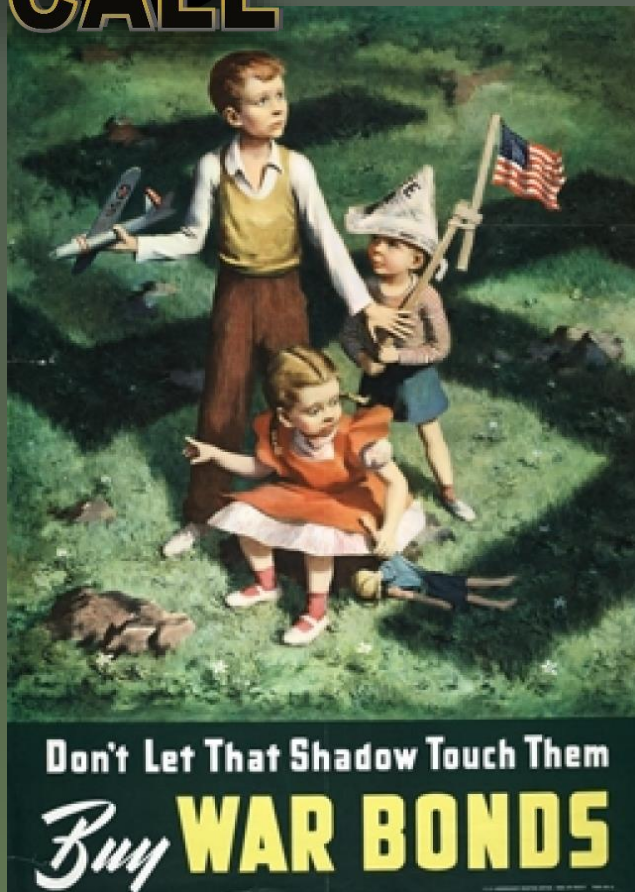


NEWS FROM THE FRONT

November 2018



Military Art

***The U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) Theater
through the Eyes of a Military Artist***

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Front Cover: United States Office of Emergency Management Information Division, Date: 1942 (Army Heritage Museum Poster Collection). (Photo Credit: Glenn Ernest Grohe) and Date: 1942 (Army Heritage Museum Poster Collection). (Photo Credit: Lawrence Beall Smith)

Forward

For this article the Center for Army Lessons Learned (CALL) is taking a new approach to the traditional News from the Front (NFTF) articles and dabbling its hand in the artistic realm with an Art from the Front (AFTF). No, this article won't explain the mysteries behind Bob Ross and his "happy little trees" rather it will showcase the influential nature military art has on soldiers throughout history.

This AFTF was developed in collaboration with the 54th Military History Detachment whose function is to conduct interviews and capture the perspectives of service members and leaders. Excerpts of this article were taken from an interview facilitated by SPC James Day of the 151st Regional Support Group, Massachusetts National Guard. SPC Day was provided interview questions and direction by the detachment to build on the unit's historical collection and expand on the lesson of Soldier expression and e'spirit de corps. By capturing drawings, we are capturing a distinct portion of the history of our Army. While history lessons might be harder to glean from drawings, this paper offers the following:



Photo by SPC Nicholas Puopolo, 2018

First, this paper illustrates how one Soldier's artistry facilitates the establishment of unit identity and e'spirit de corps. Through drawings of unit mascots, and higher headquarters icons, art has always played a role in bringing units closer and providing a sense of identity.

Second, how art plays an important role in capturing aspects of our military culture and history through interpretative drawings of iconic figures for both U.S. Army Central (ARCENT) and III Corps.

There is nothing like art that can capture the emotions of the present and continue to tell that story over time. This AFTF shows that there are still young artists out there who want to capture the emotions of their deployments through pencil and paper as well as social media. The addendum to this paper serves as a reminder of the lineage of Soldier art and expression through the changes of warfare over time.



Photo by SPC Nicholas Puopolo, 2018

At times it seems that deployed art is limited to limericks in the port-o-lets and murals on the T-walls. While we all get some temporary amazement when we see the beautiful murals on the T-walls, we also realize that over time the drawing will begin to fade away from the unremitting sun and the blowing sands of the Middle East. As generations change the need to identify and leave a mark in a place that was once distant to them and now familiar stays the same. Soldiers from every walk of life have ways of expressing themselves and their skills. Some Soldiers are artist of the spoken word or written passage but, the visual art is what initially triggers a memory or feeling. One such artist was interviewed during Operation Inherent Resolve. SPC Nicholas Puopolo is a member of the 151st Regional Support Group of the Massachusetts National Guard filling an ARCENT billet and is currently serving in Camp Arifjan, Kuwait.

SPC Puopolo has been drawing since the age of two, or as he puts it, “since I could hold a crayon.” While he has been experimenting with other media (wood burning), drawing has been a lifelong passion for him. Some major influences in his art are from the Italian Renaissance to other classic artists. A few of his favorites include Boris Vallejo, Frank Frazetta, Todd McFarlane, Greg Capullo, Phillip Tan, and Albrecht Durer. Other sources of inspiration come from present day comic books and animated shows.

Before the deployment, SPC Puopolo work focused on creating the “unofficial” unit mascot. He chose a modified version of “Rocket” from the Guardian of the Galaxy movie. The choice of the drawing and the attention to detail shows the excitement the unit has for their deployment and also captures the spirit of many of the troops in the unit. Young, scrappy fighters!

