

# Wisconsin Field Artillery in WWII



120<sup>th</sup> FA Regiment



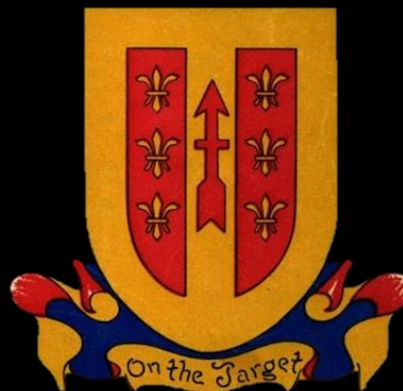
121<sup>th</sup> FA Regiment



126<sup>th</sup> FA Regiment



173<sup>rd</sup> FA Group



985<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion



173<sup>rd</sup> FA Battalion

# Interwar Years 1918-1941

1918 NOV 11 - WWI Armistice

1919 MAY - 120th, 121st FA demobilize at Camp Grant, IL

1920 FEB-OCT- 2 Batteries of the 121st FA federally recognized

1921 - 105 CAV and 120th FA created from WWI 120th FA

1923 - WIARNG strength 4,935, cost \$47.38 per Soldier

1927 - 121 FA Regiment fully established.

1930-31 - Richards Street Armory built by Light Horse Squadron Association  
(105th CAV)

1930 - WI National Guard total Strength 4,789

1939 - WI National Guard allotted strength 5,000

1939 SEP 1 - Germany Invades Poland

**1940 OCT 15 - WIARNG Mobilizes for WWII**

1941 DEC 7 - Pearl Harbor

# HQ 1-121 Basketball Team ~1927



# Pistol Inspection ~1936



# WI National Guard Field Artillery 1939

57th FA Brigade - Milwaukee, WI

120th FA Regiment (6 firing Batteries)

HQ Battery - Superior, WI

1st Battalion - Viroqua, WI

2nd Battalion - Stevens Point, WI

121st FA Regiment (8 firing Batteries)

