

# Utah National Guard HISTORY HIGHLIGHT



October 2023

## Return of Colors, November 11, 1946

*“These colors, standards, and guidons come home proudly and with added luster to their already brilliant records. No evidence of dishonor, cowardice, or surrender mars their escutcheon. When the heroic men of these units stacked arms and were told their mission was accomplished and their service completed, it was in victory.” Colonel H.A. Rich, 1946.*

In March 1941, following executive orders, the first Utah units reported for duty with the 40th Division in Camp San Luis Obispo, California. The units were slated for a years' worth of training prior to service overseas. The activated units brought their colors with them during a time of peace, little did they know it would be more than five and half years before those colors would return to Utah.

It was inevitable after the declaration of war on December 8, 1941, that the units who began their service with the 40th Division during a time of peace would be broken up. Some of the battalions separated to form new units, or bring existing ones to wartime strength while others were reallocated to support different divisions.

It took a monumental effort to demobilize and reorganize the fighting forces of the United States following World War II. Over a year after the war's official end, on November 11, 1946, a ceremony was held returning the colors of the 65th Field Artillery Brigade, 145th Field Artillery Regiment, 222nd Field Artillery Regiment, and the 115th Engineer Regiment from federal service back to the state of Utah.

Regardless of where they went, whether in the Pacific theater or Europe, the men and women from Utah all served with distinction and honor. More than 75,000 Utahns served in World War II, 2,690 were wounded and received a Purple Heart, and 2,628 perished, giving the ultimate sacrifice to their nation.

Two service members and others celebrate the end of World War II in the streets of downtown Salt Lake City. Cities across the state of Utah saw similar celebrations after the news of Japan's surrender. *Salt Lake Tribune, August 14, 1945.*



## Return of Colors Ceremony

On July 11, 1946, the National Guard Bureau released formal guidance instructing states, and their respective governors, to request the return of colors from federal service back to the states.

NGB also informed the states that a nationwide ceremony would be held on Armistice Day, November 11, 1946, to commemorate the service of National Guard members during World War II and return the colors of the units to the governors.

Utah's ceremony was held on the morning of November 11<sup>th</sup> at 1045 on the steps of the capital building in Salt Lake City. Colonel H. Arnold Rich represented the War department and presented the colors to governor Herbert B. Maw. Thousands of citizens watched and celebrated as the flags and guidons finally returned home.

## Return of Colors, November 11, 1946

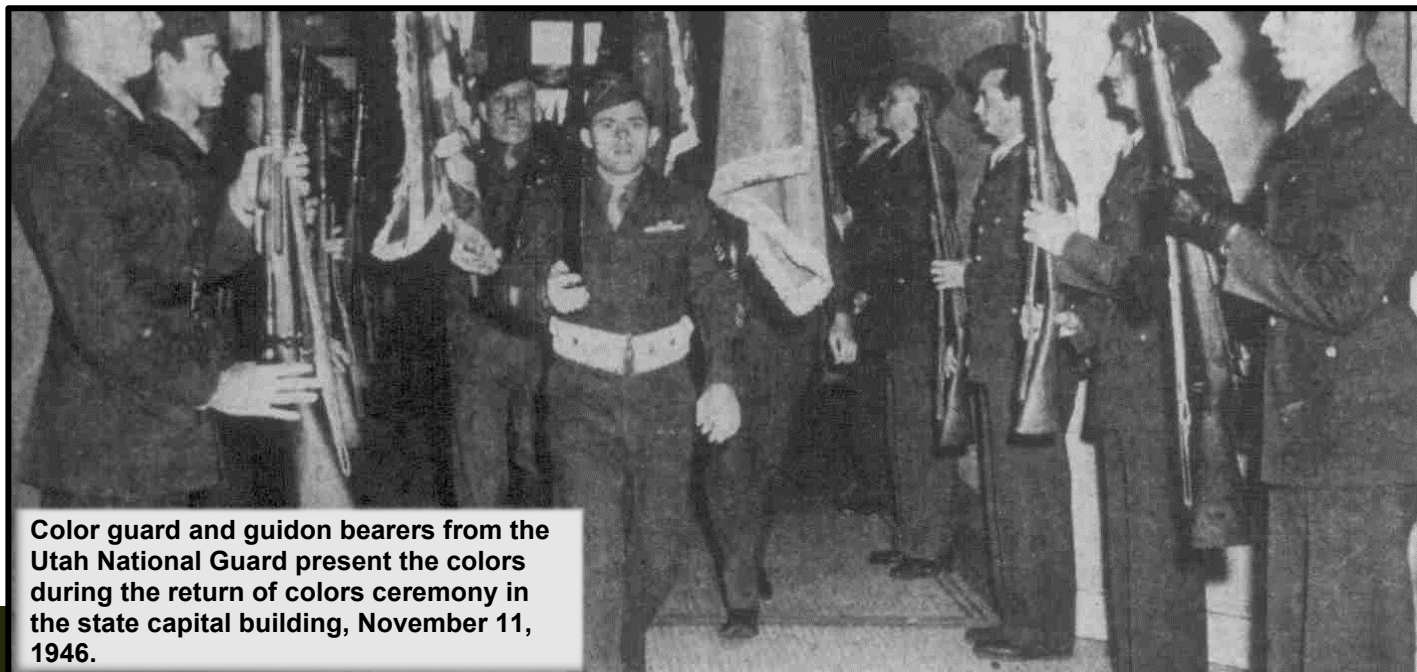
***“The things that the flag stands for were created by the experiences of a great people. Everything that it stands for was written by their lives. The flag is the embodiment not of sentiment, but of history.” President Woodrow Wilson.***

The news release from the Utah National Guard on November 9, 1946, highlighted the return of colors event taking place on November 11<sup>th</sup>. “This important event in the history of Utah—the Colors and Guidons of the National Guard of the State of Utah, which served this State in such a commendable manner during the recent years are being returned to the State. Every National Guard unit saw combat and set up an enviable record for the State. It is with pride that we await the return of our Colors from the Federal government. Similar programs are being conducted in the forty-seven other states on this same date.”

In the closing remarks from the ceremony, Colonel Rich said, “these flags are emblems of the National Guard units of this State. The men who answered

the call of their country in March 1941 and were mobilized under these flags were National Guardsmen. They were prepared for the call when it came. Long before the emergency arose, those men had seen the need for military preparedness so that they might be better able to serve in time of national crisis. To that extent these flags represent an experience and an effort far beyond that of the ordinary citizen who was called to duty in the armed forces.”

**Sources:** UTNG Return of Colors Report 1946, Salt Lake Tribune, Nov 11, 1946



Color guard and guidon bearers from the Utah National Guard present the colors during the return of colors ceremony in the state capital building, November 11, 1946.



Artistic rendering of Mrs. Dorothy Clawson, whose husband was a veteran of World War II, posing with three Utah National Guard unit flags that were returned to the state after more than 5 years of federal service. *Salt Lake Telegram, November 11, 1946*