

# Arkansas Military History Journal

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## The Arkansas National Guard at War in the 20th Century

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**Cover Photograph:** Accession 2005.6.52 from the ARNG Museum Collection.  
Picture of the 936th FA during the Korean War.

# Table of Contents

<b>Message from the Editor.....</b>	<b>4</b>
 <b>217th Maintenance Battalion Direct Support/General Support Operation Desert Shield/Storm .....</b>	<b>5</b>
By LTC Richard E. Haley <i>Originally Published in Spring 1994 Journal</i>	
 <b>The 154th Observation Squadron in North Africa.....</b>	<b>9</b>
From Materials Contributed by <i>MSgt Paul E. Schlaf</i> <i>Originally Published in Fall 1992 Journal</i>	
 <b>Recollections of the 936th Field Artillery .....</b>	<b>14</b>
By Arthur Stamm <i>Originally Published in Winter 1992 Journal</i>	
 <b>Air Guard Mobilized in Pueblo Incident.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Adapted by <i>SSG Nathan L. Barlow</i> <i>Originally Published in Spring 1994 Journal</i>	
 <b>History of the Bowie Knife .....</b>	<b>22</b>
By SGT Mike Jeu <i>Originally Published in Fall 1993 Journal</i>	

# Message from the Editor

In this issue, we move away from articles commemorating the Centennial of the First World War. Scouring the issues of the *Arkansas Military Journal* from the 1990s, which can be found on the Arkansas National Guard Museum website ([arngmuseum.com](http://arngmuseum.com)), we have located several articles, reprinted here, about the Arkansas National Guard at war during the 20th century. Because COL Damon Cluck has already masterfully covered the Arkansas Guard during World War I, all the articles are about the post-Great War era. With LTC Matthew Anderson's deployment, this issue does not include his featured artifact article, which is a regular addition to the Journal. It is hoped that LTC Anderson's feature will continue in the next edition. We hope you enjoy these articles from past Journal editions, you just might recognize the names of some of the authors.

***Dr. Raymond Screws***

**Editor/Arkansas National Guard Museum Director**

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# 217th Maintenance Battalion Direct Support/General Support Operation Desert Shield/Storm

By LTC Richard E. Haley

Originally Published in Spring 1994 Journal

**H**eadquarters, 217th Maintenance Battalion was mobilized on 27 November 1990 for participation in Operation Desert Shield/Storm. HHD, 217th is a command and control headquarters staffed to manage the maintenance operation of three to five Maintenance companies of any configuration with a maximum strength of 750 personnel. During the Persian Gulf War, after the final task organization, the battalion consisted of eight companies and five special teams with an average daily strength of 1,322 personnel and was the largest maintenance battalion ever formed in the Army. The battalion also fielded two additional companies, coordinated movement from port to the area of operations (AO) and provided life support functions for them until they were reassigned to other battalions. During that period of time the personnel accountability for the 217th swelled to over 1,680 people.

Eight days after being mobilized the 217th left the armory in Russellville, Arkansas and convoyed to Ft. Sill, OK. The Battalion (BN) went through all the personnel processing, equipment fill, validation, and was validated to deploy on 18 December 1990. Because of a lack of available aircraft there was a one week delay.

The advance party arrived in Saudi Arabia

on 25 December 1990, Christmas Day, and the main body was 4 days behind, arriving on the 29th. The HQ is 100% air deployable so all the equipment, including the vehicles, was on the planes with the troops.

The 217th spent 2 days in port waiting for clearance to move to the AO. On the evening of 1 January 1991 the convoy left port at 1700 hours and traveled all night arriving in the AO at dawn on 2 January. For security purposes all convoys had to move at night and we did not see anything and had no idea what to expect when daylight arrived.

The 217th was assigned to the 16th Area support group (ASG), of the 2nd Corps Support Command (COSCOM), in support of VII Corps. All we knew was that we were headed for their location at a place called Log Base Alpha (the BN moved to Log Base Echo as the 18<sup>th</sup> Airborne CORPS moved to the east of VII CORPS). As daylight arrived on 2 January we found ourselves 10 miles off the nearest road in the middle of the Arabian Desert and the first recognizable sight was a Patriot Battery 1/4lh a mile away. Further reconnaissance produced two more units within the base cluster (base cluster Haley, a 2x3 mile area). The units were the 85th Light Equipment Maintenance Company (LEMCO) and the 45th

Missile Maintenance Company, active duty units from Germany that were assigned to the 217th. We couldn't imagine why the base cluster was so large and wondered how we were going to defend it. We soon found out why. Other units assigned to the battalion were: the 2186th LEMCO, Army Reserve, Dallas, Texas; 1073rd Direct Support (DS) Maintenance Company, Michigan National Guard; 344th General Support (GS) Maintenance Company, Army Reserve, Louisiana; 523rd Test Measurement And Diagnostic Equipment (TMDE) Company, Regular Army; 224th DS Company, Arkansas National Guard; DAS3 of 166th DS Company; 65th and 66th EQUATE Teams; two civilian teams from General Dynamics and a special team for the repair of the desert fox vehicle (chemical detection vehicle from Europe) and Team Haley, a provisional transportation company created by 2nd COSCOM.

The mission of the 217th Maintenance Battalion was to support a deployed CORPS in combat. Specifically: to supervise maintenance management functions to include establishment of a DAS3 and SSA operation for interface with MMC in support of assigned and supported units; tailor the battalion to satisfy work load requirements and MST requirements to accomplish wartime mission; task subordinate units with an area support mission to specific customers; establish quality performance objectives to ensure a high state of materiel readiness among supported units; advise the corps support group commander of problem areas and make recommendations for resolution; ensure all maintenance assets were available to support CORPS offensive operations; and perform other missions as assigned.

The 217th accomplished its mission with greater efficiency and professionalism than ever imagined possible. The staff coordination and expertise was outstanding. When decisions and policy were made the staff sections caused them to happen. Their guidance and interaction with the battalion assigned units and the customer units was a model of Total Quality Management (TQM) in action. The civilian related management skills of the Mobilization Day (M-Day) soldiers and the expertise of the Full Time Manning (FTM) personnel worked perfectly together.

The Maintenance operations sections, managed the 1000+ mechanics, tracked over 1000 jobs daily that were in the shops, provided a daily status of each job to the commander, coordinated all MSTs and shifted work load as needed to provide the quickest possible turnaround of repair to the user. The section was also responsible for the supervision of the DAS3 and SSA which established a record in wartime that will stand for years to come.

The units operated 24 hours a day, completing 6113 work orders logged in for more than 420 separate customer units. The 217th also established the VII CORPS cannibalization point, wrote the SOP for its operation and issued 4370 parts from it at a cost of \$829,616.53 (AMDF). The supply support activity had the highest accuracy rate in VII CORPS at 97% and had over 20,000 parts on requisition. Peace time goals in Europe were 95%. By March 1991 the 217th was completing 51% of all maintenance work orders within 2nd COSCOM.

Team Haley, a provisional transportation company established by 2nd COSCOM had a mission of driving all vehicles from port to the replacement company at Log Base Echo for issue to all units in VII CORPS. We flew the drivers to the port on C130's and issued M915 tractors and 40 ft. trailers to haul all classes of issue to all units within the CORPS and back-haul all ALCO pallets to the airport. Both missions were accomplished while logging 94,000 miles with only one major accident.

