

The **ORION GALLIVANTER**

Volume XLVIII, Issue 130

December 2020

1917 - 1919

Dickebush Sector
Mount Kemmel
Vierstraat Ridge
East Poperinghe 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

BETWEEN THE WARS: THE NEW YORK DIVISION POST-BORDER STATE SERVICE, FEBRUARY – JULY 1917

The Road to War

The year 1916 was a catastrophe for Germany. The Battle of Verdun was fought between February 21 and December 20, 1916 and conceived with the intent of ‘bleeding France to death.’ Verdun succeeded in killing 143,000 German soldiers, the sacking of the campaign’s chief architect, General Erich von Falkenhayn, and no perceivable material or strategic gain. General Sir Douglas Haig’s Somme Offensive launched on July 1 proved equally as bloody and indecisive. When the battle officially ended on November 13, the British and French had suffered a com-

bined 700,000 casualties and the German’s 237,000 casualties in addition to their losses on other fronts. At sea, the British naval blockade was taking devastating effect on Germany’s economy, its civilian population, and threatened her very means to sustain the war effort. The naval engagement which became known as the Battle of Jutland was fought between May 31 and June 1. It was an attempt by the German High Seas Fleet to end the British stranglehold on the North Sea.

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MESSAGE FROM THE NATIONAL COMMANDER

Merry Christmas fellow
27th Veterans.

2020 has truly been a year
of the nuclear family. I look
forward to meeting you next
year, God willing, for our
annual reunion in October
of 2021.

May God bless you and
keep you safe.

Yours in service,

LTC (Ret) Paul Hernandez

EDITOR'S CORNER

For the Gallivanter:

Greetings,

It is my sincere hope that you and your families are doing well in this very bizarre year.

This edition sees two articles by past members of the 27th and epitomizes my desire to see more Orion Soldier's writings. Later on in the Gallivanter I have a special appeal to you all to put pen to paper or fingers to keyboards and capture your stories. Brian Murphy's article discusses the transition period from a volunteer militia serving along the US-Mexican border, then returning to NY and protecting vital infrastructure. Very reminiscent of Operation's Noble Eagle and Noble Eagle II after 9/11.

Bob Dial's article discusses that period in time when the 27th wore the 10th ID (MTN) Soldier Sleeve Insignia and served as a "Roundout" Brigade for an active duty unit.

I feel that both of these articles may have information new to many readers, while bringing back some fond memories to others (probably not the WWI article though...). The common theme of both, now that I think of it is, "What was old, is new again."

Respectfully,

Paul E. Hujer

- Unit & Personal Remembrances
- 80 + Club
- Historical Stories
- Reunion Notices for Posts
- Mailbag
- Taps

- Memorial Fund donations
- Change of Address

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Although Germany lost fewer ships and lives, Britannia continued to rule the waves and the Kaiser's surface fleet remained impotent for the remainder of the war.

The only bright spot was on the eastern front where the incompetently led and exhausted Russian Army was slowly disintegrating into mutiny and revolution.

In the United States, 1916 was a presidential election year. The American people were growing increasingly alarmed by the war news coming from Europe. A deep sense of vulnerability from foreign threats began to settle across the nation.

There were no strong sentiments on the part of the American people, or the political leaders in either of the two major parties, to enter into the internecine blood-letting across the Atlantic. The election platforms of both parties placed nearly equal emphasis on military and naval preparedness: however; the Democrats swayed greater on the side of neutrality while the Republicans leaned in the direction of protecting the rights of U.S. citizens abroad or on the seas.

The war scare with Mexico exposed the U.S. Army's inability to cope at the operational level against a relatively weak militia force without having to call for a mass mobilization of the National Guard. The border crisis also exposed the inefficiencies of the Army's mobili-

zation procedures and critical weaknesses in the nation's militia system. The Navy, likewise, faced its own challenges with too few sailors to crew its ships and suffered an embarrassment when one of its newest battleships, the U.S.S. Arkansas, had to return to port after several of her 12-inch guns cracked during gunnery practice.



Civilian attired "Plattsburgh men" drill with broomsticks on Governor's Island in preparation for Officer's Reserve Corps examinations. Upwards of 150 men would volunteer each Saturday for regular drill and military instruction. Witnessing this drill, former President Theodore Roosevelt was appalled, commenting: "I do not know whether I am more impressed by their splendid patriotism or by a feeling of shame and wonder that such a great people as ours should be in such a state of unpreparedness." March 4, 1917.

Beginning in 1915, thousands of young men from across the U.S. joined the Plattsburgh readiness movement to receive military training at their own expense with the expectation they would receive officer commissions should war befall the nation.

On May 14, 1916, upwards of 125,000 young men marched in New York City to demonstrate for greater military preparedness and to express their willingness to join the armed forces if necessary.

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This national sentiment in support of preparedness, however, did little to increase actual enlistments. As late as March 1917 the Army was 10,000 active duty soldiers short of its peacetime authorized strength. Even after an influx of new recruits following its mobilization for border service, the New York National Guard was still 14,000 soldiers short of its authorized wartime strength.

To add to America's war anxieties, on March 24, 1916 the British channel ferry S.S. Sussex was torpedoed with the loss of fifty civilian lives and nearly caused the U.S. to sever diplomatic relations with Germany. Two months following this incident, the German Kaiser agreed to a moratorium on the sinking of civilian passenger and merchant vessels "without warning and without saving human lives unless the ship attempt to escape or offer resistance."

The 1916 harvest was a calamity nearly as devastating to the German's as their military situation. By January 1917, it was clear to Germany's military leadership that unless the naval blockade was broken Germany would slowly starve to death. On January 9, the fateful decision was made to unleash Germany's U-boat fleet to break the blockade and to sink all commercial ships – belligerent and neutral nations alike – approaching the British Isles in the hope of knocking the British Empire out of the war in six months.

