

# *The* **ORION GALLIVANTER**

Volume XLVII, Issue 126

December 2019

## **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*

## **2001- Present**

*Enduring Freedom,*

*Afghanistan*

*Iraqi Freedom*

*Noble Eagle*

## **Operation Orion Strike**

### **Fort Drum, NY July 2019**

In July of this year, the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conducted their Annual Training at Fort Drum, NY. This event had two primary focuses, individual and platoon collective tasks and Battalion and Brigade Staff training. Operation Orion Strike was the name of the exercise run by Operations Group Charlie, out of the Combined Arms Center, Fort Leavenworth, KS. The exercise was designed to test our staff's ability to receive an operations order from a higher HQ, conduct analysis, then produce an order for the subordinate units. Once that was complete, the units fought a digital simulation against the enemy, utilizing our organic and assigned reconnaissance assets to try to determine their Course of Action so we could successfully counter it. While the exercise was very heavy

on automation, all orders included paper copies and acetate overlays as backup against routine network issues or electronic warfare.

Chemical and biological warfare was also taken into consideration and there were several instances when the staff donned their protective masks as a precaution. This included during the Course of Action decision briefing to the Commander, when the Assistant S2, CPT Winkler, received quite the workout trying to brief with his mask on!

Other tasks performed included breaking down the Main Command Post and moving it during the operation, while the fight was still underway.

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# THE ORION GALLIVANTER

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Sr. Past Gary Yaple

Jr. Past Ray Swift, Sr.

## Message from the National Commander

Greetings fellow Veterans,

I pray that this holiday season is a blessing to you and your families. I would like to thank BG (ret) Gary Yaple for his long and faithful service to the 27<sup>th</sup> Division Association for well over 25 years. Gary has served in various roles including Treasurer, Editor, Secretary and for many years Commander. During times when the Division Association roles numbered in the thousands, he served tirelessly the members of the Association. We are thankful for his leadership and service!

Many thanks to the Command team of the 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat Team, Colonel Robert Charlesworth and Command Sergeant Major Anthony McLean for their support of the Association and their attendance at this years reunion dinner.

There has been a 27th Division Association for over ninety years. It was organized by New York National Guardsmen who wore the patch in World War I and it has welcomed the men and women who fought in the Pacific during 1941-45. Since then Soldiers who Served in the 27<sup>th</sup> Division and then the 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade Combat team from the Cold War era and War on Terror have joined.

The 27th Division Association exists for only one reason. That reason is the preservation of the friendships we formed and fostered in New York and all over the world. Soldiers in the 27<sup>th</sup> Brigade have gone through quite a lot together. Whether it is leaving family for a few weeks to respond to a natural disaster as Guardsman or deploying overseas we have a bond with each other that is unique and set apart in the profession of arms. To this end an association is set up to serve the men and women to whom it belongs. It has an annual reunion and gets out a little news sheet every so often. It acts as a clearing house. It performs a thousand and one other little tasks which no other organization can hope to accomplish. Most importantly, the Association is not the private property of any single group. Officers meet enlisted on equal ground and the lowliest private has as much to say as the most exalted two star general. The infantry, the artillery and the quartermasters play equal parts. No group from anywhere should put forward their ideas continually over another group from anywhere else.

We look forward to serving you in this upcoming year as we aim to improve our communication through increase newsletter circulations, website updates and development of a scholarship committee.

Yours in service,

LTC (Ret) Paul Hernandez



Photo credit: SGT Alexander Rector, 27th IBCT PAO NCO

*(Continued from page 1)*

This was done while the CDR and his key staff operated from a Tactical CP to continue the fight.

Later in the fight the CDR, COL Robert Charlesworth, and a small staff operated from a Mobile Command structure during the defense.

The exercise pitted the 27th and a small group of attachments against a “Near-Peer” competitor on challenging terrain. The enemy included whole brigades of armor and artillery and we had to do everything possible to maximize our ability to fight. Coordinating and synchronizing our effects was vital to achieving any measure of success. One of the aims of this exercise is to force staff at Battalion and Brigade to use every resource available and to know how and when to do so, for the best effect.

The Brigade Communications section led the advance party to Fort Drum several times as we prepared to establish our tactical network to support the Commander and staff.

This network consisted of radios utilizing both satellite and line of sight methods, local area networks for computers and Internet Protocol phones, as well as old fashioned messengers when allowable.

Our organic efforts were enhanced by support from Charlie Company 642d Aviation Battalion who were looking to increase their proficiency and provided over 20 Soldiers to the fight. The Air National Guard of NY provided the 274th Air Support Operations Squadron to serve as Joint Tactical Air Controllers and Air Liaison Officers, while the Massachusetts 102d Weather Flight provided a three-man Weather team to support our aviation, fires, and intelligence sections. Lastly, the 401st Civil Affairs Battalion, USAR, from Webster, NY provided a two-man section to augment our BDE Staff.

At the end of the exercise, we all emerged much smarter on our tasks, worked better as a team, and had greater respect for all our enabling forces.

