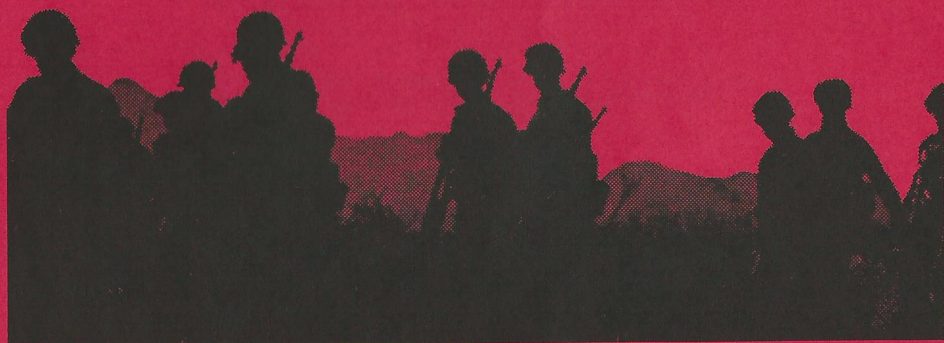


THE ANCIENT AND HONORABLE ORDER OF  
**E CLAMPUS VITUS**

JOHN P. SQUIBOB • LOST DUTCHMAN • MATT WARNER  
QUEHO POSSE • PETER LEBECK • BILLY HOLCOMB

**SOUTHERN  
ALLIANCE**



**FALL CLAMPPOUT**  
OCTOBER 11, 12, 13, 6007

**CAMP HYDER - CAMP HORN**  
**DATELAN ARMY AIRFIELD**

CAMPS OF THE DESERT TRAINING CENTER  
CALIFORNIA / ARIZONA MANEUVER AREA

WRITTEN BY  
MIKE "MOLAR MECHANIC" JOHNSON

CLAMPHISTORIAN • XNGH • X-HEAD, ABBOT • CLAMPATRIARCH

**THE SOUTHERN ALLIANCE  
OF THE ANCIENT AND HONORABLE ORDER OF  
E CLAMPUS VITUS**

**ANNOUNCES ITS EXTRAORDINARY**

**6-WAY JOINT CLAMPOUT**

**PRESENTED BY (IN ALPHABETICAL ORDER) THE  
FOLLOWING CHAPTERS**

**LOST DUTCHMAN  
BILLY HOLCOMB  
PETER LEBECK  
QUEHO POSSE  
JOHN P. SQUIBOB  
MATT WARNER**

**OCTOBER 11, 12, 13, 2002  
(IN THE RECKONING OF OUR ORDER CLAMPYEAR 6007)**

**BEING A COMMEMORATION OF**

**CAMPS HYDER AND HORN AND  
DATELAN ARMY AIR FIELD  
OF PATTON'S DESERT TRAINING CENTER**

**TEXT BY MIKE JOHNSON, XNGH/CLAMPHISTORIAN**





## DESERT TRAINING CENTER CALIFORNIA-ARIZONA MANEUVER AREA

In the early days of World War II perhaps the largest military training effort ever undertaken was begun in the desert country of southern California, Arizona, and Nevada. England was on the verge of collapse and it appeared that America's first chance to strike a blow at the Nazis would occur in North Africa. Previous campaigns in Norway, Albania, and Crete had shown a need for troops specially trained and equipped for operation in difficult terrain. To this end, the Desert Training Center was established in January of 1942. Between 1942 and 1944 nearly a million American soldiers were to train here before being shipped overseas.

In the same month the DTC was organized, Rommel's Afrika Korps recaptured the North African port of Benghazi, and in a week's time moved 100 miles eastward toward Egypt, within striking distance of the Suez Canal. If the Germans controlled Egypt they would have a foothold for expanding into the Middle East. If the Japanese, who were conquering territory at an alarming pace, moved into India they could possibly link up with the Germans in Persia (Iran), which would leave Russia open to invasion from three sides. Given these dire circumstances, it appeared that Americans would soon be involved in a war in North Africa.

By early 1942 Lieutenant General Lesley McNair, U.S. Army Chief of Staff, had developed a plan to combat the German advance in Africa. Fully aware that the United States had never fought a large-scale war in such terrain, McNair ordered that a location be found to train American troops for this task. Major General George S. Patton, recently promoted to command of the newly-formed I Armored Corps, was placed in charge of the project.