HQ Battery - Abbotsford, WI

1st Battalion - Hartford, WI

2nd Battalion - Whitefish Bay, WI

3rd Battalion - Green Bay, WI

## Background

~ 50 Pax per Firing Battery  
No 126th FA Regiment

Organized similar to WWI,

Each Regiment had its own  
band

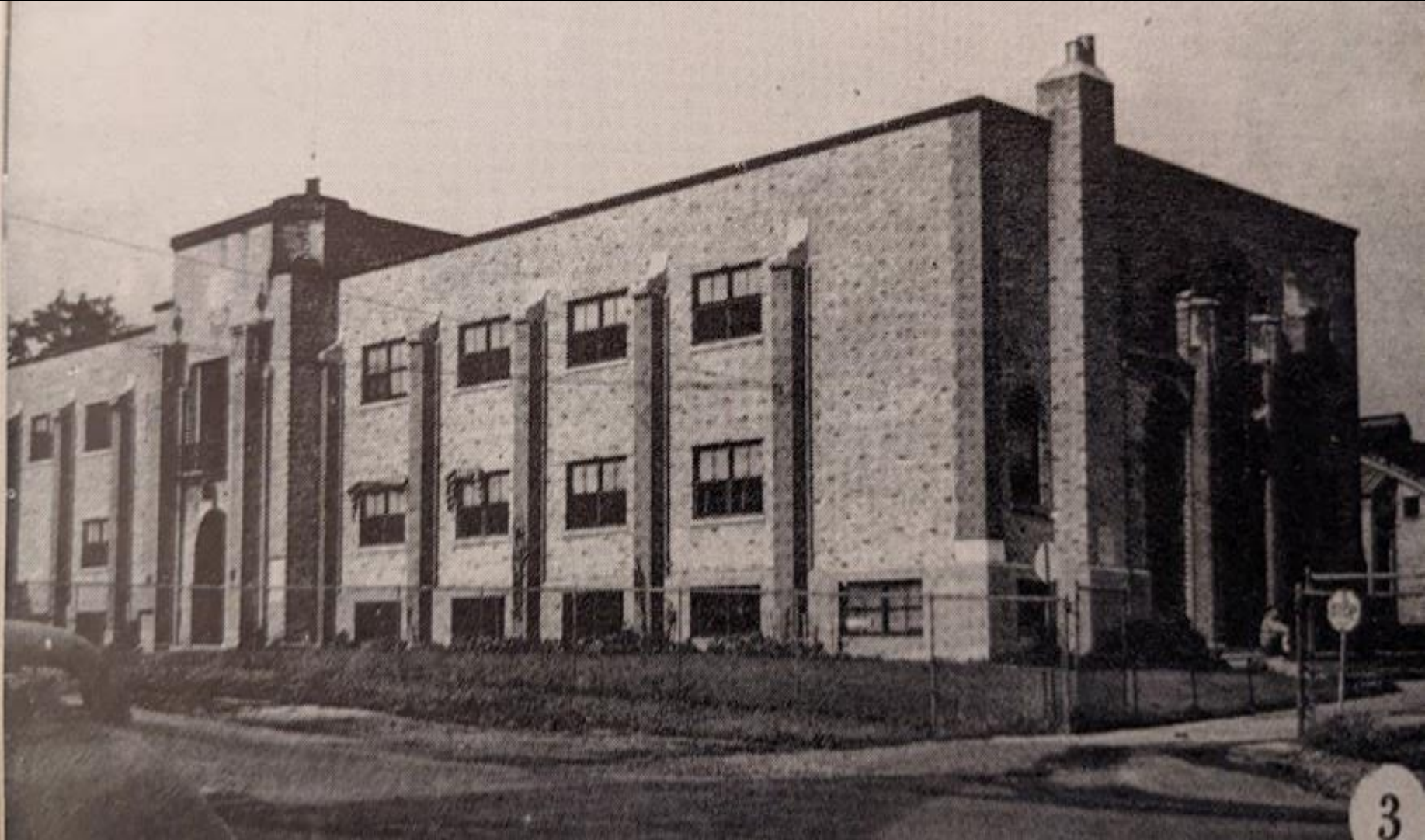
# 120th FA Regimental Band ~ 1939



# Stevens Point Armory ~1939



# Richards Street Armory ~1939

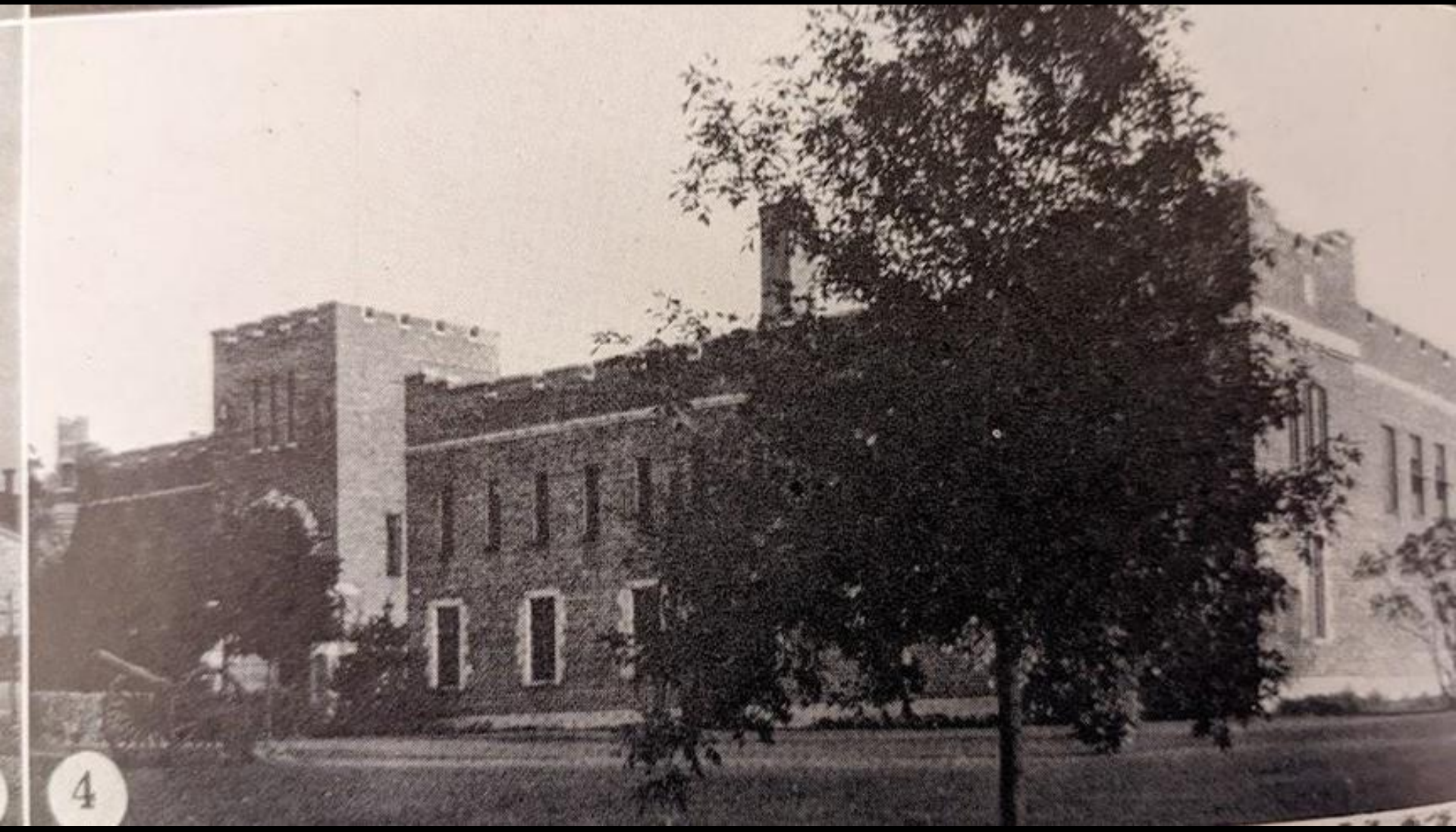




# 105th Cavalry ~1939



# Whitefish Bay Armory ~1939



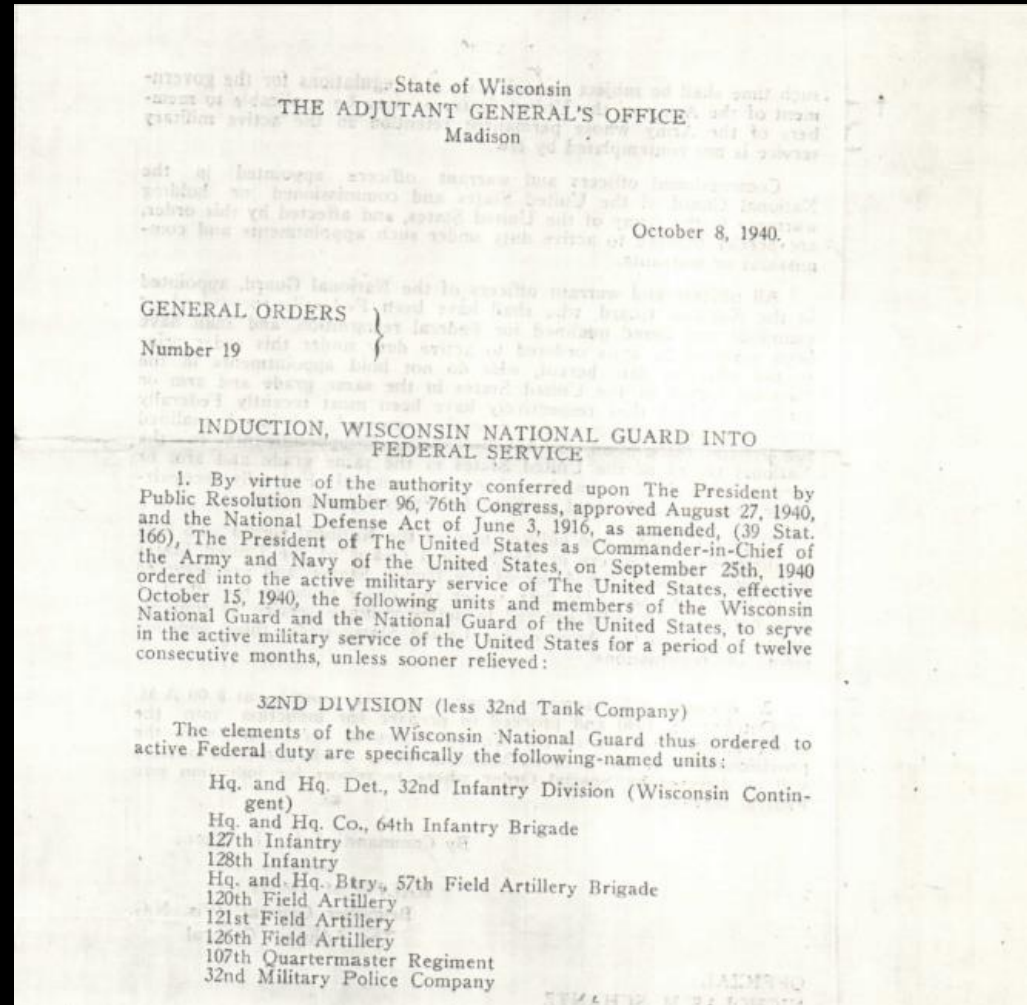
# GENERAL ORDER Number 19

## October 8, 1940

“assemble at respective armories at 8:00 A.M. on October 15, 1940.”

Units include:

- HHB 57<sup>th</sup> FA Brigade
- 120<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery
- 121st Field Artillery
- 126<sup>th</sup> Field Artillery





# 120<sup>th</sup> FA Regiment Re-organization

| Hometown Armory      | Unit(s)*<br>JAN-MAR 1941           | Unit(s) ^<br>1942-1945     | Overseas<br>Where - When  |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Superior, WI         | HQ/120 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment   | Unknown                    | Unknown                   |
| Viroqua, WI          | HQ/1-120 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment | HQ/120 <sup>st</sup> FA BN | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946 |
| Lacrosse, WI         | A/120 <sup>t</sup> FA Regiment     | A/120 <sup>st</sup> FA BN  | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946 |
