

Winter 2011 Edition



December 2011

The ORION GALLIVANTER

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

Change of Mission

The Secretary of Defense has decided that the New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team will now deploy to Kuwait where it will conduct a security force mission.

The brigade, which is headquartered in Syracuse but has units in locations around the state, has been training for a combat mission in Afghanistan since 2010 and was due to mobilize for deployment just after Thanksgiving. The brigade had been planning to mobilize about 1,500 Soldiers in December 2011 for a mission in Afghanistan later in 2012.

The new directive means that up to 2,100 members of the brigade will now mobilize in January 2012 and undertake a new security mission in Kuwait by mid-2012. The final number of Soldiers deploying may be less than 2,100.

"Our Soldiers are well prepared for any and all missions they are assigned," said Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York. "The men and women of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team have been training hard for deployment and are well prepared for this mission change." The brigade's Soldiers will train for their new mis-

sion following their mobilization. The Soldiers will be on federal active duty for up to 12 months.

Current plans call for the New York Army National Guard to mobilize and deploy Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry, which is headquartered in Utica and has elements in Gloversville, Glenville, Geneseo, Ithaca, and Leeds.

The 427th Forward Support Battalion, with companies located in Syracuse, Buffalo and Rochester will be called up. The 427th Forward Support Battalion provides logistics support-maintenance, supply, and medical support-to the brigade.

The 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion, which is headquartered in Buffalo and has elements in Lockport and Syracuse will be mobilized. The 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion includes intelligence, engineering, signal, and other specialized support units.

The brigade will be supported by the 4th Battalion, 118th Infantry from the South Carolina Army National Guard and a composite battalion from several other states.

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Commander's Message

To my fellow Gallivanter-

As we enter the Holiday Season, let us share warm thoughts for those who have served our great nation and for those who are currently serving at home and abroad. This holiday season, like so many before, will have many of our 27th Soldiers serving far away from their families. Let's remember their sacrifices and be thankful for the freedom we enjoy as a result of these dedicated and professional patriots.

The 27th BCTs preparation for Deployment has been an outstanding success. These fine Soldiers have endured great personal hardship in order to better prepare themselves for their upcoming mission. Most recently, they trained in the deserts of California at the National Training Center in order to hone their war fighting skills and to solidify and forge lasting team bonds. They tested their command and control systems, stressed their combat skills and employed state of the art weapons systems like a well oiled machine. This dynamic training environment allowed them to identify weaknesses in their training so they could modify their tactics, techniques and procedures in order to improve their overall battle readiness.

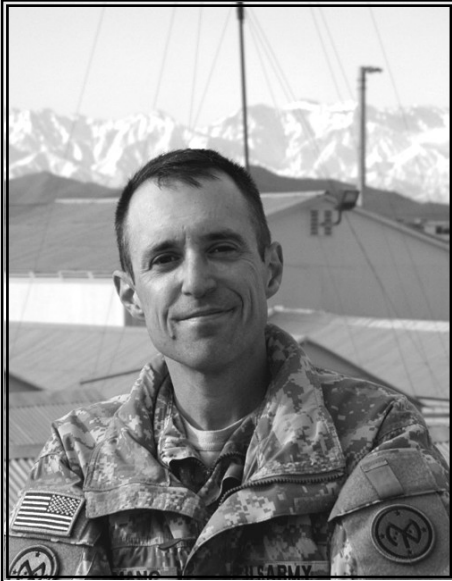
They will soon deploy to their mobilization station where they will test their skills even further. I am proud to say that these warriors will be more than ready to step into the arena at the end of all of this training. Rest assured that when our nation calls, the Soldiers of the 27th are ready to respond. They wear the Orion patch proudly and I know that our members who have served before them would be very proud of them as well.

Happy Holidays, and may you have a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year.

