



COLORADO MILITARY HISTORIANS

NEWSLETTER

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***Sua Sponte* – US Army Rangers in the Modern Era**

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Part Six – The Global War on Terror – 2008 – 2017

With the war on two fronts The Regiment conduct combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. The tempo increased in Afghanistan and operations continued in Iraq. With the drawdown in Iraq, the emphasis returned to Afghanistan. The article will cover the increased tempo in Afghanistan (2006 – 2008), Task Force 17 in Iraq (2007-2008), the Drawdown in Iraq (2009-2010), the Afghan Surge (2009-2010), and Operation Courageous Restrain (2011-2011). The article series will conclude with the Medal of Honor citation for SSF Leroy Petry.

Increased Tempo in Afghanistan (2006 – 2008)

The tempo of operations increased as insurgents increased their activity in southern Afghanistan. In Operation Niland II, a large contingent of Taliban traversed a valley. The SEALs, acting as “beaters,” drove them to the end of the valley where the Regiment had established a blocking position. The Taliban casualties numbered 120 (lots of good terrorists ;o), with zero Ranger and SEAL casualties. With the increased activity, the threshold for engaging was reduced, and the Rangers were reinforced with another platoon (Neville, 2016).

In an action in the Sagin Valley a platoon from the 1st Battalion was surrounded by an estimated 300 terrorists. They were held at bay with multiple “danger close” air strikes. As some of the Rangers were being extracted an MH-47 was shot down. As the remainder were being extracted a Battalion sniper team and two recon teams, aided by an anti-tank element held the terrorists at bay. The MH-47 was destroyed by 105 mm on an AC-130 (Neville, 2016).

Iraq - Task Force 17 (2007 – 2008)

2008 Status of Forces Agreement

The Status of Forces Agreement (“SoFA”) was ratified by the Iraqi Parliament on November 17, 2008. This agreement, which was signed on December 14, 2008, called for US military personnel to be moved out of most major populated areas. Additionally, all US Forces were to be withdrawn by December 31, 2011. The agreement did allow US Forces to continue to fight Al Qaeda and other terrorist organization in Iraq (Skovlund, 2014).

4th Rifle Company

In 2008 the Regiment expanded with the addition of a fourth rifle company (Delta Company). This gave each of the Battalions an additional 118 Rangers. The companies were established with a cadre of trained and experienced Ranger NCOs. The new Rangers were given extensive training to ensure that they were ready for upcoming deployments (Baker, 2010). As Baker (2010) said “The addition of the extra rifle company completed what was a four year (sic) Regimental transformation. The 75th Ranger Regiment was now fully staffed and trained for what would be very challenging years ahead” (p. 266).

RASP replaces RIP

The gateway to the Regiment is the Ranger Assessment and Selection Program, (“RASP”) not to be confused with the Ranger Course. The Ranger Course was established in the 1950s as the toughest leadership program in existence. The Ranger Tab is awarded upon graduation from the Ranger Course. The Ranger scroll and the tan beret are awarded for completion of RASP (Couch, 2012).

In February 1985, the four-week Ranger Indoctrination Program (“RIP”) was established at Fort Benning. In 2008, the program was expanded to eight weeks, and the name changed to RASP. The first four weeks (“Phase 1”) was the equivalent of RIP. In the second four weeks (“Phase 2”) the class is divided into two parts. One part spends two weeks in Weapons training on the Shooting Ranges, and the other half goes to Breaching. After two weeks, they switch. According to Couch (2012) “SSG Simmons said ‘In Phase One, you were too dumb to quit. Here in Phase Two, we’re going to see if you’re smart enough to stay and learn what we’re going to teach, so you can serve in the Regiment’” (p. 142). The expanded RASP training was necessary to prepare the Rangers for the grueling deployment schedule. Upon completion of RASP the young Rangers were well trained, and some of them deployed with their Battalion within a few weeks of completing RASP. RASP is broken into two different the three-week RASP 2 course before they can enter, or re-enter the Regiment. Any officer or NCO who has been out the Regiment for more than six months must complete RASP 2. As part of the training the RASP 2 students will lead a patrol of RASP 1, Phase 1 students. Class 03-10 was the first RASP 1 class and they began training on January 11, 2010 with 155 volunteers. There had been hundreds of volunteers in the pre-RASP screening process. They graduated on March 5th with 56 Rangers sent to the Regiment (Couch, 2012).

