

Staff Sgt Miles O, Shelley, Company F, 164th Infantry Regiment, WWII

When the First North Dakota Infantry was called to service in the Spanish American War, serving in the Philippines in 1899, nine soldiers earned the Medal of Honor.

[In addition, Battalion Commander John Fraine, future state legislator and Lieutenant Governor, and Battalion Commander Frank White, future state legislator, governor, and US Treasurer, earned brevet promotions for bravery and were later awarded the Silver Star.]

The flag carried by the Regiment during that war was adopted in 1911 as the flag of the State of North Dakota.

When 1st North Dakota was federalized in 1917 for WW1, it was renamed the 164th Infantry Regiment and served in France. *[COL John Fraine, 164 Reg't Commander and Governor COL Frank White attended the Paris convention in 1919 and were instrumental in the formation of the American Legion.]*

By the 1930's, Fraine Barracks and Camp Grafton were named for Guardsmen who had earned the wartime respect of their peers, and streets and buildings at those locations bore the names of other revered soldiers.

You might say the 164th Infantry Regiment was legendary. It became more so when it sailed into history as the first US Army unit to offensively engage the enemy – in either theater—when the regiment landed on Guadalcanal to reinforce the beleaguered 1st Marine Division on 13 October 1942.

Just 12 days later, the 2 battalions of the 164th were on a perimeter line, adjacent to the Marines, defending the strategic airfield that the Japanese desperately wanted. Third Battalion was in reserve. When waves of Japanese threatened a Marine sector, Battalion commander Chesty Puller called for reinforcements and the reserve 3rd Battalion moved up to the line. Battalion commander Robert K Hall and Marine battalion commander Chesty Puller walked the perimeter placing soldiers in the same foxhole as the Marines.

The Army M1 Garands made a difference. After a night of fierce fighting, the perimeter held. Chesty Puller moved his Marines to the west, leaving 3rd battalion on location to defend against a second night of banzai attacks. The line held. On the morning of October 26, there were an estimated 900 enemy dead in front of Company K alone. The location became known as Coffin Corner. Chesty Puller was quoted as saying “Those farm boys can fight, I can tell you that much.”

Miles Shelley was one of those farm boys. He had joined Company F, 164th Infantry in Carrington in 1938, at age 18, probably enticed by the dollar a drill and a new pair of boots. In December 1942, seasoned by 60 days of jungle fighting, Sergeant Miles Shelley earned a Bronze Star Medal for a bold attempt to destroy Japanese machinegun positions.

At Bougainville in January 1944, Staff Sergeant Shelley earned a Silver Star by crawling under heavy machinegun fire to retrieve a wounded comrade.

In April 1944, Miles Shelley gave his life so that his platoon could retreat to safety, for which he received a posthumous Distinguished Service Cross, an award second only to the Medal of Honor.

I talked with the First Sergeant of Company F at his house in Carrington. Some 60 years after the war, First Sergeant John Paulson cried when telling me about Miles Shelley, his cousin and best friend. "He was quite a soldier," John said.

The 164th Infantry Regiment served over 600 days in contact with the enemy from 1942-1945. They were the first into battle and were scheduled to be the first to invade of Japan as part of Operation Olympic.

The 164th infantry Regiment was legendary. The actions of individual soldiers whose actions made it so. There are no original North Dakota National Guardsmen from the 164th Infantry remaining on this earth. But they should not be forgotten. It has been almost 81 years since Staff Sgt Miles Shelley sacrificed his life to save others. Through his actions, he created his own legacy, while representing his unit, his state, and his country well.

Naming the Staff Sergeant Miles Shelley WWII Bridge would honor his individual legacy of heroism as well as perpetuate the memory of the Legendary 164th Infantry Regiment.

MILES O. SHELLEY, KIA



On Guadalcanal, 15-16 Dec 42, Miles Shelley earned a Bronze Star for providing the intelligence needed to destroy machinegun positions.

On Bougainville, 18 Jan 44, he earned a Silver Star for rescuing a comrade under heavy fire and administering first aid.

On Bougainville, 1 Apr 44, he gave his life by drawing enemy fire to himself to allow the remainder of the patrol to retreat to safety and call for artillery.

He was a first cousin and best friend of 1st Sgt John Paulson, Co F, who – some 65 years after the war – was still awed by Shelley's courage and mourned 'every day'.

"When it happened.... I was just a few members back of him when he was hit; he was lead scout and had just broke over a small hill when some entrenched Japs opened fire on him; pinning him down. He yelled to lay down a heavy barrage, the Japs then shot Miles again, no more word of him after that. We couldn't advance any more due to their position, so we backed off and sent in artillery fire. What a great person he was."

