

24TH INFANTRY DIVISION -DAY



h-
to

THE 21ST INFANTRY REGIMENT

HISTORY OF THE TWENTY-FIRST INFANTRY REGIMENT

The deeds of courageous men are vividly portrayed in the history of the Twenty-First Infantry Regiment. This history is the story of men who fought bitterly, for the victories which were necessary if our heritage of freedom was to endure. This Regiment's most recent victories over the enemies of freedom were secured in World War II. To the present generation these are most important, but in order to understand them we must go back to the War of 1812 when our newly acquired freedom was first jeopardized.

It has been established that a Twenty-First Infantry fought in the Battle of Lundy's Lane at Niagara Falls in 1814. Here the Twenty-First distinguished itself by taking a key position in the British line and by beating off numerous counter-attacks against two-to-one odds. The Regiment was commended by General Brown who presented to it one of the captured guns, a beautiful, bronze six-pounder, in testimony of the 21st's gallantry. This gun is now on display at the Army War College.

The present Twenty-First Infantry was organized from the Second Battalion, Twelfth Infantry by change of name. Therefore, the history of the Regiment begins with the organization of the Second Battalion, which was 18 June 1861.

During the Civil War this organization received its baptism of fire at Cedar Mountain on 9 August 1862. The Battalion was ordered by the Division Commander, General Auger, to deploy as skirmishers and cover "both the enemy's front and the whole of the Division front, to advance continuously, discover the enemy's position and annoy him as much as possible." This order was carried out to the finest detail and executed to perfection. To commemorate this engagement, the Regimental Coat-of-Arms bears The Cedar Tree.

The Civil War service of the Regiment was arduous and honorable. The Regimental colors bears battle streamers for Manassa, Antietam, Fredericksburg, Virginia 1862, Chancellorsville, Gettysburg, Virginia 1863, Wilderness, Spotsylvania, Cold Harbor, and Petersburg.

In 1869 the Twenty-First was consolidated with the Thirty-Second Infantry without change of name.

After the Civil War, when the Regiment was sent west to quell the activities of the Indians, four companies and the Regimental Band had the honor of being present at the driving of the Golden Spike in the Union Pacific Railroad which united East and West.

In the autumn of 1870 the Regiment, along with some units of Cavalry, began the first of a series of Indian wars. In 1889, after many bitter battles against the Apaches, Bannocks, Modocs, and Souix, the defeat of the Indians was finally accomplished. For each of the Indian Wars the Regimental colors bears a battle streamer.

The Twenty-First next fought in the Spanish American War, in which it played a great part in the attack on San Juan Hill. The Regiment was at that time a part of the Fifth Corps. The five-bastioned fort, badge of the Fifth Corps, which appears on the Regimental Coat-of-Arms, is indicative of its Spanish War service. A streamer with the inscription "Santiago" commemorates its Cuban service in 1898.

The Regiment made its first trip to the Philippines in April 1899. There it fought in the Battle of the Zapote River, crushing the main force of the Insurgents. Shortly after its return to Manilla, six companies were dispatched to Morong, on Laguana Bay. Here the continuous rain filled the foxholes and caused heavy losses from disease. Finally, 13 April 1902, General Malver surrendered to Company "D". For service in the Philippines the Regiment was commended by Major General Wheaton: "One of the most distinguished Regiments in the United States Army.--- The long list of officers and men killed and wounded while serving on the island of Luzon is proof of the gallant conduct of the Twenty-First Infantry." In recognition of its service four streamers were awarded the Regiment. The Katipunsun on the Regimental Coat-of-Arms is in memory of its Philippine service.

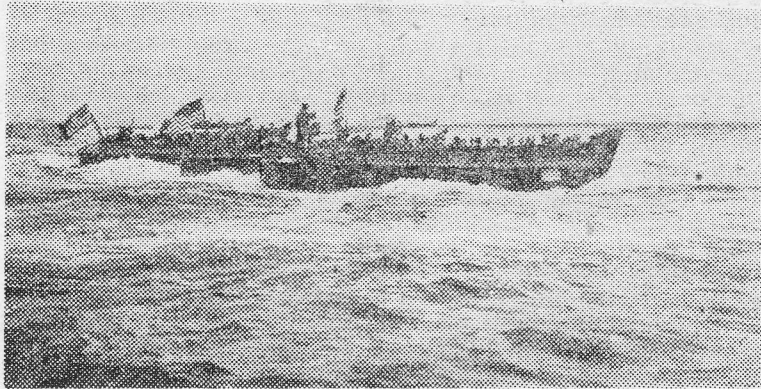
After these engagements the Twenty-First returned to the United States. In 1904 it was again sent to the Philippines to stop the raids upon Pulazano.

In May and June 1918, 2,159 recruits were sent to the Regiment, but the end of World War I found this unit still awaiting shipping orders.