| Lacrosse, WI         | B/120 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | B/120 <sup>st</sup> FA BN  | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946 |
| Chippewa Falls, WI   | C/120 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | C/120 <sup>st</sup> FA BN  | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946 |
| Stevens Point, WI    | HQ/2-120 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment | HQ/129 <sup>st</sup> FA BN | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946 |
| Stevens Point, WI    | D/120 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | A/129 <sup>h</sup> FA BN   | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946 |
| Wisconsin Rapids, WI | E/120 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | B/129 <sup>th</sup> FA BN  | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946 |
| Merrill, WI          | F/120 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | C/129 <sup>th</sup> FA BN  | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946 |

\*Units appearing in 32nd Infantry Division - WWII History, authored in 1955.

^Units existing after 32nd Infantry Division reorganization in FEB 1942.

# 121<sup>st</sup> FA Regiment Re-organization

| Hometown Armory   | Unit(s)*<br>JAN-MAR 1941           | Unit(s) ^<br>~1942-1945    | Overseas<br>Where - When         |
|-------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Abbotsford, WI    | HQ/121 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment   | 173 <sup>rd</sup> FA Group | Europe - 7/1944 - 5/1945         |
| Hartford, WI      | HQ/1-121 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment | HQ/121 <sup>st</sup> FA BN | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946        |
| Milwaukee, WI     | A/121 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | A/121 <sup>st</sup> FA BN  | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946        |
| Green Bay, WI     | B/121 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | B/121 <sup>st</sup> FA BN  | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946        |
| Milwaukee, WI     | C/121 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | C/121 <sup>st</sup> FA BN  | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946        |
| River Falls, WI   | HQ/2-121 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment | HQ/985 <sup>th</sup> FA BN | Mediterranean - 9/1943 - 10/1945 |
| Milwaukee, WI     | D/121 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | A/985 <sup>th</sup> FA BN  | Mediterranean - 9/1943 - 10/1945 |
| Milwaukee, WI     | E/121 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | B/985 <sup>th</sup> FA BN  | Mediterranean - 9/1943 - 10/1945 |
| Whitefish Bay, WI | F/121 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | C/985 <sup>th</sup> FA BN  | Mediterranean - 9/1943 - 10/1945 |

\*Units appearing in 32nd Infantry Division - WWII History, authored in 1955.

