



DECEMBER 18-24, 2023



THROUGH THE LENS

DECEMBER 19, 2003: Members of the 323rd Military Police Company bow their heads for a moment of prayer during a welcome home ceremony for the unit after returning from a deployment to Iraq.



WEEK IN REVIEW

M DECEMBER 18, 1945: The 37th Infantry Division is inactivated at Camp Anza, Calif. following World War II.

W DECEMBER 20, 1989: The 180th Tactical Fighter Group supports Operation Just Cause: the Invasion of Panama. Beginning in November 1989, elements of the 180th were deployed to Howard Air Force Base, Panama for a scheduled rotation of units. While there, the operation launched in the early morning of Dec. 20 with numerous Army units making ground and airborne attacks at various locations. The 180th flew more than 20 combat sorties in the unit's A-7D Corsair II aircraft and expended 2,715 rounds of ammunition in support of those ground troops. The group became the first Air National Guard unit in the Tactical Air Command to experience combat since the Vietnam War.



IN THEIR OWN WORDS

Maj. Charles Henne of the 148th Infantry, 37th Infantry Division, recalls his December 1945 reunion with his family after returning from more than 3 years of service in the Pacific.

"When we pulled into Shelby nothing was familiar. Obviously a lot of changes had been made to the camp since we left during February of 42. Getting off the train I was hailed by father who motioned me his way and toward a waiting sedan. Upon arriving at officer's row, Dad's driver pulled into his driveway and I was thrilled to see the family waiting on the front lawn. It was a crowd including my mother, sisters Joan and Evelyn, (and) brother Bob just back from the ETO.

My skinny frame and saffron color must have shocked the folks. They all gave me a critical stare. My mother thought I was sick, but I convinced them they were looking at a Pacific veteran no different than all of the others getting off the train with me that day. My mother vowed that her cooking would take care of my skinniness; hopefully the color would fade away. Teaming with my brother Bob, also a recent arrived veteran, we did justice to bountiful meals and on occasion each eating a head of Iceberg lettuce like an apple, a delectable treat for him and me. I had not eaten Iceberg lettuce since leaving the States in 1942.

It was great to be home and be with the folks, but I had another trip to make as soon as I cleared the reception center. It was important to me that I get to Tuscaloosa as soon as I finished processing out of the Army. There my girl was serving as a neuro-surgical nurse at Northington General Hospital, a big burn and nerve center. Northington General was located in Tuscaloosa, Alabama not more than a hundred miles or so from Camp Shelby. I attempted to call Julie several times since arriving in the States, but the person answering insisted that she was on duty and could not come to the phone. I finally got through to her to give my situation and status. I assured her I would be on the train that weekend if not earlier. We had a lot to talk about."



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