

126th Regimental Association



THE NEWSLETTER OF THE 126TH REGIMENTAL ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL REUNION SEPTEMBER 27

The 30th annual reunion of the 126th Regimental Association will take place on Saturday, September 27, at the Grand Valley Armory. Once again, our reunion will feature “dinner for a buck-twenty-six,” compliments of the Grand Valley Armory Non-Commissioned Officers’ Club. That’s an amazing \$1.26 for a great meal featuring steak, chicken, or grilled shrimp, along with drinks. The schedule for our annual reunion is:

- 5:00 p.m. Annual business meeting
- 6:00 p.m. Social hour
- 6:30 p.m. Dinner served

This year’s reunion includes an open house to tour the newly renovated Grand Valley Armory. Hosted by the 63rd Brigade, the tour will include a peek at the new kitchen, unit areas, and historical displays.

Be sure to attend this year’s reunion! Complete the enclosed registration and return it by September 12, 2008. The registration form also provides an opportunity to donate to our historical preservation fund and help us preserve the history of your regiment. Give generously if you can!

154TH YEAR

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AUGUST 2008

The 126th Regimental Association has established a website to promote the history of the organization and to provide current information on our active units as well as our association. See page 3 for more details. Use the email contacts on the website to suggest improvements or additions to the information on the site.

126TH CAVALRY TAKES ITS PLACE IN HISTORY

With the deployment of the 126th Cavalry in response to the War on Terror now having exceeded six months, it’s time to recognize it’s place in the storied history of the regiment. The men of the current 126th have “laid down their plowshares” and taken up their rifles in defense of freedom and at the call of their nation. Five times before, the men of the 126th left their homes, their families, and their jobs to serve in places such as Gettysburg, Tampa, the Mexican Border, the Argonne forest, and Buna. They may have worn infantry blue but their sacrifices were the same as the men who now wear crossed sabers.

The 126th Regimental Association’s new website (see page 3) is attempting to keep tabs on our brothers during their service in Kuwait providing

security for critical convoys. Printed here is a portion of the 126th commander’s message in his July newsletter:

Hello again to all the Hunters and their Friends and Families:

We just celebrated the Fourth of July which also means that we have finished at least one half of our year long mobilization! I know the Troopers would have preferred to be home with loved ones, with some barbeque and beer, instead they were hard at work and doing a great job here.

(Continued on page 2)

**126TH
REGIMENTAL
ASSOCIATION**

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Wyoming, MI 49509

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~
LTC (Ret) David Britten
Editor
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Courage Without Fear

Since 1855

CIVIL WAR – THIRD MICHIGAN

Bull Run
Peninsula
Manassas
Fredericksburg
Chancellorsville
Gettysburg
Wilderness
Spotsylvania
Cold Harbor
Petersburg
Appomattox
Virginia 1863

**WAR WITH SPAIN – THIRTY-
SECOND REGIMENT**

**MEXICAN BORDER WAR – THIRTY-
SECOND REGIMENT**

WORLD WAR I – 126th INFANTRY

Aisne-Marne
Oise-Aisne
Meuse-Argonne
Alsace 1918

WORLD WAR II – 126th INFANTRY

Papua
New Guinea (with Arrowhead)
Luzon
Leyte

(Continued from page 1)

We have been making constant, small refinements on how we run missions and we have picked up a few additional missions along the way. This honestly makes us the busiest unit in the 4th Sustainment Brigade with the most moving pieces on a daily basis. HHT has begun covering down on some of the very short missions we have within Kuwait to assist the rest of the unit. D FSC continues to keep things running by fixing all the trucks we

one in the organization likes it, but the trucks must roll in order to keep the bases up north supplied with food, fuel and equipment. Nevertheless, your Family members fight through the starts and stops and get the job done. I always appreciate their dedication and duty. Even when we are all sitting, waiting in the dark at Khabari Crossing (the Kuwait-Iraq border) they are usually smiling and joking while throwing a football or listening to their iPods. They are the Great Americans we celebrate on the 4th of July.



break on a daily basis. They also did a super job on a recent Brigade inspection. As for the line companies, they totaled another 301,413 truck miles in June. This is substantially lower than last month largely because of all the sandstorms we had in June.

You have seen pictures of the sandstorms before. These sandstorms often prevent us from executing our mission. When we are on a routine schedule the Troopers usually can execute the mission without problems or complaint. But sandstorms can grind things down to something like five o'clock stop and go traffic on I-94 in Detroit. We have to stand Soldiers up and then stand them down. No

You can read more about the regiment and see some of their photos from the front by going to our association website (see page 3).

Association Membership

As of this mailing, the association has an active membership of 498 with another 177 "missing in action," since we haven't been able to mail anything to them successfully. The following members passed away this year:

Frank Kuhel Jr
Howard Vantil
Robert Donald
Edward R Rossman

ASSOCIATION WEBSITE PROVIDES ADDED COMMUNICATION

This past spring, the association's website made its debut with information about the regiment's past as well as updates on its current deployment to Kuwait. The site contains information about the association including the roster of current officers and the association's membership list. Copies of the current and previous editions of the newsletter are also available as well as a blank association membership form and the constitution and by-laws.

