

SUMMER 2013

Vol. 26, No. 3

The Korean War Remembered

The year 2013 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the Armistice that ended the active combat operations of the Korea War. Although the conflict did not end with a total defeat of the Communist forces, the United Nations troops did secure the freedom and independence of South Korea.

Since 1953, South Korea has prospered as a democracy while North Korea has withered under a oppressive Communist regime. The North Koreans have faced famine and the loss of individual liberties and freedoms while South Koreans have thrived.

Fort Lewis played a crucial role in the Korean War. The 2nd Infantry Division was the first U.S. based unit to deploy to combat in Korea and tens of thousands of soldiers, including the Canadian Brigade, trained at Fort Lewis during the war. The 7th Infantry Division and I Corps, which are headquartered at JBLM, also played major roles in the Korean War.

As the U.S. efforts against terrorists in the Middle East draw down, I Corps and JBLM once more turn towards the security of the Pacific Rim area.



The museum currently features a number of fascinating exhibits on the role of Fort Lewis units in the Korean War

President's Report

The cover on this issue of The Banner reminds us that 2013 marks the sixtieth anniversary of the signing of the Korean armistice. Although a ceasefire has been effect, after sixty years no "final peaceful settlement" has been achieved and the US has had to maintain a continuing military presence in South Korea. Then Fort Lewis was a mobilization station for many units leaving for Korea, and current units at JBLM, including I Corps, the 7th Infantry Division and elements of the 2nd Infantry Division not only fought in Korea, but are again focusing toward Korea and the Pacific Rim.

The article by Erik Flint, Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry, USAR, describes the last major combat action of the 104th Infantry Division ("Timberwolves") in World War II. The Division is now the 104th Division (Leader Training) and is a training unit of the United States Army Reserve. The Division is based at JBLM. Erik is one of the marvelous group of volunteers who were significant in the restoration of the galleries and who continue to provide invaluable assistance to the Museum staff. Thanks, Erik!

The Museum has felt the impact of sequestration, having to shorten its days of being open to the public from four to three days per week. Fortunately, the impact has not been as severe as initially expected, as the sequestration for DOD civilians is being shortened from eleven days of furlough to six. Starting on August 23rd, the Museum will resume its normal four day schedule of opening on Wednesday thru Saturday from 11 am to 4pm.

It is with regret that we note the passing of one the long time members of The Friends. COL Arthur J. Read, US Army (Retired), passed away on July 26, 2013. An artilleryman, Art participated in the Normandy Campaign during World War II and also served in Korean War. His obituary observed that Art was a "faithful Christian, husband, father, grandfather, great-grandfather, soldier, American patriot, civil servant, race car driver, trumpet player, and a dear friend to many." Our thoughts and prayers are with his widow Jo-Anne and the Read family.

Our scheduled guest speaker for our Brunch on 29 September is the senior officer on JBLM – Lieutenant General Robert B. Brown, Commanding General, I Corps. General Brown has been in command since 3 July 2012. General Brown served previously at Fort Lewis, as commander of the 1st Brigade (Stryker Brigade Combat Team), 25th Infantry Division in 2002. It will be interesting to hear the perspective of a senior Army leader about what is in store for JBLM as the Army adjusts to the drawdown in the Middle East, a reexamination of missions, and other issues facing the Army and JBLM, all framed against a future of constrained budgets and resources. Please join us!

Ian Larson

Director's Report

The museum continues to improve its galleries and operational underpinnings. Since my last writing, we have added to or improved over 20 exhibits in our current footprint of ten galleries in 15,000 square feet of exhibit space located on the main floor and mezzanine and are nearly complete with the 9th Infantry Division Gallery on the second floor. Less visible, but at this stage of our reconstitution more important, is that we are improving our underlying systems which support our museum's operation and make it more effective in terms of responding to requests for information, adjusting or creating exhibits and protecting and preserving our artifacts – the National treasures which we have been entrusted with.

We are in the process of constructing an art storage system which will enable us to organize and store the museum's art collection to better protect the artwork and to facilitate a more efficient rotation. Much of the artwork has never before been seen by the public, will be on exhibit in our newly established art gallery. We are working closely with the installation and, with funding approved by the Joint Base Commander and provided by the DPTMS Training Division, are working toward the goal of installing a state-of-the-art closed circuit television system to augment our current security systems. With the aid of the DPTMS visual information branch, we are completely redoing the vehicle park signage in order to provide a more professional look and more complete information about each vehicle and also installing a map at the vehicle park entrance which orients visitors to the vehicle park's holdings. Work continues on the reconstitution and organizing of the museum's archives, technical manual library and research library.

