

# The Fir Tree

## MAGAZINE

WINTER 2002

### WINDS OF CHANGE

Meet the division's new  
commander

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WINTER 2002

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The Fir Tree Magazine serves the soldiers and families of the 91st Division (TS).

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# FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

## Recently, a colonel retired from the 91st Division's headquarters, after serving his country for more than 30 years.

He completed a career that was not terribly unusual for an Army Reserve officer, except that he graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy in 1969. Few outside of the 91st Division took notice of his retirement, and that is too bad. His 30 years covered a lot of Army history. He remembers well what the U.S. military was like during and immediately after Vietnam. Drug use was a problem, there was a clear racial divide, and an equally wide split between career and first-term officers and enlisted soldiers.

"Re-upping" for a second term (and presumably a career in the service) was nearly unthinkable for most first term soldiers, sailors and airmen. But this officer stayed in . . . advancing his career in the Reserve and National Guard, and at the same time, helping rebuild the Army.

Like the other men and women who served from the 1970s until now, he helped to make the American military the finest fighting force on the planet. They struggled through the post-Vietnam period to remake the military into a cohesive force that could win a war and come home proud.

In the book, *Into the Storm*, author Tom Clancy states, "Our Army has traveled in a single lifetime down a strange and crooked road, from the triumph of World War II, . . . through holding the line in Europe, through tragedy and waste in Vietnam, through near total collapse thereafter, through a long and wrenching process of reconstitution, then again to dominance on the sands of Iraq and Kuwait."

The men and women who stayed to rebuild the Army, recreate the Noncommissioned Officer corps, revise the training doctrine to fight the kind of war that would be fought after Vietnam, and re-instill discipline and pride in an army that was taking the blame for the failures of the national leadership are what I would call the New Greatest Generation. They fought a war just as difficult as that of their WW

II predecessors, but without the fanfare, visibility or gratitude, until 20 years later when that Army would roar through Iraqi armored divisions with a speed and lethality never seen before.

Again, Tom Clancy, from *Into the Storm*: "They stayed because the Army was wounded and needed help; you do not abandon a wounded buddy on the battlefield. They stayed because it was their duty. They were in it for the long haul. It wasn't always easy or fair, but they knew that sometime, someplace in the future, the nation would need her Army to go fight and win, and it had better be ready."

So the next time you pass one of these "old guys" in the reserve, remember that without his efforts and struggles to make the Army an organization you and I can be proud to serve, this country and this Army would be in a far different place. So here is a special 91st Division thank you to all the men and women who have spent the most significant and productive years of their lives making America proud of her military forces again.

-By Sergeant Mike Miles, Editor

Welcome to the 2002 Winter edition of *The Fir Tree Magazine*. The theme of this issue is "The Winds of Change." Since our last issue, the division has gained a new commander, the nation has been brutally attacked and we are now at war.

The division's change of command, from Major General Daniel C Balough to Major General Rodney M. Kobayashi, has ushered in a new era for the division and its role in the Army overall. In this issue of *The Fir Tree Magazine*, we have provided a photo essay on the change of command ceremony and a brief introduction and background on the new commander, the assistant division commanders and the command sergeant major.

Other articles in the publication discuss people and events within the division. The goal of the magazine is to tell the story of the division, its soldiers and the tremendous effort they make to keep the legendary 91st great.

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Major General Rodney M. Kobayashi

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## A Message from Major General Kobayashi

Happy New Year to all the soldiers, family, alumni & friends of the 91<sup>st</sup> "Wild West" Division! I hope everyone had a happy and safe holiday season. Last year was a very busy time for the 91<sup>st</sup> Division and this year promises to also be full of challenging events as well. I am confident that the soldiers of this great division will be able to meet and exceed all of the expectations for 2002.

First, I would like to thank all of the soldiers for their hard work and dedication in completing the activities so far this year. I also want to thank you for your continued support as we successfully complete the remainder of our taskings and missions for this year. This division provides training support to over 1000 National Guard and Army Reserve units, 423 of which are priority units, across the 12 western states.

During the first quarter of this training year the division's main effort focused on support to Homeland Defense. The 91st Division assisted in the mobilization of over 2000 soldiers in 65 units for Operations NOBLE EAGLE and ENDURING FREEDOM. We also helped mobilize over 300 soldiers in 30 units for Joint Task Force Olympics for the Salt Lake City Games. The division's 2nd and 4th Brigades have administrative control over two infantry battalions of the California Army National Guard to support their force protection and critical site security missions.

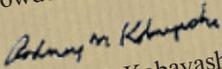
While supporting the mobilization mission we have continued to provide training support for the units in our area of responsibility. To date, we have supported 400 training events or classes. We have also put a great effort into preparing our own soldiers for the approaching summer's annual training.

Second, I would like to ask everyone to continue being flexible. In our current world and domestic situation, taskings may appear with little or no notice, or expected events may be canceled, again with little advance warning. I want to assure you that your command will do everything possible to try to minimize the effects of these last minute changes.

Third, I believe that it is important for all of us to stay technically proficient. I understand it takes time to maintain your military skills, but it is a critical part of your military career. Also, I believe you will more thoroughly enjoy your time during drills and missions if you continue to stay current on Army doctrine. There are many opportunities to sharpen your skills and learn new ones. Please take advantage of military courses and on-line materials to help you.

I am both pleased and honored to take command of the 91<sup>st</sup> Division as the 16<sup>th</sup> Commanding General. I look forward to meeting all of you and working with you to accomplish our missions.

Powder River !

  
Rodney M. Kobayashi  
Major General, USAR  
Commanding General

# SPIRITUAL READINESS

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIVISION CHAPLAIN

Faith has sometimes been described as being like shock absorbers on a car. When the road is smooth, you are not even aware of the need for them, but when the road is rough, and full of cracks and holes, it is the shock absorbers' job to keep the car from being shaken apart. Faith, however, is much more than an emergency commodity. It is the essence of a person. It is what gives them worth. Spiritual faith gives its holder love and hope, and makes each day meaningful, no matter how good or bad.

One of the best lessons I have found on "spiritual readiness" is the story of the wise and foolish builders in Matthew 7:24-28.

"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

The need for spiritual readiness is clear.

The horrendous events of September 11, considered with the story in Matthew, gives realization to the saying, "Life is fragile, handle with prayer!"

Almost all religions encourage some form of prayer. Spiritual readiness means that we are aware of our limitations and our need for someone greater than ourselves. Our nation continues to mourn the losses of recent days. Losses include much more than human life. Buildings were not only destroyed, and the inhabitants' lives lost, but families destroyed and people have been forever changed. We all need healing. One's faith teaches that there is someone who understands and can help with the sorrow.

We have all been wounded. Sorrow is a wound of the heart and soul. Cared for, the wound will heal, but left to fester, it may become infected with bitterness and hatred. After a loss has occurred, and sorrow has issued, how the person handles that sorrow will help determine whether they will become "better or bitter."

As our nation and our allies strike out to pull the roots of terrorism, we need to exercise our spirituality and keep it healthy. Spiritual health aids people in dealing with life at their best.

As our country prepares itself spiritually, work to remember God's word: "Even the youth grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not grow faint." Isaiah 40:30-31

- CHAPLAIN (LIEUTENANT COLONEL) ROBERT O. KRIEGER

# Major General Rodney M. Kobayashi

Commanding General  
91st DIVISION (TRAINING SUPPORT)



Recently promoted to Major General, Rodney M. Kobayashi is assigned as Commander of the 91st Division (Training Support). Prior to assuming this position, he served as the Assistant Division Commander (Operations), 104th Division (Institutional Training) at Vancouver Barracks, Washington.

A native of Hilo, Hawaii, he began his military career May 13, 1966 as an enlisted soldier in the Hawaii Army National Guard. In 1968, while a student at the University of Hawaii, he was activated with the 29th Infantry Brigade (Separate), Hawaii National Guard as part of the Presidential Vietnam call-up. During his activation he went on to earn a commission as a second lieutenant from the Infantry Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia in February 1970.

