
THE SIGHTSEER  

ALSACE • MEUSE-ARGONNE
NEW GUINEA • LUZON
KOREA • ALASKA

**OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE 6TH INFANTRY DIVISION, INC.**

Featured in this issue:

HOME FROM KOREA!



PAGE 3

Stonework and tile roof in Korea – 1945

“THE SIGHTSEER”

National Association
of the 6th Infantry
Division

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Editor: Thomas Price

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MESSAGES

From the President: Dear Members—
We need your input. Due to our dwindling resources, reduced membership, and board member we will vote on a resolution to dissolve the organization on **September 15, 2016**. This is an important issue that we urge all of you to consider.

Cliffor Kessen, President (Cannon & K Co, 1st Inf

From Thomas Price-Editor/ Website Historian:

The National Association continues to struggle due to dwindling membership. For these reasons the Board is providing this you **Second NOTICE** that it will consider a motion to dissolve the organization on or about **September 15, 2016**.

An alternative could be to continue the 501(c)(3), but solely for the purpose of maintaining the website. Newsletters would be available, but solely on the internet.

It is important that you tell us what you want for the organization. Funds for the organization are just over \$9,000 and our treasurer reports renewals (income) at \$20 per month. That is about \$240 per year. The cost for publication of the Sightseer every year is about \$1,200. Other expenses are several hundred more including maintaining the website. Dues paying members are dropping below 170. No reunion will be held again this year due to lack of capacity of members (including board members) to attend. The Board believes that we should consider a vote for dissolution. The Corporation will consider dissolution in a thoughtful way while members can still participate in that decision. The board has voted in favor of expending some funds (\$1500) to improve and maintain the website so that no matter the vote regarding dissolution that the story of the 6th Infantry Division can continue and be available on the internet. Your support and suggestions are important to us so consider what you can do for the organization.

Thomas Price, Editor Website Historian,(son of Robert E. Price, 63rd Inf Co D, L & Hq)

NATIONAL OFFICERS AND TRUSTEES

NATIONAL OFFICERS

Sept. 2015 to Sept. 2016

PRESIDENT

Kessen, Clifford (Cannon & K Co, 1st Inf.)

VICE PRESIDENT

Copinger, Jr., Roger (Co.F, 63rd Inf.)

JR, VICE PRESIDENT

[VACANT]

SECRETARY

Wilson, Catherine S.,
(Daughter of Andrew Sharpe,
Co H 20th Inf)

TREASURER

Patricia Kessen

CHIEF OF STAFF & HISTORIAN

[VACANT]

EDITOR AND WEBSITE HISTORIAN

Price, Thomas E., (Son of Robert E. Co L, D, Hq. 63rd Inf.)

CHAPLAIN

McLogan, Russell (Co.K, 63rd. Inf)

SURGEON GENERAL

Groff, Robin (Son of Robert Groff, Co L. 63rd Inf)

SGT.- AT- ARMS

Groff, Kelly (Son of Robert Groff, Co L 63rd Inf.)

TRUSTEE COMMITTEE

TWO-YEAR (2014-16)

Halberg, Virgil E. (HQ/HQ Btry, 80th.FA Bn.)

ONE-YEAR (2014-2015)

DuPriest, Wm. Lee (Co.E, 20th.Inf.)

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

An advisory function to the current president, consisting of active past presidents:

Wessely, Joseph L (Co.K, 63rd Inf.), [deceased] (DOD May 14, 2015).



View of 20th Inf. Regimental Medics HQ Kwang-ju Korea 1945

Home From Korea!

By **ALBERT L. SESSLER,
JR.**
Co L. 20th Inf.

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In late October, 1945, the 20th Infantry Regiment of the 6th Infantry Division established itself in the city of Kwang-ju in the southern part of South Korea, and in the surrounding area. The regiment successfully mastered a transition from combat infantry to military

occupiers and keepers of order in a relatively short time. Our relations with the Korean citizenry were generally cordial and positive on both sides. The 3rd Battalion medics lost no time in setting up our medical facilities and treating our patients. Fortunately most of the GIs stayed healthy and our work load was not heavy.

