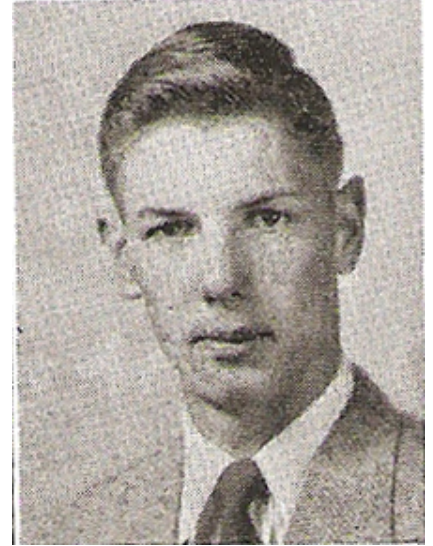


Old Baldy

At the end of World War II, the United States began a fast and dramatic reduction of its military forces. In 1945, more than twelve million Americans were in uniform, by 1948 less than a million and a half. So, when North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950, the United States was caught without sufficient forces in place to stop the aggressors. Four understrength Army divisions on occupation duty in Japan were rushed to Korea. To bridge the gap until additional units could be raised, trained, and shipped to Korea, the Army turned to the National Guard. Henry Daniel Parkman of Saluda would find his way to Korea as a soldier in the 45th Infantry Division of the Oklahoma National Guard.



Parkman was a member of Clemson's Class of 1949. He was a vocational agricultural education major from Saluda. As a cadet, he was assigned to Company L, 3rd Battalion in the Cadet Regiment.

The 45th Infantry had served in combat on Sicily and in the Italian campaign during World War II. In 1950, it was still a segregated, all-white unit, but by 1952, it was fully integrated. In addition, the division, though it retained its historic link to Oklahoma, was composed of half Guardsmen and half enlisted and drafted soldiers from the active-duty Army—men like Parkman.

The 45th moved into the front lines in late December 1951. It was deployed in the vicinity of Chonwon and tasked with defending the key routes to the capital of Seoul. Anchoring the right of the I Corps' sector, the 45th sought to control a prominent hilltop that came to be known as Old Baldy after artillery and mortar fire stripped its crest of vegetation.

Beginning in June 1952, American and Chinese forces battled for Old Baldy in a series of attacks. On June 6, soldiers from the 180th Infantry Regiment seized the crest of Old Baldy and hung on in the teeth of heavy Chinese artillery attacks. After dark, the 279th, Parkman's regiment, moved in and worked through the night to build defensive positions that could withstand the enemy's artillery and massed infantry attacks. Throughout June, the Chinese made repeated but unsuccessful attempts to knock the 45th Infantry Division off the hill.



In mid-July, after six months on the line, the 45th was relieved by the 2nd Infantry Division. The Chinese took advantage of the transition, attacking Old Baldy in force and capturing the crest of the hill. Torrential summer rains turned the battlefield into a muddy morass and delayed counterattacks by American forces.

On August 18, while attempting to cross a river swollen by a flash flood, Corporal Parkman was swept away and drowned. Control of Old Baldy would swing back and forth until Chinese forces recaptured the hill in March 1953. Both sides suffered heavy losses in the attacks on Old

Baldy, but in the end, the battle lines were exactly the same as they had been in early June 1952—representative of the Korean War.

Henry Daniel Parkman was awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge, Korean Service Medal, United Nations Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Korean War Service Medal. His body was returned to Saluda and buried in the Good Hope Baptist Church Cemetery. He was survived by his parents and four sisters.

