

Colonel Stephens Meets Red Army, Receives Medal

WITH THE 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN GERMANY—When the Red army's Major General Peter Savitch Gavelevski pinned the Russian award, the medal of the homeland, first class, on the ribboned chest of Col. Richard W. Stephens, Eugene, chief of staff of the 30th (Old Hickory) infantry division, he was decorating a leader for whom he had gained great respect.

The Russian general and the American colonel had first met in a formal ceremony at Magdeburg on May 7, several days after their troops had made contact at the Elbe river. Impressed by Colonel Stephens' forcefulness, his manner of direct dealing and his hearty good humor, General Gavelevski invited him to the Russian headquarters where at a series of feasts they compared military experiences and became great admirers, each of the other.

When they met again—this time at Magdeburg too—it was for the presentation of the Russian medal offered by General Gavelevski for recognition of the accomplishments of Colonel Stephens' part in directing the successful campaigns of the 30th infantry division from the Normandy beachhead, through northern France, Belgium, Holland and deep into Germany where it met the Red army.

The Russians had not been the first to recognize the qualities that had made Colonel Stephens such a vital cog in the Old Hickory division's consistent successes.

Colonel Stephens, who was born at Pierre, S. D., had previously been decorated by the French who presented him the legion of honor (in grade of chevalier including the croix de guerre with palm)

1945-07-01 Col Stevens received Russian medal.

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