Lastly, we are making good headway on our effort to inventory, and then integrate or conserve and store, the approximately 2,000 or so artifacts which remain to be unpacked. We are also planning out the content and estimating the cost associated with establishing four new galleries on the second floor – but more details on this in a follow on article. Work on these tasks has been somewhat impeded by the sequester, which forced the museum staff to take one unpaid furlough day per week – but, fortunately, this situation seems to be drawing to a close and we will be back to a full work week starting 19 August. Lastly, as always, I'd like to thank our dedicated Soldiers, staff members, volunteers, the Joint Base leadership, the DPTMS and the Friends of the Fort Lewis Military Museum for their continued support of our endeavors and making the museum possible.

Myles Grant

Timberwolves Take Halle

By Erik W. Flint
Lieutenant Colonel, Infantry, USAR

The ancient German city of Halle, the nation's tenth largest, sits along the east bank of the Salle River in eastern-central region of the country. With a wartime population of over 200,000, the city was a significant center for German industry, culture, education and politics. It was also the last major objective for the Pacific Northwest's own 104th Infantry Division during its one-hundred and eighty-nine day combat trek across Western Europe. The men of the "Timberwolf" division purportedly spent more consecutive days in combat than any other fighting organization in the European Theater. Their final battle, in mid-April 1945, witnessed not only the death-throes of the Third Reich but, also a courageous attempt to save Halle from unnecessary loss of life and physical destruction; an attempt that would ultimately involve a previously-relieved U.S. division commander, two American newspaper men and a World War I German naval pirate!



Major General Terry Allen



*Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of the
104th Infantry Division*

The 104th Division entered combat in Holland in October 1944. From there, the Division battled across the German frontier, through the vaunted Siegfried Line and across the Rhine River at the famed Remagen bridgehead and through the heart of the Nazi nation. By early April, the division had liberated the Mittlebau-Dora and Nordhausen concentration camps and was directed by VII Corps, its senior headquarters, to continue its eastward drive to the Saale River. The senior Timberwolf, Major General Terry de la Mesa Allen, understood that, although the *Wehrmacht* was retreating and in disarray, it remained a formidable and extremely dangerous opponent. Terry Allen, a highly experienced soldier and commander, had successfully led the famed 1st Infantry Division "Big Red One" during its campaigns in North Africa and Sicily. Despite success on the battlefield, both Allen and his deputy Brigadier General Teddy Roosevelt, Jr., son of the late President, were relieved of command by General Dwight Eisenhower following the Sicily fight.

