



History of the 125th Field Artillery “Faithful”

Organized April 15, 1887, the Minnesota Reserve National Guard became the 3rd Infantry Regiment (IR) with Headquarters in St. Paul. The companies were in the following locations:

Company A	St. Cloud Guards
Company B	Hibernian Rifles
Company C	St. Paul Sons of Veterans
Company D	Zumbrota Guards
Company E	Owatonna Sons of Veterans
Company F	Luverne Guards
Company G	Crookston Rifles
Company H	Morristown Sons of Veterans
Company I	Ada Guards
Company K	Brainerd Reserve Company

The unit was recognized in 1889, as a unit in the National Guard of Minnesota. Early in Minnesota history, the governor felt head had responsibility to stop all civil disturbances. The unit saw state duty in 1889. The newspapers of this time were not union supporters. The riots were started by a small number of violent leaders with the rest of the workers following their lead. Luckily the guard duty did not become violent, as in Chicago at the same time when conflicts erupted between National Guardsmen and railroad strikers.

Spanish-American War/Indian Uprising

The 3rd Minnesota Regiment reorganized and was re-designated May 4, 1898, as the 14th Minnesota Volunteer Infantry. It was the first state to mobilize for the Spanish American War and the Phillipine Insurrection.

It mustered into Federal service may 8, 1898, at St. Paul as the 14th Regiment.

Companies A, C, G	Duluth
Company B	Anoka
Company E	Merriam Park
Company F	Fergus Falls
Company H	Olivia

Company M	Princeton
Company I	At Large

They went to Camp Thomas at Chickamauga National Park, Georgia for the duration of the war. The regiment saw no action against Spain. The regiment moved back to St. Paul on August 1898. Before they were mustered out of the Army, they were ordered to Leech Lake to stop an expected Indian uprising. A Captain with a detachment of the 3rd US Infantry was ambushed by Anishinabe (called Chippewas by the Sioux) at Sugar Point. The Captain and five men were killed. Governor David Clough immediately asked the War Department for the use of the 14th Regiment. Once the War Department gave him permission, Governor Clough immediately sent units to Bemidji under the commands of Capt. F. E. Resche and Capt. H. V. Eva. The Indian uprising did not happen as was expected. The troops soon returned to furlough status. The 14th Regiment was mustered out of Federal service November 18, 1898 at Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

The 14th Regiment was reorganized in 1900 in the Minnesota National Guard as the 3rd Infantry with Headquarters at Duluth. On July 1, 1900, Company A from Duluth was ordered to Koochiching, where Indians where Indians were causing problems after the settlers in this location sold them liquor. Once the unit was on site, the problems subsided.

Mexican Border Conflict

The unit was again mustered into Federal service June 30, 1916 at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. They were to help the Army patrol the Mexican border and attempt to capture Francisco “Pancho” Villa. Pancho Villa was a Mexican bandit who attacked southwestern towns while Mexico went through internal problems just after the Mexican Revolution. General Pershing was sent down to find and capture Pancho Villa and his band. The 3rd IR bivouacked near Llano Grande, 3 miles west of Mercedes and 40 miles up the river from Brownsville, Texas. The 3rd Regiment was with the 2nd Indiana Infantry and the 6th Nebraska Infantry. Just before leaving for Camp Llano Grande, Colonel Eva from Duluth was commissioned Colonel and placed in command of the Regiment. The only action the unit saw was on border outpost duty. The unit was mustered out of Federal service December 19, 1916 at Fort Snelling, Minnesota.

World War I

After the outbreak of World War I, the 3rd IR was mustered into Federal service on July 24, 1917. The unit was then re-designated October 1, 1917, as the 125th Field Artillery Regiment (125th FA) was assigned to the 34th Sandstorm Division and sent to Camp Cody, New Mexico. The unit trained for a year. It was sent to Liverpool, England on October 5th and went to the province of Medoc, France where the unit saw combat in the final months of war. The 125th FA remained at Medoc until after the Armistice, which was signed on November 1918. The regiment was sent to France and was the only unit of the 34th Division to earn a battle streamer. The unit was demobilized January 8, 1919 at Camp Dodge , Iowa.

