

Freedom's Voice



The Monthly Newsletter of the
Military History Center



112 N. Main ST
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
<http://www.okmhc.org/>

"Promoting Patriotism through the Preservation of Military History"

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United States Armed Forces Day of Observance

Four Chaplains Day – February 3

The Four Chaplains – Rev. George Fox (Methodist), Rabbi Alexander Goode, Rev. Clark V. Poling (Dutch Reformed) and Father John P. Washington (Roman Catholic) – also sometimes referred to as the "Immortal Chaplains" or the "Dorchester Chaplains" were four United States Army chaplains who gave their lives to save other civilian and military personnel as the troop ship, SS *Dorchester*, was torpedoed and sunk off Greenland, on February 3, 1943. The four chaplains helped soldiers into lifeboats and gave up their own life jackets, when the supply ran out. The chaplains joined arms, said prayers and sang hymns as they went down with the ship.



George L. Fox



Alexander D. Goode



Clark D. Poling



John P. Washington

The MHC Announces Executive Director

At their January meeting, the Board of Directors of the Military History Center appointed Mr. Keith H. Browne to the position of Executive Director. He will serve the MHC *pro bono*. Mr. Browne's principal duty will be development of fundraising opportunities and activities. He began his duties at the MHC on February 1.

Mr. Browne was born in Springfield, MO in 1948 and has been a consulting mechanical engineer since beginning his career with Black & Veatch in Kansas City, MO in 1971. In 1977, he relocated to Tulsa and became a principal in a mechanical-electrical engineering consulting firm, where he remained for twenty-seven years. In 2004 he established Browne Consulting Engineers, Inc. He holds BSME and MSME degrees from the University of Missouri at Rolla.



MHC Executive Director, Keith Browne

March 17 – Vietnam Veterans Day

The MHC will host its annual Vietnam Veterans Day observance on Thursday, March 17. Ceremonies will begin with a flag raising followed by the playing of "Taps" at the MHC Flag Plaza at 4:00 p.m.

There will be a special program presented by Rolling Thunder at 7:00 p.m. at Broken Arrow's First Methodist Church, 112 E. College ST. Admission to the program is free as is admission to the MHC all day.

Please mark your calendar for this patriotic day, and come out and visit the MHC and pay tribute to our Vietnam veterans.

Kenneth Schwab back in BA Government



Former Broken Arrow Director of Engineering, Kenneth Schwab, has returned to city government as Assistant City Manager over the operations group. One of the departments within this group is the Parks and Recreations Department, headed by Mr. Scott Esmond. The MHC property is under the oversight of Parks and Recreation.

As former BA Director of Engineering, Mr. Schwab oversaw the rehabilitation and conversion of the old Broken Arrow hospital into the present MHC facility. The MHC is happy to welcome Mr. Schwab back. We look forward to renewing our relationship with him. He and Mr. Esmond have been steadfast supporters of the MHC.



A soldier of the Honor Company of the 3rd Infantry "Old Guard" Regiment standing tall at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, during the blizzard of January 22-23, 2016 – duty and sacrifice extradionare – every minute of every hour of every day. The three tombs of the unknowns hold the remains of an unknown soldier from World War I, World II and the Korean War.

This Month's Featured Exhibit



This month's featured exhibit is SFC Duane Baldwin's *ca.* 1940 cavalryman's uniform with ceremonial accessories. Sgt. Baldwin entered military service in 1940 in the Mississippi National Guard. Within a year or so, he joined the regular army and served in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Sgt. Baldwin wore this uniform while a trooper in an engineer battalion of the 1st Cavalry Division.

Sgt. Baldwin was originally from Arkansas, but settled in Edmond after his retirement. He died several years ago, and thanks to Mrs. Baldwin and his good friend, Chip Miller of Edmond, the MHC now proudly has his uniform and memorabilia to share with our guests.



Sgt. Baldwin's photograph, decorations and insignia from three wars and more than twenty years of military service.

