

Clinton Prescott « Kibbe » Glover- an army veteran's remarkable backstory



Kibbe PNC kitchen, summer, 1979

Many of us who worked in the huts, and certainly at Pinkham, knew Kibbe. After he passed away in the summer of 1991 at the age of 81 an era came to a close.

North Conway Reporter (Newspaper) - August 14, 1991, North Conway, New Hampshire OBITUARIES C.P. "KIBBE" GLOVER PINKHAM NOTCH Clinton Prescott "Kibbe" Glover died peacefully at Pinkham Notch Camp in Pinkham's Grant, N.H., on July 29, 1991. Born Sept. 9, 1910, in Haverhill, Mass., he was the youngest son among 13 children. Mr. Glover was educated in Haverhill public schools and later attended the New England School of Art in Boston. He was employed as a photographer's assistant and machinist prior to World War II. • In WWII, Mr. Glover served in the 182nd Regimental Combat Team, M Company, in the Solomon Islands on the Guadalcanal and Bougainville. He was the regimental photographer as well as an infantryman, and he received a Presidential Unit Citation. After the war. Mr. Glover returned to the White Mountains of New Hampshire, where he had worked for Joe Dodge at the Appalachian Mountain Club's Pinkham Notch Camp for a year prior to his military service. He worked as a surveyor and for the AMC and the U.S. Forest Service until his retirement in 1972. Mr. Glover continued to reside at Pinkham Notch Camp until his death, sharing his knowledge and love of die mountains with thousands of hikers, skiers and several 'generations of AMC employees. In addition to his accomplishments as a photographer, Mr. Glover was an avid golfer, skier, artist and poet. He leaves two sisters, Betty Glover of Haverhill, Mass., and Roseanne Meister of Lawrence, Mass.; two nieces, Carol Tinney of Boxford, Mass., and Nancy

Goudy of Lexington, N.C.; two nephews, Jackson Holt of Bethlehem, Pa., and Tommy Glover of Saranac Lake, N.Y.; and several cousins, grand-nieces and grand-nephews. A memorial gathering will be held in his honor at Pinkham Notch Camp on Sept. 8, at 1 p.m.

Today, three decades of AMC Croo have passed through Pinkham and many might have heard tales of Kibbe here and there and wondered who he was. Kibbe touched a lot of us who knew him. Not many knew details of his backstory as an Army infantry soldier in major and decisive battles in WWII in the South Pacific.

For over four decades, Kibbe was a fixture at the AMC Pinkham Notch Camp. After his retirement from the AMC in the early 1970s, he was encrusted there, living out of a room in the Administration Building, or in his blue-green pickup camper truck, unless he was out playing golf in North Conway. He recited odd poetry, wrote poetry on anything from napkins to number 10 can food labels, sketched, flirted shamelessly, and mostly harmlessly, with women on the Croo, mailed touching and affectionate letters and postcards, watched the news on the rickety old TV in the room off the kitchen, read the paper in a quiet corner off the main desk, scolded chipmunks, and gave the Croo who worked there year after year character and a sense of belonging. It took a while to get to know Kibbe. His outward self was consumed with an inner torment that few understood, or were given access to. We who worked alongside him in the AMC all have our Kibbe stories. I looked into Kibbe's military service because it helps understand the man, and how much we all apparently helped with him to cope with his demons and live his life in the mountains and among the people he loved so dearly on the AMC Croo.



Kibbe reading the newspaper, PNC January, 1982

As many of his generation, Kibbe was marked by his experiences in WWII. My own father had been all over the Pacific theater in the US Navy for six years and told stories often. My father had been at Pearl Harbor and was onboard the battleship USS California when it was bombed and torpedoed on Dec 7, 1941, and later was almost sunk on the destroyer USS Ralph Talbot in the Battle off Savo Island a few days after the Guadalcanal landings in early August 1942. Kibbe would allude to the Pacific now and then, and so I knew he too had been there. When we'd have a conversation, he'd sometimes drop a comment. What really bugged him was Christmas. He hated Christmas. I dared once to ask him once why.