^Units existing after 32nd Infantry Division reorganization in FEB 1942. Note the 985th FA BN was known as the 2/173rd FA Regiment between FEB 1942-FEB 1943.

# 126<sup>st</sup> FA Regiment Re-organization

1 OCT 1940- the 105th Cavalry becomes the 126th Field Artillery Regiment

| Hometown Armory | Unit(s)*<br>JAN-MAR 1941           | Unit(s) ^<br>~1942-1945   | Overseas<br>Where - When        |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Milwaukee, WI   | HQ/126 <sup>th</sup> FA Regiment   | Unknown                   | Unknown                         |
| Milwaukee, WI   | HQ/1-126 <sup>th</sup> FA Regiment | HQ/126 <sup>t</sup> FA BN | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946       |
| Milwaukee, WI   | A/126th FA Regiment                | A/126 <sup>st</sup> FA BN | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946       |
| Milwaukee, WI   | B/126th FA Regiment                | B/126 <sup>st</sup> FA BN | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946       |
| Milwaukee, WI   | C/126th FA Regiment                | C/126 <sup>st</sup> FA BN | Pacific - 5/1942 - 2/1946       |
| Milwaukee, WI   | HQ/2-126 <sup>th</sup> FA Regiment | HQ/173rd FA BN            | Mediterranean - 9/1943 - 9/1945 |
| Eau Claire, WI  | D/126 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | A/173rd FA BN             | Mediterranean - 9/1943 - 9/1945 |
| Kenosha, WI     | E/126 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | B/173rd FA BN             | Mediterranean - 9/1943 - 9/1945 |
| Watertown, WI   | F/126 <sup>st</sup> FA Regiment    | C/173rd FA BN             | Mediterranean - 9/1943 - 9/1945 |

\*Units appearing in 32nd Infantry Division - WWII History, authored in 1955.

^Units existing after 32nd Infantry Division reorganization in FEB 1942. Note the 173th FA BN was the 1/173rd FA Regiment between FEB 1942-FEB 1943.

# Mobilization to Deployment Overseas 1940-1944

15 OCT 1940 - WIARNG Mobilizes

FEB 1942 - 32nd Infantry Division reorganizes, with four BNs of FA (120, 121, 126, 129).  
121 FA Regimental HQs, 2/121, 2/126 become the 173<sup>rd</sup> FA Regiment.

MAY 1942 – 32<sup>nd</sup> ID with 120, 121, 126, 129 FA BNs arrive in Australia (Pacific Theater).

25 FEB 1943 - 173<sup>rd</sup> FA Regiment re-organized

HQ/173<sup>rd</sup> FA becomes the 173<sup>rd</sup> FA Group

1/173<sup>rd</sup> FA becomes the 173<sup>rd</sup> FA Battalion

2/173<sup>rd</sup> FA becomes the 985<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion

2 SEP 1943 - 173<sup>rd</sup> & 985<sup>th</sup> FA Battalions arrive Oran, Algiers (Mediterranean Theater)

20 JUL 1944 - 173<sup>rd</sup> FA Group Arrives Utah Beach, France (European Theater)





# 121<sup>st</sup> FA Battalion 1943-1945

## Pacific Theater



### Background

Authorized Strength: 490  
Total KIA/DOW: 4-8  
WIA: 15  
Action: Saidor, Blak, Leyte, Luzon

| Campaign(s) |
|-------------|
| New Guinea  |
| Leyte       |
| Luzon       |

January 1944

# 121st FA BN Saidor, New Guinea - Jan. 1944



# 121st FA BN Saidor, New Guinea - Jan. 1944



# 121st FA BN Saidor, New Guinea - Jan. 1944



7 February 1944

## 121 FA BN Operation Saidor Reports

*Radio Contact with the BN CDRs plane could not be made due to dampness of the ground sets (SCR-609), adjustment was begun at 1300L by using wing signals.*

*The BN CDRs plane crashed or was shot down in the mountains SE of GABUMON about 1400L.*