Major General Kobayashi has held a variety of key positions prior to his current assignment. As a commissioned officer on active duty, he was a Ranger Instructor at Fort Benning, Georgia and served one tour in Vietnam (MACSOG) as a Signal Officer, Platoon Advisor and Assistant S-2. He left active duty in 1971 and later joined the Army Reserve.

Major General Kobayashi earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration (Accounting) from the University of Hawaii. He holds a Master's degree in Business Administration (Taxation) from Golden Gate University.

He is a graduate of the Infantry Officer Advanced Course, the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College.

The division's top enlisted soldier

# Wallace B. Anderson

Command Sergeant Major  
91st DIVISION (TRAINING SUPPORT)

. — .

Wallace B. Anderson has been the Command Sergeant Major of the 91st Division (TS) for two years. His duty as Command Sergeant Major of the division began May 1, 1999 at Fort Baker, California.

Born in Plum City, Wisconsin, he began his military career by entering the U.S. Navy in 1966. He served until 1969 as a "Seabee" (in a naval construction battalion), including 26 months of service in Vietnam. In 1972, Anderson moved over to the Army Reserve. In June 1990, he graduated from the Sergeant Major Academy.

Anderson retired as Chief of Police after thirty years of service with the city of Sunnyside, Washington. He first entered law enforcement in 1970 and held assignments as Patrol Sergeant, Detective, Drug Task Force Commander, and Administrator. In June 1991, he completed the Northwest Law Enforcement Executive Command College and was awarded Executive Certification by the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission.

The Command Sergeant Major has also earned an associate degree from Columbia Basin College.



While Anderson cultivated a career in the military and law enforcement, he and his wife Brenda Jean raised four daughters and a son.

# Brigadier General James P. Combs

Assistant Division Commander



Brigadier General James P. Combs is assigned to the 91st Division as Assistant Division Commander. Concurrently, he is assigned as the Commander of the 49th Combat Support Command, California National Guard, with responsibility for the majority of California's high priority units, consisting of over 6,000 soldiers.

A native of California, General Combs began his active military career in July 1967. He began as an enlisted engineer in the United States Army, serving for three years, one of which was in Vietnam. As a staff sergeant, Combs joined the California Army National Guard in 1970. After attending the army officer candidate school in 1973 at Fort Benning, Georgia, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant. Through his commissioned career, he has served in a variety of positions, including command at the company and battalion level. He has also served as chief of staff for an armored division within the California Army National Guard.

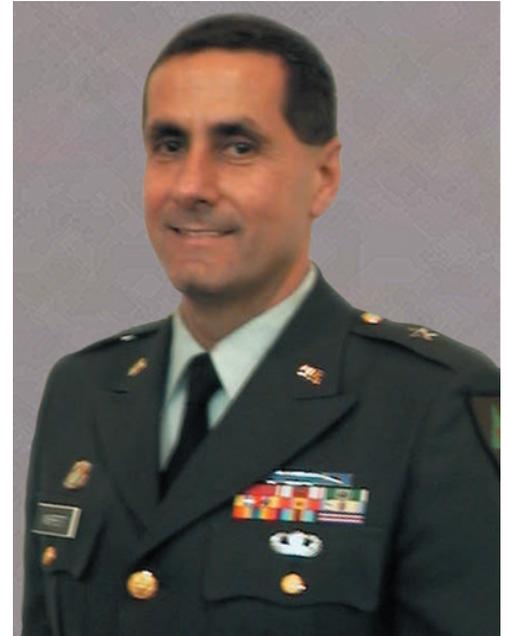
Brigadier General Combs has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Humboldt State University and an Administration degree from Shippensburg University, Pennsylvania.

Combs also graduated from the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. He serves on the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Reserve Affairs' General Officer Steering Committee for Intelligence, as well as the National Guard Bureau's Army Division Redesign Study, Fire Support and Training Task Forces.

General Combs is married to Janet Louise Briggs of Eureka, California, who is a Director of Administration and Sales for a greeting card manufacturer in Fairfield, California. They have one son.

# Brigadier General Terrill K. Moffett

Assistant Division Commander



Brigadier General Terrill Kay Moffett began his military career on July 3, 1967 when he entered the United States Military Academy, West Point, as a cadet. He was commissioned as an infantry second lieutenant from West Point on June 9, 1971, and completed the Infantry Officer Basic Course and the Basic Airborne Course at Ft. Benning, Georgia. Subsequently he served as S-4, Company Executive Officer, and Infantry Platoon Leader in the 1/19th Infantry at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, until December 1974. From December 1974 until July 1975 he served as assistant S-1, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division.

Brigadier General Moffett attended the Infantry Officers Advanced Course at Fort Benning, Georgia from July 1975 until March 1976. During this time, he also completed a Master of Arts degree from the University of Hawaii.

A 1979 graduate of the University of Mississippi Law School, Brigadier General Moffett is a partner of the Moffett Law Firm, with offices in Tupelo and Amory, Mississippi. He served as the Tupelo City Prosecutor for ten years. He is admitted to practice law in Mississippi, Alabama, the U. S. District Court for the Northern District of Mississippi, the U. S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi, the Mississippi Supreme Court, Fifth United States Court of Appeals, and the United States Supreme Court.

# *A special thank you* to the division's World War II Veterans

Brigadier General Terrill K. Moffett

I pondered at length about what I should write to the soldiers, past and present, of the 91st Division and their families as I assume my new duties as Assistant Division Commander. My biographical information is on the facing page, so I don't want to talk about me.

This issue of Fir Tree will go to the present members of the 91st, but it will also go to the World War II veterans of the division who belonged to the 91st Division Association. It is to them that I dedicate my remarks.

Two events have occurred since I joined the 91st in September of 2001. First, the events of September 11th have forever changed us all. Then, three short weeks later, the history of the 91st Division came alive for me as I represented the division at the last reunion of the 91st Division Association of World War II Combat Veterans. Both events have had a profound and lasting impact on me. Let me explain.

I am writing this article on a plane while traveling back from drill in California to my home in Mississippi. Outside the window, the sky is clear and the snow-capped mountains extend as far as the eyes can see. America, the beautiful, from sea to shining sea. That is what my new job with the division is all about; that is what all of us in the Army and the 91st, past and present, are about.

Why is America so great? Alexis de Tocqueville, a famous French philosopher, visited the United States for the first time in 1831. His purpose was to discover the secret to America's greatness. He visited schools, communities, and halls of government. His conclusion was that America was great because America was good. She has heart and it beats strong with the principles of liberty, faith and respect for others.

Our purpose has been and continues to be the defense of the nation and our way of life. As we do our jobs each day, let us always keep that thought foremost in our minds and do all that we can each day, not with eyeservice as pleasers of men, but as unto a higher calling. That is what our 91st Division Combat Veterans did. During World War II, they were in continuous combat for over 300 days. The division suffered more than 14,000 casualties, but never gave up the fight.

I believe the events of September 11th recommitted our nation to the principles established by George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and many others, including the 1,153,542 American soldiers who have paid the ultimate sacrifice with their lives in twelve wars from Concord to Afghanistan. I know my commitment has been renewed. Let us all strive to continue our work of preserving freedom for the people of the United States. Thank you for your service. To our combat veterans in all wars including World War II, Korea, Vietnam and Desert Storm, thank you.

But in war or in peace, all of you hold an important job. I am the youngest of nine children that my mother and father reared on a small tenant farm in Mississippi. During the Great Depression, my father had to work out of town to support the family, leaving my mother home alone to tend the farm and care for the children. After her death on May 21, 1997, we found a letter which she had written to my father. A portion of that letter is as follows:

'All of us have important chairs to fill - at home, at work, in our communities, in our church, in the Army and in our Nation. When your chair is empty, you are missed. We need you in the 91st - the country needs you.'

