

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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August 2017

United States Armed Services Day of Observance

Coast Guard Birthday – August 4

Important Dates

POW/MIA Recognition Day

On Saturday, September 16, at 11:00 a.m., the MHC will host a POW/MIA Recognition Day event on the Memorial Flag Plaza. The highlight of the event will be the dedication of the Oklahoma Vietnam War MIA Memorial, with the participation of Oklahoma Rolling Thunder. Please make plans to attend this important patriotic event.



Civil War Weekend

The tenth annual Wagoner County Coweta Mission Civil War Weekend will be held on October 13-15 at the farm of Mr. Arthur Street, located southeast of Coweta.

This is an event you won't want to miss. So, mark your calendars now. The September newsletter will contain detailed information about the event. **Proceeds from the Civil War Weekend are for the benefit of the MHC.**

End of World War II Commemoration

On Saturday, August 12, the Military History Center hosted a commemoration of the end of World War II. When President Truman and other allied leaders announced on August 14, 1945, that the Japanese government had accepted the Potsdam Declaration as the basis for surrender, the Allied world went wild with relief and joy.

This is the second consecutive year that the MHC has hosted this commemoration. World War II veteran, Mr. Frank Riesinger, a local retired businessman, is the human force behind these commemorations. Once again, this year, he produced a fabulous event. Union High School Air Force JROTC cadets, under the command of Chief Master Sergeant Don Snow (USAF, Retired) gave us a short demonstration of a manual of arms drill and posted the colors, as a bugler played "Stand to the Colors". We were entertained by The Goforth Brass and Miss Maggie Bond, a former Miss Tulsa, sang the National Anthem and other patriotic songs.

MHC President, BG Tom Mancino (U.S. Army, Retired), served as Master of Ceremonies. Dr. Clarence Oliver, a veteran of the Korean War, gave the invocation and introduced SGT James Wheeler of Oklahoma's 45th Brigade Combat Team, who gave an address on the combat history of the 45th Division/Brigade. Mr. Paul Andert, a veteran of world War II, and recipient of a Silver Star, three Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts, related his experiences as a Sergeant First Class in the 2nd Armored "Hell on Wheels" Division. Finally, CMSGT Snow recited a poem of his own composition. The event closed with a bugler blowing "Taps".

The weather drove the event inside, where it was a little crowded, and several attendees had to stand, but the crowd of about 150 or so enthusiastic patriots, mostly veterans and their spouses, thoroughly enjoyed the program. We are grateful for all who helped put the event together, especially Mr. Riesinger and the primary sponsors, AVB Bank and Metro Appliances and More.



Union High School JROTC cadets performing their drill



SGT Wheeler giving his address



Dr. Oliver introducing SGT Wheeler

National Purple Heart Day

The Ernest Childers Chapter of the Military Order of the Purple Heart commemorated National Purple Heart Day by holding a Purple Heart City Ceremony. The Ceremony was held in Broken Arrow's Veterans Park on Tuesday evening, August 8. More than 200 enthusiastic veterans, their families, friends and supporters attended the impressive ceremony, where Broken Arrow was proclaimed a Purple Heart City.



Mr. Riesinger addressing the audience



Master of Ceremonies, Dr. Clarence Oliver, a Korean War veteran and long-time supporter of the MHC, introducing Mitch Reed, Commander of the Ernest Childers Chapter, a Vietnam War veteran, two-time recipient of the Purple Heart and MHC docent. Mr. Reed was organizer of the event. Ms. Elaine Childers, daughter of Medal of Honor recipient, COL Ernest Childers of Broken Arrow, is seated in the background.



Broken Arrow City Manager, Michael Spurgeon, Vice Mayor Scott Eudey and City Councilors, Johnny Parks, Debra Wimpee (MHC Board member) and Mike Lester unveil the plaque designating Broken Arrow a Purple Heart City. The first plaque was installed beneath the Rose District sign at the east bound off-ramp of the Broken Arrow Expressway at Elm Street.