He said it was a time where he had to pile up the bodies of dead Japanese to act as shields to protect himself. He rarely said more than that. His mind would shut down, he'd wander off; maybe he would wander back a short time later and pick up the conversation on another subject. Or else he'd string together seemingly random phrases in free poetic verse. You'd think Kibbe was a bit nuts. Today, I'd say we're more knowledgeable about the reality of PTSD.

Everyone who was an adult that I met growing up had a connection to WWII, whether it was my father, a US Navy engineering officer, or my mother, who worked in a shipyard building minesweepers by day and had been trained by the Army as a night spotter for aircraft recognition and part of the civil defense network of Seattle, or any of their friends that I met during my youth- from prisoners of war, to members of Patton's Army in Europe, to marine snipers, to those who flew long range bombing missions over the Ploiesti oil fields of Romania. Some of those I met talked openly about their experiences, however harrowing; others clammed up completely. I figured in order to understand Kibbe a little better, I would have to uncover his past connection to WWII.

Kibbe was part of the Army 182nd Infantry Regiment, formed in Massachusetts in January 1942, and later attached to task force 6814 and what would become known as the Americal Division that formed with the 132nd regiment from Illinois. Kibbe served in the 182nd Infantry Regimental Combat Team, 3rd battalion, M company as regimental photographer. In Army regiment organization, four companies make up each of three battalions (ABCD, EFGH, IKLM). Most are rifle companies, but M Company is usually a heavy weapons one. Kibbe also trained with an anti-tank weapon, probably a towed M3 (37mm).

Kibbe's regiment spent over three years in the South Pacific. After being assembled from the historic Massachusetts 182nd regiment National Guard unit and supplemented with conscription, they trained in various places in Massachusetts (notably Camp Edwards on Cape Cod) and then in the Carolinas. They were formally inducted into federal service on 16 January 1942 in Boston and then boarded troop transport ships in New York on January 18, 1942 and arrived in Melbourne, Australia on February 26 via the Panama Canal. Kibbe's 3rd battalion company M was sent on a train to Ballarat and its environs in southern Australia in Victoria province. On March 6, they broke camp and headed for an unknown destination that would be New Caledonia. A regimental

history from that period shows them helping prepare coastal defenses on Espiritu Santo and Efate. From there they moved to Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands as part of the relief of the 1st Marine Division that had landed in August 1942, and then onto Fiji to recuperate and regroup, then more horrors in Bougainville in the northern Solomon Islands, then on to the Philippines and Leyte, then Cebu and the assault on Lahug airport and Go Chan Hill.

In early November, 1942 Kibbe's regiment and other Army units landed on Guadalcanal to support and relieve the US Marines, and the regiment progressively worked their way up the heavily defended Matanikau river towards an even more heavily fortified Japanese installation called the Gifu. Associated with that name on Guadalcanal are nearby places like Mount Austen, The Seahorse, The Galloping Horse, Hill 42, and Hill 21.

The Japanese had heavily defended the Gifu region with a series of interlocking tunnels and machine gun emplacements. The location, near Mount Austen and a map feature of open treeless ground, which on a topographical map that was otherwise shaded green for jungle canopy looked like the form of a seahorse, hence its name, and another clearing which looked like a galloping horse. The Gifu and its open summits were strategic in defense of Henderson Airfield on Guadalcanal. The Japanese used them for observation of the American invasion forces and to set up troop movements to the interior, or to establish infiltration raids. Units of the US Army were ordered to take Mount Austen and the Gifu region in a campaign that lasted over the period of December 1942 to January, 1943.

The third battalion of 182, together with 1st battalion 2nd Marines, and the Amical Division recon squadron were temporarily placed under the command of the 25th infantry division commander during action spanning the last week of December 1942-feb 1943 together with the 35th infantry regiment (commanded by Colonel McClure) and what is called the consolidation of the 2nd battle of Mount Austen/SeaHorse and Gifu. It is for that reason that 3rd battalion-including company M where Kibbe was, designated 3/182, does not often figure on detailed army campaign maps of that time, whereas the 35th regiment does, or the 25th infantry division does. All were part of the larger overall XIV corps.