† Major (Ret.) Paul Hujer (27th IBCT Warfighter 2019 Project Officer)

## EDITOR'S CORNER

Greetings,

The Association Board are chipping in with an all-hands effort to revive the ORION Gallivanter and get issues out to the membership on a timely and consistent basis. Those of you who have been members since before 2004 will have heard this before, but the current Board are all either serving or recently retired 27th staff. We have done our best to provide services while managing multiple overseas deployments, out-of-state training missions, in-state training missions, and natural disaster responses. I just recently retired from the Guard in October and now have more time to dedicate to helping out.

This issue will be the first of a newer version of Gallivanter that attempts to bring coverage of the 27th from WWI to present in every issue. Some content may look familiar from the past as we recycle some classic Gallivanter content, but we will also strive to include *never-seen-before* stories and photos.

I am also choosing to include a lot of non routine historical material to help get newer members familiarized with the 27th when we were a Division and served in two World Wars. Part of this is a TAPS roll-up from 2004-present. You can see that we are losing those veterans at a rapid rate. Just ask anyone who has served with the State Honor Guard!

Respectfully,

*Paul E. Hujer*

For the Gallivanter:

- Unit & Personal Remembrances
- 80+ Club
- Historical Stories
- Reunion Notices for Posts
- Mailbag
- Taps
  
- Memorial Fund donations
- Change of Address -
  - Email or standard mail

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# FROM THE TRENCHES (WWI)

[This article was read by 27<sup>th</sup> Division Soldiers in training at Camp Wadsworth, SC. Gas attacks were a new and terrifying threat in trench warfare, and much on the minds of the deploying American troops, as is seen in the very name of the 27<sup>th</sup> Division's newsletter. The Soldiers spent countless hours training to react to gas attacks. ~27th Division Association Historian]

From the Wadsworth Gas Attack and Rio Grande Rattler, Volume 1 No. 3, Dec. 8, 1917

## Don't Let Yourself Be Gassed!

Gas!

What does this word mean to you now? You confuse it with tunnel gas, sewer gas, natural gas, illuminating gas, any kind of gas, in fact, which smells badly. Its use and what you will do to defend yourself against it belongs to the vagueness of "Over There".

The lives of every man may some day depend on his understanding of this word. At its sound he must make certain motions instantaneously, almost automatically. In the trenches, in the dug-out, in the machine gun emplacement, in the listening post, in the mine, in the gun pit wakened from a sound sleep, this word GAS must produce a reflex action similar to the pulling away of your hand from a hot stove.

### Three Ways of Using Gas

Roughly there are three methods of using gas in Europe today. They are cloud gas, shell gas, and projectile gas. Cloud gas resembles a dense yellowish fog which rolls along the ground from the enemy trenches at a speed varying with the wind from three to fifteen miles per hour. Cloud gas is liberated from cylinders placed under the parapets to the heads of which are screwed nozzles which stick out over the top. Gas of the concentration used at the present time will kill at a distance of nine miles behind the lines. It is heavier than air and will descend into the most bomb-proof shelter.

When first seen a cloud gas attack is likely to create a panicky sensation. It rolls forward in a great cloud, dense and impenetrable. The size depends on the dampness of the air. The first thought is that it is pure gas. Pure gas is seldom used, however. The density of the cloud is entirely due to the moisture of the air.

Originally cloud gas attacks were launched to deplete the front line trench so that the enemy could follow in. In the early days before the troops were equipped with gas masks this was possible. Since better protection has been devised, however, surprise has been found to be the one successful element in a gas attack.

### Warnings of Attacks

Originally there were three means of warning against a cloud gas attack. When the gas was let out of the cylinders it made a sharp hissing noise, attacks were made in the day time and the cloud could be seen approaching across No Man's Land from the enemy trenches; also a faint smell of chlorine permeated the air slightly in advance of the main cloud. As the element of surprise became more and more important, however, machine guns were opened up by the side of each cylinder as soon as the valve was turned on, the attacks were launched under the cover of darkness so that the cloud could no longer be seen approaching. The third indicator of gas, the smell of chlorine, was never dependable, as it did not give the men in the dug-outs time to adjust their masks and helmets before the cloud was upon them.

### Four Valuable Seconds

Only by the most vigilant watchfulness, therefore, can the cloud gas attack be seen and prepared for. At least three or four seconds' warning are necessary. Given this much time a man can take a full breath and hold it until his mask is adjusted. He is then safe providing, of course, that his gas apparatus is in working order. The masks are inspected once a day. In regions where there is a likelihood of gas attack the masks are inspected twice a day. The importance of getting the masks adjusted not only with speed but with accuracy is great. One breath of the gas now used on the front will cause death.

Shell gas is used against isolated positions such as machine gun emplacements, gun pits, batteries, and such positions where it is not desired to gas the entire front line.

Projectile gas is only used at the present time by the British. It is a large bomb filled with gas that is fired into the German trenches.

### History of Gas Warfare

Gas was first launched by the Germans April 22, 1915. The attack came as a surprise. It hit the allies without any means of protection. Those who did not fall back on this first attack were killed by the gas. Many of those who did fall back were permanently disabled by the fumes.

