



PRESTON J. C. MURPHY

After arriving in Fort Collins, Colorado on August 6, 1919 Preston lived with his uncle

P.J. Murphy while attending the Agriculture State College & working part time in P. J. Murphy's Clothing store.

Almost immediately after arriving in Fort Collins, Preston was well known throughout the town for his rich baritone voice, and the local newspaper often mentioned his performances under the society column. Preston participated in many of the social event taking place throughout Fort Collins.

S-O-C-I-E-T-Y

*Preston Murphy sang a group of Cadmon's Indian songs.
April 6, 1921 Fort Collins Courier*

*A concert to be given at the College Chapel by Miss Irene Garret & assisted by Preston Murphy.
May 4, 1921 Fort Collins Courier*

*Ft. Collins pays honour to war veterans. The Americans come was sung in a pleasing manner by Preston Murphy.
Nov 12, 1921 Fort Collins Courier*

St. Joseph's Church Wedding Ceremony, "Ave Maria" & "O Promise Me" were sung by Preston Murphy with the choir accompanying him. June 15, 1922 Fort Collins Courier

The opera was adequately effectively and beautifully produced. The costumes were a feast for the eye. Preston Murphy as Captain of the Guard also assisted markedly in making the opera of a high standard April 1923, Fort Collins Courier

Preston was also known to lend his acting skills to the city of Fort Collins. One special event was in 1923 when Preston performed in the opera production of "The Bohemian Girl" by the C.A.C. conservatory of music under the direction of Prof. Alexander Emslie. Preston's uncle P.J. Murphy had performed in the chorus of the same opera production in 1909. Training for this opera production began in the latter



part of September 1922 covering a period of 6 months preparation. The production consisted of a ten piece orchestra and a chorus of 50 voices.

OPERA PROVES

The cast of characters follows:
Arling
Jennie Edwards, Mildred Eastburn
Queen Dorothy Becker
Buda Miriam Kilburn
Count Arnheim Donald Bliss
Floreslein W. S. Hill
Thaddeus George James
Captain Preston Murphy
A. Gipsy Russell Margrave
Devilshoof (His original character)
..... Prof. Alexander Emslie

In August 1935, Preston performed in the five night production of The Last Supper, portraying the biblical character Peter.²⁸ The play was performed in the stadium of the State Agriculture College.

"The Last Supper" in Passion Play at Fort Collins, Aug. 21 to 25



Preston J. C. Murphy as "Peter"
Greeley Daily Tribune Aug. 17, 1935

PRESTON JOINS COLORADO NATIONAL GUARD

On June 9, 1921 Preston enlisted in Company H, 157th Infantry, Colorado National Guard. He served as a private until 1926 when he was promoted to the unit commander. The Colorado National Guard was called upon to maintain order in times of unrest.

On November 21, 1927, Company H of the Colorado Guard under the command of Preston J.C. Murphy was called to Columbine Mine to intervene in a miner's strike.

As it had been since Cornelius days of mining in the late 1800's, miners & mine owners battled over the working conditions in the mines, hours worked and wages paid. These battles finally came to a peak in 1927 when striking miners shut down everyone of the coal mines located in Northern Colorado except the Columbine Mine. The coal mine kept operating by importing workers willing to cross the picket line. On November 21, 1927 several hundred strikers gathered at the Columbine mine urging the workers to join the state wide strike. This



Erwin Margrave (brother-in-law to Esther Wilkins) & Preston Murphy

resulted in a confirmation with the state police and several miners were killed.

Company H (157th Infantry Machine Gun Company) which was in the command of Capt. Preston J. C. Murphy, left at 1 o'clock Monday for the Columbine mine where a clash occurred this morning. The Company consists of 65 men, nearly all of whom left with the command. Several miners had been killed by State Police (Many injured, including police). In light of this, the National Guard was called out.

Preston Weds

On July 4, 1925 at the age of 24 years, Preston married Esther Wilkins at St. Joseph's Catholic Church. From this union a baby girl, Patricia Ruth was born. Preston, Esther and their daughter Patricia Ruth were living on 1002 West Oak Street, Fort Collins when on Jan. 6, 1926 Preston left behind his Canadian citizenship and became an official United States citizen.