When the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941, the units comprising the 24th Division were stationed in the Hawaiian Islands. One of these units was the Twenty-First. Im-

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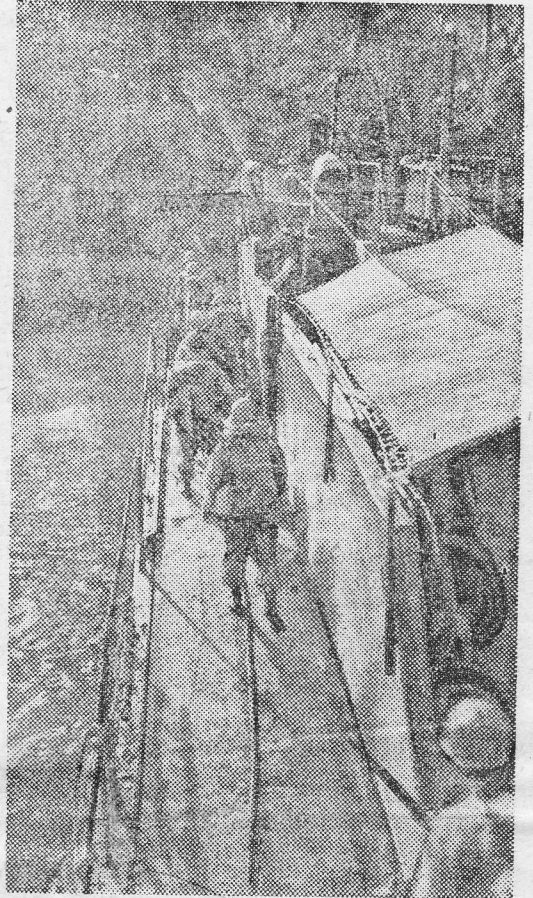
The 21st In Action



LCV's going into attack during invasion of Red Beach, Sgt Tanahmerah, New Guinea. Signal Corp Photo by Carl L. Wienke.



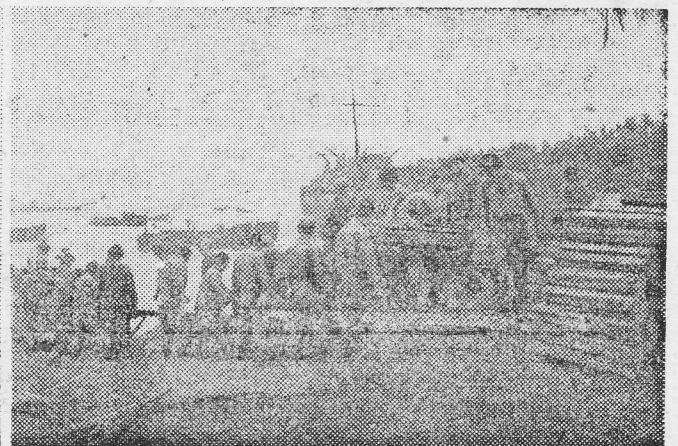
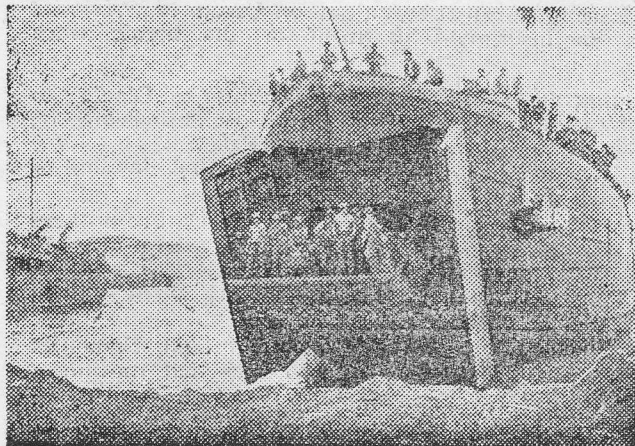
Lt Ben Morre, Calverton Ga, of the assault group (2nd Bn, 21st Inf) briefs a few of his men on their objectives. L to R, Sgt Darwin Packard, Albany, Oregon; Lt Moore; and 1st Sgt Harold D Cook, Jonesville, Va. Signal Corps photo by Sgt Carl L Wienke.



Troops disembarking from an LCI onto the beachhead a Hollandia, New Guinea. Signal Corps Photo by T/4 Ernani D' Emidio.

(Lower left) Ramp of an LST being lowered on beachhead during invasion at Hollandia, New Guinea. Signal Corps photo by T/4 Ernani D'Emidio.

(Lower right) Unloading ammunition from LCV by conveyor at Red Beach 2, Tanahmerah Bay, New Guinea. Signal Corps photo by Sgt Carl L Wienke.



mediately following the Japanese attack, defenses of Oahu were strengthened and training began for jungle warfare and amphibious landings. After the threat to the islands had passed, the Regiment sailed with the rest of the Twenty-Fourth Division to the South Pacific, Arriving in Australia in August 1943.

On 22 April 1944, D-DAY for the Tanahmerah Bay-Hollandia Campaign, the Twenty-First began its first concerted action against the enemy. Again the Regiment distinguished itself, in landing at Tanahmerah Bay and in its rapid movement inland over rough terrain, through dense jungle, and in the face of enemy fire. The Regiment profited by this experience. It remained at Hollandia doing intensive training in preparation for the invasion of the Philippines.

The operation on New Guinea was a forecast of the real fireworks--Breakneck Ridge, on Leyte, --one of the bloodiest, most bitterly fought battles of the war.