For those who are interested in the history of the 126th, a number of links will take you to complete publications and excerpts from historical documents. The complete books include:

Michigan Volunteers of '98

*Report of the Adjutant General
1897-98*

History of the 126th Infantry in the World War

*The 32nd Division in the World War Heroes All -
1919*

A number of links are included to assist those looking for more information about the history of the 126th or its current deployment. These include:

*Courage Without Fear TypePad
(follow the news of the 126th
Cavalry in Iraq)*

Old Third Michigan

*3rd Michigan Volunteer Infantry
Regiment (Wikipedia)*

*Third Michigan Volunteer Infantry
Company F*

*3rd Regiment Michigan Volunteer Infantry
A Brief history of the 32nd Michigan
Volunteer Infantry*

126th Cavalry Regiment (Wikipedia)

Colonel Merle H. Howe

*New Guinea: The U.S. Army
Campaigns of WWII*

*The 32nd Infantry Division in World
War II "The Red Arrow"*

*126th Infantry State of Michigan
Historical Marker*

Michigan Army National Guard

*National Guard Association of
Michigan*

The website is supported by Chapter 2, Disabled American Veterans. The web address is:

www.michigandavchapter2.org/126_assoc.html

126th Memorabilia

The following items are available for purchase at the armory from CW4 (Ret.) Darle VanderShuur, Historian:

Regimental Coin.....\$ 5.00
Baseball-style Cap (Infantry).....\$ 5.00
Baseball-style Cap (Khaki-color).....\$ 7.00
Unit Crest (Cloth 3" x 4").....\$ 2.00
Unit Crest (Sticker).....\$.25
Unit Crest (Miniature pin-on).....\$ 2.00
Coffee Mug (Infantry).....\$ 4.00
Officer Brass (Infantry).....\$ 8.00
Regimental China Plates.....\$ 5.00
Book: Grand Rapids Goes to War:
The 1940s Homefront.....\$12.00

Our annual reunion on September 27 will be a great time to purchase your 126 items!

Association Officers

President.....MAJ Tim Densham (deployed)
1st Vice President.....SFC Joe Levandoski
2nd Vice President.....MSG (Ret) Jerry Groters
Secretary/Treasurer..LTC (Ret) Bill Sobotka
Historian.....CW4 (Ret) Darle VanderShuur
Sgt-At-Arms.....SGM (Ret) John Kneibel
Chaplain.....CW4 (Ret) Frank Miller
Immed. Past Pres.....SFC Greg Reedy
Newsletter Editor.....LTC (Ret) David Britten

63rd Troop Command "Spartans"

Commander.....COL Phil Owens
AGR OIC.....MAJ Mark Tellier
CSM.....CSM Lester Ott

1st Bn 126th Cavalry "Hunters"

Commander.....LTC Clark Barrett
AGR S3/OIC.....MAJ Jeff Kinninger
Cmd Sgt Major.....CSM Michael White

Financial Report

Balance 1 May 2007	\$ 13,153.46
Income Ending 30 Apr 2008	
Dues	\$ 40.00
Interest	218.73
Memorabilia	146.02
Annual reunion	178.52
Preservation Fund	<u>\$ 4,172.60</u>
Total Income	\$ 4,755.87
Expense Ending 30 Apr 2008	
Postage	\$ 426.40
Displays	200.00
Incorporation fee	20.00
Red Arrow ad	50.00
Display case	275.00
Armory displays	7,000.00
Books	82.52
Franklin Press	166.31
3rd Michigan Display	562.55
Annual Meeting	<u>\$ 180.86</u>
Total Expense	\$ 8,963.64
Balance 30 Apr 2008	\$ 8,945.69

Coit Range

After all these years, the federal government is still interested in the old Coit rifle range. We received an email from SFC Joe Levandoski who is stationed at the Grand Valley Armory in full-time recruiting duty:

I was contacted by a contractor for National Guard Bureau. They are doing a survey/study on all non-Department of Defense owned Rifle Ranges. They asked for more info on the Coit Ave Range. I know the location and that it closed about 1965 but I haven't been able to find any info or photo's of the range.

In *Courage Without Fear: The Story of the Grand Rapids Guard*, LTC (Retired) David Britten points out:

“That fall (1905), the Grand Rapids Battalion secured an option on property for a new range located along the eastern shore of the Grand River near North Park. It consisted of eighty-five acres of land in Plainfield Township belonging to Sluman S. Bailey. This new range, built under the supervision of Captain Jess W. Clark, whose family home was on Coit Road not far from the range, allowed for

a maximum of one thousand yards to shoot, four hundred yards further than the Berlin range. According to Major Earl Stewart, Grand Rapids Battalion commander:

“The car fare (to Berlin) was 25 cents, with hour service, and we still had half a mile to walk to reach the range. For a time we shall have a mile and a quarter to walk, but will have a 10-cent car fare and ten-minute service.

