

★ CAMP BLANDING ★ CAMP VAN DORN ★



# Blood and Fire

63rd Division Association, Inc.

• ARDENNES / ALSACE • RHINELAND • CENTRAL EUROPE •

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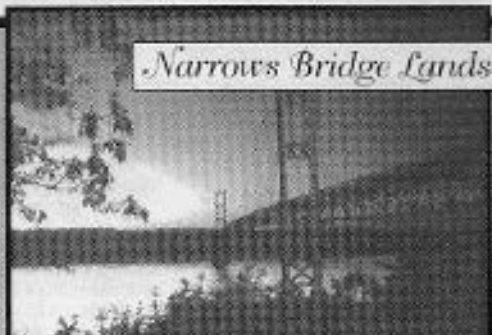
FEBRUARY 2007

## 59th Reunion

*Mt. St. Helens*



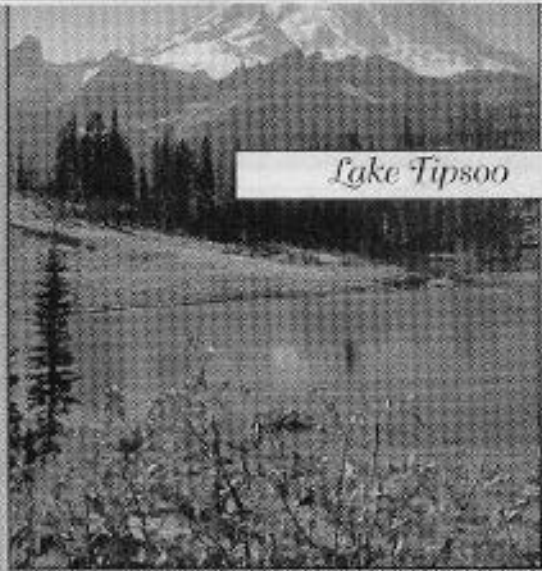
*Narrows Bridge Landscape*



**AUGUST 7-11, 2007**



*Lake Tipsoo*



# Tacoma, Washington

# Blood and Fire

Published by the 63rd Division Association to perpetuate the memory of our fallen comrades, to preserve the Esprit de Corps of the division, to assist in promoting an everlasting peace.

Three Issues Annually

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT ...

by Marsh Allen

We in the Pacific Northwest send greetings to you fellow "HOTSHOTS." We also want to greet the 63rd RRSC, (ARCOM), the current 63rd military group we welcomed to join us at the last reunion.

We want to welcome you to our great green country here in Washington. We have many things planned for you to do and see while you are here for the 2007 Reunion; the 59th annual reunion for our organization.

On Wednesday we will have our Necrology Service at the Post Chapel on Ft. Lewis. We will then have lunch on the post. After lunch we will have a tour of Ft. Lewis, see and talk to the troops, visit their equipment - Strykers, tanks, you name it. After our visit there we will bus to McCord AFB where we will get to visit the various airplanes and equipment that support our troops. Should be a great day.

Thursday will provide a tour of our famous Mt. Rainer, an inactive volcano in our backyard. Beautiful scenery. The park has been closed because of floods this past fall but the rangers inform me that all will be in shape for our visit there.

Friday will be a trip to Seattle to board a boat to go to Blake Island for a tour of the TILLICUM VILLAGE, a Native American site, where we will enjoy their delicious salmon bake. We return via boat and bus to our beautiful hotel in Tacoma in the twilight hours.

Saturday will be the men's meeting as well as the ladies' continental breakfast and social with their fun program. That evening will be our banquet and dance.

Come prepared to stay and enjoy all there is to see and do here. We have an excellent zoo and park for young and old alike. We have numerous museums and art galleries to see. The Glass Museum is but a short walk from the hotel. The Washington History Museum and the Tacoma Art Museum are next door to that. The Ft. Lewis Military Museum is located adjacent to the post just off I-5. A water wave park is just a short drive from Tacoma. Bring the kids and grandkids. There is much to enjoy for all ages.

The plans for the reunion are included in this issue of the *Blood and Fire*. We are working on getting the fares reduced, so watch for further information concerning this in the May issue of this magazine.

And, above all, SUPPORT OUR TROOPS!!

## A Memo from the Secretary . . .

Donna LaCosse

Today is Valentine's Day. Happy Day to all. As I write this, we are snow bound!! Yesterday we had a blizzard that lasted all day - in fact it started in the night on Monday - all the county roads were closed, no one could get here from there or there from here!! What fun!! We had a nice warm home, plenty of food and each other. What more could one ask? The telephone worked, the television gave us reports about the weather elsewhere and we didn't have one fight!! Today, the sun is shining but the drifts will keep everyone inside again today and perhaps even tomorrow.

I can also report that all is well in the office of the secretary/treasurer. Last fall I sent out almost 300 dues due letters and my mail box has been overflowing with "checks" from the annual members. There are a few who have not responded but have probably misplaced their reminder letter and will remember after reading this message! Several of the Life members have sent donations, and things are looking good!!

Just think spring, and it won't be long coming!

## From the editor . . .

Donna LaCosse

Wow! The mail has certainly brought me lots of material for the *Blood and Fire*!! I am so happy to receive items from you - then I can just stuff the pages full of fun and interesting things for you to read and enjoy.

We did have a problem with the November issue of the *Blood and Fire* and that is why some of you did not receive a copy in the mail. If you missed getting a copy, please let me know and I can send you one if I have enough left. First come, first served! I have a few copies and will be happy to share.

The problem? The labeler used the wrong mailing list. Since the mailing list changes with each mailing, I found myself in a royal mess! I have just spent the biggest share of each day for over a week, going over the mailing list to make sure everyone who is entitled will be sent a copy of the *Blood and Fire* this month. I am not saying you will all receive a copy, I am saying you will be sent one. I can't vouch for the mail service!

Now, you know why the *Blood and Fire* is late going to press this month. Better late than not at all!

I want to thank those of you who sent cards, emails and made telephone calls with concern for me when I was ill all during the month of December. Those

messages were all appreciated and I can now report that I am all better.

Keep sending me messages for the magazine - some of you are very lazy and can't be bothered writing your story, but you all have one to tell and I am willing to read it and print it for everyone else to enjoy. Let me hear from you!!

## Visit Website to find detailed history of 63rd Infantry Division

Visit the 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Web Site page at <http://www.63rdinfdiv.com> to find a detailed history of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. Included is a listing of unit awards, descriptions of battles, a listing of battle and non-battle deaths, descriptions and views of all 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division memorials.

There are also over 1,000 pictures of the men in training, in combat, and on occupation duty.

You will find a list of all memorabilia items for sale, information about reunions, and inquiries from members and relatives searching for information about members or buddies, plus an alphabetical listing by unit of all 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Association members, a listing of related web sites and other information of interest to veterans.

Webmaster Fred Clinton, D 254, is seeking photos and memorabilia images to be included on the web site.

Send photos by email to [joyclint@comcast.net](mailto:joyclint@comcast.net) or by regular mail to Fred Clinton, 102 S. Jenkins Street, Alexandria, VA 22304. Fred's phone number is 703-751-7548.

All items will be returned when processing has been completed.

## RECEIVED TWO COPIES?

If you received two copies of this issue of the *Blood and Fire*, please notify the editor as soon as possible. You don't need two copies and we don't need the added expense.

Thank you so much.

Donna LaCosse

*Why does someone believe you when you say there are four billion stars, but check when you say the paint is wet?*

# The Danube Bridgehead

by Raymond Restani and Herberth Schneiderman

Company "A," 254<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment effected the crossing of the Danube River, one mile south of Reidheim, Germany on April 25, 1945. The bridgehead was violently seized in a gallant thrust made by forward elements of the company.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 254<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, spearheaded by company "A," departed from Gerstetten, Germany at 0600 hours on 25 April 1945. Its mission - to cross the Danube, seize and hold the bridgehead, which action would smash clear a path over which reserve elements of the Regiment could later pass, in a drive to the Danube Plain.

After traveling forty-six miles by foot, tanks and trucks, the assault battalion early the same afternoon reached an open plain, 1,000 yards long, that lay between them and the river.

Reconnaissance elements probing forward were stopped by flak and accurate sniper fire. Directly, Company "A" was ordered to dismount and engage the enemy.

Like a well-trained football team, this company immediately deployed into its battle formation and, with a platoon of attached armor, grimly proceeded across the huge plain, towards the bridge site and the enemy. Despite the intense German machine-gun and sniper fire streaking over the field, Company "A" men advanced through it confidently, sweeping to the very banks of the river. There stood the gateway - the 250-yard concrete bridge that let into the town of Leipheim, the ultimate objective that day for Company "A" and for the rest of the 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion that followed in its wake. It was momentarily expected that the bridge would be blown by the enemy, for according to prior reconnaissance, the strategic span was mined.

Not wishing to gamble on having his armor knocked out by these charges, the company commander ordered the tanks to remain on the north side of the river and lay down a base of fire while the assault platoons, viz., the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>, were crossing the concrete structure to seize the bridgehead. The 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon was ordered to cross first. It was to be followed by Company Headquarters and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon, with the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon in support, to supplement the tanks' base of fire.

Without a backward look, the twenty-odd men of the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon, already weary from action of the past few days, rushed into their bridge assault. The almost sleepless battle-week that lay behind them was forgotten as they surged with the force of a tidal wave across the long span, hooting, shooting and, following the example of their platoon leader, 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Earle K.

Kelch, who was running at their head, ripping loose what mine-wires they could in their all-or-nothing charge to the other bank of the Danube.

Other units of the company, shortly to follow the 1<sup>st</sup>



Platoon, watched every movement of the initial assault closely, waiting tensely to see whether the bridge would be blown before the first group got completely across. The explosion did not occur just then, however, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon did get over safely. But no sooner had the last man of that group cleared the span on the other side, when the enemy set off his explosive charges and blew the bridge.

Then temporarily cut off by itself in Leipheim, the 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon began vigorously to fight its way through an area of civilian houses and town streets around the river, and there successfully stood off two enemy counter-attacks. The bridgehead had been seized and it was holding.

Back at the north bank of the river, meanwhile, battalion engineer elements had already started to construct a ramp which they intended to compensate for the north end of the original bridge, fallen into the Danube. Evidently, the enemy had done an incomplete job of setting and placing his demolition charges, had been caught off-guard by the surprisingly swift advance of Company "A," or Lt. Kelch and his men had pulled loose and neutralized enough mine-wires. In any case, except for the sunken north tip of the structure, it could still be useful. This was soon demonstrated when, after about an hour of feverish work, the engineers told the infantry that the renovated span was ready for traffic.

Still remaining behind, the tanks continued with their

## The Danube ....

...continued from page 4

base of fire, supplemented by fire from Company "B," while the rest of "Able, that had until then been waiting for the bridge to be repaired, sped across, fanned out into the town according to previous plan and enlarged the bridgehead, paving the way for "Baker" to come across and help the spearhead company clear the rest of Leipheim. Company "A" took the west half of the town; "B" took the east side.

Just at nightfall, the Germans began storming Leipheim at several different points in what later proved to be, for them, a vain and very costly counter-

attack. Twenty to thirty enemy tried to enter part of the Company "A" sector under cover of darkness, but they were quickly driven back by a small but determined element of the company, that was situated at one point on the town perimeter.

In its battle for the Danube bridgehead, Company "A" suffered three casualties when two platoon runners with Company Headquarters sustained leg injuries during the bridge explosion and a rifleman of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Platoon was killed by enemy small arms fire while helping to clear the town.

## Colonel Tucker's "Red Wireman"

by David R. Eveland



I volunteered to be drafted in January 1944. I was inducted in the army at Fort Douglas, Utah. From there, I was sent to Camp Swift, Texas. I was only there two weeks before I was sent to RTG in Camp Vandorn, Mississippi. Sometime in April, I was put in the A&P platoon HQ Company, 254th Infantry. I

took my training as a light engineer stringing barbed wire, building bridges, laying mine fields and tearing them up. I went overseas with the company.

Two days before Hill 216, we moved our living quarters into a Champagne Brewery and the ammo dump was a couple blocks away. At eight o'clock, Fate Cole and I took our stand as guard at the dump. We were told we would be there for two hours, then we would be relieved. We were there until twelve and no one came to relieve us. We had been busy issuing ammo to the rifle companies so the time went fairly fast, but then things got quiet and we started getting cold. We looked at our watches and discovered we had been on duty four hours. Cole went to see why no one had come, but he only found one person sober, Sergeant

Baumgarten. The three of us took one-hour turns getting warm the rest of the night. At six o'clock, Baumgarten got us relieved.

During a hot argument between Cole and Sergeant Barr over a bottle of champagne, Lt. Jordan came in with a request from the wire section for four men to help them for a few days. I told him if my buddies would go with me, I would go help them. Fate Cole, the little guy from Tulsa, Claud Smith, a Cherokee from Texarkana and two others said they would go. Another kid was volunteered to go. Lindsay was on sick leave so he couldn't go with us.

Now listen to this!! The three of us were all country kids and had never lived in a house with a phone, knew nothing about stringing telephone wire and I couldn't ever remember talking on a phone. We were each handed a pair of pliers, a knife to bare the end of the wire, a roll of tape and told "this is the way to splice wire." We helped set up the switchboard in the basement of a house after carrying hundreds of bottles of wine out to make room.

"Here are some rolls of wire! We need four lines strung to the OP up on the hill," was a direct order. With the help of one of the old gang, we strung those four lines over a mile long so the Colonel would have communication with troops as they took Hill 216.

Claud Smith and I were told to stay in the hole with the Colonel in case a line went out as the troops advanced. Our first trouble-shooting came when the line to Able Company went out. We went down across an open field with Jerry looking at us as we carried wire in our hands and I had a telephone on my back. We got to the CP and found no broken wire but they couldn't call the switchboard. A wire was broken someplace. So

...continued on page 14

# OUR HISTORY: THEN AND NOW

by Bill Scott, 11-Jan.-2007

e-mail: wjs631@comcast.net

Recently I read a good article titled **MILITARY HEADSTONES/MARKERS & FLAG HOLDERS** written by Donna Booth in the December 2006/January 2007 issue of **JOTS FROM THE POINT** newsletter of the Western Pennsylvania Genealogical Society. The editor is Barbara Braden Guffey who has given me permission to copy from it, but I have copied more from a VA publication that will be named in a following paragraph. Their website is <[www.wpgs.org](http://www.wpgs.org)>.

I have consulted with several funeral directors, our county Veterans Assistance Commission superintendent, and federal sources, and found that people are not at all well-informed about this subject when they are faced with the final rites for a veteran. The factual differences with the WPGS article were minor, mainly about the source of flag holders. The sources that I contacted said that the VA did not give them, but you could get them from various veterans' organizations, although some of them may be low on funds and the county, the funeral home, or family has to furnish the flag holders. It is possible that there are some variations in how the flag holders are issued and paid for in various states and localities around the country.

I would suggest that vets and/or their family get a VA 2006, or later, copy of "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents" VA Pamphlet 80-06-01, P94663, and start by reading Chap. 7 on "Burial and Memorial Benefits" as I will not try to quote every issue here. On the Internet you can get more related things from websites such as these for reading: ([www.funerals.org/faq/vet](http://www.funerals.org/faq/vet)) and ([www.funerals.org/pdfs/vets/pam.pdf](http://www.funerals.org/pdfs/vets/pam.pdf)) a contain lot of information that can be printed.

Chapter 7 Quotes: "ELIGIBILITY: Veterans discharged from active duty under conditions other than dishonorable and service members who die while on active duty, as well as spouses and dependent children of veterans and active duty service members, may be eligible for VA burial and memorial benefits. The veteran does not have to predecease a spouse or dependent child for them to be eligible.

VA national cemetery directors verify eligibility for burial in their cemeteries. A copy of the veteran's discharge document that specifies the period(s) of

active duty and character of the discharge, along with the deceased's death certificate and proof of relationship to the veteran (for eligible family members) are all that are usually needed to determine eligibility.

Readers with questions should contact the nearest national cemetery, 1-800-827-1000 or <[www.cem.va.gov](http://www.cem.va.gov)>.

**VA NATIONAL CEMETERIES:** Burial in a VA national cemetery is available for eligible veterans, their spouses and dependents at no cost to the family and includes the gravesite, grave-liner, opening and closing of the grave, a headstone or marker, and perpetual care as part of a national shrine. For veterans, benefits also include a burial flag (with case for active duty) and military funeral honors. Family members and other loved ones of deceased veterans may request Presidential Memorial Certificates.

VA operates 122 national cemeteries, of which 83 are open for new interments and 21 of these accept only cremated remains. Burial options are limited to those available at a specific cemetery but may include in-ground casket, or inurement of cremated remains in a columbarium, in ground or a scatter garden. Contact the nearest national cemetery to determine if it is open for new burial and which options are available.

The funeral director or the next of kin makes interment arrangements by contacting the national cemetery in which burial is desired. VA normally does not conduct burials on weekends. Gravesites cannot be reserved, however VA will honor reservations made under previous programs.

**HEADSTONES AND MARKERS:** Veterans, active duty members and retired reservists and National Guard members are eligible for an inscribed headstone or marker to mark their grave at any cemetery, national, state veterans or private, delivered at no cost, anywhere in the world. Spouses and dependent children are eligible for a government headstone or marker only if they are buried in a national or state veterans cemetery.

Flat markers are available in bronze, granite or marble. Upright headstones come in granite or marble. In national cemeteries, the style chosen must be consistent with existing monuments at the place of burial. Niche markers are available to mark columbaria used for inurement of cremated remains.

PARTIAL data compiled so far by 63rd Historians and helpers from AVAILABLE records

## COMPUTER DATA PRINTOUTS AND COPIES

PLEASE PRINT!	UNIT #1 Company, battery, HQ?	UNIT #2	COST/EACH
1943-45 Unit Roster of Men (w/rank, serial no., dates, medals, casualties, deaths, etc.) .....			\$4 ea.
Today's Unit Address-Phone list (for members only) .....			\$2 ea.
1945 Unit Medals List (w/WWII home towns) .....			\$2 ea.
1944-45 Unit Itineraries (in Bn. group) .....			\$3 ea.
Alphabetical List of CAMP BLANDING CADRE MEN with data .....			\$5 ea.
Today's Address & Phone List of CAMP BLANDING CADRE MEN (for members only) .....			\$2 ea.
Today's Address & Phone List by State (for members only) .....	State #1	State #2	\$2 ea.
1,029 Killed in Action, Died of Wound, & Non-Battle Death --- ALPHA .....			\$5 ea.
KIA, DOW, NBD, with all known men shown and sorted by ----- ALL UNITS .....			\$5 ea.
KIA, DOW, NBD, best viewpoint - Sorted by DATE, organization, unit .....			\$5 ea.
Casualty Summary compiled to date for ALL units with 8 categories .....			\$3 ea.
2005 Alphabetical list book (#33) with date on casualties, deaths, units, serial numbers, cadre, whether man's or widow's address is known, data & casualty summaries, etc. .... 69,179 LINES OF NAMES.....			\$63 ea.

## MAP COPIES

11" x 17" 1:1,000,000 map of entire area of 63rd combat WITHOUT trail of 63rd units.....			\$1 ea.
1:200,000 1939 map of ALSACE, Lorraine, & SAAR areas thru Siegfried Line area.....			\$5 ea.
1:50,000 map of COLMAR Pocket & Vosges Mtn. area in France for 254th guys.....			\$5 ea.
1:20,000 map of SW 1/4 of COLMAR map area w/Kaysersberg, etc. for 254th guys.....			\$5 ea.
Three 1:25K maps from S. of Sarreguemines to Saarbrucken w/great detail .....			\$13 set
Two 1:25,000 1945 maps showing the 63rd's SIEGFRIED LINE area with forts, from 1/45 aerial photos with legends .....			\$13 set
1:25,000 BLIESKASTEL map that shows Kirkel, Wurzbach, & Biesingen.....	NEW		\$5 ea.
1:100,000 KAISERSLAUTERN map that shows Homburg, Langmeil & Grunstadt.....	NEW		\$5 ea.
1:100,000 KARLSRUHE map that shows Bad Wimpfen, Heilbronn & Stuttgart.....	NEW		\$5 ea.
1:100,000 ELLWANGEN map from Waldenburg & Schwabisch Hall to Oberbobingen .....			\$5 ea.
1:25,000 MOGGLINGEN map shows from Obergroningen to Oberbobingen.....			\$5 ea.
8.5" x 14" 1:250,000 map shows from Mannheim to Rothenberg and Heilbronn.....	NEW		\$1 ea.

## HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

2nd Bn.-253 4-12 April 1945 events, rosters & Pres. Unit Citation award .....			\$14 ea.
Regimental histories for January-May 1945 in binders, copied from monthly combat reports: 253rd ___, 254th ___, 255th ___ : .....			\$13 ea.
Reprint of 135-page 1986 softcover book, "With the 63rd Infantry Division in WWII" by Col. James E. Hatcher of 254th and 255th .....	CHANGED		\$20 ea.
Unbound Xerographic copy of 1945 history & index for "The Trail of 254 Thru Blood & Fire" by Harris Peel, Vernon Kile, Algernon Keith & John Sontag .....			\$7 ea.
Unbound inkjet color copy of 1945 "Victory in Europe" booklet .....			\$5 ea.
1943-45 combat history of 263rd Engineer Combat Bn. by Bill Snyder in binder.....			\$65 ea.
Jan-Apr 45 Combat Unit Journals of Hq 1st Bn-254 by date, hour, minute in binder .....			\$10 ea.
Ray Restani's Report of A-254 Attack at Eschringen, Germany, 15-Mar-45 in binder .....			\$8 ea.
Short 1943-45 History of Hq 1st Bn-255 with "after action report" in binder.....			\$8 ea.
Unbound Germany's Siegfried Line history, details, drawings, & photos .....	NEW		\$5 ea.
Unbound History 7th U.S. Army, 15-Dec-44 to 25-Jan-45, "The Other Bulge".....	NEW		\$4 ea.
Unbound 1944 "I am a Doughboy" booklet on inf. co. & plt. equipment, weapons, & training.....	NEW		\$4 ea.

## PATCHES, can be ironed on or sewn on caps, jackets, etc.

(A) 3.5" x 2.3" 63rd Infantry Division for uniform .....			\$4 ea.
(B) 2.5" x 1.45" 63rd Infantry Div. with "BLOOD & FIRE" below .....			\$3 ea.
(C) 2.66" x 2.35" 63rd w/ "BLOOD & FIRE" and "63rd INFANTRY DIV." below.....	NEW		\$4 ea.
(D) 2.25" high x 3.5" wide US flag .....			\$3 ea.

(E) 2.5" high x 3.5" wide 63rd Division Siegfried Line sign patch .....	\$5 ea.
(F) 3.5" high x 3.5" wide 253rd Infantry Regiment w/motto "QUINTA ESSENTIA" (The Quintessence).....	\$5 ea.
(G) 3.6" high x 3.4" wide 254th Infantry Regiment w/motto "DEATH BEFORE DEFEAT" .....	\$5 ea.
(H) 3.5" high x 3.0" wide 255th Infantry Regiment with motto "COR FERREUM" (Heart of Steel) .....	\$5 ea.

## ----- 1.2 CREST PINS w/2 clutch pins -----

253rd Infantry Regiment with motto ... "QUINTA ESSENTIA" (The Quintessence) .....	Not avail.
254th Infantry Regiment with motto ... "DEATH BEFORE DEFEAT" .....	\$5 ea.
255th Infantry Regiment with motto ... "COR FERREUM (Heart of Steel) .....	\$5 ea.
Colored pin description w/honors & 63rd Div. emblems ... 253rd ____, 254th ____, 255th ____ .....	\$1 ea.

## -----HAT PINS &amp; BOLA TIES -----

63rd Inf. Div. Patch pin ____, Combat Infantryman Badge pin ____, Combat Medic Badge pin ____ .....	\$4 ea.
Ranger Badge pin ____, Silver Star Medal pin ____, Bronze Star Medal pin ____ .....	\$4 ea.
Purple Heart Medal pin ____, Presidential Unit Citation Badge pin ____, Infantry pin ____ .....	\$4 ea.
MP pin ____, POW Medal pin ____, Field Artillery pin ____, Corps of Engineers pin ____ .....	\$4 ea.
Quartermaster pin ____, Signal Corps pin ____, Ruptured Duck pin ____, 7th Army Patch pin ____ .....	\$4 ea.
Europe Africa Middle East pin ____, WWII Victory Medal pin ____, Army of Occupation pin ____ .....	\$4 ea.
Full Size Expert Infantry Badge ____, Full Size Presidential Unit Citation Badge ____ .....	\$5 ea.
63rd Inf. Div. deluxe bola tie with black cord ____, gold cord ____ .....	\$10 ea.

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Presidential Unit Citations copy: 2nd Bn.-253rd ____, 1st Bn.-254th ____, 3rd Bn.-254th ____ .....	\$2 ea.
Pres. Unit Citation narrative for 3rd Bn. and Co. A & B-253rd Inf. ....	NEW \$1 ea.
French Croix deGuerre w/Palm for 254th Inf.: 8.5" x 11" \$5 ea. ____, 11-5/8" x 17" \$10 ea. ____ .....	

## ----- COMPACT DISKS FOR MICROSOFT WINDOWS SYSTEMS -----

95 of 1943-45 Blood & Fire issues ____, 63rd Div. General Orders for medals, etc. ....	\$10 ea.
853 page updated "Chronicles" history book w/photos, rosters, alpha list .....	\$15 ea.
Histories w/photos, rosters, & other info: 253rd ____, 254th ____ .....	\$12 ea.
255th ____, All Artillery ____, 263rd Engineer & 363 Medical Bns. ____ .....	\$12 ea.
Special Troops: HQ&HQ Co., Band, MP, QM, Recon., Signal, Ordnance .....	\$12 ea.
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Special Troops: HQ&HQ Co., Band, MP, QM, Recon., Signal, Ordnance .....	\$10 ea.
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## ----- CAPS -----

Bright white cap with red bill and adjustable red rear net .....	NEW \$10 ea.
Light blue cap and bill, with adjustable blue rear net for spring, summer or fall .....	CHANGED \$10 ea.
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The new 63rd patch emblem has "BLOOD AND FIRE" and "63rd INFANTRY DIV." like the "C" patch on the other page.	

## ----- CHALLENGE COINS -----

1.5" 63rd Infantry Division Antique Bronze Challenge Coin with plastic pocket case .....	NEW \$10 ea.
1.5" 254th Infantry Regiment Antique Bronze Challenge Coin with plastic pocket case .....	NEW \$10 ea.
1.5 254th Infantry Regiment Brilliant Gold Challenge Coin with plastic pocket case .....	NEW \$10 ea.
3.5" x 3.5" x 1.25" Dark Blue Coin Presentation Case .....	NEW \$ 5 ea.

August 2006 form #61

Check # \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail To: BILL SCOTT, 63RD DIV. HISTORIAN, 407 S. WALNUT ST, SYCAMORE, IL 60178-2234

(Make check or money order to: 63RD DIV. HISTORY FUND) --- PLEASE USE ADDRESS STICKER OR PRINT CAREFULLY

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ UNIT(S): \_\_\_\_\_  
 STREET: \_\_\_\_\_ APT. \_\_\_\_\_ P.O. BOX: \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 SPOUSE: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
 VET'S RELATIVE: \_\_\_\_\_ OF \_\_\_\_\_

(SON, GRANDSON, DAUGHTER, BROTHER?)

63RD VET'S NAME



# Our history ...

... continued from page 6

**INSCRIPTION:** Headstones and markers must be inscribed with the name of the deceased, branch of service, and year of birth and death. They also may be inscribed with other markings, including an authorized emblem of belief and, space permitting, additional text including military rank, war service such as "World War II," complete date of birth and death, military awards, military organizations, civilian or veteran affiliations and words of endearment.

**PRIVATE CEMETERIES:** to apply for a headstone or marker for a private cemetery, mail a completed VA Form 40-1330 (from [www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/va40-1330.pdf](http://www.va.gov/vaforms/va/pdf/va40-1330.pdf)). Application for Standard Government Headstone or Marker for Installation in a Private or State Veterans Cemetery, and a copy of the veteran's military discharge document and death certificate to Memorial Programs Service (41A1), Department of Veterans Affairs, 5109 Russell Rd., Quantico, VA 22134-3903, or fax documents to 1-800-455-7143. VA will provide a government headstone or marker even if the grave is already marked with a private one. Before ordering, check with the cemetery to ensure that the additional headstone or marker will be accepted. Any placement fee will not be reimbursed by the VA. The foundation must meet the VA standards for material and depth.

**PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES:** Certificates are issued upon request to recognize the military service of honorably discharged deceased veterans. Next of kin, relatives and friends may request them in person at any VA regional office or by mail. Presidential Memorial Certificates (41A1C), Department of Veterans Affairs, Quantico, VA 22143-3903. Or fax documents to 202-565-8054.

No form is required and there is no time limit for requesting a certificate(s), but requests should include a copy of the veteran's discharge document and death certificate and clearly indicate to what address the certificate(s) should be sent. Information and a sample certificate can be found at ([www.cem.va.gov/jpmc.htm](http://www.cem.va.gov/jpmc.htm)).

**BURIAL FLAGS:** VA will furnish a U.S. burial flag for memorialization of:

1. Veterans who served during wartime or after Jan. 31, 1955.

2. Veterans who were entitled to retired pay for service in the reserves, or would have been entitled if over age 60.

3. Members or former members of the Selected Reserve who served their initial obligation, or were discharged for a disability incurred or aggravated in line of duty, or died while a member of the Selected Reserve.

**BURIAL ALLOWANCE:** VA will pay a \$300 burial and funeral allowance for veterans who, at time of death, were entitled to receive pension or compensation or would have been entitled if they weren't receiving military retirement pay. Eligibility also may be established when death occurs in a VA facility, a VA-contracted nursing home, or a state veterans nursing home. In non service-connected death cases claims must be filed within two years after burial or cremation.

**PLOT ALLOWANCE:** VA will pay a \$300 plot allowance when a veteran is buried in a cemetery not under U.S. government jurisdiction if: the veteran was discharged from active duty because of disability incurred or aggravated in the line of duty, the veteran was receiving compensation or pension or would have been if they weren't receiving military retired pay, or they died in a VA facility. (A receipt is required.)

The \$300 plot allowance may be paid to the state for the cost of a plot or interment in a state-owned cemetery reserved solely for veteran burials if the veteran is buried without charge. Burial expenses paid by the deceased's employer or a state agency will not be reimbursed.

Those who were getting Social Security payments would also get another \$255 death benefit for the family of the deceased.

Most of the above issues can be taken care of through the funeral director that the family has chosen.

Two more Camp Van Dorn era deaths are now recorded. Pfc. Joel Heysel of C-255 died at 1600 on 30-Oct-44. No data on the cause of his death or location was given. Pvt. William D. English of M-253 was killed in a Combat Field Exercise at about 0930 on 11-Oct-44 per the 12-Oct-44 morning report.

Since the reunion in August I've added a net gain of 136 names in the unit rosters, and those with known serial numbers has gone from 97.35% to 97.38%. The 63rd names now total 69,421 and with the attached combat unit names the grand total is now up to 70,077.

1LT Mary Kate McIsaac, CO of the 35th

... continued on page 10

## Our history ...

... continued from page 9

Military History Detachment of the 63rd Regional Readiness Command (RRC) is to create a history of that organization and the previous ones: 63rd Infantry Division (US Army Reserve) (1952-1965), 63rd Army Reserve Command (ARCOM) (1968-1995) and 63rd Regional Support Command (RSC) 1995-2003). They all wore the same patch as ours.

The history of those organizations has not been in our undertaking all these years, but there may be bits and pieces that can be put together from information that we might have in past *Blood & Fire*

other readers of this issue have some info that would help her the copies could be sent to her by mail, e-mail, or by phone to the following addresses and numbers:

1LT Kate McIsaac, 35th Military History Detachment, 5340 Bandini Blvd., Bldg 1, Bell, CA 90201-6408

Phones: (323) 307-4497 & (562) 343-3349 (Blackberry)

E-mail: Mcisaac, Mary K 1LT USAR 63RD RRC

<kate.mcisaac@usar.army.mil>

Fred Clinton has mailed her a complete set of the 16 History CDs plus one that shows the Division Memorials as a starting effort in helping her with the project.

## Old soldiers never die . . .



Nell Talcott, F 254, at age 81, sits on his tractor as others help him move a corral "up the hill." He says: "old soldiers never die -- they just keep movin' on."

# Ramblings of a World War II soldier

by John S. Lynch



*1st Squad, 1st Platoon, Co. A, 263rd Combat Engineers of 63rd Infantry Division where we went through the Siegfried Line. Right front: Owen Dobbe, Reid Meredith, John Lynch (seated in front with helmet on lap) and Roy Casey, assistant squad leader. Right rear, Harold Crose, South, our truck driver, Glen Mung, Gotell and Koryta, the other two are replacements. Taken spring of 1945.*

When Volume 58, No 1 of the *Blood and Fire* magazine arrived, it was like a breath of Spring. Accolades to those responsible. I especially was impressed by President Zimmerman's input, and his observations about the Greater Generation and our world tour. It has been observed that the engineers of the 263 have always had a poor showing. We were a relatively small part in the make-up of an Infantry Division.

Now, I will attempt to include a lot of "bumps in the road" from induction to discharge.

Inducted at Greensburg, PA., I was processed and the same night, put aboard a railroad passenger car and arrived at Ft. Meade, MD. Breakfast consisted of cold boiled eggs and already sugared coffee (take it and like it).

After orientation and being told about the importance of stepping off on the left foot and without fail saluting every officer and being further informed, it was time to clean the barracks for an important inspection.

Back to getting ready for the white glove inspection. Ed Lalliment of Beaver Falls, PA and I were assigned to clean windows. Ed became and remains a good buddy of Len Zimmerman. He is still in Beaver Falls with Velma, his wife of many years. He is also a member of the Blood and Fire Association.

When we went off duty, we had to stay on the

reservation. Don't go to Boom Town where the bars and girls mean trouble! Ed and I walked the streets looking for officers to salute.

The Army doesn't tell the newly minted privates anything. The next thing to mention was being loaded into an old Pullman car to go to "yonder" wherever that may be.

Ed Lalliment, who was newly married and I were assigned the same double berth. We talked a lot. He about Velma and I about Vi, whom I had known since we met at an Epworth League party at her church.

Anyway, the trip to wherever was a new experience for us. It was nice to be served in the dining car by white coated porters. We had lots of speculation about the destination.

The train would stop at a siding. Everyone out for exercise! Coal fired engines moved the train. Every morning there was a fresh coat of pollutants on the windowsills.

Beyond Chicago we worked our way up to the Great Northern Railroad tracks. Great expanses of very lightly populated country and some spectacular mountain scenery. At a couple of steep climbs we had three engines. One in the middle of the train and a pusher behind. On very sharp curves, we could see them at work.

We arrived at Tacoma and Ft. Lewis. On the way we passed near the site where the famous bridge, "Galloping Gertie" had fallen in the high wind storm. We were met by a convoy of trucks from the 202 Coast Artillery for the next experience. The 202 was a Chicago National Guard outfit that had been for training at Fort Bliss, Texas when they were called into Federal service. A great opportunity to experience English as spoken in the Chicago area! They regaled us with the joys of leave in Jaurez, Mexico.

They were positioned in a tent city on a school yard in Bremerton, WA for Basic Training by a cadre of non-coms from the various units. Among other things we had to learn and recite the Guard Order before we could get a pass to go out on the streets.

When they were satisfied that I was not an embarrassment to the operation, I was sent to site or section #28 at a reservoir on a hill overlooking the Bremerton Ship Repair Yard. There to remain for many months. At that time, there were many Barrage-Balloons sited around Bremerton with cable shroud lines hanging from them. Each balloon was tethered by a cable to a winch in order to get them up and down.

# Ramblings ...

*... continued from page 11*

They looked like poorly nourished elephants all baggy and saggy.

Battery HQ was at Kitsap Lake some miles away. The various battery personnel went there for mess or other duties like work details or K.P. One other guy on guard stayed on guard and his thrown-together meal in his mess kit was brought back when the truck returned. Night and day someone stayed by the field telephone just in case.

When it became apparent that the Japanese were too busy to be a threat, the defense of the yard was lessened and a new HQ was established at Chico between Bremerton and the Naval Ammo facility. Someone said we needed more infantry, the Queen of Battle!

I was moved to another tar-paper covered barracks a short walk from HQ. Ed Lallement remained at the mountain site where he was initially placed. On the rare occasion when anyone got a pass to go to Seattle, it was a ferry ride through the Coast Guard maintained movable under water net that was to trap submarines. Don't overlook any possibility in weak lines in the defense. Originally, there were battery locations on Bainbridge Island, Whidby Island and Vashion Island.

The regiment sent us for training to the Yakima Desert for night training so the radars could direct the anti aircraft guns to track incoming enemy. Since we only served our purpose at night, we were available during the day to help the farmers get necessary work done. For instance, thinning the growing apples on the tree so they would produce the famous "Yakima" grade fruit. Another activity was to haul freshly harvested bean plants to the mechanical pod threshers.

When there were no training exercises a pass to town could be had. If you were with someone in the know, a taxi driver could bring something to make Coke better. I went to town with a native of the area who had a lady friend. He claimed to have been a sheepherder before being inducted. His name was Stegman.

The unit went on several bivouacs. One at Snoquaumie on Mt. Rainier, another to a civilian conservation camp in the rain forest of the Olympic Peninsula and from there to the ocean beach area on the west side of the Peninsula.

I went to a rest and recreation camp on the Hood Canal where I had my first lesson in salt water and sunshine. Also, at the camp I met a native Oregonian whose name was John Manning and whose father was employed at the shipyard near Portland. We thumbed transportation to Portland down Highway #1 and visited his parents.

I had my first experience with Hamm's Beer. It was not hard to get picked up on the road. The civilians that

were always ready to do for men in uniform. John had been to Alaska and that made him an adventurer to me. Sometime later, I went on pass with him to Seattle. Saw an exotic dancer who had trained birds to assist in a partial disrobe. Wild stuff! His mother wrote to my mother that John brought a fellow soldier to visit.

Since a serious snowfall was rare in the Seattle area, we had one that they were not prepared for, and no-go in the snow capability.

I drove one of the two-and-a-half ton trucks around the usual farm route to pick up the cans and take them to the dairy. The man who would have normally done it treated me to a hungry man sized steak.

When it became time to leave Bremerton, I, and a medic Maurice Pontious got permission to drive to Van Dorn. He had a 1940 Ford. We and our wives drove east to his family's home in St. Cloud, Minnesota where we were made welcome by their extended families. Along the route, we stayed in some rather primitive motels as compared to today's facilities. Great experience! No interstates. After a few days in Minnesota we headed for the Camp Dorn experience. We arrived on Friday but were not due until Monday. We went to the Spinning Wheel Motel in St. Francisville, LA. The heat was oppressive and the only relief was the shower or under a ceiling fan over the bed. Maurice and I reported for duty on Monday morning. Our wives stayed in the guest facilities on the post. There was a time limit on how long they could stay so they had to look for a place off post.

Some of the accommodations were not much. After I got permission to go home at night we had one bedroom that had been a back porch. Access was through the owners bedroom. Another was a small trailer that I thought might upset while I had bouts of hay fever sneezing. Another was a room that had been created by partitioning a room which gave us half a window above a very active bar. The next move was to a four unit two-story apartment where they had a small room heater (gas fired) which I turned on it's side to make a cooking surface.

