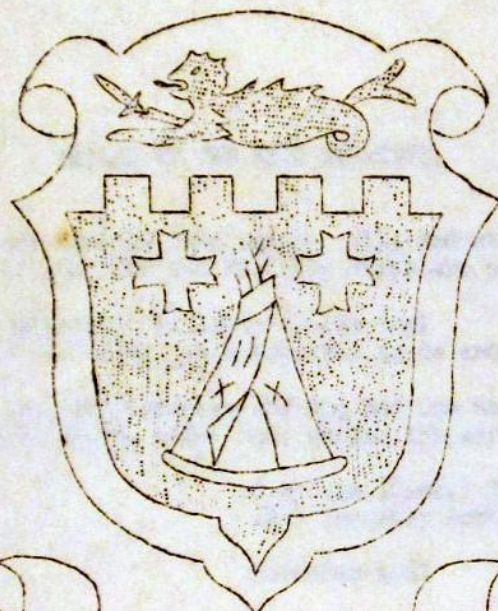
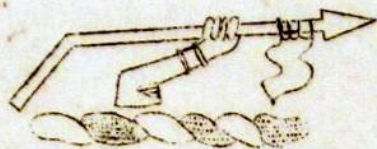


**THE 2/12TH
INFANTRY
HISTORY DURING
THE BERLIN CRISES
1961-63**

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2D BATTLE GROUP
12TH INFANTRY



HISTORY

1 SEPTEMBER 1961 - 30 SEPTEMBER 1963

THE FORMATIVE MONTHS

A national crisis in the summer of 1961 created the present 2nd Battle Group, 12th United States Infantry. The crisis was pre-empted by construction of the Berlin "Wall". With characteristic direct action, the Department of the Army formed an entire unit, changing movement orders, recalling personnel from civilian component duty, and enlisting troops with only abbreviated courses of basic training.

Command of the 12th Infantry was given to Col. George Pinard. His orders for the Battle Group were to train a combat ready force in the shortest time possible. The target date for this readiness was the first part of December.

As the Battle Group assembled at Fort Riley, the training schedule permitted little time for settling families or handling the myriad problems that arose from the sudden influx of 1300 men in an isolated area such as Fort Riley.

By mid-October, field training exercises were the training norm. The sudden death of Col. Pinard placed Lt. Col. George P. Welch, Deputy Battle Group Commander, in command of the unit.

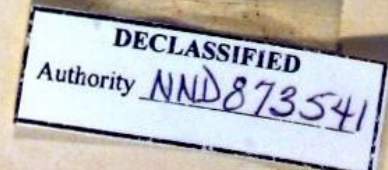
ARMY TRAINING TESTS

The Battle Group quickly adjusted to the new commander, and by the end of October and seven weeks of small unit training, the 12th Infantry completed its Army Training Tests at the company level and preparations began for the Battle Group Army Training Tests. These Army Training Tests were the climax of training, a 500 mile motor march to Tarryall, Colorado, during the period 27 November to 10 December 1961.

On December 11, 1961, with the successful completion of the training tests, the 12th Infantry went into Operational Readiness Training status. Continuous field training combined with unannounced alerts honed the Battle Group to a fine edge, as it joined the ranks of the other combat ready forces in the 1st Infantry Division. Also, in January, the 1st Infantry Division was declared a STRAC unit and later made part of STRIKCOM.

Col. Thomas P. Cleary Jr., took command of the 12th Infantry on February 1, 1962, and the Battle Group prepared for more ambitious tasks; "Red Arrow" and Long Thrust IV.

Exercise "Red Arrow," held from 17-20 April at Fort Riley, showed the 12th Infantry as the outstanding unit of the 1st Infantry Division. Achievements during Red Arrow influenced the choice of the 12th Infantry to initiate the 1st Division's participation in the Long Thrust exercises in Germany.



BOUND FOR GERMANY

With the addition of support units from the 7th Artillery, 9th Transportation Battalion, 1st Aviation Company and 701st Ordnance, the 12th Infantry became a Task Force, destined to depart for Germany in July 1962, thus becoming the first unit of the 1st Division to return to Germany after an absence of six years. The unit moved from Fort Riley on 8 July, and was flown to Rhein-Main Air Force Base near Frankfurt, Germany, completing the move on the 9th. On the airlift the entire Task Force was airborne at one time, the first aircraft touching down at Rhein-Main minutes after the last aircraft lifted off the runway at Forbes Air Force Base, Topeka, Kansas. Thus began a highly successful series of maneuvers and missions during the forthcoming six-month stay in Germany.