Maintenance support teams (MST) were provided to 4 field hospitals, COSCOM HQ, POW camps, the GGSB, the port in Dhahran for all vehicles coming off ships, and the ASPs (Ammo Supply Points) on a permanent basis plus many others on a daily basis.

Whoever said corps assets stayed in the rear were not very good students of Air-Land Battle Doctrine. The 217th moved forward before the combat unit with only one battalion of armored cavalry between them and the Iraqi Army. The area of support mentioned earlier was conducted as the combat troops moved forward to stage for the attack. They had to move through and by us as they prepared for G-day in the neutral zone. The 217th was positioned at the lip of the neutral zone to provide the closest possible support before and after the combat forces moved forward. The concept was to get repairs done and stock up ammo, food, water, and fuel as they moved by. On G-day MSTs from the 217th followed the fighters through the gap. Fifteen HEMETT tankers of the 217th followed and refueled 1st CAV tanks the first night. In BG McFarland's words (2nd COSCOM Commander) "LTC

HALEY, tell your guys congratulations on the good job and tell them they earned their combat patch last night." A tailored maintenance team went through the gap the first night and established maintenance activities at log base Nelligan 65 miles north of Iraq. Nelligan was the first two log bases established in Iraq by VII CORPS. Other missions included tractors and trailers of the BN (35 each) hauling water, Meals Ready to Eat (MREs), and ammo. They were anticipated mission for G+4 but had to be implemented on G+1 because the battle went so fast that the killers out ran the supply line. The 217th captured Prisoners of War (POWs), backhauled POWs, performed recovery missions along the Main Supply Routes (MSRs), by sector search of the battlefield, was the primary commo repair center for VII CORPS, maintained a float of 250 radios of every configuration and had the capability of GS level repair of the circuit boards so they could be placed back into the float. The BN maintained the refrigeration units for keeping blood plasma and morgues cool. We even provided volunteers to work in the morgues. There were trained morticians in one of our National Guard units.

In addition to the maintenance operations, the other staff sections were just as active. The personnel section (S-1) provided mail service, processed and handled pay problems, emergency messages and leaves and received all replacement and filler personnel into the battalion.. They established promotion boards for three components of the service (National Guard, Army Reserve, and Regular Army)so that no soldier was delayed a promotion. They also planned and



established morale activities for the battalion.

Working very closely with the S-1 was the chaplain who provided religious services, did AA counseling, marriage counseling and was involved in every emergency message delivered to the soldiers. They also collected extra food items for issue to the Kuwaitee refugee children.

The security and operations sections (S-2/3) provided timely intelligence, commo, including E-mail by computer, maps, charts, and critical electronic direction finding devices (LORANS) which were needed for the recovery teams to navigate in the desert. The section also provided excellent NBC training and advice on the chemical situation at all times.

The supply section (S-4) provided life support such as food, clothing, tentage, cots, ammo, building materials, gravel, water, concertina wire, sand bags, and somehow came up with just about anything asked for or a good substitute. They provided recreational equipment of all kinds and established a fair and equal distribution schedule for all classes of supply to the companies.

The battalion did all these things in a timely and professional manner and was referred to by the 2nd COSCOM operations and planning staff as the “The famous 217th”. All the above is so very significant since the HQs was organized and staffed to handle a maximum of 750 personnel and actually had an average daily strength of 1322 and over 1200 pieces of organic equipment.

Patriot Missile

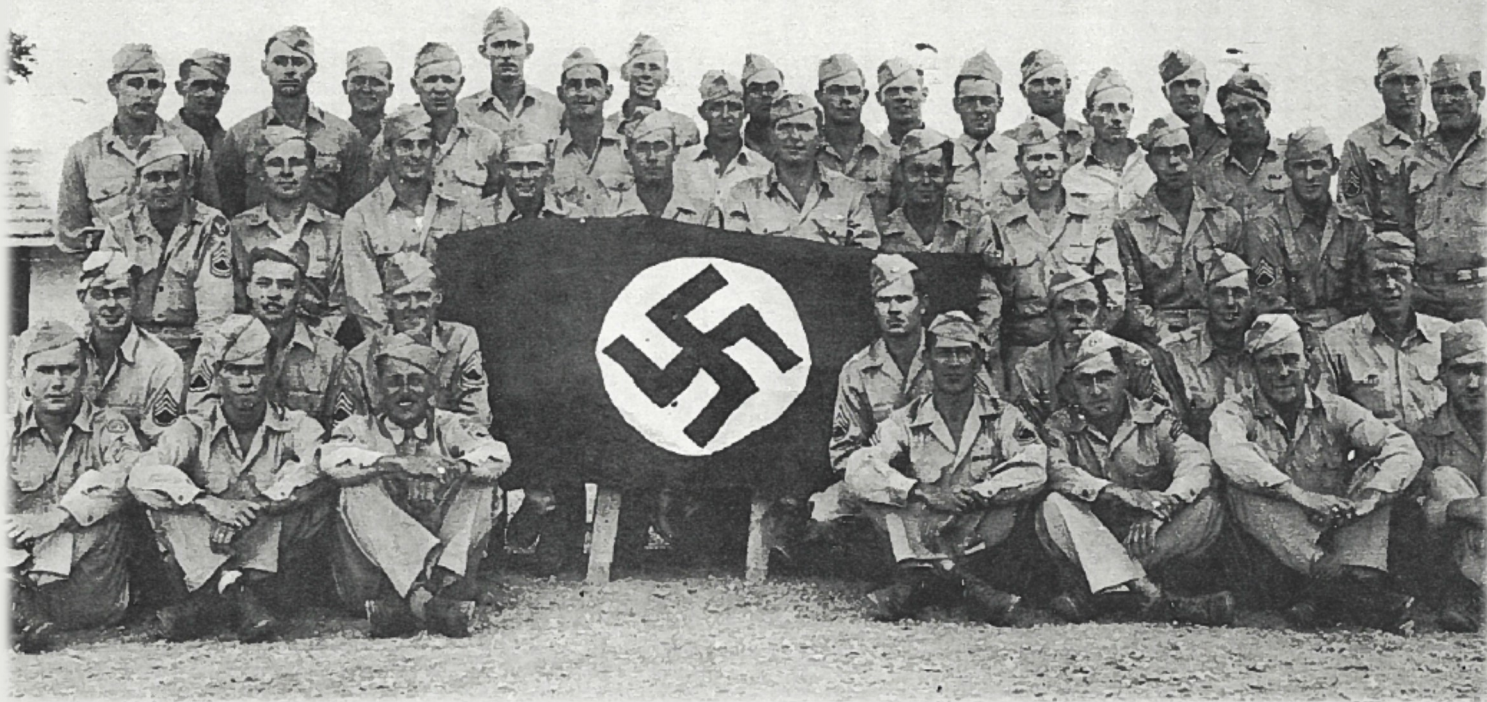
Scud Missile



43 Miles .....	<b>RANGE</b> .....	400 Miles
45 Miles/Minute .....	<b>SPEED</b> .....	75 Miles/Minute
1 Ton .....	<b>LAUNCH WEIGHT</b> .....	Nearly 8 Tons
Solid Fuel .....	<b>PROPULSION</b> .....	Liquid Fuel
Radar Guided .....	<b>GUIDANCE</b> .....	Programmed on Ground

*The Patriot successfully countered Saddam’s Scud terror missile—an effort to draw Israel into the war—although missile debris and a few warheads reached populations in Israel and Saudi Arabia.*

# The 154th Observation Squadron in North Africa



*154th Weather Reconnaissance Squadron personnel with captured German flag, Nouvion, North Africa, 1943.*



*Le Sers Airfield, Tunisia, N. Africa—May, 1943*

The 154th Tactical Airlift Training Squadron (154th TATS) traces its history to the very beginning of our Nation's air power during World War I. Experience gained in England and France during this conflict when the unit was designated the 154th Aero Squadron and the later training gained when the unit was reactivated by President Calvin Coolidge in 1925 as the 154th Observation Squadron helped prepare the unit for the frenzied years of World War II. The Squadron was among the first of the air units of the National Guard to be called to active duty on 16 September 1940 in anticipation of World War II. When the call came, the 154th anxiously made preparations for the coming action.