Murphy Brothers Form Senior Hockey Team in Fort Collins

It had been 12 years since the Canadian boy, Preston Murphy, left Summerside, PEI but his Canadian love for hockey still remained strong.

In the fall of 1931, Fort Collins developed a senior hockey league appointing Preston as the President.²⁹ It is very likely that Preston and his brother Derris were instrumental in forming this new senior league. They named their team the Fort Collins Crystals which was the name of the

Summerside senior hockey team that Derris participated in while living in Canada. In following this tradition, they also named their newly constructed rink, the Crystal Rink.

The Crystals, Fort Collins ice hockey club, will dedicate their newly constructed rink Friday night playing the Falcons of Denver in an exhibition game. Great plans have been taken to make the ice for the rink the best possible. The ground was levelled with a three inch layer of sawdust applied. The rink is completely surrounded by canvas, well lighted and has a heated dressing room adjoining and seating space for 300.

Derris, second from right & Preston far right



News

traveled quickly of the talent displayed by the Fort Collins players. Reporters

often traveled from neighbouring towns, referring to the team as a mix of Canadians & Americans.

Seeing Hockey in Near Zero Weather Is Still Plenty Warm as Evening's Sport

See a game of hockey and you will want to see another one. At least that is the impression gained by one individual after watching Fort Collins Crystals and Longmount Lovelady Drug engage in a flashing, dashing swinging, sliding battle at Fort Collins Wednesday evening. Fort Collins won 8 to 4, largely as the result of better organized passing attack & goaltending. The Murphy brothers and Frosty Harvey led in the Fort Collins Team play.

*The Greenly Tribune,
Dec. 10, 1931*

Fort Collins hockey team continued its march on the ice by winning an exciting match from Denver Ice sextet at Washington park Wednesday night by a 4 to 2 score. Preston Murphy led the offensive by counting three of Fort Collins' points.

Fort Collins Hockey Team Wins
Fort Collins—Fort Collins Crystals stepped into the lead in the Colorado ice hockey league by drubbing Colorado Ice Falcons of Denver 17 to 6 here Wednesday night before the largest crowd to turn out for the sport this season. Marvin Harvey led the Crystals scoring with five goals while Derris Murphy collected four.

The Fort Collins Crystals were named the 1931 Rocky Mountain Champs.





45TH INFANTRY DIVISION

The 45th Infantry Division was headquartered in Oklahoma and consisted of four National Guard Divisions that were activated in 1940 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. In 1941 the size of the division was reduced to three regiments; Colorado's 157th Infantry, and Oklahoma's 179th & 180th Infantry regiment also known as the Thunderbirds.

In September of 1940 the 45th Infantry Division was ordered into federal service for one year to engage in a training program. On Sept. 16, 1940 Preston was ordered to active duty and promoted to Major. Preston's training after joining the Thunderbirds began at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma.

Store Redecorated

Although Major Preston Murphy is spending the year at Fort Sill with the national guard, his firm, the Murphy Clothing company, is "carrying on" with the work of Mrs. Murphy, C. B. Preston, J. W. Fields, and Charles Lumley. The store was established in 1906, and formerly was owned and operated by Major Murphy's uncle, the late P. J. Murphy, who died in 1938, and with whom Major Murphy was associated for a number of years. The store only recently has been redecorated and the line of merchandise enlarged to include a more complete stock than previously.

Preston had inherited his uncle P.J. Murphy's clothing business in 1938 and was operating this business when he was called into Federal Service with the National Guard.

