

★ CAMP BLANDING ★ CAMP VAN DORN ★



Blood and Fire

63rd Division Association, Inc.

• ARDENNES / ALSACE • RHINELAND • CENTRAL EUROPE •

VOL. 60, NO. 2

MOROCCO, INDIANA 47963

MAY 2008

60th

Reunion

AUGUST 20 - AUGUST 24, 2008

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

- ~ The USS Indianapolis CA-35 National Memorial
- ~ The Civil War Museum
- ~ The Congressional Medal of Honor Memorial
- ~ Indiana World War Memorial and Veteran's Memorial Plaza
- ~ American Legion Mall
- ~ Soldiers' and Sailors' Monument

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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FIRST VICE PRESIDENT CARL ANDERSON 876 Cherry Lane Waterville, OH 43566 419-878-6965	TREASURER CLARE GERITY 9841 Oxford Circle Powell, OH 43065 614-793-9469
NATIONAL SECRETARY/TREASURER AND BLOOD AND FIRE EDITOR DONNA LaCOSSE P.O. Box 86 Morocco, IN 47953 (219) 285-2801	

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<i>Term Ending August 13, 2008</i>	
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William Scott, 407 S. Walnut Street, Sycamore, IL 60178 Telephone: 815-895-3967.....	254
Domenick Precchia, 730 N. Spring Street, LaGrange Park, IL 60526 Telephone: 708-579-0274.....	255
Edward F. Fawke, 352 Dayton Avenue, Springfield, OH 45506 Telephone: 937-325-1990.....	Sp. Trps.
Leonard Zimmerman, 3715 Ridgeland Road, Lansing, MI 48906 Telephone: 517-521-2950.....	FA
Theodore Paulsen, 5248 Valley View Rd, Rancho Pinos Verdes, CA 90275 Telephone: 310-541-2575.....	USAR
<i>Term Ending August 13, 2009</i>	
Herman Fabiani, 829 Balmoral Court, Inverness, FL 34453 Telephone: 352-637-2290.....	253
William Byrnes, 9645 Kedvale, Oaklawn, IL 60453 Telephone: 708-346-0632.....	254
David Montgomery, 114 Buckhorn Rd., Derby, KS 67037 Telephone: 316-788-2716.....	255
Archie Kumasaka, 2002 Windsor Dr., Princeton, NJ 08540 Telephone: 609-919-9549.....	Sp. Trps.
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FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT ...

by John Dietrick

In a recent conversation with our Veterans Affairs Service Director, it was surprising that many veterans are not taking advantage of the many and varied services available by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The VA covers a wide variety of services including: requests for Service Records, request for Military Medals, Veteran Homes, Medical Facilities, Nursing Homes, Life Insurance, Burial Benefits, Headstones, Prescriptions, Health Care Benefits, Transportation to VA Medical Facilities, Applications to Veterans Nursing Homes and many other services. Also available is Financial Assistance for hardship cases including Rent/Mortgage, Utilities, Food, Medical Centers and other benefits.

The VA has a regional office in each state. Most states also have VA offices in larger counties. Ohio, for example, has a VA Affairs Office for each of the 88 counties. Their offices are listed in the local phone book. You must seek assistance in your home county. If none is available, call VA Benefits at 1-800-827-1000 for information.

A Booklet "Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents" can be obtained by writing to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Public Affairs (80 D), 810 Vermont Ave., N.W., Washington, DC 20420. Additional information can be obtained by visiting the VA web site at www.va.gov/

To spend a few minutes (which most of us have available) contacting your local County, State or Federal VA Office may reap worthwhile benefits.

Thoughts While Shaving!!

Hope that you will be able to attend our 60th Reunion in Indianapolis, Indiana, August 20-24.

Hope that you will submit an ad in the Souvenir/Ad booklet.

**Plan Now to Attend
the 2008 Reunion
August 20 -
August 24
Indianapolis, IN**

A Memo from the Secretary . . .

Donna LaCasse

Thank you so very much for the birthday cards, phone calls and emails. I feel so blessed to have so many wonderful friends out there in 63rd Infantry-Land!