Soon after our arrival, on an excursion to "beautiful downtown Kwang-ju," we met a group of four or five Japanese soldiers of the former occupying force who were disarmed and still in Korea, and presumably were awaiting transportation back to Japan. They appeared to

be in good physical condition and their uniforms were neat and well-fitted, in contrast to most of the Japanese soldiers on Luzon, who had been surrendering to us as the war ended, and who often came into our lines malnourished, ill, and in shreds of uniforms. Our former enemies greeted us with tentative smiles. Since none of us had knowledge of the others' language, no conversation ensued and everyone went on their respective ways. This was my only contact with the Japanese in Korea.

The point system which determined the order of release of draftees from

the military services continued with greater speed now that the war was over. As a consequence, the older men who had been in service the longest were leaving in substantial numbers. This meant that most of the higher-ranking non-coms were leaving, and had to be replaced, which made for rapid promotions for some of the GIs remaining.

Toward the end of October, I was promoted to the rank of T-4 with the MOS of Medical Technician, and a month later was promoted again to T-3, with the MOS of Surgical Technician. At Battalion Medics, training for these positions was "on the job," and we learned as we went along. With the promotions came increases in pay which came in the form of Korean yen, at the exchange rate of 15 yen to the dollar.



The departing Japanese occupation forces had left behind a large inventory of weaponry and we were given the opportunity to select a Japanese sword or rifle to send home as a souvenir if we wished. I had no use for the Japanese rifle, and sent

home two swords which ultimately arrived in good condition.

In early November we were kept busy giving influenza shots to all of the companies in the battalion. For occupation purposes, the battalion companies were set up in small widely separated units in various locations around Kwang-ju. Inoculating everyone therefore meant long hours on the generally poor Korean roads, traveling between the various units. Fortunately the November weather was pleasant, with lots of sunshine and occasional showers.

The political situation in Korea during the early stages of our occupation was quite turbulent. There were usually several different political parties in each village, all trying to gain control. They bore picturesque and sometimes misleading names, such as "Korean Benevolent Peace Society," and were often equipped with a good-sized private arsenal. The 3rd Battalion line companies periodically investigated the various societies, and often returned with a load of weapons of all descriptions: pistols, rifles, shotguns, swords, knives, etc., a good part of which had been "liberated" from the Japanese during their long period of occupation.

Around the middle of November, the point count required for return to the U.S.A. was dropped to 55, just one over my own point

count of 54.
T



hat effectively eliminated my being home for Christmas, and made it likely that I would be returning in February or March.

Thanksgiving came and went without the traditional turkey dinner because the supply of turkeys was held up somewhere along the supply lines. Steak was provided as a satisfactory substitute, and the turkeys finally arrived and were served about a week later. Turkey or not, we had a great deal to be thankful for, especially the end of World War II and our own survival.

December 1 was notable from a weather standpoint, since I saw snow for the first time in many months. After the tropical climates, the bracing temperatures and accompanying snowfall were quite a change, and reminiscent of the Iowa winters in which I grew up.

Around December 4, I transferred from the 3rd Battalion Medical Detachment to the 20th Infantry Regimental Medical Detachment. Our former Battalion Surgeon, Captain Bob Trevethan, had moved up to become the Regimental Surgeon, and

wished to have me transfer to Regimental Medics, where I assumed the job of Dispensary Sergeant. My new duties included mixing and preparing various medications, assisting the Regimental Surgeon and assisting in the preparation of the many and voluminous reports concerning our many and varied activities. Among these were the files of the individual immunization cards for the regiment, which was a major headache, what with men leaving to go home, replacements arriving, etc. A surprising number of men decided to re-enlist, and almost every day some came in for the required physical examination.