Shortly after the unit engaged in its last full scale maneuvers during the summer of 1942 near Winston Salem, North Carolina, a message arrived— "prepare for overseas shipment." The ensuing weeks and months that resulted have been captured in striking detail in the work of Frederick W. Gillies. "The Story of a Squadron, an Illustrated Overseas War Diary-Album." This incisive work portrays the day by day life experiences of the Squadron with all of the human feelings and emotions embraced by its members. To read this chronology is to know how it really was.

Extracts from Gillies' work are presented here to provide the reader a window into a small portion of this distinguished unit's history during their service in North Africa during World War II.



From Materials Contributed by **MSgt Paul E. Schlaf**  
Originally Published in Fall 1992 Journal



# 1942

## November

### **Aboard HMS "Letitia", in the Gulf of Arzew; N. Africa – Nov. 9**

As darkness comes on tonight and the seas wildly slap the sides of the ship, a small advance group of our Squadron dons full pack and climbs down crazily swaying rope ladders to a lurching barge below. After the slow tortuous job of loading is completed, the barge is freed from our ship and sputters away into the darkness. Those who remain on Board the "Letitia" peer in toward the unseen shoreline, listen intently until the sound of the small boat is mixed with the wind and water noises of the night.

### **Tafaraoui Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa – Nov. 18**

After two uncertain days here, spent mostly in just waiting, eating British rations and sleeping on the ground, we head cross-country toward Algiers; this time, we ride those torture boxes of the last war, the old French freight cars, "the 40 and 8's!" (Forty men and eight horses!)

### **Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa – Nov. 22**

Our clothes so dirty they "could stand up by themselves," we spend the day washing and cleaning up "where'd we ever collect so much dirt?" we ask looking at the murky wash water.

### **Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa – Nov. 25**

The silence of men-sleeping is ruptured late tonight as one of our men, experiencing a vivid dream, hollers out "AIR RAID! AIR RAID!" Immediately, the hangar becomes alive with moving figures and we scramble wildly for the man-made ravines near the hangars, fruitlessly listen for planes which do not come.

## December

### **Blida Airdrome, Algeria, N. Africa – Dec. 3**

Night passes its mid-point, a restless soldier glances sleepily at his watch. It is one o'clock. He pulls the covers up closer and resets his body over the metal bed springs and launches again into sleep. And then, into the stillness of the night cuts the air raid siren. The whole barracks becomes electrically alive. We pour through the doors of the building and streak for the shelters. But before all can leave the building, the piercing, wailing drone of a diving plane bears steadily downward and then comes the ear shattering burst of bombs. We crouch in rain-filled foxholes, lay sprawled out on the gummy fields to the side of the airdrome. All night long, enemy planes, and sometimes it seems just one lone plane, press the attack, coming over the field at forty minute intervals. At daybreak, more than one of us exclaim, "I was never so glad to see the sun in all my life!" Thus passes our most intensive bombing to date.

### **Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa – Dec. 16**

At 0755 hours this morning, we at last become an operational unit. At this time, 1st Lt. Fred Monthei, accompanied by Gunner-Sergeant Gerrel O'Quin,

pilots the first Squadron A-20 on combat' sub-patrol over the waters in the Oran area. Along one leg of the course, one pilot spots a twin-engine down 18 miles west of Habibas Island. After returning to La Senia Airbase, Lt. Monthei leads a flying boat to the wrecked plane's position. "No sub sightings as yet:"...(In general, such sub-patrols will be within a 50-mille radius of Oran. Along with other 68th Observation Group aircraft, we will fly a close-knit, overlapping course, thus minimizing the chance of overlooking any enemy sea craft in the area. Four 250 pound depth charges will be the main offensive weapon carried by A- 20.)

### **Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa – Dec. 21**

In "Good-bye, Mr. Chips" we see our first American movie since leaving England. Despite the poor sound and bitter cold, we crowd the wind walling hangar to capacity tonight and stare eagerly at the flickering screen.



**The 154th Tactical Weather  
Reconnaissance Squadron**  
In North Africa and Europe

World War-2

A Squadron P-38 heads for enemy territory.

# 1943

## January

### **Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa – Jan. 1**

A cold shiver runs through our body this morning as we wake up to the Jarring notes of the six o'clock whistle. Opening the tent flap, we see before us in weird incongruity a thin blanket of SNOW! "Africa, the dark, steaming continent," bites out one man shaking the snow from his tent!

### **Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa – Jan. 2**

Lts. Dowling, Sheehan, Able. Monthei, Capt. Waters, Cpls. Scurlock, Sheppard, Sgts. Rice and Weiner - all up today on sub patrols and radio checks - report: "no incidents; no sightings."

### **Oujda Airbase, French Morocco, N. Africa – Jan. 5**

Sighting only allied convoys, Lts. Spradley, Kreslov, Caraway, Capt. Waters, Sgts. Kish, Shehans, Cpls. Galick and Jan- son return to base without incident.

The always welcome promotion list is posted today and tells of the following advances: to PRIVATES FIRST CLASS: Arnold Christenson, Thomas Crudden, George Flynn, Robert Halboth, William Hall, Glen Hefner, John Hubay, Robert Jennings, Paul Kahanic, Eugene McKenna, James Reynolds, Harold Rich, Ernest Tyree, Paul Wojcik. Sgt. Charles Richard is today relieved of his duties as First Sergeant of this Squadron.

**Oujda Airbase, French Morocco,  
N. Africa – Jan. 6**

After five days of uneventful flying, our crews (Lts. Sheehan, Foreman, Capt. Keith and McKinney, Cpls. Wempe and Noel) at last report "sighted a sub!" Depth charges are dropped on the suspected enemy sea craft but no definite claims can be made as a result of this attack. All planes return to base.

M/Sgt. Bernard Holstegge today assumes the duties of Acting First Sergeant of our Squadron.

**Oujda Airbase, French Morocco,  
N. Africa – Jan. 7**

From a dawn sub patrol this morning, one Squadron A-20 falls to return and the crew, Capt. Knapp, Lt. Gravestock, Sgt. Pozzi, and Pfc. Reynolds, are listed as "missing In action." Later this day, our planes are up on a search for the missing aircraft, but in their coverage of the area fail to find any traces of this ship.

**Oujda Airbase, French Morocco,  
N. Africa – Jan. 8**

Our A-20's continue on their search for the Squadron aircraft believed to have gone down in the sea yesterday; nothing is sighted in the wide area covered.

**Oujda Airbase, French Morocco,  
N. Africa – Jan. 14**

For the second day running, we rush out of our section buildings and watch with fascinated helplessness as another P-39, being put through its paces by pilots here on the field, spirals earthward and crashes far out on the field..."that's three in the last two days; that ship is becoming a Jinx."

**Oujda Airbase, French Morocco,  
N. Africa – Jan. 19**

2nd Lts. Theodore Dubois and Horace Finch become part of our flying personnel this day. Lt. Hilliker, until recently on detached service in England, also reports for duty.