My wife found a deli operation to work in where they made sandwiches for the Post Exchange. The restaurant fare was relatively inexpensive. A heaped plate of shrimp was sixty-five cents. We drank a lot of iced tea and another local refresher that used limes. Lots of roaches were in evidence, which were never seen before by us Yankees. A day out in the pine forest exercises were liable to produce chiggers, those little red spiders that burrow in your pores and sometimes, along with misery, can cause blood poisoning.

Then, more training. Some of the NCO's who were to make engineers of us were totally unaware that just because we were interested we had learned from some

*... continued on page 13*

# Ramblings ...

*... continued from page 12*

of our buddies in the 202, a lot of rigging tricks and lashings. How to secure packages on the back of a pack animal and how to tie bales of cotton on river boats using plain rigs and lines. Being farm raised, I knew about the use of dynamite in forest clearing.

Our company commander was Captain Tunneson, a Civil Engineer from Jackson, Mississippi. One of the sergeants was an ex-powder monkey who was full of him self. He was a pretty good boxer but careless and over confident about the charges that he prepared and packed in his fatigue uniform breast pockets. For training he would use his cigarette to light the fuses of the blocks of explosives before he threw them into predetermined holes in the ground. One day he became completely dissected over the trees. Also causing soldier Koryta a serious hearing problem.

When it came near time to ship out of Van Dorn we were formed for a company picture as a souvenir. We had time on Christmas for a mess of sorts. My wife left the next day by train to return to her family home. The 263<sup>rd</sup> left by troop train for Camp Shanks. My wife and my mother went to visit my aunt in New Jersey. I received a pass to go say a last goodbye.

The next day we were marched on board a converted luxury liner minus the luxury. I, and my worldly possessions including duffle bag, had a chain suspended pipe frame bed, third from the floor in a four level USA floating motel. Not a good spot for a Mal de Mere sufferer.

Duty was to make sure that at night there was no light to indicate that we were there. A non-sufferer does not know how bad a land-lubber can feel while exposed to that duty. It was felt that this liner could travel fast enough to steer an erratic course that it was not necessary to travel in convoy.

My next experience was trying to wash and shower with sea water. Some of the company had a good time on deck during the day. It was a good place to play cards and smoke. When we arrived in Marseilles, France, the ship anchored in deep water and we were taken off in litters to shuttle from ship to dock. Then we were loaded on trucks and taken to a bald hill where we erected our pup tents. This area was for staging new arrivals. It was known as DBS or Calas.

Our next experience was to the portable showers to disrobe and scrub. The clothes that we received had been recycled from some previous unit that the luck-of-the-draw did not mean as good a fit as might be desired.

A pass to the city came with rather specific instructions and a couple of large pills. There was a USO but I did not enjoy the visit. The weather was bad

and the area turned into a mud hole. It was necessary to pile up a levee to keep the flood out. It got cold at night. After seeing some training films it was time to go toward the action. We saw a lot of destroyed German equipment that had fallen to action taken by those fighting units that preceeded us. We had to leave some tent pegs behind as they were frozen in the mud. On the trip we stayed overnight at a camp that was maintained for troops moving to the war zone. Trucks will never replace Greyhound buses as a ride to enjoy!

Upon arriving in Sarguemines, France in preparation for taking on the Dragons Teeth, we occupied houses that had been requisitioned from the citizens. From there, there were patrols to be helped across the Saar and Jogst rivers as the Germans defenses were to be tested. One night my assistant squad leader took a bullet through his rank patch on one of his arms. He was able to stay on duty. Two other privates, Fagelly and Robert Carp from Texas, had more serious wounds and eventually were hospitalized in England. The mentioned Purple Heart assistant squad leader was Roy Casey of Dorset, Vermont, whose wife is a member of the Blood and Fire.

We put a pontoon bridge in place for the infantry before we loaded up with explosives for the assault. John Densley, a native from Oregon and one of my site members from the Bremmerton days, was killed. I have a close-up picture of my squad where we went into the Sigfried. Again, the army did some pre-planning and made a sign proclaiming to all that passage was made possible by the Blood and Fire 63<sup>rd</sup> Division loud and clear!

From there and moving toward victory, we experienced a lot of the field conditions that General Hibbs said in training at Van Dorn were necessary for being successful in battle. Despite the "grumbling" it proved him right. Long cold nights in fox holes were very uncomfortable!

I was granted a Bronze Medal for removal of a road block one night. Another time it fell to the engineers to destroy a tall factory smoke stack that the Germans were using as an aiming stake to improve the accuracy of their heavy firearms. The sound of their multi-barreled rocket barrages and moving Panzer tanks were designed to be unsettling. It was good to see the Air Force fighter planes in command of the skies.

We came to a place where the area between the lanes of the Auto Bahn had been paved and painted green to look like grass to provide for the take off and landing of their Messerschmidt fighters. The planes were parked in pine forests but the US planes had strafed them into junk. The Germans liked the high ground. One place we stayed was Altes Lager, a one-time cavalry camp. When they were rising in power they treated

*... continued on page 14*

## Ramblings ...

... continued from page 13

themselves well.

We moved into the Neiderstättin Castle, which had an enclosed courtyard. The rooms had built in heat that in normal times would have been tended by help in the hallways. There were people in an attached building who probably had ownership before we arrived.

I came upon a real bathtub with an electrical water tank and treated myself to a leisurely bath probably too hot which produced light headedness. A form of shock.

I had known nothing of Vice President Harry Truman until Franklin D. Roosevelt died. The war moved rather quickly to a favorable conclusion and we became an army of occupation and added up our points to determine if we could expect to return home or be prepared for duty in the Orient.

As rumors flew, we were told that we might be wearing the Texas 36<sup>th</sup> Division T Patch or the 100<sup>th</sup> Division. After a sudden collapse of Japan, the plans were changed. Those with the most points would get on priority. I had three years stateside at a point a month plus out of the country time at two points a month.

I was on a detail that received weapons for storage in a town where there was a factory that made small electric trains. I bought one and sent it home. One of our sons has it and it still works.

At Bad Mergentheim we were entertained by the troop who toured as the company that put on the "Carmen Show." We were also entertained by the Conn Brothers with a boxing exhibition. I had an opportunity for R&R leave to Paris but did not go. However, I did go to Brussels and I have a souvenir statue of one of their famous statues. I went to Nancy for a few days and also had leave at Marseilles where the hotel had a bird cage elevator. I also toured a perfume factory at Aix. We were told that the casinos at Monaco were off-limits so don't try that. Being no gambler at all, they wasted that advise on me.

The travel to the Riviera was by as cargo plane with seating against the walls in the hold. Sure beat the army's 6x6's. As we flew over the Alps it was a new thrill. It seemed like one could almost touch the beautiful peaks.

One of the duties was to ride shot gun on a train load of refugees being taken to Linz, Austria. We stopped short of the border to let them walk past the check points because the Russians would have kept the train.

Another memorable experience was seeing the farm wagons pulled by maybe an old horse or an ox. The farm hands were mostly women who would physically drag the wagon aside to let traffic pass. Many wagons had hand applied brakes. Both front and back. Many of the motor vehicles had wood burner gas supplies to

produce fuel. A heavy truck with the mechanism in the cargo box would lose their ability to make fuel on a down grade and then have to rekindle before proceeding. They carried wood blocks in burlap bags as fuel. A bus might have the mechanism on a trailer.

When the happy day arrived to board a ship for home we were marched aboard the Cody Victory. My duty there was to manage traffic in the mess hall that had dining English style with no seating. Tables were high and one stood to eat. That was easy duty and I did not suffer motion sickness.

After being back on US soil, we were taken to Camp Kilmer and then I went to Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania for a mustering out. A smooth talking recruiter convinced me to enlist in the Inactive Reserve to keep my rank and be a good patriot. The rest of the trip home was on my own on the Pennsylvania railroad.

I was happy to be reunited with Vi and our families. At that point I went to work as a mechanic for a friend of long standing.

In 1948, we were at my parents home and I heard Walter Winchell report on the Balfour agreement and he observed that the seed of World War III had just been planted. That did not make my day as I was still on my reserve enlistment.

## Colonel Tucker ...

... continued from page 5

back we went, looking for the break.

Hey, now, Jerry is looking down our backs when we got to the edge of the field so we called the switchboard and all was fine there. But, we still couldn't get through to the company, so back to the other side we went and now we could get the company but not the switchboard! We let the wire run through our hands and finely, out in the middle of the field, we found where a bullet had gone between the wires and cut the line. Then it didn't take long to fix the problem.

Claud (Smithy) and I carried the phone and strung the wire for Colonel Tucker on every attack in the Colmar Pocket and to Armucker, then we were split up and each was given a crew. I went with Tucker to Ensheim, and then we were back together until after the Siegfried.

While we were at Armucker, Smithy and I went on a looting tour. Smithy found a German flag and tore a piece of red out of it to make a scarf. I wasn't to be left out, so I got a red papal scarf from a church and now we looked like a pair of Boy Scouts! When we got back, it was chow time, so we got our mess kits and when we got in line, guess who was there? You guessed it, no one but

... continued on page 17

# My combat experiences

*Memoirs by Bill Gold – submitted by Gordon Myers*

As I look back upon my World War II combat experiences, I sometimes wonder whether I didn't dream the whole thing up, that perhaps these events were simply the result of a dreadful, hazily remembered nightmare. But my shattered left leg and the partially missing fingers of my right hand are evidence that this was all too real an event.

I was born in Brooklyn in 1925 and raised in a typical, multi-ethnic neighborhood. I sang and played drums in high school, and my goal in life was to become a professional musician. There was nothing especially different about me - just another neighborhood kid, and like the other kids. I was mostly unaware of world events. I knew who Adolph Hitler was, and that he didn't like Jews, but my knowledge went no further than that. In those days, a neighborhood (at least the ones in New York) was much more insulated than it is today; it was not unusual for a person to spend his entire life there without ever leaving it.

Upon my graduation from high school in June 1943, I was drafted into the army. I was sent to Camp Upton, on Long Island, for a day or so, then shipped to Camp Wolters, Texas for basic training. While there, I played drums in a military band as a means of keeping a hand (or two) in music. I would have been perfectly happy to continue this for the rest of the war. But this was not to be, as I was transferred yet again, this time to Camp Van Dorn in Mississippi, for combat training. It was here that I was placed in Company E, 254<sup>th</sup> Regiment of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, my final address, so to speak.

Mississippi was unlike any other place I had been to - the dark side of the moon seemed more familiar to me. It wasn't just the hot, humid climate that was different, but the social climate as well. I was unprepared for the rigid degree of racial segregation I had encountered. I had gotten a taste of it earlier in Texas, but it was worse in Mississippi. I can barely imagine what went through the minds of those Northern Blacks who found themselves victims of American Apartheid at its most appalling. In retrospect, what was equaling appalling was the fact that, at the time, it didn't bother me at all. I was eighteen years old and couldn't be bothered with such trivialities.

Upon finishing combat training, my regiment was sent to New York where, on November 25, 1944 (Thanksgiving Day), we sailed to France, arriving in Marseilles on December 8<sup>th</sup>. The Battle of the Bulge began about a week later, but I was not a part of that. It was not until early the next year that I saw combat for the first time. It was much different than portrayed in

the movies. For one thing, it was far more chaotic than the well-choreographed battles produced by Hollywood. Everybody was simply trying to stay alive, including me. There were no phony heroics or recitations of the Gettysburg Address or any such silliness. We were scared and cold, and we couldn't wait for the war to end. The main goal - the only goal - was survival.

As the war progressed and the Allies moved toward Germany in the spring of 1945, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Division was attempting to fight its way through the Siegfried Line. Early on the morning of March 16<sup>th</sup> - St. Patrick's Day - I found myself part of a squad of men detailed to enter the Siegfried Line through a maze of trenches near the town of Jepsheim, Germany. We succeeded in destroying the first pillbox by slinging hand grenades, which we threw into the enemy gun areas. Moving through the trenches to reach our second pillbox, we were ambushed from the rear by Germans who flung their own hand grenades into the area we occupied. Several of my comrades were instantly blown to bits by the explosions. Although I was successful in throwing away several of these incoming grenades, one of them blew up close to my hand, causing damage to my right forearm. There was also loss of hearing to my left ear as well as shrapnel in my eyes.

In a semi-conscious state, I applied my belt as a tourniquet around my arm to prevent my bleeding to death. I recall being dragged by some Germans into concrete fortifications and placed on a metal bed. I was one of three survivors the Germans took as hostages in fear of their lives (they were probably aware of the massacre of unarmed Americans at Malmedy, during the Battle of the Bulge, and perhaps were looking for some form of life insurance). In any case, shortly after I was taken prisoner, I destroyed my dog tags to prevent the Germans from learning I was Jewish - I worried they would kill me if they saw the "H" on my dog tags (H for Hebrew). Looking back, it surprised me that I had the presence of mind to do this, given the fact that I was only semi-conscious.

I don't remember how long I remained their prisoner in the pillbox. I do know that I was freed either the next day, or perhaps two days later, by the remaining members of my company, immediately transferred by stretcher to the nearest aid station and given last rights by a priest who was unaware of my religious affiliation. I was then placed on an operating

## Combat ...

... continued from page 15

table, still not fully conscious of what was happening. The surgeons managed to stop the hemorrhage before I bled to death. I was subsequently moved to an army general hospital in France for a few days, then transferred to a hospital in England for about a month.

It was here that I was placed in a body cast to be shipped back to Fort Dix, New Jersey, at which point the body cast was removed and some of the shrapnel lodged in sensitive parts of my body was taken out by surgeons. In an effort to save my injured left leg, surgical bone grafting was later performed at Valley Forge General Hospital in Pennsylvania. They also worked on the partially amputated fingers of my right hand, trying to salvage what was left of them. The leg was ultimately saved, and I spent the next two years in

rehabilitation at Valley Forge.

All I ever wanted to do in life was sing songs and play drums, but every time I looked at my mangled right hand and equally mangled leg, I, a would-be musician, became deeply depressed. There were days, during my rehabilitation, when I seriously questioned the practicality of my returning to music. But, I somehow stuck it out and completed the rehabilitation process. In this regard, I was helped immensely by the doctors, who were able to piece things together to a degree such that I was able to pursue a career in music. I was even able to play the drums, though I could not bend my left leg. Still I was doing what I wanted to do, and for that I will always be grateful.

## Celebration of Life



*The following deaths were reported after the November issue was printed. Please notify the secretary when you hear of the death of a person from the 63rd.*

Robert Carey, 1253, died November 25, 2006. He lived at 387 Bustleton Pike, Churchill, P A 18966.  
Kenneth L. Chase, AT 253, died September 3, 2006. He lived at 11 Sam St., Winslow, ME 04901.

Darrell Daugherty - K 255, died December 1, 2006. His wife Margaret lives at 707 Cottage, Adel, IA 50003-2111.

Ernest J. DeCelles, Eng 263, died January 8, 2006. No other information is available.

Richard E. Hunter, Band, died January 23, 2006. No other information is available.

Leamon J. Harvey, CN 254, died December 9, 2006. His wife Virginia lives at 3704 S. Camella Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57110.

F. Paul Huseman, D 253, died January 11, 2006. His wife Anne moved and left no forwarding address.  
Richard F. Herdman, MED 253, died Oct. 26, 2006. He lived with his daughter Barbara Cramer at 429 County Highway 143, Northville, NY 12134.

Wesley S. Heimer, A 254, died Jan. 20, 2007. He lived at 134 Colonial Ave., Norristown, PA 19403.

Frank Izell, C 861, died January 23, 2007. His wife Kathryn lives at 3539 Wright Road, Box 6, Port Payne, AL 35968.

Robert H. Joseph Sr, HQ 253, died October 30, 2006. He lived at 255 Possum Park Road, Rm. 2200, Newark, DE 19711-6146.

James Lyke, M 255, died March 2006. His wife, Marjorie lives at 1014 E Churchwell Ave., Knoxville, TN 37917.

Francis Morin, Associate member, died in 2004. His wife June lives at 24 Birchwood Terrace, Bristol, CT. 06010-9126.

Charles A. Marsch, HQ 253, died February 6, 2006. He lived at Rehoboth Bay, Rehoboth Beach, DE 19977.

Robert F. Newton, C 255, died December 2005. His wife June lives at 26219 SW Pine Lodge Rd., Camp Sherman, OR 97730.

Rev. George Pferdeort, SV 254, died Dec. 4, 2006. His wife Lillian lives at 221-B Crocker Lane, Bel Air, MD 21014.

Halkey K. Ross, HQ 63, died December 23, 2006. He lived at 8649 Lovas Tri., Trinity, FL 34655.

Harry G. Rouse, ORD 763, died December 31, 2006. His wife Frances lives at 801 W. Martin St., Abingdon, IL 61410-1401.

Durehy J. Shoats, I 253, died October 19, 2006. His wife Agnes lives at PO Box 336, Jennings, LA 70546.

Theodore Soderback, H 253, died March 2004. No further information was available.

... continued on page 19



# I started out as a scared infantryman and learned to survive

by Robert B. Anderson - B 255

On the morning of the April 28, we were up before dawn again. Company B was sent by truck to check out a town in the high country. The truck carrying the 2nd Platoon followed a road that took us up into the clouds. We were traveling very slowly and finally came out into bright sunshine. In the distance we could see other mountain peaks rising about the clouds.

The village we had to check was in the distance and the road was narrow and very curvy. We approached a covered bridge and the driver slowed down, but continued on through it. The bridge was creaking and groaning but we made it through. We finally reached our destination and as we went through the town the citizens greeted us with blank stares. I guess they were shocked to see such a young group of soldiers. We were mostly eighteen and nineteen year olds.

We checked out the town, and finding nothing, we returned to our Battalion. We were now at the Lech River. All the bridges over the river had been destroyed. Company A had discovered a hydroelectric dam and had gone through it and secured the area on the other side. Company B was sent through next. I remember the experience. The turbines were humming and it was very clean. It had been operated by a group of Hungarian soldiers. I exited the tunnel leading from the dam and saw a large group of Hungarian soldiers. They had just been freed from a prison camp where they had been held when they were not running the plant. They must have been treated well as they looked to be in good health.

Later that day we entered a forest as we headed in the direction of Landsberg. My squad was following a road through the woods when my first scout motioned for me to catch up. He pointed out some movement in the trees ahead. We discovered it was men in striped clothing. We advanced and came to a barbed wire fence and an open gate. We discovered that this was a prison work camp that was a branch of Dachau Concentration Camp. As we went inside, we could see that the people were human skeletons. The men we had seen in the woods had run off as soon as the Germans had left. Most of the ones remaining did not have the energy to leave. We thought we were helping when we gave our chocolate bars and crackers to a few of them. However, after being starved, their stomachs couldn't

handle the food and it soon came back up.

The Lt. radioed Battalion Headquarters, when the rest of the Platoon caught up with us. He was ordered to stay there, but my squad continued our advance. We walked through miles of woods where there was no underbrush. The Germans must have kept the prisoners busy keeping it clean. We reached an assembly area near Landsberg and dug in. At chow that night, we were told that we had finished our last combat assignment.

We were a HAPPY bunch on the morning of the April 29. We had survived even though at times it hadn't seemed possible. I started out as a scared infantryman and learned to survive. The winter had been cold and at times the snow had been very deep. I learned the ground was my friend and that keeping my head down had been good advice. I also had to feel confident that nothing would happen to me. I had been given many dangerous assignments, but had gained a great deal of experience from them. When I was asked to be squad leader I took the assignment knowing that I was now qualified to lead my men.

The toughest part of that position was starting each day knowing that when I told someone to do something they could get hurt or killed.

## Colonel Tucker . . .

*..... continued from page 14*

Colonel Tucker. He took one look at us and said, "What the hell do you think this is? This is the Army, not the Boy Scouts."

"Sir, we are the red wire team - the best damn wiremen in the Division," said Mr. Smith. Colonel Tucker responded with, "Guess you are right but they may be good targets. You can wear them on the front to show the others up, but not near Headquarters." We did wear them until the end of the war. Some of the rest of our team found some to wear also.