Iraq - The Drawdown (2009 – 2010)

As a result of the SOFA Ranger operations changed significantly, and marked the beginning of the end of the war in Iraq. General McChrystal took over command of operations in Afghanistan and he changed the way operations were conducted. He streamlined the communication and coordination of the Special Operations forces. See *Team of Teams* McChrystal, (2015) for more details. By the official end of the war in Iraq on December 15, 2011 the Rangers had transitioned from Iraq to Afghanistan (Skovlund, 2014).



According to Skovlund, (2014) the uniforms and equipment changed for the Rangers. In training and deployment, they transitioned from the unpopular ACU uniform to the Crye Precision Multi-Cam camouflage pattern. The change was well received. “The new uniform boasted built in knee and elbow pads as well as specially designed field tops for the summer months. Rangers also expanded the selection of boots they wore to include a variety of civilian hiking boots, wearing whatever worked best for the individual Ranger and the environment they would be operating in” (p. 281).

The Regiment also tested the FN Special Operations Combat Assault Rifle (SCAR) suite of weapons. Company C, of the 1st Battalion was the first to record EKIA with the new weapons system. Skovlund (2014) noted that “The individual Ranger was now better equipped than at any other point in the unit's history; every Ranger had his own customized rifle, his own sidearm, his own radio to communicate with, and the best night vision devices available. This allowed the highly trained (sic) Rangers to maximize their already elite level of shooting, moving, and communicating on the field of battle” (p. 282).

Afghan Surge (2009 – 2011)

As part of the Afghan Surge, the Ranger Regiment was placed in complete command of JSOTF. Delta was assigned to the north, and the SEALs operated in the east. The deployed Ranger battalion designated Task Force South and was based in Kandahar and Task Force Center was based in Khost. The Rangers operated mostly from helicopters due to the distances traversed. This also allowed them to avoid many of the Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) that were prevalent in the area (Neville, 2016).

Neville, (2016), said “According to a brutally frank JSOC briefing, the task forces' mission was to ‘conduct offensive operations in Afghanistan to degrade TBL [Taliban leadership], AQL [al Qaeda leadership], HQNL [Haqqani leadership] and their networks, in order to enable Coalition and Afghan forces to expand designated security zones.’ These offensive operations “buy time and space for... conventional regional commanders to accomplish the COIN [counterinsurgency] task... We are not encumbered with those COIN tasks; we don't run any shuras, or anything like that; we are focused on manhunting” (p. 34).

In 2010 the Regiment engaged the Taliban in Khandahar and Helmand provinces. This was known as Team Darby, later changed to Team Merrill. The modus operandi of these two platoon operations was to move a platoon into an enemy compound. The other platoon conducted raids as the first platoon fortify the compound. The second platoon would stir up the enemy and retreat into the compound. The Rangers would then fight from the fortified compound for up to two days; being extracted on the third day. These “Alamo” battles were supported with air assets, and hundreds of Taliban fighters were killed (Skovlund, 2014; Neville, 2016).

Afghanistan - Courageous Restraint (2011 – 2013)

Team Merrill was stood down as JSOC increased the activity of other Special Operations units. The Regiment continued to conduct operation hunting for High Value Targets (“HVT”). In one operation in the Tangi Valley, while hunting a Taliban leader a SEAL Quick Reaction Force in a CH-47D was hit by an RPG as it was attempting to land. The Rangers released their detainees and ran nearly 2 ½ miles to the crash site. Unfortunately, all 38 personnel on board were killed. Two Rangers were wounded when ammunition cooked off in the crash. The Rangers remained at the crash site to recover all of the bodies. Thus living the Ranger Creed to leave no one behind (Neville, 2016).