In spite of fears that the U.S. would end

its neutrality and enter the war on the side of the Entente*, the head of the Imperial Admiralty Staff, Admiral Henning von Holtzendorff, assured the Kaiser 'I will give you Majesty my word as an officer that not one American will land on the Continent.'



Collapsed warehouses on Jersey City's Black Tom Island rail terminal. The terminal served as a vital link in the shipment of munitions from American factories to the Entente powers of Europe. During the early morning hours of July 31, 1916, watchmen discovered fires had been set amongst ammunition laden railcars. The ensuing explosion caused skyscrapers in Manhattan to sway, smashed windows dozens of miles away, and was heard as far away as Philadelphia.

On January 17, British Naval Intelligence deciphered a German diplomatic wireless message addressed to Germany's ambassador in Washington, D.C., Count Johann Heinrich von Bernstorff, with instructions to forward the message immediately to his counterpart in Mexico City. The message informed Bernstorff of Germany's intent to resume unrestricted submarine warfare and warned that the U.S. may feel obliged at that point to enter the war against them.

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The message then went on to offer an alliance with the Mexican government to wage war together against the U.S. in exchange for the return of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona to Mexican sovereignty.

Britain was desperate for the U.S. to enter the war on the side of the Entente but the news of Zimmerman's offer of alliance with Mexico was withheld from the U.S. ambassador to Britain, Walter Hines Page. Time was needed by the British to develop a plausible cover story of how the contents of Zimmerman's message had been disclosed without tipping the Germans off that their military and diplomatic codes had been compromised.

On February 3, two days after Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare, the U.S. severed diplomatic relations. It was not until late in the day of February 24 that the contents of Zimmerman's proposal to Mexico reached the State Department in Washington.

State Mobilization: Defending Critical Infrastructure

On the day diplomatic relations between the U.S. and Germany were ended, New York City Mayor John Mitchell made an urgent request for an emergency meeting with Governor Charles Whitman and the leadership of the state's National Guard and Naval Militia – Major



Undated photo of the Croton Aqueduct, Ossining, New York. Following the severing of diplomatic relations by the United States with the Imperial German Government, Governor Whitman ordered the partial mobilization of the New York National Guard to protect critical infrastructure to include the reservoirs and aqueducts which supplied New York City with fresh potable water. George P. Hall & Son Photograph Collection, circa 1876-1914, New York Historical Society Museum and Library.

General John F. O'Ryan, Adjutant General Louis Stotesbury, and Commodore Robert P. Forshew. Earlier in the day General Leonard Wood, Commander of the Eastern Department, summoned the commanders of the New York area coastal forts to Governors Island to discuss the unfolding crisis and ordered the doubling of sentries and cancelled all leaves and passes. Similar measures were taken at the Brooklyn Naval Yard and entry restricted to sailors and workmen.

Governor Whitman arrived at the Saint Regis Hotel in New York City shortly before six in the evening and was met by his three chief military officers.

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The four men made their greetings and retired to a private room to confer. An hour later Mayor Mitchel arrived and was admitted immediately. Mitchel began



A New York Naval Militia sailor guarding the Brooklyn Bridge against potential saboteurs. The New York sailors and soldiers guarding critical infrastructure had to endure bitter sub-zero temperatures with insufficient winter clothing and in many instances had to borrow hats and gloves from

the meeting by expressing his concerns for his city under the current international crisis. He reached into his leather portfolio and produced a dossier of suspicious “acts of violence” against private and public property that had occurred in and around the city

over the previous twelve months.

The notion of German sabotage was not farfetched considering the vast amount of allied war material that flowed from American factories to Britain, France, and Russia through the Port of New York and New Jersey. The most spectacular incident occurred six months earlier at the Black Tom Island rail terminal. During the early hours of July 31,

1916, watchmen discovered a number of fires had been set amongst the ammunition packed railcars. The ensuing explosion rocked Jersey City and lower Manhattan and caused tens of millions of dollars of damage. New York had also played host to twenty-seven interned German merchant vessels (to include the famed luxury liner S.S. Vaterland) and 1,500 of their officers and crewmen since August 1914.

Reaching once more into his portfolio, Mitchel produced a single page memorandum and slid it without comment across the table to the Governor. Whitman picked it up and began to read and after a few minutes of studied silence passed it to O’Ryan. The Mayor appealed to Whitman to invoke New York Military Law to order-out the National Guard and the Naval Militia to aid civil authorities in the maintenance of law and order, protect private and public property, and prevent breaches of the peace. Mitchel spoke up saying, ‘I have no special warning. This is merely a precautionary measure.’

He continued by explaining that he had already ordered the 11,000 officers of the New York City Police Department to take special precautions by maintaining a force to guard critical infrastructure such as water and gas works while other officers remained on patrol, or in reserve to quell any disturbances. The soldiers from the Guard would be needed only to relieve police officers guarding these sites and to assist with any disturbance beyond their ability to contend with without assistance.

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He added that he had also directed the Police Commissioner, Arthur Wood, to notify members of the Police Reserve and the Home Defense League to be ready for service.

Whitman agreed with the mayor's concerns and committed to making the state's military forces available to protect critical businesses and industries, water-sheds, arsenals, armories, aqueducts and bridges, not only in the city but throughout the state. At the conclusion of the conference the Governor pledged his support and assistance to the mayor and added, 'Of course all of our people will loyally support the President.'