Fate Cole was wounded on the Siegfried. Smithy had a crew and I had a crew as we crossed Germany chasing the Krauts to the Danube. Smithy, a low pointer, left the outfit in June. He had received the Silver Star and I had a Bronze Star. Neither of us had been wounded. I left the 254th the first of August and went to the 36th, then came home with an Ach Ach outfit in November. I was discharged in Fort Douglas on December 3, 1945.

# How I learned to drive

by Mordecai Bauman

I learned how to drive on a mountaintop near Marseilles. As the 255th regiment prepared to go to the Theater of Operations, it became apparent that the available special service classifications would be given to more senior men in the company. "Senior" meant men who were in the army longer. I had not been in the outfit long enough to qualify for my role as entertainment director overseas. One of my friendly lieutenants, a special service officer, (either Naddeo or Bond) offered me a chance to stay with my outfit, listing me as a truck driver. I lived in New York all my life; my family didn't need and could not afford a car.

It amused me. I never suspected that it was a real classification, or that I would actually be required to drive. To be assigned to a different outfit meant I would leave my friends, no one in the army wanted to do that! So I agreed to the classification: truck driver.

It was December. My outfit was bivouacked on a rocky

mountain in the Maritime Alps overlooking Aix-en-Provence. It was freezing; no one could sleep. We were issued tents, but I remember with no pleasure that it was impossible to hammer the wooden pegs into the rock. We huddled in inadequate sleeping bags and suffered for nights, waking in sunshine to look longingly down at Aix.

I didn't realize that I could not see in the dark. When I was assigned night guard duty, another soldier had to guide me to my post. I stayed there, "on guard" for about four hours. When my replacement arrived I had to inform him that I couldn't find my way back. Still another soldier had to come and guide me back to my outfit.

One morning an officer called me over and said: "Here's your truck. Drive it." I admitted that I didn't know how to drive. "It's a big field, nothing's in your way. Just drive," the sergeant told me. I ground the gears, trying to shift. The truck was an absolute mystery to me. I drove around and around but never really got the hang of it.

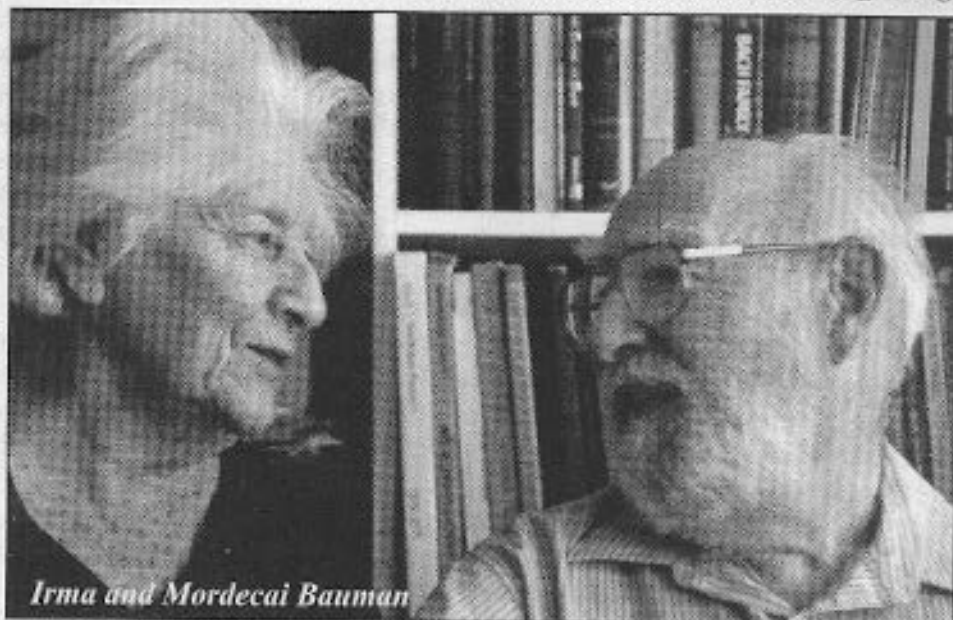
The truck was mine however, and I had to drive a Warrant Officer as he visited the troops. He couldn't stand my driving and finally took over the wheel. It was more dangerous to drive with me than face the enemy!

After I had the truck for several weeks, the maintenance crew told me to bring it in for a check up. "Didn't you check the oil?" the machinist asked me in horror when he realized the oil case was empty. I didn't understand the first thing about cars. They took the truck away from me. The next chauffeur, really an experienced driver, cracked it up on an icy road the first day he took it out.

The cold sleepless nights, inedible army food, the noise of the planes overhead and the cannons in the distance, my army experience wasn't easy, but little different from my comrades'. One scene in particular that has not appeared in any film about that war, as far as I know, is indelibly fixed in my mind. After weeks during which we had not been able to get out of our clothes, maybe not even our shoes, the army constructed an enormous tent in Saarburg, with a series of open hot water showers and bins of uniforms. Hundreds of soldiers lined up at one end, dropped their clothes, showered, and picked up clean (not new) clothes at the other end.

When the war in Europe was over, the army was sending soldiers not yet eligible for discharge to the Pacific. I was sure that the Japanese conflict would be over before I was sent there, so I volunteered to go to the eastern front, hoping for a furlough first. I was determined to get home to my family in a hurry and reasoned I would never be sent to Japan. I wasn't.

After I arrived at a replacement depot in Paris to wait to be shipped home, the war with Japan was over. But instead of coming home, I was assigned to the Biarritz American University (BAU) to work in the entertainment section. I taught singing, gave several recitals and enjoyed the wonderful French Restaurants. It was an unexpected and pleasant ending of my war experience.



Irma and Mordecai Bauman

# Not all transfers to the 63rd came from the infantry

By Willard Whitaker - Field Artillery 862



Willard Whitaker

I read with great interest Edward Fowle's account of Headquarters Battery, 862 Field Artillery Battalion's history. His account is well organized by date and action. It appears to me that he was more "in the know" than the firing batteries. Not all of the transfers to the 63rd came from the infantry.

I came from an anti aircraft artillery outfit. Imagine my surprise when I went through an advanced infantry problem with live ammunition! Later, I was assigned to (105) Battery A in the fire direction center. This was at Camp Van Dorn. At the end of training, we were shipped to New York, where I remember vividly pulling guard duty in the pouring rain.

I can recall on the trip overseas on the Mt. Vernon, that one day when the ship was rocking a bit, the chow line was shorter than usual. Sleeping accommodations were a bit crowded. Actually, I received the same accommodations on my return trip to the states.

On our first "march order," I dug the deepest foxhole I had ever dug. I could not tell the difference between incoming and outgoing rounds - I thought that Saarquemines was a fine place to stay, since we were quartered in a barn with plenty of hay.

We called Baby town the Baby Factory (Avermager). Somewhere about this time, we ran into a clock factory. We, too, participated in freeing up the liquor situation. On one march order, somebody gave me a bottle that he said contained cider. I took a good swig and almost choked to death - schnapps!!

We passed through the Sigfried line, and we had a lot of admiration for the infantry in getting through it. We, too, had a corporal who received a battlefield commission. Another parallel event is that we went through a town with white sheets hanging out the windows. We had to turn back because the infantry was not there yet. That was near the end of the war.

Battery A had an infusion of non coms from the Panama Canal zone, so there was a real dearth of promotions in our outfit. (None!) I spent two of my three years in the army as a buck private. In the states I got more than my fair share of KP! I got my stripes after going overseas. As a private, I had the distinction of being in the antiaircraft artillery, air corps, infantry, and field artillery. As a buck sergeant in the service command, I worked in the recruiting station in France.

At this time, the low pointers were sent home to prepare for the invasion of Japan. The high pointers were sent home for discharge. We middle pointers stayed in Europe. I came out of the war with the greatest respect for the infantry.

My wife and I now reside in a retirement community. We have, on several occasions, had dinner with a retired Lt. General! It is a small world.

## Celebration of life ...

... continued from page 16

Jess Benjamin Williams, F 254, died November 1, 2006. His wife Lillian lives at 2800 Elnora St., Silver Springs, MD 20902.

Frederick P. Weber, I. 253, died December 28, 2006. His wife Anna lives at 11069 Ravenwood Ct., Pickerington, OH 43147.

### DEATH OF SPOUSE

Jenny Eighmy, wife of Howard Eighmy, I 254, died January 7, 2007. Howard lives at 6151 Inverness Dr.,

Banning, CA 92220.

Catherine Foster, wife of Glen Foster, A 253, died July 18, 2006. Glen lives at 205 S. Boynton Road, Layton, UT.

Jane Neilson, wife of Donald Neilson, K 255, died August 10, 2006. Donald lives at 3520 W. State Road 238, Lake Butler, FL.

"...If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another,"  
- I John 4:11

**SHERATON TACOMA HOTEL, TACOMA, WA**  
**(253) 572-3200 or (888) 627-7044**

The Sheraton Tacoma Hotel is located at 1320 Broadway Plaza, Tacoma, WA 98402. It's located in the heart of Tacoma between Mount Rainier and Commencement Bay, adjacent to the Bicentennial Pavilion, and just a short walk to the theatre district and specialty shopping, also the scenic Tacoma waterfront is about a fifteen minute walk from the hotel. The Sheraton Tacoma Hotel has 319 rooms. Handicapped and non-smoking rooms are subject to availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your hotel reservations. Each room features a coffee maker, iron, ironing board, hairdryer, AM/FM alarm clock, and color TV with cable channels. Guests may also enjoy the 24hr on-site fitness facility, gift shop, salon, and spa. Parking at the hotel is currently \$8.00 for overnight guests. Check-in is at 3:00 pm and check-out is at 12 noon.

**The Broadway Grill** serves breakfast and lunch featuring cuisine of the Pacific Northwest. **The Altezzo Ristorante** serves dinner featuring authentic Italian cuisine with panoramic views of Commencement Bay and Mt. Rainier from the top of the hotel.

The hotel does not provide transportation to and from the Sea-Tac Airport. Once you've retrieved your luggage from Baggage Claim, proceed to the Ground Transportation Booth on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the parking garage and arrange for transportation. The hotel suggests using Capitol Aeroporter Shuttle Service, please call 800-962-3579 to make reservations and to receive departure time information. We suggest making advance reservations due to limited availability. Currently rates are \$25 per person one-way and \$45 per person round-trip. Taxi services are also available at about \$50 per taxi one-way.

The hotel has limited space available for guests with RV's, if space is needed please contact Lisa Olsen at 253-591-4134. Should you require full hook-up service, please call Majestic Manor RV Park at (800) 348-3144, Gig Harbor RV Resort at (253) 858-8138, or KOA Seattle/Tacoma at (253) 872-8652. Ask for information, reservations, and directions to determine which is best for you. The parks recommend reservations be made immediately due to limited space and availability.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheelchairs by the day and week. Please call their toll-free number at (888) 441-7575.

**Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.**

..... CUT HERE AND MAIL TO THE HOTEL .....

**63<sup>rd</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION - HOTEL RESERVATIONS**  
**REUNION: AUGUST 7-12, 2007**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS (if available) \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE # ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

ARRIVAL DATE \_\_\_\_\_ TIME \_\_\_\_\_ A/M/PM DEP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF ROOMS NEEDED \_\_\_\_\_ NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN EACH ROOM \_\_\_\_\_

**SPECIAL REQUESTS:** Wheelchair accessible room \_\_\_\_\_ Nonsmoking room \_\_\_\_\_ King Bed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Two Double Beds \_\_\_\_\_ Bed types are not guaranteed

**RATE:** \$99 + tax (currently 13.5%) Single/Double occupancy.

**CUT OFF DATE: 07/05/07.** Reservations received after this date will be processed on a space available basis, at the prevailing public rate.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Deposit is refundable if reservation is cancelled by 6:00pm one day prior to arrival date. Record your cancellation number. Call (253) 572-3200 or (888) 627-7044

**GUARANTEE:** Reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit, enclosed.

MC \_\_\_\_\_ VISA \_\_\_\_\_ AM. EXPRESS \_\_\_\_\_ CARTE BLANCHE/DINERS \_\_\_\_\_ DISCOVER \_\_\_\_\_

CREDIT CARD NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE \_\_\_\_\_

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Sheraton Tacoma Hotel, 1320 Broadway Plaza, Tacoma, WA 98402 Attn: Reservations

**63<sup>rd</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION**  
**AUGUST 8-12, 2007**  
**SHERATON TACOMA, WA**

**Wednesday, August 8**

- 2:00pm - 7:00pm **Reunion Registration Open**  
2:00pm - *History Room open during the duration of the reunion*  
*Dinner on your own*
- 7:00pm - 11:00pm "Meet Your Buddies Reception" with cash bar,  
snacks, and soft listening music

**Thursday, August 9**

- 12:30pm - 2:30pm **Reunion Registration Open.** Additional hours will  
be posted at the reunion, if necessary.
- 3:00pm - 9:30pm TILICUM VILLAGE (description follows)  
Meet your Buddies Ready Room open

**Friday, August 10**

- 9:00am - 4:00pm FT. LEWIS & McCHORD AFB TOUR AND  
NECROLOGY (*description follows*)  
Meet your Buddies Ready Room open

**Saturday, August 11**

- 9:00am - 11:30am Women's Social  
to include a Continental Breakfast
- 8:00am - 10:00am Board Meeting
- 10:15am - 12:00pm Men's Business Meeting
- 6:00pm - 7:00pm Cash Bar Reception
- 7:00pm - 11:00pm Banquet begins, followed by dancing

**Sunday, August 12**

Farewells and departures

## TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

### TILlicum VILLAGE

*Thursday, August 9*

Our adventure begins at Pier 56 on Seattle's waterfront, where you will board a boat for a narrated harbor cruise through Elliott Bay to Blake Island. Once there, enjoy clam appetizers before entering the great cedar longhouse for a delicious Native American style salmon feast with all of the accompaniments. While dining, be entertained by a magical stage presentation featuring Northwest Native American Culture. Afterwards, reboard the boat to return to Seattle, and then back to the hotel.

**3pm board bus, 9:30pm back at hotel**

**\$93/Person includes bus, escort, cruise, and dinner.**

### FT. LEWIS & McChORD AFB TOUR AND NECROLOGY

*Friday, August 10*

The first stop will be the Ft. Lewis Chapel for a Memorial Service honoring the members of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. Then we will pick up an escort officer and enjoy a windshield tour of the Fort. This is a closed Post for I Corps, Ranger Battalion, and Special Forces. It is known as the best Mast Unit west of the Mississippi. Lunch will be at the American Lake Community Club. After lunch we will visit the training facility and meet some of the troops, as well as see some of the base's renowned static displays. The group will then head to McChord Air Force Base for a driving tour before returning to the hotel.

**9:00am board bus, 4:00pm back at hotel**

**\$45/Person includes bus, guide, and lunch.**

*Driver and guide gratuities are not included in the tour prices.*

*Please plan to be at the bus boarding area at least five minutes prior to the scheduled time.*

*All trips require a minimum of thirty people, unless otherwise stated.*

### **CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.**

For attendees canceling reunion activities prior to the cut-off date, Armed Forces Reunions, Inc. (AFR) shall process a full refund less the non-refundable AFR registration fee (\$5 per person). Attendees canceling reunion activities after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that AFR's vendor commitments and guarantees will allow, less the non-refundable AFR registration fee. **Cancellations will only be taken Monday through Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm Eastern Standard Time, excluding holidays.** Please call (757) 625-6401 or email [cancel@afri.com](mailto:cancel@afri.com) to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion. Canceling your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.

63rd Infantry Registration for the 59th Reunion

August 8-12, 2007 Tacoma, WA

Listed below are all registration, tour, and meal costs for the reunion. Please enter how many people will be participating in each event and total the amount. Send that amount payable to ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC. in the form of check or money order (no credit cards or phone reservations accepted). Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before JULY 10, 2007. After that date, reservations will be accepted on a space available basis. We suggest you make a copy of this form before mailing. Please do not staple or tape your payment to this form.

Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.
PO Box 11327
Norfolk, VA 23517
ATTN: 63rd INFANTRY DIVISION

OFFICE USE ONLY
Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Date Received \_\_\_\_\_
Inputted \_\_\_\_\_ Nametag Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Table with 4 columns: Description, \$ PER PERSON, # OF PEOPLE, TOTAL. Includes rows for registration, meals, and a grand total.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ NICK NAME \_\_\_\_\_ UNIT/CO \_\_\_\_\_
SPOUSE NAME \_\_\_\_\_ GUEST NAMES \_\_\_\_\_
STREET ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ FIRST TIME ATTENDEE? ? YES ? NO
CITY, ST, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PH. NUMBER (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_
MUST YOU BE LIFTED HYDRAULICALLY ONTO THE BUS WHILE SEATED IN YOUR WHEELCHAIR IN ORDER TO PARTICIPATE IN BUS TRIPS? ? YES ? NO (PLEASE NOTE THAT WE CANNOT GUARANTEE AVAILABILITY).
EMERGENCY CONTACT \_\_\_\_\_ PH. NUMBER (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY FOR ARMED FORCES REUNIONS, INC.

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# A word from your buddies . . .

## 253 Regiment

Gaylord Betcher, K Company: "I was recently awarded a certificate for 60 plus years of continuous membership in the American Legion Post. I am still hanging in there - I will be 89 years old on March 17. I still live on the farm and there are no meals on wheels for me - only the good, home made stuff!" He lives in Mazeppa, MN.

Carroll J. Black, D Company sent this message: "Well except for a sore knee. But it is much better now. I think after about a week, I will be going as usual again." He lives in Spartanburg, SC.

Alfred P. Ciullo, C Company: "I was very sorry to hear about the passing of Rod Backus. We were good friends and he didn't live very far from me. He was a wonderful person and had a beautiful family." Alfred lives in Fall River, Mass.

Claude Denison, A Company wrote this: "I will be 88 years old on February 19, 2007. Dorothy and I have been married 67 years and have been retired 21 years. I play golf when I can." They live in Sigourney, Iowa.

Michael J. Cairo, L Company, sent this message: "I went to visit Eddie Zanski, who was in the 63rd Division. He and his wife are in the Plainville Community Nursing Home. He and I met on board the ship going to Germany. If anyone knows him please, send him a card. We remained friends with him and his family and have a long-going friendship. We go see him as much as possible." Michael and Rose live at 231 S. Regent St., Port Chester, NY 10573. *(Write to Michael for an address for Eddie)*

Gerald A. Geuss, L Company: "I was a replacement for 90th Division 357 Infantry Company G. I was trained in Van Dorn, Mississippi in September and October of 1943. I was just 18 years old at that time and I am now 81 years old. Are there any men still alive from L Company 253 Regiment, 1st Platoon? I would like to hear from them." Gerald and Susan live in Kingston, NY.

James A. Gregg, I Company, and his wife Iona sent Holiday Greetings to everyone in the Association, and to all our servicemen and women. They live in Bend, OR.

Wilbur T. Braithwaite, A Company, wrote: "It seems like all of us are showing our age. I just had a successful heart surgery. Probably the portion of every servicemen's life remembered most vividly is the time serving, especially the combat troops." He and Jane live in Manti, UT.

Carl V. Anderson, E Company, tells us: "Kit and I will celebrate our 60th anniversary on June 28, 2007. Our grandson and his wife, Amanda now live in Tacoma, Washington. How convenient for the reunion in August! They have also presented us with our first great-grandchild. A boy named William Anderson Hobbs. Great-grandma can hardly wait to get that little guy in her arms!"

William Taylor, HQ Company, wrote: "Missed the reunion because of schedule conflicts and last minute sickness in family. We are still in pretty good health and most of the body parts operate within the acceptable pain threshold. I am still doing airplane restoration work at the New England Air Museum, six hours a day, twice a week. Hope to see you all again at the next reunion." Bill and Mary Lou live in Manchester, CT.