# USS LST-454 - L-4A Grasshopper 43-29071

## Saidor, PNG - January 2, 1944



# Wreckage identified June 1998 Gabutamon Village, PNG



Saidor



MAJ Earl Kindig



1LT Francis Piotrowski

# C/121 FA Thanksgiving Japan - November 1945

## Thanksgiving

November 24<sup>th</sup> 1945  
Sasebo, Kyushu Japan



Battery "C" 121st. F. A. Battalion



## Menu

~~Cream Tomato Soup and Crackers~~  
Roast Turkey  
Cranberry Sauce *stewed raisins* Gilbert Gravy  
Oyster Dressing  
~~Snow Flaked Potatoes~~  
~~parfrieded spuds~~  
Sweet Potatoes ~~with Marshmallows~~  
~~Buttered Peas~~ Creamed Corn  
Salad  
(No Parkerhouse Rolls) Bread Butter  
~~Mince Pie~~ Pumpkin Pie  
Fruits *a hard pear*  
~~Ice Cream~~  
Mixed Nuts  
Coffee *decaf* Assorted Candies  
*few fresh*  
*panch-ya*  
*kick in the ass*  
Cigarettes  
*2 cans beer*

Compliments of Capt. Chas. W. Kendrick

J



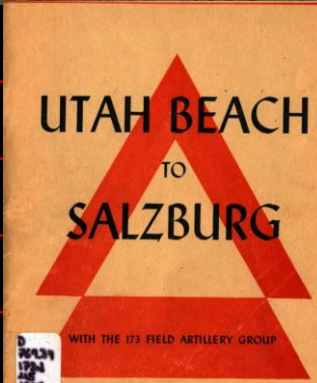


# 173<sup>rd</sup> Field Artillery Group 1944-1945

## European Theater



| Campaign(s)     |
|-----------------|
| Normandy        |
| Northern France |
| Ardennes-Alsace |
| Central Europe  |



| Background                  |
|-----------------------------|
| Hometown: Abbotsford, WI    |
| HQ 121 FA TO 173RD FA Group |
| Personnel in Unit: ~150     |

# Nuremberg & Berchtesgaden Germany



Nurnberg Sportsplatz.



Adolph Hitler's house.



# 173rd FA Battalion 1943-1945

## Mediterranean Theater

### Background

105 CAV - 2/126 FA - 173 FA  
Authorized Strength: ~580 Pax  
Total KIA/DOW: 12  
WIA: 46

Move: 74 locations over 521 days  
(move every ~7 days)

Shoot: 127,877 Rounds, average  
245 rounds per day or ~20 per  
gun per day.



### Campaign(s)

- Naples-Foggia
- Rome-Arno
- North Apennines
- Po Valley



# 985<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion 1943-1945

## Mediterranean Theater

### Background

2/121 FA - 2/173 FA - 985 FA  
Authorized Strength: ~580 Pax  
Total KIA/DOW: ~18  
WIA: ~84

Move: 50 locations over 552 days  
(move every ~11 days)

Shoot: 131,359 Rounds, ~238  
rounds per day or ~20 per gun per  
day.