It was a glorious birthday – I will never again be able to say “I am 80 today!” Our children hosted a luncheon for me and for the over sixty family members and friends who came to help me celebrate.

As people were beginning to leave, I asked them if we could do this again in 80 years, but that is not going to happen because our daughter said she will not be cooking for that party!! There has to be a spoil-sport at every party.

We also celebrated our 60th wedding anniversary on March 12. We stayed home all day and did our celebrating with our 63rd Indiana friends on March 13. We met for lunch and enjoyed the fellowship as well as the food.

Well, enough about me – I need to move along to 63rd business.

Members have been great about paying their dues this year, however there are a few who have not responded to the dues-due letter I sent as a reminder. If you think you are one of those who forgot, please send me a check real soon.

The National Reunion will soon be here – have you made your plans to attend? This is a special year – 60th anniversary for all you hotshots. Better plan on traveling to Indiana so you can celebrate with all your buddies. If you don't come, you will be missed!!

Make sure you check the dates for the reunion – the reunion is over on August 24, not the 25th. Remember, we always gather on Wednesday and leave on Sunday. A tricky finger goofed those dates up in the February issue of the *Blood and Fire*.

Also, be sure you read the notice in this issue concerning traveling from the airport to the Marriott East. Bring phone numbers with you so you can take advantage of that mode of travel.

And, until August, have a great summer, stay well and come help us celebrate!

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 LaCasse

From the editor . . .

Donna LaCasse

Someone once said, “there is a first time for everything.” Well, I am recovering from such an event! It happened to me three weeks ago – I fell out of bed, sound asleep, landed on my belly and crushed a waste paper basket with my face! Needless to say, I have not been a pretty sight! In fact, I never have been a pretty sight but now I am just plain ugly!!

My nose took a beating and I had a cut just above my left eye on the lid, a cut just below my lip, a fat lip, a scrape on my arm and bumps here and there. I also have bruises all down the left side of my face and others where I would rather not look and I hurt in places I didn't know I had.

However, I am alive and I will recuperate. Harold says he did not push me but I think he protests too much.

Now, for some good news – members are beginning to remember to let me know when they move. I have been waiting for so long for this to happen! Only ten *Blood and Fire* magazines were returned to me with “no forwarding address” across the name label. Several new addresses were forwarded by the various post offices, where the forwarding request had not expired. Those magazines were forwarded to the members so we did not have to pay additional postage for that transaction.

Many thanks to you who have sent me your war stories. They are so interesting – some are rather short, others more lengthy – but all need to be shared with other members of the association. If you have not sent your story to me, please do so as soon as possible. Pictures are always welcome. I think lots of pictures make a good newspaper!!

Please take advantage of Letters and Opinions so I know what you would like to see in your magazine. If you don't write “stuff” for the *Blood and Fire*, you may end up with reading a bunch of nonsense from me!! All you hotshots like to read A Word From Your Buddies, so be helpful – send messages as often as you want.

I am thinking about an earlier deadline for the November issue so I can get this publication in the mail before the Christmas rush gets into full gear. I think the first day of September would be a good time for this next deadline. Now you have all summer to think about what you are going to do to help make this a better publication.

Enjoy this issue, have a good summer and hopefully we will see you at the reunion in Indianapolis in August.

Why do we press harder on the remote control when we know the batteries are getting weak?

Celebration of Life



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

Albert M. Bisinger – I 254 – Killed in Action January 25, 1945.

William Bostwick – HQ 254 – Life Member 470, died May 6, 2006. His widow, Joan, lives at 10 Norwich, Pleasant Ridge, MI 48069.

Sherman M. Byrd – A 254 – Life Member 1812, died March 21, 2008. He was 89 years old. His widow, Wilma, lives at 2987 W. 1000 N., Perrysville, IN 47974.

Clarence A. Cozart – MED 255 – Life Member 143, died December 4, 1984. He lived in Rockwell, NC.

Ronald Dunlap – B 863 – Life Member 1522, died September 2006. His widow, Dorothy lives in Columbus Grove, Ohio.