On 5 November the Twenty-First was in the Pinamopohan area of Leyte. The next day it opened a series of attacks against Breakneck Ridge, key to the enemy's defense system, at the head of Ormac Corridor. The crack Japanese First Division was well entrenched in the hills and along the Ormac road which afforded the best avenue of attack. Shoulder-high cogon grass flushed the low ground, offering the enemy excellent concealment. The pockets between the hills were thickly wooded; the valleys deep and precipitous.

On 6 November the First and Third Battalions launched their attacks. Strong opposition met all advances. Persistent sniper fire picked at the front, flanks, and rear of all positions. The enemy was everywhere seeing but not seen. The roughness of the terrain facilitated the infiltration of small detachments. Even during the nights there was contact with strong enemy forces.

Against such opposition and under artillery bombardment, the initiative was maintained, and the remarkable progress of two to three hundred yards was made each day.

On 10 November the Twenty-Fourth Division began a coordinated assault down the Ormac Valley. A frontal attack on the Ridge was undertaken by the Twenty-First. The First Battalion attacked through a veil of rain and over muddy ground.

On the next day the First and Second Battalions jumped off abreast, the First to the north and the Second in column of companies to the south and west.

On the 12th, after preparatory fire, the Third Battalion moved off along the Ormac road and skirted the crest of Breakneck Ridge, with a tank company in support. Assaults were highly successful, and by the end of the day the entire length of Breakneck Ridge had been taken. Another advance of six hundred yards was made the next day.

By noon on 16 November, the capture of Breakneck Ridge was complete. The Twenty-First had 630 battle casualties and 133 men sick or injured from other causes. Enemy bodies counted, totaled 1779. It is assumed there were at least that many more of the enemy wounded.

Major General Roscoe B. Woodruff, commanding General of the Twenty-Fourth Division, wrote in November 1944: "These action of the Twenty-First Infantry Regiment reflect the finest traditions of the United States Army, and will stand as a bright page in the Nation's military history."

The capture of Breakneck Ridge had been a monumental task. The indomitable courage and fighting spirit displayed by the men of this Regiment in the struggle, is a priceless tribute to the country for which they fought, bled, and died. America will long honor those dead who lie beneath the crimson earth on Leyte.

After a brief rest during which new clothing and equipment and a few replacements were received, the Regiment sailed from Leyte to Mindoro and then to Mindinao. Throughout the trip the convoy was under constant sea and air attack. After landing, defensive positions were taken until 7 January. The Third Battalion then successfully defeated enemy garrisons at Bongabong and Pinamalayan, on Mindoro and Marinduque Islands. After the Twenty-First had liberated northern Mindoro they enjoyed being entertained by a liberated people for the first time in any campaign. On 1 February most of the Regiment returned to Son Jose in southern Mindoro, for a period of reorganization, rest, and training.

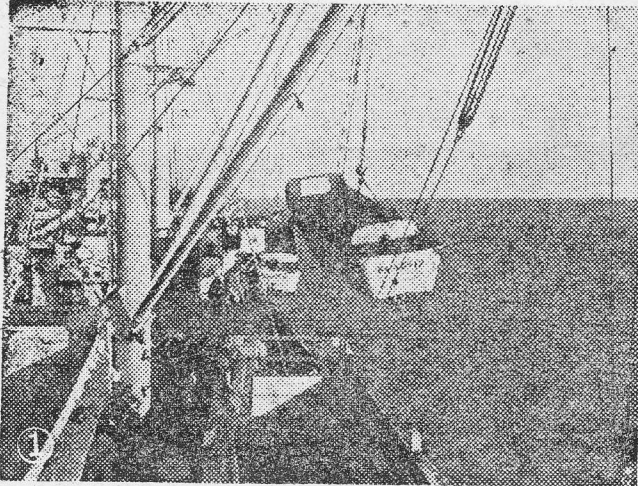
Cannon Company, however, was dispatched to support an airborne unit on Luzon. It performed its duty so well that it was awarded a citation from the War Department for its heroic work from the period 31 January to 5 February 1945.

In March 1945 information was received that an enemy force was enroute to Dipalog to seize an airfield there. This base was then in the hands of friendly Philippino Guerillas. Promptly, two companies of the Second Battalion were flown to Dipalog in transport planes. This force secured the air base and town and turned back the hostile force. This was the first landing of ground forces on Mindinao.

On the following day, 18 April, Cotabato and the surrounding area was seized. From there the Regiment began one of the swiftest assault marches in the history of jungle warfare. In 17 days, marching day and night despite spasmodic resistance, destroyed bridges, roadblocks, ambushes, and mines, it covered 140 miles. On 1 May a tired Regiment was approaching Bago and an offensive which was to last for 51 days.

The terrain in this area was a continuous climb going north into the hinterland. Numerous streams and deep ravines presented a natural defence. Abaca groves were so thick that movement through them was almost impossible.