Yours in the 27th,

GARY S. YAPLE
27th DIV Commander

Editor's Corner



Mailing Addresses:

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- Unit & Personal Remembrances
 - 80 Plus Club to the Editor
 - Historical stories
 - Reunion Notices
 - Mailbag items
 - Taps
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27th DIV Association Veterans,

With hope this edition finds you all in good health and in good spirits. This has been a busy, at times confusing, historic and one could say, hectic year for the 27th BDE.

Multiple training sessions throughout the year culminated with our attendance at The National Training Center (NTC), Fort Irwin California. This was the first time that the Stars of Orion have flown over Fort Irwin and by all accounts, the BDE exceeded expectations of all concerned.

By far the biggest news that affects the 27th is our change of mission from Afghanistan to Kuwait. Details and final preparations are still being worked out at this time so by the time the March edition arrives we should be training at Camp Shelby, MS preparing to head back to the Middle East.

I encourage every member to actively recruit fellow Soldiers who have not become members of the DIV Association. As our Taps page unfortunately shows, many of our old guard members are slowly slipping away.

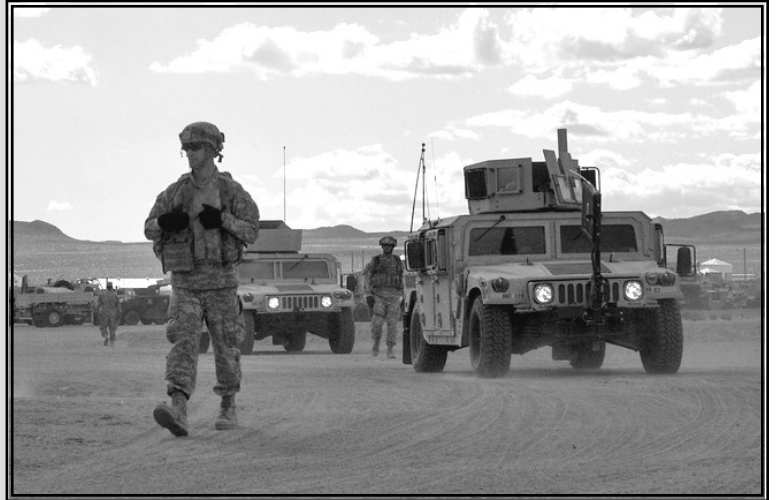
Lastly, if you're "Social Network" savvy and have a minute, go to the 27th DIV Association's Facebook Page and become a member. (27th Division Association—Group).

Sincerely,

Your Editor
Robert Romano

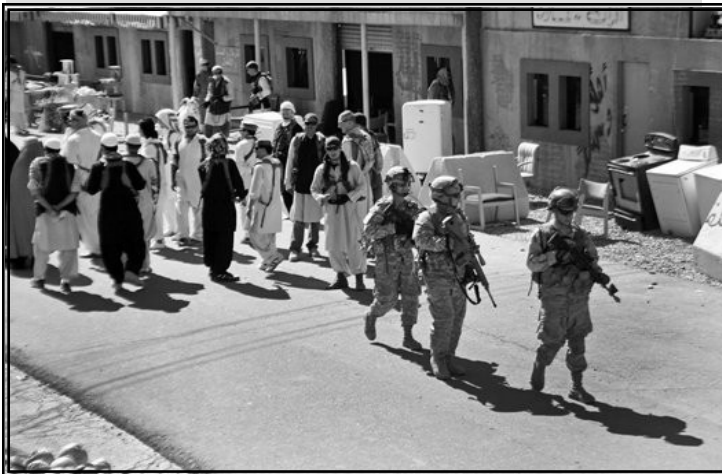
Fort Irwin - NTC

Nearly 2,900 National Guard Soldiers conducted training in the "box" of the National Training Center, Fort Irwin, California, taking on enemy forces, partnering with role-playing security forces and conducting complex live fire exercises. Soldiers of the 27th BDE deployed to NTC for a month-long annual training exercise as they prepared for the scheduled deployment to Afghanistan.