Death in the Sky

On the morning of July 19, 1944, the B-17 bomber, *Sweet Mama*, lifted off from her base in England headed for a mission over Germany. SSGT Martin B. Seibert, the tail gunner, was flying his twenty-fourth credited mission, with only six more to go. That day, the 545th Bombardment Squadron, 384th Bombardment Group (Heavy) was heading to Höllriegelskreuth, a small municipality just south of Munich.



Sweet Mama on the hardstand at her base, Grafton Underwood, Northamptonshire, England

After successfully completing his bomb run, 1st Lt. Gerald Heim turned *Sweet Mama* toward home. Once outside the flak zone, a Messerschmitt fighter got on his tail. The German fired on *Sweet Mama*, probably with his 20mm nose gun, very likely killing Sgt. Seibert instantly. The number one engine was also hit, and it exploded. The B-17 fell out of formation and quickly dropped from 25,000 to 5,000 feet, on fire inside and out, yet two of the crew were able to get out. Another German attacked the crippled aircraft as it was falling. It exploded and crashed near the village of Perhting, about twenty miles southwest of Munich.

After the war, the remains of the seven killed crew members were recovered and returned to the United States, where they were interred in a common grave in the Jefferson Barracks National Cemetery at St. Louis, in 1949. Martin Seibert was born in Maryland in 1924. He was just twenty years old.

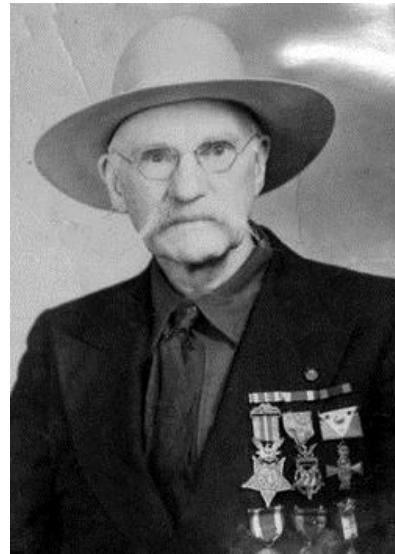


Pvt. Seibert - 1942

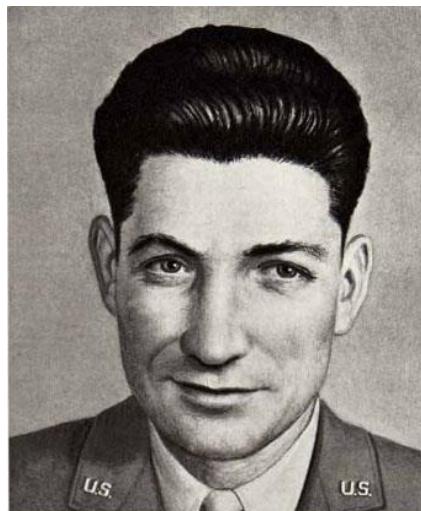


SSG Seibert- March 31, 1944

Sgt. Seibert's cousin, Dennis Laffin, MHC Vice President, donated his silver Gunners Wings to the MHC.



Pvt. Joseph L. Epps of Co. B, 33rd Infantry, U.S. Volunteer Infantry was awarded the Medal of Honor for "conspicuous heroism above and beyond the call of duty at Vigan, Luzon, Philippine Islands, on 4 December 1899." His medal was issued February 7, 1902. He was born at Jamestown, MO on May 16, 1870, but was a resident of Indian Territory (Oklahoma) at the time of his enlistment. Joseph Epps died on June 30, 1952, at Muskogee. He is buried in Muskogee's Greenhill Cemetery.