Regimental Medics occupied a sturdy and substantial house of western-type construction in the foreign residential district of Kwang-ju, located on a hill with a great view of the city. Being located within the city, we could enjoy the hustle and bustle of the population as they pursued their daily activities, and we were close to the various commercial establishments for necessary purchases and services. An Army theatre was located only a short distance from the house. We took our meals at the Regimental Service Company, where the food was quite good.

We were told that before the war our house had been the residence of a missionary and his family. The main room included a fireplace, and the popping and sparking of burning logs

made for a warm and cozy atmosphere as the winter deepened outdoors. Heating of the house was accomplished efficiently by several oil stoves.

On December 2, the official news came through that the point requirement for separation would be lowered to 50 on December 31. That was my ticket home from Korea to the U.S.A., so I began feeling very much like an official "short timer" and looked forward to leaving Kwang-ju during the first week in January. On December 7, those GIs with between 55 and 60 points left for the long trip back to the States. With 54 points, I was now one of the "high point" men of the regiment.

Around December 17, we experienced a heavy snowfall for about two days continuously. Looking out our windows from the elevated position of our location, we could see the Oriental architecture of the city, with the white steeply pitched roofs offering a startling contrast to the darker walls of the houses. In the distance, a mountain range, with the peaks and slopes whitened with snow, looked down on the valley.

Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were festive and enjoyable. A Christmas Eve service at our chapel included a choir from the nearby hospital, as well as an outstanding program by a Korean choir. Regimental Medics was well-decorated, with Christmas decorations and an eight-foot tree

complete with tinsel and ornaments. The mail had come through with numerous packages, so there were presents to open, and the Army did its usual good job of providing an excellent meal with all the holiday trimmings.

The old year of 1945, one of the most eventful in my life, and in the life of the Nation, passed quietly on New Years Eve for me. We didn't have a party and in fact I went to bed before midnight. The main significance of New Years Day, January 1, 1946, was that I was now eligible for discharge from the Army under the rules of the point system, and would soon be leaving the 6th Division and Kwang-ju within less than a week.

My long trip back to Davenport, Iowa began at about 2 AM on January 3, 1946. I had spent the past couple of days in preparation for departure, mailing packages home, drawing my pay and saying goodbye to friends.

My final letter from Korea to my parents was written on January 4, 1946, from the Korean Disposition Center located near Seoul. I was in a huge, cold, barn-like building which constituted part of the Replacement Depot, temporarily housing thousands of men while they awaited processing to board ship and return to the USA. We had left Kwang-ju at 2AM and had ridden in an open truck through rain and snow for fourteen hours in bitter

cold until we reached the Korean Disposition Center at 4 PM.

We spent the night there in the unheated building on cots, with only one thin blanket per man, shivering and trying to sleep. Without a doubt, it was one of the coldest nights of my life. Also inadequate was the food service, with long lines and mediocre chow. However we survived and were "processed" the next morning, which included receiving two "shots," having our personal records checked, our clothing inspected, and a meeting with a Customs officer. We then rode a short distance to the 74th Replacement Battalion at another location where we were fed, assigned bunks, and had our Korean money exchanged for US currency.

After a few days at the depot, we were transported by open-air truck to the Seoul railroad station, where we stood around for hours in the best Army tradition of "Hurry up and wait" before boarding an ancient Korean train. This carried us to the port of Incheon, where we immediately boarded an LCP (landing craft personnel) that carried us into the harbor to board the ship that would take us back to the USA. Our magic carpet to the Promised Land was the SS Marine Falcon, a large Merchant Marine vessel skippered by Captain E. E. Greenlaw.

We weighed anchor and left the port of Incheon on

January 7, 1946. I believe that there were about 3,000 of us aboard. The ship was the best I had sailed on during my time in the Army. The food was quite good, and we had three meals per day, as contrasted with some of the other troop ships I had sailed on, where only two meals per day were served. Movies were shown in the evening and there was a library. A daily newsletter kept us up to date on current events. Most important, we were headed home and morale was high, with everyone feeling good.