Re-organized in 1921-1926 in the Minnesota National Guard, the 125th FA itself was reactivated and reorganized in Duluth in 1924 under Col. Elmer W. McDevitt. As a Captain in the 125th FA during World War I, Col. McDevitt was instrumental in making the 125th FA part of the Minnesota National Guard lineage. He commissioned someone to make the Battalion Shield and worked with the Department of the Army to find the actual lineage of the 125th FA. The battalion standard he helped create has a blue lower half bearing the infantry blue to symbolize the old 3rd Infantry and a red upper half representing the field artillery. A sheathed Roman sword represents the Spanish-American War, a quiver of arrows from the Northeast Minnesota Indian wars, and a cactus representing the Mexican border conflict. Records, in the State Adjutant General's Office, shows numerous correspondence between the War Department and Col. McDevitt. He did more to establish the 125th as a proud FA unit than any other officer. He commanded the 125th FA unit his untimely death just before World War II. He commanded the unit for 16 years.

World War II

The 125th FA was inducted into Federal service at Anoka and Duluth, Minnesota on February 10, 1941. The Regiment was broken up February 1, 1942. Its elements were reorganized and re-designated as 125th Artillery Battalion, 34th Infantry Division (ID).

After mobilization with the 34th ID, the unit moved to Camp Claibourne, in central Louisiana. The camp was located 20 miles south of the town of Alexandria. The unit trained with the French 75mm-towed howitzer. In September 1941, the unit participated in the Louisiana Maneuvers (the Army's largest peace time maneuvers). There were 460,000 Soldiers who participated in the exercise.

On December 7, 1941, Japanese naval forces attacked and destroyed the American naval fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. A declaration of war followed. Concern for coastal defense saw the 135th Infantry Battalion sent to coastal cities with batteries from the 125th FA in support. The 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry with one artillery battery was sent to Fort Barrancas, Florida. The 2nd Battalion with the Regimental Headquarters and one artillery battery was sent to the Port of New Orleans. The 3rd Battalion with one artillery battery was sent to Texas City, Texas to protect the oil refineries and storage tanks.

In April 30, 1942, the unit boarded ships at New York Port of Embarkation for movements to Londonderry, Northern Ireland. They arrived at Belfast on May 10.

The unit embarked in December 1942 for North Africa and participated in the North African Campaign. The Battalion participated in many campaigns of the war. It supported the 135th IR during most of their campaigns with light artillery guns, the British 25 pounders in Tunisia and later the towed 105mm howitzer in Italy. The 125th FA Fired over 250,000 round of artillery ammunition in 480 days of combat, more than any other battalion.

The Battalion's first combat rounds were fired near Pichon, Tunisia in North Africa. In the Algerian desert with the 5th Army Training Center, the battalion conducted experiments with the Army's new 105mm howitzer and the M-10 tank destroyers. The M-10 destroyers were attached to the 125th FA after the unit came ashore at Salerno, Italy on September 22-24, 1943.

The unit crossed the Volturno River three times. The 100th Battalion made up of Japanese American from Hawaii was attached to the 133rd IR to bring the unit up to full strength. The 100th Battalion, later attached to the 442nd "Go For Broke" Regiment, went on to become the most decorated unit in the history of the United States Army. The 125th FA has a strong role at Piedimonte d'Alife where they destroyed one attacking German tank and disabled several using a "Cub" observer plan flying over enemy lines on October 21, 1943, the 135th IR moved through the 133rd IR. Their mission was to attack the German 8th Panzer Grenadier Regiment strongly entrenched on the hills east of Raviscanina. On October 27th, the 125th FA knocked out two enemy tanks and shelled propaganda against the German positions on Hill 235.

Across the Vernafro hills to San Vittore, Mount Pantano and Mount Trocchio, the 125th FA assisted the infantry who advanced to Cassino, part of the German Gustav Line. The 125th FA dug deep, permanent gun pits at the edge of Purple Heart Valley, about 4,000 yards from Cassino. They fired for 33 days until February 19, 1944, when Cassino fell. A 125th observer ventured beyond the Cassino's Monastery Hill and was captured by two Germans, but returned unharmed to his camp when a shell killed both of his captors.

