



Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Peña holds the Medal of Honor received by Sgt. 1st Class William S. Sitman.

2nd Infantry Division NCOs Use History's Lessons to Prepare for Today's Challenges

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The 2nd Infantry Division of the U.S. Army has a storied history celebrated by their motto, "Second to None." With 38 Medal of Honor recipients and a history that goes back to the division's formation in 1917, today's NCOs serving in Korea and the United States find much to be inspired by.

The division's formation in October 1917, allows for one, and only one, deviation from the "Second to None" motto, said Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Spano, the command sergeant major of the 2nd Infantry Division, headquartered at Camp Red Cloud, Uijeongbu, South Korea.

"When you think of 'Second to None,' we are second to only one unit, and that's because the 1st Infantry Division was formed a few months earlier," Spano said. "But in every other aspect, we're second to no other. We're the second oldest division in the Army. We have served in four different wars, and are still serving today on freedom's frontier here in Korea.

"When these young Soldiers first get to wear the patch, and begin to learn about the history, they realize,

'I'm part of something that's been around for 96 years. I'm part of that now,'" Spano said.

World War I

The 2nd Infantry Division is the only U.S. Army division formed overseas. The division was organized in Bourmont, France, on Oct. 26, 1917. The division was composed of both Army and Marine units, something that brings pride to NCOs such as Staff Sgt. Brian Hughes, squad leader of B Company, 2nd Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division.

Twice during World War I, the 2nd Infantry Division was commanded by Marine Corps generals, Brigadier Gen. Charles A. Doyen and Major Gen. John A. Lejeune. It was the only time in U.S. military history when Marine Corps officers commanded an Army division.

Knowing the 2nd Infantry Division's first test was in the Battle of Belleau Wood in World War I, which is commonly thought of as a Marine battle, and that a

famous Marine general like Lejeune shares history with the 2nd Infantry Division means a lot, Hughes said.

"I am a prior Marine, and I was not aware that 2ID was formed originally with Marines," Hughes said. "It allows me now, with my buddies who give me a hard time about coming to the Army, and my Army buddies giving me a hard time about being a Marine, to say, 'Here with 2ID, they are both here and fought together.' That was a really neat part of history for me to learn."

For Command Sgt. Maj. Carl Ashmead, brigade sergeant major of the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, that history ties directly to the mission the division serves in Korea today.

"Historically speaking, we're the only infantry division to be formed overseas, the last division being deployed overseas, in an alliance force with a sister army that is its own separate national army, speaks a completely different language," Ashmead said. "The first time the 2nd Infantry Division took the line in France, they had a French division on each flank that they had to coordinate and fight with. Then jump from 1917 to 2014, and we have the same issue of coordination here in Korea. The number of people who spoke French then is probably the same number of people who speak Korean in the 2nd Infantry Division right now. In 1917, we had two Marine Corps generals and a Marine brigade as part of the force, and now we're a joint force here in Korea with Air Force, Marines, Navy, Army all working together in case of hostilities. So, there is a historical thread from the very beginning of the division in World War I that continues to run through the way we do operations today."

After the Battle of Belleau Wood, the division went on to win hard-fought victories at Soissons and Mont Blanc, for which it was awarded the French Fourragere in the colors of the Croix de Guerre. On Nov. 11, 1918, an armistice was declared, and the division performed occupation duties in Germany until April 1919. The division returned to the United States in July 1919, emerging from World War I as the most decorated American Division of the American Expeditionary Forces.

The Patch

NCOs of the 2nd Infantry Division are proud to wear their distinct patch, which shows the profile of an Indian on top of a star on a black shield. The patch's design came from two NCOs who submitted designs as part of a contest to come up with the best unit insignia. The patch came about in March 1918 when Lt. Col. William

Herringshaw took the Indianhead design submitted by Sgt. Louis Lundy and put it on a white star design submitted by Sgt. John Kenny.

The colors, background and shape of the patch changed depending on what type of unit a Soldier was in, until 1933 when the patch we see today was made uniform.

Seeing the pride Soldiers and NCOs had in wearing the Indianhead patch is one of the first things about the 2nd Infantry Division that caught the attention of Command Sgt. Maj. Ann Sydnor, the command sergeant major of Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division.

"The first time I learned of 2ID was not so far back," Sydnor said. "I was a first sergeant at Fort Carson, Colorado, and I was with 4-4, which had previously been 2-2, and they reflagged. We went downrange, and when you go downrange, it's 'everybody wear this flag.' It took a lot for those Soldiers to take this Indianhead patch off, and I realized at that point how proud they were to serve in the 2nd Infantry Division. It stood out."