It appeared that we were fortunate to have left Korea when we did. There were reports of riots in Seoul. Also the flood of American GIs returning to the US was straining the capabilities of facilities to handle them, and there was talk of a three-month hiatus before continuing the return of the troops. Fortunately we were on the way and had avoided any delay.

Our course took us south of the southern tip of the Korean peninsula, south of the Japanese island of Kyushu, and then east across the Pacific. The distance to be covered from Incheon to our destination of Seattle, Washington was 6268 miles, and our travel time was 14 days, nine hours. We crossed the International Date Line, and therefore enjoyed a "double exposure" of January 15, and "encored" our membership in the "Domain of the Golden Dragon." After

an average daily travel of over 400 miles, we arrived in the Seattle area on January 21, 1946.

There were several significant differences between this voyage and the one I had made aboard the USS General Bliss from San Francisco to New Guinea in 1944. Most important, we were now sailing in peacetime, while on the earlier journey there had always been the possibility of attack by a Japanese submarine or surface vessel. This voyage was made in January, while the earlier trip had been made in May. Also the earlier voyage had taken us across the equator and through the tropics, while this later passage was across the northern Pacific. The weather had generally been quite mild on our earlier west-bound passage, while we experienced the Pacific in an angry mood at times during our 1946 voyage east. The 1944 voyage had consumed about a month and was many miles longer. Finally, the ships themselves were quite different. While it definitely wasn't a luxury cruise aboard the Marine Falcon, the trip was much more pleasant in every respect.

On January 21, we entered the territorial waters of the United States and began our passage through Puget Sound in the state of Washington. As I recall, it was raining and visibility was limited by fog, but no land had ever looked as good as this to those of us returning.

While we were still aboard ship, arrangements were made for us to send a standard form of telegram to our parents, wives or other relatives, advising of our safe arrival. My parents saved the telegram which they received and I still have it. It had been a long war for them and they were much relieved to learn that I was once more back in the continental United States.

After the ship docked and we debarked we were taken to Fort Lawton where we underwent further processing and remained for two days. At Fort Lawton I learned that that my separation center was to be Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. This was quite a distance from Davenport, Iowa, but travel expenses would be paid. Travel to Fort Leavenworth would be by rail, with a scheduled length of travel of 71 hours. The train turned out to be a relic resurrected from an earlier era to meet the transportation demands of bringing huge numbers of

returning servicemen back to their homes.

Accordingly, we rattled and rolled for almost four days from Washington to Kansas. Somewhere along the way, I began to feel very ill with fever and chills. In view of my many months in the tropics, much of it out of doors and unprotected from the malaria-carrying mosquito, I thought it was quite likely that I had contracted malaria.

Upon arrival at Fort Leavenworth, I was admitted to the base hospital, where treatment was deferred until the laboratory could confirm that what I had was indeed malaria. In the meantime, the severe chills and high fevers continued. Finally, confirmation was received and treatment was commenced. It was effective, and by early February I was released from the hospital, completed processing for my separation, and was honorably discharged, effective February 5, 1946. A final train trip brought me back at long last to

Davenport, Iowa, where my parents met me at the station.

Since that arrival back home, I have lived a long, eventful and rewarding life. However the most adventurous and eventful time of all took place before my 21st birthday, during the eighteen months that I was a member of the 6th Infantry Division, and it is a time that I will never forget.



**Questions or comments,
write to:**

Albert L. Sessler, Jr.

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**TAPS, REST IN PEACE,
DEDICATED TO ALL THOSE WHO SERVED IN WAR AND PEACE.**



- To all our fallen comrades and supporters over the last 83 plus years of the Sightseer and the last

100 year of the 6th Infantry Division of the United States Army

DONATIONS



Thanks to all those who have donated to our organization over the many decades of our existence.

