

ERWIN PRIESKORN AND THE RED ARROW DIVISION

After World War I, American Legion Post No. 46 added the name Erwin Prieskorn owing to his being an early Ann-Arbor casualty from the Red Arrow (32nd) Division on September 26, 1918. Cpl. Erwin Ottmer Prieskorn (with a nickname of Happy, shortened to Hap) was born on April 1, 1897, to Mr. and Mrs. Gustave Prieskorn. Erwin's mother's maiden name was Mary Schultz (1870-1901); with Gustave (1861-1910), they had five sons (John, Henry, Oscar, Walter and Erwin) and one daughter (Viola). Erwin was the youngest boy.

An October 5, 1910, obituary for Gustave reported that he was born in Germany and came to this country in 1869 as an eight-year old boy. Gustave was a valued employee of the Ann Arbor Gas Company for fourteen years, but in 1905 he had to cease working for them owing to medical reasons. He was a brava (good) Christian man and a long-standing member of the Bethlehem Church. The family address is given as 217 South Fourth Avenue. All of the children attended public school in Ann Arbor. Then both ^{OSCAR}~~Henry~~ and Erwin started as meter readers for Detroit Edison. In 1916, Erwin and brother Walter joined Company I of the Michigan National Guard and were sent to Texas to be on border patrol during the Mexican troubles with Villistas. Walter died of pneumonia in Texas.

When war against Germany was declared on April 6, 1917, state National-Guard infantry regiments from both Michigan (Wolverines) and Wisconsin (Badgers) were assembled for further training at Camp Mac Arthur, Waco, Texas. The 32nd Division of these troops was organized under War Department orders of July 18, 1917, to include the 63rd (MI) and 64th (WI) infantry brigades. The 63rd had the 125th and 126th regiments; the 64th had the 127th and 128th regiments. Each regiment had three battalions,

and each battalion had four companies of 200 men (plus 4 officers) each. Hence, each infantry brigade contained roughly 4800 men. In addition, there was the 57th brigade of field artillery composed of three regiments. Also included were the 107th regiment of engineers and 107th signal battalion.

Cpl. Erwin Prieskorn was attached to Company E, 126th Infantry Regiment, 63rd Brigade, 32nd Division. On January 24th, 1918, the advance party of the 32nd Division arrived at Brest, France. From May to November, 1918, they were six months under fire, with but ten days in a rest area. They fought on five fronts in three major offensives - the Aisne-Marne, Oise-Aisne and Meuse-Argonne. It was on the Juvigny front (east of Soissons) during the second of these offensives that Erwin received severe shrapnel wounds while on patrol around August ²⁸ 31, 1918. He passed away in a military hospital some ²⁹ 26 days later to be buried in a National Cemetery in France.

Including replacements, the 32nd Division suffered 14,000 casualties from all causes. They met and vanquished twenty-three German divisions from which 2153 prisoners were taken. Under the leadership of Maj. Gen. William Haan, they gained 38 kilometers in four attacks and repulsed every enemy counter attack. They were still in action east of the Meuse when the Armistice was signed. Composed of Michigan and Wisconsin National Guardsmen, they jointly adopted the Red-Arrow insignia - signifying that the Division shot through every line the enemy put before it. They were also given the name of "Les Terribles" by Gen. Mangin's Tenth French Army.

After serving five months in Germany as an Army of Occupation under Maj. Gen. William Lassiter, they became homeward bound for the United States and were demobilized in May, 1919.

The World War II chronology of the Red Arrow Division is as follows:

- Oct. 15, 1940: Inducted into Federal service.
- April 22, 1942: Sailed from San Francisco for the South-west Pacific.
- May 14, 1942: Landed in Adelaide, Australia.
- July 18, 1942: Division moved to Brisbane, Queensland.
- Sept. 18, 1942: First elements committed in World War II in New Guinea.
- Oct. 11, 1942: 126th Infantry, 2nd Battalion, began the long march across the Owen Stanley range.
- Nov. 9-11, 1942: 126th Infantry flown to Pongani.
- Jan. 22, 1943: Buna-Sanananda campaign completed.
- April 8, 1943: Division completed movement to Australia.
- Sept. 4, 1943: Division began movement to New Guinea for the second time.
- Jan. 2, 1944: 126th regimental combat team landed at Saidor.
- April 22, 1944: RCT took part in Altapo landing.
- Sept. 15, 1944: 126th RCT took part in Morotai landing.
- Nov. 14, 1944: 32nd Division arrived at Leyte.
- Nov. 16, 1944: Red Arrow men committed at Leyte.
- Jan. 27, 1945: 32nd landed on Luzon.
- Jan. 30, 1945: The Red Arrow Division went into action in the Sixth Army's I Corps Sector in Northern Luzon.
- June 1, 1945: It took 119 days to secure the Villa Verde Trail with the loss of 916 Red Arrow men. Japanese casualties numbered ten times more.
- Sept. 2, 1945: Lieut. Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita, the man they called the "Tiger of Malaya" and "Butcher of Bataan", came into the 32nd's lines to surrender.