Roy E. Sjoblad, Head Quarters Company: "Recently celebrated 61 years together. I appreciated reminder to pay my dues - I wouldn't want to miss any *Blood and Fire* issues! I am always looking for names attached to HQ Co., 3rd Bn, 253rd Reg. Whatever happened to all of them?" Roy and Elsie live in Boylston, MA.

John C. Harth, B Company, sent this brief note: "I have a change of address. I still live with my wife Joann and help my nephews some with the farm work." He and Joann live in Hickley, MN.

Gordon "Shorty" Myers, HQ Company, sent this message: "I was in the hospital on my birthday August 17. I had to have my Carotid Artery opened up. I had the left side done three years ago - now I have a matching pair! Had my gallbladder removed on November 15th. I don't wish that pain on anyone! Never experienced pain like that in my life. All is well now and on the road to mending. Hope to make the Tacoma reunion. Robert Carey, I 253, passed away on November 25, 2006 after a very long illness. His wife Marge lives in Holland, ML." Shorty and Betty live in Levittown, PA.

Claude Mayfield, B Company, wrote: "I am 84 years old and still in pretty good health. My wife, Hazel, is 84 years old and also in good health." They live in Harwich Port, MA.

Harry E. Maxwell, Cannon Company: "I will be 94 years old in April. I still have (as they say) all my marbles! I was once a four-sport athlete but now I watch sports the Ohio State Buckeyes from my home



# A word from your buddies . . .

... continued from page 24

town of Columbus, Ohio.

## 254 Regiment

Edward L. McGrath, K Company: "I am getting older and a little slower. Do enjoy the magazine. It is bigger than a pamphlet!" He and his wife, Janice, live in St. Lewis, MO.

Robert T. Ziemke, D Company sent pictures for use in the *Blood and Fire*. He said: "Photography and golf are my hobbies. Bill Pink and Ray Wise are my buddies." Bob lives in McKeesport, PA. (*Editors note: pictures will be used as space permits, in this issue and the next issue.*)

Sal Genova, G Company sent this message: "My good buddy, Charles (Chuck) Renner passed away. He was in G Company, 254th Weapons Platoon. He is survived by his wife, Carol and family. Chuck is from Ohio. I'll miss him." Sal and Edith live at Franklin Square, NY.

Rudy Lencioni, F Company reports: "We had our 55th wedding anniversary on October 20. Betty and I have four sons, ten grandchildren and three-and-a-half great-grandchildren. We are doing well." He and Betty live in Dyer, Indiana.

Harold K. LaCrosse, F Company, is taking advantage of the editor by using a little space in this column. He is semi-retired now and getting slower by the day! He and Donna will be married 59 years on March 12. They are the parents of two sons and one daughter and they have one foster son. Their grandchildren, including foster grandsons and a granddaughter-in-law comes to the grand sum of thirteen. One grandson is in the army stationed in Iraq; one grandson is a minister and one grandson recently accepted a position at the New England Conservatory in Boston. They also have two great-grandsons and another great-grandbaby is expected in May. And, a foster granddaughter will join the family in July. Christmas is a heap of fun in the LaCrosse "House of Confusion."

Ben Wyatt, F Company, had this to say: "We had to cancel the Kentucky reunion. I'm trying to remember this is the Golden years! At 81, I hit a few medical problems that had to be taken care of. Evelyn and I are sorry to have missed it. We enjoy the reunions and meeting the bunch we've gotten to know. I am doing ok now and looking forward to next year."

Lewis S. Germain, L Company wrote: "At my age, I

send in one year's dues at a time! I am 91 years old and that is a long time!! Sure miss the conventions. Say 'Hi' to Fred Clinton and his wife." Lewis and Joan live in Millbrae, CA.

Joseph "Bill" W. Thoman, B Company sent this message: "I became 91 years old on September 13, 2006 and Maryellen, my wife of 65 years, will be 91 on December 22, 2006. We have four children, ten grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. Our health has been good but is now declining. I have chronic leukemia and she has cancer and is taking chemo. We still live in our home and have lots of family and friends here. Best wishes to any Company B 254 duffs still out there!" Bill and Maryellen live in Tucson, AZ.

Herb Schneiderman, A Company wrote: "I hope you have room for my wee message - it is less than 30 words! Charlotte still line dances twice a week. New for us is having no car, only bus and taxi for shopping. She is 81 and I am past 89. Write, please Hotshots!" They live at 1185 Washington St., Bath, ME 045302837.

Joseph P. Matrale, C Company, sent this brief message: "80 years old - married 52 years." He and Elizabeth live in Caldwell, NJ.

Alf L. Crutchfield, I Company wrote: "We enjoy the magazine very much as well as all the History of the Division. I am 81 years old this November (2006) and in fairly good health. Have been battling eye problems - glaucoma - but we think it is under control now." Alf and Imogene live in Claremore, OK.

Sheldon Toder, Cannon Company, asks this: "As there are so few of us, would it be possible to list members by company and regiment? I could access the information on the internet."

Hugo Boettcher, B Company, wrote: "I wish Corine and I could attend the reunion next summer but we can't travel that far any more. Received the *Blood and Fire* last week and saw where Maurice Etcheson had passed away last February. I'll sure miss my old buddy. We visited each other several times during the last 60 years. Etch was a soldier's soldier; he had the respect of both the officers and the enlisted men. A salute to Maurice and a big hello to all my buddies." Hugo and Corine live in Frohna, MO.

Harold G. Heavin, A Company, and Wanda live in Lawton, OK. He is a man of few words! "Wanda and I just celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary in June 2006."

... continued on page 26

# A word ...

... continued from page 25

Edward Karcheski, B Company, sent the following message: "When I lived on the south side of Chicago, a group of us would pile into my car and we would go to Morocco or Hobart, Indiana to pick mushrooms! Edith and I just celebrated our 65th wedding anniversary in June and we just became great-great-grandparents! We are both doing fine here." They live in King, WI.

## 255 Regiment

Vincent Tramuta, K Company: "I am almost 88 years old and having a tough time getting around. I am a diabetic and have trouble with my legs due to poor circulation. I miss going to the reunions." He and Josephine live in West Babylon, NY.

Robert Williams, F Company had this to say: "I look forward to the *Blood and Fire* new look! Keep up the good work. After the war was over, I was sent to Berlin as an MP. I served seven years and left the army as a Sgt. 1st Class." Bob lives in Camp Hill, PA.

Leonard L. Kiang, I and HQ Companies, of Oakland, California wrote: "I am a retired social worker and am 85 years old. I am disabled by rheumatoid arthritis, am single and dote on my niece, two nephews and their families. I quit driving due to poor vision and hearing. Just hanging on and enjoying life one day at a time. Best regards to everyone of you."

Vernard O. Riggs, D Company: "Retired from the (now) Bank of America in 1988. Irene and I have been married 60 years as of July 3, 2006. We have two sons and one daughter. Enjoy the *Blood and Fire*." They live in Maysville, NC.

James V. Rathburn, I Company wrote: "India and I are enjoying reasonable health. I celebrated my 81st birthday November 10, 2006. Enjoying our children and grandchildren very much. Always looking forward for the *Blood and Fire* to arrive. Thanks for all you do." Vern and India live in Easley, SC.

John Needham, Service Company, sent this message: "I retired after 30 years service with the Chicago Police Department. I enjoy reading the *Blood and Fire* and would like to hear from anyone who served with me in Service Company, 255th Infantry. My address is 162 Hummingbird Hill Dr., Orland Park, IL 60467. My email address is [jQHjJay6514@laol.com](mailto:jQHjJay6514@laol.com) Hope to hear from someone."

Lecile D. Self, HQ Company, wrote that he and Louise celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary on

October 18, 2006. They have two sons, four grandchildren and four great-grandchildren. They live in Pinson, AL.

Ray W. Peterson, HQ Company, sent this message: "We are both doing fine. Our health is good and we are able to take care of ourselves. I had some hernia repair surgery and recovery has been good. We will celebrate our 60th wedding anniversary on May 28, 2007. Have lost contact with platoon members except Jack Boyer in Ohio and Al Binko in Maryland. Appreciate all your good work for the Association." Ray and Merlene live in Ogden, Utah.

Ernest Klimek, D Company and Mary live in Livonia, Michigan. He wrote: "We really enjoyed the reunion in Kentucky this year and hope to join you next year. We have forgotten the date and would appreciate any information you could send us." (*all reunion information is in this issue of the Blood and Fire*).

Robert Titterington, K Company, had this to say: "Looking forward to the reunion in 2007 in Tacoma. That's right in my back yard! My wife and I are in good health. I taught school for 35 years and then worked with seniors in my church." Robert and Eileen live in Seattle, WA.

John McKenna, M Company, wrote: "Just talked to Marjorie Lyke a short while ago and she told me that Jimmy (James Lyke) had passed away in March. His daughter was supposed to let me know but she forgot. Jim was a member of M 255 and had been in a nursing home in Knoxville, TN." John and Yolanda live in Wytheville, VA.

George M. Silovich, I Company, had very few words in his message: "I remembered! Still only 18 years old, going on night patrol behind German lines!" He lives in Alliance, Ohio.

Pasquale W. Cappiapouti, C Company, sent this brief message: "I am 89 years old and my wife and I are still good friends." They live in Webster, MA.

## Anti Tank

Ralph Warriner, 254 wrote: "After the war ended, I was re-assigned constabulary duty in Northern Germany. Returned to the USA in March 1946. Re-inlisted in the US Army Air Corp in 1947. Received medical discharge in March 1948. I retired from US National Park Service in 1984." He and Anna live in Ranson, WV.

## Med. Tech

Benjamin F. Butler Jr, A Company lives with his wife, Dorothy, in Greensboro, NC. His message was brief: "I am 95 years old and walk two miles a day."

John F. Troy, 254 Regiment, wrote: "Thrilled when I receive each edition of the *Blood and Fire*. Thanks a

... continued on page 27

# A word ...

..... continued from page 26

lot and keep up the good work." John lives in Atkinson, NH.

## Field Artillery

Herbert L. Cameron, 862, sent this message: "I received the *Blood and Fire* yesterday and really enjoyed it. Doris and I are looking forward to the convention in Tacoma and hope to see everyone there in August. We are well and busy most of the time." Herb and Doris live in Yadkinville, NC.

This note came from Edward Stolpa, 718: "We had our third great-granddaughter in August 2006." He and Alice live in Mequon, WI.

"Bud" Breeding, 863rd, lives in Oklahoma City, OK. He wrote: "I missed the 2006 reunion and will probably miss it again in 2007. Hopefully, I'll be able to make the scene in 2008. Thank you for everything you do to keep the 63rd spirit alive and well. I couldn't have served with a better bunch of men if I had hand-picked 'em."

Gerald J. Bungert, 718th Company lives in Morton Grove, Illinois. He sent this brief message: "Any thought of a convention in Chicago or Washington DC?"

## Head Quarters

Roy J. Rock wrote: "We both are in bad health. I fall, even in the house. I was injured in the war and have lots of problems with my health. But I am thankful to be 81. My wife, Sue, and I are on a lot of medication. We don't go places except to the doctors and to church." He and Sue live in Hodgenville, KY.

Joseph T. Scales, 862, also sent a brief message: "On November 2, 2006 Louree and I had our 64th years of marriage." They live in Farmington, NM.

## Quarter Master

Jack Mayrsohn wrote: "We had a great trip to our National Parks out west for our 56th wedding anniversary on October 8." He and Tobi live in Delray Beach, FL.

## SIG

Harry J. Bevignani, 253: "I am now 89 years old and semi-retired as a Bank Director. I have no children but have two sisters so have lots of nephews! I am in relatively good health and have a condo in Palm Beach, Florida." Harry lives in Westmont,

Illinois.

## Engineers

Melvin E. Risley, C Company, made this comment: "I never see anything of anyone in the *Blood and Fire* from C Company 308 Engineers. Are they all dead!!" Melvin lives in Twisp, WA.

Donald J. Liptak, H & S Company, wrote: "I was with the original Cadre at Camp Blanding, Florida and Camp Van Dorn in Mississippi. I worked in Battalion Headquarters for Capt. Harry Wire, who was our Intelligence Officer - S-2. After training period was over, I was sent to Camp Beale, California for a short time and then sent out to the P.T.O. as a replacement." Don lives in Streator, Illinois.

## Associate Member

Ginny Sokolowski sent this note: "My husband, Joseph, HQ 254, died on April 25, 2006. We were married for 57 years. While he was well and able to travel, he loved attending the 63rd reunions and receiving the *Blood and Fire* and catching up with (news of) his buddies." Ginny lives in Iselin, CT.

Florence Rome, widow of Edward J. Rome, H 253 would like to hear from any member who remembers her husband, Sergeant Eddie Rome. Her address is 18202 Marcella Road, Cleveland, OH 44119.

Mildred Hendry, widow of Jay R. Hendry, Company L, 254 sends this message: "My husband never knew there was a 63rd Infantry reunion or of the *Blood and Fire*. I found out after his death and have received it every year. I also found one of his real close buddies and communicate with him and his wife. Not only is your name (LaCosse) getting an extra letter, my hometown is missing one. It's the only known Greeneville with the middle E." Mildred lives in Greeneville, TN. (she has reference of people putting an R in our last name of LaCosse)

Nan Landers, widow of Arlton D. Landers, Band, sent this message: "I do enjoy getting the *Blood and Fire*. Al always enjoyed it and I always hope to see something about the band and his buddies. Also, the Woodville girls, including me, loved the dances! The ones in Van Dorn and also in Woodville. Met a lot of nice boys! Al and I were married 53 years when I lost him. We have a son who was in the Marines and fought in Viet Nam and we now have a grandson in the Marines doing his second tour in Iraq. Hopefully he will be back home in January - maybe." Nan lives in Woodville, MS.

Marie P. Gerbino, widow of Tony Gerbino, wrote: "My husband, Tony, passed away at the age of 78 on March 9, 2001. He was with HQ CO, 253. He also d the

..... continued on page 28

# A word . . .

... continued from page 27

traveled with the "Carmen Show" after the war as a member of the cast and Dance Director from June 1945 until February 1946. Upon his separation from the service, he received the American Service Medal, European-African-Middle Eastern Service Medal, Good Conduct Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Purple Heart and Bronze Star. If any of his friends are still around, they can get in touch with me. I'd be glad to hear from them. You (Donna) have my address." Marie lives in Titusville, FL.

June Newton, widow of Robert P. Newton, C 254, sent this message: "My husband passed away in December 2005. He will be missed forever by his family. We have seven children, 18 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren. He felt blessed and thankful to spend time in the fall at the World War II Memorial.

June lives in Camp Sherman, OR.

Brenda Manning, daughter of Robert H. Joseph Sr., Head Quarters 253, wrote to inform us of her father's passing. "Dad passed away October 30, 2006 at the age of 92. He was the father of one son and one daughter and four grandchildren. We, without a doubt, are all blessed for having known this remarkable man, who had such a profound influence on all of our lives." Brenda lives in Newark, DE and is now a member of the 63rd Infantry Division Association.

Agnes Shoats, widow of Durphy Shoats, L 253, sent word of his passing: "My husband died October 19, 2006 while a patient in the VA Home that was newly built in 2004. It is a beautiful place and they took good care of him. We have good people running the Home." Agnes lives in Jennings, LA.

# Ham operator I am

by John Dumond

I regret to report that I am very limited in my ability to participate in national, regional or local Association events. However, please note that my interest in the Association and its members continues unabated as my future unfolds.

I want to stress how much I appreciate your dedication and that of Fred Clinton and others who continue to carry on the activities of the Association. I am indeed grateful for the friendship of Russ DeMar who lives in Maderia.

Rest assured that I am indeed proud to have been a member of the 63rd Division and want to be kept abreast of the activities and special information about its members. This being the case, I am submitting a bit more personal information that may help me locate some of my colleagues of years long past.

I am a retired school principal whose retirement days are filled with a variety of activities. I help my dear wife, Cloda, of 58 years in her mission of providing toys and items of personal and household use to needy families locally as well as in the Appalachian Region of Kentucky. Summers are filled with gardening.

I am also an active Amateur Radio Operator, "Ham," devoted to helping others via "Ham" radio. In addition to emergency communication service, I take pride in being a member of Navy-Marine Corps MARS (Military Affiliate Radio System) providing

phone patch communication between deployed personnel at sea and loved ones at home. The motto of Navy-Marine Corps MARS is "Serving those who serve."

After basic training with the 63rd Infantry Division, since I was a licensed radio operator from my high school days, I was given permanent assignment with Hq. Btry, 63rd Div Arty. In Europe until the 63rd returned to the USA. Lacking enough points to return with the Division, I said "goodbye" to my Div. Arty. friends and left to join other units for occupation duty until my discharge in May, 1946.

Since I am still a very active "Ham" operator, I hope to be able to contact some of my old radio operator buddies who may have followed their military service by becoming "Ham" operators. If so, I would really like to contact them by radio and "rag chew" with them on the air. My amateur call sign is WSYML with information about my station readily accessible through "Ham" radio channels.

I would be grateful if this information could be made accessible in order for me to link-up by amateur radio with my old buddies.

Once again, I am grateful for the opportunity to continue to be a part of the Association and, God willing, to continue to be so for many years in the future.

# Found in the drawers of Fred Weber's desk

*(Fred Weber, H 253, began "housecleaning" and down-sizing the contents of his desk and files following the Kentucky reunion. He sent the following letters for publication in the Blood and Fire because he thought there was background information and combat experiences in them that would be of an interest to the "buddies" in the 63rd Infantry Division Association. I told him his articles would appear in the Blood and Fire beginning in February. Even though Fred passed away in December, I am keeping my promise to him. -Editor)*

The first letter was dated November 15, 1995 and was from Paul and Rosemary Vermillion.

Dear Fred and Anna,

Thank you very much for your card, photos and kind words. Appreciate that! Glad you have whipped the cancer, Anna.

Bill Scott just mailed me another big list of new men to search for. Not enough hours in the day or year!

Enclosed are two articles I wrote about Van Dorn and combat. Also some info on some ways to search for "lost sheep," but the CD-Rom phone discs are the best weapon.

Thanks again.

Best Regards,

Paul and Rosemary

## LIFE AND DEATH IN A MACHINE GUN SQUAD - WW2

*By Paul Vermillion*

I arrived at Camp Van Dorn, MS. Early September 1943 and was placed in Rifle Company "A" 253 Infantry Regiment, 63rd "Blood and Fire" Division in one of the two machine gun squads where I remained a machine gunner until the 63rd started breaking up in August 1945. Of all the 4th platoon men who were originals, I was the only man (I was 18 years old) who managed to stick around and go overseas with the company. Most of the others went in on the Normandy Invasion - or shortly after. I remained at Van Dorn 14 months until the 63rd went overseas into combat. At that time I was a Sgt. and squad leader. We went into combat during December 1944 along the Rhine River in France. Company "A" held a one mile front along the Rhine Dike, I was the only member of my squad to remain in combat until war's end and only two of us in the section.

Our company's worst day in combat occurred on April 6, 1945 when our 253rd Regiment attacked one of Hitler's best Divisions - the famous 17th Panzer S.S. Division - plus other German Units. They were dug in

and waiting for us on choice real estate - high ground and open terrain. (A machine gunner's dream - IF - you were the one in defense). Company "A" attacked right down the middle of their defenses on the highest ground. We were fortunate to have five M-4 tanks attached to our company that day. Our company "A" objective was about three miles distance from Unter-Greisheim, towards a small farming village with about 70 population, called Kressbach, Germany. We started at dawn and took Kressbach just before dark - the battle lasted all day - and then - on into the night!! We lost most of our Company and officers and three of the tanks. I lost my entire machine gun squad plus one replacement on that day. We six men received wounds nine different times that day. I was wounded two times (unreported) and ended up being the entire machine gun squad. We lost Kressbach during the night and had to take it again the next day. Frank Sinerius (deceased) was wounded for the 3rd time before he was taken to the hospital. Einer Eide, Jim Cole and John Smith (all deceased) were wounded and hospitalized. The replacement, Don Boehm, only lasted a short time before he was wounded and hospitalized.