The NTC rotation included more than 2,000 members of the New York Army National Guard and an additional 650 Soldiers from the South Carolina Army National Guard.

Fort Irwin is located approximately 37 miles northeast of Barstow, Calif., in the High Mojave Desert, surrounded by desert hills and mountains.



The NTC maneuver area has multiple urban operations sites and portrays the complexity and human dimension of the modern battlefield.

The 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, headquartered in Syracuse and has elements across New York, were joined by infantrymen from the South Carolina Army National Guard's 4th Battalion, 118th Infantry. Many of the New York and South Carolina National Guardsmen have worked together on previous missions over the last ten years to include the Operation Noble Eagle II and TF Phoenix, Afghanistan. Noble Eagle II was the Airbase Defense mission where elements of the NY Army National Guard augmented NY Air National Guard Security Forces. Elements of the SC Army Na-

The Stars of Orion in the Desert

tional Guard were assigned as the higher headquarters for the established Noble Eagle II Teams across the eastern seaboard. The 27th BDE, assumed responsibilities in Afghanistan as TF Phoenix VII from South Carolina National Guard who deployed as TF Phoenix VI.

Troops immersed themselves in an environment that replicated Afghanistan, with security forces to partner, civilians and villages across the battlefield and a contemporary opposing force. The brigade was accompanied by U.S. Army controller-trainers who observed, assisted and supported the training of the Soldiers.

The Soldiers who participated in the training came from armories across western New York, the Hudson Valley, the Utica area, Long Island and New York City.

A small contingent providing support to the training units came from the 42nd Infantry Division Headquarters in

Troy and National Guard Joint Forces Headquarters in Latham, NY.

The training, conducted at the NTC through late October, provided Soldiers from the brigade, along with the battalion from South Carolina, with a realistic, demanding training environment. The exercise stressed leaders, Soldiers and staffs in a simulated combat environment.



The NTC trains units by conducting force-on-force and live-fire training across the spectrum of conflict, using a live-virtual-constructive training model. The National Guard Soldiers confronted a highly lethal and capable Opposing Force and the entire exercise was controlled by an expert and experienced Operations Group.

The NTC maneuver area has multiple urban operations sites and portrays the complexity and human dimension of the modern battlefield.

HOW IT HAPPENED

Part 7: "Battles in the Air"

We became very familiar with the sight of large Hun captive observation balloons in the distance and also our own right over our heads and with many lights in the air between Boche planes and ours. Boche scout planes would also sneak over and with inflammable machine gun bullets burn up 2 or 3 of our observation balloons before getting chased back to their own territory. Of course this didn't happen without our own aviators burning down a few Hun planes but this was more waste of property as each always had extra balloons that were put up almost immediately, but each balloon was valued at about \$7000 each. At first it seemed a great sight to see the occupants of the burned balloons come down in their parachutes from heights of 1000 to 2000 ft. but it soon got to be such a familiar sight that after a time was just one of the days happenings.

Air battles were plenty. Boche battle planes could be seen miles away in battle formation. On the horizon some of our planes would loom up and they would get together and the fur would fly. Up and down they would go, machine guns popping, they would fly at each other and just when you would think they were going to collide head on one would scoot down just beneath the other, then swing around and at it again until some of them had gone blazing to earth, with their gas tanks on fire; then when one side was whipped - usually the Boche the remaining one or two planes would turn tail and beat it for safer territory. Our anti air craft guns did fairly good work also, their main work being to put up a barrage in favor of the oncoming Hun planes to keep them from coming over our lanes and at times they would register hits and down would come the Boche plane in a blaze of glory to the earth. Oh, how we loved to see those sights. Many a raid on us was prevented by the anti aircraft guns with their one pound shells and they also prevented many a picture of our movements from being taken. Each observation balloon was protected by from 3 to 10 machine guns which did very effective work if the enemy planes got near the ground.

