

126th Regimental Association



ANNUAL REUNION SEPTEMBER 26

The 31st annual reunion of the 126th Regimental Association will take place on Saturday, September 26, at the Grand Valley Armory. This year's program includes a formal dedication of our beautiful historical display cases in the main lobby and General Schnipke Room. This will begin promptly at 4:30 p.m. and members should plan on meeting in the main lobby of the armory at 1200 44th Street SW in Wyoming. This will be your opportunity to see some of the spectacular changes and upgrades made to the GVA which will celebrate its 45th year of service to the 126th and its successor units.

The reunion schedule will be:

- 4:30 p.m. Dedication Ceremony
- 5:00 p.m. Annual business meeting
- 6:00 p.m. Social hour
Dinner

The business meeting will convene after the dedication in the Third Michigan NCO Club behind the armory. An important part of the business meeting each year is the annual election of officers. Please step up and volunteer to serve when nominations are requested.

Dinner this year will be \$10 for your choice of steak or chicken (grill your own). Potato, salad, and other items will be provided.

Be sure to attend this year's reunion! Complete the enclosed registration form and return it by September 11, 2009, along with a check or money order made out to "126th Regimental Association."

Historical Work Continues

The reunion registration form also provides an opportunity to donate to our historical preservation

fund and help us preserve the history of this great regiment. Give generously if you can! A roster of donors since August 2006 is on page 4 of this newsletter. Donors will be recognized by having their names placed on a donor registry located in the main display case within the armory. Donors are listed by category indicating the extent to which they have contributed. Those who send additional contributions will have their category upgraded when they reach the new amount. The 126th Regimental Association is a non-profit veterans organization under Section 503(c)(19) of the Internal Revenue Code and all contributions to the historical preservation fund are tax deductible.

1463rd Returns

Families of 128 members of the Michigan Army National Guard gathered to welcome their soldiers home on June 7th. The soldiers were welcomed at the Grand Valley Armory by families and veterans waving flags and showing their support.

Some members of the 1463rd Transportation Company were finishing their second tour of duty in Iraq. The unit was first deployed in 2004.

During their tour, which had begun over a year ago, unit members were awarded four Bronze Star medals, seven Meritorious Service medals, and more than 100 Army Commendation medals.

The unit's main responsibilities were to serve as corrections officers at Camp Bucca, Iraq, overseeing, educating and processing of approximately 10,000 detainees during their service. Congratulations on a job well done and welcome home, soldiers!

155TH YEAR

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AUGUST 2009

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. Go to:

www.michigandavchapter2.org/126_assoc.html

**126TH
REGIMENTAL
ASSOCIATION**

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~
LTC (Ret) David Britten
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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

KUWAIT/IRAQ

Captain John D. Shirley

Captain Shirley was born in Comstock Park, Michigan, on May 16, 1915. He soon moved to the southwest side of Grand Rapids where he graduated from South High School in 1934. Employed by General Motors at the Grand Rapids Stamping plant, Shirley first enlisted as a private in the 126th Infantry back in 1931. He moved up the enlisted ranks, receiving a promotion to sergeant in 1937 and served with the Grand Rapids Guard during the Flint strike that year.

Shirley received his commission as second lieutenant while assigned to Company L during the October 15, 1940, activation. Promoted to first lieutenant the next February, he attended special infantry officer training at Fort Benning before returning to the 126th in Louisiana. Just twenty-seven years old when he was killed in action in New Guinea, he left behind a wife and a young daughter who was just eleven months old at the time. For a number of years, the soldier of the year in Third Battalion was awarded the “Shirley Medal” in Captain Shirley’s honor.

Growing Pains, Again

By the early twenties, it was already becoming apparent the Grand Rapids Armory on Michigan Street was too crowded. Designed originally for use by the four infantry companies, medical detachment and band of the Grand Rapids Battalion, by 1924 eight companies occupied the building. In addition to its military use, the building was being kept busy with a constant demand for concerts, indoor fairs, boxing matches, charity dances, and large banquets. The income from these events was becoming so profitable that they threatened to further cut into the military use of the armory (the Civic Auditorium would not be constructed until the 1930s). The solution suggested at the time was to expand the building north 150 feet and east an additional 50 feet. In 1926 General Schouten took the matter of a new or greatly expanded armory up with the local Association of Commerce, but nothing ever came of the idea. Later, a garage would be added on to the north end of the building. Despite crowded conditions, the Guard would

remain at that location until forced out in 1961.