Several different officers commanded our company that day, the first one, 1st Lt. Louis Magin only lasted a few minutes until he was shot in the head and killed by a sniper. Another was Lt. James Robinson, who was our attached Artillery Observer, was hit in the neck and died later that day. He received the Congressional Medal of Honor for his leadership and actions that day. He was only one of two men in the 63rd to receive the C.M.H. Captain Charles Young (later General) was Robinson's Battery Commander. Late in the afternoon of April 6, Captain Young followed the path of Co. "A" attack looking for one of his missing men. General Young's conclusion of the battle field - was that this action may have been one of the most brutal, bloodiest, continuous, prolonged battles encountered by a single rifle company during the war in German.

Lt. Anthony F. Daskevich (later General), who commanded the five tanks attached to Co. "A", came to a similar conclusion as Gen. Young in making the following written statement about this action: "In conclusion, I must say that the battle for Kressbach was the toughest and longest I have ever encountered. I was a veteran of Sicily, Italy, France and Germany. I have been in many battles, but none compared with what we went through in trying to take Kressbach. Every man that lived through the ordeal should have been

# Found . . .

... continued from page 29

decorated for bravery and courage beyond the call of duty. A very few people, like Lt. Robinson, held together a situation that could have resulted in complete chaos and defeat - instead of chaos and defeat - I understand that Company "A", with its tanks and artillery was the only force to penetrate the German Defenses on the 6th and 7th day of April 1945.

For the men of Company "A", living and dead, the battle for Kressbach is a prolonged nightmare which is not easily forgotten. Therefore - to the men of Rifle Company "A" - "A Salute"

## A SALUTE

By Paul Vermillion

This story can never fully explain or convey the horrible feelings and experiences a front line Infantry Soldier goes through in combat, day after day.

Hundreds of split second decisions can end your life or those around you. Seeing men of your company wounded, killed or go crazy (called Battle Rattle), grates on a person and leaves an indelible place in your memory.

The first time you look at another Human Being through the sights of a weapon, squeeze the trigger and realize you are sending another Soul into Eternity, stays with you for the rest of your life.

Ditches, slit trenches, Foxholes, K-rations and D-Bars are not a very good way to exist. As you live, eat, and sleep out in the elements, whether it is freezing, snowing or raining - the war must go on!

The continual guard duty goes on day and night, whether you sleep or not, until in the darkness you imagine things that may, or may not be out there, and hope they are not - but sometimes - you are wrong.

In the attack, you may throw away a blanket and a raincoat, you wish you had that night, when your teeth start chattering uncontrolled, with the cold, snow or rain - or all three!

Your clothes get so slick from the dirt, they can't hold anymore!

Can you imagine taking only three baths in a five month period? One bath, we stripped down naked and waited our turn in about six inches of snow - just to take a three minute shower. One of those goes a long ways!

In short - a person can never really convey what the front line Infantryman goes through in combat, unless you experience it all- and then - if - you live through it all- you will never be the same person again.

So here is a Salute to the men of Rifle Company "A", who gave their lives and their blood!

Today - some of us still endure the pain and carry the physical scars of battle, all of us still carry the mental scars and mental agony. A Salute to the brave, not so brave and even the cowards, because every man has his own breaking point. Beyond which, the human mind refuses to go.

McArthur quoted an old military ballad that says: "Old soldiers never die, they just fade away." So, before we fade away, we believe Rifle Company "A", 253rd Infantry Regiment, 63rd "Blood and Fire" Division deserves something in writing.

## SEARCHING FOR 63RD LOST SHEEP

Co. A, 253 used most of the following methods to locate 447 men out of 519 men - or 86-percent - of those who were overseas with us in combat. More than half are deceased. With more effort, we could have located some of the 72 other men, but most of them joined us late in the war.

Address with WW2 letters: Using a 4"x 9 1/2" envelope, make a long slash mark on each side of the WW2 address and above the first slash (/) write "WW2 Army Buddy" and below the other slash (/) write "or relative." In small towns, many times this gets results. You can even get zip codes at the post office.

Phone Information Operator: Dial WW2 address area 1 - (area code)-555-1212 and ask operator to search town and surrounding area. Ask for address.

Obtain Name and Army Serial Number: Middle initial is very helpful. Bill Scott has computer print outs you can order for your Unit (Company, etc). There is a fee for this service.

Your local State Veterans Administration Regional Office: May be called at 1-800-827-1000 to get information. American Legion Members: Can have five (5) letters per year forwarded to buddies if they are also members. You need to send for a blank form at: Library, The American Legion, National Hdq., PO Box 1055, Indianapolis, IN 46206-1055. No charge.

Cd-Rom "Phonefiche: Large libraries have computer disc you can use in the library which has many names, addresses and phone numbers. The disc is divided between Eastern and Western U.S.

State Drivers License Search: If you know which state the person lived in before or after the war, chances are they still live in that same state.

... continued on page 31

# Found . . .

..... continued from page 30

**State Where Buddy Entered Service:** If you have a person's Army Serial Number, we can tell you from which state they entered the service. They may still live in that state.

**Best Book On The Subject:** "How To Locate Anyone Who Is Or Has Been In the Military." Total cost (when I was doing my research) was \$23.00. I ordered it from MIE Publishing, PO Box 5143, Burlington, NC 27216.

This letter was dated November 23, 1995 and was from Jim Ernster, who was also in H 253.

Dear Fred,

Thanks for the letter, pictures, and an updating. After 50 years it seems like yesterday. You were and still are the same age as I am. A few weeks ago I received a letter from Richard Franson. I remember him, too. He was a great Sgt. Anyone who had kind words for us was great.

After I got out of service in 1946, I went to Marquette University in Milwaukee. I graduated in 1949 from Business Administration. Most of the students were G.I.s I worked nights at a department store thru Marquette. After that I went to the Seminary at St. Francis. I was ordained a Roman Catholic priest in 1955. As a diocesan priest, I served at five parishes. In June 1995, I retired. I now live in a small house with my dog, Alfie. I am getting adjusted to retirement. At first it was hard to realize I didn't have to be anywhere. Now I am getting used to it.

Too bad I didn't know your whereabouts a few years ago. I had a sabbatical at Notre Dame for four months.

You did well in your promotions. A Lt. C is quite a jump from where we were. I got so far as Sgt. I do remember Joe Ecksteine. He was about my size. He talked about becoming a minister after the war. Sure I remember Chuck Wolter. I sort of forgot our code names until you refreshed my memory. Kurt/Hans/Karl/Fritz.

I really appreciated your letter after all these years. It all started when I got on the mailing list after I responded to the initial letter from Texas when I sent my S5.

I am enclosing the pictures you sent as you requested them back. There is also a picture taken recently. Fred, thanks for writing.

With warm regards,

Jim Ernster

P.S. I remember Joe Ecksteine writing lots of letters. No wonder you had a long letter.

On April 5, 1996, Daron Vaughn wrote the following letter to Fred:

Dear Fred,

Your Bugler letter of April 1996 was very interesting reading about a different people while serving with the Blood and Fire.

In reference to the Saar River crossing, you mentioned in your letter, I was BAR team leader (nickname Frenchie) in 3rd squad of 2nd Plt. Was very much involved in that river crossing. Two GIs from the 1st or 3rd Plt. came to guide the 2nd Plt. in crossing the river and to a small town approx. 1/2 mile or so across the river. They had been there the previous night on patrol.

We got to the river after sundown. The Engineers had set up a guide line from one side of the river to the other side of the river. There was a very swift current. We crossed in two boats by holding and pulling on the line. It was a very dark night. The two guides showed us the town. Lt. Rich, our Plt. leader, divided the men on each side of the street to form a cross fire. We were informed there was a movement of German soldiers at night.

Lt. Rich gave an order for me and another GI (I don't remember whom) to take the two guides back to the river and cross them over, and come back to the town. We got back to the river and in a few minutes. We couldn't find the guideline, somebody had cut it or untied it. The two guides wanted us to cross them over without the guidelines. I flatly refused, informed them we would never make the other side with the swift current by paddling the boat.

..... continued on page 33

## NOTICE

It is no longer necessary for Life Members to pay a surcharge of five dollars annually. That policy was in effect for one year, and that year ended in 2004.

## — Notice —

Please support the reunion committee by sending an ad for the Souvenir Book. There is an Ad Book Reservation Form in this issue of the *Blood and Fire* for you to use and the address of Donna LaCosse.

# AD BOOK RESERVATION FORM

**CUT-OFF DATE**  
**SATURDAY, JULY 1, 2007**

PRINTED BOOK SIZE ( 5-1/2" x 8-1/2")

FULL PAGE ..... \$60.00

1/2 PAGE ..... \$35.00



1/4 PAGE ..... \$25.00

FULL PAGE = \$60.00 (4 1/4" x 7 1/4")

HALF PAGE = \$35.00 (4 1/2" x 3 3/4")

1/4 PAGE = \$25.00 (4 1/4" x 1 3/4")

1/8 PAGE = \$20.00 (2-3/8" x 1 1/4")

1/8 PAGE  
\$20.00

3 LINE  
BOOSTER  
\$10.00

SPONSOR  
NAME  
(EACH)  
\$2.00

**August 7 thru 11, 2007**



2007 Tacoma, Washington

**63rd Division**

**Association** BLOOD and FIRE

• ARDENNES • CENTRAL EUROPE • RHINELAND

## "HOT SHOTS" WE NEED YOUR HELP

As you may know, the money collected from the Ads in the Souvenir/Ad Book is used to help off-set some of the reunion expenses.

Most of the money defrays the cost of the band, free beer, soda and entertainment during the reunion.

With prices constantly increasing, we are asking for your support to help us keep the reunion cost down for our retired members.

So would you please place an ad in the Souvenir Ad Book?

Make check(s) payable to:  
**59TH REUNION 63rd DIVISION ASS'N.**  
 and mail to:

*Donna LaCrosse*  
*Post Office Box 86*  
*Morocco, Indiana 47963*

Ad Copy: PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Ad Size:

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Unit Served With: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Authorized By: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Found . . .

We proceeded to go back and meet Lt. Rich and men. We had pre-arranged a password between Lt. Rich and myself. As said before, it was a very dark nite and was worried for me to come back with three men instead of one. I was scared we might get shot by our own men. Anyway, the password worked and reported to Lt. Rich what had happened at the river.

We stayed in the town almost all nite and didn't encounter any Germans. We left early enough to cross the river before daylight.

There were approx. 11 men in the first boat that tried to cross the river by paddling. It overturned and heard some of the GIs cry for help. There was nothing that we could do due to the swift current and darkness. Two or three of the men caught on to some tree limbs and was saved. We never heard about the rest of the men that overturned.

By that time it was daylight. Lt. Rush contacted Engineers and they came and crossed us with a rope with two slings. We crossed two at a time in the freezing water. Evidently the Germans didn't see us as we didn't draw any fire.

When you mentioned the Saar River crossing in your letter it brought back memories I'll never forget.

Hope you can use some of this info in your next Bugler, maybe somebody can fill in some more of the pieces.

Sincerely Yours,  
Daron Vaughn

The following letter was also from Daron Vaughn, H 253 and dated May 15, 1996.

Dear Fred,

Was glad to hear from you. I did get both issues of the Bugler this year.

In your letter of April 10, 1996, you asked if I remember when and what place Lt. Rich was KIA. I don't remember place or date. I don't think Andy Fortura was in the 2nd Plt. Have a picture of the 2nd Plt we took in Mississippi. It's kind of discolored; studied the faces and remember some of the men.

Don't know if my wife and I will attend the reunion in N.Y. I don't care to fly with all the accidents that's accruing with airlines. You mentioned in your letter that McKeon was a Machine Gunner in heavy weapon Plt. As I mentioned before, I was a BAR Team Leader in 3rd sq. of 2nd Plt. I was also a Machine Gunner for a few days.

Do you remember a quarry we defended just before the big 7th army push in March or April 1945? Late one afternoon we replaced a unit who had suffered heavy

casualties. We were offered two choices, string up barb wire at the bottom of the quarry or carry dead German bodies to a mass grave. It took us most of the night to dig in, due to the hard ground. Two men from Heavy Weapon Plt. Came by my foxhole and handed me a 30-cal. machine gun and ammunition; informed me that the Lt. wanted me to set up the machine gun as there was nobody available to operate it. They knew I had taken training in all infantry weapons. Morning came, it was a bright day, our foxhole was at the edge of the quarry where you could see several hundred yards. The Germans started to shell us with 50-mm mortars. Before we realized it, we were drawing most of the shelling due to the machine gun.

Chow truck would set up behind the quarry. One of us would go eat, one at a time. While alone in foxhole, I had a 50-mm mortar shell hit approx. three-feet from the end of the foxhole. Thanks to the hard ground. I was lying down in foxhole with my hands over my ears as I had heard when they release three-rounds in their motor tube. For some reason, both of us had gone to eat at the same time. We came back to the foxhole and found that we had a direct hit - most probably with a 88 or larger. I guess we are lucky to be alive.

Fred, I kind of got carried away with my story!

Sincerely yours,  
Daron Vaughn

PS. Looked at personnel list of Co. L that Lydia Liszka sent me. It shows Lt. Rich was KIA April 8, 1945.

**Notice**  
**DEADLINE FOR**  
**THE MAY**  
**ISSUE OF THE**  
**BLOOD AND FIRE**  
**IS ON OR BEFORE**  
**APRIL 1, 2007**

# John J. Burney Highway U.S. 17 Bypass opened June 30, 2006



John Jay Burney Jr. with his wife Betty and other family members, take part in the ribbon cutting ceremony at the highway dedication.

*By Donna LaCosse, using information from two local North Carolina newspapers*

The John Jay Burney Jr. Highway was opened on June 30, 2006 with the Burney family in attendance when John cut the ribbon announcing the opening of the 7.5 mile section of the new U.S. 17 Bypass. The Wilmington Bypass connects Highway 17 near Ogden with Highway 421, thus enabling motorists to bypass all of Wilmington.

Along with his military service in Germany and his

political work in Raleigh, Burney served as New Hanover's district attorney and on the board of trustees for the University of North Carolina, Wilmington. He is a member of the 63rd Infantry Division Association and has also served the state of North Carolina as an attorney and as a senator. He is known as a "pillar of the community."

At the ribbon cutting, Burney said, "the best thing this road can do is relieve traffic congestion, and if it does that, my name will go down in history."

## New members

Cpt. Jonpatrick Anderson, Ph.D. lives in Dallas, Texas, with his wife, Deatra. He is a life member of the 63rd Infantry Division Association, USAR, and is now a member of the original WWII Association. Welcome!

Joseph "Don" Gunning and his wife live in Lebanon Junction, KY. He was with the 254 Battalion, 63rd Division. He enlisted in 1944 and was discharged in 1946. He is interested in getting in touch with any surviving men in his Division. Sgt. Robanik was the squad leader. His good friend, Redwine from Moorhead, KY was killed in action. We welcome him to the Association!

Col. Minor K. White, Company C, 15th Infantry,

USAR is a new member and we welcome him to the Association. He lives in Columbus, GA.

Dean Langrall is joining the Association as an Associate member. His father is H. Orland Langrall, Co H 255. Dean lives in Ocean City, MD. Welcome to Dean!

Andrew Thompson, USAR, lives in Mesa, Arizona. He has seen active duty in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq and has recently left the service. Welcome!

Walter L. Howell, A 255 is a new member. His son, James Howell, who lives in Branson, Florida, paid his membership dues as a Christmas present. Walter lives

# Lost Sheep Need To Be Found

*We need new addresses for the following people. Listed below are the last known addresses. If you can help, please call, write or email the secretary/treasurer.*

Lewis W. Anderson, F 254, 328 Fieldstone Ct., Wellington, OH. 44090.

Mrs. Bernard Bast, Associate, 1105 Park Row Blvd., Manitowoc, WI 54220.

Keith S. Brimhall, ENG 263, 611 Adams Place, Mt. Pleasant, IA.

John E. Convey, H 255, 1 Dustin Street, Spencer, MA 01562.

F.J. Cross, Associate member, 1 Spruce Lane #4, Georgetown, MA 01833.

Dorothy von Dietsch, Associate, PO Box 35082, Palm Coast, FL 32135.

Mrs. Clifford R. Ditzel, Associate, 12 Strokes St., Freehold, NJ 07728.

Julius T. Edmonds, A 255, 5918 Sellers Rd., Lot 48, Hanahan, SC 29406.

Robert T. Follick, C 255, 7055 Clover Nook Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45239.

Vernon C. Fredson, M 255, 3006 East Shore Place, Reno, NV 89509.

Charles W. Hemann, H 255, Phoenix, AZ 85023.

Walter R. Howell, F 253, PO Box 56, Osprey, FL 33559.

Joseph A. Kosin, MP 63, 7318 Bayberry Lane, Darien, IL 60561.

Edward J. Mang, I 255, 11 Cobb Street, Tonawanda, NY 14150.

Jackie Martin, Associate, 949 College Ave, Modesta, CA 95350.

Ada Matthews, Associate, 2458 Church Street, Baker City, OR 97814.

Clarence C. Noble, ORD 763, 712 Sunset Rt. 5, Wheelersburg, OH 45694.

Olga Oznovich, Associate, 1013 Barkston Drive, Highland Heights, OH 44143.

Frank J. Padula, A 253, 13 Old Village Road, Starbridge, MA 01566.

Morris D. Parker, ENG 263, 3104 Chestnut Street, Lufkin, TX 75901.

Yvone Pepe, Associate, 218 South St. #14, Waltham, MA 02453.

Blair R. Richards, K 254, 5400 Burling Road, Bethesda, MD 20814.

La Verne Rintoul, Associate, PO Box 6666, Libertyville, IL 60048.

Robert W. Selton, HQ 63, 300 Woodhaven Dr. Apt

3496, Hilton Head, SC 29926-7516. James L. Thome, C 253, 15 Augustine Lane, Fairfield Glade TN.

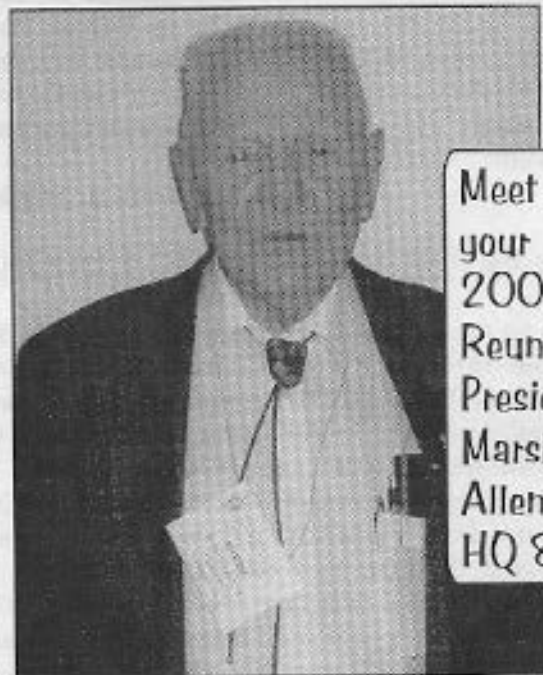
Ernest J. Van Mark, G 255, 10853 Prairie Drive, Dude City, FL 33525.

James T. Watson, I 254, 25 N. Roberts Ave., Dotham, AL 36303.

June Yost, Associate, 6919 10th St., Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221-2447.

Raymond R. Zavacki, K 255, 6255 N. Oak Ave., Chicago, IL 60631.

Maurice Zinker, AT 255, 16-44 200th Street, Bayside, NY 11360.



Meet  
your  
2007  
Reunion  
President  
Marsh  
Allen  
HQ 861

## New members ...

*... continued from page 34*

in Willard, Ohio. Welcome.