Wolverine and Badger militia met initially during the Civil War to form the Iron Brigade under Wisconsin native, Rufus King. They were

identifiable by dark blue uniforms and black slouch hats rather than French kepis. Rufus King was soon replaced by Brig. Gen. John Gibbon. It was thought that King was inebriated on facing the enemy when actually he was a victim of epilepsy. The Iron Brigade performed admirably during the Second Battle of Bull Run, South Mountain, Antietam and Fredericksburg. During the first day at Gettysburg, Brig. Gen. Solomon Meredith led 1829 men of the Iron Brigade against Archer's and Pettigrew's Confederate Brigades. They clashed in the woods of McPherson's Ridge; the Confederate advance stalled because of stiff Wolverine-Badger resistance. Maj. Gen. John F. Reynolds rode up to urge the Iron Brigade forward and was killed by a sniper. Faced with superior numbers, the Union troops withdrew to reform on Seminary Ridge. Gen. Meredith was also wounded in the conflict and relinquished command early the next day. Iron-Brigade survivors then joined Brig. Gen. James S. Wadsworth to see further action on Culp's Hill.

More recently, veterans of the marches across the terrible Owen Stanley range in New Guinea and the mountains of Leyte have jokingly remarked that "Our Red-Arrow insignia ought to be the horns of a mountain goat!" Metallurgically, association with strong, tough iron (protected from corrosion with a thin film of good leadership) also seems suitable.

William C. Hagel

February 24, 2002

REFERENCES

1. Family information provided January 29, 2002, by Robert Prieskorn, son of Erwin's brother, ^{OSIAR.} Henry.
2. Joint War History Commissions of Michigan and Wisconsin: "The 32nd Division in the World War" (1920).
3. John M. Carlisle: "Red Arrow Men", Arnold-Powers, Inc., Detroit (1945).
4. Carl Smith: "Gettysburg 1863", Barnes and Noble, New York (1998).

ATTACHMENTS

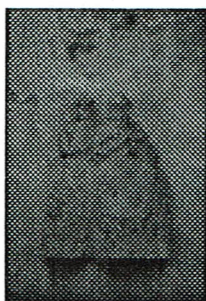
- I. Military photographs of Erwin Prieskorn (1897-1918).
- II. Washtenaw County Courthouse Memorial.
- III. Commanders - American Legion Erwin Prieskorn Post #46.





Dominick DeMattia, Corporal Harris Russell, "Happy" Prescorn, all of Ann Arbor, Mich., who are now overseas with a U. S. Infantry Company.

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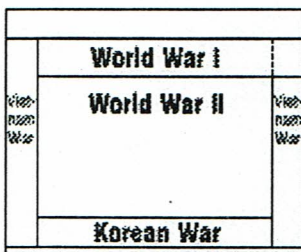


Washtenaw County Courthouse relief

Genealogical Society of Washtenaw County, Michigan, Inc.
Washtenaw County Data Files

Washtenaw County War Memorials
Washtenaw County Courthouse Memorial
Washtenaw County Courthouse
Ann Arbor, Michigan

- Inscription -



On the wall just to your left as you go in through the main entrance to the Washtenaw County Courthouse is a large memorial plaque which originally listed Washtenaw County soldiers who died in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. More recently, Vietnam War soldiers were added in the left and right margins, as indicated in the diagram to the left. The name of Emil A. Jacob was added to the World War I list at the same time. The horizontal lines indicate column breaks; there were originally seven columns of names across the plaque. The number of names listed are 65 under World War I, 188 under World War II, 30 under the Korean War, and 59 under the Vietnam War. (The Washtenaw County Vietnam Veterans Memorial lists 74.)

IN LOVING MEMORY OF THOSE FROM WASHTENAW COUNTY
WHO MADE THE SUPREME SACRIFICE

WORLD WAR I

ALDEN, SPENCER T. AGER, CHAS. BARR, HOLLIS C. BARRY, LEWIS W. BLAIR, WILLIAM P. BORDE, CHET BROWN, RODNEY F. CARPENTER, GILBERT V.	FELDKAMP, HERBERT GARDENIER, HAROLD GERKE, WILLIAM GIBSON, EDWARD B. JR. GLADFETTER, EARL I. GRAF, ERNEST GREY, MARVIN B. GOODHEW, HARRY J.	JAMES, ELTON M. KATOPODIS, JOHN LAJORES, LOUIS LERTRUM, RUDOLPH LIEGENBEIN, WILLIAM J. LINDSEY, BERT A. LUTZ, WILLIAM JR. LYNCH, JAMES	OWAD, PETER PRIESKORN, ERWIN RABB, ROHRBACKER, CLARENCE W. RUSSELL, RALPH A. SMITH, DELBERT SMITH, REYNOLDS R. SPRAGUE, WILLIAM G.
CHAPMAN, WILBUR R. CRANE, RALPH V. DALEY, ALFRED T. DAVIN, HENRY A. DETTLING, ROY S. DIEMAN, HARRY C. EGIDIO, JOHN FORD, ALLEN D.	HALL, RICHARD M. HARRINGTON, LEROY HARTMAN, CARL W. HENDRICKSON, JOHN HIEBER, OTTO HINCKLEY, PORTER HEUSEL, GEORGE HOLLANDS, WILLIAM T.	MCKUNE, HERBERT J. MAURER, EDWARD C. J. MILL, A. P. MONAHAN, JOHN H. MORRIS, CHAS. B. MOTLEY, JOSEPH A. O'HARA, FRANK D. OMANS, PAUL K.	VAUGHAN, VICTOR C. JR. WALKER, CHAS. GLEN WALSH, HERBERT E. WANZECK, WILLIAM H. WEINKAUF, WILLIAM WEIR, JULIUS WILLIAMS, PAUL WHITNEY, RALPH
			JACOB, EMIL A.