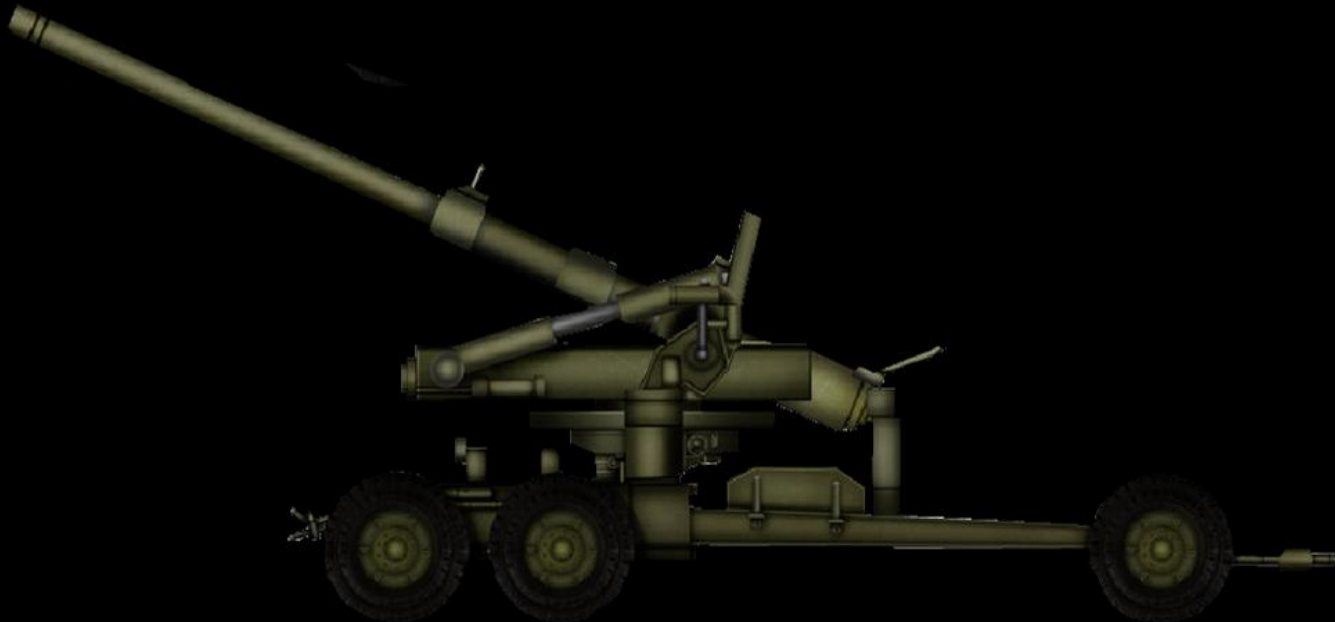


| Campaign(s)     |
|-----------------|
| Naples-Foggia   |
| Rome-Arno       |
| North Apennines |
| Po Valley       |

# 173<sup>rd</sup> and 985 FA Battalions

## M1 “Long Tom”

- 580 Pax in Battalion
- HQ and Service Battery
- 3 Firing Batteries of 4 guns
- 120 Pax firing battery
- Caliber: 155MM
- Range: 22 KM (14.7 miles)
- Weight: 13,880 kg (30,600 lbs)
- Crew: 14 Pax
- Rate of Fire: 40 per Hour



# 173<sup>rd</sup> & 985<sup>th</sup> FA BN Rounds Fired Mediterranean Theater

## 173<sup>rd</sup> FA Battalion

|              |         |
|--------------|---------|
| DEC 1943     | 2,286   |
| JAN 1944     | 9,536   |
| FEB 1944     | 7,223   |
| MAR 1944     | 10,561  |
| APR 1944     | 4,913   |
| MAY 1944     | 11,177  |
| JUN 1944     | 10,374  |
| JUL 1944     | 15,794  |
| AUG 1944     | 1,757   |
| SEP 1944     | 9,497   |
| OCT 1944     | 10,188  |
| NOV 1944     | 4,525   |
| DEC 1944     | 4,642   |
| JAN 1945     | 3,971   |
| FEB 1945     | 5,160   |
| MAR 1945     | 5,299   |
| APR 1945     | 12,274  |
| TOTAL ROUNDS | 129,877 |

## 985<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion

|                      |         |
|----------------------|---------|
| Total Rounds Fired   | 131,359 |
| Missions Fired       |         |
| Counterbattery       | 2,957   |
| Registrations        | 434     |
| Harassing            | 1,224   |
| Vehicles & Personnel | 217     |
| Destruction          | 26      |
| Tanks                | 9       |

- The 173<sup>rd</sup> and 985<sup>th</sup> FA Battalions were in Italy during the same timeframe.