Joseph H. Fennell – I 255 & E 255, died March 25, 2008. His widow, Irene lives at 1904 Inman Drive, Anderson, SC 29625-2869. His daughter, Diane Lollis lives at 134 Moreland Ave., Laurens, SC 29360-2730.

Harry H. Heck – AT 63 – Life Member 1343, died February 19, 2003. Jennie Hick of Chapel Hill, NC reported his death.

Ralph L. Immings – HQ 255 – Life Member 738, died April 3, 2003. His granddaughter, Sonja Wright, reported his death. He lived at 338 North, Dike, IA 50624.

Robert J. Johnson – SV 862 – died March 10, 2008. He and his family lived at PO Box 53, Glenn, MI 49416.

Ralph Lazar – D 254 – Life Member 710, died January 11, 2008. His widow, Rhea, lives at 28914 Paseo Carvella, Mission Viejo, CA 92692.

Rowe W. Maxwell – B 254 – Life Member 1877 – died June 16, 2007. His widow Sara, lives at 1474 Weatherfield Ct, Centerville, OH 45459.

George J. Mitchell Jr. – G 253 & HQ & F 254 – died December 26, 1994. His son, Art, reported his death.

George Murchio – D 254 – died January 31, 2008.

Joe Panicucci – G 254 – died 2005

Michael J. Pilleri – G 255 – Life Member 1411 – died March 24, 2008.

Julius Ruffatola – K 255 is deceased as reported by the post office when they returned the February issue of the *Blood and Fire*. No date given.

Maurice E. Sink – C 254 – died February 22, 2008. His granddaughter Chastidy Hubbard reported his death.

Lester Swallowood – H 255 – died January 9, 2008. His

widow, Harriet lives at 5330 Webb Court, Orlando, FL 32821.

Emlen H. Tharp Jr. – A 363-MED – died February 1, 2006. His death was reported by his daughter, Jane MacLachlan.

DEATH OF SPOUSE

Mrs. Lyle Atwood, wife of Lyle, HQ 254, died 2006.

Neola Cozart, widow of Clarence A. Cozart, died March 17, 1999.

Jean J. Heck, widow of Harry H. Heck, died June 19, 2007. Jennie Hick of 15 Weybridge Place, Chapel Hill, NC 27517 reported her death.

Mary C. Lanfrit, widow of John Lanfrit, HQ 254, died February 15, John, Life Member 1332, died June 11, 1994. Death reported by sister Cecile Santisi of 275 Rina Ave., Milltown, NJ 08850.

Rose Panicucci, wife of the late Joe Panicucci, G 254, preceded him in death. The exact date is unknown.

Down Memory Lane

by Bob Anderson, B 255

On April 21, 1944 (?), after setting up our defense in the town of Winzeneller, B Company was ordered to send out a patrol to try to capture a prisoner. Lt. Veihl picked my squad for this mission. After K-Rations, we left behind our helmets, packs and anything that would make a noise. We assembled and started out. We advanced a few blocks into no-mans land, where we took up positions in doorways and alleys. The men had to be alert and know where the next man was. After a few hours of quiet, the Lt. decided we had been there long enough, and signaled for us to follow him out. I waited for my assistant squad leader to come by and we left together.

ON THE BRIGHTER SIDE

"A pedestrian is a person who should be seen and not hurt."

2008 Reunion
August 20 - August 24
Indianapolis, Indiana

Association Reunion Locations

1947 - 1957

April 19 - 1947 - New York, NY - Hdqtrs Restaurant
 Unknown, 1948 - New York, NY - Local Members
 Unknown, 1949 - New York, NY - Local Members
 June 16-18, 1950 - New Yorker in New York City
 July 6-8, 1951 - Netherland Plaza in Cincinnati, OH
 Aug. 22-24, 1952 - Hotel Sylvania in Philadelphia, PA
 June 12-14 - 1953 - LaSalle Hotel in Chicago, IL
 Aug. 23-25, 1954 - New Yorker in New York City
 July 29-31, 1955 - Sheraton Plaza in Boston, MA
 Aug. 3-5, 1956 - Statler Hotel in Cleveland, OH
 July 19-21, 1957 - Sheraton Hotel in Philadelphia, PA