On February 28, 1941 Preston and the 157th

Preston Murphy Family Returns From Abilene

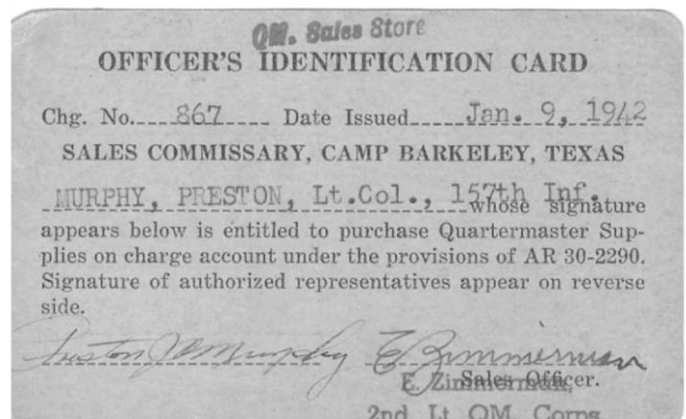
Mrs. Preston Murphy and daughter Patricia, and Mrs. Murphy's mother, Mrs. Anna R. Wilkin have returned from Abilene, Tex., where they spent four weeks, visiting Lieutenant Colonel Murphy, who has been stationed at Camp Barkeley, 14 miles from Abilene. Saturday morning Mrs. Murphy and her mother and daughter watched the forty-fifth division, numbering about 18,000 men, move out from camp for Army maneuvers in Louisiana. The column extended more than 30 miles, Mrs. Murphy said.

Infantry were stationed at Camp Barkeley, Texas and Preston had been promoted to Lieutenant Colonel.

Five Camps, Five States

At the end of the first year of training, the world situation had grown worse and the Thunderbirds were ordered to continue their training moving between five different states. The Thunderbirds trained at Fort Sill, Oklahoma; Camp Barkeley, Texas; Fort Devens, Massachusetts; Pine Camp, New York; and Camp Pickett, Virginia.

By the end of 1941, the Thunderbirds were participating in the Louisiana Maneuvers, the largest mock war maneuver held in the United States, involving over half a million soldiers.



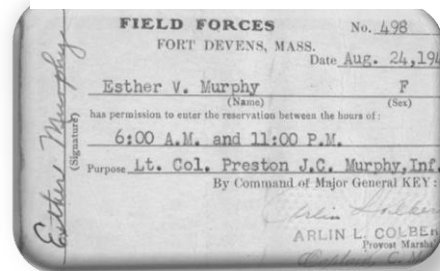
Following the attack on Pearl Harbour on December 7, 1941 (The 157th Infantry at this time was station in Camp Barkeley Texas) Preston was once again moving between camps.



Preston & Esther at Camp Barkeley, Texas 1942

Preston Returns to Prince Edward Island

In April 1942, the division moved to Fort Devens, Massachusetts. In July as the reality of war was approaching, Preston and his family ventured back to his former hometown of Summerside, Prince Edward Island. The residents of Summerside were proud of their hometown boy and often reported on Preston's activities during WW11. After returning from his visit to PEI, Preston continued his training at



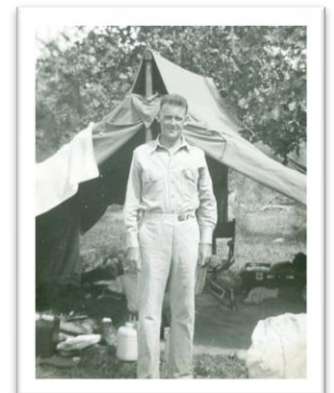
Preston & daughter Patty, Cape Bordeu 1940

Lieut.-Colonel Preston Murphy, of Fort Collins, Colorado with Mrs Murphy, who has been visiting Summerside is now spending a few days visiting relatives and friends in West Prince. Colonel Murphy, who is a native of Summerside, left here in 1919. He was a former member of the Summerside Post Office staff. Lieut. Colonel Murphy who is serving with the U.S. National Guard has served in Texas, Wyoming and Louisiana, and two months ago was transferred to Massachusetts.

Fort Devens, Mass., until November 1942, when he pulled up stakes once again and relocated to Pine Camp, New York.

Mrs. Murphy, Daughter Home
Mrs. Preston Murphy and daughter Patricia have returned from the East where they had spent the last six months, to be near Colonel Murphy. They left him after a visit with him in New York. His address is still APO 45, New York.

"The Thunderbird laboured in all kinds of terrain and weather. At Camp Pickett, Virginia, special mountain training was conducted in Virginia's Blue Ridge range, and amphibious training at Cape Cod, Mass., and Norfolk, Va."



