

Casing the Colors

A Retrospective of the Triple Nickel, the 555th Military Police Company

1LT John C. Giordano

The stage has been set for over 44 years, but the curtain is about to fall on the 555th Military Police Company yet again. On June 9th, the Department of the Army announced force restructuring which will require the inactivation of the "Triple Nickel", one of the most easily identifiable and storied units in the Military Police Corps Regiment. As part of the turmoil and tumult that is typical with a force restructuring of this nature, a close-knit company and Army family must bid farewell to each other as they begin to depart Fort Lee for points across the globe.

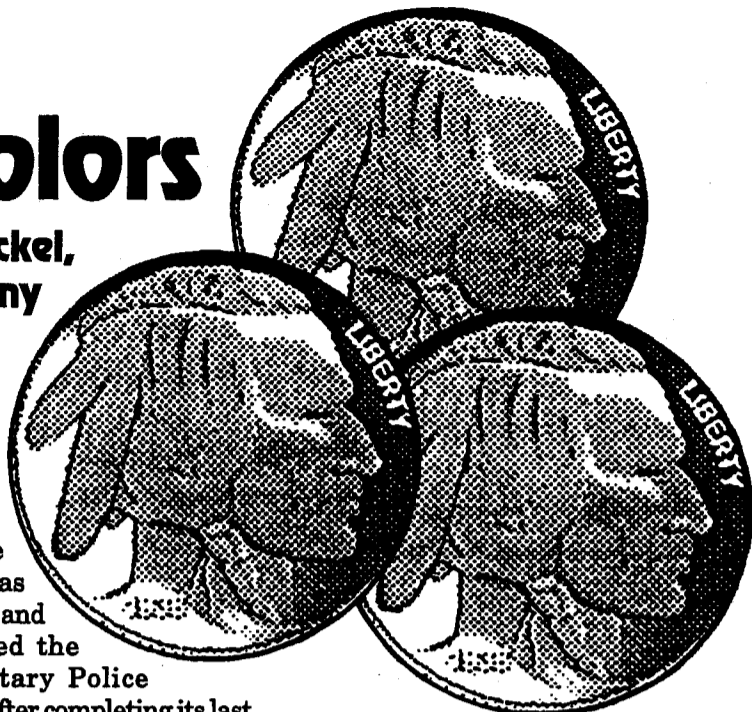
The most recent inactivation, however, is not the first one that the unit has had to endure. The unit takes its history from World War II, when it was first organized and activated as the 555th Military Police Escort Guard Company on June 25, 1944 at Fort Custer, Michigan. Soon thereafter, the unit was transferred to Hawaii, where it supported U.S. and allied installations until it was transferred to Japan on April 26, 1946. The Nickel was never afforded the opportunity to serve in either the Pacific or European theaters during the war. After it was transferred to Japan, it saw its first deactivation in Tokyo on December 15th of the same year.

The ensuing peace in the wake of World War II was disrupted by conflict in Korea. The Nickel was called to service and reactivated on September 27, 1951, and began a series of formidable campaign participations, helping the unit to earn its

reputation as a fighting force. On February 1, 1953, the company was reorganized and redesignated the 555th Military Police Company. After completing its last tour on the peninsula, on April 25, 1954, the unit was again deactivated.

That was not the last the world would see of the Nickel, though. On February 1, 1970, the unit was activated again, this time to Fort Dix, New Jersey. It wasn't until 1977 that the unit found its current home at Fort Lee, Virginia.

In the past twenty years, the Nickel has been one of the most unique and active companies in the Military Police Corps Regiment. Some of its most recent high visibility missions include participation in Joint Task Force Bravo in Honduras, starting in 1983 and continuing on a rotational basis, support for the Atlanta Federal Prison riots from November 1987 to April 1988, support for Operation Just Cause in Panama in December 1989, support for operations at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, starting in November of 1991, and support for Operation Uphold Democracy in Haiti, starting in 1992. One of its latest unique missions called for support to security operations in Williamsburg, Virginia; in conjunction with the first ever NATO ministerial conference held on American soil. The Nickel is renowned for its continued support



of the National Scout Jamboree, for which it provides security and quick reaction force support. The unit's most recent overseas deployment took it to Saudi Arabia, where a platoon-sized element had the opportunity to work for the Office of the Program Manager-Saudi Arabia National Guard and perform force protection operations. The company's final mission before inactivation was, once again, the National Scout Jamboree, held this year at Fort A.P. Hill.

As the last Company Commander, CPT James W. Hayhurst, plans for the inactivation ceremony, he knows that not only are a lot of good people being spread throughout the Army, but that he is casing the colors of a highly decorated and well respected unit—one renowned throughout the Military Police Corps Regiment and the Army alike. If the past is any indication of the future, the Nickel will again be called to serve.

1LT John C. Giordano was the 4th platoon leader in the 555th MP Co. at the time this article was written. He is now the S-2 for the 11th Transportation Battalion.