Four days later a second gas attack was discharged at the French. This was the only time gas has been used to stop an attack. Two French battalions were out of their trenches on their way across No Man's Land. The Germans already had a supply of gas in their trench. The wind was favorable.

They opened their cylinders on the advancing French lines, forcing them to fall back.

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On the following day another gas attack was launched by the Germans. It became evident that they had adopted gas as a weapon of offensive. Chemists were hurried from London to the front line trenches, On the occasion of the next attack, they proved the gas to be chlorine.

### **Need of a Gas Mask**

Need for a protective device, such as a mechanical air filter, was immediately felt. At first triangular strips of cotton or flannel from shirts were used. These were moistened with water and tied around over the nose and mouth. Later, men were found who had been hit by bits of shrapnel, causing them to fall forward on their faces. Because of the filtration of the air through the damp ground, many of these men recovered from the gasing. This brought into being another makeshift filter, a beer bottle, with the bottom knocked out, filled with moist earth. The neck of the bottle was held in the mouth.

At the end of April, the first respirator pad appeared. This was made of several strips of flannel, sewed together and dipped in a chemical solution. It was worn over the nose and mouth, and held in place by a strap that passed over the head. The great objection to this first pad was that it left an opening between the nose and mouth for the entrance of gas. It was supplanted by the black veil respirator. This was merely a black veil with a woolen pad in the center, soaked in chemicals. Black veil respirators were used in an attack in the spring of 1916. It was found that although the respirators were chemically good, many men were gassed because they did not have their pads properly adjusted. Two basic principles were evolved from the attack:

Masks must be easily adjusted.

Men must be thoroughly trained in putting them on.

During this attack a number of Germans were seen walking about with their heads covered in cloth bags. This led to the helmet, which for a long time was used in various forms as a protection against gas.

The first helmets were chemically treated cloth bags. The air was drawn into the lungs through the fabric. Vision was secured through a mica strip in front. The skirts of the helmet were tucked into the collar.

The mica cracked. There was no outlet for impure air, A new helmet was devised, containing glass eye-pieces and a rubber outlet valve. With a few minor changes this helmet remained standard until the Germans began sending over tear shells in the first half of 1916. Tear shells (lachrymatory gas) affect the eyes, inflaming the lids and causing temporary blindness. To overcome this the eye-pieces of the helmet were adjusted to fit closely over the eyes.

### **New Gas Defense Principles**

During December, 1915 the Germans used a new gas which added three new principles to the science of gas defense:

Men must not remove helmets until it is absolutely sure that trenches, mines, and dugouts are absolutely free from gas.

Dugouts and mines must be cleared artificially.

Men must be impressed with the idea that they must exercise as little as possible while wearing gas helmets. It was found that when a man became winded he drew in air faster than it could be filtered.

In the spring of 1916, the first box respirator was issued. The helmet respirator, formerly used, filtered the air by drawing it through the chemically-treated material of the helmet. The box respirator draws the poisoned air through a metal box carried on the chest. Here the air is filtered by chemicals and passes on to the mouth through a rubber tubing with a mouthpiece on the end, which is fastened to the mask. The mask is added as a further protection against gas entering the nose and to protect the eyes from lachrymatory shells. These first box respirators, known as the Tower Box Respirator, were too cumbersome to be worn by the infantry. They were issued to the artillery, machine gunners, staff officers, and wherever mobility was not needed to any great extent, but where protection was necessary, which could be worn for hours on end.

### **Box Respirator Invented**

The old cloth helmet had proved to be very uncomfortable. The action of the gas on its neutralizing chemicals was found to blister the skin and hurt the eyes. Later in the spring, a smaller box respirator, designed on the same principle, was issued to some of the infantry. By the fall of 1916 all troops were wearing the S.B.R. With a few modifications this is the one in general use to-day. The S.B.R.'s to be issued to the men of the 27<sup>th</sup> Division will probably be of this type.

In spite of its deadliness, gas is the only weapon against which there is absolute protection.

If four things are borne in mind, the danger from gas attack is brought down to the irreducible minimum. Even in the best trained battalions the irreducible minimum has been found to be 1 percent. There is always one fool in every hundred men:

First, take care of your mask. See that it is adjusted properly and ready to be put on at all times.

Second, have your gas mask always with you.

Third, become so proficient in the adjustment of the mask that putting it on is a mechanical action, like buttoning a coat or putting on your sox.

Fourth, keep your gas mask clean.

Each man will be thoroughly drilled in the adjustment of the respirator. He must be able to put it on in six seconds.

It is up to every man in the 27<sup>th</sup> Division to master thoroughly the few simple details of gas defense. Master them now. Gas will soon be a real, tangible fact in our everyday lives. If you are ready for it, it can't hurt you. Get ready for it.

## FROM THE WAR ON TERROR (OVERSEAS OPERATIONS, POST 9/11)

### YAVORIV COMBAT TRAINING CENTER , UKRAINE

Overseas deployments for Soldiers of the New York National Guard have usually meant Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kuwait.

But deployment for 220 New York Army National Guard Soldiers from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team meant a trip to Europe.