JEEP TRACKS

Co. B 20th Infantry
Jack P. Baker

Co. L 1st Infantry
Raymond Smith

HQ Co. MPs
Theodore "Ted" Maznicki

HQ Co. Battalion C
WWII & Korea
Earl P. Sheppard

Co. A 63rd Infantry
Charles E. Comfort
Co. D Medical
William S. Dalton II
52nd Battery Artillery
Roscoe Matteson

Co. G 63rd Infantry
Oliver E. Lemlin

Medical Detachment 20th
Infantry
Albert L. Sessler

Co. C 63rd Infantry
John M. Liberta
Grandson of Mario Socci

1st Sgt Fox Co. 63rd Infantry
Thomas J. Spitzig

Co. K 1st Infantry
Charlie B. "C.B." Griggs

Cannon Co. 1st Infantry
Karen R. Arbogast
Daughter of Member who
served as
Letter Bearer & Clerk Typist

List of members who have paid their dues since the last issue of the Sightseer. If you wish contact info on other members, contact Secretary Cathy Wilson @ (706) 835-5829.

MAIL CALL!

Thank you all for you service
to this organization and to
the United States



Infantry Soldiers on a road in Northern Luzon--1945

Message from the Website Historian and Editor, Thomas Price:

To All Members of the National Association:

We need your input. This is a repeat of the notice provided to membership in the last Sightseer.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT A MOTION HAS BEEN MADE AND SECONDED TO PROPOSE THAT THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION IS AND SHOULD BE VOTED UPON BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS THIS YEAR AS FOLLOWS:

TO DISSOLVE THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE 6TH INFANTRY DIVISION, INC., AND DONATE ITS FUNDS AND ARTIFACTS TO THE NATIONAL MILITARY HISTORY INSTITUTE AND MUSEUM AT CARLISLE BARRACKS PENNSYLVANIA OR ANOTHER SUITABLE MUSEUM AND QUALIFYING 501(C)(3) CORPORATION.

IT IS FURTHER MOVED THAT A VOTE ON THE RESOLUTION TO DISSOLVE THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF THE 6TH INFANTRY DIVISION BE TAKEN UP BY THE BOARD AND ALL MEMBERSHIP INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATION ON OR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 15, 2016.

MEMBER SENTIMENTS ON THE PROPOSED RESOLUTION ARE REQUESTED. VOTES ON THE RESOLUTION BY THE BOARD WILL BE CAST IN WRITING, BY MAIL OR ELECTRONICALLY CONVEYED TO OUR SECRETARY CATHERINE WILSON STATING "YES" OR "NO" REGARDING "DISSOLUTION" BY NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 15, 2016.

Respectfully submitted,

Cathy Wilson, Secretary

Message from Thomas Price---Dear Members and Board:

In the event that the Board votes for dissolution, the organization will need to engage the services of an attorney in Oregon to draw up the paperwork and assist with that process. I am not in a position to provide that service or any legal advice to the organization. I can however recommend an attorney in Oregon to assist with the paperwork and process and suggest that this is considered earlier rather than later.

Sincerely, Thomas Price, Website Historian.



NOTICE TO ALL CURRENT MEMBERS AND ALL PROSPECTIVE NEW MEMBERS:

YOUR MEMBERSHIP IS A DONATION TO OUR NON-PROFIT ORGANIZATION AND ENTITLES YOU TO A VOTE ON MATTERS SPECIFIC TO THE RIGHTS OF MEMBERSHIP INCLUDING ELECTING THE BOARD. IN THE EVENT OF DISSOLUTION, THE SIGHTSEER WOULD BE DISCONTINUED. KEEP THIS IN MIND IN CONSIDERING RENEWAL OF MEMBERSHIP. Membership is entitlement to a vote, not entitlement to a newsletter.