The Purple Heart truck at the Purple Heart Day event – On August 9, a ceremony was held at Matthews Ford at 1101 Expressway Drive in Broken Arrow to send-off the Purple Heart Truck. The truck is a 2017 Ford F-150 Raptor especially modified for a combat wounded veteran.



On May 23, 1944, Henry Schauer was serving as a PFC in 2nd BN, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Infantry “Rock of the Marne” Division. On that day, near Cisterna di Littoria, Italy, he single-handedly killed five German snipers and disabled two machine gun emplacements. The next day he destroyed a third German machine gun nest. His Medal of Honor citation:

“Pfc. (now T/Sgt.) Schauer left the cover of a ditch to engage 4 German snipers who opened fire on the patrol from its rear. Standing erect he walked deliberately 30 yards toward the enemy, stopped amid the fire from 4 rifles centered on him, and with 4 bursts from his BAR, each at a different range, killed all of the snipers. Catching sight of a fifth sniper waiting for the patrol behind a house chimney, Pfc. Schauer brought him down with another burst. Shortly after, when a heavy enemy artillery concentration and 2 machineguns temporarily halted the patrol, Pfc. Schauer again left cover to engage the enemy weapons single-handed. While shells exploded within 15 yards, showering dirt over him, and strings of grazing German tracer bullets whipped past him at chest level, Pfc. Schauer knelt, killed the 2 gunners of the machinegun only 60 yards from him with a single burst from his BAR, and crumpled 2 other enemy soldiers who ran to man the gun. Inserting a fresh magazine in his BAR, Pfc. Schauer shifted his body to fire at the other weapon 500 yards distant and emptied his weapon into the enemy crew, killing all 4 Germans. Next morning, when shells from a German Mark VI tank and a machinegun only 100 yards distant again forced the patrol to seek cover, Pfc. Schauer crawled toward the enemy machinegun. stood upright only 80 yards from the weapon as its bullets cut the surrounding ground, and 4 tank shells fired directly at him burst within 20 yards. Raising his BAR to his shoulder, Pfc. Schauer killed the 4 members of the German machinegun crew with 1 burst of fire.”

Henry Shauer was born at Clinton, Oklahoma, on October 9, 1918. He entered the Army at Scobey, Montana. After the war, he eventually settled in Oregon. He died on June 16, 1997, at Salem, Oregon. He is buried in City View Cemetery in Salem. We know nothing else about his life.

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 information, call (918) 794-2712

www.okmhc.org

World War II Ace



COL John Dave Landers

John Dave Landers was born near Wilson in Carter County, Oklahoma, on June 23, 1920. At the time of his enlistment, April 25, 1941, he lived in Joshua, Texas. He was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant and received his pilot's wings at Stockton Field, California, on December 12, 1941. LT Landers was assigned to the 9th Pursuit Squadron, 49th Pursuit Group, flying P-40 Warhawks in the Pacific Theater, where he was credited with destroying six enemy aircraft in aerial combat. He was shot down near Dododura, New Guinea, in December 1942, evaded capture and was subsequently rescued. He returned to the U.S. in January 1943.

After a tour in the United States as a flight instructor, he was assigned to the 55th Fighter Group, 38th Fighter Squadron stationed at Duxford, England. There, he flew the newly developed, powerful P-51D Mustang. He named his fighter *Big Beautiful Doll*. During his time in Europe, he was credited with shooting down eight and a half German fighters and destroying twenty during strafing attacks. His shared aerial kill was a German ME-262 jet fighter. He ended the war as a Lt. Colonel and commander of the 78th Fighter Group, with 174 missions and a total of thirty-four and one-half combined aerial and ground kills.

Colonel Landers was a highly-decorated combat pilot, having been awarded four Distinguished Flying Crosses, three Silver Stars, British Distinguished Flying Cross, French Croix de Guerre, twenty-one Air Medals, Purple Heart and Victory Medal.

After the war, Landers was employed at Brown and Root Construction. At the time of his death, September 12, 1989, he lived in Granbury, Texas. He is entombed in Greenwood Mausoleum, Fort Worth, Texas.