Frederick Funston Henry was born on September 23, 1919, at Vian, OK. He joined the Army at Clinton, OK in September 1940. On September 1, 1950, he was serving as a 1st lieutenant in Co. F, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, within the Pusan Perimeter, near Andong, Republic of Korea, when his platoon was attacked by a numerically superior enemy force. Although seriously wounded, Lt. Henry ordered his men to withdraw, while he stayed behind to cover them, until he was killed by enemy fire. Lt. Henry "distinguished himself by conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty" and was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor on February 16, 1951. He is buried in the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, Honolulu, HI.

Last Man Standing



Barren E. Tucker, age ninety-one, at the MHC
February 2, 2016

On June 7, 1944, D-Day plus 1, the 1st and 2nd Battalions, 175th Infantry Regiment (Maryland National Guard) of the 29th Infantry Division landed on Omaha Beach, Normandy, France beginning at 1230 hours. They landed abreast one mile east of Vierville sur Mer. Among the men of Co. G of the 2nd Battalion was PFC Barren E. Tucker from Spiro, OK.



Soldiers wade ashore at Omaha Beach

PFC Tucker recalls that just as the men began disembarking from their landing craft, it was struck on the side by a large wave that knocked him into the water. Almost immediately after that, a German shell hit the landing craft killing most of the men still in it. Once the men got on the beach, they encountered heavy machinegun and small arms fire and had to crawl across the beach. Along the way, Tucker's helmet was shot off his head. He believes he was fortunate that his chin strap wasn't fastened, or it might have broken his neck.

Once over the beach, the battalions moved inland to Vierville, encountering occasional mortar and machinegun fire. The regiment, in a column of battalions, marched to Gruchy. During the march, detachments were deployed from time to time to wipe out small pockets of enemy resistance and snipers.

At 0645 on June 12, the task force, with Company C leading, crossed the River Vire. It then pushed south to Montmartin en

Graignes, with Company E on the left and Company C on the right. They encountered stiff resistance on the outskirts of the village. At 2200, Company G, with one mortar section and one machinegun section attached, was sent across the River Vire to the aid of Company C. The next morning, a battalion of paratroops came up on the right of the task force, relieving the pressure on their right flank. Later in the day, the paratroops were forced to withdraw, leaving the task force to face the enemy alone. At 1205 on June 13, Company G re-crossed the River Vire, having run into stiff enemy opposition. It was during this action in the village of Montmartin en Graignes that Company G, out of ammunition and faced with overwhelming force, was compelled to surrender to a unit of the 17th SS Panzergrenadier Division.¹ The SS men forced the prisoners to kneel at the point of machineguns. As the SS checked the men's dog tags, they discovered two Jewish soldiers among the prisoners. (Religion is stamped on dog tags for the benefit of chaplains and graves registrars.) SS men took them behind a hedge – witnessed by PFC Tucker – and shot them.² Killing prisoners, especially the wounded and Jewish soldiers, was common practice with SS units, which were made up of fanatical Nazis. The surviving prisoners were marched away from the front to a rear location, where they were loaded on cattle cars for transport to Germany. Somewhere along the way – Mr. Tucker isn't sure – they were placed in a barbwire enclosure, maybe a temporary collecting point. Tucker, along with a few paratroopers and rangers, was able to dig under the wire at a dead spot where the search light missed them, and to escape. They still must have been in France, probably in Lorraine, as they made their way to a farmhouse, where a French family told them they could hide in the barn. During the night, the French farmer reported the prisoners' presence to German authorities.

The recaptured prisoners were taken to Stalag VII-A, located near Moosburg in southern Bavaria. Stalag VII-A was used as a transit camp that processed POWs to be relocated to other camps. Tucker was sent to Zeitz in Saxony, where he was detailed to clean bomb rubble from a recent attack. At some point, he was transferred to a sub-camp of Buchenwald concentration camp and put to work in sugar beet fields. During his captivity, Tucker subsisted on a starvation diet, largely of watery soup and bread made with sawdust, in lieu of flour. He weighed less than ninety pounds at the end of the war.

In April 1945, he and some other prisoners escaped again. As the escapees were heading west, they met forward elements of the 2nd Armored Division. PFC Tucker was finally a free man.