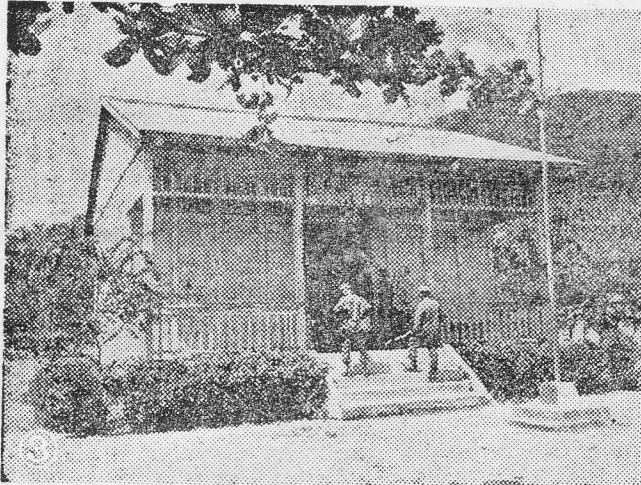
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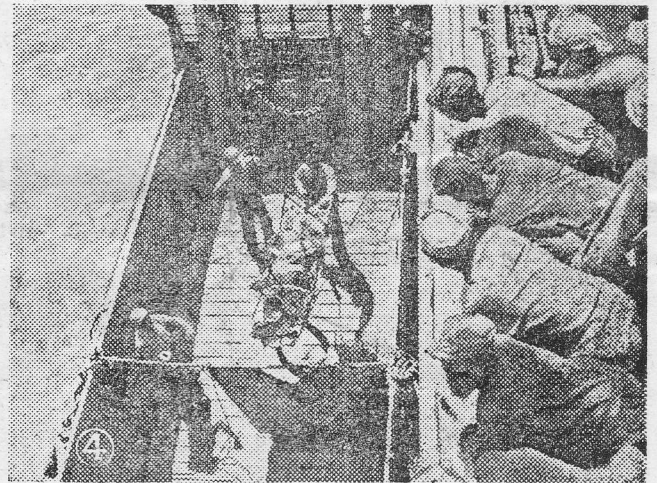
1 Hoisting an LCVP from an APA on A-Day at Leyte. Signal Corps photo by Pvt Robert Sorace.



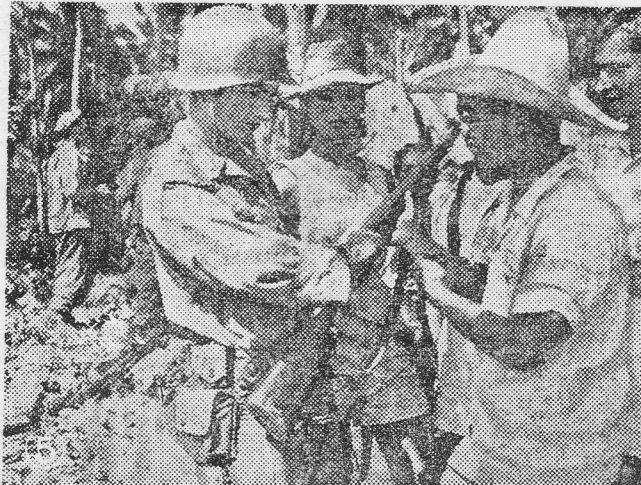
2 Natives looking at "K" Company, 21st Inf Radio setup, on Leyte. Signal Corps photo by T/4 Stanley Lambert.



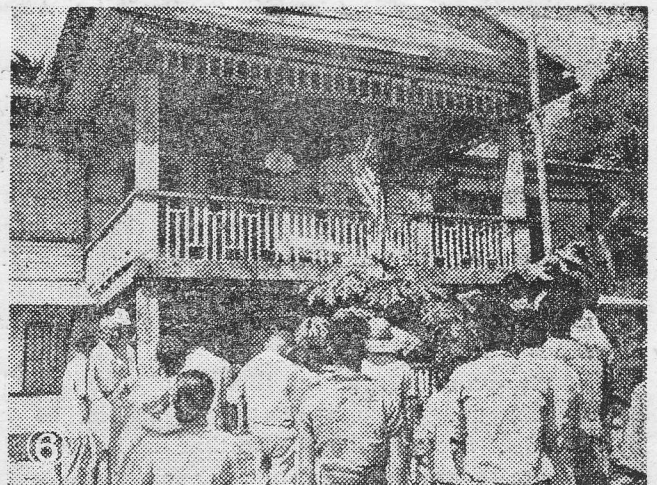
3 GIs examining a school in the village of Malopolo, Leyte. Signal Corps photo by T/4 Stanley Lambert.



4 An American casualty being loaded aboard ship in the harbor of Leyte Gulf. Signal Corp photo by T/4 Hriak.



5 PFC Wm T Little, Tampa Fla, of "K" Co, 21st Inf, shows the M-1 rifle to an eager Filipino. Signal Corps photo by T/4 Stanley Lambert.



6 Judge Dominado Velso, Mayer Pablo Tio, and the mayor's secretary, Sabino Montera, all of Liloan, Leyte, raise the town's flag on their town hall the flag having been secreted from the Japs in the hill.

The Story of A Gimlet

The air around Mintal, in the green hell near Libby Drome, and along the Talomo River, was filled with machinegun bullets and fragments of artillery and mortar shells looking for human flesh in which to bury themselves. The screams of men in pain and the moans of those beyond it pierced the soggy air. The sweating, grimy men who still could fight hugged the ground, pinned down by sniper fire, unable to use their own guns.

He didn't say a word, this Gimlet. What was there to say? He knew there was plenty to be done. So he took the sniper nearest his position, the one who had been tossing grenades, and killed him. Then he stood there on the mound in front of the dead Jap and pointed to the pill boxes, and the artillery on the other side of the river did the rest. Then he grinned. His job was done--for now.

