



Murrieta Valley Historical Society Newsletter

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It is our mission to identify, preserve and promote the historic legacy of the Murrieta Valley and to educate the public about its historical significance.

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Patrick Samaniego

By Jeffery Harmon

“Gas!” the officer cried, alerting the troops. Patrick quickly donned his mask hoping he would escape the fate of the Germans’ poisonous weapon. His heart was pounding, as he waited and wondered what would happen next. Time passed slowly. Then the all clear report came down the line just as a German warplane roared overhead.

The American troops remained hidden under the cover of trees, but the Germans knew of their position, because they had heard the “gas” cry numerous times. The moment came when the troops were commanded to move forward, and then all hell broke loose in the Argonne Forest.

Patrick was the son of Victor Samaniego, Sr., a Mexican who moved to California sometime before 1877. Victor had married Rosenda Carillo, a California native, and had settled in Pala. They had twelve children, six boys and six girls. Patrick was born May 10, 1889 at San Luis Rey, California. Victor and Rosenda Samaniego were both buried in the Pala Mission cemetery. Their graves are unmarked and may be located under the dirt path that



Pvt. Patrick Samaniego
(Source: The Samaniego Family Collection)

crosses the grounds.

The Samaniego boys had a limited education, because as soon as they were old enough, they began working the land to make a living. As a result, Patrick only obtained a fourth grade education.

Placido, the oldest son, worked for Cobb & Culver on the Pauba Ranch in 1900. He soon bought a small town lot in Murrieta and then sold it to his brother, Vic-



Patrick Samaniego's Purple Heart Medal. His name is engraved on the back. (Source: The Samaniego Family Collection)

tor, Jr. Victor got married and raised his growing family in Murrieta. Patrick followed his brothers to the valley and found work on Miles W. Dodd's Murrieta ranch in 1917.

On June 5, 1917, Patrick, age 29, filed his draft card at the Murrieta register's office. He knew that his chances of being called to serve were imminent. He was single, and had no dependents. He worked at the Dodd ranch through the harvest season, wondering when he would be called up. Within a few months, he answered roll call in Riverside, and then boarded a train headed to a military training camp.

The train brought him to Camp Lewis, Washington in September 1917. He was assigned to the 91st Division, 364th Infantry, Company M. Many of the recruits had come from Southern California and were not use to the damp cold climate

of the Puget Sound. This was their home for the next ten months. Here the American men would be put through rigorous training preparing them for combat with the Germans on the Western Front.

The assembled troops knew that they would have to wait through the winter until the Atlantic waters were calm enough to cross. Each week they trained from sunup to sundown until they learned weaponry and battle combat techniques. Soon their bodies were toned and fit ready for war. When Friday night came, the energy was electrifying in the camp. If they had performed well during the week, they received a pass to go to Tacoma to celebrate life and to relax.

It was May when the high command notified the 91st Division that they would be moving out soon. On June 26 and 27th, eight trains were used

to move the troops. The trains traveled on three separate routes across the continent to Camp Merritt, New Jersey. The troops traveled in style with sleeping quarters and served meals. It took five days to move the 91st Division from the west coast to the east coast. It was a bitter-sweet moment for Patrick as he left Camp Lewis behind. The party like atmosphere on the train seemed to mask the cloud of anxiety that lingered in the back of each soldier's mind.

The troops boarded a ferry boat on July 11th and crossed to New York City. The next day they filed onto the ship *Olympic* and with much fanfare moved out of New York Harbor. The troops on deck saw the Statue of Liberty as their ship moved out to sea. The ship was given a military escort out to open water in fear of German submarines lurking below. Soon the American planes and boats left and the *Olympic* plowed through the waters unprotected.

The Atlantic crossing was filled with mixed emotions. Guards were posted at all points of the ship, throughout the day and night. Limited drill exercises were given on deck to remind the soldiers they were headed for war. However, there was entertainment and dances, keeping morale high as the battlefield loomed on the horizon.

The future president Herbert Hoover was on board the ship traveling to England. He

was called to deliver a speech to the troops. He was given a mixed reception because he had been responsible, under the Wilson Administration, for putting America on food rations for the war effort.

The *Olympic* was greeted by a heavily armed American/British escort when it neared the European shores. It was guided into Southampton, the point where the Pilgrims and the Mayflower, had sailed out in 1620. There the festivities gave way to reality. The years of war fatigue and resolve was seen in the faces of the British people. They looked to the fresh American troops with hope, knowing this could turn the Germans back to Berlin.