Each day, many of us visit the French-Arab town of Oujda, a place of many sights and experiences: private baths where you can loll in a steaming tub-full of soapy water: crowded photo shops offering "gud" portraits; Arab kids pouncing on American soldiers with "shoo-shine?...vay-ree gud ...shooingum?...bon bon?"; side-walk cafes peopled with leisurely sprawling soldiers and civilians: white-legged Fifth Army MP's.

# February

**Youks Les Bains, Algeria,  
N. Africa – Feb. 17**

Major Dyas, Lts. Killian, Anstine, Pitts, Hilliker, Mayse, Kelsey. Schwab, Howard and Finch amass an Impressive claim total this day: destroyed-2 tanks, 8 trucks, 25 personnel: damaged-1 medium tank. 2 halftracks and 8 trucks. All our planes return to base and two ships are marked as "slightly damaged."

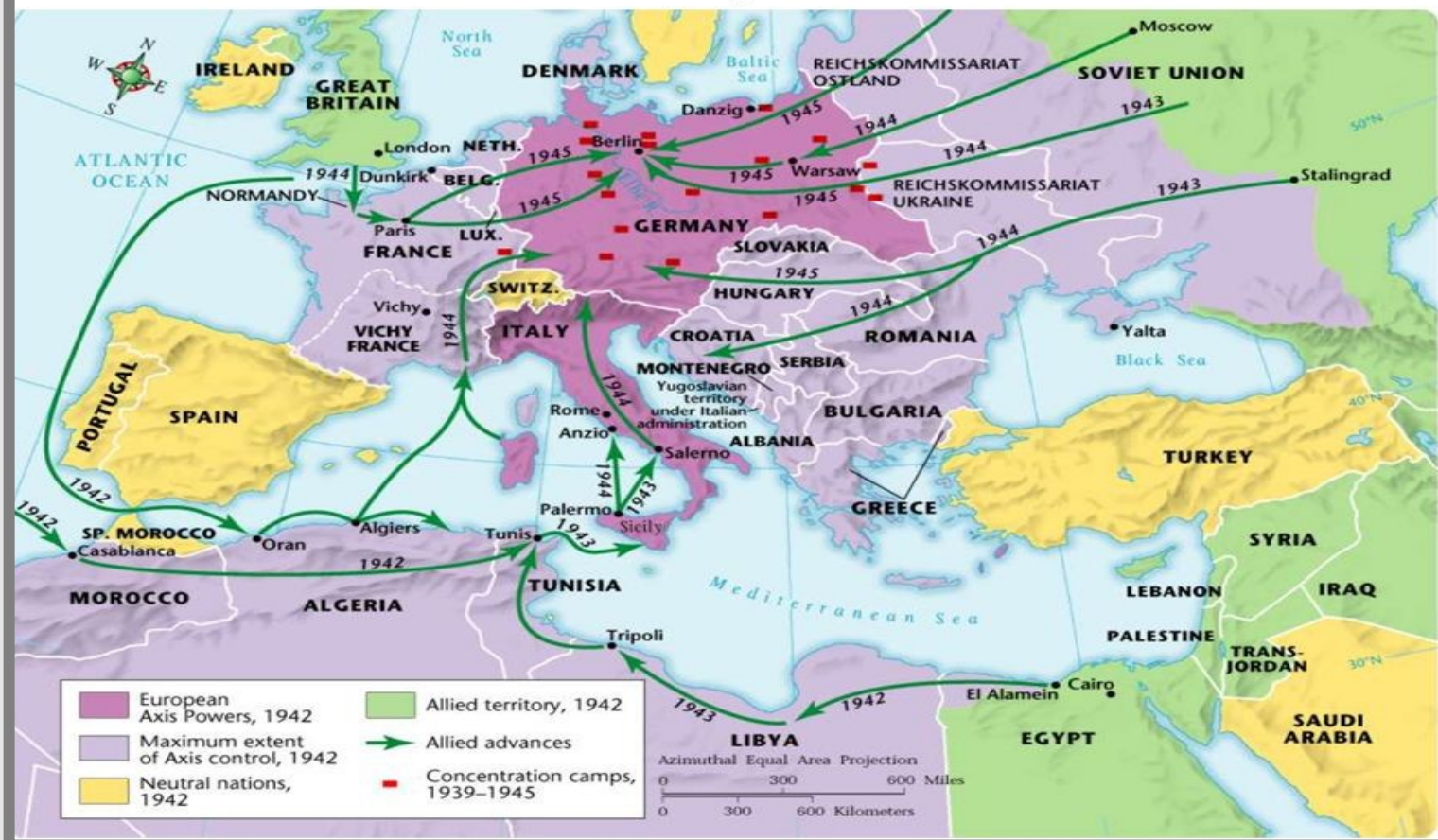
**Youks Les Bains, Algeria,  
N. Africa – Feb. 28**

The Axis, being constantly hammered from the air and on land, is now paying for the slaughter of Kasserine. Meanwhile, the 8th Army (British) approaches near the Mareth Line and overnight

Rommel must divide his forces between two threats-the British in the south, and the Americans, British, and French in the west.



# World War II in Europe and North Africa



## July

### Nouvion Airfield, Algeria, N. Africa – July 26

Each day passes here and all, somehow, manage to slip into one another. The line functions: bug-like planes stir up clouds of amber dust and then slip into the cradling cushion of the air: mechanics lay down in the shade and drowsily await their return. Cows, sheep, and Arabs wander over the field and runway and have to be chased off by a wildly weaving jeep or a few effective shots from a flare gun. The sun glares down with a yellow blazing eye and sending all but the necessary alert crews up on the hill to an afternoon of siesta. In the nearby fields, the grapes droop from vines in purple heaviness and a Jeep stops now and then, soldiers fan out into the fields, and soon return with arms full of the green and purple clusters. Once again, we experience the strange

feeling of wanderlust... the news from Sicily becomes increasingly good and the Axis is getting ready to do another CapBon in the northeast part of this first pre-continental bastion. Startling, yet wholly understandable. Is the news that "11 Duce" (Mussolini) has resigned his position as head of the Fascist Regime and also that King Victor Emmanuel "will carry on the war against the Allies."... Such is the news and we look with an anticipating eye toward the lands of Italy.

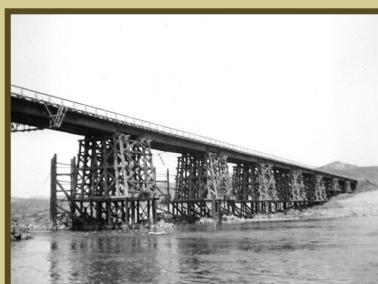
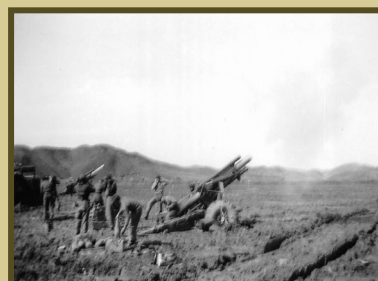
These are just a few of the examples of the trials of war that the members of the 154th endured during these perilous times. Life was precious and came to be cherished on the field of honor. The members of the 154th exemplified the fighting spirit of the Arkansas National Guard during the days of fighting in North Africa and that same spirit continues today among the members of the 154th Tactical Airlift Training Squadron.