After drawing equipment at a staging area in the woods near Karlsruhe, Germany, the men of the 12th Infantry proceeded on a tactical motor march of 150 miles to Wildflecken, where they terminated the initial phase of Long Thrust IV in a rugged test of combat readiness by a swift moving attack against the seasoned troops of the 504th Airborne Infantry. Repeating their "Red Arrow" performance, the Warriors kept the aggressors constantly off balance for the duration of the problem.

Completing this initial exercise, the Battle Group moved to quarters at Wildflecken, Germany. Situated among the mountains, with quiet farms and heavy forests, Wildflecken was an incongruous scene for the combat ready 12th Infantry with its mission of assisting in keeping Germany free. Only twelve miles from the East German border, Wildflecken Kaserne challenged the Battle Group mobility and readiness in this important job. The unit quickly adjusted to the situation in Germany; intense training coupled with short-reaction-time alerts showed the esprit at a higher level than ever before. The 12th Infantry was a truly cohesive unit, proud in garrison and rough in the field.

Although the military mission was firmly established, a paramount interest during this time was the first Organization Day Celebration held September 1, 1962. Most of the festivities were of a competitive nature with thirty contests in all. Highlighting the day were the visits of Lt. Gen. J.H. Michaelis, V Corps CG; Brig. Gen. C.E. Beck, Assistant 8th Division Commander; and Brig. Gen. Michael S. Davidson, V Corps Chief of Staff. Their praise for the unit and its enthusiasm and competitive spirit enhanced the success of Organization Day.

BERLIN ASSIGNMENT

Word was received in September 1962 that the 12th Infantry would move from Wildflecken to Berlin. This marked the first time that the colors of the Big Red One would be flying in this city. The move to Berlin would place a heavy burden of responsibility on the 12th Infantry as they formed a front line defense for the free people in Berlin and reasserted the right of free access by United States forces.

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Last elements of the 12th Infantry closed into Berlin on September 24. The reason for being there was seen first hand. In October the 12th Infantry participated in one of the most successful training exercises held in the Grunewald of West Berlin. "On Guard" was designed to test all phases of operation and planning, particularly those areas peculiar to all metropolitan areas such as Berlin. The 12th Infantry wrote, controlled and umpired the exercise as well as providing the aggressor force. The fast paced action and unusual situations encountered during "On Guard" provided the best of field training for the Warriors.

A unique group of Army Reserve Officers visited Berlin in November as part of a brief tour of active duty which took them to other American military installations throughout the world. Senators J. Strom Thurmond, a reserve Major General, and Ralph W. Yarborough, a reserve Colonel, led a group of eight legislators and twelve Congressional staff members through the city. The group called on Mayor Willy Brandt, visited with troops and witnessed an equipment demonstration put on by the 2nd Battle Group, 12th Infantry. This demonstration represented one of the few times in the history of a ROCH Division that an entire Infantry Battle Group, with men and equipment, was displayed in one compact formation.

At the conclusion of the demonstration Senator Thurmond congratulated the 12th Infantry for its accomplishments and assured the assembled troops that their efforts were recognized and appreciated by all free people.

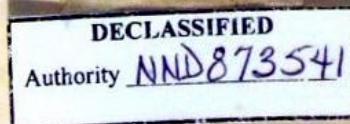
In November also, the Berlin people were invited to an American football game in the Olympic Stadium, built in 1936 by Hitler for the Olympic Games. The 2nd Battle Group, 12th Infantry troops had the place of honor while marching in the Stadium before the largest foreign national crowd ever assembled for an American football game.

HOLIDAYS AWAY FROM HOME

Throughout the holiday season beginning with Thanksgiving and continuing through the New Year holiday, the men of the 12th Infantry were separated from their families and loved ones. On Thanksgiving, to help fill the void of loneliness, the men invited families and children of Berlin to dinner at Andrews Barracks. Here, several hundred Berliners from the Steglitz district joined with the 12th Infantry in this national holiday celebration.

There is an annual Christmas Fair held at the Funkturm Exhibition and Fair Grounds in Berlin. With a child by the hand, from Battle Group sponsored orphanages throughout the city, the men enjoyed the fair and the thrill of making a lonely child happy.

Departure from Germany and termination of Long Thrust IV began the first week of January 1963, with the move from Berlin by the Task Force to a staging area at Spinelli Barracks in Mannheim. Here, equipment drawn in Germany was turned in and the Task Force made its long, non-stop flight back to Kansas.