Painting of Landers flying *Big Beautiful Doll* over France

World War I Ace



LT William Portwood Erwin

William Portwood Erwin was born at Ryan in the Chickasaw Nation, Indian Territory, on October 18, 1895. Sometime in his youth, his family moved to Chicago.

In 1917 or 1918, he joined the Aviation Section, Signal Corps, a part of the Army. After pilot training, Irwin was assigned to 1st Aero Squadron of the 1st Observation Group. The group's mission was reconnaissance, artillery spotting and infantry contact, in order of importance. Between September 15 and October 22, 1918, Erwin is credited with shooting down eight German aircraft with half of the kills shared with his gunner, Arthur Easterbrook. The gunner was an enlisted man who operated a machine gun from an open cockpit behind the pilot (also in an open cockpit), who operated the aircraft's forward machine guns. LT Erwin was awarded two Distinguished Service Crosses and a French Croix de Guerre for actions during the war.

After the war, Erwin continued flying, including participation in air races. In August 1927, he disappeared somewhere over the Pacific between Oakland, California and Hawaii, while competing in the Dole Air Race.

The 1st Aero Squadron, formed on March 5, 1913, is the lineal ancestor of today's 1st Reconnaissance Squadron, the oldest flying unit in the United States Air Force.



Unidentified air crew – 1st Aero Squadron

45th Infantry Brigade in Afghanistan

In the fall of 2003, the 45th Infantry “Thunderbird” Brigade, Oklahoma National Guard, was deployed to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom, assuming command of Task Force Phoenix II from 2nd Brigade, 10th Mountain Division. The purpose of the deployment was to assist in training Afghan security forces. Over the next few years, soldiers of the 45th Infantry Brigade, including its headquarters and headquarters company, would deploy in support of this mission. In April 2004, 350 soldiers from the Brigade's 1st Battalion, 279th Infantry Regiment also deployed to Joint Task Force Phoenix. During this rotation, the brigade grew the size of the Afghan National Army to over 14,000, as well as fielding a corps-sized force ahead of schedule. In August 2004, the Brigade was replaced in this mission by the 76th Infantry Brigade, and subsequently returned home to the United States. The Brigade spent three years at its home base, and in that time transformed into an infantry Brigade Combat Team as a part of a new transformation plan for the Army.



45th Infantry Brigade Headquarters staff posing on and around an Afghan destroyed, Russian tank near Kabul, Afghanistan – 2004. Brigade Commander, Brigadier General Tom Mancino, is standing in the front center.

In March 2006, the 180th Cavalry (still infantry in 2006) deployed as part of Task Force Phoenix V. They were attached to the 41st Brigade Combat Team (Oregon National Guard). The 180th returned in June 2007.

The 45th Brigade Combat Team deployed to Afghanistan in 2011 and reunited with the 201st Corps of the Afghan National Army (ANA), as partners this time, in combined combat operations against insurgent forces in Eastern Afghanistan where they suffered the loss of fourteen soldiers but made significant progress in disrupting and destroying insurgent operations while continuing to mentor the ANA and progressively handing off security missions to them.



SPC Jonathan Clattenburg of Oklahoma City receiving his Thunderbird combat patch – September 2011



Lt. Colonel Tommy Mancino (right), commander of the 45th Brigade Combat Team Special Troops Battalion – December 2011



45th Infantry BCT, stationed at Forward Operating Base Gamberi, Afghanistan, eating a traditional Thanksgiving meal – 2011.



Insignia of 45th BCT Special Troops Battalion

This Month's Featured Exhibit



Except for the uniform on the far left, this part of the Afghanistan War Exhibit showcases a variety of uniforms worn by soldiers in the war.



The two uniforms on the left are a continuation of the uniform array in the first photo. The ceremonial uniform is an Aghan Ceremonial Guard's uniform. The indigenous clothing on the far right is a Hamid Chapans – formal wear for Afghan men. The flag, "From the Ashes", is the flag of Task Force Phoenix. This flag flew over the Task Force headquarters when it was operated by the 45th Infantry Brigade, commanded by BG Tom Mancino in 2003-04.