Photos Patty-Jo Wray Collection

WW11

Sicily-Salerno-Anzio-France-Germany

In June 1943, after three years of intense training in the United States, the 45th division set sail from the states landing in North Africa.

Preston, commander of the first Battalion, 157th Infantry, saw action on the beaches of Sicily in July 1943. Preston's conduct at the "Battle of Bloody Ridge" in Northern Sicily won him the Silver Star medal for gallantry in action. His battalion was the only battalion size unit of the 45th division to enter Messina, Sicily with General Patterson prior to the arrival of the British Army.³⁰

The capture of Bloody Ridge, an almost perpendicular hill mass barring the American advance along the northern coast toward the mountain village of San Stefano is an epic battle of the brief Steillan campaign. This natural rock-studded fortress held by Germans entrenched with machine-guns in protecting draws & ravines was stormed & taken yesterday in blinding heat. The battalion was commanded by Lieut. Col. Preston Murphy³¹.

Preston's next major battle against German assault was on the Salerno beachhead in Italy during the Italian campaign.

Held Nazis at Salerno Beach

Micheal Chinigo, representing the combined American Press, watched Nazi armoured columns encounter attack for four long hours against Allied beachhead at Salerno. The main force of the enemy, a dozen tanks, a score of self propelled 88 mm guns and a long line of troop carriers came dashing out at breakneck speed in an effort to sweep over Allied right flank held by forces under Lieut. Colonels Chester James of Greenly and Col. Preston Murphy of Fort Collins, Colo. Murphy's men should have run but they didn't and the battle raged four hours before both sides quieted down to consolidate their positions for the night.

Sept 17, 1943 Greely Daily Fortune



Preston Murphy & Sgt. Durst in Olive Grove, Sicily 1943

Col. Preston Murphy of Fort Collins, commander of the 179th infantry regiment with the forty-fifth division on the Western front, and his men probably are looking forward with considerable anticipation to the impending annihilation of the German forces still opposing them in the Saar region of Germany's Rhineland. But for a brief time a few weeks ago Colonel Murphy thought he might have to spend the rest of the war behind barbed wire in German prison camp. In recent letters to his wife, Mrs. Esther Murphy, Colonel Murphy revealed that his regimental command post was raided at night by a German patrol, which captured several American officers. Others including Colonel Murphy had sufficient warning of the attack to permit them to disappear into the darkness. "I heard some German ask, in perfect English, 'Where's that damn Colonel?'" Colonel Murphy wrote.

After the Battle of Salerno, Preston wrote a letter to his wife on bullet torn stationery that had been removed by another soldier from a fallen Nazi during battle. Preston explained how he and most of his official staff escaped from vicious German fire in which they were caught in during the Salerno counter attacks. For a time the staff was cut off by crossfire. The officers crawled to safety beneath German artillery and chemical mortar barrage. He stated his group was well, but was suffering from loss of sleep.³²

Just prior to the Anzio invasion, Preston was assigned as Executive Officer of the 179th infantry and at times acting commander. During the Anzio Invasion on Feb. 18 and 19, 1944 Preston was awarded the Oak Leaf Cluster medal. He was awarded this medal for his orders and encouragement which were credited with helping his troops to stand off attacks by German troops in the early phases of the famous, "Battle of the Caves."

SOUTHERN FRANCE

During the summer of 1944 Preston accompanied by the 45th division, made their fourth amphibious landing since arriving in Europe. After arriving in Southern France, the 45th division advanced rapidly up the Rhone Valley to the corner of Switzerland, into the Vosges Mountains and finally in a sudden break through crossed the mountains and reached the Rhine near Strasbourg.

COL. C. P. MURPHY RECALLS BATTLE
In WW II his order saved a French village

Austinite Recalls Battle for Village

"I was regimental executive officer with the 179th Regiment, 45th Division. Raymond Mollard, the liaison officer, and other members of FFI said that if I had not given my order, many more of them would have lost their lives in the battle for the town. We were trying to prevent the German retreat north through the Rhone Valley in August and September of 1944 and had set up road blocks at Meximieux, Lagnieu and Amberieu to contain retreating German units. On Sept. 1, 1944, about 1,000 men of the 15th Panzer Regiment and the 111th Panzer Grenadier Regiment of the 11th Panzer Division attacked the village in order to push our 1st Battalion of the 179th infantry out of the town to protect their retreating flank."