The battle of Sea Horse Ridge, Mt Austen, and the surrounding and ultimate dissolution of the Gifu was ferocious and was the last major engagement of US forces and the Japanese Imperial Army on Guadalcanal. Many historians say the capture of Guadalcanal was a major turning point in the Pacific war.



U.S. soldiers of the 35th Infantry Regiment, 25th Infantry Division trek across the high hills of Guadalcanal after capturing the Gifu for over 21 days of fighting, January 19, 1943.

For reference: US Army Center of Military History).

Following Kibbe's experiences on Guadalcanal, the Bougainville campaign was part of a larger strategic picture called the « Cartwheel. » In defense of Australia, New Zealand, shipping lanes, the free French on New Caledonia, and to contain and repulse Japanese imperial expansion, Allied forces started island hopping planned as a cartwheel. The major Japanese sea base furthest south was Raboul, and so the first Island to take was Guadalcanal and its strategic airfield; according to the cartwheel plan, the second hop a bit further north was the island of Bougainville, once Guadalcanal had been secured. Allied forces built

three airstrips on Bougainville, and from there could threaten Raboul and Japanese efforts to provide supply and reinforcements.

The 182nd ended up on Bougainville in late December, 1943, and tasked with the defense of the observation post banyon tree of Hill 260. Not long after, in March, the Japanese threw everything they had in an effort to re-take Hill 260. There are a lot of photos (probably Kibbe's again) if you look up the Bougainville campaign. There is practically nothing there today, and there was practically nothing there then. At least on Guadalcanal, the area of the Gifu now has a small village, and a school, and there is a small white memorial. Bougainville and Hill 260 are as desolate as one can imagine. The Japanese casualties in this campaign were immense.

In Kibbe's obituary in the Conway Sun in 1991, it stated that he was authorized to wear the Presidential Unit Citation. Actually, his regiment was awarded and authorized to wear two Presidential Unit citations- one for their efforts on Guadalcanal and a second one for their efforts later on Bougainville (reference source: Department of the Army Lineage and Honors Information, 182nd Regiment). In military terms, it is awarded for exceptional combat heroism for a whole unit. The army award criteria specifically states: Requirements include that the unit must "display such gallantry, determination, and esprit de corps in accomplishing its mission under extremely difficult and hazardous conditions as to set it apart from and above other units in the same campaign." Lt. Lyle Bouck's squad of 18 men that held off an entire German battalion and blocked the timing of the fifth and sixth German Panzer armies for 24 hours at Lanzerath Ridge during the Battle of the Bulge was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. For perspective from today, the Navy Seal Team 6 involved in the Bin Laden raid at Abbottabad was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. Kibbe's regiment had earned two. Remarkably, the Americal Division commander also awarded the entire 182nd regiment a separate Unit Commendation the 29th of June 1945 for their efforts on the island of Cebu (Philippines) in March and April of 1945.

Veterans of the regiment were progressively rotated stateside and discharged starting in May 1945 with the closure of the European theater. This probably included Kibbe. By the end of November, 1945, the entire regiment had been deactivated through staging passage at Fort Lewis near Tacoma, Washington. A major fire in the National Personal Records Center Archives in St. Louis on July 12, 1973 destroyed 80% most service records for the Army from 1912 through 1960 so there is very little searchable data available in the public domain after the mandatory 62 year embargo requirement for record access requests of non next to kin.

Kibbe took part in an enormously important chapter of history that shaped the modern world. He survived. A lot of others in the Pacific never returned. Not just from Guadalcanal, but from Iwo Jima, Tarawa, Saipan, or Okinawa. James Jones, the writer of « From Here to Eternity » and « Thin Red Line », both of which were made into major motion picture films, was with the 25th infantry division and participated in the second battle of Mount Austen on Guadalcanal in mid-January 1943, and was an eyewitness contemporary of Kibbe's experiences. The