*Monday evening, 3 o'clock*

*My only dear one. I was so glad to hear from you. I have been so worried about you . . . I can't bear to think of you being so far away . . . I get so sorry for the little boys. They are always thinking of Daddy . . . (The new mule) sure is a fast walking mule. They plowed with him that evening they brought him.*

*I wish you would . . . come back home . . . it looks so empty when we go to the table and your chair is empty. (Emphasis provided).*

All of us have important chairs to fill - at home, at work, in our communities, in our church, in the Army and in our Nation. When your chair is empty, you are missed. We need you in the 91st - the country needs you.

Keep up the good work. America is great and she is well. Let us all work to keep her that way as we pass the torch of liberty to those who come after us. I am honored and grateful to be a part of the great traditions of the Army and the 91st Division. May God grant each of us the wisdom to know how to live and the courage to live accordingly as we serve together.

# CHANGE OF COMMAND

**WINDS OF CHANGE** blew through the rows of uniformed troops and flags on a hot August morning at Parks Reserve Forces Training Area as Major General Daniel C Balough and Brigadier General Bruce A. Adams departed after providing outstanding leadership to the 91st Division during a period already marked by great changes. Major General Balough turned over command of the division to then-Brigadier General Rodney M. Kobayashi. Kobayashi's new team includes two Assistant Division Commanders, Brigadier Generals James P. Combs and Terrill K. Moffett.





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Highlights from the

# 91st Division Change of Command

August 19, 2001



“You’re the luckiest guy in the world,” Major General Daniel C Balough tells then-Brigadier General Rodney M. Kobayashi just prior to trooping the line.

Lieutenant General Freddy McFarren, Commanding General, Fifth United States Army addresses division troops and invited guests during the ceremony.





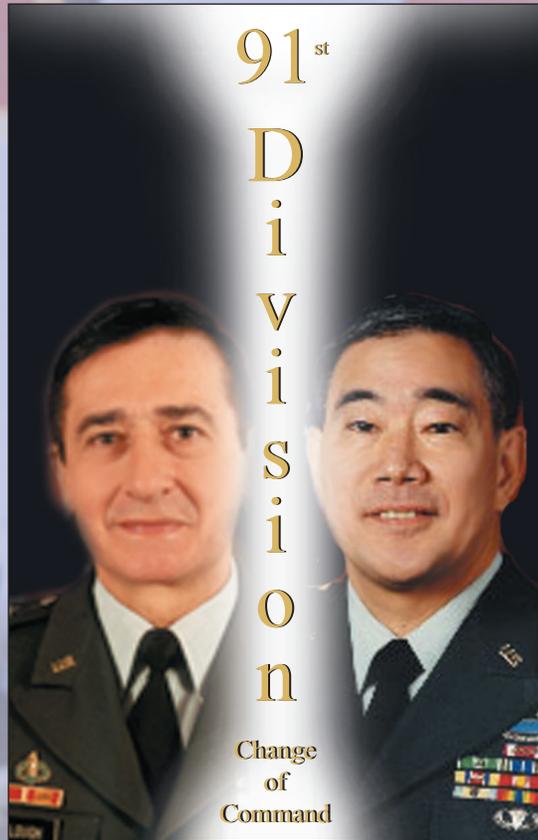
Division soldiers render honors to the reviewing party.



Major General Balough giving some parting thoughts after receiving an award.

# CHANGE OF COMMAND

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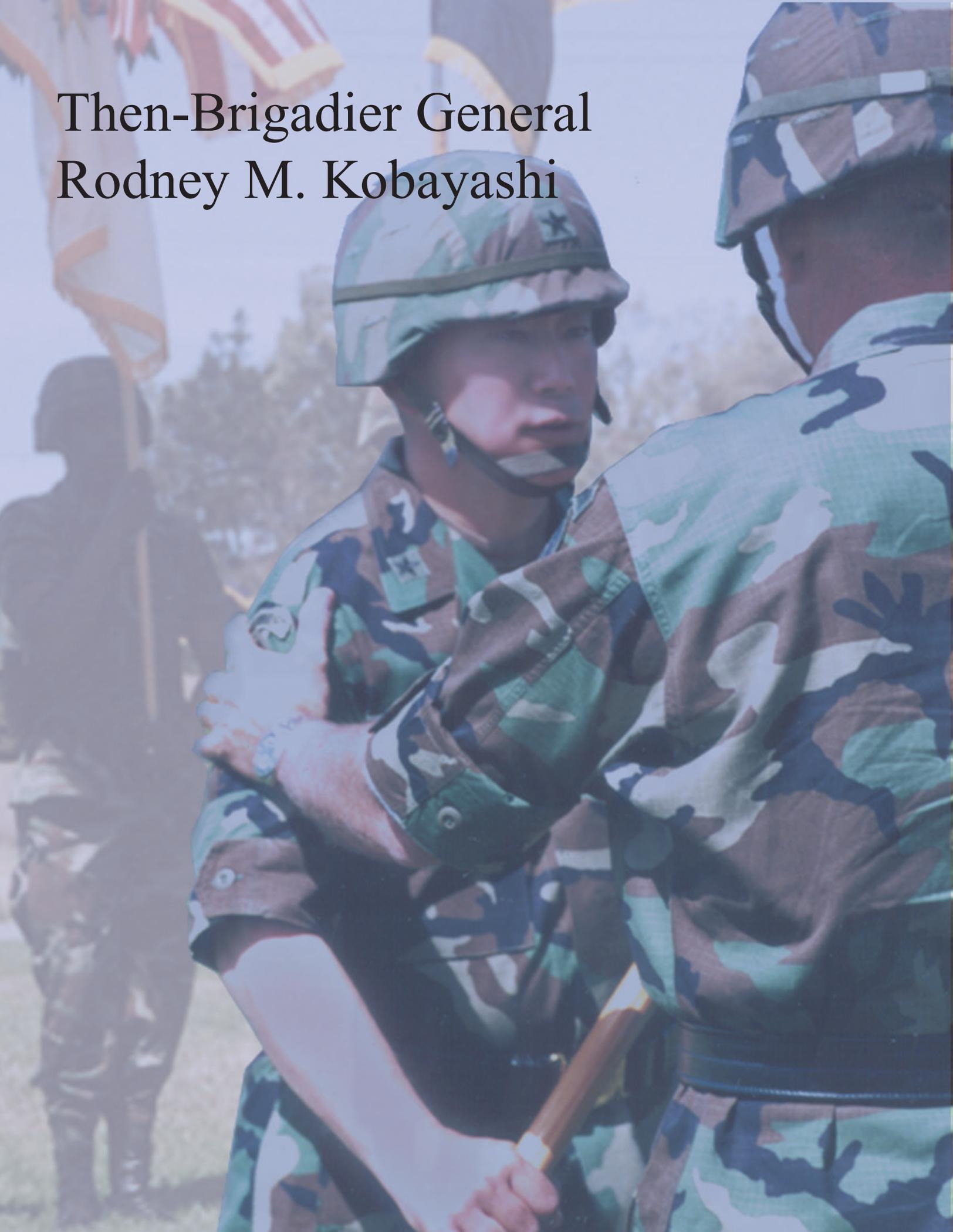


Cover of the Change of Command ceremony program



91<sup>st</sup> Division Band performing for the Change of Command ceremony

Then-Brigadier General  
Rodney M. Kobayashi



# San Francisco's 2001 Veterans Day Parade

Veterans Day in San Francisco drew a nice size crowd. The weather was pleasant after a night of rain with just enough sunshine to make the parade a good reason to go outside.

America's military was giving the country something to cheer about, a brilliant air and ground campaign in Afganistan.

The 91st Division Band and Color Guard marched down



91st Division Color Guard

Market Street along the lines of local people who came out to pay tribute to America's soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. It was a chance to say "thank you." Old Glory was carried by the 23rd Marine Regiment. The parade also included the men and women who put their lives on the line every day for the city, the San Francisco Police and Fire Departments.