Since November 2017, Soldiers from the Syracuse-based 27th brigade have been serving in Ukraine to help train and mentor Ukrainian Army units. The New York Soldiers are part of the Joint Multinational Training Group – Ukraine, known as JMTG-U, serving as cadre and advisors at the Yavoriv Training Center helping Ukrainian Army units meet the goal of achieving NATO compatibility.

“I started ROTC in 2008 and I commissioned in 2012,” said 1st Lt. Chasen Smith, a plans officer in the JMTG-U. “When someone said where do you think you’re going to deploy, my first thought was Iraq or Afghanistan, maybe later on Syria. I never expected to be pulled onto a mission like this.”

Smith currently serves alongside other soldiers from Canada, Denmark, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, the United States, and the United Kingdom as part of the multinational group.

Following a month at Fort Bliss, Texas, conducting pre-deployment training, the unit -consisting predominately of Soldiers from the Niagara Falls -based 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry- arrived in Ukraine to relieve the departing 200 members of the Oklahoma Army National Guard's 45th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

For two weeks, the Oklahoma Guard Soldiers

mentored the New Yorkers before handing over command of the mission at the Combined Arms Training Center on November 22, 2017.

Now, after eight months working alongside the Ukrainian Army, the progress made by the training group is evident, Smith said.

“When we first arrived here the training center (staff) was struggling to conduct their planning any more than two to three days out,” Smith said.

“Through our efforts with them, we have moved them to the point where they are now planning two to three weeks out. The third week is all theoretical, the second week is confirming and checking plans, and, by week one, the majority of the questions have been answered and plans are for the most part locked in,” Smith explained.

“They have also made vast improvements in the way they present the training,” Smith added.

“We’re dealing with a partner nation and trying to teach them to operate the way we do.”

The U.S. Soldiers act as mentors and instructors to the Ukrainian training center personnel when needed.

Originally, the U.S. and allied nations conducted direct training for Ukrainian Army battalions that rotated through the center. Now, three years later, the bulk of the training is taught by Ukrainian instructors now stationed at the combat training center.

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American Soldiers continue to act as mentors, providing guidance and clarification to both the rotational units training at Yavoriv and the Ukrainian instructors facilitating the exercises.

“During the rotation we will go out to the field, supervise the action, and make on the spot corrections as needed,” said Staff Sgt. Riener Mongerson, a Charlie Company mentor.

As a mentor, Mongerson works directly alongside Ukrainian soldiers stationed at the training center.

“We have been trying to get away from Americans directly teaching classes and move toward assisting them teach their own classes,” he said.

Though the bulk of the training has been handed over to Ukrainian personnel, the Americans and multinational partners here are ready to share their expertise and experience with their Ukrainian counterparts, Mongerson said.

Ukrainian partners, especially first line junior leaders, are willing and eager to learn, Mongerson said.

“We want to change the culture and empower junior leaders and NCOs to take the initiative,” he said.

“When I'm giving a class, it will usually be for most of their non-commissioned officers and a

few of their lieutenants,” Mongerson said. “I want to be able to instruct their non-commissioned officers so that they can then turn around and teach their soldiers.”

While working alongside a partner nation and trying to overcome both language and cultural barriers, the need for creating strong relationships is paramount, he said.

“One of the things we were told before coming over here is that Ukrainians don't take criticism well,” Smith said.



“While that is true to an extent, the lower level leadership is very receptive to criticism, especially once you establish a rapport. Don't underestimate the relationships you make between yourself and your counterparts. This job is all about building relationships,” he added.

“We're mostly there to supervise and give guidance when needed,” said Staff Sgt. Jamah Figaro, a Bravo Company training NCO.

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Each time a Ukrainian battalion completes a training rotation, the quality of the exercise improves as the Ukrainian staff and their U.S. mentors find ways to improve the training experience, Figaro said.

“You see a lot of professionalism out in the training area, and we strive to get things perfect.” Figaro said.

“At first they might say it’s because of our equipment, but we show them how resourceful we can be and they realize it’s more about basic leadership skills, and leading by example.



Once they see that, they realize why the United States Army is the most powerful army in the world,” he added.

Along with providing training to the personnel staffing the combined training center, the U.S. Soldiers here say they are also working diligently to improve both the facility’s infrastructure and training aides.

One valuable resource is MILES gear. MILES, short for Multiple Integrated Laser Engagement System similar to a laser-tag system that allows soldiers to conduct simulated battles as they exchange shot-for-shot.

The gear consists of a laser module and harness. The laser is mounted on a soldier's rifle, and the harness, which is covered in receivers, is worn by the Soldier.

When the soldier fires a blank round, it triggers the laser. If the laser strikes a receiver mounted on another Soldier's vest, a hit is recorded.

In addition to individual MILES gear, there are vehicle-based systems that can be mounted on

tanks, trucks, or armored personnel carriers.

Since the Ukrainian training center began using MILES gear as a training aide, the

Ukrainian training center staff has surprised their U.S. counterparts with their skills and resourcefulness, said Staff Sgt. Michael Powell, the joint training group simulated munitions – “simunitions”—NCO.