Although born in Southern California, Patton was unfamiliar with the desert, and he sought information and advice from many sources, among them an acquaintance who had once explored the Gobi Desert. Shortly after assuming command, he and his staff flew to March Field in Riverside (now March Air Reserve Base) to begin the search for a suitable location for the



proposed training center. For several days they scouted the region by air, road, on horseback, and on foot. Patton felt that the California desert was eminently suited to his needs and provided sufficient space and terrain features not only for armored desert warfare, but for practically any type of large military exercise. The region was very similar to North Africa except that it contained numerous rugged mountain ranges. The geography varied from flat desert valleys to mountain peaks rising 7,000 feet above sea level. Patton proclaimed it the biggest and best training ground in the United States.

The area, though isolated and rugged, could be easily supplied with water from the recently-completed Colorado River Aqueduct. It was already served by three rail lines: the Union Pacific in the north, the Santa Fe in the center, and the Southern Pacific to the south. There were but three towns worthy of the name in the region (Needles, Blythe, and Yuma) and only a tiny fraction of the land was privately owned. All in all, it seemed to fill the bill perfectly.

The Desert Training Center, as this huge undertaking came to be called, originally extended from just east of Indio to the Colorado River, and from Yuma north to Searchlight, Nevada. Headquarters for the entire operation was at Camp Young, near today's Chiriaco Summit, east of Indio. Divisional camps, airfields, railroad sidings, and other installations were set up throughout the DTC. Countless permits, leases, and agreements had to be obtained, and negotiations with the railroads and the Metropolitan Water District had to be completed. The Department of the Interior, which controlled most of the land in question, allowed the Army to use millions of acres, but the land for the camps themselves was transferred to the War Department. This was deemed necessary to prevent the filing of claims by individuals on adjacent lands. Altogether, about 105 million acres were acquired by the War Department through purchase or transfer.

In March 1942 the General Headquarters of the Army Ground Forces realized that there was a need to develop and test equipment and materiel under simulated combat conditions. The Desert Warfare Board was established for this task. It made recommendations for such diverse items as combat boots, tires, small-arms lubricants, and vehicle cooling systems. The DWB was



also headquartered at Camp Young.

Despite daunting logistical challenges, the DTC was officially opened on April 30, 1942 with an initial staff of 20 officers. By the end of May about 4,800 enlisted men were present at Camp Young. From this small beginning the DTC was rapidly expanded and camps for division-sized units were established. At the peak of activity the facility boasted 15 divisional camps. They were, in alphabetical order, Bouse, Clipper, Coxcomb, Desert Center, Essex, Goffs, Granite, Horn, Hyder, Ibis, Iron Mountain, Laguna, Pilot Knob, Rice, and Young. Each camp was designed to accommodate up to 15,000 soldiers, with a typical layout being a large rectangle three miles long and one mile wide. In addition to the divisional camps there were numerous other installations such as rail sidings, airstrips, hospitals, supply and ammo dumps, laundry facilities, etc. 15 water points were established to draw water from the Colorado River Aqueduct. These were supplemented by wells, canals, and municipal water systems. Other supply and logistics facilities were established as far afield as San Bernardino and Pomona.

In its first few months of operation the DTC trained the initial wave of American soldiers bound for overseas. In the late summer of 1942 Patton and the I Armored Corps were ordered to depart the DTC in order to participate in the upcoming American landing in North Africa, Operation Torch, in which Patton would command the western portion of the invasion forces. Although the DTC will perhaps always be known as "Patton's Desert Training Center", it must be remembered that Patton, even though he helped create the facility and set the tone for later operations, was present in the desert for only a few months.

After Patton's departure the DTC was commanded first by Major General Alvan Gillem and then by Major General Walton Walker. Both the physical area and the scope of training were increased. By March 1943 the North African campaign was in its final stages, and the primary mission of the DTC, to train soldiers to survive and fight in the desert, no longer applied to incoming units which would be deployed to many different theaters throughout the world. The DTC was redesignated the California-Arizona Maneuver Area and tasked with training combat troops, service units, and staffs under realistic conditions similar to what they would experience





overseas. No longer simply a center to train armored units in desert warfare, it provided a realistic maneuver area for infantry divisions, Army Air Force units, engineering and artillery battalions, and supply and service units.