World War II

On June 7, 1944, the day after D-Day, the Soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division landed on Omaha Beach. On June 10, the division liberated Trévières, France. On June 11, the division secured Hill 192, a key enemy strongpoint on the road to St. Lo. Using the St. Lo breakthrough, the division advanced to take Tinchebray on Aug. 15. After a long, fierce battle, the division was able to take the vital port city of Brest on Sept. 18.

The division entered Germany on Oct. 3, and was then ordered to seize the Roer River dams near Aachen. However, before they could do that, the bad news arrived that 250,000 armored German troops had attacked along a 50-mile front in the Ardennes. The assault on the dams was called off and the veteran 2ID Soldiers quickly moved to help hold the line at the Elsenborn Ridge. The Germans threw a huge force at

Shoulder Sleeve Insignia



Description:

Upon a five-pointed white star whose lie in the circumference of an imaginary circle, an Indian's head with war bonnet in profile, face red, bonnet blue, with outline of feathers in blue. The star is superimposed upon a black shield.

Symbolism:

The color markings (red, white, and blue) used to identify the division and other equipment in France during World War I were chosen by the commander of the division as the colors for this insignia. The star and Indian head signify the American origin of the division.

A display in the 2nd Infantry Division Museum at Camp Red Cloud, Uijeongbu, South Korea, shows the patch worn by 2nd Infantry Division soldiers.

them attempting to take the ridge during the Battle of the Bulge, but the 2ID stood strong.

On Dec. 20, 1944, Gen. Courtney Hodges, commanding general of the First U.S. Army, wrote to commanding general of the 2nd ID that, “What the Second Infantry Division has done in the last four days will live forever in the history of the United States Army.”

In February 1945, the division attacked and recaptured lost ground, seizing Gemünd on March 4. The division reached the Rhine on March 9 and advanced south to take Bad Breisig and guard the Remagen bridge. After crossing the Rhine, the division relieved elements of the 9th Armored Division in Limburg an der Lahn on March 28. On April 18, the division captured Leipzig. By May, the division had moved 200 miles to positions along the German-Czechoslovakia border.

After Victory in Europe Day on May 8, the division returned to the United States on July 20, and arrived at Camp Swift, Bastrop, Texas, on July 22. The division’s Soldiers began preparing to join the invasion of Japan, but Victory in Japan Day came quickly and they never deployed.

Following the end of World War II, the division made their home at Fort Lewis, Wash.

Korean War

When hostilities in Korea began in the summer of 1950, the 2nd Infantry Division was alerted for movement to the Far East Command. The division arrived in Korea on July 23, 1950, becoming the first unit to reach Korea directly from the United States.

The division’s first test came Aug. 31, 1950, when the North Koreans began a human wave attack. In the 16-day battle, the division’s clerks, bandsmen, technical and supply personnel joined the fight. The division eventually broke out of the Pusan Perimeter, becoming the first United Nations force to enter the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

The Chinese entered the war Nov. 26, quickly changing the dynamic to favor the North Korean forces. The 2nd Infantry Division protected the rear and right flank of the Eighth Army as it moved back south. Battles near Kunu-ri cost the division nearly a third of its strength.

On Feb. 5, 1951, the 23rd Regimental Combat Team of the 2nd Infantry Division moved into the valley of Chipyeong-ni. Col. Paul Freeman, the commander of the team, requested permission to fall back. But Lt. Gen. Matthew Ridgway, the commanding general of the Eighth Army, ordered the team to stand against the Chinese forces.

On Feb. 13, the team was cut off and surrounded by three Chinese divisions. The team included an attached French Battalion and had a total of 5,000 Soldiers. They were surrounded by 90,000 Chinese soldiers. As the surrounded team exhausted supplies during the battle, air drops helped them restock ammunition, rations and

other supplies. The Soldiers fought bravely for 3 days and 3 nights, eventually forcing a withdrawal of Chinese forces. This was the first victory against the forces since China became involved in the Korean War and was a major turning point in the war.

The NCOs of the 2nd Infantry Division can take lessons and inspiration from the battle at Chipyeong-ni, Spano said.