The night of Sept. 25th at the zero hour of 11

o'clock, started the biggest barrage of the whole war; the infantry were to go over the top in the morning under the protection of the barrage; the 75's and the 155's were almost hub to hub, the larger caliber guns, large naval guns and railway guns being a little further back. We had been busy for two weeks night and day hauling ammunition to the different battery positions. Things were fairly quiet previous to 11 P.M. Then at the zero hour everything opened up and for miles and miles was a roaring hell; cannon belched forth, the heavens were filled with flashes and roars, everyone was filled with exultation and excitement at the roar of our artillery and many conjectures were made as to the amount of damage being done to the Huns. At 4:30 A.M. the infantry went over the top and the artillery began a creeping barrage, increasing their range little by little. This barrage continued for three full days, the smaller cannon having to move forward on an average of once every 24 hours as the infantry were advancing very rapidly. During these three days the infantry advanced over 17 kilos and on our sector sent back over 5000 prisoners. These were unshaven and dirty; some appeared to be about 16 or 17, some 40 to 45 years and mostly very ignorant looking. At some points, our infantry advanced so fast that they were not found for a couple of days, when supplies were gotten to them. At this time we were the 33rd Division. After three days the big drive was over for the time being and things settled down to the routine of throwing a certain amount of shells at the Germans to let them know we were still interested in them.

About this time the rainy season started and we got beau coup rain for some time. Oct. 1, 1918 we heard that Turkey and Austria Hungary had laid down their arms in surrender and we prophesied that if this were true we would soon be on our way home. Oct. 2nd, we heard some very bad news. Twelve trucks of another ammunition train had been struck by shells, going forward over the same road that we used and about 25 men were either killed or wounded. Every time we heard news like this we talked it over and wondered when our turn was coming. We were certainly playing in too good luck to have it last and we had been nicknamed O'Ryan's 3 ring Circus also the "Lucky 102nd." which was surely true.

Oct. 2nd, 6:30 P.M. I was sitting peacefully in a pup tent with 3 other fellows, gossiping - it was just getting dark - bang, machine gun bullets began popping just overhead. Of course we were curious and ducked out to find out what the excitement was. As soon as we were in the open we could also hear the whir of aeroplane motors and we found a dandy battle going on in the air just over our heads. We inquired about it and found out that 5 Hun planes had come over our lines to take pictures of our positions. Having come over in a high altitude and in the clouds they were unobserved until one of them dipped down to a lower altitude and one of our planes happening along engaged it in battle.

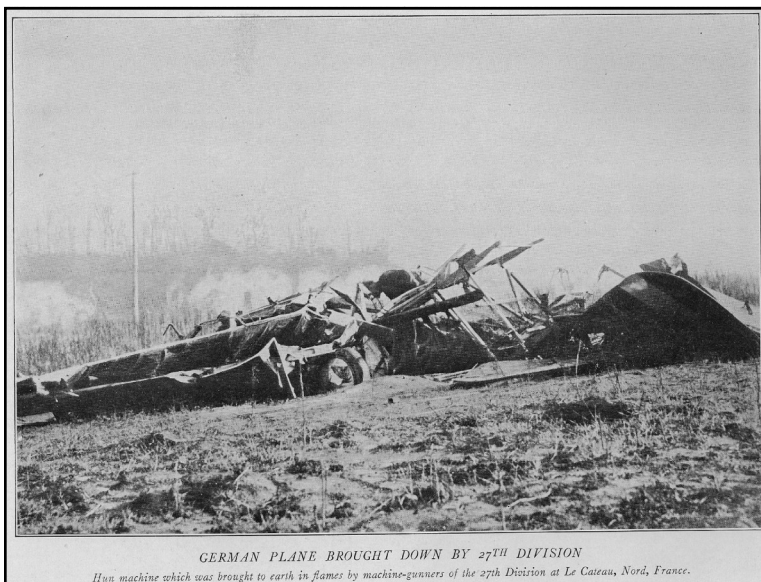
The other 4 planes then dropped down to help out their comrade when along came 5 other American planes and the excitement began. When our 5 planes arrived the other 4 Hun planes turned tail and made their best speed for home. The other Hun plane was so well boxed in by our fellows that he couldn't get away so the fun continued. Speaking