"During the fight that ensued, American forces also had the aid of the soldiers in the FFI, the French

underground forces. As the Germans approached Meximieux, I could tell that the 1st Battalion and the FFI were going to need help when the fight came. I knew the 2nd Battalion, which had advanced the day before to positions north of Meximieux, could mean the difference in victory and defeat. So it was I with the permission of the 45th Division commander, who gave the order for the 2nd Battalion's return to Meximieux. Artillery and mortar fire continued throughout the night, but the next day the village was declared secure."

*Interview with Preston Murphy,
American Statesman Jan. 17, 1971*



Murphy Leads His Troops Over Rhine In Fifth Crossing

"I hope the next river I cross will be the Poudre-and with a fly rod along," remarked Col. Preston Murphy of Fort Collins, commander of the 179th Infantry regiment of the Forty-fifth Thunderbird division, as his men boarded assault boat for their latest amphibious expedition across the Rhine River.

Colonel Murphy's regiment took 587 prisoners within 12 hours. His orderly commented that the colonel was lucky to be able to cross another river, since German shell had narrowly missed him a short time before. His division, which has been driving up through southern and eastern France since last August, took part in the recent Seventh army drive through the Slegfried line which contributed to the conquest of the western Rhineland, the Saar and Palatinat.

*Fort Collins Express Courier
March 30, 1945*





Derris Murphy Collection

War Ends

When the current commander of the 179th was injured in October 1944, Preston was assigned to commanding officer and promoted to Colonel. He served as Colonel until he was wounded in the battle for Nurnberg, Germany on April 16, 1945.³³

On Wednesday, May 9, 1945 the war in Europe was over. After blazing a trail through three countries, Preston celebrated the end of the war along with other 45th division commanders inside Adolf Hitler's apartment in Munich, Germany.

Lived For Short Time in Hitler's House in Munich

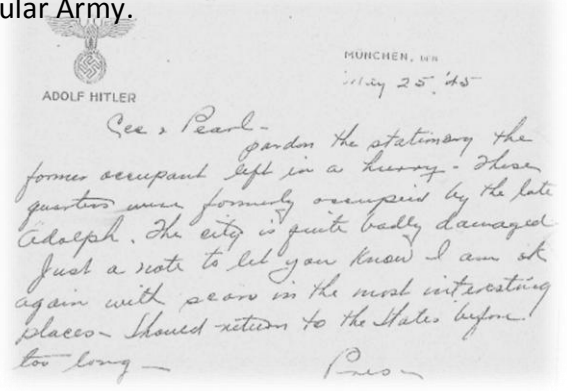
New York—One of the officers who arrived in New York today with troops returning from the European theater had the unique experience of being quartered in Hitler's apartment in Munich. He is Colonel Preston Murphy of Fort Collins, Colorado, commander of the 179th infantry regiment. Colonel Murphy lived in Hitler's fancy apartment in Munich for a time prior to the fall of Berlin.

He declared that although the Fuehrer expected everyone to trust him, he himself trusted nobody. For instance, Colonel Murphy pointed out that Hitler had a direct wire to the apartment of Eva Braun, his sweetheart. But although he could call her directly, her calls to him could only come through the gestapo.

As indicated in a letter written by Preston on Hitler's stationery on May 25, 1945, Preston returned to Fort Collins at the end of the war with plans of resuming his civilian life. Like so many soldiers

before him this was not an easy task as life in Fort Collins had greatly changed and his marriage to Esther Wilkins ended in divorce. With the exception of his adult daughter Patty, Preston's family ties in Fort Collins had vanished. His mother Maude, his sister Yvonne and uncle P.J. had all passed away before Preston left Fort Collins in 1940 and his brother Derris and his family had relocated to Washington.

With his marriage over, he decided to sell the clothing store business that he had inherited from his uncle P.J. Murphy and in January 1946, applied to re-activate into the Regular Army.



