGSDF soldiers exchanged combat skills and techniques.

Demonstrating how they conduct military maneuvers in urban terrain operations, air assault missions, squad movement and reconnaissance techniques. Of particular interest to Japan forces was learning to engage targets while moving in a confined area and reacting quickly to unstable targets.

“The command and control abilities of the 69th Regiment Commander, staff activities and basic action of each soldiers, are very helpful for us,” said Col. Hiroyuki Hata, 7th Infantry Regiment Commander.

“They’ve also learned about Japanese leadership skills and techniques, tactics and procedures... and that’s what this whole thing’s about,” Wiercinski added.

“This training is a way to build up connections between the US and Japan Ground Self-defense Force. It is most important in case we must conduct combined operations under each chain of command,” said Lt. General Mamoru Fujisaki, Commanding General for the 3rd Division, JGSDF, Camp Senzo, Japan. “This field training exercise is remarkable, which has a direct bearing on interoperability.”

For many of these Soldiers it was their first opportunity to train with soldiers from a different culture with totally different weapons systems.

“This has been a great opportunity to assess how they perform their missions and possibly utilize some of their practices,” said Staff Sgt. Johnny Madera, a Squad Leader with Bravo Company, 1-69 Inf. from Queens

Village, NY.

“Their mission performance was executed on point with successful use of their equipment. Everything we saw convinces me I’d fight alongside them any day,” Madera added.



Sgt. Masahiro Jyoko, Co. 5 Rifle Platoon Squad Leader, gained a great deal of information from the combined training opportunity. “The 69th infantry regiment fight effectively and have experience from combat. I am very happy to teach this important skills to my subordinates,” said Jyoko.

“We should train more and we must reflect on

what we have studied from US and also hope this exercise has the honor of good relationship between US and Japan. The friendship and trust built between 1st Bn. 69th Regiment and the 7th Infantry Regiment is forever,” Hata said.



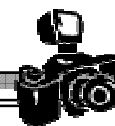
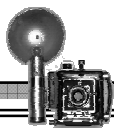
“It’s an honor to have the 69th here. They have a great history, a magnificent combat record and they come here with an attitude of learning and an attitude of teaching and that’s exactly what we need,” Wiercinski said.

“My hat goes off to them for doing such a superb job out here, for extending US and

Japanese relations, and really being great ambassadors for the United States of America,” Wiercinski said.

“This has been an outstanding experience for our Soldiers, not only in the context of our own training, but the opportunity to share our experiences with our Japanese counterparts and learn from them,” said Lt. Col. John Andonie, Commander, 1st Bn. 69th Infantry Regiment, New York Army National Guard.

THE SHUTTERBUG PAGE



NY National Guard Soldiers from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team march in the annual Syracuse Veteran's Parade, Saturday, Nov. 7. Elements from the New York Air National Guard's 174th Fighter Wing also marched, and F-16C fighters conducted a flyover during the parade. The annual parade drew large crowds and local dignitaries in an early observance of Veteran's Day, Nov. 11.



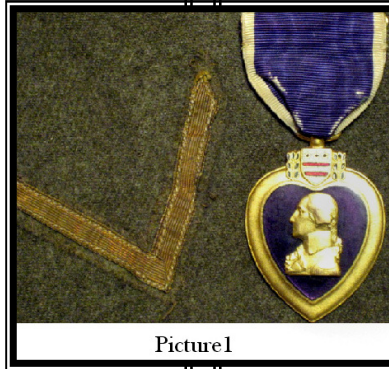
A military forces honor guard stands next to a portrait of New York Army National Guard Sgt. Deon Taylor, killed in Afghanistan while serving as part of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix. His hometown street in the Bronx was renamed as Police Officer Deon Taylor Way on October 29 in honor of his service as an NYPD officer and Citizen Soldier.

- History Corner -

A look at documents, memorabilia and collections that help tell the story of the 27th Division

27th Division Purple Hearts

Although it is difficult to account for exact numbers, the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs (DMNA) states that there were 6,492 reported 27th Infantry Division KIA/WIA's during WWI, and 8,209 KIA/WIA's during WWII. Were all 14,701 of these Soldiers or their next of kin presented with a Purple Heart Medal? It's impossible to say. But thousands were. While for the most part WWII Soldiers were awarded their Purple Heart Medals right away, WWI Soldiers did not- because the medal did not exist during WWI. It wasn't until 1932 that the medal was authorized in its current form. WWI Soldiers had to request a medal from the government, proving eligibility by providing their wound chevron documentation. Once the government was satisfied a Soldier met the criteria for award, a medal was engraved with the Soldier's name and sent to the Soldier. During WWII, so many Purple Heart medals were awarded that it became very difficult to engrave each one. Some Soldiers received engraved medals, some blank. Oftentimes, Soldiers would have the medals engraved upon returning home from theater. A great variety of engraving styles resulted as each private engraver would mark the medal in a somewhat different fashion. While the official engraving by the government only included the Soldier's name, Soldiers would often elect to have additional information engraved on the medal, including rank, service dates, serial number, battles or unit.



Picture 1

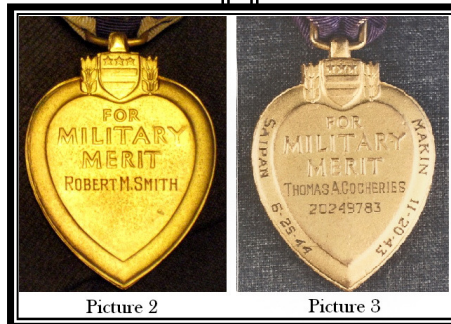
Pictured examples:

Picture 1. We see a WWI wound chevron and a Purple Heart from the uniform of Pvt. John H. Stett, Co. I, 107th Infantry Regiment. Pvt. Stett was injured in the trenches by a German gas attack shortly before Armistice. His Purple Heart medal was not issued to him by the government, but was probably obtained as a replacement in the 1940's. There is no engraving on the reverse. (*Milligan Collection*)

Picture 2. This engraved Purple Heart is typical of a WWII veteran. It belonged to MAJ Robert M. Smith of the 106th Infantry Regiment. The engraving is clear and distinct, and beautifully done. (*27th Division Association Archives*)

Picture 3. This is a beautiful example of a private engraving. Thomas A. Cocheries served in WWII with the 165th Infantry in the Pacific and remembered his fellow "Fighting 69th" Soldiers by having "MAKIN 11-20-43" and "SAIPAN 6-25-44" engraved on his Purple Heart Medal. He was also awarded the Bronze Star Medal and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. (*Private collection- used with permission*)

Few decorations in any service carry the meaning of a Purple Heart. To both fellow service members and civilians who may never have heard of any other military award, the Purple Heart Medal signifies the sacrifice that service members have made for the United States for generations.



Picture 2

Picture 3

I have begun the huge project of cataloging and digitizing the 27th Division Association Archive. The task is daunting, considering the *huge amount of material there is from 1916 to the present day*. But, at the same time, not enough material is there. For example, the Archive has surprising gaps in the Gallivanter files. Photos and newspaper clippings during the Armor years are scarce. There is hardly any material at all from the 1990's 27th Brigade. If there is anyone who would like their 27th files to become part of the Archive to help fill these gaps, please contact me at geoffrey.milligan@us.army.mil or write to me in care of the Gallivanter. All items are welcome- slides, negatives, and copies are just fine!

Geoffrey Milligan, Historian

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