When he arrived in theater and was assigned to ARCENT, an opportunity to showcase his artistry presented itself. Usual rotations through ARCENT will capture the deployment with a commemorative T-Shirt with the ARCENT A or the ARCENT Eagle on the back of the shirt. SPC Puopolo took a different route and wanted to make note of ARCENTS 100 year anniversary. He took one of the more famous Patton photos and submitted

a drawing to capture the ARCENT motto of “Patton’s Own.” In addition, he incorporated the 100 year anniversary but also showed the unit’s pride in supporting ARCENT by utilizing the infinity symbol to show that great Soldiers will keep ARCENT around for several centuries to follow.

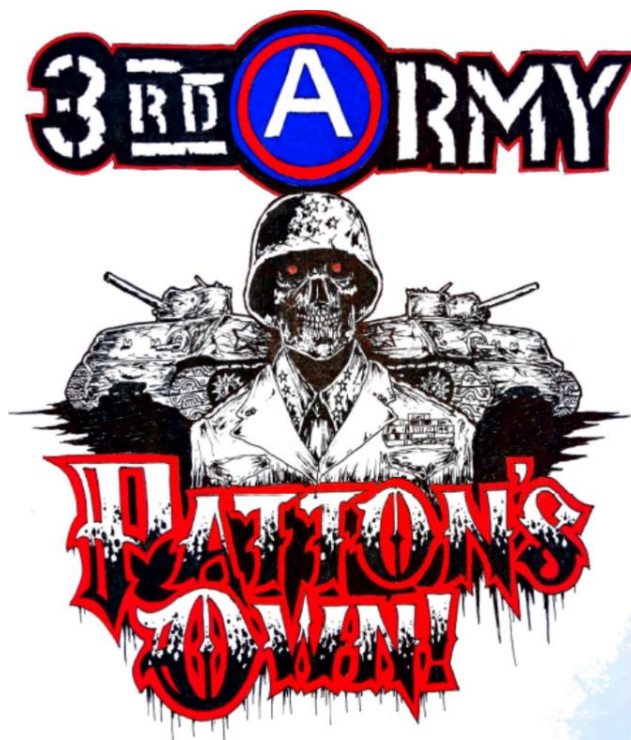


Drawing by SPC Nicholas Puopolo, 2017

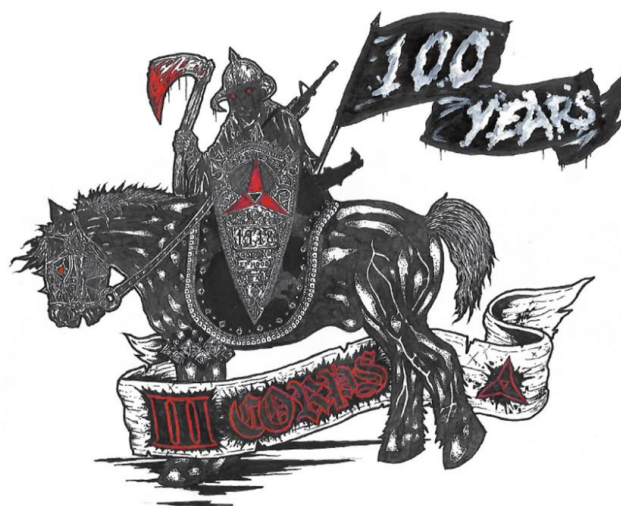
Knowing GEN Patton’s history, SPC Puopolo also submitted a more fearsome version of GEN Patton similar to the comic book character “Ghost Rider.” He realized that at first glance, some may view the drawing irreverent to the memory of GEN Patton. He stressed that he is capturing the emotion he feels for 3rd Army. “We are to be feared by those who choose to be our adversaries.”

Since his art trends toward drawing darker things lately, the young artist took on his next challenge of capturing the III Corps anniversary by drawing a version of the Death Dealer. Unfortunately the Death Dealer by Frank Frazetta was originally drawn as a cover for a Molly Hatchet album affording it certain protections. However, III Corps received permission to utilize the drawing for official purposes only. SPC Puopolo wanted to make sure that he didn’t just copy the drawing but also captured the dark beauty and the seriousness of the Death Dealer and still pay homage to 100 years of service to the Army.

When asked for his thoughts on Puopolo’s unique skill set, COL Matt Kennedy, the 151st Regional Support Group Commander said, “Every Soldier brings something special to the table and SPC Puopolo is definitely no exception. It makes you proud as a commander when you see your Soldier take the initiative and share their skills.” The artwork has been display on business cards, coffee mugs and flag flying certificates.



Drawing by SPC Nicholas Puopolo, 2017



Drawing by SPC Nicholas Puopolo, 2018

Addendum

WHERE HAS KILROY GONE

Who was Kilroy? We now see him as a graphic representation of a generation of service men and women. During World War II (1939-1945) the name Kilroy was sprawled across everything from wagons to tanks as the Soldiers of the allied forces made their way across Europe and the Pacific. However, he was really a wandering Soldier making his mark just as Kilroy did. The important part is that Soldiers identified with this piece of work that inspired them to do more as they ventured ever forward into the unknown. They created him in all forms and showcased their skills and talents beyond what they had learned in basic training or through their trials of combat.

The service men and women of World War II were from all walks of life representing every race and creed. All with the goal of bringing freedom but still working to stay connected to what they knew as themselves. From the trench art of WWI to the art presented in this article, every generation brings with them their own skills and talents.