Henry H. Combs of West Alexandria, Ohio is a new Associate member of the Association. He is the cousin to Arthur Russell, H 254. Henry, his wife Marilyn and Arthur attended the Kentucky reunion last August. Welcome to the Association!

Barbara Cramer is an Associate member. Her father, Richard F. Herdman, who looked forward to receiving the *Blood and Fire* each time, passed away October 26, 2006. Welcome to Barbara.

# - Opinions and Thoughts -

## UNSUCCESSFUL SEARCH

You mentioned lost sheep in the November issue of the *Blood and Fire* and I took note of the name William W. Rodberg of Colorado Springs. Since my son lives in Colorado Springs, I asked him to check if a person by name lived there. He did a thorough job of checking but could find no one by that name in the city.

I am wondering if you ever hear anything from members of M company, 1st and 2nd platoon of the 253rd Infantry?

My wife and I are both retired and will be celebrating our 58th wedding anniversary on December 18, 2006. We have spent the last 15 years in Winter Park, Colorado - a guaranteed white Christmas! But there comes a time when one has to hang the ski's on the wall, so this year we will probably have a brown Christmas in Lincoln!

*Harold A. Steffens*

## TONY BENNETT SLEPT NEXT DOOR

I was on the front with G Company, 254 every day except for three days of R&R somewhere between Jebshiem and Siegfried Line. About a month before I was transferred to the 36th Division, a young guy by the name of Anthony Benadito joined G Company.

That was Tony Bennett and he slept in a bunk bed just outside my little room where I had the Company switchboard. So, Tony, remember the old 26 year old man on the switchboard in Frasudenbalk, Germany? A couple of names comes to mind that may confirm this - John Williams from Rome, NY and Steve Radar, a replacement who helped us set up the switchboard. I know Tony was there - I listened to him croon a lot. He and I were good buddies before I left for the 36th.

I have been down fighting a bladder tumor and the last report was good. Perhaps I can read a few more copies of the *Blood and Fire*.

*Vernon Worster*

## IT IS A VERY SMALL WORLD

Recently I had a chance to talk to Alan Romanoff, who lives near our son. We belong to the Philadelphia Chapter. My son is a dentist and one of his patients asked him about his last name and asked him if I was his dad. And, of course Alan found out where I was and called me. We didn't get a chance to meet at that time,

but I will visit him when I get a chance. Alan said he remembered me from our combat days.

My wife and I are well and enjoying our little five year old granddaughter, who lives in the Boothwyn section of Pennsylvania. I haven't had much of a chance in the last few years to meet the fellows of the Philadelphia Chapter. My wife has a tough time going on trips and I hate to go without her. They plan some very nice affairs, trips etc. and we have always had a good time. It's always good to meet some of our friends and share our experiences." I served in Company L, 255.

*Benedict Parenti*

## HIGHLIGHT OF THE REUNION

While we were at the Kentucky reunion, I visited with Ed Green. He and I were in the same squad and trained together at Camp Van Dorn. We served in E Company, 255, went overseas together and stayed together until after the war was over. He made Sergeant while we were on the front and I never made it above PFC. I was the Bar Man in our squad. We were both very lucky to make it through the war.

Ed was in the VA Hospital at Ft. Thomas, Kentucky and we hadn't seen each other since the summer of 1945 - 61 years. He knew who I was when I walked into his room. We had a good visit and that was the highlight of the reunion for me. He has been in the VA Hospital five years.

My wife, Betty and I live in Derby, Kansas. We are doing good for our ages. Getting a little slower as time goes by and it goes by so fast! We have enjoyed the reunions that we have attended. I didn't know for a long time that there was an Association. Son Jim found it on the internet and we joined right away. I feel very lucky to still be going. We plan to go to Tacoma if we are able and hope to see you all there."

*David Montgomery*

## WE KEEP IN TOUCH WITH EACH OTHER

Recently I received a letter from, Walter Johnson, who was Section Chief in our Howitzer Group and we keep in touch with each other. He sent me also a couple of discs so I could look up various things I might be interested in and my daughter made a copy of what I wanted. I am on the roster of A Battery and 861 from our group.

*..... continued on page 37*

## Opinions ...

..... continued from page 36

I was in A Battery from September of 1944 all the way till the end of the war and then was transferred into different outfit. I started with being shipped to the 695th Field Artillery, which was mechanized artillery, on to the Quartermaster sorting mail, then transferred to the MP's to guard prisoners of war and ended up the Ordinance. I was shipped back to the states in April 1946 and discharged May 1946.

Marion and I were married June 25, 1944 and six months later on December 25, I left to go overseas and ended up in France.

One day Tillett and I were headed for chow when some sniper in the church steeple shot at us. Thankfully he missed! The Sgt. and a couple of other guys went to the church and found a lot of shell casings from rifles that had been used up there. That's when we found out we were that close to the enemy!

This year Marion and I will be married 63 years. I would enjoy hearing from some of the guys from A Battery, 861 st. FA, 4th Section.

*Albert Saffanck*

### ICAN'T REMEMBER MUCH ANYMORE

Thank you so much for reminding me of the dues. I simply can't remember a lot of things at this old age of nearly 87!! I have always been so thankful for Roy and what he did our the freedom of our country. He was such a good man and was full of humor. He was a rural mail carrier for 28 years after his time in the army. I still miss him, of course.

*Janet Casey*

### WANT CONTACT WITH BEST PALS

My brother, Walter Hughson, 253 B Company, was best pals with Bert Hildebrand. He was also close to Charlie Southhoof. I would be most pleased to reestablish contact with these two gentlemen. My address is 9399 Martingham Circle, PO Box 955, St. Michaels, MD 21663.

*William J.C. Hughson*

### MISSED SEEING FRIENDS OF THE 63RD

I have missed seeing all you people! I had hoped I could make it to the reunion in Kentucky but it just did not work out. I am unable to drive that far and the kids had all given up so much of their time when I moved, I just could not ask them for another favor.

I am very content here at Friendship Village. It is a great place to live if you can't have your own home, and I didn't like living alone in our townhouse.

My health has stayed pretty good - just a couple "old

age" problems. I think of you all so often and will never forget all the good friends we have made in the 63rd.

*Betty Bonifield*

### I FOUND A NEW MEMBER

I met Sgt. Andrew Thompson in a Drug Store. He saw my 63rd Division cap and we struck up a conversation.

There is a major unit of the 63rd here in Mesa at the old Williams AFB.

Sgt. Thompson was in that command and saw service in Bosnia, Kosovo and Iraq. He only recently left the service. Please add him to your mailing list.

### HAPPY TO REPORT I AM ALIVE AND WELL

*Waymond H. Fischer, K 255*

It is with great pleasure that I tell you I am very much alive!

On page 15 of the November issue of the *Blood and Fire*, I have been listed as deceased, and that is NOT true. I am still a Life Member of the Association.

Please correct your records, so we will all know that I am alive and well!

### I WAS NOT LISTED AS ATTENDING REUNION

*Lewis B. Disbrow, E 255*

My name was missing from the roster of those attending the reunion in Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky in August 2006.

Attending with me were my wife, Bernice, my son, Bob and his wife, Jessica.

### STILL ACTIVE AND STILL DRIVING

*Henry Shartzler, AT 253*

I was 93 years young on December 31, 2006. I still drive every day and am active with Bingo and visiting the nursing homes weekly. I am also a deacon in my church.

### HUSBAND KNOWS EMBLEM ON COVER

*Helen Parke, wife*

My husband, Robert E. Parke, B 254, has Alzheimers but knows the *Blood and Fire* emblem on the magazine. He keeps all the copies by his chair and looks through them a lot.

# Happy Anniversary



## MARCH

- 2: Juanita & Richard Wanamaker - K 254 -1945
- 4: Rowene & Frederick Kroesen - E 254 -1944
- 5: Jo and Martin Beer - L 253 - 1948
- 5: Susan & Dave Bibe - Associate - 1977
- 7: Barbara & Craig Ethier - Associate - 1981
- 8: Betty & Shorty Myers - HQ 253 - 1952
- 12: Donna & Harold LaCrosse - F 254 -1948
- 12: Beryl & Pasquale Scorzelli - A 255 - 1946
- 14: Marjorie & Jacob Gesek - FA 861 - 1953
- 14: Bertha & Walter Harmon - G 253 - 1947
- 18: Jacquelin & Charles King - SV 254 - 1946
- 22: Juanita & Junior McDaniel- G 255 -1947
- 30: Joyce & Paul Schwene - Associate - 1944

## APRIL

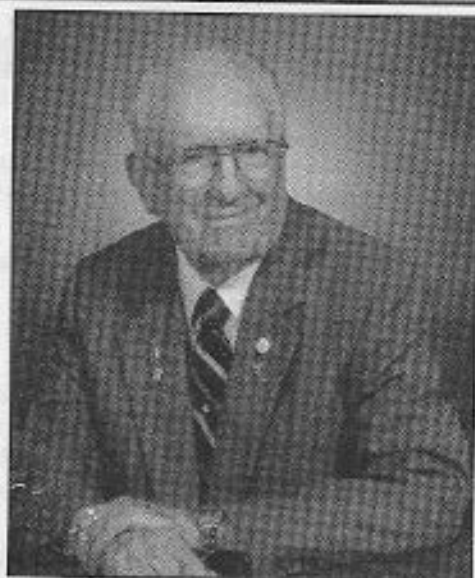
- 2: Joyce & Andrew Kidwell- ORD 763 -1949
- 6: Lucille & Levy Collier - D 255 - 1950
- 9: Helen & Donald Ivie - USAR - 1947
- 13: Dale & Donald Lindstrom - FA 718 -1957
- 14: Gwynn & Tom Malan - A 255 - 1946
- 19: Gloria & Mario Antoci - E 253 - 1947
- 24: Mary & Sam Fittanti - RECON 63 - 1954
- 30: Eleanor & Stanley Kozlowski - I 255 - 1949

## MAY

- 1: D'Arline & Charles Driemeyer - I 253 - 1954
- 2: Audrey & Ralph Alexander - G 253 -1953
- 4: Vertalee & William Pillsbury - HQ 63 -1946
- 5: Marie & Joseph Pacella - K 253 - 1944
- 5: India & James V. Rathburn - I 255 - 1951
- 7: Antoinette & Robert Barnard - FA 861 - 1959
- 8: Marlene & Walter Pucher - B 255 - 1954
- 15: Jean & James Settineri - H 254 - 1948
- 16: Charlotte & Herb Schneiderman -A 254- 1949
- 16: Olga & Michael Gribb - B 255 - 1953
- 24: Fannie & George Millis - HQ 63 -1952
- 24: Marie & Benedict Parenti - L 255 - 1952
- 25: Lourene & Elmer Bellow - HQ 255 - 1946
- 26: Jez & Jack Linscott - A 253 - 1951
- 28: Mary & Charles Dolan - A 254 - 1949
- 28: Marlene & Ray Peterson - HQ 255 - 1947

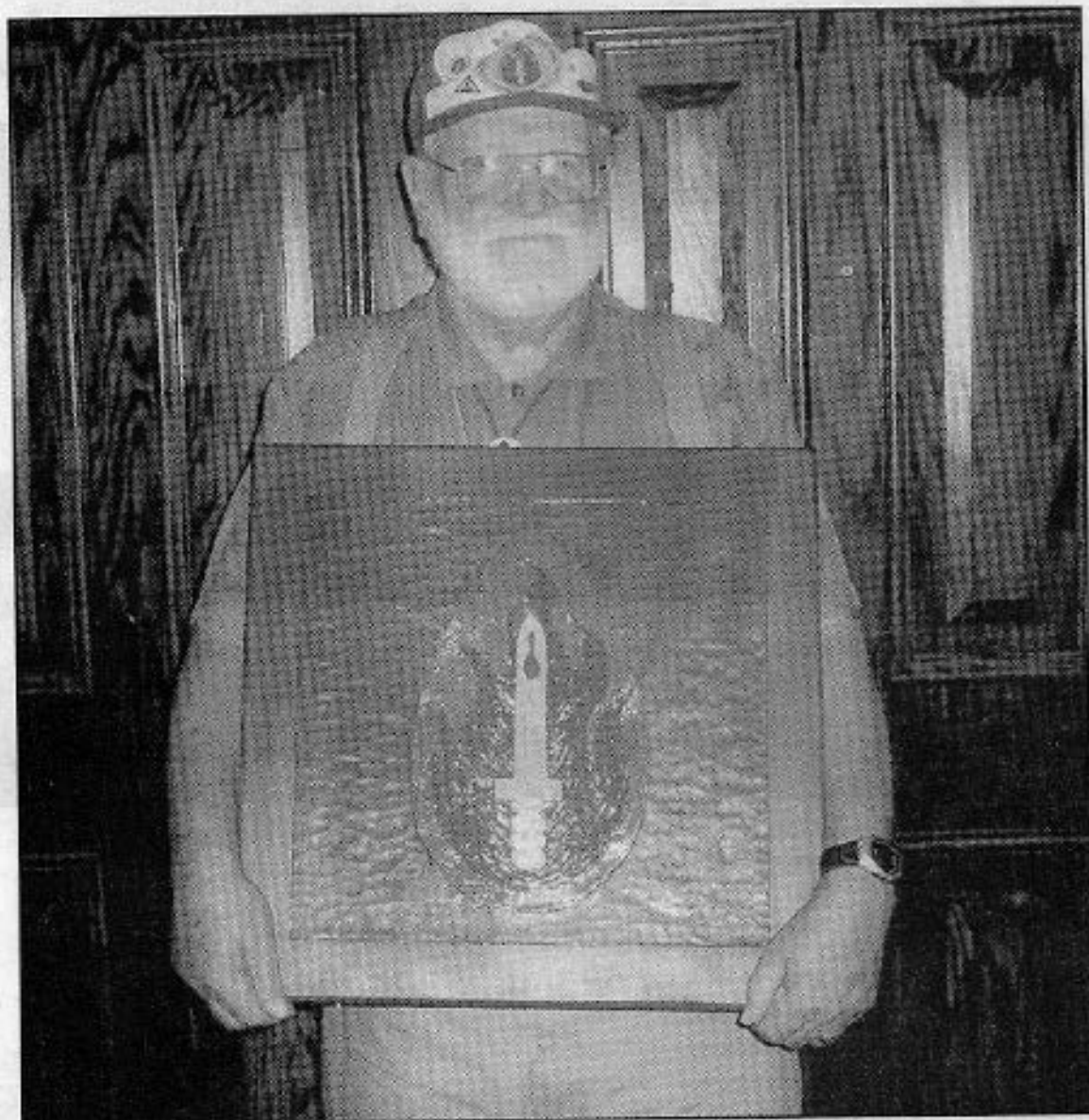
## JUNE

- 2: Ernestine & Allen Agnew - H 255 -1950
- 3: Catherine & Alfred Circullo - C 253 -1950
- 5: Clea & John Dumont - HQ 63 - 1948
- 5: Carol & Charles Renner - G 254 - 1950
- 6: Clare & Del Gerity - C 253 -1947
- 6: Dolores & Bill Davis - G 254 -1947
- 6: Marjorie & Charles Ewart - AT 253 - 1948
- 6: Mary & Edgar Torrence - G 254 - 1942
- 6: Vera & James Jordan - HQ 254 -1944
- 7: Donna & Edward Fowle - FA 862 -1944
- 7: Gladys & Joe Perez - C 253 -1952
- 7: Rachel & Donald Reents - FA 863 -1969
- 7: Ruth & William Murray - AT 718 - 1944
- 7: Lacey & Melvin Stahl- E 255 - 1951
- 10: Elaine & Angelo Davis - F 254 - 1949
- 12: Dorothea & William Beckett - HQ 254 -1942
- 15: Nancy & Tom Cone - Associate - 1974
- 20: Carol & Ivan Charitan - ENG 263 - 1999
- 22: Claire & William Hughson - Association -1947
- 22: Betty & Marvin Karr - C 253 -1948
- 23: Joan & James Casey - L 255 - 1951
- 24: Gwynne & David Bonifield - Associate - 1978
- 25: Marion & Albert Safranek - FA 861 - 1944
- 26: Dorothy & Robert Gross - HQ 253 - 1949
- 26: Florence & Sheldon Toder - CN 254 - 1952
- 27: Joan & Lewis Germain - L 254 -1952
- 28: Kit & Carl Anderson - E 253 - 1947
- 28: Edith & Edward Karcheski - B 254 - 1941
- 28: Mae & Domenick Pecchia - H 255 - 1947
- 30: Iva & Richard Schulz - FA 718 - 1956
- 30: Eileen & Robert Titterington - K 255 -1948



F. Calvin Futch was in Co. D., 363rd Med Bn. during World War II.

The above picture is the mature version of Futch!



Melvin Goebel, I 254 displays the plaque he made before attending the Kentucky reunion.

## *59th Reunion - Tacoma, Washington*

Abbott  
Waterway



# Fowle family at 2006 reunion



Pictured above are Judy Fowle Schaefer, on the left, her mother Donna, center front, and dad, Edward. Down in the corner is Stacy, a representative from Armed Forces Reunion Planners.

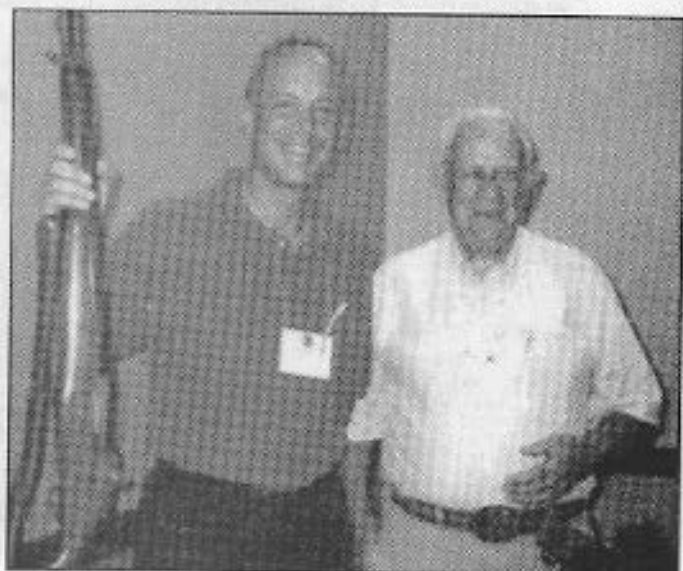
Enjoyed the November issue of the *Blood and Fire*. One of the best! Also the Kentucky reunion was a winner. I am looking forward to Tacoma but that is a long way off for an old man! I was also pleased to give my pictures to the 63rd. I am sure they can use some. I have no one left in my family.

Now, about your mystery picture. My memory is shot - gone, etc. but I am sure the fellow in white shirt is me. However, I don't remember the young fellow with me, or having my picture taken. I did have a goatee from June to October 2006, and I am sure Bill (Davis) didn't. Also, he is much better looking!

I made quite a round robin trip this year. Bought a new 2006 Jeep April 21. Had a stint put in the artery next to my heart. Left for Omaha on July 10 in 110 degrees temperature and drove over to Kentucky for the reunion. After that stop, I drove to Wisconsin Rapids, across Wyoming to Sand Point, Idaho, then home on September 19 and it was still 110 degrees. I drove 8,573 miles. Next year, Tacoma is much closer, around 1,100 miles.

Wayne Crosser, EA 863

## Mystery picture





# Reporting death of member

*Art Singer*

I am writing to report the passing of one of your members, Darrell Daugherty, K 255, 2nd platoon. My father was Art Singer, K 255, 2nd platoon.

Darrell lived in Adel, Iowa and when I was in the war in Viet Nam, Darrell and my father found each other through your newsletter. Darrell had been trying to find my father for years.

Darrell was shot under the eye by a German in December 1944. He gave my father credit for saving his life, keeping him from going into shock and keeping him warm on night he was wounded in action. My dad did not know Darrell survived his wound until 1966.