The CAMA was reorganized to include both a Communications Zone and a Combat Zone, eventually extending 350 miles from Pomona east nearly to Phoenix, and 250 miles north from Yuma to Boulder City, Nevada. Thousands of soldiers with their supplies and equipment poured off the trains at such remote desert sidings as Rice, Freda, and Ibis. At the peak of operations, in the summer of 1943, there were approximately 200,000 American servicemen in the area. By the time of its closure in 1944 20 of the U. S. Army's 87 divisions had been stationed here (13 infantry and 7 armored) as well as countless other smaller units, for an estimated total of a million men trained in the desert facility.

Toward the end of 1943 shipments of service and support units overseas were increasing dramatically. Although there were still many soldiers to be trained, the lack of service units to supply and support them became the limiting factor. As a result, the War Department announced that the CAMA would close in May of 1944. Although training ceased as of that date, the center remained nominally in existence into the 1950s while equipment and supplies were collected and shipped to other locations. Italian POWs captured in North Africa were used to help dismantle some of the camps, including Camp Young. Explosive ordnance disposal units cleaned up portions of the facility in the immediate postwar years.

Following the cleanup the entire DTC/CAMA became surplus property. The BLM assumed responsibility for this immense area, and still has jurisdiction over most of it. Between 1951 and 1954 there were additional attempts to clean up unexploded ordnance, although decontaminating this huge stretch of desert was clearly impossible, and undoubtedly some dangerous materials remain today. The camps fell into disuse and were largely neglected in the years after WWII. Today there is increased interest in this great historical resource, and attempts are underway to preserve this history for later generations to experience and enjoy.



## CAMPS HYDER AND HORN

Four of the DTC's 15 divisional camps were located in Arizona: Bouse, Laguna, Hyder and Horn. Camp Hyder is about 70 miles east of Yuma, near the Gila River and in close proximity to Camp Horn. The 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, the first foot soldiers of the DTC, trained here from April to September of 1943. Camp Horn, a short distance west of Hyder, is most closely associated with the 81<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division, which occupied the area from June to November of 1943. Today a large portion of the former camp is owned by a farming company and has been largely cleared of evidence of its former existence. However, a pyramidal memorial honoring seven soldiers who died here still stands. The 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division also trained at this location.

Of interest at this juncture is an account of the "Battle of Palen Pass", which took place just east of today's Joshua Tree National Park. Palen Pass, located between the Granite and the Palen Mountains near Camps Granite, Coxcomb, and Iron Mountain, was the site of several large-scale military maneuvers. The pass was heavily fortified with bunkers, earthworks, and barbed wire.

In late June of 1943 the 77<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division began moving by motor convoy to Palo Verde to begin desert maneuvers as part of the IX Corps. There they joined their teammates, the 7<sup>th</sup> Armored Division. After a road march of 80 miles in a single night they attacked. They completely surprised their "enemy", the 8<sup>th</sup> Motorized Division, in one of the many mock battles in Palen Pass. In this action the performance of the 77<sup>th</sup> was deemed not up to standard and the division was sent back to Camp Hyder for additional training. The 77<sup>th</sup> Division would later see action at Guam, Leyte, Okinawa, and Ie Shima, and served occupation duty in Japan until 1946.

In a similar "battle" in October 1943 the 81<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division moved 200 miles by road to the vicinity of Palen Pass to participate in XV Corps maneuvers. The 81<sup>st</sup>'s opponent was the 79<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, which was entrenched in fortified positions in the pass. Most of the action occurred at night. The importance of digging in, dispersion of forces, and camouflage was



frequently demonstrated as planes made mock strafing runs at such low altitudes that the troops sometimes threw rocks at them! In this particular action the 81<sup>st</sup> Division Wildcats received passing marks and prepared to move to a new station. The division eventually saw action at Peleliu and other islands in the Palau group, on Leyte, and also served occupation duty in Japan.

Palen Pass was considered rough country in an area noted for rugged terrain. It is mentioned in conjunction with the very unofficial "Hyder Campaign Medal." In the words of a soldier who lost 30 pounds during his desert stay, "the Hyder Ribbon is a strip of sandpaper on which is mounted a broken thermometer. If you fought at Palen Pass you can mount one salt tablet on it, and if you climbed Fourth of July Butte you are authorized to wear on it one small cactus lobe."