Tucker had been drafted while still in high school, so after he returned home, he went back to school to get his diploma. He then enrolled at Oklahoma Military Academy, graduating in 1948. After that, he enrolled at Oklahoma A&M College – now Oklahoma State University – to complete his education. Mr.

¹ The movements of the 175th, up to the surrender of the men of Company G, are taken from the regimental after action report for June 1944.

² The bodies may have been discovered. Two bodies were found together in the River Vire in 1944 and buried in the Normandy American Cemetery as Unknowns. DNA testing will confirm whether or not they are the missing men.

Tucker was employed for several years at the McAlester Naval Depot, now McAlester Army Ammunition Plant. He later joined the US Postal Service, where he finished his working career. In the meantime, he had joined the 95th Infantry Division of the Army Reserve, from which he retired as a Lt. Colonel. He now lives with his daughter in Bixby. He is believed to be the last survivor of Co. G, 2nd Battalion, 175th Infantry Regiment.

So, how did a boy from Spiro, Oklahoma end up in a Maryland National Guard regiment? During World War II, federalized National Guard units were filled-in with both draftees and enlistees without regard for state of residence, the same as regular Army units.



Col. Tucker's insignia and decorations representing more than twenty years of service in the U. S. Army.



According to a 2015 Tulsa *World* interview with Mr. Tucker, that is him at the lower left. If it is him, the town must be Isigny sur Mer, the largest town the 2/175th liberated prior to June 13, when PFC Tucker was captured. The two photographs appear to be the same location.



Isigny sur Mer today – Memorial Liberation Monument

175th Infantry Regiment

The 175th Infantry Regiment is one of the oldest and most historic regiments in the American military system. It is a descendant of the Baltimore Independent Cadets, formed on December 3, 1774. In 1776, the Cadets became Smallwood's Maryland Battalion. On August 27, 1776, Smallwood's Battalion was on Long Island, where it first went into battle against the British army. On December 10, in response to a request from the Continental Congress for troops, Smallwood's Battalion was incorporated into the 5th Maryland Infantry, the "Dandy Fifth", as part of the Maryland Continental Line.

Marylanders' loyalties were divided during the Civil War. Some of the men of the 5th Maryland went to Virginia and organized the 1st Maryland (CSA) while, others remained in the state and formed the 1st Maryland (USA). On September 29, 1881, several independent militia companies from Frederick and Hagerstown formed the First Battalion of Infantry. During World War I, it was joined with the 5th Maryland Infantry to form the 115th Infantry Regiment, Maryland National Guard. The 115th saw combat in France, where it received battle streamers for Alsace and Meuse-Argonne.

In 1940, the 115th was re-designated the 175th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division. The 175th was the 29th Division's reserve regiment for the Normandy landings. The regiment went ashore on Omaha Beach on June 7, D-Day plus 1.

The most recent deployment of the 175th was to Iraq in 2007, as a unit of the 3rd Infantry Division. The regiment's Latin motto, *Decus et Praesidium*, translates as "An Honor and a Guard".



175th Infantry Regiment "Fifth Maryland", 58th Brigade Combat Team, Maryland National Guard



Eighteen year-old Pvt. Barren Tucker

Thunderbird Tour Announcement

Lt. Col. Keith Varner, Recruiting & Retention Battalion Commander, Oklahoma Army National Guard, in partnership with Prime Time Travel of Edmond, OK, will be leading a historical tour of Anzio, Rome, Nuremburg, Munich and Dachau. During this trip, participants will walk in the footsteps of the 45th Infantry Division Thunderbirds as they helped liberate Europe. This trip is more than just a battlefield tour, it will be a first person walk through history as you learn about the men who fought and won World War II.