Another observer, 1st Lt. Albert B. Konikoff of Washington D.C., set up his outpost at the rest of a Cassino hill that was the direct goal of German counterattacking force. Keeping his ground, he directed the heavy fire that eventually repelled the enemy force. The Lieutenant was killed in the fight. For two months the 125th FA assumed a variety of artillery roles on the Anzio beach. They fired surrender leaflets at the Germans. They spotted and harassed enemy batteries and supported raining parties.

On June 4, 1944, near Rome, the 125th FA and 135th IR, moving with the 1st Armored Division was the first unit to march into the city. After a brief respite, the unit was back in action. June 25, 1944, the 34th ID was now composed of four combat teams; the 133rd, 135th, 168th and the 442nd (Nisei "Go For Broke") Infantry Regimental Combat Teams. On June 26, the 105mm howitzers of the 125th supported the Division, which smashed through south of Rombina. German defenses from Suvereto to the sea, crumbled. Their command post was overrun and launders of prisoners were taken.

At the Battle of Cicino River, the Division attacked with three regiments abreast. The 135th IR that bore the brunt of the previous battle for Cecina was held in reserve. They faced a formidable enemy force. The German 14th Army composed of General von Sengers' XIV Panzer Corps. Whenever the 135th IR was engaged, the 125th FA fired their howitzers in support. The

125th FA was prominent in the drive to Ceceina, Leghorn and the fighting, the forces pushed their way to Monte Adone.

The unit took their artillery pieces up the mountain trails lying west of Highway 65 and the Futa Pass. The men crossed the Gothic Line in a wilderness route. On December 26, 1944, the German L1 Mountain Corps, which repelled the XIV Panzer Corps, launched an attack. During the night of December 27, the 125th FA spent the night moving their 105mm howitzers from their gun pits through the mud to the hard surface road. By 1300 hours the 125th FA reached Florence. They were ordered to the west coast. The Germans had broken through the 92nd Division. The Battalion set up their howitzers behind the 135th Regiment and the 92nd Division. The 4th Indian Division retook the land lost by the 92nd Division. The front was re-established.

In February 1945, the Division, as part of the 5th Army launched a heavy attack and reached Bologna and moved through the Po Valley, part of the German Gothic Line. The 34th ID was given the mission to move north across the Po River and cut off German escape routes into Austria. On May 1, the German LXXV Corps surrendered in Milan to Maj. Gen. Charles L. Bolte, commander of the 34th ID. On 1200 hours on May 2 all hostilities ceased in Italy.

The Battalion moved to Naples where it was quartered at the University of Naples. The unit departed Naples on October 22. The convoy arrived at Newport News, Virginia on November 3. The Soldiers were transported by bus to Camp Patrick Henry. The 125th FA was inactivated November 3, 1945 at Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia and relieved June 10, 1946 from assignment to the 34th ID.

Reorganization

The unit consolidated, reorganized and was Federally recognized on February 20, 1947. Headquarters, 125th FA Battalion (reconstituted August 4, 1945 in the Minnesota National Guard) at Anoka was assigned to the newly organized 47th ID, Minnesota Army National Guard. The other batteries included Battery A at St. James, Battery B at Windom, Battery C at Jackson and Service Battery at St. Peter, Minnesota.

Korean War

The unit was ordered into an active Federal service January 16, 1951 for the Korean War. The unit served as a training battalion at Camp Rucker, Alabama. Many of its members saw action in the Korean War as replacements at Camp Rucker, Alabama. Many of its members saw action in the Korean War as replacements for units in Korea. The unit took part in the Longhorn Maneuvers in the early part of 1952 at Fort Hood, Texas. In the latter part of 1952, the unit began to demobilize. The unit was released from active duty on December 2, 1954. The 125th FA was released December 2, 1954 from active Federal service and reverted to state control.

