



Freedom's Voice

The Monthly Newsletter of the
Military History Center

112 N. Main ST
Broken Arrow, OK 74012
<http://www.okmhc.org/>



"Promoting Patriotism through the Preservation of Military History"

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Important Dates

May 8 – Mission 22 Memorial Dedication

The dedication of the MHC's Mission 22 Memorial will be Saturday, May 8, beginning at 1:00 PM at the Memorial Flag Plaza. The memorial is dedicated to the memory of SSGT Michael Keith Coon and all veterans with issues that may lead to suicide. Michael's father, Michael Coon, will be the keynote speaker. Music will be by Maggie Bond, Miss Bricktown and a 2021 Miss Oklahoma candidate, and others. She will be accompanied on guitar by MHC docent, Dennis Hoch. She and Mr. James Major McHenry will sing *Amazing Grace*; she in English, and he in the Muscogee language. Creek and Seminole Nation color guards will post the colors.



"Until We Heal"

June 12 – Flag Day Commemoration

The Military History Center will host its annual Flag Day Commemoration on Saturday, June 12. The May newsletter will contain detailed information. In the meantime, please mark your calendars, and plan to attend this important, patriotic event. Flag Day is the MHC's signature event. Admission to the museum is free.

Patriot's Day

Patriot's Day commemorates April 19, 1775, when the Massachusetts militia challenged regular British soldiers, first on Lexington Green and then at Concord Bridge. That was the day on which "the shot heard round the world" was fired. The day is generally considered the beginning of America's War of Independence. Patriot's Day is a civic, not a national, holiday. It's a state holiday in Massachusetts, Maine, Wisconsin, Connecticut and North Dakota.



The Battle of Lexington by William Barnes Wollen



The Grand Union Flag or the Continental Colors was the first flag flown by the U.S. Army.

In Memory of Oscar Nipps, Jr.



Junior at the MHC – January 22, 2016

Oscar Nipps, Jr., whom we affectionally call Junior, was born on September 25, 1925, at Broken Arrow. His family moved to California when he was a teenager. He was drafted into the Army on the second anniversary of Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1943. Junior was trained as a rifleman and assigned to the 5th Cavalry "Black Knights" Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division. He began as a rifleman, but in Japan, he became the company cook. His first combat was on October 24, 1944, on Leyte, where GEN MacArthur was fulfilling his promise to return to the Philippines. After Leyte was cleared, 1st Cavalry Division's next combat was on Luzon. MacArthur was concerned for the safety of several thousand civilians interned at Santo Tomas University in Manila. He ordered a flying column to get to the university as fast as possible. Junior's regiment was one of two selected for the mission. They were successful, and liberated several thousand internees on February 3, 1945. Junior went on to participate in the ferocious Battle of Manila and the fighting in the mountains east of the city. MacArthur selected 1st Cavalry Division as one of the Japanese occupation divisions, so Junior's next stop was Tokyo. His troop ship was anchored next to USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, where he witnessed the surrender ceremony. In June 1946, Junior was sent back to the United States for discharge.

After separation from the Army, Junior returned to Broken Arrow, married and

raised a family while working in home construction and as an electrician.

Junior first came to the MHC in January 2016, where I had the privilege of interviewing him and introducing him to newsletter readers in the January 2016 issue. Beginning in 2018, Junior was one of the veterans selected to raise the Army flag as part of the annual Flag Day commemoration. On 2019 Flag Day, Congressman Kevin Hern presented Junior with a framed display of all of his World War II decorations, including a Bronze Star, none of which Junior had ever bothered to acquire.



Georgia (Barnes) Payne was a fifteen-year-old girl interned with her family at Santo Tomas in February 1945. She spent years trying to locate any of her liberators so she could properly thank one of them. Her efforts came to fruition on November 14, 2019, when she and Junior met at the DAV office in Joplin, Missouri.



The Great Depression, the move to California, World War II and the rest of his life interrupted Junior's schooling. Through the efforts of MHC docent, Brad Heath, and others, Junior received an honorary high school diploma from Superintendent Dr. Janet Dunlop at Broken Arrow High School's graduation ceremony on June 30, 2020.



Junior was a daily presence at the MHC for the past five years, sitting in his chair next to the reception desk, meeting new people, and from time to time, visiting with guests and relating some of his World War II experiences. We celebrated his 95th birthday on September 25, 2020.



Junior was a beloved husband, father, grandfather, friend, soldier, war hero, patriot – a son of the Greatest Generation. On April 19, Trooper Oscar Nipps, Jr. departed on his ride to Fiddler's Green, where "none but the shades of cavalrymen dismount". *Ken Cook, Editor*

Obituary of Oscar Nipps, Jr.