“When you look back at history and look at some of the examples of the battles that were fought here in the Korean War, think back to Col. Freeman, who was the regimental commander of the 23rd Regiment,” Spano said. “That battle — when you sit there and tell the Soldiers — imagine having only 5,000 of your closest friends with you, and you circle the wagons, and they tell you to slow the enemy down. Not defeat the enemy; slow the enemy down. And over a three-and-a-half day battle, the Chinese throw regiment after regiment after regiment, and at the end of that battle more than 5,000 Chinese are dead ... amazing. That was what those men had to overcome and deal with. And we’re going to have to deal with the same type of things, if and when that time comes.

“That’s what I try to tell Soldiers,” Spano said. “This is the enemy that you are fighting, you have to get to know who they are and what makes them tick. Because when you go to war, it’s not going to be like the last 12 years of the Global War on Terrorism, where you go out on patrol and you come back at the end of the day, or you might come back at the end of a 2-day patrol. We’re going North, and we’re going to do what we have to do to accomplish the mission and fight that type of enemy.”

As the fighting went on, the 2nd Infantry Division was pivotal in turning back the communist’s spring offensive in 1951, and the division was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest decoration the United States can award a division. As an armistice agreement was hammered out, the 2nd ID continued to fight for hilltops in the Iron Triangle, Pork Chop Hill, Baldy Hill, Bloody Ridge and Heartbreak Ridge.

In April 1953, the division was moved to a rear area and in summer 1954, the division was transferred from Korea to Fort Lewis, Wash. The division transferred again in 1956, this time to Alaska. From 1958 to 1965, the division was headquartered at Fort Benning, Ga. On July 1, 1965, the division’s colors returned to the Republic of Korea, where they remain today.

Cold War

As the Cold War played out on the Korean peninsula, 2nd Infantry Division Soldiers were assigned to guard portions of the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) between North and South Korea. North Korean forces were engaging in increasing border incursions, and the 2nd ID went to work to halt these attacks.

On Nov. 2, 1966, a North Korean ambush at the DMZ killed six American Soldiers and one KATUSA (Korean

Augmentation to the United States Army) soldier of the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment. In 1967, the attacks increased, and 16 American Soldiers were killed defending the DMZ.

Attacks eventually decreased, and by 1971, South Korean forces were in charge of most of the duties of patrolling the DMZ. But one of the most famous incidents in the area occurred Aug. 18, 1976, in the Joint Security Area (JSA) of the DMZ.

Despite the tensions and the fact there was no peace treaty between North and South Korea, only an armistice agreement, the United Nations set up the JSA to be patrolled by both sides, said William Alexander, the museum director of the 2nd Infantry Division Museum at Camp Red Cloud.

“Back then, unlike how you see it today, where the North stayed on the North side and the South stayed on the South side, back then, they were all intermixed,” Alexander said.



The 2nd Infantry Division Museum at Camp Red Cloud, Uijeongbu, South Korea, helps highlight the 96 years of service the division has provided. (Photos by Jonathan (Jay) Koester / NCO Journal)

That intermixing led to tension and stress for the Soldiers stationed in the area, especially because North Korean forces on occasion would try to grab United Nations personnel and drag them across a bridge to the North. Those kidnapping worries led to a tree-trimming operation to help preserve line-of-sight in the area.

As the JSA tree-trimming was going on, a group of North Korean soldiers arrived and demanded that the operation end. When it continued, the North Korean soldiers attacked and killed Capt. Arthur Bonifas and 1st Lt. Mark Barrett. The attack injured several others before it was stopped.

In response to the killing of Bonifas and Barrett, Soldiers with the 2nd Infantry Division responded with Operation Paul Bunyan. In a large show of force, including B-52 bombers flying overhead, escorted by U.S. F-4 fighters and ROK F-5 fighters, Soldiers from the U.S. and South Korea moved in and cut down the tree Aug. 21, just three days after the North Korean attack.

The incident ended the intermingling of North and South in the JSA. With Soldiers staying strictly to their own sides, incidents began to decrease, and the role of the 2nd Infantry Division along the DMZ decreased, as well.

Global War On Terrorism

The first element of the 2nd Infantry Division to deploy to Operation Iraqi Freedom was the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, deploying out of Fort Lewis beginning in November 2003. In August 2004, the 2nd Brigade Combat Team made history by deploying to Iraq from the Republic of Korea. It was the first operational deployment from Korea, and the team worked alongside ROK soldiers, just as they had in Korea.