In February 2010 Rangers mistakenly shot a number of civilians, and the political intervention resulted in revised Rules of Engagement (“ROE”) for night raids. Afghans were required to lead the raids, and announcements were made over loudspeakers would announce the raid. This later change resulted in a number of “squirters” out the other side of the target area. Additionally, all operations had to be cleared by an Afghan authority known as the Operational Coordination Group. Nevielle (2016) noted that “A JSOC briefing noted that night raids typically proceeded in the following manner: “We isolate the compound, and do a tactical callout – 80 percent of the time no shots are even fired. The targeted individuals comply with the guidance given in their native language; we separate the woman and children from the military age males, begin tactical questions, begin sensitive site exploitation, [and] get all the communication devices, pocket litter [etc.] off the objective” (p. 39).

As of 2016, Rangers remained deployed in Afghanistan conducting Counterterrorism operations. Operation Freedom Sentinel, replaced Operation Enduring Freedom. Operations in Afghanistan continue (Neville, 2016).

SSF Leroy A. Petry – Medal of Honor



The idea is to end this series with the story of SSF Leroy Petry of Delta Company of the 2nd Battalion. It serves as a outstanding example of what it means to live the Ranger Creed. On May 26, 2008 in the Pakita Province of Afghanistan his actions earned the Medal of Honor during Operation Niland II (Neville, 2016). According to Baker (2013) the Citation reads:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty: Staff Sergeant Leroy A. Petry distinguished himself by acts of gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty in action with an armed enemy in the vicinity of Paktya Province, Afghanistan, on May 26, 2008. As a Weapons Squad Leader with D Company, 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment, Staff Sergeant Petry moved to clear the courtyard of a house that potentially contained high-value combatants. While crossing the courtyard, Staff Sergeant Petry and another Ranger were engaged and wounded by automatic weapons fire from enemy fighters. Still under enemy fire, and wounded in both legs, Staff Sergeant Petry led the other Ranger to cover. He then reported the situation and engaged the enemy with a hand grenade, providing suppression as another Ranger moved to his position. The enemy quickly responded by maneuvering closer and throwing grenades. The first grenade explosion knocked his two fellow Rangers to the ground and wounded both with shrapnel. A second grenade then landed only a few feet away from them. Instantly realizing the danger, Staff Sergeant Petry, unhesitatingly and with complete disregard for his safety, deliberately and selflessly moved forward, picked up the grenade, and in an effort to clear the immediate threat, threw the grenade away from his fellow Rangers. As he was releasing the grenade it detonated, amputating his right hand at the wrist and further injuring him with multiple shrapnel wounds. Although picking up and throwing the live grenade grievously wounded Staff Sergeant Petry, his gallant act undeniably saved his fellow Rangers from being severely wounded or killed. Despite the severity of his wounds, Staff Sergeant Petry continued to maintain the presence of mind to place a tourniquet on his right wrist before communicating the situation by radio in order to coordinate support for himself and his fellow wounded Rangers. Staff Sergeant Petry's extraordinary heroism and

devotion to duty are in keeping with the highest traditions of military service, and reflect great credit upon himself, 75th Ranger Regiment, and the United States Army (p. 1082).

I hope that you have enjoyed these articles.

Always remember - Rangers Lead the Way!

References

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war on terror. Colorado Springs, CO: Blackside Concepts.

