

VC Co. G storms Guadalcanal with Marines



American World War II
Heritage City

Valley City
North Dakota

Valley City's Company G Infantry had vital role in WWII Victory

The Valley City North Dakota's National Guard was first organized in March of 1884 as Company G, Dakota Militia, Dakota Territory. The unit was first called to duty in May 1898 to serve in the Spanish American War; they were also part of the Mexican border campaign from June 1916-February 1917, and were on active duty for the First World War where the troops served from March 1917-February 1919. But the company's biggest call to action would come with the start of World War II.

On February 10, 1941, Company G was mobilized for a year of active federal training. More than 1,500 ND officers and men



were sent to Camp Claiborne in Louisiana; 112 men of Company G reported for roll call. The Congress of the United States would declare war against Japan on December 8, 1941.

Company G was then transferred to Montana and local folk hoped the troops would be used for guard duty in the western states. But by April of 1942, Company G landed with the 164th Infantry of North Dakota in Australia to fight under General Douglas MacArthur.

From the New York Times – "The first unit of the 164th Infantry to come to actual grips with the Japanese on Guadalcanal was the First Platoon of Company G of the Second Battalion, which was sent up early the night of October 23 (1942) to reinforce the Seventh Marines at the start of the "Battle of Coffin Corner."

During the first five days of the 164th's landing at Guadalcanal, 117 men were killed. During the battle for Henderson Field, an estimated 1,700 Japanese were killed, while the 164th suffered 26 killed and 52 wounded. The 164th continued with other battles and patrols through February 1943, and the unit saw 147 men lose their lives. The regiment received the Navy's Presidential Unit Citation.

The 164th left Guadalcanal then moved on to Bougainville, part of the Solomon Islands, where it served until November 1944.

The Legacy of Company G lives on in the 231st Brigade Support Battalion

Company G would see action in the Korean Conflict from 1950-1953 before the unit was renamed in 1955 as the 141st Engineer Combat Battalion, headquartered in Valley City. In 2004, the 141st served with distinction in Operation Iraqi Freedom, assigned to Task Force Trailblazer; four of its members were killed in action. Another transformation came in 2008 when the 141st colors were retired, and the Valley City National Guard unit became the 231st Brigade Support Battalion.

The 2005 legislature passed a bill to honor the 164th Infantry and name Highway 2 from Grand Forks to the Montana border the 164th Infantry Highway. There are four signs along that stretch of Highway 2 in North Dakota. One was damaged and then relocated to the Veterans Memorial Park in Valley City after repairs.

The sign reads in part: The 164th Infantry Regiment of the 'Americal' Division was the first US Army unit to take offensive action against the enemy (in either Theatre of Operation) during World War II on Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, when they reinforced the First Marine Division on 13 October 1942. Men of the 164th Infantry Regiment were awarded the US Navy Presidential Unit Citation for their part in the battle of Henderson Field on 23-26 October 1942. The 164th Infantry Regiment spent nearly 600 days in combat and suffered 325 killed in action, and 1193 wounded. Regimental soldiers earned the following decorations: 1 Navy Cross, 6 Distinguished Service Cross-es, 89 Silver Stars, 199 Bronze Stars, 7 Legions of Merit, 10 Soldier's Medals, and approximately 2000 Purple Hearts. The regiment also earned the Republic of the Philippines Presidential Unit Citation.

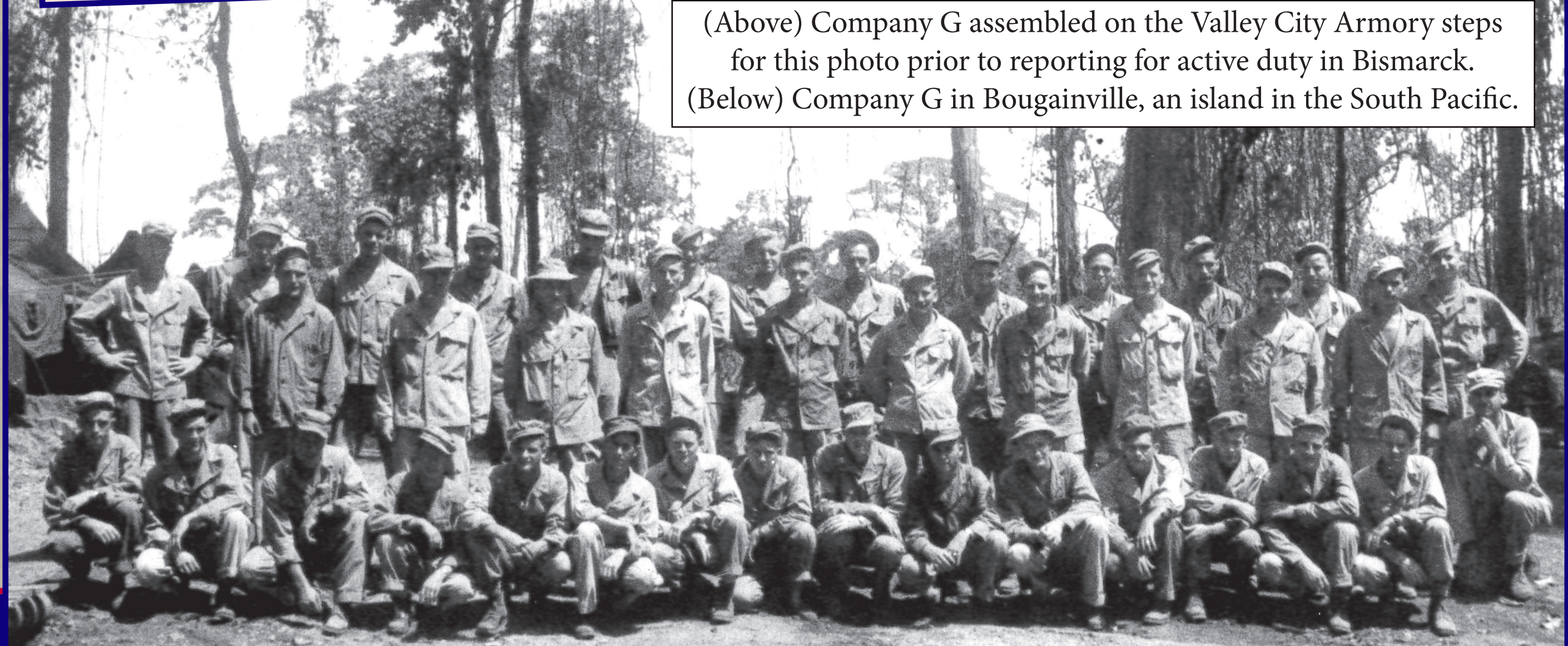
'Going Our Way, Buddy?' ...



With the Americal Infantry Division in the Philippine Islands—Goin' our way, buddy? If you are you're heading for the States, because these two North Dakota soldiers are being sent home under the overseas rotation plan after three years' service in the Pacific. On the left is First Sergeant Luther McHattie, son of Mr. and Mrs. R. J. McHattie and husband of Mrs. Helen McHattie, of Valley City. Toting the barracks bag and sign is Technical Sergeant Bruce McKay, son of Mrs. H. K. McKay, of Valley City, and husband of Mrs. Irene McKay, of Milltown, Mont. The veteran infantrymen fought at Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and the Philippines with the Americal division.



(Above) Company G assembled on the Valley City Armory steps for this photo prior to reporting for active duty in Bismarck.
(Below) Company G in Bougainville, an island in the South Pacific.



Want more information?

Visit the Barnes County Museum at 315 Central Ave North in Historic Downtown Valley City or scan the QR Code to connect to the Barnes County Historical Society website.