After a brief but well-earned rest upon its return to Fort Riley, the Battle Group found itself faced with the mission of supporting the rifle and pistol matches to be held during the Spring of 1963, with Col. Cleary named as Match Executive Officer. Before beginning this task, however, the men gloried in the proud welcome they received here. Culminating the joy of returning home was a letter of commendation received by the commanding general of the 1st Division commenting on the tremendous job done by the 12th Infantry throughout its stay in Germany. The letter was signed by Frederick O. Hartel, Commanding General, Berlin Brigade, and forwarded through channels to Arthur W. Oberbeck, Commanding General, 1st Infantry Division; Fort Riley, Kansas.

The Fort Riley 1st Division Matches in March started the season and it ended with the Fifth Army Matches April 28th. The preparation and thorough training prior to the matches resulted in one of the most perfectly run operations of this type earning many laudatory remarks from the participants.

NEW TASKS, A NEW COMMANDER

In May 1963, operational readiness training resumed, with training aimed at preparation for the Army Training Tests. At this time the Battle Group took on a new face as many personnel changes became effective, culminating in a new commander, Col. Frederick F. Lash.

Under the command of Col Lash the 2nd Battle Group, 12th Infantry remained organized as a Pentomic Battle Group, consisting of five rifle companies, a combat support company and a headquarters company.

After two weeks of field training in August and early September, the Battle Group began its Army Training Tests on 16 September 1963. In true Warrior manner, they did an outstanding job. This ended the career of the 2nd Battle Group, 12th United States Infantry, as a unit of the Big Red One.

On October 1, 1963, the colors of the Battle Group reverted to the 4th Division with headquarters at Fort Lewis, Washington, and the men of the 12th became the 2nd Battle Group, 18th United States Infantry. As the "Vanguards," their record will continue to be as distinctively skilled and admirably accomplished as it has been in the past.



BALLAD TO THE FIRST INFANTRY DIVISION

Over the farflung battlefield of earth they go!
Valor and courage with each marching step they sow!

Martial music filling the tense air!
Feet beating cadences in perfect pair!

Hearts pulsating with their unit's story!
Minds envisioning its greater glory!

"No mission too difficult" they are told!
"No sacrifice too great" they echo bold!
"Duty first" thunder their voices steady!
As they move up front with rifles ready!

Onward! Forward! Push on ahead! they cheer,
As they throw back the foe to his rear!

Eyes blazing with blood of gun and battle!
Ears attuned to din of roar and rattle!

Faces hardened and belined
Fatigues tattered and begrimed
With dust of their enemy on the run!
With sweat of their victory in the sun!

Who are these embattled men so brave and tried?
People ask, wave, and exclaim on every side!

Now listen to me, ye one and all,
Comes ringing clear the commander's call!
It's the doughboys of the Fighting First
Weathering the shells and bombs that burst,
With dauntless and intrepid spirit
Forever etched on the scroll of merit!
These are men who are gallant and true
To the colors of red, white, and blue!
These are men who always rise and shine
Holding firm and fast the battle line!

Annals of war tell the tale of thrilling deeds done
By men who weave the saga of the Big Red One!

Chaplain (Capt.) T.M. Dattilo
Battle Group Chaplain
2nd Battle Group, 12th Infantry
First Infantry Division
Fort Riley, Kansas

This ballad was composed by Chaplain Dattilo as a final tribute to the First Infantry Division in behalf of all officers and enlisted men of the 2nd Battle Group, 12th Infantry. The colors of the 2nd BG, 12th Infantry leave the ranks of the First Infantry Division and join the ranks of the Fourth Infantry Division.



The following is a list of the commanders and special staff officers of the 2nd Battle Group, 12th United States Infantry for the period of 1 September 1961 through 30 September 1963

BATTLE GROUP COMMANDERS:

Col. George Pinard
Lt. Col. George P. Welch
Col. Thomas P. Cleary
Col. Frederick F. Lash

BATTLE GROUP SGT. MAJORS:

S/Maj. William H. Dewey
S/Maj. William J. Humphreys
1/Sgt. Norman R. Gubser

BATTLE GROUP DEPUTY COMMANDING OFFICERS:

Lt. Col. George P. Welch
Maj. Thomas Duffy
Lt. Col. Jack Mittelstadt
Lt. Col. Edward L. Nicely

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:

Lt. Col. William D. Bratton
Maj. Thomas Duffy
Lt. Col. Jack Mittelstadt
Maj. Earl Latta

S-1:

2/Lt. Roy G. Ray
Capt. Donald R. Mortenson
Maj. Donald L. Harouff
Capt. Richard W. Pfeiffer
1/Lt. Robert C. Johnston

S-2:

Capt. Jeremiah B. Hawkins
Capt. Charles M. Hansen
Maj. Jack A. Henson
1/Lt. William S. Thomas, III
1/Lt. Richard B. Wallace, Jr.