film *Thin Red Line*, released in 1998 and starring Sean Penn, was filmed, in part, on location in Guadalcanal and Savo Island and depicts in a fictionalized way, the battle of Mount Austen (a previous *Thin Red Line* film appeared in 1964 based on the same material-the book by Jones). Another book, originally published in 1947, is a first-hand account by John B. George entitled : « Shots Fired In Anger » that recounts his experiences as an officer, platoon leader and sniper with the 132nd regiment on Guadalcanal and which fought alongside the 182nd. Other writers also address the Pacific theater. Leon Uris (2nd battalion, 5th marines) wrote graphically of his personal experiences as a marine on Guadalcanal and Tarawa and later, Saipan in his book entitled: *Battle Cry*. Another haunting book is Eugene Sledge's *With the Old Breed*, a harrowing and frank autobiographical work where he recounts his personal experience as a US marine (3/5/1: 3rd battalion, 5th marines, 1st Marine division) on Peleliu and Okinawa. Sledge summed up his horrifying experiences succinctly: "it was a killing war." Read those books, and you start to understand the unbelievably horrible world as a frontline infantry soldier as Kibbe was thrown into.

To compound the actual combat misery was the stifling tropical climate, torrential rains, and rampant disease in the South Pacific. Malaria and other tropical diseases such as dengue, or things affectionately called jungle rot, plagued huge percentages of the soldiers. This period was also essentially still the pre-antibiotic era, and so battle wounds and superficial skin infections were prevalent and difficult to treat.

There is a whole detailed web blog site (<http://www.182infantry.org>) dedicated to the 182nd that recounts the regiment's actions in the Pacific theater. There is not much on M company, but there is a rich literature from L and G company history in the same regiment. L company was in the same 3rd battalion as Kibbe's M company. There are a lot of photos supplied on this site, none with attribution, but I wouldn't be surprised if many of the photos were indeed taken by Kibbe in his role as regimental photographer. A comprehensive history of the Americal Division Entitled « Under the Southern Cross » by Captain Francis Cronin (1951) recounts in detail the engagements of the 182nd and the Americal Division in the South Pacific. It runs 470 pages and provides troop movements, orders, dozens of photos, and insights from captured and translated Japanese documents obtained in the various campaigns, especially on Guadalacanal and Bougainville. It can be consulted in its entirety online, free of charge at:

<https://archive.org/details/UnderTheSouthernCross/page/n27/mode/2up>

Additional reference material

Another detailed source is John Miller Jr.'s book entitled: "The US Army in WWII-Pacific Theater" and chapters (from XVIII on) starting with the Guadalcanal campaign.

<http://www.182ndinfantry.org/four-years-of-war/>

<https://www.ozatwar.com/ozatwar/campdarley.htm>

<http://www.182ndinfantry.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/182nd-Infantry-History-01161941-to-11111942.pdf>

<https://www.25thida.org/division/wwii-chronology/>).

<https://www.ibiblio.org/hyperwar/USA/USA-P-Guadalcanal/USA-P-Guadalcanal-11.html#cn7>

A short film made in 2019 walks you through the GIFU region as it is today and Hill 27. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5KfiYx-B7Is>

Another brief video was posted around the 75th anniversary of the Gifu battle on Guadalcanal by current members of the Army 25th infantry division. It was taken on site on Guadalcanal in the summer of 2017.

<https://www.dvidshub.net/video/542892/gifu-world-war-ii-battlefield-b-roll>



Kibbe Glover- “Mountains, Mountains, Mountains” from his room in the Admin PNC.

A snowy mountain photo, presumably taken by Kibbe himself, showing Lion Head, Raymond’s Cataract and Mt. Washington and taken from Rt 16 around the current state road camp and dated Nov 1945 was posted on Friends of Kibbe in Facebook by Kim Schroeder Steward in 2009. The photo shows, with Kibbe’s own scratchy handwriting on the bottom, the words : « *Home June '45 38 months 23 days 14hrs under the Southern Cross* ». The photo on the left shows Kibbe someplace in mountains in the South Pacific. My guess is Fiji where the regiment recuperated after the Guadalcanal campaign.

Note that although Kibbe hailed from Haverhill, MA, he chose to write on this particular White Mountains photo the word « home. » After that, he never left. Not long after his funeral service in 1991, Jon Martinson and Jack Corbin, together with Kibbe’s niece and her family, hiked up to a quiet place near

Tuckerman Junction away from any crowds and spread Kibbe's ashes on the headwall so that he would rest with Tuckerman Ravine and the mountains he loved so much.