Immediately following the meeting O'Ryan and Stotesbury rushed off to the nearby armory of the 1st Field Artillery where they prepared and telegraphed the order calling a portion of the National Guard to active service. Within the hour, all the armories in the city had guards placed at the entrances while commanding officers and their staffs began to arrive and make preparations and await additional orders. Other National Guard organizations across the state were instructed to contact their members and be prepared to report for duty if additional soldiers were needed. At this time, there were approximately 19,000 Guardsmen and an additional 2,000 Naval Militia available for state duty while another 5,500 remained on border service. The next morning O'Ryan's headquarters announced that the 1st and 10th New York Infantry Regiments had been ordered to

guard the reservoirs and aqueducts of the lower Hudson River counties.

The 1st and 2nd Battalions of the Naval Militia were given responsibility for posting guards on and below the bridges connecting the city's boroughs while militia tugboats patrolled the waters beneath.



The Central New England Railroad bridge spanned the Hudson River at Poughkeepsie. It was a vital link connecting the factories of New England, the Port of New York and New Jersey, and the shipment of war material to the European Allies. Postcard photo. Authors collection.

Bitter cold and blizzard conditions struck New York state before O'Ryan's signature dried on the orders calling out the two regiments.

Similar to the uniform and equipment shortages of the previous summer, the state's regiments lacked sufficient winter clothing for the subzero temperatures. Lacking any sort of winter field equipment, Naval Militiamen guarding the city's bridges were forced to stand guard wrapped in service blankets and borrowed gloves and knit hats provided by concerned local citizens.

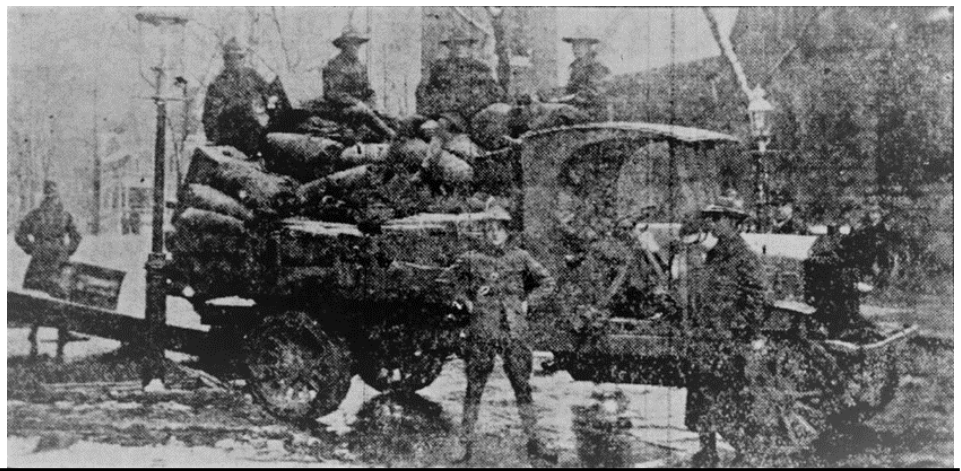
(Continued on page 9)

Soldiers of the two Infantry regiments dispatched to guard the city's water supply in the Catskills and Westchester County had to contend with waste high snow and incapacitating cold. During the initial confusion caused by the sudden deployment, many of the rank-and-file soldiers felt they were being "pushed around aimlessly with no definite objective," lacking proper food, clothing, or shelter. Like their Naval Militia brethren, the Guardsmen were lent gloves and hats by women of the surrounding villages who also generously supplied them with hot coffee and sandwiches. On the day the Guardsmen began to settle in at their guard-posts, the New York Division headquarters issued orders directing all units to make requisitions for clothing, equipment, other supplies, and to be prepared for immediate field service.

It took several days, but eventually proper arrangements were made to lodge the men in local hotels, nearby homes, and vouchers issued for feeding the men at local restaurants. In the meantime, General O'Ryan and his staff personally inspected the various detached guard posts – often unannounced - to check on the welfare and comfort of the men and to see that their needs were being met. He also directed that each soldier then on guard duty be provided with thick woolen underwear, fur lined overcoats, caps and

gloves.

Guarding the aqueducts and reservoirs was not without its moments of drama and tragedy. At about one in the morning on February 11, a soldier of Company L of the 1st Infantry Regiment was on sentry duty along the Catskill Aqueduct, not far from Pleasantville, when he noticed the headlights of an automobile come to a halt on the road next to the aqueduct. Two men exited the vehicle and began climbing the rocky snow-covered embankment. The car



Soldiers of Buffalo's Company L, 74th Infantry preparing to leave their armory for patrol duty. The 74th Infantry returned from border service on February 20 and mustered back into service just over a month later.

drove-off a short distance and once more came to a stop. Unseen, the sentry approached and noticed the two men were struggling with a large heavy suitcase. When he was within 200 feet of the men the sentry shouted at them to halt. Startled, one of the men dropped his side of the case causing the other to fall to the ground. The man who had fallen got back up on his feet and together the two collected the case and raced off to the waiting automobile but not before the Guardsmen raised his rifle and twice fired in the direction of the mysterious duo.

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On February 16, Companies A and E of the 1st Infantry were rushed to Poughkeepsie following the arrest of a suspicious man who was found with three sticks of dynamite in his possession near the Central New England Railroad bridge. The bridge served as a vital link between the munition factories of New England and the Port of New York. It was also critical in the shipment of coal to the northeast: an essential resource necessary to power these same factories and the warming of millions of American homes.

