

THE COMM

FALL/WINTER 2016

Newsletter

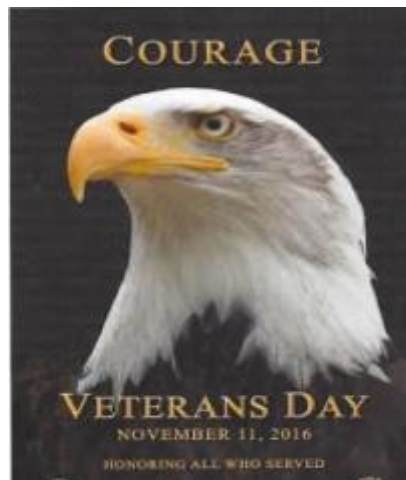
St. Mary's Festival

On Sunday May 14, 2016 the 101st AB 502nd Living History and the Central Ohio Military Museum (COMM) set up at the St. Mary's Festival in St. Mary's, Ohio. Displays included AC patches, airborne patches, D-Day items, Handie Talkie, knives, uniforms of WWII veterans, weapons, T-5 parachute, posters, .30 cal machine gun, bazooka with rocket, 60mm mortar, demolition display and several uniforms on mannequins. The weather was poor. It rained most of the day, but we still had a good deal of traffic. We set up on the covered bridge, so we were dry. It was open from 11:00am to 4:00pm.



Grove City Veterans Day

The American Legion Paschall Post 164 and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8198 presented the Veterans Day event at the Town Center Museum in Grove City, Ohio on November the 11th 2016. Cheryl Grossman was the guest speaker. She is the past Mayor of Grove City and the current State Representative from the Ohio House District 23. The COMM brought a jeep as a backdrop to the event in front of the museum. When the event concluded all the attendees were invited back to the Legion hall for lunch.



American Legion Paschall Post 164
Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8198

The American Legion family wishes to thank Mayor Ike Steg, The Grove City Welcome Center and Museum, the Grove City Police Division, the Jackson Township Fire Department, the Grove City High School NJROTC Color Guard, and the Central Crossing High School NJROTC Color Guard for their help in making this day possible.

When the Veterans Day event was over I was approached by the Grove City K-9 police. He asked if he could have a picture of his partner in the jeep. The honor was mine.



Columbus Veterans Day Parade

On Thursday November 10, 2016 the COMM and the 101st AB Living History Group participated in the Columbus Veterans Day Parade in downtown Columbus, Ohio. We have joined with the Ohio Historical Connection for the last 5 years. The Connection float theme this year was WWI.



Snow Hill Elementary School

On January 12th 2017 Dennis Sullivan, representing the 101st Airborne Living History Group, and myself gave a presentation to the after school history group at the Snow Hill Elementary School in Springfield, Ohio. Our presentation was on the causes that developed between WWI and WWII that led to war. We discussed the political climate, the Great Depression, Germany's war planning, Japans aggression in china and finally Pearl Harbor. We brought a Navy uniform, a navy flight jacket with Remember Pearl Harbor painted on the back, cases of pins/medals and two binders with portraits of WWII veterans.



We were invited by history teacher Larry Marple. Larry is a fellow living historian we met many years ago. He portrays Teddy Roosevelt. His wife, Julia, portrays Teddy's wife Edith Roosevelt. Larry and Julia do a first person portrayal of the president in different time period clothing.

If you would like to learn more or have "Teddy" be at an event in your area his contact info can be found on his website: <http://troosevelt1904.com/>

Grove City Veteran Corporal Howard J. Bentley

Cpl Howard J. Bentley

Serial #35636028

Serial#236265210

Service: October 201942 to October 1945

Awards: Bronze Star (2 OLC & V for Valor), Good Conduct, American Campaign, Asia Pacific (invasion arrowhead and 2 stars), WWII Victory, Occupation, Korean War, Philippine Liberation (w/2 stars) and Philippine Independence Medals. He also earned a Presidential Unit Citation and Philippine Unit Citation.