# RECOLLECTIONS OF THE 936TH FIELD ARTILLERY

BY ARTHUR STAMM

Originally Published in Winter 1992 Journal



**A**fter basic and leaders course at Fort (then Camp) Chaffee, I was ordered to Fort Lewis for transfer to FECOM. We, I and 3500 other replacements, left Seattle aboard the MSTS Marine Lynx on 14 March 1953. Aboard were replacements for the Canadian "Princess Pat" Regiment. We dropped anchor in Tokyo Bay on 29 March 1953, arrived at Camp Drake near Yokohama on 30 March and returned to the ship on 31 March after processing and my assignment to the 936th.

I arrived at Inchon on 4 April, spent a couple of days in a replacement depot at Yongdungo, and arrived at the railhead at Yonchon 7 April. I was part of five replacements, products of the Chaffee leadership school - 85th Recon., which were picked up there by a Charlie Battery vehicle. I was assigned to the fifth gun section of Charlie Battery. The Main Line of Resistance (MLR) was approximately two miles in front of our Battery. A Republic of Korea (ROK) 105mm Battery was emplaced behind us - the theory was for the medium artillery (155mm) to be closer to the front to achieve greater interdiction range. I was told the battery had been in that same position, 35 miles east and a little north of Panmunjom, for the past 14 months.

We lived in squad tents surrounded by sandbagged walls. Nearby U. S. divisional artillery lived in bunkers. Our fires were usually one to five round battery missions, but single gun or platoon gun missions were not uncommon. On 7 May our gun, Number 5, fired a six hour, 44 round single gun mission trying to hit a Chinese gun dug into a tunnel from the reverse slope. Our target was literally a small hole in the forward slope from which the enemy gun tube protruded when it fired.

Observation for our Battalion was from Dagmar, Hill 355, which the 1st Commonwealth now occupied. Volunteers were regularly recruited to rebuild the forward observation (F.O.) bunker at Hill 355 and were offered four points as an inducement to volunteer. We were in a three point (support) zone, while troops on the MLR were in a four point zone. At the time it took 36 points to rotate, accumulated on a two, three, or a four point basis per month. Shortly before I arrived, the three versus two point (rear) zone border was revised and our service battery, finding itself zoned out of three points, immediately moved to get back into a three point zone.

Much of our fire was directed by air - the most ac-



curate method. Often we could see the L-19s, similar to a Piper Cub, cruising back and forth parallel to the MLR with Chinese anti-aircraft fire bursting around them. For proper spotting it was necessary to fly a straight line perpendicular to the target making the observing aircraft's route predictable. But I never saw one shot down.

We fired mostly night missions. These fires were for harassment and interdiction - H&Is. The theory was to keep the enemy awake and hopefully strike a road crossing just as it was being used. Chinese movement was virtually restricted to the hours of darkness due to our air domination. But the missions were almost always "on the Hour," as opposed to random times. It would have taken an unimaginably dull enemy commander not to have figured out the pattern and avoid it! They were neither dull nor unimaginable.

Only when the Chinese attacked did we fire extensively. These attacks would usually take place in the rain since rain diminished the effectiveness of our variable time - radio proximity (VT) fuse, which was the fuse of choice for air bursts against attacking infantry. Rain clouds simulate a solid object to the fuse and cause the shell to detonate in the air long before it arrived on target. The projectile was supposedly "bore-safe" in that it took the rotation of "going-up-the-tube" to arm it a few seconds after it left the gun. I have seen four of six rounds from a battery mission during the rain explode a few hundred yards in the air in front of our guns. Just before the war ended, we received new VT fuses supposedly less sensitive to rain.

The Korean 105 battery behind us was under orders not to fire VT under rain conditions as their shells became armed over our heads. Unfortunately, in their zeal to support their comrades, the 1<sup>st</sup> ROK, they often ignored these orders, resulting in "iron pot" time, steel helmets, and holes in our tents!

We became so dependent on the ease of VT fusing that a minor flap occurred one night when we were ordered to use time fuses and no one knew how to set them. There was a lot of reading of technical manuals the next day.

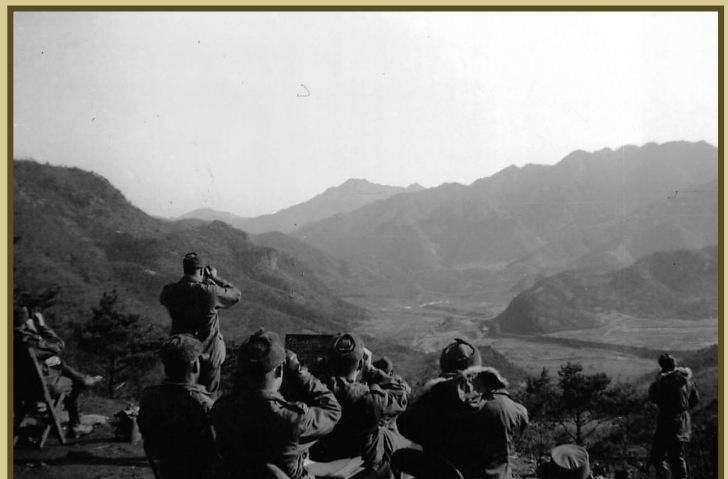
The war in Korea at this time, and for the last 18

months, was positional warfare. It was an artillery war. We fired more artillery rounds in Korea than in all of World War II. The Western Front (our battalion was located due north of Seoul) was anchored on Panmunjom. The Marines held east of there, then the 1st Commonwealth, 1st ROK (the Capitol Division) and U. S. 7th Division.

On 25 May, Charlie Battery pulled out of position and moved to "The Hook" to support the 1st Commonwealth repel an expected Chinese offensive. The word we received was it would come on a certain night (Thursday?) between eight and ten P. M. I have since learned such precise intelligence was not unusual. Chinese military doctrine prescribed specific knowledge of plans down to the squad level with the result that line crossers, i.e. deserters, told all - literally! For the first and only time we were firing 19 and 17 round battery missions - unheard of for 155's. And it was raining!

We usually were chewed out for firing too fast as this was deemed to cause excessive wear on the gun tube and also result in inaccurate laying of the gun on the aiming stakes. But not that night! A good crew on a 155 could put out five to six rounds a minute but I am sure we exceeded that. The main concern of our Chief of Section was that we swab between each round to avoid a powder bag detonation from burning residue before the breech was closed.

It was then an outpost war. In late June 1953 the Chinese attacked Queen, Bak and Betty which we supported. During these assaults on 1st ROK, was the largest shoot from our "permanent position,



there was a steady stream of traffic to the rear on the Military Service Road (MSR) next to our position. But the ROKs held although they lost outposts Queen, Bak and Betty. Fuses became in such short supply our battery vehicles were driving to Inchon to get them directly off the ships.

In July the Chinese again attacked Pork Chop Hill. We held it in April as depicted in the movie but let them have it this time. Our battery pulled out of position

and supported the 7th in this battle. All of these attacks, and especially the big Chinese summer offensive on the Central Front, where a sister 155 battalion, the 552nd, was overrun, were related to the on-going "peace" talks at Panmunjom.

During one all night shoot, within twenty minutes of each other, two guns (#6 and #2) fired without first ramming a projectile in the tube. This was credited to the crew's fatigue. When they fired, burning powder was projected over the entire hill in front of us. On 13 May a round exploded in the tube of #4 gun in Abie Battery. This phenomena is theoretically impossible, i.e. bore-safe. Miraculously, no one was hurt.