The city government did their part as well. The parade route was well protected by city police with barricades to guide traffic and pedestrians. Mayor Willie Brown restored the battle flags of the 363rd Regiment to a glorious display case occupying a place of honor in City Hall. The 363rd is known as "San Francisco's Own" and is still a part of the 91st Division, headquartered in the East Bay.



Right: Battle flags of the 363rd Regiment from WWI

- By Sergeant Mike Miles, Editor

## In Memory of Major General C. C. Delwiche

Former 91<sup>st</sup> Division commanding general Constant Collin Delwiche died September 22, 2001. He retired as the 91<sup>st</sup> Division commander with the rank of Major General in 1971. Delwiche served during WWII in the 88<sup>th</sup> Infantry Glider Division.

After the war, Delwiche completed his Ph.D. in Geo-micro-biochemistry and served on the faculty at U.C. Berkeley. In 1963, he moved to the Davis campus and taught in the Department of Soils and Plant Nutrition. After he retired from the university, Delwiche served as the interim head of the National Institute on Global Environmental Change.



Constant Collin Delwiche

# In the Middle of the Country, in the Middle of the Century



**I**n the house where I grew up, there was a portrait hanging on the wall of the first floor, not far from the kitchen. It was not a famous painting, not the work of a well-known artist. In fact, even though, in my mind's eye, it is the most memorable portrait I have ever encountered, I still have no idea of precisely who held the brush and applied the oil to the canvas.

“He virtually never spoke about the painting; it was on the wall of our house all during my childhood, and later, when he and my mother moved to another house, they took it with them.”

I do know that the portrait was done in Italy, during World War II, and that the artist was an Army buddy of my father's. Apparently this man enjoyed painting portraits for his fellow soldiers in the 91st Infantry Division, and he did them during down moments in the long months the 91st spent in North Africa and Italy in 1944 and 1945. The artist's subject - the man whose face looks off the canvas - was my dad.

He virtually never spoke about the painting; it was on the wall of our house all during my childhood, and later, when he and my mother moved to another house, they took it with them.

Today the portrait hangs on a wall in the house where my mother lives by herself, now that he is dead.

The years of the war were, I now know, the most important and affecting of his life, the years of which he was the very proudest. If you were to have asked him, which I don't think we ever did, what was the best accomplishment of his lifetime, I am quite certain he would have said, without hesitation: serving in the United States Army in the greatest conflict in the history of man.

Not that he was a hero, or a renowned soldier; he was neither. He was there. That was enough - he, like all those American soldiers and sailors and airmen of the war years, was there. He knew he did not face the daily peril that the frontline guys, the dog faces, did, and he never pretended that it was otherwise. But he was there, in Africa, in Italy, on the long march through the Apennine Mountains and then, when the victory in Europe was won, back through Bologna and Florence and Naples - and it was the period of his manhood that mattered most. It was the time of his life.

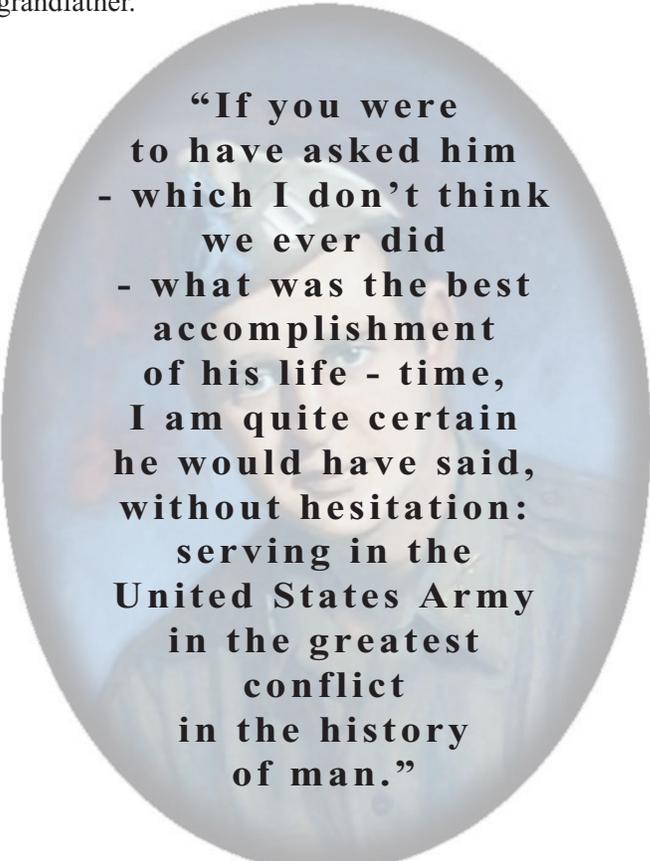
Perhaps, when he was alone with our mother, he spoke in detail of those days and nights, but to us children he talked of the war only in the most general of ways. It was almost as if he thought he would bore us if he told us war stories; it was almost as though he didn't want us to think him tedious.

Yet there was the portrait in our house - on a quiet street in the middle of Ohio in the middle of the country in the middle of the century. There were no mementos of the war in our house - when I was in the first and second and third grade. World War II had been over for less than 10 years, but there were no souvenirs, no displays. Save for the portrait his fellow soldier had painted.

All of them, all of those young men whose lives had been difficult enough during the years of the Depression, and then all of a sudden their worlds were jarred once more, this time by events in countries that, as Depression boys, they never even dared to dream of visiting. And then they were there. They were on the ground in those distant nations that had been colors on a classroom globe to them. No one promised them they would ever get to come back home.

And - most remarkable of all, they seldom spoke about it. Those who did make it home, those who survived the fighting, went about their lives, and started families, and reported to work in a different America, an America of the post victory years in which the former soldiers were expected to wear different uniforms, obey different rules. They became the men in the gray flannel suits - or the factory coveralls, or the service station caps and slacks - and it was almost as if they thought they were supposed to forget about the war, except for inside their own hearts. It was almost as if no (one told them this), they must have decided it on their own - they felt they were obliged to keep it to themselves.

My father, before he died, recorded a tape about his life, a gift to my sister and brother and me. It wasn't a professional production; over the course of weeks or months, he spoke the words into a handheld tape recorder. There were stories of his childhood, and of his young adulthood, and there were stories of him as a married man and a father and, eventually, a grandfather.



**“If you were  
to have asked him  
- which I don't think  
we ever did  
- what was the best  
accomplishment  
of his life - time,  
I am quite certain  
he would have said,  
without hesitation:  
serving in the  
United States Army  
in the greatest  
conflict  
in the history  
of man.”**

But the guts of his life story (the solid center) was the narrative of his years at war. Most of it, the first time I heard the tape, was brand new to me; these were the most elemental stories of his time on earth, but I didn't know them.

One passage in particular, after he had been drafted into the Army and sent to Camp Shelby in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, for basic training, stops me every time I listen to it. I have to remind myself that these young men, most of them, had never been soldiers before; these young men had very little time to process what had just happened to them. One day they were walking the streets of their hometowns in that pre-interstate-highway America that was so much more local than the America in which we live today; the next day they were being told that they were soldiers in training to win what would turn out to be the most massive global war in history.

Here is the passage; my father describing some of those first days of basic training, into which he had entered scared and disoriented and so far away from everyone and everything with which he was familiar: "After we got down to Camp Shelby, it was an entirely new world. The camp had recently been gouged out of cornfields and cotton fields, and consisted of miles and miles of perimeter tents with wood-and-coal-burning stoves in them. And that was our introduction to Army life. The first thing we noted was a cloud of black smoke over the whole area as far as you could see, a result of the soft coal that was being burnt in those stoves. It was the middle of winter, and while the camp was in Mississippi it was still a very cold place, and the stoves were baldly needed. We lined up and were assigned certain companies . . .