## **DATELAN ARMY AIR FIELD**

Datelan Army Air Field was established near Camps Hyder and Horn on January 1, 1943. It was a sub-field for nearby Yuma Army Air Field, which was the location of the United States Army Air Force advanced flying school. The site was chosen for its proximity to Yuma, as well as for the availability of abundant fresh water from nearby wells. Construction was completed June 1, 1943. At its peak the field had a garrison of perhaps 160 men. Information is somewhat sketchy, but government documents indicate that the base composed a total of 3,200 acres, and at one time boasted 95 buildings, 3 runways, 4 taxiways, a gasoline station, water system, electrical distribution system, sewage disposal facilities, and perimeter fences. The runways were asphalt, with concrete turning and warmup pads and tie-down areas for the aircraft.

Three auxiliary airstrips with associated ground gunnery ranges were constructed nearby. These were Colfred, Stovall, and Wellton Fields, located between Datelan and Yuma. A fourth auxiliary field was planned for Aztec, about 8 miles east of Datelan, but was never





constructed. Department of Defense records indicate that Datalan Air Field was used until 1946, when it ceased operations due to the end of hostilities.

## **UNITS BASED AT CAMPS HYDER AND HORN**

### **77<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION**

The 77<sup>th</sup> Division was organized in New York in 1917. It was originally called the Metropolitan Division because its personnel came almost entirely from New York City. It was the first American division to reach France in World War I. The famed "Lost Battalion", the subject of a recent made-for-TV movie starring Rick Schroder, was a part of the 77<sup>th</sup> Division. As a result of this action the battalion commander, Major Charles Whittlesey, received the Congressional Medal of Honor.

The 77<sup>th</sup> was deactivated in 1919, then reactivated for World War II in the spring of 1942. Now known as the Liberty Division, it trained for over a year at Camp Hyder and other locations before making its combat debut on the island of Guam. It then fought at Leyte in the Phillipines before spending May and June of 1945 in the front lines on Okinawa. The nearby island of Ie Shima, where some of the fiercest fighting occurred, was the location where famed war correspondent Ernie Pyle was killed by a Japanese sniper. The division also served as a reserve for the Saipan and Iwo Jima invasions. On Okinawa PFC Desmond Doss, a medic in the 307<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 77<sup>th</sup>, received the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions in saving the lives of many Liberty Division soldiers.

After the Japanese surrender the division was assigned to occupation duty on the island of Hokkaido. On March 15, 1946 the Liberty Division was deactivated in Japan. During five operations in three campaigns the 77<sup>th</sup> spent 200 days in combat and suffered more than 2,000 casualties.



During the postwar period the 77<sup>th</sup> was one of six divisions comprising the Army Reserve. In 1967 the 77<sup>th</sup> Army Reserve Command (ARCOM) was formed in a reorganization of the Army Reserve. 77<sup>th</sup> ARCOM units were called to active duty during the Pueblo crisis in 1968, and some of these later served in Vietnam. In 1990 3,500 soldiers from 28 of its component units were mobilized during Operation Desert Storm. They participated in the loading and shipping of thousand of tons of logistical supplies and provided military intelligence units for the campaign, while engineering units constructed roads, buildings, water pipelines and POW camps in support of the Allied effort. In 1995 the 77<sup>th</sup> ARCOM was again reorganized into the 77<sup>th</sup> Regional Support Command, which provided troops for the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

## **81<sup>ST</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION**

The 81<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division was formed at Camp Jackson, South Carolina in August of 1917. It took its name, the Wildcat Division, from Wildcat Creek which flowed through the base. The 81<sup>st</sup> began the practice of wearing a distinguishing shoulder patch, a black wildcat on an olive drab circle, on their uniforms. This elicited howls of protest from other units, and the matter eventually came to the attention of General Pershing. He approved the Wildcat trademark, and further suggested that other Army divisions adopt the practice of wearing distinctive patches.

The Wildcats fought with distinction in the Meuse-Argonne campaign and in other actions. They were deactivated in June 1919 in New Jersey. With the beginning of World War II the division was reactivated in June 1942 at Fort Rucker, Alabama. After training at Camp Horn they sailed to Hawaii in mid-1944. The division, minus one regiment, invaded Anguar in the Palau group in September of that year. The remaining regiment was attached to the 1<sup>st</sup> Marine Division and fought at Peleliu. Elements of the 81<sup>st</sup> then landed on Ulithi, Yap, and nearby islands.