Though we enjoyed air superiority, the Chinese did send over "Bed Check Charlies" at night. These were slow flying bi-planes which would tootle down the valleys below radar cover and drop a few bombs to keep the troops awake. Many an outdoor movie was scratched because of a Red Air Alert. They did however achieve one outstanding success by blowing up a POL dump near Inchon. We could see the flames from up on the line. A shortage of heating oil for our stoves was the result.



Apparently jets were ineffective in shooting down these planes - too fast? The Air Force brought over some WWII prop driven Corsairs. While I was there, the first ace was made for shooting down five of these "Bed Check Charlies."

KATUSAs (Korean Augmentations to the United States Army) had long been used to flesh out our units.

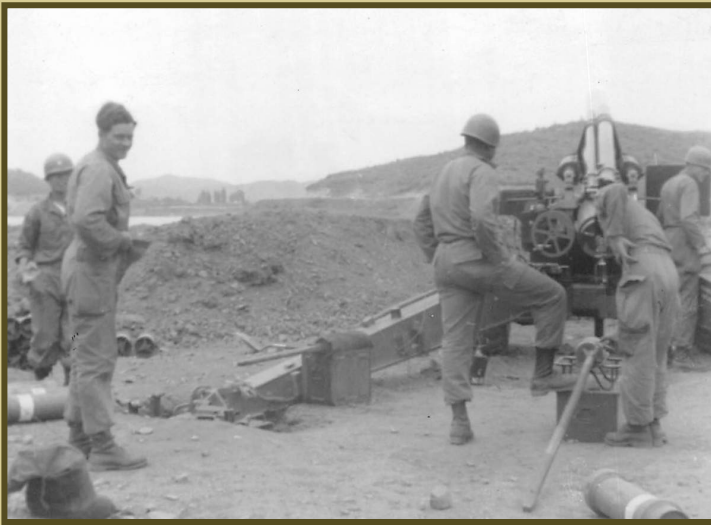
In April our Battery received about

two dozen of these Korean Army soldiers. After de-lousing and receiving new clothing, three were assigned to my gun section, Moon Young Moh, Son Num Ju and Ahn. Despite language problems, they were a real help and I became good friends with Moon.

The peace talks finally produced a truce at 9:45 P.M. on 27 July 1953. The next day we moved out to a temporary position near Whitefront Bridge which was just west of the Ingim. Our main reserve position was the old Kansas Line south of the 38th Parallel, which we spent the next month improving.

A "permanent" camp was set up south of there, Camp Saint Barbara, "the patron saint of artillery." This held I Corp's artillery including HQ Battery, 1st F. A. Observation BN, and the 17th, 96th, 623rd, and the 936th F. A. BNs, also, the Artillery School "little Old Fort Sill" and "Nomad" (Armed Forces Radio).

The firing batteries of the 936th would rotate to spend one month in our forward position a few hundred yards west of the Whitefront Bridge. The idea was to give our infantry some immediate support in case the Chinese attacked through the DMZ.



The infantry now occupied our old battery position. Once the moves were accomplished and things settled down, a lot of time was spent on sudden alerts and scrambles. Reconnaissance, selection, and occupation of position (RSOP's) were conducted to different firing positions with live round exercises that simulated a breaking of the truce and a Chinese attack. Eventually, the battery became adept at this, but the three or four months following the truce were worrisome in terms of combat readiness. In large measure this was due to inexperienced replacements and lack of combat training.

Even more worrisome in the Spring of 1954 were the "wet weather" indoctrination courses at a time when the French were losing the Indo Chinese war at Dien Bien Phu. It was obvious that serious military intervention by the U. S. was being considered. However, this did not then take place, with results we are now all familiar with.

I rotated home out of the battery on 9 June 1954.



## Information from the Butler Center

The 936th Field Artillery Battalion was the first Arkansas Nation Guard unit to enter combat in Korea. It mobilized on August 2, 1950, and trained stateside for five months before arriving at Pusan, South Korea, on February 10, 1951. The 936th provided artillery support to the 3rd Infantry Division, 25th Infantry Division, and 1st Cavalry Division, as well as division from the Army of the Republic of Korea. It fired its first rounds from 155mm self-propelled howitzers, called "Long Toms," on March 29 during the UN offensive and push north. During its time in Korea, the battalion participated in the following campaigns: First United Nations (UN) Counteroffensive; CCF Spring Offensive; UN Spring Offensive; UN Summer - Fall Offensive; and Second Korean winter. Following the Korean War, the 936th Field Artillery Battalion and its Arkansas counterpart the 937th Field Artillery Battalion were reorganized as the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 142nd Field Artillery.





# Air Guard Mobilized in Pueblo Incident



Adapted by **SSG Nathan L. Barlow**  
Originally Published in Spring 1994 Journal



**T**he Arkansas Air National Guard units became a part of the activation process that saw the mobilization of 14,600 reservists by President Lyndon Johnson. The mobilization came about as a result of the capture by North Korea of the intelligence vessel PUEBLO and its 83 man crew in international waters.

The Arkansas Air National Guard units of the 189th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, 189th Communications Flight (Support), 154th Weather Flight (Mobile, Fixed), located at Little Rock Air Force Base, Jacksonville, Arkansas and the 123rd Reconnaissance Technical Squadron, located on Adams Field, Little Rock, Arkansas were ordered to active duty on 26 January 1968, for a period of not more than 24 months.

According to the ARKANSAS GAZETTE, a total of 769 men, 100 officers and 669 enlisted, were notified to report to duty. The 189th, which was commanded by Colonel Drew F. Holbrook of Little Rock, was part of the 123rd Wing, headquartered at Louisville, Kentucky. The 189th was a self-sustaining unit which utilized the supersonic RF-101 Voodoo reconnaissance-fighter for visual and photographic reconnaissance. All of the smaller units operated in support of the 189th. This was the first time the 189th group had been activated, although one of its squadrons, the

154th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, was activated during the Korean War.

"It came as a surprise," Colonel Holbrook stated. "Just from following the news it didn't seem ...that the situation was that serious. Of course, we realize that we are all subject to call." Colonel Holbrook was a geologist with the Arkansas Geology Commission who saw World War II service as an Army Air Corps fighter pilot and was recalled during the Korean War.

The following contains a synopsis of the unit's strengths, tasks and missions during the call to active service.

## 189TH TACTICAL RECONNAISSANCE GROUP

One hundred percent of the Group's assigned strength of 83 officers and 548 airmen reported for duty within twenty-four hours after being notified. All personnel were processed within 72 hours; this also included the processing of dependents.

The Group, when ordered to active duty, had a C-4 operationally ready rating. This low rating was due

mostly to the lack of aerial camera equipment for the unit aircraft. With a high priority, these equipment shortages were quickly relieved. This made it possible to qualify 25 pilots as operationally ready by 1 March 1968. Each tactical pilot attended the TAC Sea Survival School at Homestead AFB, Florida. By the end of April 1968, the Group had a C-I combat readiness rating.

During this period, mobility detachments consisting of six aircraft, nine aircrews, and 50 support personnel were deployed in three separate detachments to Bergstrom AFB, Texas for two weeks of concentrated combat training. These detachments flew 280 sorties, logging 343 flying hours and exposing approximately 58,000 feet of aerial film.

The Group operated from 26 January 1968 until early June, with minimum assistance from the active duty Air Force personnel at Little Rock AFB. This was due to both work hours and training of all personnel in their assigned duties. In June, the 154th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron's authorized strength was increased from 52 to 388 personnel. Personnel were gained by transferring 250 from the units within the Group, 14 from the 123d Reconnaissance Technical Squadron, and 72 filler personnel from the units throughout the Air Force.

in place prior to the arrival of the unit equipment aircraft.