In the meantime, a strange phenomenon occurred. As you know, the favorite thing for a soldier to do is gripe, and believe me, this division make-up of fifteen thousand recent civilians and a handful of regular Army officers and enlisted men did very little else but gripe. The weather was terrible, the jobs onerous, the drills and hikes very bone wearying, and in all it was a hell of a way to live.

But the phenomenon I mentioned to you was just this: strangely enough, I started to like it. I don't know why, but it just seemed to me that I was free.

Although I had to obey orders and do everything a soldier must do, it was kind of a newfound freedom. Everyone was alike, nobody was given any privileges other than what they deserved or earned, and I was not fettered by a [civilian] job that I did not like. So going into the Army, believe it or not, was kind of a relief for me . . ."

So unexpected - the fine gradations of a man's life, the never-anticipated changes he may encounter, changes that transform him from the person he was before into the person he will be forever after. Showing up for Army training and finding it liberating, finding it freeing . . . So unexpected for him as it happened, so unexpected for his son to learn, all the years later.



They are leaving us every day now, the men and women of these war years; soon we, their children, will be all alone in the world they saved for us. Each of those men, each of those women, had his or her own stories; most of the time, or so it seems, the stories went untold.

He never said, not to my face, just how essential those years in uniform were to the man he became. But he didn't really have to say it. None of them did.

The portrait hung on the wall of a peaceful house in a peaceful town, and of all the times he must have walked past that portrait, on his way to the dinner table, on his way to work, on his way to bed. I don't recall even one occasion when he stopped to stand before it and look into the eyes of the young man he used to be.

Taken from Life Collector's edition with express consent. Bob Green's new book, just published, is

*Duty: A father, His son,  
and the Man Who Won the War.*

91st Division soldiers from throughout the west gathered at Camp Roberts, California, to support

# Operation GOLDEN SPIKE

“Operation GOLDEN SPIKE is a joint exercise between the United States Army Reserve and the California National Guard to test the combat skills and synchronization of all these units together,” said Col. Robert O’Neill, director of the Camp Roberts Visitors Bureau.

Observer/Controllers from both the 2nd and 3rd Brigades oversaw many of the lanes training events that were underway on the many ranges of Camp Roberts. The California Guard sent units from nearly 30 units from throughout the state. These units covered a range of combat and combat support functions, such as truck companies from transportation units to heavy artillery units. Water was supplied to the bivouacked units by the 316th Quartermaster Battalion. They set up a supply point with nearly 70 thousand gallons of drinking water. And that water was needed! Temperatures soared above 100 degrees many of the 14 days of the exercise.

According to Captain Todd Newell, assigned to the S-3 section of the 3rd Brigade, “we want the units to leave with a better feeling about themselves,” after the

exercise. To that end, soldiers got immediate feedback after each lanes evolution. The After Action Reviews focused on the performance of each soldier and squad. Questions from the Observer/Controllers allowed each soldier to review what he did to support the mission, and what might have been a better course of action.

We followed two units through lanes to see how the training was going. One was the 211th Truck Company, part of the 63rd Regional Support Command, and the 540th Mobility Support Battalion of the California Army National Guard. Their mission was relatively simple . . . drive a small convoy up a road about a quarter mile to a nearby building to rescue American civilians there. Waiting for them were troops from the Arizona National Guard. The truck units would have to react to the ambushes and mines of the Arizona troops. When we watched the 540th prepare for the mission, their commanders were briefed by Captain Lindan Moya, 2/363rd, 3rd Brigade. She stressed that the mission was to rescue the civilians, and not engage in protracted fire fights. But as one soldier put it after one engagement, that was more fire fight than

rescue mission. “This is what I joined the Army for!” Captain Moya said later that the “John Wayne” mind set was a hard one to overcome, but that was what the training and mission debriefs were for. Despite the 100+ degree weather, the 504th seemed eager to train on soldier skills and managed to destroy the enemy machine gun position at the top of a small hill. The bad news



was that they lost at least one truck to simulated heavy machine gun fire. It’s hard to remember that you are not mechanized infantry once the machine guns start rattling. But after the engagement, it was a mandatory 40 minute rest, as a “Category 5” heat alert had been declared.

During the rest, the observer/controllers reviewed the group’s performance. They were praised for their aggressive approach, but assisted in learning why they were unsuccessful in completing the main mission of reaching the trapped civilians at the satellite station.

For the soldiers of the 540th Mobility Support Battalion, it was a steep learning curve. But the lessons they learned at GOLDEN SPIKE are ones they’ll remember if they’re ever in combat.

- Sergeant Mike Miles



# Staff Sergeant Thomas Mortenson: U.S. Army Reserve Command Soldier of the Year

Staff Sergeant Thomas Mortenson, from the 363<sup>rd</sup> Regiment, 3<sup>rd</sup> Brigade was named the Noncommissioned Officer of the year for the U.S. Army Reserve after winning that honor from Fifth U.S. Army and the 91<sup>st</sup> Division earlier in 2001. In competition with other winners from throughout the other commands within the Army Reserve though, he finished behind the eventual winner, Staff Sergeant Jody Wilson from the 9<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command.

Staff Sergeant Mortenson spent three days in Washington D.C. last August competing in the reserve competition. Before appearing before the board of senior Noncommissioned Officers, he and the other top soldiers received a VIP tour of the nation's capital. Stops on that tour included the White House, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and lunch at the Executive Dining Room at the Pentagon. While touring the Pentagon, they were greeted by the Sergeant Major of the Army, Jack Tilley. Each of the nominees received a Sergeant Major of the Army coin.

The winners of the title of Soldier and Noncommissioned Officer of the year went to Specialist Jean Stackpole, 941<sup>st</sup> Transportation Detachment, 88<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command at Fort Sheridan, Illinois and Staff Sergeant Jody Wilson, U.S. Forces Korea Support Unit, 9<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command, Fort Schafter, Hawaii.

Mortenson received a plaque from Arizona Senator John McCain honoring him for his achievement in the Noncommissioned Officer of the Year competition. Mortenson was the first Noncommissioned Officer from the 91<sup>st</sup> Division to reach the finals at the U.S. Army Reserve Command level.



Staff Sergeant Mortenson being congratulated by Senator John McCain



Colonel Thomas Henry Jenkin

## Thomas Jenkin Inducted into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame

Colonel Thomas Henry Jenkin was inducted into the Infantry OCS Hall of Fame in April 2001. Colonel Jenkin graduated from Infantry Officer Candidate School on July 25th, 1952. His first duty assignment was as a training officer, 7th Armored Division, 23rd Armored Infantry Battalion.

Jenkin was also assigned to FECOM, Camp Stoneman, California and he was later assigned to the 3rd Infantry Division's 15th Infantry Regiment in Japan. He served as Chief of Staff of the 91st Division and rose to the position of Assistant Division Commander before retiring from the United States Army Reserve.

Colonel Jenkin, who resides in Daly City, California, is a retired architect, who still does freelance work. He is a proud graduate of Abraham Lincoln High School in San Francisco and is extremely active in the school's alumni association. He is a dedicated member of the 91st Infantry Division League and serves on the board of directors for the division's museum.

- By Specialist Jack Gaines

# Thousands Show Gratitude for the Armed Forces

It was patriotism at its best, when all branches of the United States Armed Forces were honored during the pregame ceremony at Game 3 of the American League divisional playoff series in Oakland, California, October 13th.

As soldiers from the 91st Division and Western Army Reserve Intelligence Support Center (WARISC) here, and the 104th Division from



Sacramento marched onto the field, they were met by a thunderous applause from 57,000 baseball fans.

"I felt six feet tall," said Sergeant Major Azina Cooper, a reservist with Headquarters, 1st Brigade, 91st Division (TS). "I don't think the majority of the American public knows that there are military forces in the Bay Area, and I think we gave them a sense of having some protection in these crazy times."

Throughout the day, the soldiers were recognized and revered for their willingness to put their lives on the line. It was clear that the recent attacks had evoked a surge of patriotism among the crowd.