1958 - 1967

Aug. 1-3, 1958 - Statler Hotel in Detroit, Michigan
 July 24-26, 1959 - Penn Sheraton in Pittsburgh
 July 29-31, 1960 - Statler Hotel in New York City
 July 28-30, 1961 - Emerson Hotel in Baltimore
 July 27-29, 1962 - Sheraton Hotel in Chicago
 July 25-28, 1963 - Seville Hotel in Miami Beach
 July 24-26, 1964 - Sheraton Hotel in Pittsburgh
 July 30 - Aug. 1, 1965 - Statler Hotel in New York City
 July 28-31, 1966 - Hilton Hotel in Washington DC
 July 27-29, 1967 - Sheraton Cadillac in Detroit

1968 - 1977

July 25-27, 1968 - Hilton Hotel in Hartford, Conn
 July 25-27, 1969 - Sheraton Hotel in Columbus, O
 July 23-26, 1970 - Deauville Hotel in Miami Beach
 July 30-Aug. 1, 1971 - Pick Roosevelt in Pittsburgh
 July 27-30, 1972 - Marriott Motor Inn, Philadelphia
 July 27-29, 1973 - Sheraton Motor Inn, Oakbrook, Ill.
 July 25-27, 1974 - Howard Johnson, Windsor Locks, Conn.
 July 24-26, 1975 - Holiday Inn in Lansing, Michigan
 July 29-31, 1976 - Sheraton in Valley Forge, PA
 July 27-30, 1977 - El Tropicano, San Antonio, TX

1978 - 1987

July 26-30, 1978 - Marriott in Saddlebrook, NJ
 July 26-29, 1979 - Imperial House South, Dayton, OH
 July 23-27, 1980 - Wm. Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh
 July 22-25, 1981 - Holiday Inn, Jackson, MS
 July 28-Aug. 1, 1982 - Buffalo Hilton, Buffalo, NY
 July 27-31, 1983 - Hilton Hotel, Valley Forge, PA
 July 25-29, 1984 - Hilton Inn, Orlando, FL
 Aug. 7-10, 1985 - Marriott Twin, Washington DC

Aug. 20-24, 1986 - Tropicana in Las Vegas
 Aug. 19-22, 1987 - Hyatt Regency in Louisville, KY

1988 - 1997

Aug. 3-6, 1988 - Marriott Pavilion, St Louis, MO
 Aug. 23-27, 1989 - Airport Marriott, Burlington, CA
 Aug. 29-Sept. 2, 1990 - Airport Marriott, Orlando, FL
 Aug. 14-18, 1991 - Sheraton Music City, Nashville, TN
 Aug. 23-27, 1992 - Bally's Casino Resort, Reno, NV
 Aug. 25-29, 1993 - Arpt. Marriott, Bloomington, MN
 Sept. 29-Oct. 3, 1994 - Omni, Jacksonville, FL
 Sept. 6-10, 1995 - Regal Hotel, Cincinnati, Ohio
 Aug. 19-23, 1996 - Friar Tuck Inn, Catskill, NY
 Aug. 30-Sept. 3, 1997 - Town & Country, San Diego

1998 - 2008

Sept. 2-5, 1998 - Marriott Southeast, Denver, CO
 Aug. 11-15, 1999 - Crowne Plaza, Rochester, NY
 Aug. 15-20, 2000 - The Hilton, Cherry Hill, NJ
 Sept. 28-Oct. 1, 2001 - Holiday Inn, Virginia, VA
 Aug. 13-19, 2002 - Lodge of The Ozarks, Branson, Mo
 Aug. 13-17, 2003 - Holiday Inn, Columbus, Ohio
 Aug. 11-16, 2004 - F. Park Marriott, Falls Church, VA
 Aug. 10-14, 2005 - Westin Crown, Kansas City, MO
 Aug. 16-20, 2006 - Drawbridge Inn, Ft. Mitchell, KY
 Aug. 8-12, 2007 - Sheraton Hotel, Tacoma, WA
 Aug. 20-24, 2008 - Marriott East, Indianapolis, IN