Twenty RF-101 aircraft departed Little Rock AFB on 23 July 1968 in two cells of six aircraft, and two cells of four aircraft. The Deployment from Little Rock AFB, Arkansas to Itazuke AB, Japan was 8,697 nautical miles requiring nine inflight refuelings. The entire final leg from Guam to Japan was accomplished in adverse weather without incident.



## 123RD RECONNAISSANCE TECHNICAL SQUADRON

The 123d Reconnaissance Technical Squadron with total assigned strength of 12 Officers and 72 airmen reported for duty within the allotted time—some from as far away as Colorado. In-processing was performed by the 189th Tactical Reconnaissance Group but members of the 123d were used in administrative positions where support was needed. Their interest and ability certainly helped the fast in-processing procedures.

The Squadron was assigned classified projects previously being performed exclusively by the 444th Reconnaissance Technical Group, Shaw AFB, S.C. In addition to over 1,400 of these projects being completed, work was also done for the U.S. Army which was of a classified nature.

Fifty-four airmen and eleven officers were divided into three groups. Each group was sent in a temporary duty status for a period of two weeks to Mountain Home AFB, Idaho. There they worked with photo lab personnel and photo interpretation personnel. Seventeen airmen were provided for support during the deployment to Japan; fourteen of them made the trip to Japan.



On 24 June 1968, an advance party departed from Itazuke AB, Japan, to prepare for the arrival of the 154th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron. On 20 July 1968, USAF C-141 aircraft began airlift of the Squadron personnel and equipment. Approximately 316 personnel and 200 tons of cargo were deployed and



Specialized work was required for the 123d Technical Reconnaissance Wing in the area of automated photo equipment. Two NCO's were sent in a temporary duty status to Richards-Gebaur AFB, Missouri to coordinate this work. These same NCO's attended a seminar at Log-E-Tronics Corporation on the sophisticated equipment in use by the Air Force.

The mission of the 154th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron, while in Japan, was provide tactical reconnaissance and training missions as directed by the Fifth Air Force Advanced Echelon. Missions were flown in South Korea and Japan. Pilots flew 1,252 sorties logging 2,518 flying hours. A total of 240,249 feet of aerial 111m was utilized on reconnaissance missions launched from Itazuke AB, Japan.

The deployment was a success and General McGehee, Commanding General, Fifth Air Force, best summarized the accomplishments by the following message—" I wish to take this opportunity to commend your entire squadron for its outstanding and professional performance as a part of Fifth Air Force. Your rapid deployment and immediate operational readiness aided immeasurably in providing a more effective combat posture in WESTPAC. With your departure from Japan, our best wishes for continued success go with you. Please convey to all your people my most sincere appreciation for a job well done."

With the departure of the 154th Tactical Reconnaissance Squadron to Japan, personnel remaining at home station who were not essential to support the operations of the Group were placed on jobs in their AFSCs with sections at Little Rock AFB. Also, the 189th Civil Engineering Branch performed temporary duty (Operation "Prime Beef") on missions assigned by Tactical Air Command to Cannon AFB, New Mexico; Homestead AFB, Florida; Pope AFB, N.C.; Nellis AFB, Nevada; Lockbourne AFB, Ohio; and Eglin AFB, Florida.

#### **189TH COMMUNICATIONS FLIGHT (SUPPORT)**

The 189th Communications Flight (Support) (AFCS) was mobilized with two officers and twenty-three airmen. Personnel were reassigned as individuals and departed Little Rock AFB within 30 to 60 days after recall. They were assigned as follows: 1 officer

and 9 airmen to Korea; 3 airmen to Vietnam; 1 airman to Westover AFB Mass.; 1 airman to McClellan AFB, Calif.; 1 officer to Carswell AFB, Texas; 3 airmen to McDill AFB, Fla.; 1 airman to Homestead AFB, Fla.; 1 airman to Patrick AFB, Fla.; 1 airman to Eglin AFB Fla. These personnel remained at these locations until date of release, 20 December 1968.

#### **154TH WEATHER FLIGHT (Mobile/Fixed)**

The 154th Weather Flight (Mobile/Fixed) (AWS) was mobilized with two officers and twelve airmen. Personnel were reassigned as individuals as follows: 1 officer to Lockbourne AFB, Ohio; 1 airman to Duluth AFB, Minn.; 1 officer and 4 airmen to Little Rock AFB, Arkansas; 1 airman to England AFB, LA.; 1 airman to Blytheville AFB, Ark.; 1 airman to Fort Lewis, Wash.; 1 airman to McGuire AFB, N.Y.; 1 airman to Ellington AFB, Texas.

As a result of this mobilization, the 123 Tactical Reconnaissance Wing, which includes the 189th Tactical Reconnaissance Group, Little Rock AFB, and the 123d Reconnaissance Technical Squadron, Adams Field, was awarded the Air Force Outstanding Unit Award for exceptionally meritorious service in support of military operations from 26 January 1968 to 20 December 1968.

All units were released from active duty on 20 December 1968.



Crew of USS Pueblo upon release on 23 December 1968.

From: 154th Observation Squadron 50th Anniversary Album (1925-1975), Report of the Adjutant General, Arkansas National Guard, January 1967-December 1970, *The Arkansas Gazette*, January 1968.



A close-up photograph of a replica of the James Black bowie knife. The knife has a long, curved blade with a serrated edge, a wide hand guard, and a handle made of wood with metal bolsters. It is resting on a wooden wagon wheel with many spokes. The background is a blurred green field.

# HISTORY OF THE BOWIE KNIFE

By SGT Mike Jeu

Originally Published in Fall 1993 Journal

*Replica of the James Black bowie knife made at the blacksmith shop at the Historic Washington State Park in Hempstead County.*

**T**raditionally when you think of the Arkansas National Guard and its vast array of weapons for the individual soldier, you may envision rifles, machine guns, LAW rockets, or even the Stinger Missile System. Yes, we exist in an age of modern technology and weaponry. Among this array of weaponry exists a weapon that holds its birth here in our great state, The Bowie Knife. Some may consider this piece of equipment as antique or nonfunctional, but this knife has served our troops admirably from the late 1830's to present.

The Bowie knife we have come to know and admire traces its roots back to Washington, Arkansas, in late 1830's. It was first made by the famous blacksmith and knife maker, James Black. As legend has it, James Bowie was travelling through Arkansas and stopped in Washington, Arkansas to see Mr. Black. Mr. Bowie's intention was to have Mr. Black make him a knife of his (Bowie's) own design. Mr. Bowie had selected Mr. Black since Mr. Black was an expert in tempering steel and was renowned to be the best knife maker in the southwest.

Mr. Bowie left a knife pattern that he had whittled out of wood with Mr. Black for the new knife design. Mr. Black agreed to undertake this request to produce the knife in one month for Mr. Bowie. The knife blade was to be made of the finest material, possess a heavy hand guard, and be balanced for throwing.

As the appointed month passed, Mr. Bowie did return to Mr. Black's shop. Mr. Black had made a knife to Bowie's pattern as requested and had also made a similar knife with his own modifications. Both of these knives were single edged, but Mr. Black's knife design had a curved point of two edges. This made it possible to either stab or slash with the knife. Mr. Bowie was pleased with these modifications and took Mr. Black's knife in place of the knife he had designed.