The war in Afghanistan began within a few weeks following the terrorist attack of September 11, 2001. Afghanistan's Taliban government had provided sanctuary for the terrorist group, Al Qaeda, responsible for the attack. The purpose for U.S. entry into Afghanistan was to destroy Al Qaeda and kill or capture its leader, Usama bin Laden. But, he escaped into Pakistan, where he was killed by members of Seal Team 6 in a daring raid on May 2, 2011. The Afghanistan War continues to this day. It has become America's longest war.

Aerial Combat in MiG Alley



An American F-84 destroys a North Korean MiG-15 in MiG Alley

Most aerial combat during the Korean War occurred in the notorious MiG Alley, in the northwestern portion of North Korea where the Yalu River empties into the Yellow Sea. The communist fliers favored fighting close to the Chinese border, where they could easily flee over the Yalu River to the safety of China, where the Americans weren't supposed to follow, although that order was often winked at.

The Republic F-84 Thunderjet, a turbojet fighter-bomber, was the USAF's primary strike aircraft during the Korean War. It flew 86,408 missions and destroyed sixty per cent of all ground targets in the war as well as eight Soviet-built MiG fighters. The F-84s were armed with six 0.50 caliber (12.7 mm) M2 Browning machine guns – four in the nose and one in each wing root – and had the provision for wingtip fuel tanks holding 226 gallons each. During the war, the F-84 became the first USAF fighter to utilize aerial refueling. It was the first aircraft to fly with the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds demonstration team. The USAF Strategic Air Command had F-84 Thunderjets in service from 1948 through 1957.

The Chinese and North Korean air forces were equipped with the Mikoyan-Gurevich MiG-15, a jet fighter developed by the Soviet Union. The MiG-15 was one of the first successful swept-wing jet fighters. It achieved fame in the skies over Korea, where early in the war it outclassed all straight-winged fighters in most applications. The MiG-15 was armed with three cannons: two 23-mm with eighty rounds per gun and a single 37-mm with forty rounds.



Operation Tidal Wave



1LT John C. "Jack" Martin standing beside his B-24 Liberator bomber, *The Oklahoman* – Benghazi, Libya

On August 1, 1943, 177 B-24 Liberator heavy bombers flew from their base at Benghazi, Libya, to Ploesti, Romania, in an operation named Tidal Wave. Their mission was the large oil refinery complex located there. One of the bombers, No. 42-40738, "*The Oklahoman*", was piloted by 1LT John C. Martin of Tishomingo, Oklahoma. After crossing the mountainous Balkans, the pilots dropped down to a few hundred feet above ground to avoid German radar. Some of the pilots lost their way to the target, but in the end, 167 managed to drop their bombs over the refinery complex. Fifty-seven of the bombers were lost – fifty-four over Romania and three at sea.

On the return flight to base, LT Martin's bomber ran short of fuel, and he had to land on Malta. He was awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for his actions during the operation:

"The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the Distinguished Service Cross to John C. Martin, First Lieutenant (Air Corps), U.S. Army Air Forces, for extraordinary heroism in connection with military operations against an armed enemy while serving as Co-Pilot of a B-24 Heavy Bomber in the 566th Bombardment Squadron, 389th Bombardment Group (H), NINTH Air Force (Attached), while participating in a bombing mission on 1 August 1943, against the Ploesti Oil Refineries in Rumania. During a long and hazardous attack against a vital enemy oil installation made at low-altitude by a formation of B-24 type aircraft, First Lieutenant Martin flew through heavy enemy fire against impossible odds, and despite heavy damage to his bomber, skillfully remained in control to divert his bomber for an emergency landing at Malta without the loss of a single man. The personal courage and devotion to duty displayed by First Lieutenant Martin on this occasion, even when confronted with practically certain destruction, exemplified the highest traditions of the military service and reflects great credit upon himself, the 9th Air Force, and the United States Army Air Forces." (Editor: Although Martin is referred to as co-pilot in the Citation, he actually piloted the aircraft.)