“The battalion made plans for erecting a thirty-foot stop butt, constructing a clubhouse, and placing a boat on the river for transportation to and from the site. There’s no evidence that the boat ever became a reality.

“In the spring of 1910, the range hosted a rifle competition between the local companies. Each company provided a team of six. The contest included a slow-fire phase at two hundred, three hundred, and four hundred yards, followed by a timed fire phase at two hundred yards. On the seventh of July, the range hosted a state competition to deter-

mine who would represent the Michigan National Guard at the national rifle competition to be held at Camp Perry, Ohio.

“The range, known originally as the Bailey Springs Range but eventually referred to simply as the Coit Rifle Range, remained in use until the mid-1950s. Today, the range property is part of Lamoreaux Park, and the original range road is still identified on local maps.”

If you have any additional information about the Coit Range, please contact SFC Joe Levandoski at 616-893-6802 or by email at:

joseph.levandoski@us.army.mil

Historical Trivia

The Michigan State Troops were re-designated as the Michigan National Guard on December 31, 1894, in response to a growing use of that designation across the country. It was first applied to the New York state militia in 1824 as a compliment to General Lafayette, who had been visiting the United States at that time. Lafayette had commanded the Garde Nationale in Paris around 1789.

The “Battle of Grandville”

On June 23, 1910, fifty-five men from Troop A, Cavalry of South Haven, encamped for the night at Grandville near the southeast corner

of State and Fayette streets. Seventy men from the Grand Rapids Battalion formed a company under command of Captain Schouten and prepared to attack. Having sent out a scout earlier in the evening, Captain Schouten and his men boarded the interurban electric train at nine o’clock that evening headed for Grandville. The company detrained west of Ivanrest station, and by ten-thirty the enemy was routed and Grandville had been saved

Armory Addition

An upgrade to the Grand Rapids Armory got underway in September 1948. An area north of the armory was graded to provide for construction of a motor vehicle storage shed. Plans also called for redecorating the enlisted men’s day room and adding new equipment to it. The armory was becoming more crowded due to the number of units assigned as well as rising membership. This situation led to staggering drill nights throughout the week: Companies I, K, and L began drilling on Monday nights; Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Service Company, and the Medical Detachment were to meet on Tuesday nights; and, Thursday nights were set aside for Third Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company along with Company M

Britten, David G., LTC (Retired). *Courage Without Fear: The Story of the Grand Rapids Guard*. Xlibris. 2004.

**126th Regimental Association
Annual Reunion Reservation
September 27, 2008
Grand Valley Armory Third Michigan NCO Club**

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

I will be attending the annual reunion on Saturday, September 27. I plan on attending the following activities (check all that apply):

_____ Annual business meeting, 5:00 p.m.

_____ Social hour, 6:00 p.m.

_____ Dinner, 6:30 p.m.

Indicate the number of dinners you desire. Each dinner is \$1.26 payable at the door.

_____ Steak

_____ Chicken

_____ Shrimp

Would you like to make a generous, tax-deductible donation to the 126th Regimental Association Memorial Fund at this time?

_____ Yes, I am contributing \$_____ (enclose check or money order)

My donation is in honor of _____

_____ I would like a receipt for my contribution sent to the address above.

_____ No, I am unable to contribute at this time but please ask again, later.

Please return this reservation and any contributions you wish to make
by September 12, 2008.

Mail to: 126th Regimental Association
c/o LTC Bill Sobotka
2820 Longstreet SW
Wyoming, MI 49509

DIRK J. VLUG Medal of Honor

Rank and organization: Private First Class, U.S. Army,
126th Infantry, 32d Infantry Division.

Place and date. Near Limon, Leyte, Philippine Islands,
15 December 1944.

Entered service at: Grand Rapids, Mich.

Birth: Maple Lake, Minn.

G.O. No.: 60, 26 June 1946. Citation: He displayed conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty when an American roadblock on the Ormoc Road was attacked by a group of enemy tanks. He left his covered position, and with a rocket launcher and 6 rounds of ammunition, advanced alone under intense machinegun and 37-mm. fire. Loading single-handedly, he destroyed the first tank, killing its occupants with a single round. As the crew of the second tank started to dismount and attack him, he killed 1 of the foe with his pistol, forcing the survivors to return to their vehicle, which he then destroyed with a second round.

Three more hostile tanks moved up the road, so he flanked the first and eliminated it, and then, despite a hail of enemy fire, pressed forward again to destroy another. With his last round of ammunition he struck the remaining vehicle, causing it to crash down a steep embankment. Through his sustained heroism in the face of superior forces, Pfc. Vlug alone destroyed 5 enemy tanks and greatly facilitated successful accomplishment of his battalion's mission.



Dirk Vlug returns home to a hero's welcome after receiving the Medal of Honor.



126th Regimental Association
c/o LTC (Ret) Bill Sobotka
2820 Longstreet SW
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