“It used to be that if a piece of MILES equipment went down, that soldier was out of the fight for the rest of day. Now they are able to fix it out in the field and get that soldier back into the fight,” he observed.

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"I've watch them tear a whole miles unit apart and repair it with locally purchased parts." Powell said. "They will go to a hardware store and buy a bunch of doorbells, tear them apart, and use them to fix MILES components."

"The end state is for us to be able to outfit an entire Ukrainian brigade with MILES gear," he said.

Though MILES is a useful training aid, issuing the gear to the individual soldier is often a lengthy process. Fortunately improvements have been made that creates less work for both the MILES section staff and the rotational unit, Powell said.



"They used to have each soldier stand in line and sign for their MILES gear," Powell said. "It took hours to do. Now the commander comes to sign for the equipment and has his subordinates distribute it. Having the commander come and sign for the equipment is allowing the unit to save two to three hours of time where they can train with the gear instead of standing in line."

Though the mission is to train the Ukrainians, the U.S. Soldiers stationed at the training center are learning from the Ukrainians as well, the

New York Guardsmen said.

"One of the biggest things we have learned from the Ukrainians is how to make do with what you have," Smith said. "These days we are so dependent on optics. Thermal and night vision. The Ukrainians don't have any of that, but they still conduct night operations."

"One of the things they use to overcome that deficiency is through the use of vehicle mounted spotlights," Smith said. "Once they get an idea of where somebody is, they hit that spotlight, engage the target, then turn the spotlight off."

As the Yavoriv training center continues to evolve and change, one thing remains constant. The en-

thusiasm of the U.S. and Ukrainian soldiers stationed there, New York Soldiers said.

Now nearing the completion of their rotation, the New York Soldiers are slated to be relieved by the Tennessee National Guard's 278th Armored Cavalry Regiment, who are scheduled to take over command of JMTG-U later this summer.

**Story by Sgt. Alexander Rector, 27th IBCT  
Public Affairs NCO**



## FROM THE TRAINING AREA (CURRENT NEWS)

### 27th Infantry Brigade Guard Soldiers compete for Best Warrior title

Syracuse, NY – After three days of intense challenges, two Army National Guard Soldiers from New York City won the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team’s Best Warrior Competition.

Spc. Troy Perez, an infantryman assigned to Alpha Company, 1-69th and Staff Sgt. Matthew Ortiz, an infantryman assigned to Headquarters Company 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment won the titles of Soldier and NCO of the year, respectively.

Ortiz and Perez were two of the many Soldiers sent from units across New York State to compete at the Brigade level.

For three days, they were tested on their proficiency with weapons, ability to complete grueling physical challenges, skills in land navigation, and knowledge of military regulations.

Preparing for the competition took months.

“You have to be mentally and physically ready,” said Perez. “You’ve got to put the work in. There’s a lot of running and there’s a lot of memorization.”

For Perez, a member of the New York City Fire Department, competition is part of his personal drive.

“I feel blessed,” said Perez. “I know a lot of people that are in the military and don’t know what they want to do in life, but I wake up every morning feeling blessed for every day.”

New to this year’s competition was a change of location.

“We have always held it at Fort Drum and this year I wanted to change it up and try a different venue,” said Sgt. Maj. Richard Richardson, the 27th IBCT operations noncommissioned officer in charge.

The majority of the tests were held at or near the Brigade’s Syracuse headquarters, with a land navigation course at Green Lakes State Park in Fayetteville, and only the marksmanship portion of the competition at Fort Drum.

This was the first year Richardson took over responsibility for organizing the event. It took nearly

five months to plan, and he’s already got his sights set on 2020.

“Next year, I plan to make it a little bit harder,” he said.

In the meantime, Ortiz and Perez are preparing to compete at the state

level, and they’re not alone. In a change from prior years, New York Army National Guard leadership have asked for two NCOs and two Soldiers from the brigade to compete. Joining the winners will be Soldier runner-up Pv2. Alejandro Sanchez, an infantryman assigned to Charlie Company, 1-69th, and NCO runner-up Cpl. Paul Philbeck, an infantryman assigned to Charlie Company, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment.

Ortiz, Perez, Philbeck, and Sanchez will compete at the New York Army National Guard Best Warrior Competition in the spring of 2020 for a shot at advancing to the regional and national Best Warrior Competitions. It’s a chance to follow in the footsteps of their fellow 27th Brigade Soldiers who placed third and runner-up in the 2019 Army National Guard national Best Warrior Competition for the Soldier and NCO categories, respectively.

**Story by Sgt. Alexander Rector, 27th IBCT Public Affairs NCO**



# **REUNION REVIEWS**

## **REUNION 2018**

### **Reunion marks World War I Centennial and 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Afghanistan mission**

**NYS MILITARY MUSEUM, SARATOGA SPRINGS** – A loyal cadre of friends gathered in Saratoga Springs on the morning of Saturday, October 20, 2018 to renew friendships and look as far back as a century for a better understanding of the history of the team they served in during war and peace.