On February 13, Private Hugh Taylor of Company C, 10th Infantry was killed by a negligent discharge from a rifle in the hands of another soldier. On that night, Private Taylor and the members of his squad were patrolling a section of the aqueduct three miles south of the Bontecou Tunnel near New Paltz. Having noticed some moving lights not far away, Taylor gave the alarm and started running in the direction of the lights. As he started to climb a low fence in his path, the sudden crack of a rifle broke the night's silence. Private Taylor slumped to the other side dead. The young Private who shot him 'could not explain the manner in which (his rifle) came to be discharged.' The incident was ruled an accident. Tragically, Private Taylor was the first of eleven Guardsmen shot by negligent discharge of a fire arm – six of them fatal – between February and July. Much of this needless death and suffering can no doubt be blamed on the practice of the

time of putting fire arms and live ammunition into the hands of new recruits with no formal training. Most importantly, these incidents betrayed poor leadership at all levels in many of New York's regiments. Though the deployment to the U.S. - Mexican border in the summer of 1916 was invaluable in improving the training and professionalism of the New York Division, they still had a great deal to learn in the year to come before deploying to Europe.

The Guard on the Border Ordered to Return Home

On December 24, 1916 representatives from the United States and Mexican governments agreed to a timeline for the withdrawal of General Pershing's force from Mexican territory. On February 5, 1917, the last American soldier crossed the border into the United States.

Nearly two weeks later Secretary of War Newton D. Baker ordered the remaining 75,000 National Guard and militia soldiers then serving along the Mexican border to return immediately to their home states and muster out of Federal service. Baker stated the decision to send the Guard home was made independent of the situation with Germany. 'The National Guard,' he said, 'had completed its work on the border, and that the time had come when the Washington Government felt the militia forces could be spared from Federal service.'

For New York's 6th Field Division, the gradual withdrawal from border service began in September and by the end of 1916 five Infantry and two Artillery Regiments had returned home. Brooklyn's 23rd Infantry boarded trains on the second day of the new year and arrived home on January 9. In February, the 74th, 69th, and 12th Infantry broke camp at McAllen and Mission, Texas to begin the long trek back to New York. Of the thousands of New York soldiers that arrived on the border the previous July, all that remained were the three squadrons of the 1st Cavalry, the 3rd Field Artillery (former 65th Infantry), and the 4th Field Hospital.

The 1st Cavalry Regiment departed McAllen on March 5. Owing to the large number of horses requiring care, feeding, and exercise, the regiment did not complete its movement until the six Brooklyn based troops (A, C, E, K, L, and Machine Gun Troop) arrived on the fourteenth, eight days shy of nine months since leaving for the border. Colonel Charles De Bevoise, commanding officer of the 1st Cavalry, observed that the trip north from Texas was 'very tiresome for the men owing to the many delays experienced. The railroad equipment was not very good and this caused much trouble. It certainly looked as if they had had a great deal of trouble in getting the cars together for us and had to give us what was left over.'

The trains pulled in at the New York Central yards in Manhattan at about 7 a.m. just as a heavy wet snow began to

fall. No sooner had the trains come to a halt than the Cavalrymen immediately set to work unloading equipment, personal baggage, and saddling and grooming of horses. To their surprise and delight, a great press of mothers, fathers, wives, and children had arrived and had begun mingling amongst the troopers adding to a sense of celebration. By noon all of the troopers were saddled and formed. With Colonel De Bevoise at the head of the column, the 1st Cavalry turned out of the yard onto West 58th Street to be met by cheering crowds. Hours before the trains arrived, thousands of well-wishers braved the weather to line the route the Cavalrymen would take back to the armory at Bedford Avenue and Union Street in Brooklyn. The march continued at a slow pace owing to the slippery conditions: nevertheless, dozens of horses slipped and fell throwing their riders into the slush and filth filling the street gutters.

In one instance, a mule used by the machine gun troop to carry guns and ammunition, "went down in a heap" and refused to get up until unburdened of its load. When the troopers crossed the Manhattan Bridge and entered Brooklyn they were greeted with "wild, tumultuous" cheers. Their return to family life and civilian careers would be short lived.

The last major unit to depart Texas, Buffalo's 3rd Field Artillery, left on March 6 to little fanfare or public notice. The regiment's band played several tunes for the amusement of a handful of well-wishers who had come out in spite of a strong wind that kicked up a heavy cloud of dust.

The men were grateful to be shaking off Texas and even more so for the government going to the extra expense of providing them with tourist cars, beds with clean sheets, and porters to look after their personal needs. After a tumultuous ten-months which saw the regiment reorganize from infantry to artillery, the forced retirement of its popular commander, Colonel Charles Babcock, and five months of difficult training under field conditions, the Buffalo men returned home on March 11 to the cheers of family, friends, and citizens of the city.

The World Must be Made Safe for Democracy

The day following the 1st Cavalry's return home, the New York Division Headquarters received an urgent communique from the War Department advising that all preparations necessary be made for a prompt mobilization of the National Guard of the state. Similar messages were sent to other state National Guard and militia organizations throughout the U.S. to prepare for mobilization and muster into United States service.

On March 18, the Governors of Delaware, New York, Maryland, and Pennsylvania met in executive session at the request of New Jersey's Governor, Walter Edge, to develop a plan to put their states on a war footing, identify and inventory resources and industry necessary for military purposes, and petition the War Department to send supplies and weapons to prepare their states for

the war they believed would soon be declared. Just one week later, President Woodrow Wilson called for the Federalization of 11 National Guard regiments – followed up the next day by calling for an additional 20 - and five separate battalions for the “general purposes of police protection against possible interference with postal, commercial, and military channels, and instrumentalities.” Amongst the New York units immediately effected by the President's order were the 3rd Battalion of the 23rd Infantry, 47th, 71st, and 74th Infantry Regiments, along with the 1st Squadron of the 1st Cavalry Regiment. By the beginning of April, these regiments were deployed across the state guarding long stretches of railroad, bridges, tunnels, and other vital infrastructure.