The next morning things were so hot the aid men couldn't get through. Hot steel boiled the water of the Talomo River. The wounded had to be gotten across. He got up and jammed his helmet on, while the men around him shook their heads. It couldn't be done.

He found a jeep someone had left for dead. Eight times he drove through the deadly air with wounded comrades, until shell fragments had slashed to ribbons the tires of his vehicle and it would no longer move. Eight men--and more, a whole battalion--lived because of this one man.

The next morning the battalion was needed for a flank attack. The order came to fall back across the river, but the bridge built the day before had been knocked out and the deadly accuracy of Japanese fire made it impossible for the squad to repair it. Another job for him.

With a buddy, and using some frayed timbers and rope the engineers had left behind, he repaired the bridge, while bursts of machinegun fire and exploding mortar and artillery shells splattered him with mud and water. Surely he must have known a bullet somewhere had his number on it!

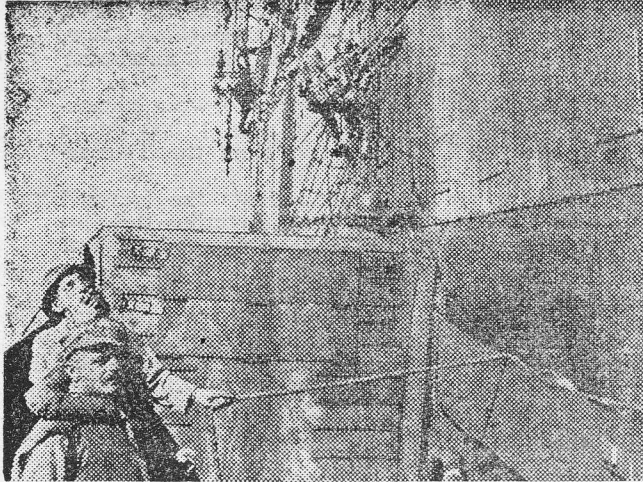
A few days later, 14 May 1945, his battalion was cut off again, without food or water, and running low on ammunition. "Incredible Jim"--for that is what the men had begun calling him--volunteered to lead a patrol to bring out the wounded and bring in food and water. Half way out, a Jap gunner spotted them and began raking the patrol with hot lead. One man was wounded. The others hugged the ground.

Once more this Gimlet saw a way out. It was an abandoned machinegun, some fifty yards away, with an ammunition belt running through it and an ammunition box standing next to it--but there was a single bullet headed his way. He never reached that gun. Later, 6 March 1946, the Congress of the United States had a few words to say:

WAR DEPARTMENT General Order No 23 dated 6 March 1946

"Private First Class JAMES H DIAMOND, ASN 34872309, as a member of a machine gun section, Company D, 21st Infantry Regiment, Army of the United States, displayed extreme gallantry and intrepidity on 8, 9, 10, and 14 May 1945 at Mintal, Mindanao, Phillipine Islands. When a Japanese sniper rose from his fox hole to throw a grenade into their midst, this valiant soldier charged and killed the enemy with a burst from his sub-machinegun. Then by delivering sustained fire from his personal arm and simultaneously directing the fire of 105 mm and .50 cal weapons upon the enemy pill boxes immobilizing his and another machinegun section, he enabled them to put their guns into action. When two infantry companies established a bridgehead he voluntarily assisted in evacuating the wounded under heavy fire, and securing an abandoned vehicle transported casualties to the rear through mortar and artillery fire so intense as to render the vehicle inoperative, despite the fact he was suffering from a painful wound. The following day, he again volunteered, this time for the hazardous job of repairing a bridge under heavy enemy fire. On 14 May 1945, when leading a patrol to evacuate casualties from his battalion, which was cut off, he ran through a virtual hail of Japanese fire to secure an abandoned machinegun. Though mortally wounded as he reached the gun, he succeeded in drawing sufficient fire upon himself so that the remaining members of the patrol could reach safety. Private Diamond's indomitable spirit, constant disregard of danger, and eagerness to assist his comrades, will ever remain a symbol of selflessness and heroic sacrifice to those for whom he gave his life".

Cursed be anybody, here or back home, who says Jim Diamond did not give his life for him!



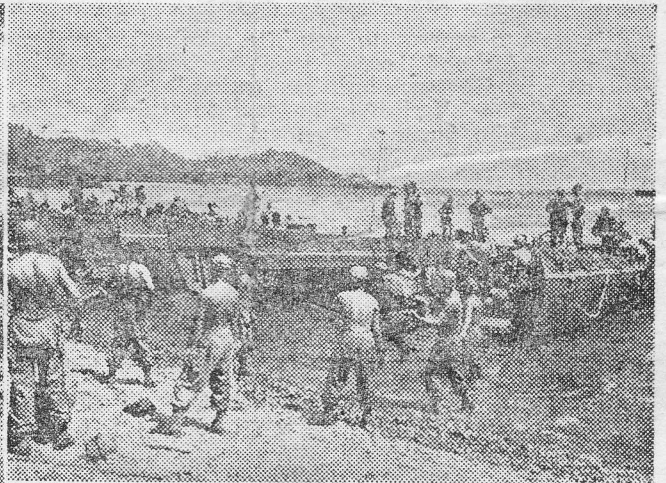
"K" Company, 21st Inf, going down the landing nets at Green Beach, Leyte Island, Philippine Group. Signal Corps photo by T/5 Stanley Lambert.