The 27<sup>th</sup> Division Association held its 2018 Reunion at the NYS Military Museum in the morning and afternoon, and that evening gathered at the Desmond Hotel in Colonie for a banquet. Participants pledged to help strengthen current membership through greater communication and connection with those who currently serve in descendent units. While the veterans were meeting, others were on duty during scheduled drills at various armories around the state.

The Association was formed by National Guard members of the New York Division following WWI. Today, the legacy of the New York Division is actively maintained by the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the NY Army National Guard. The modern command is a vibrant, effective and essential component of the military forces of the State of NY.

The reunion marked the centennial of the 27th during the Great War and the 10th anniversary of the 27th Infantry Brigade's deployment to Afghanistan in 2008. The Association is the dedicated veterans' organization affiliated with the serving unit, which numbers almost 3,500 troops across New York.

Following a solemn memorial ceremony at the Flag Pole in front of the New York State Military Museum, members of the association and executive board then gathered inside for a presentation on the origins of the New York Division and its World War I role.

The memorial ceremony was led by BG Gary Yaple, association national commander, who also served as the deputy commander of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII in Afghanistan. General Yaple described the service and combat losses of the 27<sup>th</sup> in both World Wars and in 2008 in Afghanistan. A wreath was laid at the base of the



pole.

Later, museum director Courtney Burns delivered a 20-minute oral and slide presentation about the creation of 16 National Guard divisions from the militia units of various states, among them the 27<sup>th</sup> from NY. A series of legislation enacted early in the new century brought the National Guard under greater control of the War Department, he said. The role of the National Guard and its relationship to the U.S. Army was drastically changed. Guard units were no longer just a state militia but had become an auxiliary force to help respond to international crises, said Burns.

World War I led directly to the creation of the 27<sup>th</sup> Division, one of only six single state divisions. The NY division became famous for its role in breaking the Hindenburg Line which ultimately led to the end of the war.

Following a membership meeting during which new association officers were elected, an open discussion about the 2008 mission in Afghanistan took place. Several Task Force Phoenix veterans shared personal memories and stories of their experiences. There were slide show presentations and a display of posters and video clips showing the pre-deployment training, movement to theater and conduct of the 27<sup>th</sup>'s mission to train and mentor Afghan forces and provide humanitarian support to the people.

During the evening banquet, the numbers of participants grew significantly with current Guard members who had been drilling during the day. Major General Raymond Shields, recently promoted to Adjutant General of NY, led award presentations. The keynote address was delivered by Colonel Christopher Cronin, then commander of the 27<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the new association officers were sworn in.

Additionally, two officers were inducted into the Order of Saint Maurice, given by the National Infantry Association. LTC's Paul Hernandez and Eric Vihinen were presented the Awards by COL John Andonie, a former CDR of the 1-69 Infantry Battalion, who was able to share that he had been informed by National Guard Bureau that he would soon be promoted to Brigadier General.

Ω



## **1918-2018 (WWI) , 2008-2018 (CJTF-PHOENIX) ANNIVERSARY BADGES/COINS**

2018 Reunion Badge/Coin set: we have some badge/coin sets remaining- the badge is a very special item in the traditions of the 27th Association and you'll want to get one before they are gone! [Available here on eBay.](#)



## REUNION 2019

This year's event was held at the Crowne Plaza hotel in downtown Syracuse. Key events that tied into it were the 27th Brigade's Best Warrior Competition and the Senior Enlisted Leader Conference. A General meeting was held at the Thompson Road Armory and was attended by National Commander Paul Hernandez, Past National Commander Gary Yaple, Sgt.-at-Arms Vince Memole, and Past National Commander Paul Hujer. A number of topics were covered relating to reviving the Gallivanter, refreshing the website, and taking advantage of the Not-for-Profit status once approved.

One huge advantage that comes to mind about this year's event is that due to the Senior Enlisted Conference, the Association had exposure with all the Command and Operations Sergeant's Major, as well as many of the Company First Sergeants. It is this kind of exposure that is key to our continued existence. When they see that the Association is the institutional memory of the Brigade, as well as its "attic" as far as historical items goes, they can truly see the benefits we provide to their Soldiers (past and present).

The Dinner was held on the top floor dining room of the hotel which looked out over downtown Syracuse. As the hotel is circular in shape, it proved to be a very scenic venue.



Photo by Paul Hernandez

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Awards were presented by the Brigade Commander, COL Robert Charlesworth and CSM Anthony McClean to all the Best Warrior Participants, assisted by National CDR Paul Hernandez. Since this was the Brigade level competition each participant was already their Battalion's best NCO or junior enlisted Soldier.

COL Charlesworth then addressed the event, followed by the evening's Guest of Honor Brigadier General Joseph Biehler. BG Biehler had previously commanded the 2-108th Infantry Battalion and the 27th Brigade. Currently he is serving as the Deputy Commanding General (Maneuver) for the 42d Infantry Division.

Historical displays were provided by the Association Historian, Geoff Milligan and the State Military Museum. A hospitality room was provided, but most of the attendees for dinner had military duties to perform early the next morning. Therefore, it was an early night for all.