A party was given for the Americans on July 19th. The next night they were ferried across the English Channel under the cover of darkness and landed on French soil at Le Havre, France. The troops marched from the docks to the train station and boarded boxcars to be moved closer to the frontlines. Patrick remembered the boxcars as they were more designed for beast than men. Accommodations were rough and more than one man in his company lost his dinner in transport.

They detrained at Andelot, and then hiked twelve miles to camp in five small villages. On September 3rd they marched to Mandres and then to Rolampont on the Marne River. They boarded a train on September 7th and traveled in boxcars to

Gondrecourt. They detrained there and marched six miles in darkness and rain to the woods of Amanty where they camped for three days. Patrick then understood that the weather at Camp Lewis was similar to the weather in France. Yet no preparation could have prepared him for the ordeals he was experiencing.

At 7:00 p.m. on September 10th, the troops marched thirteen miles in darkness to St. Mihiel. The next day they rested. The Battle of Saint-Mihiel began at 1:00 a.m., September 12, 1918. The American artillery opened up and bombarded the German lines. It had been one year and three months since Patrick had walked into the Murrieta register's office by the time he arrived at the Western Front. The 91st Division was held in reserve during the battle, thus

Patrick never had to use his weapon.

The Americans rushed the Germans at 5:00 a.m., and the battle was believed to be in America's favor. By 12 noon, the 91st Division was ordered to march to the town of Pagny-sur-Meuse. On September 13th at 7:30 p.m., troops boarded a truck convoy and were transported to the village of Villotte. They then marched through the nights, and rested during the days until they reached the Forest of Hesse and made camp.

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive began on September 26, 1918 at 2:30 a.m. when American artillery began firing at the German lines. Patrick followed his company through the woods, dodging German machine guns, barbed wires, and artillery shells.

(Continued on page 4)



Patrick Samaniego's Victory Medal. The medal bands list the 91st Division's operations during WWI.
(Source: The Samaniego Family Collection)



Leo and Jack Samaniego in front of the family home.
(Source: The Samaniego Family Collection)

After eight days, and eight miles gained, the 364th Infantry was moved to the reserve. Six officers and 115 men were killed, 28 officers and 626 men were wounded, and 176 were MIA.

The 91st Division was then moved to Belgium and arrived at the Ypres battlefield on October 18, 1918. During the Lys-Scheldt operations in Belgium, 2 officers and 32 men

were killed, 2 officers and 40 men were severely wounded, 2 officers and 56 men were slightly wounded, 6 were gassed, and 1 was MIA.

The Armistice was signed at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month. The American troops had a seventy-five mile hike back to Dunkirk. It was not until March 22, 1919, that 2119 American troops of the



The Samaniego Home at Adams Ave and Juniper Street.
(Source: The Samaniego Family Collection)

364th Infantry boarded a ship and returned to America. The division was demobilized at Camp Kearny, San Diego, California in April 1919.

Patrick Samaniego did not leave the war unscathed. He was hit by German shrapnel in the right arm. He received medical treatment and was returned to the United States on December 26, 1918. After receiving medical care in an East Coast hospital, he was honorably discharged on January 30, 1919. He was given travel fare to take a train back to Riverside, California.

After returning to Murrieta, he lived with his brother, Victor. He then found work at the Camarillo Ranch in Ventura County. He married Lola Juarez from Saticoy on August 11, 1931. They later moved back to Murrieta where Patrick worked for Arthur Servel. They built their home on the northwestern corner of Adams Avenue and Juniper Street. They had three children: Ramona (1933), Jack (1938), and Leo (1946).

In 1942, Patrick Samaniego, age 53, filed his draft application during World War II, but because of his age and his family, he was not called to duty. To provide food for his family, Patrick had a truck farm, which grew fruits and vegetables for the market. He had grapevines, an olive tree, and apricot and peach trees for canning. The farm also consisted of a dairy cow which produced milk

and Lola made butter and cheese. They had calves that were sold to a butcher. Patrick also raised pigs, chickens, and rabbits. As he reached retirement age, he worked as a caretaker for the Laurel Cemetery in Murrieta.

On September 11, 1956, Patrick Samaniego died and was laid to rest in the cemetery he cared for. On his gravestone was etched his military service during World War I followed by the initials "PH". Patrick had received the Purple Heart medal for being wounded by enemy fire. His wife, Lola, had ordered his marker and wanted to make sure that his sacrifice was not forgotten.

Patrick's sons, Jack and Leo, followed in their father's footsteps. They too answered their nation's call and joined the military. Jack served in the US Army from April 5, 1957 to March 8, 1960. Leo served in the US Army from November 1965 to November 1968, completing two tours of duty in Vietnam. Both young men found themselves at Fort Lewis, Washington at different times during their military service. It was years later that Leo discovered that they had been at the same camp as their father.