The Guard continued to glow in its postwar mystique and pride. No doubt, the existence of the Michigan Street armory as the major civic center in Grand Rapids added to the Guard’s stature. While the militia of the 1800s was often looked at scornfully and ridiculed for its amateur status and social club atmosphere, the Guard of the 1900s was looked at more as a professional military organization that contributed to the welfare of the young men who enlisted.

Rioting in Muskegon

On September 8, 1873, the Guard was called out under command of Captain Israel C. Smith to aid civil authorities at the Muskegon County Jail due to rioting thought to be out of control. Apparently, a local man had molested a young girl in Muskegon and was jailed pending trial. A mob had gathered outside the jail wanting to take matters into their own hands. The sheriff contacted Grand Rapids’ Mayor Peter R. L. Pierce for assistance, which the mayor promptly forwarded to the governor at Detroit. Adjutant General John Robertson subsequently ordered Captain Smith and his Grand Rapids Guard company, to accompany the Adjutant General to Muskegon. It was the first recorded state service for any postwar military company in Michigan, and one of the rare instances in which the chief ranking military officer accompanied the men on duty.

The Guard left Grand Rapids for Muskegon that very morning as ordered. Later around noon, the father of the little girl, having asked permission to see the perpetrator of the crime against his daughter, drew a pistol and shot him in the face. Despite the severity of the wound, under security provided by the Grand Rapids Guard, a trial was quickly conducted on Monday morning at which time the defendant pleaded guilty. He was sentenced on the spot to life in prison and was marched under guard of the militia to the train station where he was dispatched to the state penitentiary at Jackson.

Excerpts from *Courage Without Fear: The Story of the Grand Rapids Guard*. 2004. Xlibris. Lieutenant Colonel (Ret) David G. Britten

Association Officers

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

63rd Troop Command "Spartans"

Commander.....COL Phil Owens
 S3 OIC.....LTC 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

Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Annual Financial Report

1 May 2008 – 30 April 2009

Balance on hand 1 May 2008	\$ 8,945.69
INCOME	
Dues	\$ 10.00
Interest on savings & CD's	199.82
Items	80.00
Annual meeting dinner	94.50
Preservation Fund Donations	2640.00
Total Income	\$ 3,024.32
EXPENSE	
Postage	\$ 445.20
Godwin Plumbing (locksets)	137.78
Incorporation Fee	20.00
Supplies	44.61
Bank-checks	17.95
Franklin Press(Envelopes)	145.66
Annual Meeting	141.98
Door Prizes	50.00
NCO Club	91.98(donated to fund)
Regimental Hats	475.20

Display Materials	985.81
Total Expense	\$ 2,414.19
Net Increase	\$ 610.13
Balance on hand 30 April 2009	\$ 9,555.82
Funds on deposit in Huntington Bank	
Wyoming, Michigan are:	
Savings Account	\$ 2,488.50
Checking Account	\$ 2,963.78
Certificate of Deposit 9/12/09 3.92%	\$ 2,046.05
Certificate of Deposit 9/12/11 4.88%	\$ 2,057.49
Preservation Fund	\$ 3,998.16
Regimental Fund	\$ 5,557.66
NET WORTH (30 April 2009)	\$ 9,555.82

Current Financial Summary

Bank statement as of 2 August 09:

Checking	\$ 2,938.78
Savings	2,588.81
CD	2,066.14
CD	<u>2,082.67</u>
Total	\$ 9,676.40

Preservation Fund	\$ 4,123.16
126th Association Fund	\$ 5,553.24

NET WORTH (2 August 2009) \$ 9,676.40

Deceased Members

Reported since last annual meeting:

Martin H. Bolt	William D. Hendricks
Edgar M. Foster	Robert G. Kilpatrick
William D. Scott	Ray P. Rief
Edwin G. Moran	Louis M. Weiss
Patrick J. Norton	Earl A. Hartman
Jack C. Hill	

Respectfully submitted by: LTC (Ret) William Sobotka
Secretary-Treasurer

126th Regimental Association Preservation Fund Donors (August 2006–August 2009)

Regimental Level Donors (\$500 +)

Carolyn Wills
Third Michigan Vol Infantry Company F
BG Robert Williams
Raymond Larson
Grand Rapids Red Arrow Club
John Stengel

Battalion Level Donors (\$250-\$499)

Third Michigan NCO Club
American Legion Post #179
Wellington (Bill) & Laurel Miller
Robert Hackett
Fred Steed

Company Level Donors (\$100-\$249)

Clyde Wills
Duane Goltz
COL Bill Ewald
Arthur Edson
COL David Ratajik
Jerry Kline
Michael Carpenter
COL Gary Krueger
Kenneth McCreary
Arlene VanTil
COL Ralph Kelly
BG Warren Lawrence
COL Mel & Ruth Wierenga
Chuck Nagtzaam
Gerald Streelman
Clair Zwiep
Chris Abernathy
Jack Heidtman
CPT Duane Rotman
Sally Norton
COL Howard Becker
Nate Chang
Kenneth Wolfe
Clare Ehlert

Platoon Level Donors (\$50-\$99)

Robert & Terry Sokorai
Robert K. Richards
Dr Edward & Harleth Herremans
Gary J. Fowle O.D.
Lawrence P. Stillwell
Santo Tropiano
Steve Janicki
BG Gary Tellier
BG Jerry Mathieu Jr
Lloyd & Suanne Winer
Rayman Spalsbury

Salvador Castro
John L. Clark
John Stewart
Paul Essenburg
Frank Gerke
Leonard Engels
Hilding A. Peterson
John Johnson
SFC Roy Walburn

Squad Level Donors (\$0-\$49)

Lawrence P. Burrill
Richard & Edith Wills
COL Duane Bartrem
Annette & Edwin Jachimski
Leone Wills
Paul & Carole Horton
Geraldine Riall Jackson
Roland & Carla Revello
Leonard & Virginia Bietila
COL Harry & Kathryn Sobotka
Pat & Bruce Bureau
Patrick & Mary Gavin
Gladys Jeanne Keller
Barb & James Pesola
Vicki & Craig Kaiserlian
William Himeline
Richard & Elizabeth Kroll
Frank & Nicole Hansen
Thomas & Carol Wills
Ruperto Rodriguez
Ray Small
Frank & Lynne Miller
Russell & Elaine Buys
Darwin L. Jensen
John Kneibel
Phyllis Ball
Michael Madden
Byron Gibbs
Ray & Char Hintz
Walt Draeger
William Byl
Jarvis Compagner
Carl Smestad
Joe & Marcia Fortuna
Dale Walston
Robert O'Donnell
Ester Donald-Briggs
Rudolph Gand
William Snyder Jr
MAJ Gerald & Delores Sadowski
Stanley Jastrzembski
Walter Becker

Donald North
Carl Sheneman Sr
William Witte
George Anthony
Walt & Pam McVeigh
Earl Jenkins
Erling Smestad
Dale Carpenter
Bob & Esther VanHammen
Robert Olbani
Harry Cleveland
Forrest Civils
Rubin Stout
Joseph McAndrews
Jeffrey C Larrabee

In Memory of:

COL Robert C Wills
CWO Ralph Schmidt
George Yonker
BG Charles Lamoreaux
LT Kallad
Grant Gutshall
Anna May Peterson
SGT Joe Barowski
Joseph F. Ravetta
Patrick Norton
Jerry Hunt
Edby & Dave Malowitz
Gerald D. Young
SSG Norman Swanson
George Wayman Jr
Oscar VanAnroy
MSG Tony Siciliano
Robert M. Donald
Howard E Krueger
Howard J VanTil
MAJ Arthur Bush
LTC John Prokop
Dick Zwiep
Men of Co K
Soldiers in Iraq & Afghanistan
3rd Bn 126th INF
Service Co 3-126Inf
2/126
All the men and women in Desert Storm
WWII Veterans
L Co 2nd Plt
Grand Rapids Red Arrow Club
All who have served