Photo by Paul Hernandez



## **Suggested Reading and /or Viewing**

### ***Borrowed Soldiers, Americans under British Command 1918. Mitch Yockelson***

The combined British Expeditionary Force and American II Corps successfully pierced the Hindenburg Line during the Hundred Days Campaign of World War I, an offensive that hastened the war's end. Yet despite the importance of this effort, the training and operation of II Corps has received scant attention from historians.

Mitchell A. Yockelson delivers a comprehensive study of the first time American and British soldiers fought together as a coalition force—more than twenty years before D-Day.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jodJqgYb3ec>

### ***27th Division in WWII. Edmund G. Love***

### ***The Fighting 69th, From Ground Zero to Baghdad. Sean Michael Flynn***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yVtsRF33paI>

### ***The Story of the 27th Division. Major General John F. O’Ryan***

[https://www.google.com/books/edition/The\\_Story\\_of\\_the\\_27th\\_Division/D8kIAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1](https://www.google.com/books/edition/The_Story_of_the_27th_Division/D8kIAQAAMAAJ?hl=en&gbpv=1)

### ***A Short history and illustrated roster of the 108th Infantry, United States Army***

[https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/wwi/infantry/108thInf/Short\\_History\\_Illustrated\\_Roster\\_108th\\_1917.pdf](https://dmna.ny.gov/historic/reghist/wwi/infantry/108thInf/Short_History_Illustrated_Roster_108th_1917.pdf)

# REUNION NOTICE

What: Annual Reunion

Who: The National Association membership & Guests

When: October, 2020

Where: Rochester, New York area

Why: Annual General Meeting, Blinger, Awards, Election/  
Progression of Officers, Guest of Honor, and most importantly  
camaraderie!

More details to follow after the Winter Board Meeting in  
January/February.

## Events:

Friday

5:00 pm Registration

7:00 pm Blinger (Icebreaker with Food and drink)

9:00 - 11:00 pm Hospitality room open

Saturday

11:30 am Annual General Meeting, Election of new officers

4:30 pm Hospitality room opens

6:00 pm Cash bar at banquet room

7:00 pm Dinner, followed by Guest Speaker and Presentations

9:00 - 12:00 pm Hospitality Room re-opens

# TAPS 2004-2018

COL Martin Nolan—2004	SSGT James L Boyle—2005
PFC Nathan Brown (2-108 IN)—2004 ☉	CPL Ralph Britton Sr. (E/106 IN) -2005
George Kedeburg—2004	Rocco J. Mangino (D/105 IN) - 2005
LTC Leigh M. Trowbridge (104 FA)— 2004	COL Robert R. French (C/104 FA) - 2005
TSGT Lester Klein—2004	Frank Freiser (C/104 FA) - 2005
SGT Clifford D. Hayden (27th SIG CO) —2004	Milan Planavasky (H/106 IN) - 2005
CPL Nate Brodheim (D/102 QM)—2004	LT John Donnelly (C/104 FA) - 2005
Albert R. Ciampi—2004	Pasquale Mercadante—2005
Raymond Litchfield (G/105 IN)—2004	Charles A. Pfiesser (G/106 IN) - 2006
William H. Isaac Jr. (105 IN)—2004	Arthur G. Hansen (G/105 IN) - 2006
SSG Herman M. Myatt (HQ 3-105 IN) - 2004	1SG Russell J. Delfosse (H/108 IN) - 2006
Jack Falkenstein (G/105 IN) - 2004	MAJ Leo A. Sharp Sr.—2006
Roy A. Kaps—2004	LeRoy Poyfair (M/105 IN)
Hoy M. Haught (165 IN) - 2004	William E. Siegrist—2006
SGT Michael A. Uvanni (HHC 2-108 IN) - 2004 ☉	MSG Devere W. McRorie (104 FA) - 2007
SPC Segun F. Akintade (A/2-108 IN) - 2004 ☉	Charles Hollis (E/106 IN) -2007
Leo Romsiewicz (G/105 IN) - 2005	Joseph Rizzo—2007
PSG Martin Emmer (H/106 IN) - 2005	SGT Marino S. Papalas (105 IN) - 2007
Robert E. Miller—2005	PNC George Rogers—2007
Marvin Guill (165 IN) - 2005	John W. Federici (G/106 IN) - 2007
SGT Lawrence W. Castler (105 IN) - 2005	Harold P. Routt—2007
	Hoyle W. Greene Sr. (HHC 3-105 IN)— 2007