---Loren Ellis. Co F, Bloomer, WI

I. AWARDS (POSTHUMOUS) OF THE DISTINGUISHED-SERVICE CROSS:

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (Bull 43, WD, 1918), a Distinguished-Service Cross is posthumously awarded by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area, to the following-named enlisted men:

MILES O. SHELLEY, (20711126), Staff Sergeant, Infantry, Americal Division, United States Army, for extraordinary heroism at Bougainville, Solomon Islands, on 1 April 1944. Despite the imminence of contacting dug-in enemy on higher ground favorable to them, and despite not being a member of the leading platoon, Sergeant Shelley courageously volunteered to be lead scout rather than endanger a less experienced man. In this capacity he led his company up a steep hill and discovered the hostile position. While reporting to the platoon leader he was fired upon. Instead of seeking cover, he immediately charged the enemy alone and unaided, and was seriously wounded. He lay unable to move but continued heroically to call out exact directions for artillery fire in the face of close-range rifle, machine-gun and mortar fire. Completely willing to sacrifice his own life for those of his comrades, he urged them to leave him behind and withdraw, for an artillery concentration was about to start in the area where he lay. Immediately thereafter, Sergeant Shelley was killed by an enemy fire burst. Following the withdrawal a devastating barrage was laid down by the artillery. Sergeant Shelley's exemplary courage and great sacrifice were in keeping with the highest traditions of the Armed Forces of the United States. Next of Kin: Mr. Oscar Shelley, Father, Carrington, North Dakota.

More... Miles Shelley, 1920 - 1944

II. AWARDS OF THE SILVER STAR:

General Order # 529 13 Apr 44

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (Bull 45, WD, 1918), a Silver Star is awarded by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area, to the following-named enlisted man:

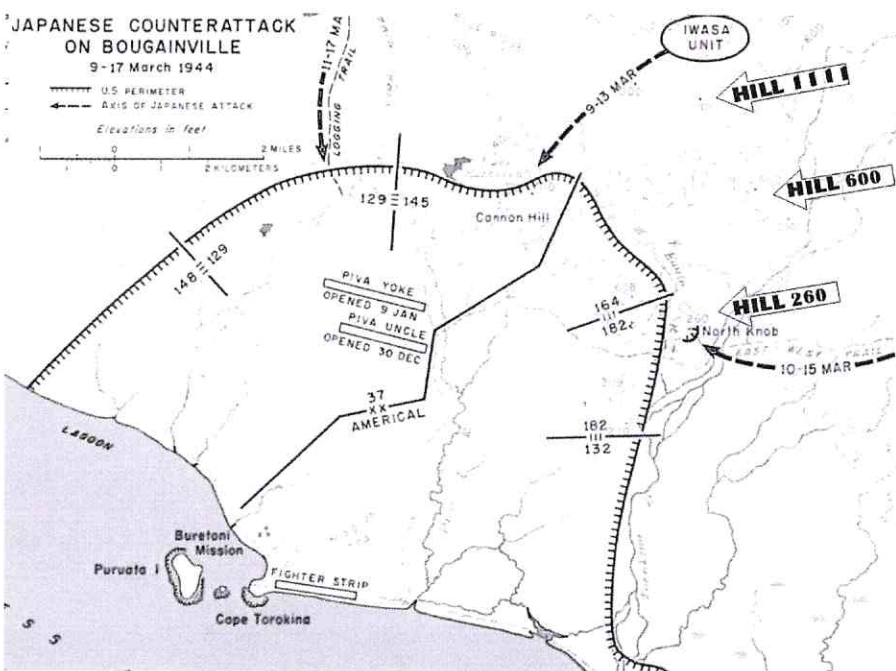
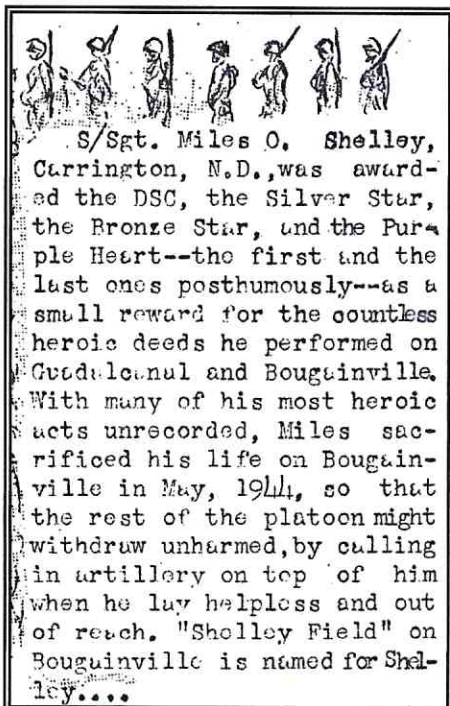
MILES O. SHELLEY, (20711126), Staff Sergeant, Infantry, United States Army, for gallantry in action at Bougainville, Solomon Islands, on 18 January 1944. Under the constant grazing fire of Japanese machine guns, Sergeant Shelley crawled twenty yards to rescue a wounded comrade. After calmly administering first aid while exposed to the enemy, he dragged the injured man to safety. Home Address: Carrington, North Dakota.