On April 2, President Wilson addressed a joint session of the United States Congress during which he laid forth the nation's grievances against the Imperial German Government. Wilson argued that Germany had made war against the U.S. by sinking American ships and taking American lives upon the high-seas. That Germany had denied the right of American vessels to defensively arm themselves, declaring such actions piracy, and these ships would be sunk as such. That the German government had engaged in intrigue's with America's neighbor Mexico and filled that country with spies and agitators for the purpose of making war against the United States.

‘With a profound sense of the solemn and even tragical character, I advise that the Congress declare the recent course of the Imperial Government to be in fact nothing less than war against the Government and people of the United States; that it formally accept the status of belligerent which has been thrust upon it.’ The President continued:

‘The world must be made safe for democracy. Its peace must be planted upon the tested foundations of political liberty. We have no selfish ends to serve. We desire no conquest, no dominion. We ask no indemnities for ourselves, no material compensation for the sacrifices we shall freely make. We are but on the champions of the rights of mankind. We shall be satisfied when those rights have been made as secure as the faith and the freedom of nations can make them.’

Following the President’s speech, the Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee introduced a War Resolution declaring “that a State of War exists between the Imperial German Government and the Government and People of the United States. Four days later, 6 April 1917, the joint resolution was passed by Congress and war was formally declared between the United States and Germany.

Over the next several days and weeks, additional New York National Guard regiments were mustered into

federal service to continue the mission of protecting essential infrastructure from sabotage. Amongst these regiments were the remaining two battalions of the 23rd, 15th, and 3rd Infantry Regiments.

On May 19, General O’Ryan received orders from the War Department to recruit all units to full war strength.

The actual mobilization of the New York National Guard for World War service began on July 14 with the mustering of the division’s newly organized Supply Train, Ammunition Train, and Military Police Company. At 9:00 a.m. the next morning, nine regiments of infantry, three of artillery, one of engineers, along with the 1st Cavalry Regiment and Squadron A assembled at their armories to muster into federal service as the 6th Division of the United States Army. Under the Army’s new tables of organization, the 4th Brigade (10th, 14th, and 15th Infantry Regiments) was excess and not assigned as part of the division; however; it did muster into federal service that same day.

On July 25, the 6th Division was redesignated as the 27th Division: however; the Division’s new numeric designation did not become effective until August 29, 1917. The following day, Major General John F. O’Ryan was officially appointed commanding officer of the 27th Division.

About the Author:

LTC (Ret.) Brian J. Murphy served a total of 28 years as both a traditional Guardsman and an AGR officer. In NY, he served with the 1-105th IN and both the 2nd and 3rd BNs of the 108th IN. His positions ranged from Scout platoon leader to Company commander. In the Arizona National Guard he served in a wide variety of positions, to include Civil Support Team, Assistant State Training Officer, SGS, and the Joint Staff. He also did a tour in Balad, Iraq with the 1-180 FA (SP). He holds a B.S. in political science from SUNY Cortland and a Master of Public Administration from Marist College. His military schooling includes a Master of Military Science from CGSC and a Master of Science from the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security & Resource Strategy. He resides in Northern Virginia.

For further reading on this topic:

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-----, *The Battle of Verdun: The Story of the Iconic WWI Clash, One of the Bloodiest Battles in History*. Guilford, CT: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

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CSM SENDS...

Subject: State BWC Winners

Leaders:

For the third consecutive year the 27 IBCT has claimed the State Best Warrior Competition and is once again headed to the Regionals. This year's competition was held at CSTS this past weekend and the Brigade had a good showing of competitors and supporters. The Fighting 69th swept the competition with both NCO and Soldier and also had a strong showing from one of its runner-up competitors.

The following Soldiers will be representing NY and the 27 IBCT at the next upcoming Regional BWC to be held in Vermont 13-16 August.

NCO BWC Winner - SSG Ortiz, M

HHC 1-69 IN

Soldier BWC Winner- CPL Perez, T

A Co 1-69 INF

Runner Up Soldier- PFC Sanchez, Alejandro C Co 1-69 INF (less than 2 years in Army!)

Congratulations to the winners, The Fighting 69th, the 27 IBCT, and a personal thank you to all of the Leaders and Soldiers that put in a maximum effort into supporting this invaluable event that showcases our amazing Soldiers. Orion!!

V/r

CSM Anthony McLean

Subject: BWC 2021

CSM/SGM

This year's BWC was held at CSTS and here are the winners for the 27 IBCT BWC are both from the 2/108th INF. They are as follows:

SPC Miller, D. 2/108th IN

Soldier of the Year

SSG Mulholland, S. 2/108th IN

NCO of the Year

The runner-up for the year are as follows:

SPC Sanchez, Alejandro 69th IN

Soldier of the Year runner up

SSG Murphy, N 2/101 CAV

NCO of the Year runner up

Both groups of primary and alternates will be competing in the FY21 State BWC.