Command Sergeant Major William R. Davis, one of four reservists from Headquarters, 2nd Battalion (SC), 3rd Brigade (CS), 104th Division (IT) in

Sacramento, remembers a time when public sentiment wasn't so supportive.

"Throughout the evening people greeted us with smiles, patted us on the back, and thanked us for being there in uniform," he said. "This was a huge difference from the public disdain of the late 60's and 70's."

The soldiers were marched onto the field by Sergeant Sebastian Do, of Parks RFTA range control. As the National Anthem played, and a colorful array of fireworks exploded nearby, the citizen-soldiers were overwhelmed with a deep sense of pride.

"I've been to a lot of events and ceremonies," said Cooper, who has served her country for 26 years. "But, when I stepped onto that field . . . I got chills all over."

Sergeant Michelle Chilicky,

assigned to the 418th Military Intelligence Company (SIAD), WARISC here, felt very proud to be acknowledged by so many. "I felt extremely honored," said Chilicky. "The most wonderful thing for me was to have my husband, Rob, and I both participate and our children there to see it," she said.

As the highest ranking Army representative, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Trent, with the 104th Division, received the honor of throwing the pregame ball across home plate. The baseball was given to him signed by the Oakland A's catcher.

This was even more special for Trent since his two daughters, Megan, 9, and Taylor, 7, were present. When asked if they were proud of their dad, both girls replied with a nod and a big, toothy grin.

- Lynne Schaack  
Parks RFTA PAO

## Brief History of the 91st Division Pipes and Drums

- By Sergeant First Class Chuck Jamison

Originally the Sixth U.S. Army had a Pipes and Drum band until the late 1950's. The unit was deactivated and the pipes and uniforms were given to an Army National Guard unit in Los Angeles.

In 1962, CW4 Olwell, of the 91st Division, learned of the pipes and uniforms. He received permission to form a pipe band - which began with three volunteers. The band was named the 360th Regiment Bagpipe Band. Mr. Olwell remained officer-in-charge of the band for more than two decades until he retired in 1984.

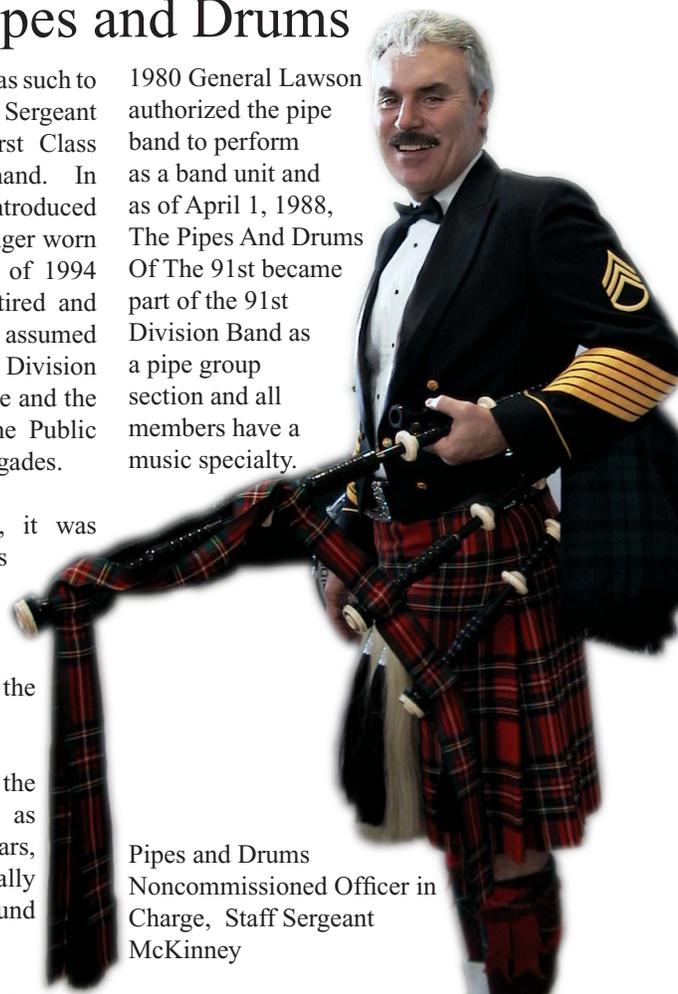
In 1968 the 91st Division reorganized. The pipe band moved to the First Brigade and, in 1978, the band became known as The Pipes And Drums of The 91st Division. Master Sergeant Paul K. Morris assumed command of the band. At this time, the full plaid and black doublet uniforms were retired. The green shirt and class A jacket were introduced. Master Sergeant Morris rightly claimed this was not a highland bagpipe band but an Army band playing

bagpipes. The band has remained as such to the present. In early 1988 Master Sergeant Morris retired and Sergeant First Class Ronald Sullivan assumed command. In 1990 the Mess Dress jacket was introduced and the Class A jacket was no longer worn with highland attire. In January of 1994 Sergeant First Class Sullivan retired and Staff Sergeant Chuck Jamison assumed command. The role of the 91st Division changed from Training to Exercise and the mission of the pipe band became Public Affairs and support for the six brigades.

During the band's early years, it was composed of civilian volunteers as well as active reservists who participated in the band on their own time while performing in other duty slots throughout the brigade.

Most individuals were from the division's test section, known as Detachment One. In later years, personnel was recruited specifically for duty in the pipe band. Around

1980 General Lawson authorized the pipe band to perform as a band unit and as of April 1, 1988, The Pipes And Drums Of The 91st became part of the 91st Division Band as a pipe group section and all members have a music specialty.



Pipes and Drums  
Noncommissioned Officer in  
Charge, Staff Sergeant  
McKinney



## The Bob Palassou Story: A SOLDIERS TALE

I joined the 91<sup>st</sup> Division in November 1942; I was a sniper for the division while in Italy.

We first went into combat in July 1944. Our first encounter with the Germans was a sniper attack that raked our battalion headquarters. The attack came from a small hill in front of us. My sergeant and I were sent to locate and stop this sniper. We began to scout the hillside. I was eager to test myself and wanted to see just how good I was against him! As we hunted, our battalion commander sent another company to attack the hill.

The company started receiving a lot of fire. My sergeant and I continued to hunt, but never located the sniper. The fire fight ensued through the afternoon. Eventually the enemy gunshots stopped and two German infantry soldiers surrendered. Both were friendly and smiling. Later we found that these two were not using rifles but the famous German “burp gun.” The “burp gun” was a small sub-machine gun. These two German soldiers tied up our force for over a day with a pair of small machine guns. I learned an important lesson that day. These Germans were top soldiers and not the bumpkins we were told back home. From that day on, I respected the German soldier’s skill in combat. In fact, I believed that they were much better soldiers than I, and that I needed to be a more capable soldier to combat them. By having this level of respect, I had no assumptions. I believed that they were prepared. I had to think ahead and be prepared for them. This made me a better soldier, and I lived to see the end of the war.

Each day of combat, I spoke a personal verse. We attacked in the dark of early morning. As I lay on the ground and the sun would rise I would say to myself, “Will I see you set today?” The day wore on and evening began to set. The sun would wane and I would say, “Will I see you rise tomorrow?” Whether we were “belly working,” or on an advance, the sun would rise or set and I would speak those words. Of course, in a serious fire fight, I had to pay attention to what was going on.

I was very lucky; I did see each day. When we were moving, and had no contact with the Germans, I would try to get into the heads of their infantrymen and to figure where they would be waiting for us. When I guessed right, it really helped me. I was always looking for mines, and if we were fired upon, the best place to take cover from bullets and fragments. This mind set saved me, and a number of my buddies as well.

Sketch of a 91st Division soldier in Italy. 1944 era, artist and subject - unknown. Courtesy of the 91st Division Museum.