Jeff Lambert's December Report on the WWI Aerial Combat Campaign

The following combat report was filed on 15 December, 1917 by Lt. Lawrence Irons, RFC:

"Took off from La Lovie with Lt. Lambert at 0920 hrs 15 December 1917. Lambert had just received the new SPAD XIII and was taking it on a tryout patrol, I was flying my SE5a as his wingman. Cloud cover above 7000 feet, we flew just beneath it over the front in the Arras sector. Spotted two EA close to our altitude over No Man's Land-- Lambert signalled me to engage and the EA must have seen us as they immediately turned towards us. A blue Pfalz was escorted by a plain Albatros with few markings, but I knew by the colors and the winged sword on his fuselage sides that the Pfalz was flown by Lt. Skelly, an 18-1/2-kill ace. Lambert lined up on the Albatros while I executed a retournment and found myself nose-to-nose with Skelly. I gave him a good long burst, and received the same from him, but mine was better aimed! I observed bits of his tail falling off behind him as he spun out of control, and later I saw the wreckage in the shell-holes near the German lines. Skelly must have holed my fuel tank, though, as the needle crept more quickly towards the "E" than usual. I couldn't turn for home just then, as Lambert and the other German were whirling about trying to get shots at each other. Both Lambert and I fired at him, and he fired back a few times, but was mostly very good at avoiding us. At last I signalled Lambert that I was almost out of fuel, he nodded and we broke off the engagement. The Albatros pilot saluted us as he also turned toward his own lines. Landed back at La Lovie at 1145 hrs. Crew chief Sgt. Smith reported that I was very lucky not to have exploded, as the fuel tank had two holes in it and was nearly drained! Skelly was my fifth victory."

Intelligence reports confirmed Irons' claim some weeks later when the announcement of Skelly's death and funeral appeared in the German newspapers. The wingman, Lt. Casteletto, stated in an interview that Skelly had taken him aloft for a familiarity flight when the British were spotted, and keen to engage for the final two kills which would earn him a "Blue Max", Skelly flew at them. Skelly went down on the first pass, and it was only through desperate flying and good luck that Casteletto was able to return and report his leader's death. The body was recovered that evening by a patrol of the 5th Westphalian Regiment. Skelly was buried with full military honors a week later at his family's estate in Bavaria.

The Leader Board as of 12/16/17:

SKELLY 18-1/2 victories 1395pts. (465 adjusted)
HUNT 8 705 (628)
FORTE 7-1/2 695 (446)
LAMBERT 3-1/2 663 (282)
IRONS 5 652 (361)
WHARRIER 3 450 (435)
MANLEY 4 396 (213)
MARTINEZ 1-1/2 335 (243)
CAVER-BOYD 3-1/2 263 (88)
BEAUGARIN 1 232 (149)
MARSTON 0 218 (137)
CROWN 0 180 (63)
FRAKES 2-1/2 178 (59)
STUART 0 97 (16)
CASTELETTO 1/2 81 (81)
WAITE 1 56 (56)
HERSCH 0 38 (13)
WEBER 0 36 (36)

GAME OF THE MONTH

Total Escape Games Sponsor



Member Name	Scale	Era	Rules	Description
John Brown	15mm	1500	DBMM2	Poles vs. Hungarians
John Owens		TYW	SPI	Breitenfeld
Greg Skelly*	28mm	WWII	Roll Call	Battle of the Bulge

*Denotes this month's winner

Each month CMH members host games at the monthly meeting. This award is for the effort put out by the host.



OF MEN AND ARMS I SPEAK

It has been a while since I wrote an article relating to the concept of our club motto "Arma Virumque Cano."

We seldom play boardgames at the monthly meeting. Occasionally someone brings one, especially if it is new and a few participate in the game. Such was the case with John Owen at the December meeting in which we visited the Battle of Breitenfeld. It was an enjoyable game and got me to thinking about some of my favorite boardgames of the past. So I want to propose that each month someone write a short article about their favorite boardgames with a short description and why they like the game. Here are my top 5.

#1 Kingmaker (Avalon Hill) 1974 with Variant in 1978

It recreates the Wars of Roses 1450-1490. Included are event cards that can upset the efforts of some or all of the participants in the various noble families of the time. Most memorably in one of my encounters was the calling of Parliament at Kent where all but two nobles convened. Unfortunately for all present the next event was a plague at Kent that killed all of us and the two absent, from the same faction, won the game.