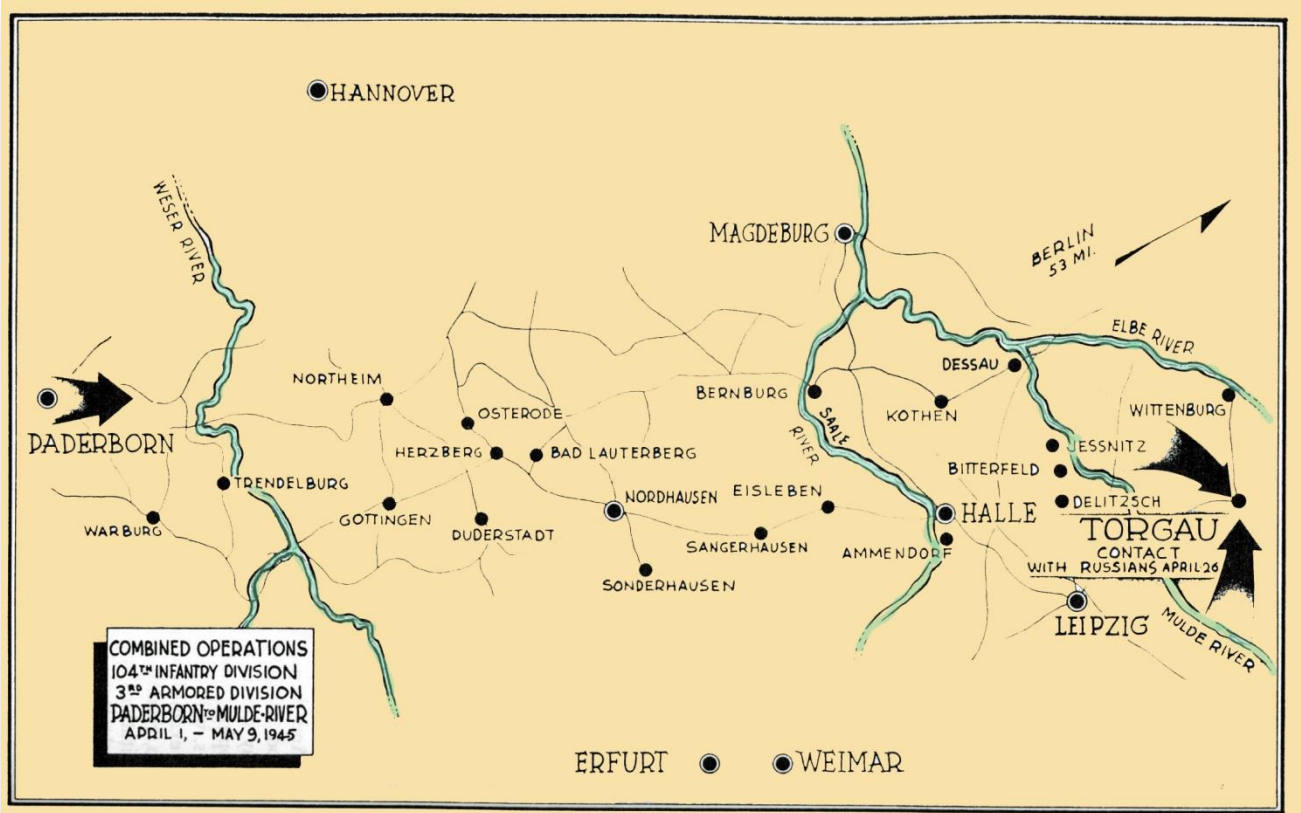
Returning to the United States, Allen was given the opportunity to lead again and in October 1943, assumed command of the Timberwolf Division then training at Camp Adair, Oregon. Allen's experience fighting the Germans impressed upon him the critical task of night combat. During training at Camp Adair, Allen placed great emphasis on fighting in limited visibility conditions, ultimately earning the Division the nickname "The Nightfighters." On their way across Germany, the Timberwolves would refine and perfect this skill.

On 11 April, Allen directed his 414th Infantry Regiment, under the command of Colonel Gerald C. Kelleher, to move east to the Saale, cross the river and attack Halle. As the 414th's two battalion task forces, Task Force Clark (1st battalion) and Task Force Rouge (3rd battalion), reached the river's west bank, both came under exceptionally intense defensive fires, mostly in the form of dreaded German 88mm flak guns. By this time, the Germans had also destroyed all bridges across the Saale in the city's immediate vicinity further, retarding any chance of a rapid assault. Upon hearing of the situation on the Saale, General Allen directed Colonel Kelleher to shift his task forces north to a point where the 3rd Armored Division had erected a pontoon bridge across the Saale and attack the Halle from the northwest.

The division's ability to operate in limited visibility came into play as task forces Clark and Rouge conducted a nighttime relief in place with the 415th Infantry Regiment and shifted north by foot and truck to the 3rd Armored crossing site. Once across the Saale, the 414th prepared for a dawn attack. Inside the city the German defenders waited.



PFC Milton Ableson poses with a wrecked truck



Halle's defense consisted of panzer and infantry troops from the 130th *Panzer Lehr* Division and the 176th Infantry Division along with a typical late-war mix of replacement and training formations, SS augmentees and Hitler Youth. The roughly 4,000-man force was under the uneasy command of Major General Fritz DeWitt. According to 414th Regimental intelligence reports, DeWitt was a reasonable *Heer* (regular army) officer who hated the Nazis but whose family was under immediate threat by the Gestapo if he didn't follow Hitler's "defend-to-the-death" directive.

At 0800 on the 15th of April, the two 414th task forces crossed the line of departure and immediately encountered stiff enemy resistance. *Panzerfaust* anti-armor weapons and deadly-accurate sniper fire meant that the Timberwolves were forced to clear every building, resulting in ponderously slow offensive progress. By nightfall, roughly one-eighth of the city and some 800 prisoners were in Timberwolf hands.