of spirals, tail dips and side slides; we viewed everything those boys had in stock while they were manouvering for position; machine gun bullets were flying thick and fast, some clipping twigs from trees, and some going far away but the odds were too great and finally down came the Hun in a blaze of glory - for us. Some lieutenant from Buffalo was given credit for that plane as he was after him all the time until he was brought down. The Hun machine fell in a woods about a mile away and we all ran to the spot. It had fallen in a tree, breaking through it and hitting the ground right side up. Both the Germans in the machine were only bruised and should have considered themselves very lucky. In a few minutes there were a couple thousand soldiers in the spot and even with the machine a mass of flames and machine gun bullets popping from the heat, also the gas tank on

fire, they would run in and break souvenirs from the machine so that soon there was nothing left of it. The Hun fliers were put under guard and things settled down.

Wherever there was a chance, the American soldiers would gather souvenirs, which reminds one of the story about the Hun prisoner being quizzed by an American officer. The officer asked the Boche if he knew what the different countries were fighting for and he said certainly he knew: "the Germans were fighting for the Fatherland, the French for the Republic, the English for the King and the Americans for the souvenirs." The French also realized this fact as they would make cigarette lighters out of one pound and smaller

shells, also of bullets and "Gott mit uns" belt buckles, and paper weights and such things and sell them to the American soldiers for exhorbitant prices. I know because I fell for them and paid their prices only to have the things get too heavy to carry, then when we moved from place to place little by little away went the souvenirs and my pack grew lighter.



GERMAN PLANE BROUGHT DOWN BY 27TH DIVISION
Hun machine which was brought to earth in flames by machine-guns of the 27th Division at Le Cateau, Nord, France.

About this time the aeroplanes were becoming more active as they were arriving in great quantities from the U.S. and we were making sure of supremacy in the air.

From the Historian:

I am continuing the work of archiving the massive number of newspaper clippings and photos into a searchable database. Quite a project, but we are always looking for more clippings and identified photos of veterans. Contact me if you can help in digitizing or have paperwork or artifacts that are important to the Division. At this stage, preservation of WWI and WWII artifacts is the key to maintaining the history of the Division and our brothers in arms in the 20th Century.

Next: "Marne"

The Way it was - the Way it is

PERSONAL RATIONS OF THE 27TH

C-Rations

Soldiers in WWII went to the field with four type of rations—B, C, D & K. The most common field ration was the “C” Ration—a common staple of field life that would continue until the late 1950’s. Development began in 1938 eventually leading to three meals, meat and beans, meat-and-vegetable hash, and meat-and-vegetable stew. Each was supplemented with cereal, biscuits, candy, coffee, jam, etc. depending on the intended meal—breakfast, lunch or dinner. Finally, each had an accessory pack with cigarettes, matches, toilet paper, gum and a can opener.

In 1958, the replacement called, “Meal, Combat Individual” was introduced but was visually similar, so the name “C-Rat” would continue until the early 1980’s)



MRE's

In the early 1960’s, the US Government began development of a combat ration that would be lighter weight, more nutritious and easier to manufacture. By 1975 dehydrated meal items had been used in certain combat rations and were selected to be used in the first tests of the MRE’s. By 1981, the initial special issue began with 12 Meals and by 1986, MRE’s were in service as the primary field ration. Feedback from the field was mixed and led to numerous changes beginning in 1993 beginning with a flameless heater. By 1994 all dehydrated items were removed. The number of entrées expanded to 16 by 1996, 20 entrées by 1997 and 24 entrées by 1998. Today, service members can choose from up to 24 entrées, and more than 150 additional items



Author Major Robert Romano has been the 27th Brigade’s “New Equipment Fielding Officer” since 2006 and has been the primary project officer on over 75 fieldings from shotguns to satellite communications equipment.