Howard was born on 8 December 1920 in Greenup, Kentucky. He attended McKell High School where he played basketball, baseball and football. He worked in the store his Dad operated. In 1942 Howard was drafted into the Army went to Fort Thomas, Kentucky. He completed boot camp at Fort Wheeler, Georgia. He was assigned to the 96th ID and was stationed at Camp Adair, Oregon. He was selected for the S-2 section and qualified as a Sharpshooter.

Camp Adair (1942-1946) - Established in 1942 and formally dedicated 4 Sep 1943 on 50,000 acres in Benton and Polk Counties, Oregon and was deactivated 23 May 1946. Camp Adair was named after Lt. [Henry Rodney Adair](#), a West Point Graduate ([Quilum 4309](#)), who was killed 21 Jun 1916 during Gen. Pershing's incursion into Mexico.



Camp Adair Entrance



Camp Adair Map

World War II (1941-1945)

Camp Adair was built as a training center during World War II and was occupied by four divisions of combat infantry troops, the 91st U.S. Infantry Division (Powder River), the 96th U.S. Infantry Division (Deadeye), the 104th U.S. Infantry Division (Timberwolf), and the 70th U.S. Infantry Division (Trailblazer). As these divisions were shipped out the U.S. Army turned the base hospital over to the U.S. Navy to handle casualties from the Pacific Theater. The hospital was enlarged to take care of 3,600 convalescents. The camp also served as a prisoner of war camp between Aug 1944 and Apr 1946 for Italian and German prisoners. Another group that was located at Camp Adair was the 9th Signal Corp. The civilian leader of this group was Robert E. "Zeke" Walton who was charged with training and directing the Signal Corp Photographers. I have posted some of his photographs and some of his memorabilia can be viewed at the Linn County Museum in Albany, Oregon. After the war ended and the camp closed, Zeke returned to Roseburg where he and a partner (Sd Frederickson) opened the Photo Lab and Studio.

In September of 1944 Howard was shipped to Hawaii where he took jungle training. He remembered in his training at boot camp that they trained with wood sticks to simulate rifles. They finally got 1903's before receiving their M1 Garand's. Now that the training was complete it was time to prepare for combat.

Howard was on the first wave on the Leyte invasion. Two hours after they landed T/Sgt McClain of "L" Company 383rd Regiment was killed by a machine gun fire. The Company commander ordered Howard to take out the machine gun nest. Howard got some oxen (he was used to farm animal having been raised on a farm) and used them to transport a 37mm gun (he was trained on all weapons up to the 37mm gun). He eliminated the enemy and their gun.

"The 96th Infantry Division trained in Hawaiian Islands, July to September 1944, before entering combat in an assault landing in Leyte Gulf, Philippine Islands, between Tanauan and Dulag, 20 October 1944. Enemy resistance in the beachhead area was quickly broken and the Division had advanced to and secured the Tanauan-Dagami-Tabontabon sector by 9 November after heavy fighting. The Division continued to wipe out resistance on the island, engaging in small unit actions, patrolling, probing, and wiping out pockets of Japanese. Chalk Ridge was taken, 12 December 1944, and major organized resistance was at an end by Christmas Day. The next 3 months were spent in mopping up, security duty, training, and loading for the coming invasion of Okinawa."

The action on Leyte as recounted below by Don Dencker:

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“At 10:00 am on October 20, 1944 (A Day) the 96th Infantry Division made the amphibious assault landing on Blue and Orange beaches, Leyte Island, marking the return of U.S. forces to the Philippines. Our opposition was the Japanese 16th Infantry Division, infamous for taking part in the rape of Nanking, China and the 1942 defeat of U.S. forces on Bataan.