PRESTON WEDS CORINNE HALL



Preston was assigned to Caserta, Italy where he met Corinne Hall, a young naval officer 20 years his junior. During WW11, Corinne was assigned to the

Naval Air Station in Corpus Christi, Texas. Having achieved the rank of Lieutenant JG, she then took an assignment to serve in Northern Italy where she met Col Preston J.C. Murphy in Sorrento, Italy. On September 18, 1948 Preston and Corinne were married in the Walter Reed Chapel, Washington D.C.

After returning to the States, Preston & Corinne spent the next few years assigned to Ft



Patty-Jo Wray Collection

Monroe, Virginia. While living in Virginia, Preston and Corinne were blessed with two children, Derris & Deborah.



Preston Murphy & Corinne Hall

Sept. 18, 1948

Derris Murphy Collection

The next relocation for the Murphy family was to Tokyo, Japan. When the 45th Division activated again for the Korean War, Preston was assigned commander of the 279th Infantry Regiment where he served throughout the Korean War.



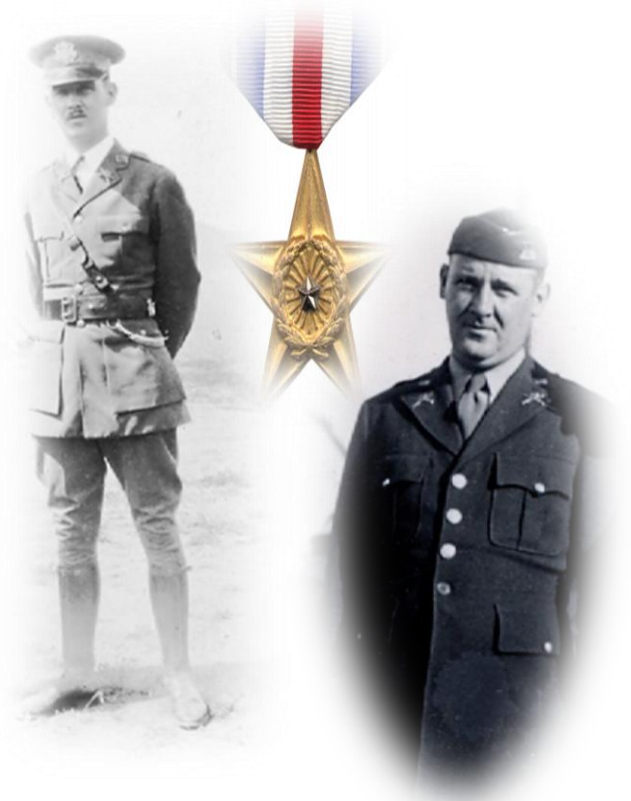
Preston Returns To United States

After the Korean War, Preston was assigned to Austin, Texas as Senior Adviser to the Texas National Guard. While living in Austin, Preston & Corinne had two more children, John & Rebecca. Preston served as the Senior Adviser to the Texas National Guard until he retired in 1957. Following Preston's retirement he served as a contact agent for 20 years with the Texas Armoury Board.

During Preston's military career he was awarded with the following medals: the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Legion of Merit with Cluster, the Bronze Star with two Clusters, the Purple Heart, the Combat Infantry Badge and the French Croix de Guerre with Gold Star.

On January 6, 1983, Preston J.C. Murphy passed away at the age of 82 years. He is buried at the Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery.

After Preston's death, the 45th Infantry Division Museum Library located in Oklahoma, was dedicated to the memory of Preston J. C. Murphy.



"Few, if any men, have ever served with greater distinction in the 45th Infantry Division than Colonel Preston J.C. Murphy. He was one of the most capable officers ever produced by the division. Likewise he was a man of warmth and compassion, and he was loved by all who were privileged to know & to serve either beside or under him. "

"It is in recognition not only of his distinguished service to the defence of his country, but also of his admirable personal qualities making him one of the greatest Thunderbirds of all time that the 45th division Museum board and the 45th Infantry Division Association dedicate the museum library to Colonel Preston J. C. Murphy."



Corinne & Preston

Left- Rebecca, Derris, Derris wife Ellie,
John, Debbie