My dad passed in April 1987 and after his passing, I lost track of Darrell till a few years ago, I read his name in the *Blood and Fire*. I contacted him and we wrote

back and forth for the last several years.

My dad and Darrell were proud members of the 63rd, so I feel as though I grew in the 63rd, especially K Company 255.

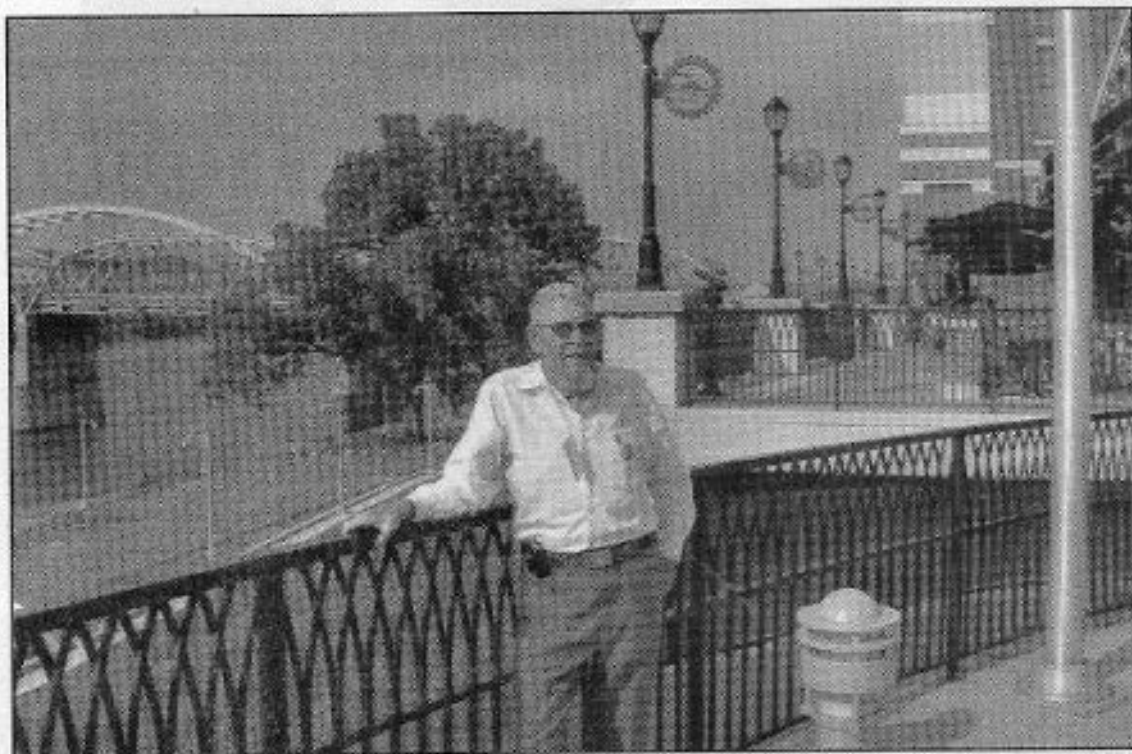
My dad had a purple heart and a bronze star.

I am a combat wounded disabled veteran who served with the 2nd Bat. 7th Marines in Viet Nam in 1966 and 1967. I used to be a Sgt. Like my dad.

Pretty much now my close relationship with the 63rd is over. But knowing you guys from the truly "Greatest Generation" made me a better man and a better Infantry Marine.

*Why is that whenever you attempt to catch something that's falling off the table, you always manage to knock something else over?*

~~~~~  
*How come you never hear father-in-law jokes?*



Wayne Crosser—taken on the bank of the Ohio River in Kentucky, 2006.

# My Denmark experience

*Vincent W. Fealy*

I want to tell you about an experience I had last February while on a visit to Denmark to see my granddaughter, Jennifer.

With the help of the *Blood and Fire*, my son-in-law, Tom got in touch with General Harris' grandson, Major Fred Harris. Fred was a Flight Surgeon stationed in Germany after spending some time in Iraq.

There were seven in my family, the major and his wife, who was with child. We had dinner in Rothenberg at the Major's suggestion.

The next day we visited Heidleberg and Tauberbischofsheim. After sixty-odd years, I had no trouble finding the house I lived in for two months. I believe this was the Mayor's house - nothing but the

best. Then we went to visit the church where I was an altar boy for Father Fourmir during several Masses.

We tried to locate the swimming hole we had used in 1945 but was not successful. In fact we even got stuck in the mud and all of us had to get out of the car and push.

It was a lot of fun showing my daughter, Elaine and Tom and my four grandchildren where their Poppy was many years ago. These grandchildren are all older than I was at the time!! As a side-note, I met Sully" Yonkers also from Yonkers, New York. He was also in the 253rd. He earned a battlefield commission and the Silver Star before being hit and sent to England.

Our wives died a day apart so we, and our families saw a lot of one another at the hospital and funeral home.



The Maguire Sisters sang at the U.S.O. Show presented at the reunion in Kentucky.



**57  
Chevys**

*A little bit about who I am*

*Harold Davis - FA863*

**59th Reunion  
Tacoma, WA  
August 7 - 11, 2007**

*Need to replace your DD 214?*

A website has been established to provide veterans information on how to replace lost, destroyed, or never-issued DD 214's.

The website is:

[www.members.aol.com/forvets/dd214.htm](http://www.members.aol.com/forvets/dd214.htm).

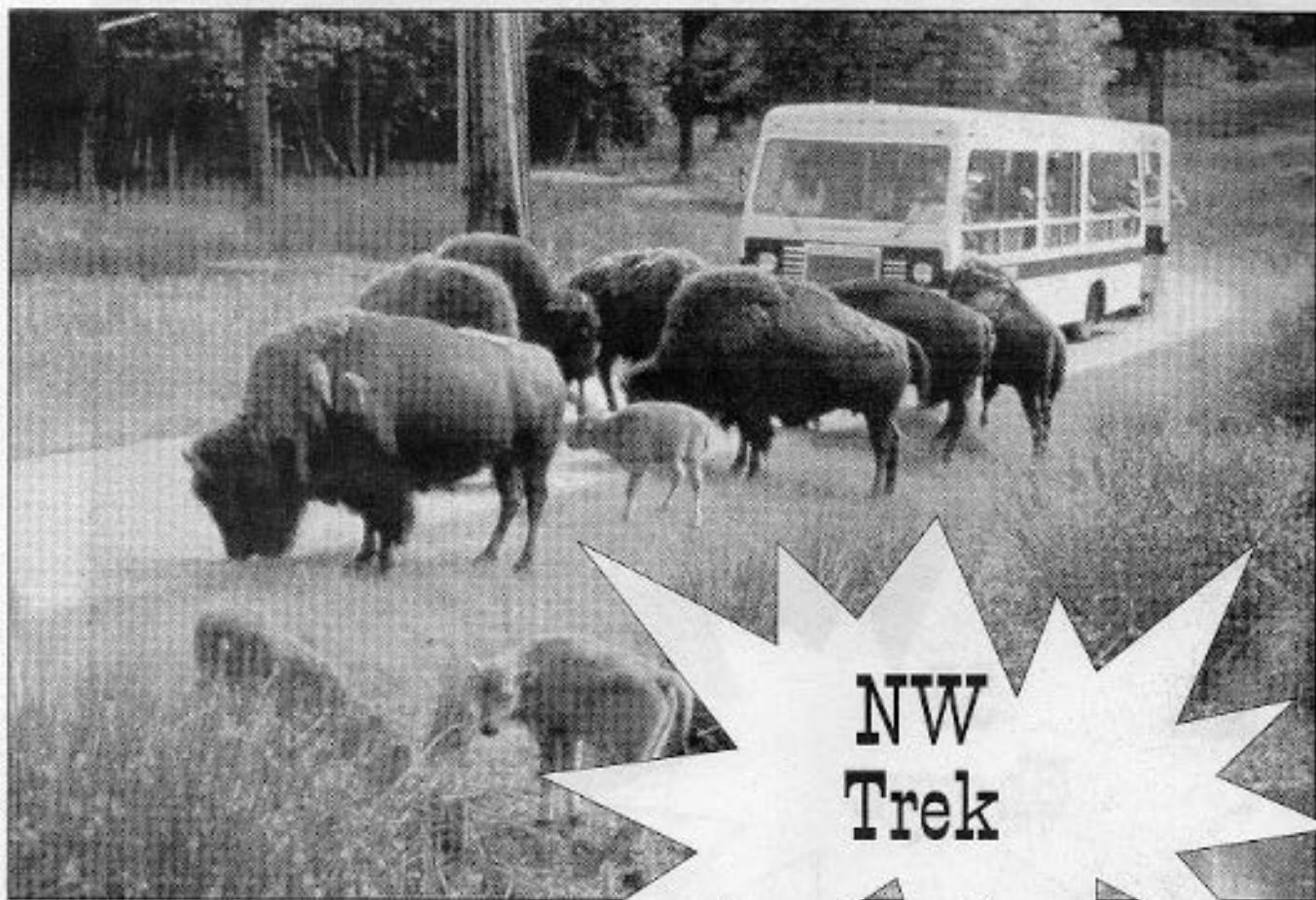
I started in the Army in the 98th Division in Camp Breckinbridge, Kentucky in November 1942. I Cadred to the 63rd in 1943 at Camp Blanding, Florida. From there I went to Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi.

I also did some duty as school troops in Fort. Sill, Oklahoma. I went overseas in December 1944 and returned to the United States in March 1945.

I worked for the Davison Chemical Corporation, which was phased into W.R. Grace Inc. Company in 1954, from February 1946 until retirement in 1980. I became a CPA in 1951, starting as office boy and retiring as Treasurer of the Division. It was a good 39 years of employment.

Life has been real good - working and serving with the best men ever.

## 59TH REUNION - AUGUST 7-11, 2007 - TACOMA, WASHINGTON



NW  
Trek

# Purple Heart Hall of Honor

*Submitted by "Peggy" von Pentz*

The House of Representatives recently passed legislation introduced by U.S. Congresswoman Sue Kelly that calls for federal support of New York State's efforts to develop the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor, New York.

She recognizes that the Purple Heart is the oldest and one of the most prestigious honors bestowed upon an American soldier.

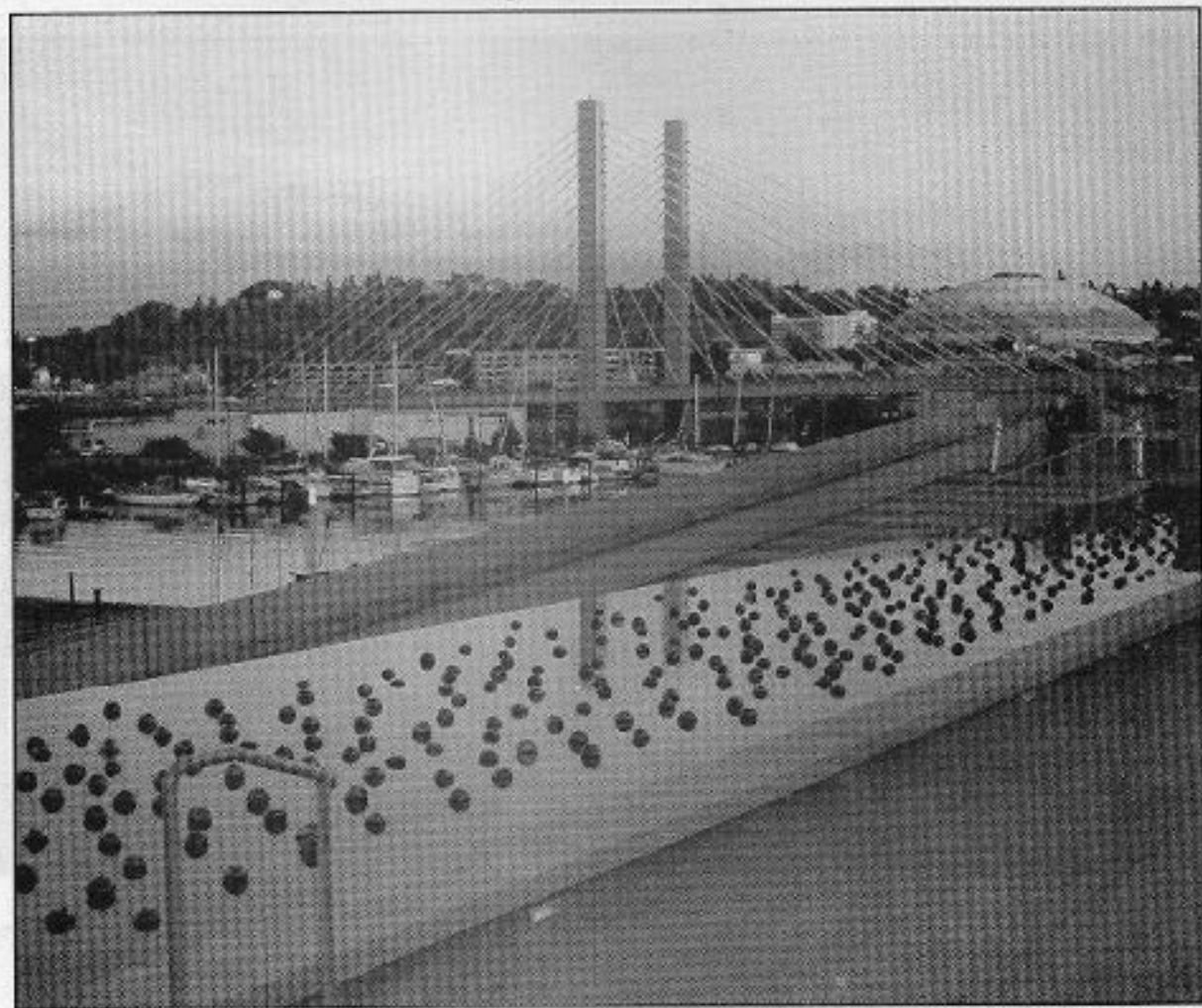
The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor in New Windsor will highlight the stories of Purple Heart veterans - stories that need to be told. The stories that will be echoed within the walls of the National Purple Heart Hall of Honor should inspire the nation to

preserve the legacy of the military heroes, and to better appreciate the freedom for which they fought.

The Hall will be located at the New Windsor Cantonment site of the last encampment of the Continental Army where General George Washington presented the first Badge of Military Merit in 1782. Since then, more than 800,000 members of the armed forces have been awarded the Purple Heart. It is an honor reserved for those soldiers who are wounded or killed in battle.'

Even though the Hall Of Honor will be built in New York, it is important to remember that this is a national institution that will recognize the sacrifices of soldiers and veterans who have lived in all areas of the country.

# 59TH REUNION - AUGUST 7-11, 2007 - TACOMA, WASHINGTON



## *Mule Train Charley*

*By Paul Vermillion*

At one of our 63rd Infantry Division Reunions, during one of our Company A, 253 Regiment meetings, a man from Florida, named Charlie, attended. Charlie related a story about his service in Italy before he came to our Company as a replacement.

He had served in a Unit that used pack mules, or donkeys, I don't remember which. These animals carried supplies to the frontline troops fighting in the mountains of Italy. He said these were very stubborn animals to work with. Sometimes they would simply

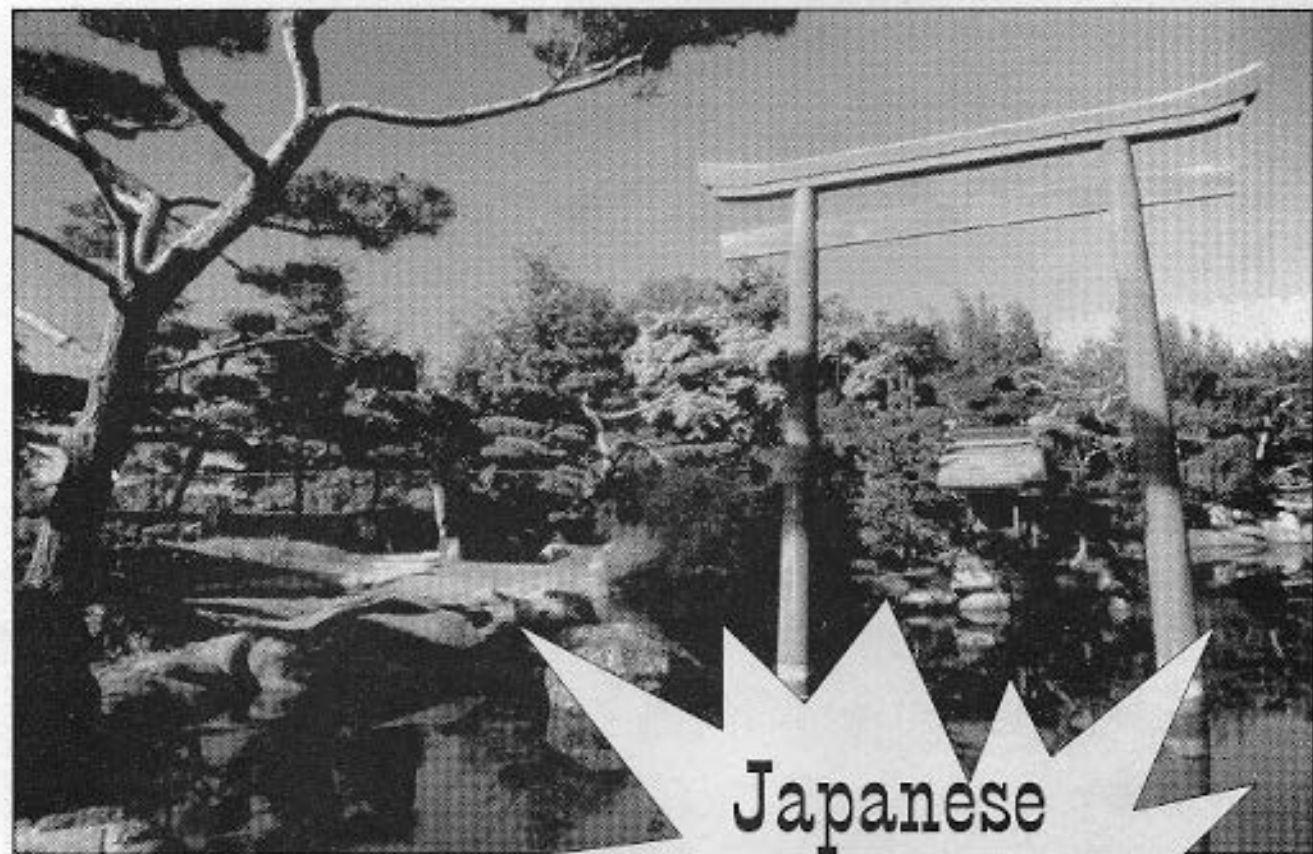
balk and lay down. No amount of coaxing, prodding or beating seemed to change the animal's mind until it decided to get up and go again.

But, in the military, where there is a will, there is a way. So, here is what they would do to get them up and going again.

They would gather a handful of dried leaves, grass, or paper, raise their tail, place the material under their tail and set it on fire. This action immediately changed the animal's stubborn ways. I suppose, if the animal ever balked again, all they would have to do, was raise their tail and pretend to light a fire.

We named this man: "Mule Train Charlie."

# 59TH REUNION - AUGUST 7-11, 2007 - TACOMA, WASHINGTON



Japanese  
Pagoda

## Life's friends

*submitted by Bill Scott*

"I now know why men who have been to war yearn to reunite. Not to tell stories or look at old pictures. Not to laugh or weep. Comrades gather because they long to be with the men who once acted at their best; men who suffered and sacrificed, who were stripped of their humanity. I did not pick these men. They were delivered by fate and the military. But I know them in a way I know no other men. I have never given anyone such trust. They were willing to guard something more precious than my life. They would have carried my reputation, the memory of me. It was part of the bargain we all made, the reason we were so willing to die for one another. As long as I have memory, I will think of them all, every day. I am sure that when I leave this world, my last thought will be of my family and my comrades ..... Such good men."—*Author Unknown*

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