Beginning in January 1945 the division left in increments for New Caledonia, where it



regrouped and resumed training. It went into action at Leyte in the Philippines in May and participated in mopping-up operations in the northwestern part of the island. After the surrender soldiers of the 81<sup>st</sup> performed occupation duties in Japan's Aomori Prefecture until the division was deactivated in January of 1946.

In the postwar period the Wildcats were reactivated as an Army Reserve division in November 1947. Although considered for recall to active duty during the Korean War, it remained in Reserve status until 1965, when it was again deactivated. Two years later it was reorganized as the 81<sup>st</sup> ARCOM, and three of its units were deployed to Vietnam. In 1990 81<sup>st</sup> ARCOM troops were some of the first Reserve units called up for duty in Operation Desert Storm, and nearly 6,000 of them served during the Gulf War, most in the Middle East. 81<sup>st</sup> soldiers also participated in relief efforts after Hurricane Andrew struck south Florida in 1992. In 1993 they supported Operation Restore Hope in Somalia and a year later helped with humanitarian relief efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In 1995 the 81<sup>st</sup> ARCOM was reorganized into the 81<sup>st</sup> Regional Support Command. Under this restructuring the 81<sup>st</sup> became the largest Army Reserve command in the United States. It encompasses the states of Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, the Carolinas, Kentucky, Tennessee, and Florida and exercises control over more than 30,000 soldiers.

## **104<sup>TH</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION**

The 104<sup>th</sup>, the Timberwolf Division, was organized as a Reserve division in July 1921, three years after the close of World War I. Its manpower was to be drawn from the western states of Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Utah and Nevada. With the outbreak of World War II the 104<sup>th</sup> was constituted as an active division in September 1942 at Camp Adair, Oregon. After training at Camp Horn and other locations, it landed in France in September of 1944 and soon moved to





Belgium, where it relieved the British 49<sup>th</sup> Division and joined the British First Corps of the Canadian First Army. The 413<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 104<sup>th</sup> became the first American troops to relieve an Allied (as opposed to American) unit on the Western Front, and the first Americans to fight under the command of an Allied Army in this theater of operations. The 104<sup>th</sup> liberated German-held territory in Holland, then moved to near Aachen, Germany to join the American Seventh Corps of the U. S. First Army, minus some units left in Holland to secure the liberated areas. In November the division went on the offensive and saw heavy fighting in Germany, crossing the Roer River and eventually entering Cologne (Köln). It then attacked east of the Remagen bridgehead. In March it joined forces with the U. S. 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division to mop up resistance in the Ruhr Pocket, eventually making contact with the advancing Red Army in April. On May 5, 1945 the division lost contact with the enemy after experiencing 195 consecutive days of combat.

The 104<sup>th</sup> left Europe in June and was stationed at San Luis Obispo, California while awaiting deployment to the Pacific Theater. Its role in the planned invasion of Japan was to stage through the Philippines and become part of an 11-division floating reserve that was to back up Operation Coronet, the invasion of Japan's main island of Honshu, slated for March 1946. With news of the Japanese surrender, however, the division was deactivated in December 1945.



## A NOTE ON SOURCES

The main source of information on the DTC-CAMA for this article was the BLM's recent publication **The Desert Training Center/California-Arizona Maneuver Area, 1942-1944: Historical and Archaeological Contacts** by Matt C. Bischoff, published in 2000 by Statistical Research, Inc. of Tucson, Arizona. Also of great use was **Patton's Desert Training Center** by John S. Lynch, John W. Kennedy, and Robert Wooley. It was originally published as issue number 47, *Journal of the Council on America's Military Past (CAMP)* at Fort Myers, Virginia in December 1982. Additional reference was made to material researched and written by XNGH Bill Pearson for previous Clampouts involving the DTC. Other suggested sources for those interested in reading more about the DTC-CAMA are **The Land That God Forgot: The Saga of Gen. George Patton's Desert Training Camps** by Brigadier General David C. Henley published in conjunction with the Western Military History Association in 2000, and the BLM's **Desert Training Center: California-Arizona Maneuver Area Interpretive Plan, 1986**. Information on the 77<sup>th</sup>, 81<sup>st</sup> and 104<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions was taken from official division histories.