126th Regimental Association
Annual Reunion Reservation
September 26, 2009
Grand Valley Armory Third Michigan NCO Club

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Street Address: _____

City, State and Zip: _____

I will be attending the annual reunion on Saturday, Sept. 26. I plan on attending the following activities (check all that apply):

_____ Historical Display Dedication, 4:30 p.m.

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

_____ Social hour, 6:00 p.m.

_____ Dinner, immediately following

Indicate the number of dinners you desire. Each dinner is \$10 payable in advance, please. Check or money order.

_____ Steak

_____ Chicken

Would you like to make a generous, tax-deductible donation to the 126th Regimental Association Historical Preservation 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, dinner payment, and any historical contributions you wish to make by September 11, 2009.

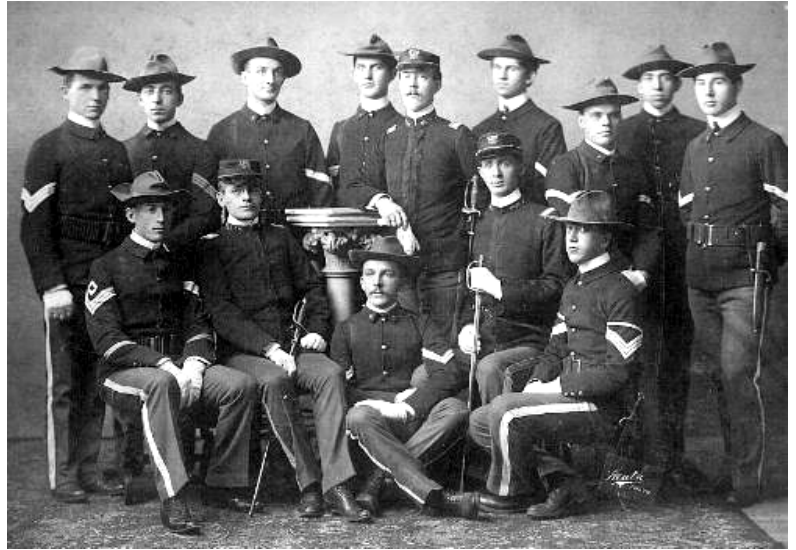
Mail to: 126th Regimental Association
c/o LTC Bill Sobotka
2820 Longstreet SW
Wyoming, MI 49509

32nd Volunteer Infantry

The unit was mustered into service between May 11 and 14, 1898 at Island Lake, Michigan. At this time, the unit consisted of 47 officers and 966 enlisted men. It was soon sent to Camp Cuba Libre at Jacksonville, Florida. The 32nd Michigan served out its term of enlisted in the continental U.S., and did not see service overseas.

The unit was mustered out of service between October 2 and November 9, 1898 in Michigan. At the time of its muster out the unit consisted of 46 officers and 1,234 enlisted men.

During its term of service, the unit had 20 enlisted men die of disease and 16 discharged for disability.



Camp Cuba Libre was the assembly point for Maj. Gen'l. Fitzhugh Lee's Seventh Corps. This camp was established on May 31, 1898, because the area around Tampa simply had gotten too crowded, but it eventually became home to 30,000 men. When it was first established, supplies were scarce, and the men assembling at the camp had to fend for themselves. Most of the troops at Camp Cuba Libre never got to the front, spending their time in the camp in drill, target practice. They were preparing for a planned assault to capture Havana, Cuba, but the operation became unnecessary with the fall of Santiago. When the armistice was declared, morale and discipline at Camp Cuba Libre and the other camps began to break down. The Camp Cuba Libre men had a drunken riot in the streets of Jacksonville.

Source: <http://www.spanamwar.com/32ndMichigan.htm>



126th Regimental Association
c/o LTC (Ret) Bill Sobotka
2820 Longstreet SW
Wyoming, MI 49509

Inside this Edition:

Annual Reunion set for September 26

Roster of Historical Preservation Donors (2006-09)