A medic helps a US wounded soldier hit during the landing of the 3rd wave on Leyte Island. Signal Corps photo by T/5 Joseph Reynolds.



Action on Red Beach, Leyte Island. Signal Corps photo by Pvt Hilmon Pineger.



On the beach of Leyte members of the 21st Inf unload supplies from small craft. Signal Corps photo by Archie Stone.



Members of Hq Co, 21st Inf disembark from LCVs onto Leyte. Signal Corps photo by Archie Stone.



T/5 Ralph Herderman, Versailles, Ind, 21st Inf Hq Co Wire Section, strings telephone wire to a coconut tree on Leyte. Signal Corps photo by Pvt Archie Stone.

For three years the Japanese had prepared the defense of this area. Pillboxes, spider holes, foxholes and trenches were built along the roads that lined the countryside. Man-made camouflage, improved by natural growth, made the emplacements imperceptible. The enemy had built an almost impregnable stronghold on this island, their last fortress in the Philippines.

The Twenty-First Infantry faced a force of approximately 6500 enemy troops who were unusually well armed with automatic weapons. During the period 1 May to 19 June an area 12,000 yards wide for a distance of 12 miles was cleared. The price was high. During this time the Twenty-First sustained more casualties than ever before in one battle.

In this battle, during the crossing of the Talomo River, sniper fire pinned down the forward elements. Pfc. James Diamond advanced alone, killing the first sniper and then directing the fire of a self-propelled howitzer on the pillboxes and remaining snipers. Later he evacuated several wounded comrades across the swift, shoulder-deep Talomo River, while mortar and machine-gun fire raked the water and both banks. Though painfully injured he brought the casualties to safety by driving an abandoned jeep eight times through fire so intense that all four tires were punctured. When his battalion was ordered back, Diamond volunteered to repair the blasted Talomo River bridge. With one helper he built a foot span which enabled the battalion to withdraw across the river, despite a concurrent mortar barrage. James Diamond was killed in action on 14 May when he purposely attracted enemy fire, thus enabling his patrol to reach safety. For his unselfish acts and finally the sacrifice of his life for his fellows he was posthumously awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor.

With victory in Davao, the final chapter in the Philippines Liberation Campaign was written. The Twenty-First Infantry had accounted for 42% of the Twenty-Fourth Division's total of enemy casualties.

Mopping-up operations continued until September 1945, and at the time World War II was declared over the Regiment was undergoing training preparatory to an invasion of Japan.

Colonel William J. Verbeck said in a letter to the Regiment: "It is difficult for me to find words to express to you the admiration and respect in which I hold you. You and your dead comrades, and those of you who were wounded in action, have kindled in me an intense pride in commanding such an organization."

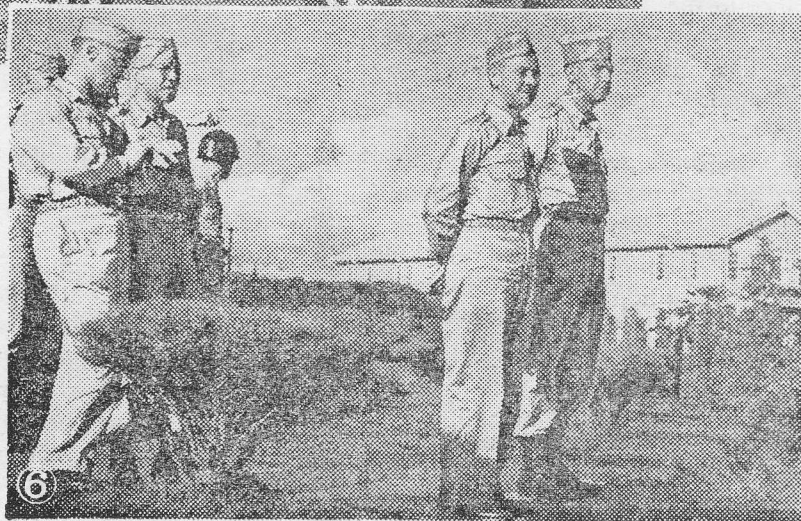
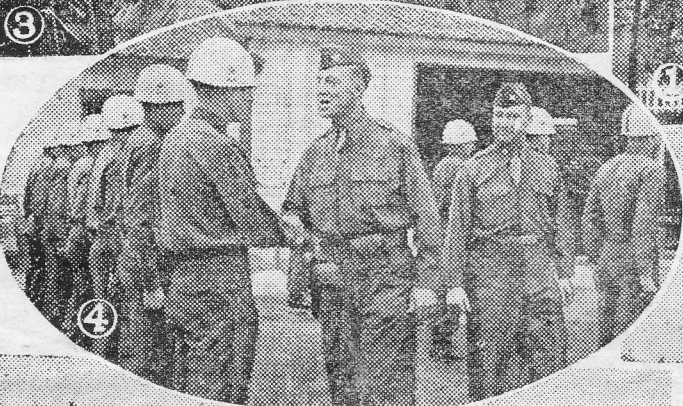
Colonel Verbeck, who saw so truly and felt so deeply the thoughts and words of the men under him, wrote a commemoration poem when news of Japan's surrender request had reached him. He was in New York at the time, and he could hear the shouts and cheers of "Victory" which undulated in the streets.

