

THE POWDER RIVER REVIEW

The voice of the Wild West Division

“Powder River, Let'er Buck”

Editor's Note

As we mentioned before this is a new series of newsletters to report on the activities of the 91st Division and its history. If you have an event or something that you would like to have covered please contact 1st Lt. Kevin Braafladt kevin.d.braafladt.mil@mail.mil or Sgt. 1st Class Jason Hudson jason.v.hudson.mil@mail.mil for story submission requirements. All stories are subject to editing by Public Affairs Office staff. In addition we also hope to include details of our Division's history as well as historic items of interest.

Newsletter Contributors: 1st Lt. Braafladt, Sgt. 1st Class Jason Hudson



Our New Command Sergeant Major

Command Sergeant Major Larry May will become the 91st Training Division's new Command Sergeant Major during the November battle assembly and we thought we would share some of his background information for those who could not attend the ceremony. Most recently he served as the Command Sergeant Major for the 645th Regional Support Group, Southfield, MI. Command Sergeant Major May has 14 years' experience as a CSM, serving at both the Battalion and Group level. During his 32 year career CSM May served in many leadership positions, including Command Sergeant Major of the 643rd Regional Support Group and 319th Quartermaster Battalion, 1SG of both the 2nd PSYOP GP Headquarters Company and the 350th Tactical PSYOP Company. CSM May is moving on to his next assignment as the Command Sergeant Major of the 91st Training Division.

In his civilian occupation, CSM May is a Senior Analyst with The General Physics Corp. of Troy, MI. CSM May is married to Mrs. Bridget May. The May's have four children and the family resides in North Ridgeville, OH.

“Faces of the Fallen”



The month of October 1944 was a crucial period of time for the 91st Infantry Division in World War Two. The Division was facing some of the strongest resistance it has encountered to date at the town of Livergnano. However before Livergnano could be taken Highway 65 and the small village of La Fortuna had to be captured and held, see center picture. This task was given to Co. I, 361st Infantry Regiment of the 91st Division. This Company was ordered to take the village and hold their position to stop any retreating Germans from the south to link up with the Germans holding the town of Livergnano. Over the course of two days of difficult fighting I company was scattered and nearly destroyed. They did however hold the important village of La Fortuna which eventually led to the liberation of Livergnano several days later. The casualties that occurred from holding the town were nine killed and a majority of the Company suffering wounds. One of the nine men killed, pictured above left, was PFC Wilmer Kenney. He was killed when a German tank round burst on the north face of the house. He had been with I Company since its activation at Camp White in Oregon. He was from Taylor County, Wisconsin and was older than most of the other men when he entered basic training at 29 years old. He was known as Grandpa to many in the company. He also had a wife and two year old daughter named Katheryn. He was later buried in the Florence American Cemetery with many of his fallen comrades from the 91st. The top right picture, taken in 2013, shows Katheryn and her son John visiting his grave for the first time. We honor his memory along with all those who fell defending the United States.

91st Division Stars and Stripes Article

The Stars & Stripes
February 14, 1919

A.E.F. DIVISIONS: THEIR RECORDS, THEIR MARKS

Ninety-First Division

National Army of Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Idaho, Nevada, Montana, Wyoming and Utah. Divisional headquarters arrived in France July 12, 1918. Activities: Argonne-Meuse sector near Vauquies, Sept. 20-Oct. 3 (Argonne-Meuse offensive, Sept. 26-Oct. 3); west of Escaut river, Belgium, Oct. 30-Nov. 10-11.

4; east of Escaut river, Belgium, Nov. 10-11.

Prisoners captured: 12 officers, 2,400 enlisted men. Guns captured: 33 pieces of artillery, 471 machine guns. Total advance on front line: 34 kilometers.

Insignia: Green fir tree. The 91st is known as the "Wild West Division." Design emblematic of the far West.



"Powder River, Let'er Buck!"

The phrase Powder River, Let'er Buck, has been the 91st Division motto ever since the start. Legend has it that as the 91st Division was being formed at Camp Lewis Washington that the new soldiers arriving came from all walks of life. From well-dressed professionals in cities to cowboys directly off of cattle drives. One soldier still in his work clothes and holding his saddle was wondering around looking for his unit when an officer yelled to him asking where he was from. He responded, from Wyoming, Sir! Powder River, Let'er Buck! The saying quickly spread to the rest of the Division becoming the battle cry even before they left for France. It was meant to show the Division's rough and ready start as the Wild West Division. The phrase has several different explanations as to how it started the most common is that it started as an expression to celebrate the rough cowboys that rode along and through the Powder River to Casper, Wyoming during cattle drives and how if you didn't have the right horse that they could buck while making the river crossing. So you either had to be an experienced cowboy or have a good horse. The motto was also used to describe the 91st Division as rough cowboys during its ship ride overseas. One of the ships used was manned by British sailors and on the first day at sea a number of fights were started between members of the Division and the crew over disparaging comments about America joining the war so late. Legend has it that there was an uneasy truce for the remainder of the voyage after the members showed their Wild West background.



91 Mile March



Shortly after the reactivation of the 91st Infantry Division at Camp White, Oregon the new commander, Major General Charles H. Gerhardt, decided to conduct a 91-mile march to inspire the members of the Division. Undertaken to instruct the cadre in marches and bivouacs and to test the best physical powers of the officers and men, the march of 91 miles was made through the rough roads and trails of the Cascade Mountains. The distance was covered in 28-3/4 hours of actual marching time. Once completed a certificate was awarded to each member on behalf of the Division Commander.

91st Division Family



As the Division Historian, I have met a number of current 91st Division soldiers who had family members who served in the 91st at some point. If you have this family tie to the 91st Division please contact me if you are willing to share your family's story and to share pictures.