II. AWARD (POSTHUMOUS) OF THE BRONZE STAR MEDAL:

GO #775 16May44

By direction of the President, under the provisions of Executive Order, No. 9419, 4 February 1944 (sec II, Bull 3, WD, 1944), a Bronze Star is posthumously awarded by the Commanding General, United States Army Forces in the South Pacific Area, to the following-named enlisted man:

MILES O. SHELLEY, (20711126), Sergeant, Infantry, United States Army, for the performance of meritorious services at Guadalcanal, Solomon on 15 and 16 December 1942. After his bold attempt to destroy several Japanese machine-gun positions with high-explosive charges, he provided information brought destructive mortar fire to bear on the enemy emplacements. Hometown Carrington, North Dakota.



The map of Bougainville shows the Americal defensive perimeter during the March 1944 Japanese Counter attack. By 1 April, the 164th was advancing toward Hill 1111. ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Rabaul/USA-P-Rabaul-17.html

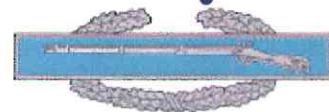
US Highway 2 within ND is



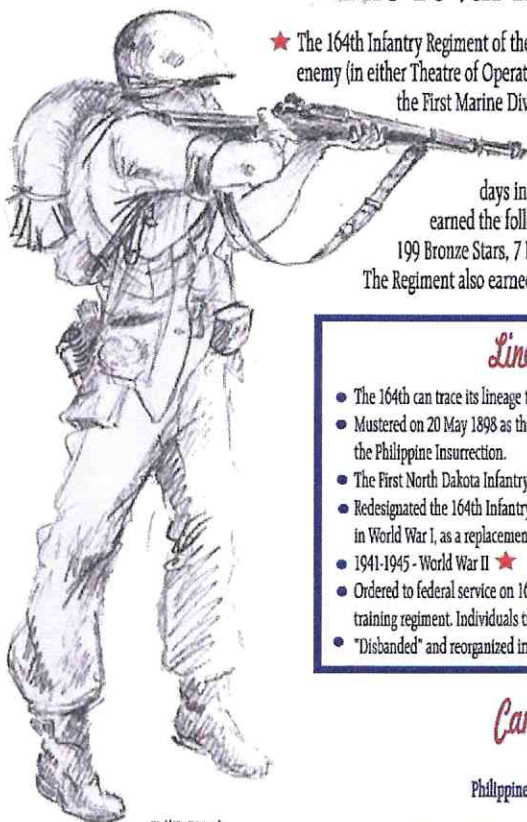
The 164th Infantry Memorial Highway

Authorized by the North Dakota 48th Legislative Assembly to honor the members of

The 164th Infantry Regiment, North Dakota Army National Guard



Combat Infantry Badge
The most coveted award an Infantryman can receive.



World War II Artist
by Doug Russell, 164 Infantry

★ 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 Crosses, 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.

Lineage and History of the 164th

- The 164th can trace its lineage to 1885 when the Regiment was organized as the First Dakota Infantry.
- Mustered on 20 May 1898 as the First North Dakota Volunteer Infantry for the Spanish American War and the Philippine Insurrection.
- The First North Dakota Infantry Regiment was called into federal service on 18 June 1916 for service on the Mexican Border.
- Redesignated the 164th Infantry Regiment on 4 October 1917, it was assigned to the 41st Division for service in World War I, as a replacement Division in the European Theatre of Operations.
- 1941-1945 - World War II ★
- Ordered to federal service on 16 January 1951 for service for the Korean War, and was assigned to Ft. Rucker, AL, as a training regiment. Individuals transferred to other units for service in Korean Theatre of Operations.
- "Disbanded" and reorganized into Engineer Units in 1955.

Campaign Participation Credits

War with Spain - Manila
Philippine Insurrection - Manila, Laguna de Bay, San Isidro
World War I
World War II - Guadalcanal, Northern Solomons, Leyte, Southern Philippines



JE SUIS PRET means "I Am Ready" The distinctive unit insignia was originally approved for the 164th Infantry Regiment on 11 January 1933. The blue shield is for Infantry, with the Spanish castle taken from the Campaign Medal representing service in the Spanish-American War. The Philippine Insurrection service is indicated by the three mullets (stars) from the Philippine Island flag. The sun in the base, from the 41st Division shoulder sleeve insignia, denotes World War I service with that Division.



Soldiers in the Line
by Donna Kiser

In the spring of 1899, the 1st North Dakota Infantry was part of an expedition to clear out insurgent strongholds north of Manila. When a civilian named Henry Young organized an elite scouting and reconnaissance force, 16 North Dakotans were selected for this detail. One historian wrote that "Young's Scouts" were always in front of the main column, the scouts bore the brunt of the advance, encountering and maintaining contact with the enemy. The Scouts discovered that the insurgents had set an important bridge on fire. Knowing the river below was unfordable, the 22 Scouts rushed the bridge and put out the flames, despite direct fire from some 600 insurgents. Sources: *Guardsmen* were awarded the Medal of Honor. Of that 14, two were members of Young's Scouts, decorated for their actions on 13 and 15 May 1899. Seven men were from the First North Dakota Infantry.

Locations of the 164th Infantry Regiment Units, WWII