Col. Varner has been able to work with Mr. Mike Beckett and Mr. Mike Gonzalez of the 45th Infantry Division Museum in Oklahoma City, and their assistance will make this a one of a kind tour. Additionally, the tour will be joined in Italy by Dr. Danilla Bracaglia, a historian and archeologist whose specialty is the Italian Campaign. With her assistance, participants will be able to visit sites (such as the Caves at Anzio) that are not generally open to the public.

The Military History Center is pleased to offer this announcement, but has no involvement with the Thunderbird Tour as either a sponsor or organizer. Neither the MHC, nor any of its board members, officers, employees or volunteers will receive any remuneration or any other benefits from the tour organizers or from Prime Time Travel other than any free will contributions they may make to the MHC. Information about the tour is provided only as a service to patrons and friends of the MHC. For information about the tour, please contact Prime Time Travel at 405-340-1120. Please do not contact the MHC for tour information, as we have no information about the tour other than what is provided herein.



MHC docent, Harold Hayes, explaining artifacts in the World War II display room to residents of Senior Star at Burgundy Place, a Tulsa independent living retirement community. (January 22)

Museum Hours and Admission Fee

Tuesday – Friday: 10:00 – 4:00; Saturday: 10:00 – 2:00
Closed Sunday and Monday and major Federal holidays

Adults – \$5.00
Members and Children under 18 – Free

FOR MORE INFO CALL (918) 794-2712

Support the Military History Center

Do you want to join the many patriotic Oklahomans who are already supporting the Military History Center's mission of "Promoting Patriotism by Preserving Military History"? If so, contact the Military History Center at (918) 794-2712 to learn how you can be a supporter, or click on the link below to go to the MHC website, <http://www.okmhc.org/donate/>.

There's something to accommodate everyone's budget. Monetary donations, as well as gifts in kind, are tax deductible, subject to IRS regulations.

We invite you to be a part of this unique opportunity to support a first-class military museum and history center in Oklahoma.



SUCCESSFUL FLIGHT: Tulsa Mayor Dewey Bartlett, Jr., left, with Major Nathan Garrett after their successful flight in an Oklahoma Air National Guard F-16 fighter jet. (GTR Midtown Monitor)

On Christmas Eve, Major Garrett of the 138th Fighter Wing, Oklahoma Air National Guard, gave Mayor Bartlett "the ride of my life" in his F-16 Fighting Falcon, or Viper, as it's also called. Major Garrett put the Mayor through combat maneuvers at nearly Mach-1 speed. He put his aircraft through every combat maneuver from high altitude dog fighting to low-level strafing. The Mayor was obviously thrilled.



F-16s of 125th Fighter Squadron, 138th Fighter Wing, ONG

“Lest We Forget”



The most iconic photograph of World War II

On February 23, 1945, Associated Press photographer, Al Rosenthal, captured the image of five Marines – Harlon Block, Rene Gagnon, Ira Hayes, Franklin Sousley and Michael Strank – and one Navy hospital corpsman – John Bradley – as they raised the Stars and Stripes atop Mt. Suribachi, the highest point on Iwo Jima. Block, Sousley and Strank were killed in action within a few days of the flag raising. In fact, that flag raising was the second of the day. The first flag was too small to be easily seen by the men of the large fleet offshore, so a second, larger flag was ordered to be raised, replacing the smaller flag.

According to the Department of the Navy's accounting, "The 36-day assault resulted in more than 26,000 American casualties, including 6,800 dead." All but a very few were Marines, the highest number of casualties for any battle in the history of the Marine Corps. Twenty-two Marines (twelve posthumously) and five sailors (four posthumously), two of whom were hospital corpsmen attached to Marine infantry units, were awarded Medals of Honor for their heroic actions above and beyond the call of duty during the battle. This was twenty-eight per cent of all the Medals of Honor awarded to Marines in World War II.

After the battle, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz said: *"Among the men who fought on Iwo Jima, uncommon valor was a common virtue".* (Note: Al Rosenthal won a Pulitzer Prize for his photograph. It became the symbol of the last war bond drive.)

Freedom is not free.