You can read Junior's obituary and leave a message on the Tribute Wall by clicking the following link:

<https://www.hayhurstfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Oscar-Nipps/>



Junior's memorial service at Hayhurst Chapel – April 23. Junior was laid to rest next to Melza, his wife of fifty-seven years, in Park Grove Cemetery in Broken Arrow.

Military History Center 6th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament

Friday, June 4

\$90 per player – \$350 per four-person team

Play is limited to the first twenty-two teams that register and pay their entry fees.

**Four Person Scramble
Shotgun Start**

For more information about participating as a player, sponsor or donor, contact JeanE Bailie at 918-794-2712 or BG Tom Mancino at 918-794-2712 or 918-277-2486.

MHC'S Longest Serving Volunteer Retires



Tom Mancino, MHC President, and Claudia Price, the MHC's longest serving volunteer – seven-plus years

Claudia Price, MHC's longest serving volunteer, retired on April 15. Claudia, a retired Registered Nurse, began her association with the MHC in 2013 as a volunteer to help set-up the museum that opened to the public on November 9, 2013. She was a valuable member of the MHC family for more than seven years. We will deeply miss her varied talents, willingness to help with too many projects to enumerate and her cheerful personality. We wish Claudia the very best.

News from the Disabled American Veterans Office at the MHC

We are pleased to announce that Royce Caskey has passed his accreditation test and now is one of a few volunteers in Oklahoma who are Accredited Claims Agents. The Military History Center's DAV office now has two accredited claims agents. We are very pleased to have both Royce and George Hedrick here at the museum. They see Veterans by appointment only.

Congratulations to MHC Board member, Debra Wimpee, who recently won reelection to her seat on the Broken Arrow City Council. On Tuesday, April 20, the City Council elected her Mayor.

MHC Volunteers' Retreat

The MHC held a retreat for volunteers on April 19 at Camp One 16 located west of Beggs. The turnout was light, but everyone enjoyed themselves with a day of target shooting and a super, good lunch that included hot dogs roasted over a camp fire, beans cooked over the fire, cole slaw, potato salad, chips, and cake for dessert.



Tom Mancino takes careful aim for a shot.



Tom Mancino helps Jean Bailie with her aim. She actually hit the target.



Dennis Hoch prepares to fire one of his antique rifles.



Group Photo

Michael Tarman and Ken Cook (below) show off their bullseye shots.

A great big "thank you" to Dennis Hoch for putting the event together, Jean Bailie for the great lunch and Christa Hoch and Matthew Rana for allowing us to use their facility.

This Month's Featured Artifact



Original receipt for three Super Fine blankets from the Hartford Selectmen (City Councilors) for soldiers of Col. Wyllys's regiment.
Receipt signed by Capt. John Barnard – March 9, 1779.

(Donated by Frances Hixenbaugh)

Samuel Wyllys was a politician and a Lieutenant Colonel of the 2nd Connecticut Regiment in 1775. He was later promoted to Colonel. He served at the siege of Boston and in the Battle of Long Island. From 1777-1781, COL Wyllys commanded the 3rd Connecticut Regiment. He was later promoted to Major General and given command of the Connecticut Militia. After the war, he served in the Connecticut General Assembly and as Secretary of State of Connecticut.

John Barnard was a Lieutenant in Wolcott's Connecticut Regiment from December 1775 to March 1776. He was a 1st Lieutenant in Chester's Connecticut State Regiment from June 20 to December 25, 1776. By 1779, he was a Captain serving in COL Wyllys's 3rd Connecticut Regiment, Connecticut Continental Line.



Flag of 3rd Connecticut Regiment



2LT Ernest Childers of Broken Arrow, 180th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, received the Medal of Honor from LTG Jacob L. Devers, Deputy Commander, Mediterranean Theater – April 8, 1944.

“For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at risk of live above and beyond the call of duty in action on 22 September 1943, at Oliveto, Italy. Although 2d Lt. Childers had just suffered a fractured instep, he, with eight enlisted men, advanced up a hill toward enemy machine-gun nests. The group advanced to a rock wall overlooking a cornfield, and 2d Lt. Childers ordered a base of fire laid across the field so that he could advance. When he was fired upon by two enemy snipers from a nearby house, he killed both of them. He moved behind the machine-gun nests and killed all occupants of the nearer one. He continued toward the second one and threw rocks into it. When the two occupants of the nest raised up, he responded. 2d Lt. Childers continued his advance toward a house farther up the hill and singlehandedly captured an enemy mortar observer. The exceptional leadership, initiative, calmness under fire and conspicuous gallantry displayed by 2d Lt. Childers were an inspiration to his men”.