1LT Martin was assigned to the 566th Bomb Squadron, 389th Bombardment Group (Heavy), "Sky Scorpions", Eighth Air Force, based at Hethel, England. The 566th had been detached to Ninth Air Force specifically for Operation Tidal Wave.



1LT Robert W. Sternfels of Laguna Beach, California flying his B-24, *The Sandman*, low over the Ploesti refinery complex. The bomber lost an engine when a propeller was struck by a barrage balloon cable. On the flight back to base, Sternfels had to land on Cyprus for repairs.

John Chandler Martin, Jr. was born at Richmond, Virginia, on December 2, 1918. His parents moved to Tishomingo when he was a boy. He enlisted in the Army Air Force at Oklahoma City on February 28, 1942. He died at Vacaville, California, on October 27, 2001. (We could find nothing else about his life, including where he is buried, suggesting his body may have been cremated.)



1LT Martin (first row, second from the right) and his crew at Hethel

The last mission of *The Oklahoman* was December 5, 1943. She was flown from her regular base at Hethel for a mission to Cognac, France. On that day, she was flown by 1LT Harley Mason and his crew, who ordinarily flew *Fightin' Sam*. The weather was bad over Cognac, so the bombers diverted to their secondary target, St. Nazaire. *The Oklahoman* was hit by a direct burst from an anti-aircraft gun and came apart in air. 1LT Mason was the only crewmember who survived. He was captured and spent the remainder of the war a POW.



Tulsa's Jewish World War I Hero



Maurice Meyer

Maurice (original name Morris) Meyer was born on December 8, 1895, in Bellville, Texas. As his father progressed in politics and business, Maurice and his family moved from Bellville to Sayre, Oklahoma Territory, then to Guthrie, then to Oklahoma City and finally to Tulsa.

On June 5, 1917, Meyer registered for the draft in Oklahoma City. After induction, he was sent for training to Camp Travis near San Antonio, Texas, in November 1917. He was assigned to Company A, 1st Battalion, 357th Infantry Regiment, 179th Infantry "Oklahoma" Brigade, 90th Infantry Division.



Training at Camp Travis – 1917

After training, the 90th was shipped to France to become part of General John J. Pershing's American Expeditionary Force. The 90th Division departed Camp Travis for the port of embarkation at New York City in June 1918. Most of the units landed at Liverpool, England, and then took trains to channel ports for the move over to France – Cherbourg and Le Havre. From there, they were disbursed to camps around France for further training. PFC Meyer was soon promoted to corporal.

The first combat by the newly created American First Army was the reduction of the St. Mihiel Salient. The 90th Division was on the right flank of the American line, anchored against the Moselle River. The jump-off date was September 12. The Germans were in the process of evacuating the salient in order to straighten their lines; nevertheless, American forces engaged in heavy combat and sustained substantial casualties. From September 17, until the 90th Division was relieved three weeks later in order to prepare for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive, the men finished mopping-up the battlefield and dug defensive trenches opposite the German Hindenburg Line.

After the salient was cleared, American forces engaged in nightly patrols and trench raids. Trench raids were conducted to gather intelligence and/or to grab prisoners. On the night of September 23-24, CPL Meyer and several other men of the 1st Battalion, 357th Infantry Regiment, conducted a trench raid to acquire prisoners. The men advanced behind a machine gun barrage, crossed two bands of wire and entered the Hindenburg Line near Sebastopol Farm. It was a successful raid, in that they captured five Germans, but CPL Meyer was mortally wounded. He succumbed to his wounds on the 24th.



Barbed wire in front of the forward trench of the Hindenburg Line – Germany's main defensive line in France.

Meyer was posthumously promoted to sergeant. He was initially buried in France with a cross on his grave, but upon his father informing the military that his son was Jewish, the marker was changed to a Star of David. In April 1922, Meyer's body was disinterred in France and returned to Oklahoma. On May 3, 1922, Maurice Meyer was given a proper funeral at Temple Israel in Tulsa. The local American Legion Post's Color Guard led the funeral cortege from Temple Israel to Rose Hill Cemetery. A Legion Honor Guard escorted SGT Meyer's casket. Two squads of cadets from Oklahoma Military Academy came to pay their respects. At the time, it was the largest military parade ever conducted in Tulsa.