Eventually, in a throwback to the 2nd Infantry Division's history of fighting alongside the Marines in World War I, the 2nd BCT fell under the direct command of the 1st Marine Division. Later in its deployment, the team was attached to the 2nd Marine Division.

In November 2004, The 2nd BCT fought in the Fallujah offensive, and helped Iraq with national elections in January 2005. The team redeployed from Iraq to its new home at Fort Carson, Colo., in August 2005.

Soldiers from the 2nd Infantry Division continued to deploy to Iraq and Afghanistan throughout the Global War on Terrorism, and today they are spread out around the globe, with the dual mission of fighting terrorism and containing the dangerous threat of North Korea.

History's Lessons

Serving with the 2nd Infantry Division and getting to serve in the Republic of Korea is a special opportunity, Ashmead said. It is a place where you serve right where the division's history was made and fought for.

“Unlike most divisions, we're uniquely situated where we're stationed, right on the battlefields of some of the biggest conflicts the division participated in,” Ashmead said. “If we were in another unit, our closest battlefield might be in Europe or the Pacific Islands. In Korea, just a

15-minute drive from Camp Casey, you're where the 2nd Infantry Division fought. You're close to the Iron Triangle, Punch Bowl, Pork Chop Hill, Heartbreak Ridge. It's all right outside the door. We are lucky and blessed to be stationed right in one of the main crucibles of our division's history."

Spano makes sure the Soldiers and NCOs of the 2nd Infantry Division learn from that history and prepare themselves for a future that could include more conflict with North Korea.

"We have not fought an enemy that is bound and determined to destroy us when we got to war with them

like we have since we fought the North Koreans in the 1950s," Spano said. "We're not just going to be fighting insurgents who will take pot shots at you or maybe have a little gun battle that lasts a couple of hours. We're going to be fighting against regiments, filled with men who are fully trained and capable."

Because of that history in Korea, as well as the headquarters at Camp Red Cloud today, when you think of Korea, you think of the proud history of the 2nd Infantry Division, Spano said.

"Everywhere you are on this peninsula is some land that has been fought over at one time," Spano said. "Soldiers

who preceded us fought and died for where we live right now. So, when you think of the U.S. Army serving in Korea, what patch do you think of? Everyone thinks of the 2nd Infantry Division, and why wouldn't you?"

Medal of Honor Recipients Inspire 2nd Infantry Division NCOs

The 2nd Infantry Division has 38 Soldiers who received the Medal of Honor for their actions in battle. Those 38 heroic tales are told at the 2nd Infantry Division Museum at Camp Red Cloud, and those stories help inspire NCOs in their missions today.

Sgt. 1st Class Ulric Sanders, First Sergeant for E Company, 3-2 General Support Aviation Battalion, 2nd Combat Aviation Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, said the history of the 2nd Infantry Division inspires him every day.

"I'm real big on trying to follow behind some of the Medal of Honor recipients," Sanders said. "Having 38 to follow from the division and being able to read about them and the things they've done is amazing. Being here, forward deployed in Korea for six decades, is a very significant point. I really appreciated getting the chance to serve in this division."

Held in a place of honor at the museum is the Medal of Honor received posthumously by Sgt. 1st Class William S. Sitman. Sitman was serving with M Company, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division when the 23rd was trying



When Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Peña toured the 2nd Infantry Division Museum, he was allowed to hold the Medal of Honor received by Sgt. 1st Class William S. Sitman. (Photo by Jonathan (Jay) Koester / NCO Journal)

to hold the Korean Chipyong-ni valley against a large Chinese force on Feb. 14, 1951.

Sitman was a machine gun section leader for M Company, and when an enemy grenade knocked out his machine gun, a squad from I Company brought in a light machine gun to continue the fight as Sitman and his men remained to provide security. Then, his medal citation reads, "In the ensuing action, the enemy lobbed a grenade into the position and SFC Sitman, fully aware of the odds against him, selflessly threw himself on it, absorbing the full force of the explosion with his body. Although mortally wounded in this

fearless display of valor, his intrepid act saved five men from death or serious injury, and enabled them to continue inflicting withering fire on the ruthless foe throughout the attack."

Sgt. 1st Class Carlos Peña of the 1st Armored Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, is based at Camp Casey, but made a visit to the museum while he was visiting Camp Red Cloud for a retirement ceremony. Museum director William Alexander saw Peña touring the museum and allowed him to hold Sitman's medal.

"Wow, it means a lot," Peña said as he held the Medal of Honor. "This is special." ■



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