Crest of 180th Infantry Regiment
(Now 180th Cavalry Regiment)

100-Year-Old Veteran Receives Thunderbird Medal



Oklahoma Adjutant General, MG Michael Thompson, presented LTC (Ret.) Oren L. Peters the Oklahoma Thunderbird Medal, the Oklahoma National Guard's highest award presented to a civilian, on April 10 in Edmond. It was also LTC Peters' 100th birthday.

Peters enlisted in the 179th Infantry Regiment, 45th Infantry Division, Oklahoma Army National Guard in January 1939. In September 1940, Peters was activated to prepare for service in World War II, where he served 511 days in combat in the European Theater of Operations. His service overseas earned him the Silver Star for gallantry in action, the Bronze Star for heroism, and the Purple Heart for being wounded in action, Guard officials said.

After being discharged in June 1945, officials said Peters re-enlisted in the 45th Infantry Division and was commissioned a second lieutenant in June 1948. More than three years later, in December 1951, he deployed to Korea where he received additional awards, including his second Combat Infantryman Badge.

Peters worked as a full-time federal technician for the Oklahoma Army National Guard from 1954-1978, where he held numerous positions both as a commissioned officer and a chief warrant officer. He retired from the Oklahoma National Guard in 1981 as a Lieutenant Colonel. (www.koco.com)



45th Infantry Division liberated Dachau – April 29, 1945.

SSGT Deuce VII Retires



On April 15, Fort Sill said goodbye to SSGT Deuce VII. Deuce VII has been honorably discharged and retired. CPT McMenamain and the soldiers of 458th Field Artillery Brigade presented SSGT Deuce VII with his award and thanked him for his service and for being an outstanding member of the Fort Sill team. He is retiring to DT Ranch at Marlow. There, they specialize in donkey rescue and have a small petting zoo. Deuce VII, you will be missed. [#HappyTrails!](#) [#PeopleFirst](#) [#Teammates4Life](#) [#Soldier4Life](#)

National World War I Memorial Dedicated



The National World War I Memorial in Pershing Park in Washington was dedicated in a First Colors ceremony on April 16. Most of the 90-minute ceremony was prerecorded and livestreamed.

Easter in Korea – 1951



Captain Chaplain Emil Joseph Kapaun

At Easter 1951, CPT Emil Kapaun, a Catholic chaplain in 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, 1st Cavalry Division, was a prisoner of the Chinese in Camp 5 at Pyoktong, North Korea. Life in the camp was difficult, to say the least, with sometimes up to two dozen men dying each day from starvation, disease, lice or extreme cold. Kapaun refused to give in to despair and devoted himself entirely to his men. He dug latrines, mediated disputes, gave away his own food and raised morale among the prisoners. He was noted among his fellow POWs as one, who would steal food for them. He also stood up to communist indoctrination, smuggled dysentery drugs to the doctor, a fellow POW, and led the men in prayer. Severely weakened from a blood clot in one of his legs as well as having dysentery and pneumonia, Father Emil managed to lead Easter sunrise services on March 25, 1951.

Emil Joseph Kapaun was born at Pilsen, Kansas, an unincorporated community sixty miles north of Wichita, on April 20, 1916. He was ordained a Catholic priest at what is now Newman University in Wichita, on June 9, 1940. He served as a chaplain in the China-Burma-India Theater during World War II. After the war, Kapaun earned a Master of Arts degree from Catholic University of America. He returned to active duty in 1948. In June 1950, he became a chaplain of the 8th Cavalry Regiment. When the Chinese overran the 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment at Unsan on November 1-2, 1950, Kapaun refused pleas to withdraw, instead he stayed with the wounded and was taken prisoner. He died of disease on May 23, 1951. Fellow POWs buried him in a POW cemetery.

Captain Chaplain Emil Joseph Kapaun was posthumously awarded a Distinguished Service Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star with Valor Device and Purple Heart. The DSC was upgraded to the Medal of Honor on April 11, 2013. President Obama presented it to CPT Kapaun's family in a White House ceremony. He is the highest decorated chaplain in the history of the United States Army.

On March 2, 2021, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency announced that CPT Kapaun's remains had been iden-

tified. They were among 1,868 sets of remains returned shortly after the 1953 armistice agreement was signed, but they were unidentifiable at the time. His remains were interred in National Cemetery of the Pacific at Honolulu along with other unknowns of the Korean War. No re-burial information has been released, but CPT Kapaun's remains may be interred in Saint John Nepomucene Catholic Cemetery at Pilsen, where a memorial to him exists.