CSM Anthony McLean

Brigade Sergeant Major

27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team,

NYARNG

Forgotten 10th Mountain: New York's Roundout Brigade (1986-1998)

This article originally appeared in Blizzard, the official newsletter of the 10th MTN Division Association

One element of the historic 10th Mountain Division seldom recalled today is the 27th Brigade of the New York Army National Guard, which for more than a decade served as the 10th Mountain's third brigade (then known as a "Roundout" brigade). National Guard Roundout brigades were intended to train with their "parent" active-duty divisions and to deploy, if necessary, after call-up and an additional period of post-activation training. Part-time Guard soldiers were known as "M-Day" soldiers, with "M" standing for "Mobilization." To be fair, the Roundout brigade concept worked with mixed results. In 1986, various units of the 27th Brigade, then part of the New York Army National Guard's 42nd Infantry Division, were reassigned to become the roundout brigade for 10th Mountain. According to the 1986 Annual Report of the New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs:

"On May 1, 1986, the historic colors of the 27th Infantry Division, New York Army National Guard (NYARNG), were reactivated by the 27th Brigade as it became the 'Round Out' Brigade for the Army's 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry) stationed at Fort Drum. During the ceremony held at Fort Drum's

Wheeler-Sack Army Air Field, the Brigade retired the colors of the 42nd Infantry (Rainbow) Division, New York City, to which it was formerly attached, and unfurled the colors of New York's famed 27th Infantry Division. "The ceremony symbolized the role of the modern guard soldier – the reactivating of the colors of an historic guard unit for an element which becomes an essential part of an active Army Division. It is a new mission for a reserve element, in this case the 27th Brigade. It is a most important mission as reserve elements soon will comprise more than half the nation's defensive force. "As the 'Round Out' Brigade, the 27th retains its Guard status and training schedule and constitutes one-third of the 10th Division's combat power. This blending of Guard and active Army units is part of the Army's 'Total Force' Policy which makes Guard and active Army soldiers equal partners in this nation's defense. "With the new assignment, the soldiers of the 27th Brigade began an intensive training program to develop their 'Light Fighter' skills. The 'Light Fighter' is a new breed of soldier who constitutes a rapidly deployable deterrent force.

These soldiers must be experts in such basic soldiering skills as individual weapons proficiency, map reading, medical and tactical capabilities. In many ways, they are an elite, self-sufficient field force. "The new 27th Brigade is headquartered in Syracuse. Its subordinate units are located throughout Upstate New York. These units are: the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, based in Schenectady, Troy, Leeds, and Amsterdam; The 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, with units in Syracuse; the 3rd Battalion, 108th Infantry, located in Utica, Ogdensburg, and Malone; and the 1st Battalion, 156th Field Artillery, with units in Kingston, Poughkeepsie, and Newburgh."

I first arrived at Co. C, 1-105 Infantry, at the Leeds Armory, N.Y. in June 1986, a month after the re-flagging ceremony described above. I had come from a mechanized infantry Army National Guard unit in another part of New York State, and from a combat engineer unit before that. The soldiers at Leeds Armory had been working toward the transition from 42nd Infantry to 10th Mountain for some time, and some who didn't want the added rigor of light infantry training had transferred out to "easier" units. I distinctly remember my first day in the Leeds Armory when our full-time training NCO, SFC Daniel Murphy, told me, "I hope you like to

hump a rucksack, because that's all we do now." I told him, "I joined the Army because that's just what I wanted to do!" And we definitely got our chance! Soldiers from 27th Brigade completed the Light Fighter Course at Fort Drum. One of the highlights of Light Fighter was completing the Combat Water Survival Test at the indoor swimming pool on post at Fort Drum, treading water while ditching equipment, sidestroke swimming the length of the pool in full uniform, and of course, walking blindfolded off the 3-meter diving board with weapon held straight out in front. NCOs also completed the Light Leader Course that was conducted at various sites. Personally, I attended Light Leader at Fort AP Hill, Virginia, conducted by trainers from the 29th Infantry Division (Virginia Army National Guard). Light Leader was looked forward to as an opportunity to conduct a lot of "high speed" training, such as rappelling from helicopters, helocasting into a river, and MOUT (Military Operations in Urban Terrain) training, in addition to numerous day and night patrols. The year I attended Light Leader (1989), the nice new Army MOUT training facility at Fort Pickett, Virginia was unavailable, so instead we convoyed to Quantico, Virginia to train on a MOUT site used by Marines.

One of the highlights of our MOULT training was rappelling from the top of a cinderblock building directly into an open window, firing blanks from our M-16A1 rifles as we entered on a rope to clear the room. 27th Brigade soldiers were given ample other opportunities for training. For example, some attended jungle school in Panama. Other leaders could participate in the Key Personnel Upgrade Program (acronym KPUP, pronounced “Keep Up”) where an Army Guard soldier would spend 15 days taking the position of an active duty Team or Squad Leader who was away on leave. During our normal Annual Training periods at Fort Drum, we trained primarily on squad- and platoon-level battle drills – such as movement to contact, break contact, and raid – under the watchful eye of Observer/Controllers (OCs) from the active duty 10th Mountain. OCs we trained with usually came from the battalions of 2-22nd Infantry (the “Triple Deuce”) or 1-87th or 2-87th Infantry. Guard soldiers from the 27th Brigade wore the 10th Mountain Division shoulder sleeve insignia and felt like full members of the division. To be honest, I feel we fell short of active duty soldiers in both overall physical fitness and general discipline (with individual exceptions), but that we excelled at maintaining a high *esprit de corps* and

often were able to “think outside the box” in developing tactical solutions to various field problems. After each training iteration, we would conduct a detailed AAR (After Action Review) conducted by the active duty OCs. We trained as hard as we could to meet the standard.

Here are two memorable training events I recall from the late 1980s. The first involved an unexpected snowstorm at a local training area near our armory, and the second involved intense training at Fort Drum. In early October 1987, my unit at Leeds (Co. C, 1-105 Infantry) conducting its weekend drill training with a rappelling and patrolling exercise high up in the Catskill Mountains. We were in a remote area called Platte Clove when the un-forecasted monster October 4, 1987 snowstorm hit that seemed to knock down about every tree in the Capital District of upstate New York. The storm struck during the overnight period while we were bivouacked above 3,000 feet elevation, and it dropped two-and-a-half-feet of heavy, wet snow, with many trees snapping from the weight because they all still retained their leaves at that early date in October. We struggled mightily to get out of there the next day, suffering some cold-weather injuries along the way.