When the bullets were flying, and explosions were pounding the earth, I really tried to see into the mind of the German soldiers. I tried to figure out where he expected me to appear, and what type of surprise he had for me. In response, I did what I felt they would never expect. When we fired and moved forward, instinct was to run straight ahead to where you wanted to go. Undoubtedly, that was where the Germans set machine guns. So instead of running straight, I would mix up my movement and run at an angle, then do a quick turn and go the other way. The German gunners would set their scopes and turn to fire, but I was already going another direction. They couldn't get a clean shot. Once I hit the ground, I would roll. The German Machine gun crews tried to fire in and around where they last saw you and box you in for the kill. It was terrifying to live and think like this, but they couldn't locate me.

The 91<sup>st</sup> Division continued north till we reached the "Gothic Line." My "L" company was to attack before the rest of the 91st. We were to hit Mt. Altuzzo an hour before the main attack against Monticelli. Our assault was a diversion to draw German troops and supplies to this mountain before the main attack occurred on Monticelli. At three in the morning we rose, got our supplies, a tactical brief and moved out. Quietly, under a starry sky, we worked our way to the base of the mountain. The air had a cold stillness to it, as if the world was frozen in time until the sun rose. We set our teams and charged the first positions with mortars and gunfire. Surprised, the German 4th Parachute Division scrambled under the fire. They were unprepared for us. We really started to roll over their defenses while they fell back. As we fought our way up the base, the Germans began to slow our advance. The predawn sky was lighting up, yet the soldiers and the land were still colorless. The advance began to grind down. We were pushing hard against their defensive line, and they were struggling wildly to keep us back. The tension was high. Germans and Americans were crawling all over, shooting and fighting by hand. One moment it seemed like our side was winning, the next, the Germans were pushing our line back. It was everywhere, and everyone could feel it, a teetering between victory or defeat - life or death. The lines stabilized and we were becoming pinned down. German infantrymen were pinning my team down while they moved to gain the advantage. My buddy, Jack "Buck" Buchanan, charged during the cross fire, and began to work through some German barbed wire apron. Working through the wire, and avoiding land mines, he saw a German pull a side arm. Buck couldn't raise his rifle and began firing his M-1 from the hip. One of his rounds went through a German's mouth and ricocheted, killing a few others. We covered him with fire while he shot and captured five others. He later earned the Silver Star for that. I'm sure that was the first medal awarded to a division member on the attack of the Gothic Line.

The counter attack was slowly breaking up. Bullets and mortars were heating the air with hot steel. We fought and inched forward over the rocks and bodies. One platoon would cover while members of the other platoon crawled along the dirt and rock to flank the German defenses. Then it came! You could hear it in the air. Our artillery started pounding the earth. The rounds were coming in short of the German lines and fell on the attacking

platoons. It stopped us dead in our tracks. The German defenses fell back and tried to pin us in so that we couldn't escape the barrage. Crawling backwards, firing to keep the Germans back, we fought our way back. The 1st Battalion of the 338th, and the 85th Division moved their troops up to our position and covered us while we withdrew. We had to regroup and catch up with our 363<sup>rd</sup>; they had begun their attack on Monticelli.

A small camp was set up at the base of Monticelli Mountain. We walked in, ate while packing supplies, and took in replacement soldiers to bring us up to strength. "I" company was trapped in some buildings and my company needed to pull them out. We began our move up the base of the mountain. You could feel the eyes of the Germans, hidden in the brush, tracking our moves. We came up to an open area. A brushy field that was open for about 100 yards. The area sloped up about 50 degrees. One by one, each man went across the field to the other side. I was concerned. We didn't receive any fire, but we knew that they were out there. My turn came. Our First Sergeant had already gone across, and was urging the men to rush over this open ground. So when my time came I started running up this steep ground in a zig-zag fashion. Grouping up, we began to move onto the buildings where "I" company was. Scanning the area, I heard it; German mortar fire



Bob Palassou, December 2001



Painting of an Italian town after the 91st Division drove out the German defenses, 1944 era, artist unknown.  
Courtesy of the 91st Division Museum

coming. Their rounds were so fast that we were still upright. The blasts knocked everyone off their feet. Dust and fragments ripped through the air and a cloud of soupy brown air covered us. The hot air and cordite burnt our lungs and eyes. The blast noise felt like it was splitting our heads open. Everyone grabbed the earth and held on.

No one had moved since the first mortar hit. I saw a friend of mine rolling around. He was hit in the shoulder. I knew his wife and son. Without thinking, I shot up and started running towards him. Normally you run about five yards and dive to the ground. 5, 10, 15 yards in a dead run; I heard the rattle of a German machine gunner fire at me. I knew if I stopped, he would get me. Hell, he might get me, even though I was running. A second machine-gun also opened up on me. Bullets were whizzing by and pelting the ground. I looked straight ahead at my buddy. Two thirds across, both machine gunners stopped. I like to think that they decided to let me live.

Pulling my buddy into the cover, I looked up and others were getting off the ground and running up there, too. I reached down to scratch my calf. I had a half-dollar size fragment burned into it. I thought that I smelled something burning, and it was me. I took

care of the wound myself. The fragment hit flat and burned into the flesh. It took the 363rd regiment three days to breakthrough the Gothic Line's main defenses. We were the second unit to do so followed by the 338th regiment of the 85<sup>th</sup> division. Between the 338th & my 363rd we all but destroyed the 4th German Parachute Division. All of the 363rd committed to the attack and only 54 men gained the top of Monticelli. They were led by Captain Bill Fulton - who retired from the Army as a Lieutenant General.

Entering into the Po valley, we had the Germans off balance. They couldn't stand toe to toe with us as they did in the mountains. After the war, the 91st went on the Morgan Line to keep Tito, and his army, from taking the Po Valley from the Italians. We were the only division in Italy after the war that was fully armed and on a war time footing.

On October 25, 1945, I was finally discharged. Of my original company of 220 men, I was one of 27 who survived.

Background image: 91st Division soldier's painting of Mt. Monticelli and the Gothic Line, 1944 era, Artist unknown.  
Courtesy of the 91st Division Museum.

# The efforts of one soldier bring joy to hundreds

Was it the attack on America that brought out such a spirit of giving? Or was it the dedicated efforts of a soldier wanting to help those less fortunate? Perhaps a combination of both made this year's Toys for Tots program the most successful ever.

Wanting to do something to help underprivileged kids, Sergeant Gregory D. White, a member of the BOSS (Better Opportunities for Single Soldiers) Committee, and a soldier with Headquarters, 91st Division (TS) at Parks Reserve Forces Training Area in Dublin, California, teamed with the post Fire Department to support the annual Christmas program.

While shopping for Christmas presents for his twin boys at Kay Bee Toys in Pleasanton, White met Store Manager David Hisel. After Hisel heard about the charitable event, he offered a 10% discount, and no sales tax, to people who purchased toys for donation.

White went above and beyond the call of duty. In uniform, after duty hours and on weekends, he would sit outside the store next to the collection barrel.

"Sitting at Kay Bee Toys was nothing less than ensuring people saw a servicemember in dress uniform supporting a worthwhile program," he said. "To let people know that soldiers understand the true meaning of giving."

White, who enlisted in the Army after high school in 1982, was moved by a conversation he had one day with a young boy and his mother.

"The boy, 10, came up and talked to me about my uniform and ribbons for about 10 minutes," he said. "They donated a toy and as they began to walk away the boy said he, too, was going to join the military. But it was why he was going to join that touched me. He said he wanted to serve his country; I joined for the same reasons. To serve my country -- nothing more and nothing less."



Lucie Titus, President of the William F. Dean Chapter of the Association of the United States Army, presents a certificate of appreciation to Sergeant Gregory D. White for his efforts on behalf of the Toys for Tots program.

Hundreds of toys were donated over the two-week period. There were also Christmas shoppers who, because of the soldier sitting outside, stopped in and bought toys.

But White didn't stop there. He was personally responsible for dropping off collection barrels to Home Depot and Safeway stores in the Tri-Valley area. Every day he would drive to the locations and bring the donated toys back to the Fire Department.