S-3:

Maj. Quentin L. McNary
Maj. James H. Porteus
Maj. Thomas E. Duffy
Capt. Maurice B. Dullea
Maj. Herbert W. Hayes, Jr.
Capt. Charles M. Hansen

S-4:

Maj. Earl W. Latta, Jr.
Capt. Ralph T. Correll
Capt. Robert W. Welsh

INTELLIGENCE SGT.

M/Sgt. John L. Noon
M/Sgt. Herbert B. Cain

OPERATIONS SGT.

M/Sgt. Paul H. Pannell
M/Sgt. Pedro M. Nacional

SENIOR SUPPLY SGT.

M/Sgt. Robert D. Perras
M/Sgt. Francis G. Anstett



BATTLE GROUP SURGEONS:

Capt. William E. Worley
Capt. Donald L. Baltz

BATTLE GROUP CHAPLAINS:

Capt. (Chap.) Theophane M. Dattilo
1/Lt. (Chap.) Charles H. Schmidt
Capt. (Chap.) Louis Hendricks
1/Lt. (Chap.) Ward J. Hagin

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY COMMANDING OFFICERS:

Capt. Charles White
Capt. Jack Henson
Capt. David Thoreson
Capt. Richard Pfeiffer
1/Lt. Ronald S. Durian

FIRST SERGEANTS:

M/Sgt. James R. Hardyman
1/Sgt. Robert L. Morgan
1/Sgt. Donald L. Faust

COMPANY A COMMANDING OFFICERS:

2/Lt. Ronald G. Denfeld
2/Lt. Paul C. Clark
Capt. Jeremiah B. Hawkins
1/Lt. Ralph E. Edwards
Capt. Charles M. Hansen
Capt. Russell C. Miller

FIRST SERGEANTS:

1/Sgt. Norman R. Gubser
M/Sgt. James L. Burgan

COMPANY B COMMANDING OFFICERS:

2/Lt. Theodore Fichtl
Capt. Lovett L. Briggs
1/Lt. Thomas J. Hendricks
Capt. Walter J. Ryan
1/Lt. Richard B. Wallace, Jr.
Capt. James Whitley
Capt. Robert E. Wharrie

FIRST SERGEANTS:

1/Sgt. Winfield S. Paris
M/Sgt. Edward Stoner
1/Sgt. Paul Boggs

COMPANY C COMMANDING OFFICERS:

2/Lt. William G. Keoho
Capt. Donald Harouff
1/Lt. Ralph E. Edwards
Capt. Sydney Stone
Capt. Clarence Curtis
Capt. Ralph T. Correll
Capt. John M. McCarthy

FIRST SERGEANTS:

1/Sgt. Ivan H. Read

COMPANY D COMMANDING OFFICERS:

1/Lt. Aubrey J. McGrede
Capt. Maurice B. Dullea
1/Lt. Roy G. Ray
Capt. Sam Lemmon

FIRST SERGEANTS:

1/Sgt. Gerald Davis, Sr.

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COMPANY E COMMANDING OFFICERS:

1/Lt. William S. Thomas, III
Capt. Thomas E. Duffy
Capt. Hugh Galligan
Capt. David Thoresan
Capt. Richard W. Pfeiffer
1/Lt. Aubrey McGrede
Capt. Jack Taylor

FIRST SERGEANTS:

1/Sgt. William H. Humphreys
M/Sgt. Robert Bankston
1/Sgt. James Green
M/Sgt. Edward Stoner
1/Sgt. Robert Forties

COMBAT SUPPORT COMPANY COMMANDING OFFICERS:

Capt. Richard W. Pfeiffer
Capt. Charles M. Hansen
1/Lt. Ralph E. Edwards
Capt. Richard A. Grim

FIRST SERGEANTS:

1/Sgt. Robert L. Morgan
1/Sgt. Paul Boggs
1/Sgt. Erie A. Martin, Jr.