The second memorable event involved Annual Training 1988 at Fort Drum. Normally, Annual Training would begin with a night in “cantonment” in the old wooden World War 2-era barracks on Fort Drum (since demolished, I am told) before moving out into the field. This year (1988) marked a difference as we went straight from the buses that deposited us at Fort Drum on to an extended road march with full rucksacks directly into the field. We stayed out for the entire 15 days, conducting patrols, ambushes, raids, reconnaissance missions, movement-to-contact, etc. on a remote part of the base (I realize that 15 days doesn’t sound like much to active-duty light infantry 10th veterans who would spend months at a time in the field). One particularly interesting event occurred when we began to run short of drinking water, and our company commander requested a resupply by helicopter. We had to use machetes to hack a small LZ in dense vegetation so that a helicopter could slingload down a cargo-net full of 5-gallon water cans to us. And then it was “Charlie Mike” (continue the mission). Good training for us!

Also one night, we conducted a large helicopter pick-up that took an unexpected turn. We were broken up into our chinks in the treeline around a darkened pickup zone (large open field) when our company commander recognized that in-

stead of the UH-1H Huey helicopters we normally operated with, several large Chinook helicopters were inbound. Problem was, we were set up for Hueys and few soldiers in our company had ever ridden on a Chinook before. Our CO quickly reassembled the chinks and delivered a revised safety brief to instruct us to enter the aircraft from the rear in two columns (completely different from loading a Huey). And, despite the SNAFU, we successfully, safely and rapidly loaded for our night pickup. This was also good training in always remaining flexible and adapting to the situation, no matter what.

To my knowledge, no Roundout Brigades ever deployed to combat zones in the 1980s or 90s. The closest time came during Operation Desert Storm in 1990-91. Three mechanized Roundout Brigades from Southern U.S. states were activated and some units were sent to the National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California for their train-up period. Despite the additional training, none of these Guard mechanized brigades were deemed ready by the Regular Army to be sent overseas for Desert Storm. Although the death knell of the Roundout Brigade Concept was probably sounded by the failure of these mechanized Guard brigades to deploy during Desert Storm,

we soldiered on as part of the 10th Mountain Division for another seven years, doing our best to train to standard and to fulfill our obligation in the hierarchy. In both the late 1980s and early 1990s, we often trained using elaborate “Low Intensity Conflict” scenarios that generally involved a guerilla insurgency in some fictitious Central American nation and with OpFor (opposing forces) provided by active duty 10th soldiers. OpFor could be identified because they wore their BDU shirts inside-out. They even had names for both this fictional country and the fictitious guerilla leader, but they escape me now. In fact, in 1994 our battalion was scheduled to go to Honduras for Annual Training as a reward for superior performance, but budget cuts of the post-Cold War era canceled that overseas training and we went to Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania instead (not nearly as exciting as Honduras but “new dirt” from Fort Drum nonetheless). After Desert Storm, our training also involved many trench clearing exercises. And also in the early 1990s, we participated in Operation Bold Shift during training at Fort Drum, navigating many training lanes and live-fire exercises. My particular unit in Leeds was subject to several reorganizations, going from Co. C, 1-105 Infantry to Detachment 1, Co. B, 3-108 Infantry, and finally to Detachment 1,

Co. A, 1-105 Infantry – all as part of the 27th Brigade and 10th Mountain Division (LI). Personally, I ETS’d after 12 years of service in 1996, but the 27th Brigade continued on as part of the 10th Mountain Division until 1998 before becoming a Separate Brigade. Later, many of the soldiers I served with in 1-105 Infantry, re-designated as 2-108 Infantry, deployed to Iraq in 2004 as part of OIF 3, seeing tough duty in the Sunni Triangle area and Samarra. 2-108 Infantry was the first New York Army National Guard battalion since World War 2 to serve overseas in combat, and it was commanded by Lt. Col. Mark Warnecke, who as a Captain had been our company commander in Co. C, 1-105 Infantry in the late 1980s. While in Iraq, soldiers from 2-108, including at least one man I had personally served with, SFC Mark Forbes, were able to rescue American civilian truck driver Thomas Hamill, who was being held captive by insurgents. Many of these same soldiers from 2-108 had earlier served on state duty at Ground Zero in New York City in the immediate aftermath of 9-11. Later still, they served in Afghanistan and continue on to this day.

It has been many years since I served in a small way as part of the 10th Mountain Division, but it is a time in my life I look back on now with both fondness and pride.

While some may view Roundout brigades as a “failed experiment,” I believe they provided an opportunity to learn many lessons that helped integrate reserve forces into their many combat roles in conflicts that would come later during the Global War on Terrorism.

By John R. (Bob) Dial, Former SSG, 1-105 Infantry, 27th Brigade (Roundout),
10th Mountain Division (LI)

Editor’s postscript: See this article in Army Times for something that sounds familiar.
<https://www.armytimes.com/pay-benefits/military-benefits/2016/08/19/army-units-change-patches-as-part-of-active-guard-and-reserve-pilot-program>

1918-2018 (WWI) , 2008-2018 (CJTF-PHOENIX)

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.](#)



GUIDON CALL !

(NEWS FROM AROUND THE FORMATION)



NEW YORK , NY, UNITED STATES

12.22.2020

Story by [Eric Durr](#)

[New York National Guard](#)

LATHAM, N.Y. -- Two New York National Guard Soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry finished eighth out of 35 teams during the sniper competition held at the National Guard Marksmanship Training Center in North Little Rock, Arkansas Dec. 4-10.

Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Melendez and Sgt. Andreas Diaz, both New York City police officers who served together in Afghanistan and in the 69th's sniper section, competed against 23 National Guard state teams and 12 active duty military units in the Armed Forces Skill at Arms Sniper Match. Diaz was the shooter, using a bolt action M-2010 enhanced sniper rifle with range of one kilometer. Melendez was his spotter, armed with the M110—a larger caliber version of the M-16A2—used to engage closer targets. While they finished eighth overall, they came in at fourth place among the National Guard Teams. That part of the competition is known as the William P. Winston Sniper Competition, named for a former chief of the National Guard Bureau who encouraged marksmanship training. Their performance was impressive enough that there is a chance they will get invited to the annual International Sniper Competition head at Fort Benning, Georgia. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic international travel is shut down, so there is a chance the Army will invite some of the top performing National Guard teams to fill all the slots, Diaz explained. "I think we outperformed most people's expectations," Melendez said. "I am actually really proud of how well we did." "That competition has some of the best shooters and snipers in the country. You have Special Forces teams, Marine Recon and Special Operations guys there," Melendez added.



Sgt. Andres Diaz (left) and Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Melendez, both assigned to the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry (U.S.Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Israel Sanchez)

"As far as the sniper community it is the 'who's who' of the best guys. It is pretty cool to feel you can hang with them at that level," he said. The sniper competition tested the Soldiers' ability to acquire and engage targets using sniper rifles and pistols, their physical fitness and their ability to approach and engage a target undetected. Diaz and Melendez also learned that the competition tests snipers ability to plan for a mission and cope with the unexpected. The two friends, who attended the New York Police Department academy together, prepared for the contest by shooting at a private range in the Catskills. The range is used by the NYPD long-range shooting team to hone their skills. If they could redo their train-up, Melendez and Diaz agreed, they would focus on night shooting. That was the toughest part of the competition for them. They did their best when it came to the unusual firing positions they had to use for some engagements, Diaz said. In one case they were on a platform known as a "boat" that was elevated on four sides but not on the fifth. "The second you got on, it moved constantly," he recalled.

(Continued on page 23)

(Continued from page 22)

“We just decided to lay down on the boat and alternate shooting.” The two also did well on a “stalk lane.” That task involved executing a “ruck march” with all their gear, getting into position unobserved, shooting a target and then remaining hidden when a “walker” came looking for them. Shooting, though, was only part of the challenge, Diaz said. “Getting through the mission is just as important as shooting,” he said. The teams would be told what their mission was. But they were not told what equipment they would need, or whether getting there would require a road march. They had to decide what to bring and what to leave behind so a potential ruck march would not exhaust them, he explained. The most challenging event literally involved tying one arm behind his back, Melendez said. The competitors flipped a coin to decide if they would lose the use of their right or left arm. He’s right handed so he got lucky when his left arm was tied behind his back. But all of the firing data he need to engage the target with his M110 was on written on his left sleeve.

So Diaz had to read the data off to him so he could shoot successfully, Melendez recalled. Melendez, who led the 69th sniper section and has now become an infantry platoon leader, said participating in the event was “bittersweet” for him. “I wish I had an opportunity to do this sooner in my sniper career. I learned so much about potential sniper training I would have altered my section training plan,” he said. Diaz, who took over as head of the battalion sniper section, said he came away with lots of great information to share.

He would like to see the New York Army National Guard hold a similar sniper competition for other Soldiers in those positions across the 69th, the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, and the 2nd Squadron, 101st Cavalry.

That would be great training and it would be great way to pick contestants for the National Guard’s annual event, Diaz said.



TAPS



Alfred (Beau) Romano Sr., born in Syracuse, NY on October 9, 1930, to Alfred and Mary Romano died peacefully in Altamonte Springs, FL on December 11, 2020. Al graduated from Oneida High School, class of 1948, and began his military career immediately after high school. After the military, Al and Anna and their family settled in Montgomery, NY where Al continued many years of service and involvement in the community. Surviving are his three sons: Roger Romano of Santa Cruz, CA, Joseph Romano of Longwood, FL, Alfred Romano, Jr. and wife, Geri Galazzo and granddaughter, Giulia Romano of Pine Bush, NY; and his daughter, Susan Kirkpatrick and husband, Steven, of Redwood City, CA., a sister, Lydia Volpe, of Oneida; and many nieces and nephews. He served with the 108th Infantry.

REQUEST FOR STORIES

“So, there I was, no shit!”

How many times has that phrase pre-faced a long rambling “war story”, that frequently involved drinking, getting in trouble, and often hilarity?

Here at my editorial desk I am looking for your stories about your time in the 27th. Not the story about how you got that weird tattoo or met the woman of your dreams, but about your time with the “joes”, training, travel, and possibly danger.

I joined several years before JRTC in 2001. I know of a few events that happened before JRTC such as a wind storm, ice storm, Support to the Olympics in Atlanta (1994), and training in Iceland. I haven’t read a single story about them though.

I will be working with the board to dig up stories from past Gallivanter’s to republish in order to keep them “alive” as it were, but we need to hear from you as well.

What are the guidelines?

1. Must be about your time with a 27th Division or Brigade unit.
2. May include photos, but not necessary. Let me know if you want me to try to find photos to support your story, I can try that!
3. Ideally, it will appeal to more than just yourself. So stories that involve fellow squad or section members is more desirable than one that features you on pass by yourself .
4. You don’t have to be Mark Twain or Earnest Hemingway, just put pen to paper or fingers to a keyboard. As long as I can read it, we will publish it.

Help keep our legacy of service to the Army and the Nation alive.

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. Subject line should read "For Gallivanter". Thank you.



27th Division Association



New Membership/ Membership Renewal Application (\$15)

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