Reorganization

The unit was consolidated February 22, 1959 with the 257th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion and reorganized and re-designated as the 125th Artillery, 216th Combat Arms Regiment, a parent regiment under the Combat Arms Regimental System. It consisted of 1st and 2nd Battalions in Duluth with the A Battery in Cloquet and B Battery in Pine City, and the 3rd Howitzer Battalion in Southern Minnesota, which were assigned as elements of the 47th ID. Headquarters and Headquarters Battery were in St. Paul.

Reorganized April 1, 1963, 2nd and 3rd Battalions became elements of the 47th ID. The 1st Battalion was disbanded. 2nd Battalion, 125th Artillery was equipped with the Honest John Rocket while the 3rd Battalion was armed with the 105mm howitzer. During the 1960's the unit also received riot training to help local police departments peacefully control anti-war demonstrations.

Reorganized February 1, 1968, 1st and 2nd Battalion became elements of the 47th ID. Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, and Service Battery, 151st Artillery and the 3rd Battalion, 125th Artillery combined to organize the 1st Battalion, 125th Artillery. The battalion was designated as a "Select Reserve Force (SRF) organization. The 1st Battalion, 125th FA became a 155mm-towed howitzer battalion and was equipped with eighteen howitzers, six per firing battery. It was a non-divisional organization that had a General Support-Reinforcing role. It had a nuclear capability and was organized as a Corps type artillery battalion. The unit also took time for riot control training during this period and participated in riot control around the state.

On January 8, 1972, the battalion was reorganized. It was re-designated May 1, 1972 as the 125th FA. Headquarters and Headquarters Battery location was changed from West St. Paul to New Ulm, Minnesota. The remaining units stayed the same; A Battery in Windom, B Battery at Jackson, C Battery at St. James and Service Battery at St. Peter.

The 125th FA Battalion was organized April 1, 1977 to form the 1st Battalion. In March 1990, the unit was sent to Korea and participated in the I Corps Exercise Team Spirit 90 for 3 weeks. This was the first overseas deployment the battalion sized element from Minnesota since World War II. They employed the M114, 155mm-towed howitzer.

34th Infantry Division

The 47th ID, Minnesota Army National Guard was re-designated the 34th ID on February 10, 1991. The battalion joined the 34th ID as a Direct Support Battalion to 1st Brigade in August 1992.

The unit converted weapons systems in a relatively short period of time. The unit converted to M198/155mm towed in August 1991. The unit returned to the M101/105mm towed, on January 1992. Another conversion occurred in November 1993 from the M101 to the M102,

105mm towed. On July 1996, the unit turned over the M101 for the M109A5, 155mm self-propelled howitzer.

During 1996 and the winter 1997, the unit helped numerous stranded motorists in Southern Minnesota utilizing the small unit support vehicle (SUSV).

Norway Deployment/Natural Disasters

1997 was a historical year for the Battalion. It participated in its first Adventure Express exercise in Northern Norway. Headquarters and Battery A participated in supporting the 6th Norwegian Artillery Regiment in a Field Training Exercise. Battery A was armed with US Army-Europe M109A5 self-propelled howitzers. The Fire Support personnel coordinated fires in the deep snows in the mountains alongside the Norwegian Artillery Rangers. This exercise with the Norwegian 6th Division gave the battalion a general support role. The exercise practiced NATO strategy. Participants were from Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Land, air and naval forces were involved with the field training. The battalion will be training annually in Norway as part of the Norwegian 6th ID.

The unit saw state duty in 1997 to fight floods in the Minnesota and Red River Valleys. That spring the unit also saw service on flood duty, with much of the battalion assigned to Task Force South and helped in the New Ulm area. The Fire Support Detachment was sent the Task Force North to Moorhead and East Grand Forks in the Red River Valley. This was the largest civil exercise in the history of the Minnesota National Guard.

In March 1998, headquarters of the 1st Battalion 125th FA traveled to Setermoen Garrison in Bardu, Northern Norway to participate in a Command Post Exercise, Strong Resolve 98. The CPX supported the 6th Artillery Regiment of the Norwegian 6th Division along with a combined NATO force composed of units of the US Marines and Soldiers from Italy, the United Kingdom and Germany.