The following day, the offensive continued with Task Force Clark moving due east to establish blocking positions on the eastern exits of the city, while Task Force Rouge continued the hard work of pushing south house-by-house into the heart of the city. The ferocity of the city's defense was exacerbated by the reluctance of commanders to employ two of the Allies' most potent weapons; airpower and artillery. This reluctance resulted from the knowledge that Halle contained a number of hospital facilities where Allied prisoners were known to be housed.

Deprived of aerial and land-based preparatory bombardments, the men of the 414th Regiment continued the dirty work of clearing the city throughout the day and night of the 16th.

Hopes for a quick surrender of the city were raised on the afternoon of the 16th when two American newspapermen, Al Newman of Newsweek and the Stars and Stripes' C.K. Hodenfield, arrived at Colonel Kelleher's command post with a most unusual peace emissary.

Count Felix von Luckner, the *See Teufel* (Sea Devil), was a former German Imperial naval officer from the First World War whose raiding exploits against Allied shipping aboard a sailing ship were only matched by his well-deserved reputation for chivalry. During the course of the Great War the Count and his crew were responsible for 30,000 tons of allied shipping sunk with only a single fatality. After the war, Luckner retired from the Navy, travelled the world lecturing on his wartime exploits and ultimately settled in Halle.



U.S. Tank Destroyer in Halle



Count Felix von Luckner in full German military regalia

Newman and Hodenfield, accompanying Task Force Rouge on its push through the center of the city, had come across Luckner through a rather unique series of circumstances that led them to seek out the Count in the hopes of obtaining an exclusive interview. Once located, Luckner stated his desire to facilitate a surrender in order to spare the city and its inhabitants further destruction and suffering. The trio made their way to Colonel Kelleher's regimental command post then on to General Allen's division headquarters. After a lengthy meeting with the division commander, the two newsmen accompanied the Count back into the city, shook hands and wished him good luck in his negotiations with DeWitt.

The Count returned to Kelleher's command post at 0300 hours on the morning of the 17th to report resistance by SS troops and the Gestapo's threats against DeWitt prevented any hope of an early surrender. With Task Force Clark manning six blocking positions to the east of the city, Task Force Rouge resumed the offensive into the southern half of the city at first light. As the men from Task Force Rouge moved south past the

eastern blocking positions, men from those positions joined in the general assault south, accelerating the pace of offensive progress. Hard fighting continued for nearly two more days until the city was declared cleared at 1055 hours on the morning of April 18th.

The city of Halle had been taken over a period of four days by two understrength infantry battalion task forces against a numerically superior enemy in the defense. The Timberwolves suffered twelve men killed, sixty-eight wounded and twelve missing while capturing 2,640 enemy prisoners. With the capture of Halle, the 104th Division had reduced the last major urban obstacle standing between the Allies and Soviet forces advancing from the East.

On April 23rd divisional reconnaissance elements advancing across the Mulde River made contact with Soviet troops near Torgau. Here, the Division effectively ended nearly 200 days of consecutive combat and soon witnessed the end of the Second World War in Europe.



Timberwolves mug for the camera with captured Nazi flag

FRIENDS OF THE FORT LEWIS MILITARY MUSEUM

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

29 SEPTEMBER 2013

Place: **Patriots Landing, Olympic Dining Room**

Time: 1130-1215 Social Hour

1215-1330 Brunch

1330-1415 Program



We are honored to announce that the speaker at our next General Membership Meeting will be Lieutenant General Robert B. Brown, Commander of I Corps and the senior commander on JBLM. We know all our Museum Friends are eager to hear what changes and challenges are in store for I Corps and the Army in the coming years. Our distinguished guest will address these issues and others related to the future of Joint Base Lewis-McChord and the military.

Please join us to hear our guest speak on topics very important to I Corps, JBLM, and the entire military community.

Please return your reservation form and check by Thursday, 26 September 2013.
Last minute reservations may be made by calling Paul Knoop at (253) 279-2598.

Return this form to LTC (Ret) Donald A Simpson, 6615 79th Street W
Lakewood, WA 98499. Make checks payable to "The Friends."
Cost of Brunch for members and guests: \$16.00 each.

Number of Reservations: _____ Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Name of Member: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Names of Guests: _____

**Residents of Patriot's Landing do not need to make payment for the meeting,
but are requested to make reservations for seating.**

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Visit the Museum web site for more information and purchases
from the Cannon Shop.

<http://www.fortlewismuseum.com>



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**Please Continue to be a Friend
of the Lewis Army Museum
and Keep History Alive!**



**Friends of the Fort Lewis
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A Fort Lewis based soldier from the 1950s