In April the Third Battalion landed near the town of Baras in Southern Mindanao, secured a beach-head, the town of Malabang, and its airfield. The First and Second Battalions landed at Parang and established a beach-head there. At Parang the Regimental Commander, Colonel William J. Verbeck, was wounded by a sniper.

"Jungles of Guinea, guard well your dead,
 Cogon on Leyte where heroes once bled,
 Churchyard in Lubang, hear you these cheers?
 Sleep there in silence, on through the years.
 Clifford and Langford, Crouch and Bruce Hill,
 Do sirens and whistles give you a thrill?
 Far from the shining cities' gay whirl
 Lie Eddleston, Davis, Diamond and Earle.
 On a day in November, out there in the rain
 In mud-caked fury of the Ormac campaign
 No laughing and joking lighted the scene.
 Sure! Forget all the hardship, but remember the sheen.
 Revellers on Broadway, what know you of grief?
 Have you seen tired soldiers awaiting relief?
 Have you seen all their faces when once more they move out?
 Have you read in their glances that feeling of doubt?
 Listen, you' reveller, blowing your horn,
 Walk up to Mintal with me in the morn,
 Look over the river and see there our dead,
 Or Would you prefer to shout "Victory" instead?
 So we who are living, forget not this day,
 The sacrifice of heroes who miss all this play.
 Teey cannot rejoin us; their duty is done.
 Pray for them now that victory is won.

In October 1945 the Twenty-First sailed from Mindanao to southern Honshu, landed near Kure, and proceeded by rail to Okayama where extensive patrolling was carried out. The Regiment remained at Okayama until June 1946, then moved to Kumamoto, Kyushu. Here replacements were received and training, and routine occupations duties carried out.

CAMP WOOD



1—An outside view of the 21st Regiment's theatre at Camp Wood.

2—The Regiment's Chapel.

3—The boys relax and enjoy themselves in Regimental beer garden.

4—Colonel McKay shakes hands with a fireman at the dedication of the 21st Fire Department buildings.

5—Buddies pose in front of an artillery piece in the flower gardens at Camp Wood.

6—Officers shown on a routine inspection of the Camp. From left to right are: Colonel O E Trechter, former 24th Division Chief of staff; Lt Colonel Fred H Stoll, Major General James A Lester, Division Commander; and Colonel Winfield R McKay 21st Infantry Commander.

Cannon Company Receives Citation

General Orders)

No 68)

WAR DEPARTMENT

Washington 25, D C, 14 August 1945

BATTLE HONORS. - As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (sec I, WD Bul 22, 1943), superseding Executive Order 9075 (sec III, WD Bul 11, 1942), citations of the following units in the general orders indicated are confirmed under the provisions of section IV, WD Circular 333, 1943, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction:

19 CANNON COMPANY, 21ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, is cited for outstanding heroism and gallantry in supporting the drive of an airborne division from Nasugbu to Manila, Philippine Islands, 31 January to 5 February 1945. On 31 January the Cannon Company, 21st Infantry Regiment, landed at Nasugbu, Luzon. It was the only armored unit in support of the airborne division at that time. When heavy enemy resistance was encountered at Cayungan on 1 February, this company moved forward under hostile artillery and automatic weapons fire to cover the advance of leading units across a deep ravine. By direct fire, promptly and accurately placed, this company neutralized enemy automatic weapons permitting the seizure of the position with minimum losses to our forces. On 2 February at Aga the division advance was held up by another strongpoint. Despite the fact that its vehicles drew heavy hostile artillery, mortar, and automatic fire, this company advanced rapidly to forward positions and again by direct fire neutralized the enemy position. On 3 February, during the advance on Tagaytay Ridge, from an area subject to enemy artillery, mortar, and small-arms fire, the Cannon Company, 21st Infantry Regiment, delivered direct fire on enemy emplacements, greatly facilitating the seizure of the area. On 4 February, with assault units of the division, this company surprised and destroyed hostile groups in four stone houses guarding approaches to the Imus River Bridge. This action enabled the mined structure to be secured before it could be destroyed. By aggressive action at Las Pinas the same day, the self-propelled mounts reduced pillboxes near the Las Pinas Bridge, permitting this bridge, also mined, to be secured before the charges could be detonated. Capturing these two bridges intact was of greatest importance to the 31-mile advance made by the division that day. At Pardaque 5 February, encountering main defenses of the heavily fortified Genko Line guarding approaches to Manila and Nichols Field, the company pushed through streets covered by hostile artillery antitank guns and mined with 250 KG aerial bombs destroyed numerous pillboxes and large roadblocks, and materially aided the breaching of outer defenses. Throughout this entire series of actions, the Cannon Company, 21st Infantry Regiment, subordinated personal safety to aggressive action despite heavy casualties, and by its gallant action earned the admiration of all units it had supported. (General Orders 69, Headquarters Eighth Army, 25 June 1945, as approved by the Commander in Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific.)