Three days after the unit returned from Norway, the Soldiers were mobilized to assist the communities of Southwest Minnesota when a tornado tore through the communities of Comfrey, St. James, Le Center and St. Peter. St. Peter suffered severe damage to the town, residential area and the local Gustavus Adolphus College. Comfrey was considered totally destroyed; though the residents vowed to rebuild. Realizing that the condition was serious, Soldiers reported to St. James, New Ulm and St. Peter armories without being called. They were already assisting the communities when the notification came from State Headquarters to mobilize the units.

The kitchen at the St. Peter armory was manned by both Guardsmen and civilian volunteers. Mobile kitchen trailers were set up at Comfrey to help the residents. Soldiers assisted the Red Cross, Salvation Army, local law enforcement and Federal Emergency Management (FEMA) personnel.

During Annual Training (AT) 1998 at Camp Ripley, the Battalion joined the other units from Division Artillery. The Battalion was joined by the 1-120th FA (Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin) with its M109A5 self-propelled howitzers, the 1-194th FA, Air Assault (Ford Dodge, Iowa) with 105mm howitzers and the Division's general support battery, F Battery (Roseville) with M109A5's. The 1-151st FA (Montevideo) with M198, 155mm towed howitzers remained with the DIVARTY for the first week of training.

During the AT period, the 1-125th FA did well and at the end of AT they were honored with two very prestigious awards. A howitzer section from A Battery (Pipestone-Luverne) was awarded the DIVARTY "Top Gun" award. Spec. Adam T. Lint from HHB Det. 1 (Fire Support), Anoka was awarded the DIVARTY "Top Shooter" award.

During AT, the Norwegian Artillery battalion Commander, Lt. Col. Tor O. Øon and his staff paid a visit to the field training at Camp Ripley. Maj. Oystein Paulsen, the artillery regiment logistics officer, mentioned the differences in resupply methods between the Norwegian and American forces.

In January 9-10, 1999, the Battalion performed a field training exercise Camp Ripley. With temperatures falling to -24° Fahrenheit, the troops showed they were well prepared for the Norway deployment in February. The firing batteries participated in live fire and the combat support elements trained in cold weather operations to resupply all of the units.

The unit locations are: Headquarters and Headquarters Battery in New Ulm, Fire Support Detachment in Anoke, A Battery in Luverne and Pipestone, B Battery in Jackson, C Battery in St. James and Service Battery in St. Peter.

The heritage of the 125th FA is long and proud. Campaign credits and decorations earned by the battalion and individuals are many. The Battalion has brought honor upon itself, its Division and the Minnesota Army National Guard. Wherever and whenever it is called to serve, the 125th is ready.

CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

World War I

Streamer without inscription

World War II

Tunisia

Naples-Foggia

Anzio

Rome-Arno

North Apennines

Po Valley

Battery B (Jackson) and Battery C (St. James), 1st Battalion, each additionally entitled to:

Rhineland

Central Europe

Battery B (Pine City), 2nd Battalion, 125th Artillery, additionally entitled to:

Southern France

Rhineland

Ardennes-Alsace

Central Europe

DECORATIONS

French Croix de Guerre with Palm, World War II. Streamer embroidered BELVEDERE

French Croix de Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star, World War II. Streamer embroidered

FROSINONE, ITALY

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Anoka County Historical Genealogical Society, Anoka, Minnesota
Brown County Museum, New Ulm, Minnesota
Cottonwood County Historical Society, 812 4th Ave., Windom, Minnesota 56101
Jackson County Museum, Lakefield, Minnesota
Pipestone Museum, Pipestone, Minnesota

Some Things You Never Forget, Five Battle Starts From Tunisia to the Po Valley, 1996, by Sergeant Clem W. Miller, Savage Press, Superior, Wisconsin can be purchased directly from the publishers.
Phone: 1-800-732-3867

The Gopher Gunners, A History of Minnesota's 151st Field Artillery, Lt. Col. (Retired) Francis J. Vojta can be purchased from the Military Museum, Camp Ripley, Minnesota.