Maurice's father, Leo Meyer, was Oklahoma's first Secretary of State (1907-1910) and state Auditor in 1910. Due to his political influence and financial support, Leo Meyer succeeded in having the first barracks built in 1920, for the new Oklahoma Military Academy, named Maurice Meyer Barracks. It was first utilized during the school year, 1920-21. It's now called Meyer Hall, located on the campus of Rogers State University.



SGT Meyer's grave – Rose Hill Memorial Park

Editor: The idea for this article, including the title, came from an article published by Phil Goldfarb in the July issue of "Tulsa Jewish Review". Portions of this article are excerpted from his article. Mr. Goldfarb is President of the Jewish Genealogical Society of Tulsa and a supporter of the Military History Center.

United States Coast Guard



Intercepting smugglers – North Carolina – 1793



Convey escort, USS Tampa, sunk by a U-Boat off Wales – 1918



Confronting a British raider – Long Island, New York – 1813



Rescuing a trapped Marine Battalion – Guadalcanal – 1942



Blockading Havana Harbor, Cuba – 1898



Protecting an oil tanker in the Persian Gulf – 2003



Since August 4, 1790, the United States Coast Guard has been protecting America from smugglers and pirates, saving lives on the high seas and inland waterways, and in time of war, defending the nation in combat against foreign enemies.



Marine Corps PFCs William A. McCoy and Ralph L. Plunkett holding a sign thanking the U.S. Coast Guard after the battle for the liberation of Guam (21 July – 10 August 1944).



Coast Guard service mark or racing stripe, painted on both sides of a cutter's bow

Support the Military History Center

We believe the MHC provides a valuable service to the local community, especially to students and veterans, by "Promoting Patriotism through the Preservation of Military History". We ask for your financial support to help the MHC continue our educational programs and to help our ongoing mission of promoting patriotism and recognizing the sacrifices made by our veterans to keep America free.

For more information, please contact the Military History Center at (918) 794-2712 to learn how you can be a financial supporter, or click on the link below to go to the MHC website at www.okmhc.org/donate/.

Monetary donations, as well as gifts in kind, are tax deductible, subject to IRS regulations.

MHC's Newest Feature

Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Earl Laney, the MHC has acquired two computerized flight simulators. They have been installed in the Jane and Henry Primeaux Media Room. The simulators' software contains several thousand actual airports and several different types of aircraft, civilian and military. The simulators allow trainees to "fly" under various weather conditions and other factors common to pilots.

Mr. Laney is a licensed pilot, qualified to fly several different types of private and commercial aircraft. Using the simulators, he will train anyone interested at \$10 per hour. After three successful take-offs and landings and one solo, trainees will receive a MHC Flight Training Certificate. The Certificate, of course, does not qualify anyone to fly an aircraft, but the experience is very educational and a lot of fun. This can be a wonderful experience for young people, whether or not they are ultimately interested in a career in flight. Mr. Laney is generously providing his time gratis. All proceeds of the training sessions are for the benefit of the MHC.



Mr. Earl Laney instructing Jack Mancino on one of the computerized flight simulators



Example of a flight simulator screen

“Lest We Forget”



Clark Veterans Cemetery – Clark Freeport Zone, Philippines

Clark Veterans Cemetery contains the remains of almost 8,600 individuals with the earliest recorded burial being Private Santiago Belona, a Philippine Scout, who served in the U.S. Army and died on January 13, 1900. While there are no remaining records, it is believed he was moved from one of the two old Fort Stotsenburg post cemeteries. In addition to the 650 Philippine Scouts, there are thousands of U.S. veterans from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Coast Guard and their dependents, which comprise the preponderance of the burials. There are veterans interred at Clark who served in every American conflict since the Spanish–American War, including the Philippine Insurrection, World War I, World War II, (survivors who died after the war), the Korean War, Vietnam War and Iraq War. There are also over 2,100 unknowns buried at Clark.

Freedom is not free.



THANK YOU