# 985<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion

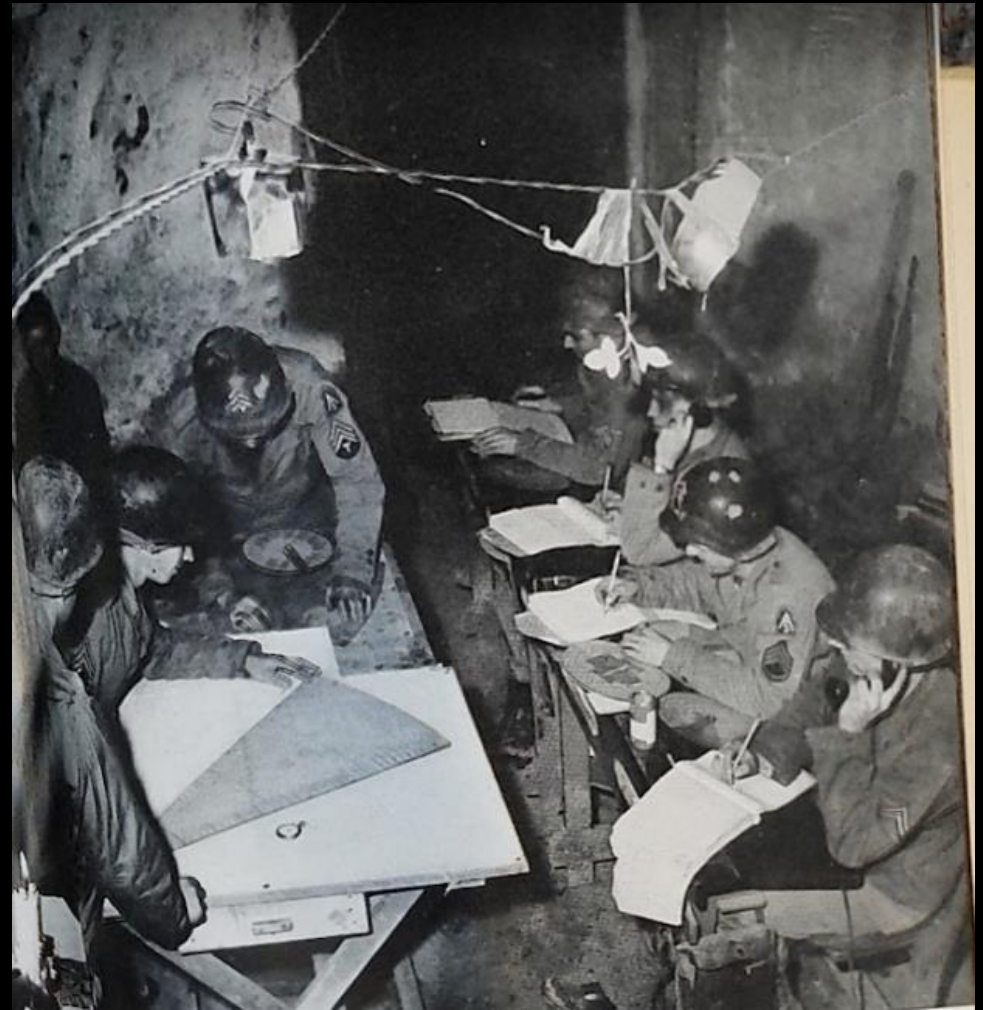
## “155-mm. FLASH BULB”

THEY CALLED IT  
“PURPLE HEART  
VALLEY”

*A Combat Chronicle of the War in Italy*

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHS BY  
MARGARET BOURKE-WHITE

SIMON AND SCHUSTER · NEW YORK · 1944



# Kellogg W. Harkins

World War I



SGT Harkins ~1918  
C/120th FA

World War II



LTC Harkins ~1945  
985th FA Battalion



# References

- Burns, Benton H., Harry T. Ketcham, and Earl J. Rice. 1945. History, 173rd Field Artillery Battalion. [Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified]. 173rd Field Artillery Battalion History
- History of the Biak Operation
- Makal, Thomas J. 2002. Mr. National guard: a civilian soldier. [United States?]: T.J. Makal.
- Operation BIAK (May 44 – Sept 44). 1944. US Army Reports, 121st FA Battalion
- Operation SAIDOR (Jan 44 – Mar 44). 1944. US Army Reports, 121st FA Battalion.
- United States. 1945. On the target. Milano [Italy]: O De-Magistris Cartotecnica.]
- United States. 1945. Utah Beach to Salzburg with the 173 Field Artillery Group. [Place of publication not identified]: [publisher not identified].
- <https://pacificwrecks.com/aircraft/l-4/43-29071.html>

Most references can be found in PDF file format at the following two locations:

- 1-121<sup>st</sup> FA GKO Webpage
- <https://121fava.org/history/world-war-ii/>

# Questions?



120<sup>th</sup> FA Regiment



121<sup>th</sup> FA Regiment



126<sup>th</sup> FA Regiment



173<sup>rd</sup> FA Group



985<sup>th</sup> FA Battalion



173<sup>rd</sup> FA Battalion