By order of the Secretary of War:

C C Marshall,
Chief of Staff

Official :

EDWARD F WITSELL
Major General Acting The Adjutant General

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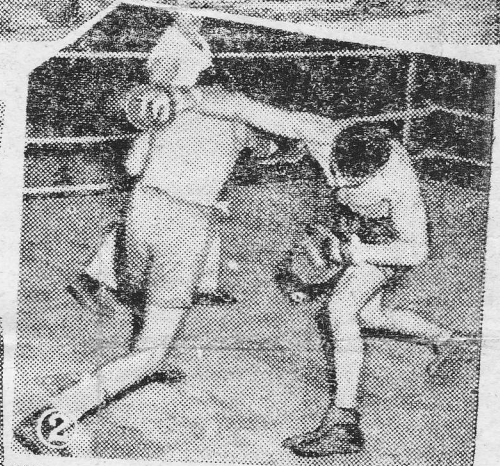
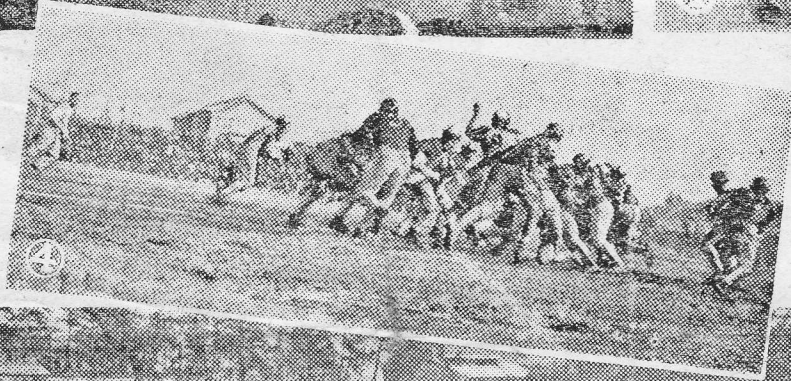
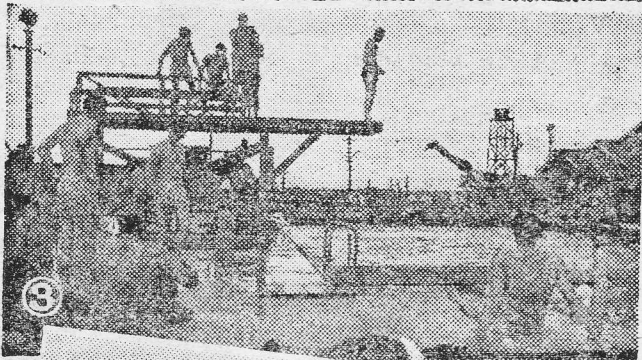
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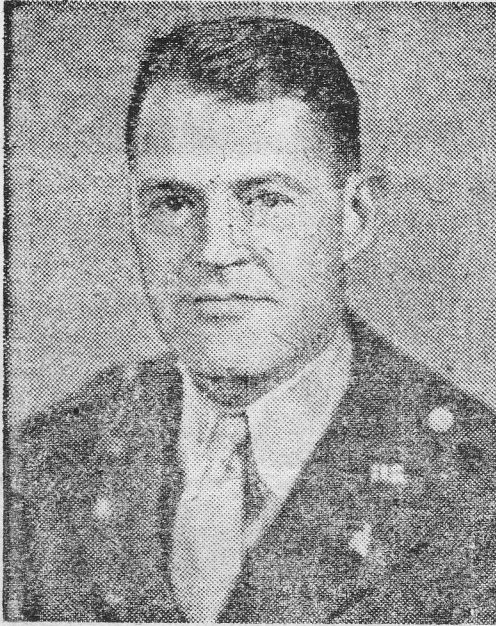
21st SPORTS & RECREATION



The 21st has a well-planned, all around sports program. At the present time the Gimlets are in second place in the Division Baseball League. These 21st T&E photos show various phases of the Gimlets' athletic program.

- ① 21st back breaks thru for a gain during last fall's football season.
- ② It would have been a KO but ...he missed.
- ③ Every one enjoys a cool plunge on a hot day. The Gimlets are proud of there pool, one of the best on Kyushu.
- ④ Two 21st teams battle it out at Camp Wood.
- ⑤ Batter up....a Gimlet prepares for a hard hit.
- ⑥ When a USO troupe hits camp everyone is happy. The girls enjoy a swim and the Gs enjoy the company.

He may look tough but you should see him when Mrs Winfield says something.



In war and in peace the 21st has maintained an outstanding record. Colonel William J Verbeck, (left) wartime commander of the regiment, was wounded four times in battle. The present Commander is Colonel Winfield B McKay (right).



ORGANIZATION DAY ☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ 21st INFANTRY
1861 KUMAMOTO, KYUSHU, JAPAN 1947

PROGRAM

Friday 8 August

- 0900 — Regimental Review
- 0945 — Formal Dedication of Diamond Theatre
- 1000 — 1200 — Theatre Open For Inspection
- 1400 — Baseball Game Gimlets vs Divarty

1900 — Band Concert 24th Division

Saturday 9 August

- 0800 — 1130 — Field Meet
- 1200 — Holiday Dinner
- 1400 — Baseball Game Gimlets vs Divarty
- 1900 — Company Beer Parties



21st INFANTRY ON PARADE