Photo of Kibbe and Bob Brock dated Sept 1941 at Lakes of the Clouds shortly before Kibbe entered Army service. Photographer unknown. First published on the OHCroo Facebook webpage.

There were a lot of people like Kibbe. Wars produce survivors that carry around harsh memories for the rest of their life. Today there are Vietnam veterans, and still more from Afghanistan, Iraq, and Kuwait. They all have a story and don't always want to articulate it. Some do, and through them we learn more about the horrors of war that may help frame the debate to curtail armed violent conflict in the future. Others clam up and live their tortured memories in solitude.

When I was a caretaker at Tuckerman's in the early 1980s, we had, on more than one occasion, porch conversations long into the night over a beer or two with Vietnam vets that just wanted to talk to someone about their experiences. We were in a very real sense, mountain bartenders. We were anonymous, friendly, and non-judgmental. Whether 1942 or 1968, the type of story from the front line infantry soldier didn't change much. I'm sure Fallujah and Helmand Province produced similar soldier experiences from Iraq and Afghanistan that are being discussed on the Tuckerman porch today.

What Kibbe probably needed more than anything else after WWII and such life altering experiences was a safe place. He found it in Pinkham Notch as a no-nonsense night watchman and surveyor. He certainly could spot a leaf move at 300 yards. He found solace in camaraderie with the AMC Croo. He found peace playing golf and skiing. He had a sense of humor, and a big laugh. And he now and then, sitting with a rapt Croo on the Pinkham front porch, he would let off with his impeccable imitation of the Cog Railway locomotive steam whistle. Though a photographer himself, he graciously let me take candid photographs of him.







An epilogue, of sorts.

As a professional microbiologist, I came across a few curious bits of related information.

In late 1943/1944 the ship that my father was then on, the destroyer USS Ralph Talbott, DD390, sailed from San Francisco as part of a convoy headed for Australia via Hawaii and New Zealand. A part of what they were escorting besides supplies and troop transports, turned out to be an extremely top secret cargo. The convoy crews did not know what it was until years later. It was penicillin destined for the Australian and American troops. It was one of the first batches of scaled up production from an Illinois research laboratory and a consortium of pharmaceutical companies scattered around the US. Records seem to indicate the first use of penicillin was for Australian troops in Papua New Guinea in late 1943/early1944. The first penicillin dose sent to Australia a bit earlier was even more secretive and was transported in a matter of days in a B24 Liberator bomber. It was destined for Peter Harrison, a young child who had contracted pneumococcal meningitis. His father, Dr. Leo Harrison, was an Australian Navy surgeon. Desperate, he appealed to Australian Medical authorities in July,1943 and a special penicillin wish was granted and a dose sent. The child survived. Reference: <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2018-08-06/secret-history-of-the-first-australian-to-be-given-penicillin/10078510>

Penicillin was extremely hard to make in large quantities and it took incredible luck and skill to produce it once the therapeutic and strategic value was recognized. One key ingredient was corn steep liquor, a normally discarded waste product of cornstarch production, in which the mold grew happily. The other was a remarkable

overproducer strain of *Penicillium crysogenum*, isolated from a moldy cantaloupe found a fruit market in Peoria, Illinois. Various pharmaceutical companies tinkered with vat production, aeration, and extraction processes. The US government oversaw the whole operation. Reference: [Am J Public Health](#). 2013 March; 103(3): 426–434.

The penicillin destined for the South Pacific and the European theater was a miracle drug. Estimates of combat fatalities in WWI attribute up to half to infection and disease. Penicillin and sulfa drugs made available to the front line soldiers in WWII undoubtedly saved countless lives, no doubt including those in Kibbe's regiment and other comrades in arms. In 1945, Alexander Fleming was awarded the Nobel Prize for the discovery of penicillin, together with Boris Chain and Howard Florey who together showed its effectiveness and made the process engineering work.

Bill Kelley was on the AMC PNC kitchen Croo the summer of 1979. He then spent three summer seasons and a spring ski season in Tuckerman Ravine with Joe Gill. He was the fall and winter caretaker at Zealand Falls Hut 1981-1982 together with Williams College classmate, Steve Colt. He's lived in Geneva, Switzerland for the last 30 years.