The landing was textbook perfect against light Japanese opposition. Deadeyes, advancing over almost impenetrable swamps (described in intelligence reports as farmland) defeated the Japanese at Tabontabon and captured strategic Catmon Hill. By October 30, the 96th had captured their entire assigned beachhead area. During November and early December 1944 the 96th Division destroyed the remnants of the Japanese 16th Division in the hills and jungle west of Dagami, Leyte.

Between December 6th and 10th elements of the 96th Division combated and destroyed Japanese paratroops who had descended upon and captured Buri Airfield near Burauen, Leyte. For action during this fighting, Pfc. Ova Kelly, Company 'A', 382nd Infantry was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. For the Leyte Battle sadly, 514 Deadeyes were killed in action or died of wounds. Almost 1,500 were wounded, with a like number of disease casualties. As of 2007 there were 12 men from the 96th Infantry Division still listed as Missing in Action for the Leyte Battle.

For its part in the liberation of Leyte the 96th Infantry Division was awarded the Philippine Presidential Unit Citation. Deadeyes are still well remembered on Leyte, where every October 20th is celebrated as Liberation Day. Hill 120 on Blue Beach 1, where the 3rd Battalion, 382nd Infantry landed is now the 96th Infantry Division Veterans Memorial Park. There are also four 96th Infantry Division Veterans Memorial Libraries at Jarq, Burauen, Tabontabon and Dagami, Leyte.

Howard remembered the smell of death and war after the fight for Leyte. He said that Squad strength had been reduced to as little as three men per Squad. Replacements were sent to replace casualties only to be quickly killed or wounded. Howard said he learned how to eat grasshoppers and bargain for coconuts. One cigarette could get a native to get you one coconut. They were taken off Leyte after two months and began to refit and replace troops before the invasion of Okinawa.

Okinawa was a real test of the Deadeyes!

“The division left the Philippines, 27 March 1945, for Okinawa, making an assault landing on the island, 1 April 1945. The landing was unopposed and a beachhead was established, between 1 April to 3 April 1945. Resistance stiffened considerably as the division advanced to Gakazu Ridge, where fighting was fierce, during 7 April to 16 April 1945. The 96th assaulted and cracked the fanatically defended enemy defense line, Tanabaru Nishibaru, 17-23 April, and after advancing slightly against extremely determined resistance, was relieved, 30 April, by the 77th Infantry Division. The division trained and rested, 1-9 May, while elements mopped up bypassed enemy pockets and then returned to the offensive, 10 May 1945, attacking and capturing Conical-Sugar Hill Ridge, 21 May, thus breaking the right flank of the Shuri defenses. Heavy rains the following week slowed down the advance. The offensive was resumed, 30 May, against weakening enemy resistance; Japanese north of Yonabaru-Shuri-Naha Road area were cleared out. Resistance stiffened again, 3 June, and Laura Hill was taken, 14 June 1945, only after a bloody fight; the last important Japanese defense position, the Yuza-Dake, Yaeju-Dake Hill mass, was secured by 17 June, and on 22 June all resistance was declared at an end. The Division patrolled an area from Chan to Ogusuku until 30 June. After resting in July, the Division left Okinawa for Mindoro, in the Philippines, and engaged in a training program. The Division left the Philippines, 17 January 1946, for the United States.”

The atom bombs proved too much for the Japanese and they surrendered before an invasion was necessary. Howard had earned enough points to be shipped back to the states. He came home on October of 1945.

He returned to work at Bethlehem Steel in Baltimore, Maryland before getting married to Mildred. They had a daughter of 9 months old when he was recalled to service in Korea. He was a Corporal in the army reserves. In 1950 he was recalled and assigned to the 394th Chemical Corp. He reported to Fort Knox, Kentucky, he was sent to Fort Mead Maryland and then to the Edgewood Arsenal in Maryland. From Edgewood he was sent to Korea. He spent one year having on occasion spread smoke over harbors and air bases.

Howard currently lives in Grove City, Ohio.

Submitted by:
Bob Traphagan
COMM Curator