WORLD WAR II

ACREE, FRANK R. AKERS, EDGAR A. ALBER, WAYNE R. ALLEN, ROBERT ALLISON, JAMES S. ALLEMENDINGER, ROBERT C. ATKINS, DAVID ATSALAR, JOHN IV BAILEY, WARREN H. BAKER, CARL S.	DYSINGER, VERN D. EDMUNDS, CHARLES W. EMPIE, ELMER W. ENGEL, HOLLIS J. EVANOFF, JOHN ECKILSON, GORDON L. FAST, CHARLES R. FAUST, CLINTON E. FIKE, DALE W. FINKBEINER, DONALD J.	KELLEY, GERALD L. KELLY, MICHAEL E. KENDROVICS, ANDY KETT, NATHAN KEYES, EARL J. KIBLER, OTTO KIRK, ROBERT O. KLAPHAAK, JOHN R. KLOHS, JOSEPH JR. KNAGGS, DALE W.	POWELL, WESLEY H. PRENTICE, WILLIAM A. PRICE, DENNIS PRYER, ERWIN E. PRYOR, ROBERT H. PURCELL, GEORGE A. PURCHASE, FRED W. RACHOFSKY, ROBERT C. RAGUE, KARL M. READER, LLOYD C.
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COMMANDERS----AMERICAL LEGION ERWIN PRIESKORN POST #46

1919	Pat Walsh		
19-20	Carl lehman		
20-21	James J. O'Hare		
21-22	F.M. Menefee		
22-23	Conrad church		
23-24	George Hammond		
24-25	Roscoe Bonisteel		
25-26	Cornelius W. Tuomy		
26-27	A.C. Stimson		
27-28	Reull I. Blake		
28-29	Charkes Rash		
29-30	Lawrence Leever	68-69	William Collins
30-31	Leo Burns	69-70	Clarence Nutt
31-32	Leonard Topp	70-71	Myron Crosswait
32-34	Jack Dunn	71-72	Stanley Schlecht
34-35	Arthur Marsh	72-77	Carl Hetchler
35-36	Albert Larmee	77-79	Dick Schindler
36-37	R. Roy O.Bartell	79-80	David "Ron" Karr
37-38	Harold Golds	80-81	Jack Tschirhart
38-39	Luther F. Hagen	81-83	Tim Budoff
39-40	Thomas A. Fitzgerald	83-85	John Tanner
40-41	R. Day Bird	85-86	Robert Kuehn
41-42	Chester L. Nowland	86-88	Kermit Sharp
42-43	A. Benj. Alber	88-89	Clyde Gow
43-44	William Sodt	89-90	Joseph Hoffman
44-45	George T. O'Neal	90-91	Fred Reeves
45-46	Dugold Duncanson	91-92	Robert Oxenger
46-47	Melvin C. Pierce	92-93	William Weindorf (succeeded in mid-term by Fred Reeves)
47-48	Olin G. Tenny	93-94	Joseph Hoffman
48-49	Roy C. Bird	94-00	Brian Dunn
49-50	Lloyd Alber	00-02	J.J. Van Gasse
50-51	Floyd Barry		
51-52	Walter Orth		
52-53	Howard Seefield		
53-54	Harold C. Brooks		
54-55	Rudy Schmerberg		
55-56	Kenneth E. Immel		
56-57	Donald G. Bachman		
57-58	Freeman J. Flynn		
58-59	Clark D. Lewis Jr.		
59-60	Robert E. Hinderer		
60-61	Lawrence A. Wren		
61-62	Carl E. Delaney		
62-63	James L. Amerman		
63-64	Henry A. DeSautels		
64-65	Herbert J. Schaft		
65-66	Melvin Kessler		
66-67	George Harms		

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32-34	Jack Dunn	71-72	Stanley Schlecht
34-35	Arthur Marsh	72-77	Carl Hetchler
35-36	Albert Larmee	77-79	Dick Schindler
36-37	R. Roy O.Bartell	79-80	David "Ron" Karr
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