

# Farewell To a Hero



## **Colonel John (Jack) F. Hyde (Retired) 1917–2007**

*Compiled by Ms. Rebecca Higeons*

Colonel John F. Hyde was born 20 December 1917. He entered the U.S. Army on 4 May 1942 and, one year later, was commissioned a second lieutenant. In his first duty appointment, Second Lieutenant Hyde was detailed to the 9th Armored Division and appointed traffic control officer.

During the Battle of the Bulge in 1944, Second Lieutenant Hyde helped ensure the orderly rearward movement of the division. It was then that his leadership ability attracted the attention of the Commanding General of the Third U.S. Army—Lieutenant General George Patton. While maintaining a roadblock, Second Lieutenant Hyde prevented the commander from passing through a restricted area, despite Lieutenant General Patton's strenuous objections. Second Lieutenant Hyde explained that earlier that morning he had captured two German Soldiers less than 100 yards from the roadblock. After being denied passage, Lieutenant General Patton requested the Soldier's name. Because Lieutenant General Patton was famous for his temper, Second Lieutenant Hyde expected to receive a blistering reprimand; however, what he received was a letter of promotion to first lieutenant.

As the 9th Armored Division entered Germany in 1945, First Lieutenant Hyde was among the lead element of Allied forces that encountered the still viable Ludendorf Bridge over the Rhine River. The bridge, of great tactical significance, was a key asset in the advance of Allied forces. Under intense enemy artillery and tank fire and air bombardment, First Lieutenant Hyde's detachment was engaged for a number of days and encountered daily casualties. First Lieutenant Hyde established rigid traffic control and holding patterns to ensure that no vehicles were abandoned and that the flow of traffic continued unblocked and unimpeded across the bridge. The leadership of First Lieutenant Hyde and the actions of his detachment permitted Allied infantry and armor troops to cross this important river obstacle with needed vehicles and tanks. The actions of the detachment, in conjunction with division reconnaissance forces, were instrumental in establishing the Remagen bridgehead and trapping German forces on the west side of the Rhine. This operation is credited with shortening the war by approximately 6 months. For his heroic actions of bravery and gallantry under fire, First Lieutenant Hyde was awarded the Silver Star Medal. His involvement was

also instrumental in securing the coveted Presidential Unit Citation for the Military Police Platoon of the 9th Armored Division.<sup>1</sup> First Lieutenant Hyde participated in campaigns in the Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, and Central Europe, remaining with the 9th Armored Division until the end of the war.

After the war, John Hyde was integrated into the regular Army and commissioned in the Infantry Corps but transferred into the Military Police Corps. As he progressed through the commissioned ranks, he distinguished himself in numerous military police command and staff assignments (with special focus in security and intelligence). These military police assignments led to additional awards, including the Legion of Merit (with oak-leaf clusters), Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, and Army General Staff Identification Badge.

After returning to the United States in 1945, the positions assigned to John Hyde indicated the high caliber of regard the Military Police Corps held for him. He served as provost marshal for the 8th Infantry Division and, later, as the provost marshal at Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. In 1949, John Hyde was appointed Provost Marshal, Headquarters, U.S. Troops, Trieste; was later assigned a tour of duty at the Office of the Provost Marshal General and; subsequently, was designated provost marshal of the Mediterranean Division, U.S. Corps of Engineers.

In 1959, the then Lieutenant Colonel Hyde assumed command of the 504th Military Police Battalion at Fort Gordon, Georgia. Under his leadership, the battalion became a Strategic Army Corps (STRAC) unit in support of the 101st Airborne Division. In 1965, he was promoted to colonel and assigned as the Chief of the Security and Investigation Division, Office of the Provost Marshal General. In that capacity, he engaged in numerous confidential and sensitive investigations. Additionally, Colonel Hyde initiated several efforts that significantly impacted the doctrine and long-term mission of the Corps. He established the Military Police Detector Dog Program; and during its trial stages, demonstrated—to Department of Defense (DOD) personnel and members of Congress—the drug interdiction capability of German shepherds to detect concealed marijuana. After providing worldwide Army canine training information, he transferred this successful program to the Military Police School at Fort Gordon. As drug interdiction became a national focus, Colonel Hyde received commendations from the Honorable Frank Bartimo, Chairman of the DOD Drug Abuse Prevention Program.

During the period 1969–1973, Colonel Hyde served as the Provost Marshal and Chief of Safety and Security, Military Traffic Management and Terminal

Service. In this capacity, he was appointed as the alternate DOD representative to the Department of Transportation's Interagency Coordinating Committee for Nationwide Transportation Security where he was responsible for establishing a cargo security and pilferage protection program at a time of great national need. For his innovation and coordination efforts, Colonel Hyde was commended by the Honorable Joseph J. Leibling, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (Security Policy).

At his Army retirement on 28 February 1973, Colonel Hyde received an extraordinary personal letter of gratitude from the Army Chief of Staff, General Creighton W. Abrams, recognizing many years of devoted service.

Colonel Hyde's education in military science and tactics and his military police skills provided the foundation for his successful second career at the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority in Washington, D.C. Immediately after his military retirement, Colonel Hyde participated in the now nationally recognized crime prevention design criteria for the underground railway transit facility. As the Deputy Chief of Transit Police, he implemented high-visibility programs in law enforcement, criminal investigations, physical security, and crime prevention in conformance with the policies and procedures of four local police jurisdictions surrounding Washington. For his accomplishments, John Hyde was awarded the Washington Metropolitan Police Distinguished Service medal. After retiring from the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority in 1983, he engaged in consulting work on the security of subway systems in New York City and Atlanta, Georgia. His knowledge and professionalism in transit security and crime prevention was sought by numerous law enforcement agencies. Upon his full retirement, John Hyde engaged in volunteer work, heading a cohesive notification chain for special events and activities for local retired military police officers and warrant officers.

John Hyde was inducted into the Military Police Corps Hall of Fame in 2001. His 30-plus years of distinguished service to the U.S. Army included significant and long-term contributions to the character, doctrine, and mission focus of the Military Police Corps. John Hyde passed away on 13 August 2007.

**Endnote:**

<sup>1</sup>John Hyde is cited for his heroism in Ken Hechler's book *The Bridge at Remagen*, Ballantine Books, 1957.

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