Chaplain Emil Kapaun (right) and a doctor, CPT Jerome A. Dolan, 8th Cavalry Regiment, carry an exhausted soldier off the battlefield near Unsan. (Photo by SFC Raymond Piper, courtesy ACME)



Chaplain Kapaun celebrates Mass using the hood of his jeep as an altar. His assistant, Patrick J. Schuler, kneels in prayer in Korea on October 7, 1950, less than a month before Kapaun was taken prisoner. (AP Photo/COL Raymond A. Skeehan via the *Wichita Eagle*)

Museum Hours and Admission Fee

Tuesday – Saturday: 10:00 – 4:00
Closed Sunday and Monday and major Federal holidays

Adults – \$5.00
Members and Children under 18 – Free.

For more information, call (918) 794-2712

Korea – Return to the 38th Parallel

After Eighth Army's successes in March. LTG Matthew Ridgeway was now poised to move to the 38th Parallel. In the meantime, the American public was rapidly turning against the war. What was supposed to have been a quick in and out operation to expel the NKPA from South Korea had become a full-scale war involving a large portion of the Chinese army. The war was now in its tenth month with ferocious combat up and down the Korean peninsula with serious setbacks, high casualties and no military victory in sight for the UN forces. It had now become clear to the Truman Administration that the costs of a military victory were unacceptable. They were groping for some way to end the war politically, in other words, a negotiated settlement. Negotiations could not begin with the UN forces in a weak position and with the communists in possession of South Korean territory.

Both Ridgeway and MacArthur anticipated that when negotiations began, the war would be reduced to a stalemate. In such an event, they wanted to be in the best possible military position. A few days after submitting Operation RUGGED to MacArthur for his approval, which he granted, Ridgeway changed the thrust of the attack. His original plan for RUGGED, was to advance to Line Kansas, generally along the 38th Parallel. Line Kansas was considered to be the best suited position for establishing a strong defensive line generally along the Parallel. Ridgeway's ultimate goal was to advance to Line Wyoming, about twenty miles north of the 38th Parallel to an area known as the Iron Triangle. That would clear the communists out of South Korea except for the farthest west portion just below the 38th Parallel. It would also hopefully convince the Chinese and North Koreans that they were unable to drive the UN forces out of Korea, and it would give the UN a good position for opening negotiations.

The Iron Triangle was a key CCF and NKPA concentration area and a major communications junction located twenty to thirty miles north of the 38th Parallel. It contained major road and rail links between the port of Wonsan in the northeast and Seoul in the southwest. The area was generally in the shape of an equilateral triangle, thus its name. The apex of the triangle was Pyongyang. The base extended from Cheron in the west to Kumwha in the east.

RUGGED kicked off on April 2 with the objective of reaching Line Kansas and additionally, occupying the area around Hwach'on Reservoir. The reservoir was just north of the 38th Parallel, and Ridgeway was concerned that the North Koreans would open the sluice gates flooding Pukhan River. They did, in fact, partially open the gates, but the resulting flood proved to be an annoyance rather than the anticipated general catastrophic flooding. The forces tasked with seizing the reservoir and dam failed because of tenacious NKPA resistance. All UN forces except X Corps and the ROK III Corps had reached Line Kansas by April 8. The next day, Ridgeway ordered Operation DAUNTLESS to commence. The operation's mission was to advance to Line Wyoming.

Meanwhile, MacArthur's continued insubordination had finally exhausted President Truman's patience. The President ordered his relief on April 11. Ridgeway replaced him as commander of U.S. far eastern forces, military governor of Japan and commander of UN forces in Korea. LTG James Alward Van Fleet replaced Ridgeway as commander of Eighth Army. Van Fleet was a highly decorated veteran of both world wars and most recently had been an advisor to the Greek government during its civil war with communist insurgents. It was largely on his performance in Greece that Van Fleet was selected to replace Ridgeway.

Ridgeway was a firm believer in the massive use of artillery to overcome the CCF's manpower superiority. Upon his arrival in Korea, he had requested more long-range artillery. He got it, and among the units was the Arkansas National Guard's 937th Field Artillery Battalion with their self-propelled 155 mm "long toms" that had a range of fifteen miles. The 937th long toms, the first in Korea, pushed the CCF rear areas back an additional four to five miles.

Operation DAUNTLESS advanced with relative ease as the CCF and NKPA had broken contact and withdrawn. On April 10, a company of the 9th Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Infantry Division patrolled fifteen miles north of Yangyang without finding any enemy. However, forward units and air reconnaissance soon began to see more intensive CCF activity and identified new CCF units.