How many toys in all did White collect? "You really can't count numbers when it comes to making children smile," he said.

Lynne Schaack  
Public Affairs Officer for Parks RFTA

## 91st Division 2001 Christmas Celebration

Joy and cheer flowed through the 91st Division (TS) headquarters building this December when soldiers and their families joined in a holiday celebration.

Division staff and the public affairs NCOIC, Sergeant First Class Lisa Gyax, organized games for the youth, photos, visits with



Division Family enjoying the holiday meal



The 91st Division Band filled the closing moments of the holiday celebration with warmth and music.

Santa, and a holiday dinner. The holiday celebration closed with a Christmas concert by the 91st Division Band, which included sing along carols. At the end of the day, soldiers were released and families went home with smiles, warmth and children sleeping contentedly in their arms.

*Coming in the summer 2002 issue . . .*

# The Powder River Journal

In October 2001, the 91st Division League and 91st Division Association combined to make a truly nation-wide organization.

“I think this merger is an excellent idea. We don’t really have any other option. It’s merge or fade away. This is the way to make sure that the 91st Infantry Division Association continues down to the last man,” said Fred Booth, former president of the 91st Infantry Division Association.

Under the terms of the merger agreement, the 91st Division will set aside a section of The Fir Tree magazine to incorporate the Powder River Journal and articles submitted by the association’s historian, Roy Livengood.

Brigadier General Terrill K. Moffett, who attended the associations’s reunion in Omaha, said, “This merger is truly a significant event. It ensures that the history of the division, and the memory of those who wrote that history with their blood and sweat, will live on in today’s 91st Division. I want all these people to know how proud we are to follow in their footsteps, and how privileged we feel to be the keepers of the Rome-Arno, North Apennines and Po Valley battle streamers that grace the division’s color. We take great pains to make sure that the young soldiers of the division know the cherished history of the unit’s 306 days of combat, its 6 medal of honor winners and its 14-plus thousand battle casualties. I welcome all members of the 91st Infantry Division League and look forward to working with you to preserve the history and traditions of the division.”

“91st Division history came alive for me during the ceremony in Omaha. I attended the final reunion of the 91st Infantry Division Association. It was an emotional weekend for the members and myself. As I listened to the stories these combat veterans told, I realized that this truly was ‘the greatest generation’. One veteran’s face was paralyzed on the left side. He pointed to a scar on his nose next to his right eye, and told me that a bullet entered next

to his eye, went through his brain and exited above his left ear, but miraculously did not kill him. Another told me of losing two friends in one day to hostile fire. Another told me of one occasion when his new lieutenant had both legs, his left arm, and his right eye blown away by an artillery shell. I had already read about the 14,583 battle casualties of the 91st Infantry Division in the Rome-Arno, North Apennines and Po Valley campaigns, but those casualties had faces for me this weekend,” Moffett continued.

## 91st Division League and Association reunion scheduled

To celebrate the merger of the 91st Infantry Division League and the 91st Infantry Division Association, the Division League will hold a reunion October 18 - 20, 2002. Please mark these dates on your calendars.

One of the Division League’s promises, made during the Omaha reunion, was to not only have a biennial reunion, but to have one this year.

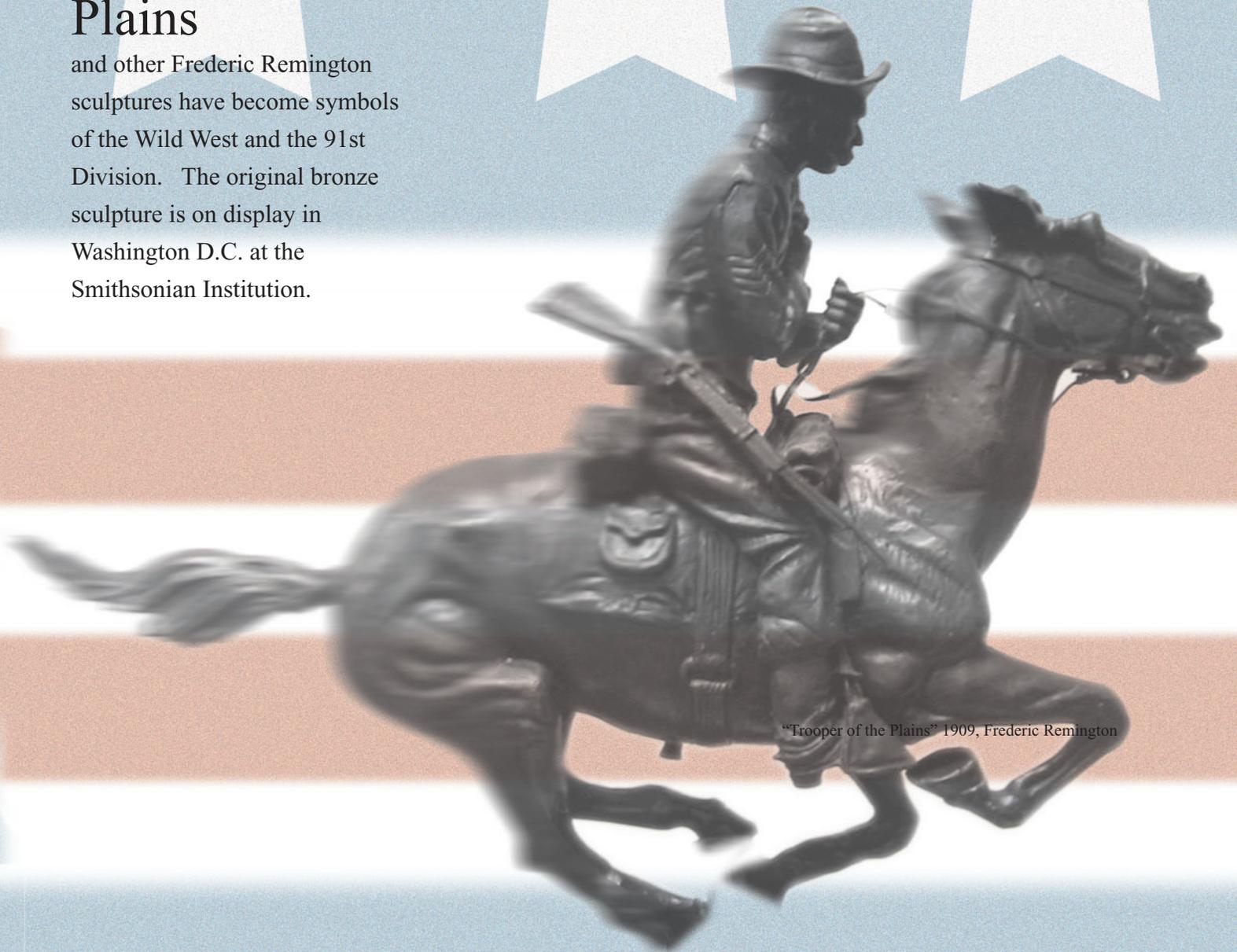
The reunion will be held in the San Francisco bay area and will include a tour of the 91st Division Headquarters, located in Dublin, California. That will afford everyone an opportunity to meet some of the 91st Division’s outstanding soldiers and learn more about the division’s mission and organization. Planned events include a golf tournament, memorial service and dinner dance. Former 91st Infantry Division Association President, Fred Booth, has agreed to serve on the reunion planning committee.

Information regarding location and additional events will follow as it becomes available. You’ll find a full update in the summer 2002 edition of The Fir Tree.

For more information about the 91st Infantry Division League, go to [www.91divleague.org](http://www.91divleague.org).

## Trooper of the Plains

and other Frederic Remington sculptures have become symbols of the Wild West and the 91st Division. The original bronze sculpture is on display in Washington D.C. at the Smithsonian Institution.



“Trooper of the Plains” 1909, Frederic Remington

The 91st Division, headquartered in Dublin, California, also displays “Old Bill.” That sculpture is also a symbol of the spirit of the Wild West Division and honors its soldiers and their roots.