*(Continued on page 20)*

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Frank R. Pusatere—2007	Joseph A. Nardo (C/104 FA) - 2008
LTC Charles H. Hallden (3-106 IN) - 2007	Charles D. Rehm—2008
Allen Roberts (175 IN) - 2007	MAJ & PNC Robert E. Fox Jr. (D/105 FA) - 2010
LTC James Barton (108 IN & 175 AR) - 2007	LTC & PNC Joseph T. Nader - 2010
Ralph Dernberger (HHC Special Troops) -2007	SGM Charles M. LoBalbo—2010
PNC Edward A. Jodlowski—2007	James H. Famiano—2010
BG Richard S. Fidurski—2007	SPC Andrew Wilson—2010 ±
CPT Jon E. Pfaff (108 IN & 175 AR) - 2007	John P. Earley (106 IN) —2011
MG Howard G. Garrison (27 & 42 ID) - 2007	John J. Collins—2011
Matthew P. Garbett (H/106 IN) - 2008	Robert Stefferson (B/1-106 IN) - 2011
1SG & PNC Nicholas J. Cavallaro (106 IN) - 2008	Peter A. Sawicki (B/104 FA) - 2011
SSG Willard Van Wie (A/106 IN) - 2008	Vincent E. Busone (A/105 IN) - 2011
CPT Jack B. Howey—2008	John Hayes—2011
	Robert Alexander (HHC BDE & 1-108 IN) - 2011
	Constantine Varvisotis (A/175 IN) - 2011
	PNC Stanley Gardner (H/ 106 IN) - 2011
	Roger H. Schulof (B/ 165 IN) - 2012
	Paul C. Strike - 2011

± - Died of Non Combat Wounds

⊙—Died in Combat

PNC—Past National Commander of the 27th Infantry Division Association



# HISTORY CORNER

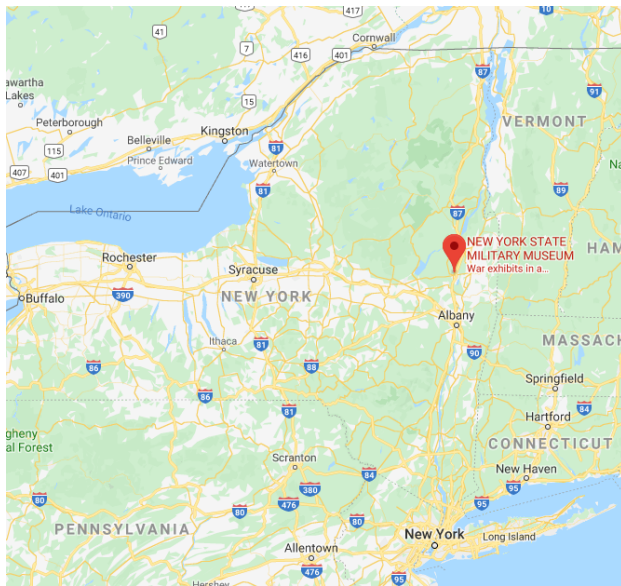
## New York State Military Museum in Saratoga Springs Feature exhibit

Our 27th Division in World War II exhibit is now open for public viewing. And, it's fantastic! Plan on a visit to the museum to see the entire exhibit. Worth a special trip to check it out.

The New York State Military Museum is proud to announce an unveiling of a new exhibit later this month at the museum located on 61 Lake Avenue.

"From the Empire State to the Pacific Theater: The 27th Division before Combat, 1940-43".

Through the use of artifacts, photographs, and oral histories the temporary exhibit will discuss the New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Division's three plus years of training for war from basic training at Fort McClellan to Coastal Defense duties in California and training for amphibious landings and jungle warfare in Hawaii.



**Address:** 61 Lake Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

**Hours:** **Friday** 10AM–4PM  
Saturday 10AM–4PM  
Sunday Closed  
Monday Closed  
Tuesday 10AM–4PM  
Wednesday 10AM–4PM  
Thursday 10AM–4PM  
(Thanksgiving) Hours might differ

[Suggest an edit](#)

**Phone:** (518) 581-5100

The Association maintains a small collection of our own historical items. In addition the Historian has a large collection of material he has personally acquired. While HQ Department of the Army maintains several museums and collections, much of the personal memorabilia from the Soldiers of the 27th Infantry Division and it's descendant units are lost every year. Photos, letters, scrapbooks, etc. are lost when people move or downsize their houses, etc. Consider donating items to the 27th Division Association so that their story will live on for future generations. See the Historian for further details.

Geoffrey Milligan, Historian—[Geoffrey.milligan@gmail.com](mailto:Geoffrey.milligan@gmail.com)

# CALLING FOR SUBMISSIONS!

If you have a story or photo(s) that you want to submit to the Gallivanter here are our publication guidelines.

1. Must relate to the 27th Infantry or Armored Brigade/Division, or the 27th Division Association.
2. We reserve the right to edit for clarity, typographical errors, and length. When time permits we will send you an advance copy of what your material will look like.
3. Items may not appear in the very next Gallivanter published after you submitted. We will try to notify you in advance of when it will be published!
4. Lastly, all content should be something that serves to inform our readership about the training, combat service, and dedication of our Soldiers.
5. Send to [27thDivisionAssociation@gmail.com](mailto:27thDivisionAssociation@gmail.com). Subject line should read "For Gallivanter". Thank you.



## 27<sup>th</sup> Division Association



### New Membership/ Membership Renewal Application (\$15)

Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Last) (First) (MI)

Rank /Title \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse's Name \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

(House Number and Street) (City) (Zone) (State) (Zip)

Current Phone # \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

Unit Served \_\_\_\_\_ Dates: From \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_