Civil War History meets the 27th

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER, FORT IRWIN, Calif. -- New York Army National Guard Col. Geoffrey Slack hosted Civil War Reenactor Neil Morrison, a member of the Southern California Civil War reenactors of the 69th Infantry Regiment and curator of the Fort Irwin Museum. The Civil War reenactors met with their



contemporary peers of the Guard's 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry and talked about the differences in the lives of 69th Soldiers over the past 150 years. Col. Slack is the former battalion commander of the 69th Infantry and now commands the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Thunder in the Mojave

NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER, FORT IRWIN, Calif. -- New York Army National Guard Soldiers from Battery A, 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery Regiment from New Windsor, N.Y., perform an exercise gun fire drill on their M119A2 howitzer here Oct. 16. The NTC training rotation, through late October, pro-



vides Soldiers from the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team with a realistic, demanding training environment. The exercise stresses leaders, Soldiers and staffs in a simulated combat environment. The Soldiers are training here as part of the unit's preparations for future mobilizations and deployments.



MAILBAG

— TAPS —



- Vincent E. Busone -

Resident of North Port Fl. Passed away on June 20, 2011. He served in Co A, 105th Infantry and was activated with the 27th DIV in 1941. After completing OCS in 1943 he transferred to the USAD, 439th Troop Carrier Group and served until 1945. He served with the Reserves until 1977.

He worked at the VA Hospital, Albany, NY and retired from the VA Hospital in Northampton, MA. He is survived by his wife Lauretta, 2 sons, 2 daughters, 13 grandchildren and 12 Great grandchildren.

- Constantine Varvisotis -

Resident of Vestal, NY passed away on August 31, 2011. He retired from the NY ARNG with over 35 years of service. He served in A Co 175 IN BN, 27th DIV until reorganization in 1968 and continued his service with 204th Engineer BN until retirement.

He is survived by his wife Vivian of 56 years, his sons Michael & James, daughters Darlene & Connie and four grandchildren.

- John "Jack" Hayes -

Resident of Palm Beach Shores, FL passed away on 13 October 2011 after a long battle with Parkinson's disease. Jack began his military career soon after graduating high school. On active duty he was assigned to a Special Forces BN and was the only Guardsmen assigned as a helicopter pilot and on airborne status simultaneously.

He is survived by his wife of 51 years, Bronwen, 2 sons, 3 grandsons his brother and sister.

- Stanley W. Gardner -

Resident of Johnson City, NY passed away on 13 Nov 2011 at the age of 92. Stan was mobilized in 1940 with the 27th DIV, H Co, 106th IN and served in the Pacific. He was a long and faithful member of the Association and served as the National Commander from 1981-1982. He was a past commander of the Johnson City VFW and a member of the American Legion.

He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Esther and his son, Timothy.

- Robert "Skeet" Alexander -

Resident of Freeville, NY passed away on 6 July, 2011. Robert served on active until becoming a member of the 27th BDE in 1998 and served until 2008 with the 1-108th IN and BDE HHC.

He was a gentleman, who loved to travel and experience other cultures. He enjoyed music and all outdoor activities.

He is survived by his wife Cynthia.

- Mary Ann Wartonick -

Resident of Vestal NY, passed away on 29 Nov 11 after a courageous battle with cancer.

Mary was an active member of the 27th DIV Association's Women's Auxiliary until it disbanded in 2006.

Mary Ann was married to Bob Wartonick, Assistant Chaplain for the 27th DIV Association and Post 11 Secretary.

Mary was a charming wonderful woman who will be missed by all who knew her.



THE SHUTTERBUG PAGE



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