#2 Civilization (Avalon Hill) 1981

This game encompasses the dawn of history. It spans from B.C. 8000 to 250 (New Stone Age through Late Iron Age). There are invasions of other kingdoms, wild trading, and the inventions that lead civilization forward. Be careful if you are the Egyptians as the Nile is fickle and could flood you out of the game.

#3 Struggle of Empires (Warfrog) 2004

A more recent game that a number of you have played involves the economic, political and military problems of the 18th Century. The rules are only 5 pages long with a 6th page for examples of play and tips. Although it looks simple the reality of the eventual play is very complex. One of the most intriguing aspects is the creation of opposing alliances. There are three separate wars in which the alliances will most assuredly change between wars.

#4 Down With the King (Avalon Hill) 1981

We find ourselves in the fictional kingdom of Fandonia where ever player wants to dethrone King George and rule. The court intrigues include your faction of other royal family members, Ministers of all kinds, and most surprising women who can seduce the opposition with great results for your group. We once had a lady win the game and crowned the Queen of Fandonia. A very entertaining game.

#5 1776 (Avalon Hill) 1974

The subject is obvious. Because of the breadth of the war the game is divided into three versions. For beginners there is the basic game where the mechanisms of the game are learned. Second is the advanced game with more chrome in the game mechanisms. It focuses on four scenarios depicting decisive campaigns in the war. The Campaign Simulation Game is very complex encompassing the entire war from Bunker Hill to Yorktown. The learning curve for the third version is fairly steep but once mastered is exhilarating.

There are many more boardgames that I could mention. But these continuously come to mind when I think about the enjoyable hours of board gaming over the years.

Now it is your turn to enlighten us with your choices! GOOD GAMING!

CMH January Scheduled Events

This table shows what events are scheduled for CMH. Next months Friday Night Fights (FNF) and the monthly meeting (MM) are listed. It is recommended to schedule your game for future meetings and will appear on this page.

Date	Meeting	Location	Start Time
January 5	FNF	TEG	7PM
January 12	FNF	TBD	7PM
January 14	MM	Baker Rec Center	12 - 5 PM
January 19	FNF	TBD	7PM
January 26	FNF	TBD	7PM

TEG - Total Escape Games
6831 W. 120th Ave.
Suite C

Broomfield CO 80020 www.totalescapegames.com

FNF (TBD) may or may not occur due to a lack of a scheduled host/location.

Upcoming Events:

January 13: Copar Hobbies Gaming Swap Meet Aurora CO

January 14: Colorado Military Show Denver CO

January 19-21: Hexacon Ramada Northglenn CO

January 20: Gamer's Haven Auction Colorado Springs CO

February 11-14: Ghenghis Con Denver CO

Colorado Military Historians, Inc.

Colorado military Historians (CMH) is a non-profit organization whose purpose is to promote historical wargaming and the study of military history. Founded in 1965, CMH meets monthly on the second Sunday of the month, except in May when it is deferred to the third Sunday. The meeting starts at noon at the Baker Recreational Center, 6751 Irving Street (just a few blocks west of Federal Blvd), Denver CO. The club also hosts gaming at least one Friday night a month, called "Friday Night Fights" (FNF) at 7 PM. FNF will be held at several various locations. See previous schedule or view the website for latest information.

CMH maintains ties with numbers local, regional and national groups to help promote the hobby. CMH is governed by member-elected officers who serve on the Board of Directors (executive board). Terms are one year, with elections held at the May meeting. New members are accepted after attending three CMH functions and a vote of the membership. Dues are \$40.00 per year, payable in January. Members wishing to receive a snail-mail newsletter subscription must pay an additional fee of \$15.00 per year. Authors retain ownership of articles and graphics published. CMH reserves the right to edit or reject submissions to the newsletter.

One year Adult Membership: \$40.00
Half year Adult Membership: \$25.00
(For NEW members who join after June 30)
Family Membership: \$40.00 (one Adult and any number of offspring)
Student Membership: \$20.00 (16 to 22 years old)



CMH Newsletter

The CMH Newsletter is a monthly newsletter published by the Colorado military Historians. Views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of all CMH members.

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