Shortly after Mr. Bowie had acquired this new knife, he had an occasion to use it. Being attacked by three men who had been hired to kill him, Mr. Bowie drew his new knife. Mr. Bowie slashed at the first man, beheading him, utilized an upward stab killing

the second man, and the third man attempted to run away. Mr. Bowie gave chase and delivered a downward swing blow to the top of the man's head, killing him. This fight made both Bowie and Black famous. Soon Mr. Black was deluged with requests from all over the Southwest for knives "like Bowie's."

Mr. James Black was the only man who knew how to make the real Bowie knife.

Mr. Black had developed a secret way of making a fine steel which no one could duplicate. He never divulged this secret and took it to his grave with him in 1872. Mr. Black lies in an unmarked grave in a cemetery at Washington, Arkansas.

Mr. Bowie was considered to be a business man, explorer, and soldier. Mr. Bowie gallantly gave his life in 1836 in the most famous battle of the Texas war of independence at the Alamo.



Arkansas' 39th Infantry Brigade (Separate) was formed following reorganization on 1 December 1967. In 1968, the Bowie Knife was adopted as part of the Brigade insignia and as the individual weapon of Brigade field grade officers, the commander's aide de camp, and recently the Command Sergeant Major and Sergeant Majors.

A distinctive and honored award from the brigade, the knife is modified from the original design to be more suitable for close combat. It is indicative of the aggressive spirit of the infantry.

Only knives that are procured by order of the brigade commander are authorized for wear or presentation. General officers are authorized a knife with an ivory handle. Colonels wear knives with stag handles, while other field grade officers and the aide camp wear black handles. Warrant Officers of the rank of CW4 are authorized to wear walnut handles.

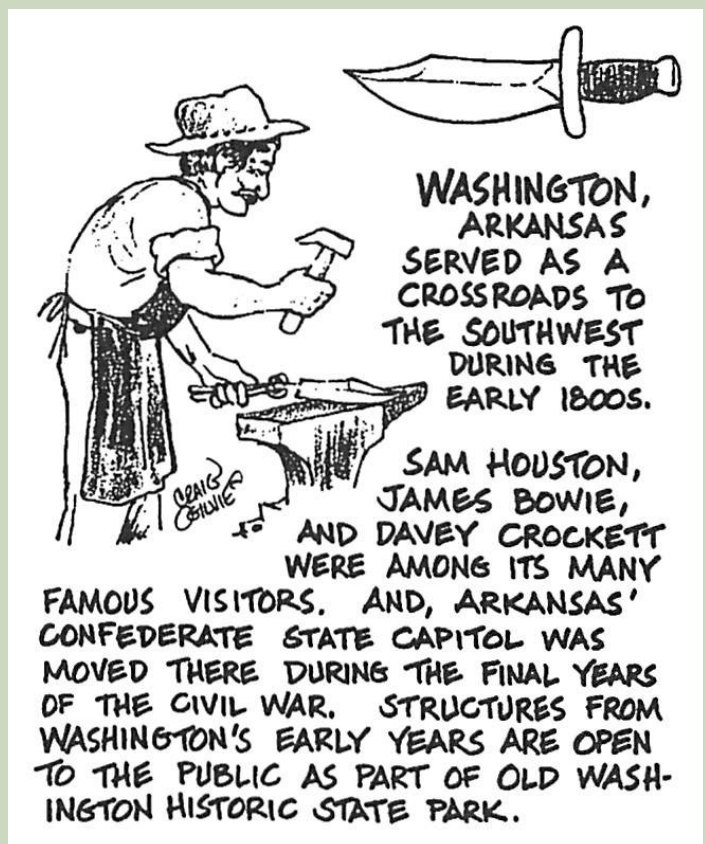
The ranks of Command Sergeant Major and Sergeant Major are authorized to wear the cherry wood han-

dle. Honorees are presented a knife commensurate with their ranks. All former brigade members and persons who have been honored by the presentation of the brigade Bowie knife may wear it on ceremonial occasions.

Ironically, the Bowie knife was conceived in Arkansas by a native knife maker and in 1993, this knife continues to be produced in Arkansas. Until recently, each presentation grade knife was handmade by Mr. Jimmy Lyle of Russellville, Arkansas. Mr. Lyle was commissioned to build the knife used by Sylvester Stallone in the film "Rambo". The Lyle family continues to build these knives for the brigade. The general public cannot purchase one of these knives, but can purchase a different pattern Bowie style knife.

Each brigade Bowie knife bears the recipient's name, social security number, rank, and branch as well as the maker's name and serial number of the knife.

The Brigade Bowie knife, a work of superb craftsmanship, identifies the bearer as a member of the elite Arkansas Brigade.





# ESSAY CONTEST

## Arkansas Military Historian Essay Competition

The Arkansas Military Historian Essay Competition is **state wide competition open to students enrolled in grades 9-12 in public, private, and parochial schools, and those in home-study programs.** The Arkansas National Guard Museum Foundation, recognizing the importance of encouraging young scholars and promoting research regarding Arkansas Military History, has established this \$500 annual prize. The winning essay will be published in the *Arkansas Military History Journal*.

Each competitor will submit an essay that addresses the following topic:

***“What military events have most shaped the social, political or economic development of Arkansas?”***

The committee will judge papers according to the following criteria:

- 1) Clear thesis
- 2) Elaboration on the thesis with specific, concrete, personal example(s)
- 3) Evidence of critical-thinking, such as synthesis and evaluation, when reflecting on the essay question
- 4) Organization and fluency
- 5) Overall effectiveness of the student’s ability to communicate the impact that military events have had on the development of Arkansas and its people?

### **Submission Guidelines:**

Length: Submissions for the 9-12 Arkansas Military Historian Essay should be approximately 1,500 words. Formatting: Number all pages except for the title page. All pages are to be double-spaced. Use 12 pt. Times New Roman Font. Margins are to be 1” left and right, and top and bottom. Submissions must be composed in Microsoft Word. The author’s identity is to appear nowhere on the paper. A separate, un-attached page should accompany the paper, identifying the author, title of paper, home address, telephone number, email address, and name of school. Papers that do not adhere to these guidelines will be disqualified.

**Deadline:** Entries must be emailed or postmarked by the annual deadline of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Winning papers will be announced in no later than September 1, 2018.

The Arkansas National Guard Museum reserves the right to publish in the *Arkansas Military History Journal* any essay (or portion thereof) submitted to the competition. It will do so solely at its discretion, but full acknowledgment of authorship will be given. If someone’s essay is published in whole or in part, the author will receive three (3) copies of the Journal.

To submit your materials by email: Send the following materials as separate attachments in the same email (formatted in MS Word), with the subject line “Arkansas Military Historian Essay”:

1. The paper
2. A page with identifying information (author, title of paper, home address, telephone number, e-mail address, and name of school.)

**Email to:** [raymond.d.screws.nfg@mail.mil](mailto:raymond.d.screws.nfg@mail.mil)

To submit your material by mail:

Send five copies of the paper and five copies of the page with identifying information. In the lower left hand corner on the front of the envelope write: **Arkansas Military Historian Essay Competition** and mail to:

**Dr. Raymond Screws  
Arkansas National Guard Museum  
Box 58, Camp Robinson  
North Little Rock, Arkansas 72199**

### **Arkansas Military Historian Essay Competition Committee:**

- Dr. Raymond Screws
- COL Damon N. Cluck
- LTC Clement J. Papineau

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