On the night of April 22, the CCF opened their Spring Offensive (or Fifth Phase Offensive). Ridgeway had anticipated a Chinese counterattack and had ordered a strong defensive line, the No-Name Line, constructed. It extended from west of Seoul, then eastward just north of the city. He was determined that the communists would not retake the South Korean capital. The CCF and NKPA pushed the UN forces back all across the front, erasing all the gains of RUGGED and DAUNTLESS. By April 30, UN forces had withdrawn to No-Name Line, where they held and prepared for a counter offensive.



937th FAB's long toms in action in Korea

Sources:

Appleman, Roy E., *Ridgeway Duels for Korea*, Texas A&M University Press, College Station, Texas, 1990
Blair, Clay, *The Forgotten War*, Times Books, New York, 1987

Oklahoma's Fallen Heroes of the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars



James Randolph Graham, III

James Randolph Graham, III was born in Tulsa on April 15, 1980, but Coweta was his home town. He was a member of the Marine Reserve Unit based in Broken Arrow. On August 1, 2005, he was attached to Regimental Combat Team 2, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward). On that day, Graham was killed by a suicide car bomb near Hit, Iraq, about eighty-five miles northwest of Baghdad.

SGT James Randolph Graham, III was laid to rest in Floral Haven Memorial Gardens in Broken Arrow.



Gary Lee Nice

Gary Lee Nice was born in Newark, Ohio, on April 6, 1985. At some point, he went to live with his grandmother in Nicoma Park (Oklahoma County), Oklahoma. He is a 2003 graduate of Choctaw High School in Choctaw, where he was on the soccer team and played saxophone in the high school marching band. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in December 2002 and left for boot camp at Camp Pendleton shortly after graduation. He was deployed to Iraq with 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force based at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California. On August 4, 2004, Nice was killed in a fire fight in Anbar Province. He was nineteen years old.

LCPL Gary Lee Nice was interred in Arlington Memory Gardens in Oklahoma City.



Wilfred Flores, Jr.

Wilfred Flores, Jr. was born into a military family at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, on April 10, 1986. Both of his parents were career Army NCOs, and one of his grandfathers was a retired Air Force NCO. Flores is a 2004 graduate of Eisenhower High School in Lawton, where he was active in the JROTC. He enlisted in the Army as an infantryman right out of high school. On March 21, 2007, he was on his second tour in Iraq, this time with 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division. Flores died from wounds suffered when an IED detonated near his vehicle near Baghdad. SPC Wilfred Flores, Jr. was laid to rest in Fort Sill National Cemetery. He was twenty years old.



Justin Lee Noyes

Justin Lee Noyes was born on August 8, 1982, in Tulsa, but grew up in Vinita, where he graduated from Vinita High School in 2000. He joined the Marine Corps shortly after graduation. He underwent further training at Camp Lajuene, North Carolina, and Elgin Air Force Base, Florida. He was trained as an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Technician. He was deployed to Iraq with 9th Engineer Support Battalion, 3rd Marine Logistics Group, III Marine Expeditionary Force based on Okinawa. Noyes was killed on July 2, 2006, apparently while trying to defuse an explosive device.

SGT Justin Lee Noyes was interred in Fairview Cemetery in Vinita.

“To Remember is to Honor”



Lt. General Matthew Bunker Ridgway

Matthew Bunker Ridgway was born on March 3, 1895, at Fort Monroe, Virginia, where his father, an Army officer, was posted. He was a graduate of the United States Military Academy, Class of 1917. His first assignment was with 3rd Infantry Regiment on the Mexican border, after which he was assigned to West Point, where he taught Spanish. After Pearl Harbor, he advanced rapidly in rank. In February 1942, as a Brigadier General he was posted to the 82nd Infantry Division as Assistant Division Commander. In April 1942, Ridgway was promoted to Major General and given command of the 82nd ID, which was in the process of being converted to an airborne division. Ridgway went on to lead the 82nd on D-Day in Normandy. In August 1944, he was given command of the XVIII Airborne Corps. He was promoted to Lieutenant General in June 1945. In December 1950, Ridgway succeeded LTG Walton Walker as commander of Eighth Army in Korea. In April 1951, he succeeded General MacArthur as commander of Far East Command and military governor of Japan and was promoted to full General. In May 1952, he was made commander of NATO forces. Ridgway was appointed Army Chief of Staff on August 17, 1953. He retired from the Army on June 30, 1955. GEN Matthew Bunker Ridgway died on July 26, 1993, at age ninety-eight. He is buried in Arlington National Cemetery. GEN Ridgway was the most consequential person, who served in Korea. During the four months he served there, he completely turned a defeated and demoralized Eighth Army into a powerful fighting force that saved South Korea and redeemed the honor of the United States Army.