One hundred years later, the sacrifice of Patrick Samaniego is known only by his family. Jack and Leo proudly preserve their father's military photo, his Purple Heart medal and his Victory medal. The Samaniego family home no

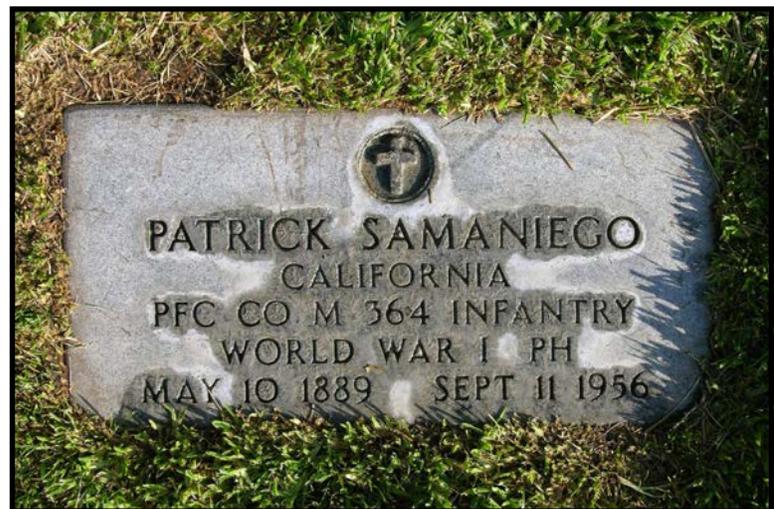


Two oak trees stand at the intersection of Adams Ave and Juniper Street as a reminder of Patrick Samaniego and his two sons' military services. (Photo by Jeffery Harmon)

longer stands, but has been replaced by a preschool. However, there are two oak trees in the former front yard that were planted as acorns gathered from the Willards Farm in Wildomar by Patrick and his son, Jack. These two oak trees stand today as a memorial to a father and his two sons who stood on the line to protect our freedoms. May

we never forget their sacrifice.

To learn more about Patrick Samaniego and the 364th Infantry, you can read the book, *With the 364th Infantry in America, France, and Belgium*, by 1st Lt. Bryant Wilson and 1st Lt. Lamar Tooze, which was published in 1920 and is now digitally available on Google Books.



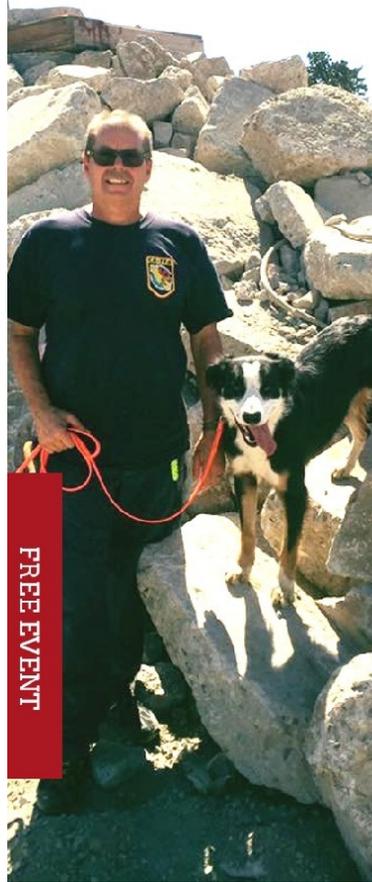
Murrieta's Laurel Cemetery grave marker
(Source: Find-A-Grave image)

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Next Monthly Board Meeting:

Monday, August 7, 2017 at 5:30 p.m. at
Honeycutt Farms Family Restaurant
40477 Murrieta Hot Springs Road, D2
(In the Alta Murrieta Shopping Center)
All members welcome to attend



JOHN THOMAS,
9/11 + K9 HANDLER FOR CATF6

**MONDAY, SEPT. 11
6 PM
MURRIETA LIBRARY**
located in the community room at
8 Town Square, Murrieta, CA 92562

**On September 11, 2001
John Thomas responded
with CaTF6 to the World
Trade Center as a Rescue
Specialist. Listen to his
story and how he became
a K9 handler.**

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Annual \$25.00
Lifetime \$150.00

Family

Annual \$35.00
Lifetime \$250.00

Senior/Student

Annual \$15.00

Business

Annual \$200.00

Sponsorship

Annual \$300.00

Membership dues are for
one year and will be up for
renewal the month you
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