Down Memory Lane

.....By Bob Anderson, B-255

On March 29, 1944 (?), when my Sergeant was wounded, I became squad leader of the 2nd squad, 2nd platoon, B Co. On April 3, as we checked houses in a small town, my scout pointed to a house where he could hear women talking. As I entered I called for him to follow me. I entered the cellar. The women and an old man started saying, "Nix Soldat." I noticed a pile of clothes and blankets in a corner just as I heard a voice say, "put a round into that pile." I looked up to see Lieutenant Viehl, the Company Co., who had followed me downstairs. As I raised my rifle toward the corner, the women started shouting and a soldier came out with his hands up. I checked the pile and took our prisoner away. My scout told me he started to follow me but the lieutenant rushed by and said he would go in.

OUR HISTORY: THEN AND NOW

by Bill Scott, 31-Mar-2008

e-mail: wjs631@comcast.net

The lengthy years of recording the data from the available morning reports of all the units and headquarters of the 63rd Infantry Division of WWII are done. The editing of many aspects has started with going through the alphabetical lists and compiled rosters to find obvious errors and matching names. The heavy load of orders and the need to start printing the rosters and the alpha list will likely keep me from getting through the letter H section this spring. Family and housing commitments also exist, as you well know.

At this time the total names on the 63rd rosters and the attached units are up to 70,270, and the 63rd section now has 97.60% with serial numbers which will be likely increased as matches are made.

Some of the problems come from orders and reports, plus 1943-45 Blood & Fire items, that only showed the last name of the man. Men who then and now use their middle name for their first name also cause many gaps in logical data recording.

Those who work on their genealogy can recognize the problems of getting our information correct and logical.

Historians in France and Germany are showing their interest in the items that we can offer to our own families and other American people who are interested in our history. The problems of getting the cash payments here are sometimes a big barrier to getting them furnished with items. We also have to keep our financial systems from being invaded and robbed.

Later this year I hope to get back to sending the big volume of 1943-45 unit morning reports to the Army Historical and Education Center in Carlisle, PA. That will free a lot of our storage shelves so that I can see things that have been in hiding for years.

There will be other military history locations that will get a lot of the known printed and copied items that we can offer now. Some of the museums are still in the known planning, expansion, financial, or big construction efforts.

The printouts of the rosters, the alphabetical lists, and other ones for display at 63rd reunions, museums and people who are not members will not have data on whose addresses are known, WWII 63rd Inf. Div. membership, and those who dropped their membership. Ones with that data are on the old wide greenbar paper at several of the Army museums, and will be replaced when the editing is completed in the next few years.

Some historical items that have not been ordered from me for some years that have data that is in need of

addition or correction are going to be updated soon. Those who have ordered some of those items will have a delay as I get the changes done. The items of most concern are the alpha listing and the Camp Blanding cadre list where I have found names with the wrong spelling, as expected.

Now it is time to get this to Donna and get to work on the income taxes.

An open letter to the elected officials and members of the Association

Jeffrey A. Neberman, Associate

As the son of a 63rd Division infantryman, I read the *Blood and Fire* from cover to cover when they arrive. Last month however, I was shocked and appalled by an article by Associate Member Edward Phillips soliciting military items (and offering to purchase them) from the Second World War (Preservation of WW II military items: *Blood and Fire*; Vol. 60, No 1, February 2008, page 27).

While I trust that Mr. Phillips has honorable intentions, as a Museum professional, I am well aware of the current collectors market for WW 2 items and the often fraudulent manner in which collectors attain them. I would *strongly* recommend that the Association adopt a resolution at the August Reunion forbidding non-accredited private citizens from soliciting donations through the *Blood and Fire*. The preservation of the physical items and documents brought home from the war for future generations is of equal importance with "preserving the memory of the fallen and promoting everlasting peace.

I ask the Division Officers to act on my proposal at the earliest possible date. I am also submitting a separate article listing museums where any donated items would be held in perpetuity.

**August 20 - August 24
2008 Reunion
Indianapolis, Indiana**

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

COMPUTER DATA/PRINTOUTS AND COPIES

PLEASE PRINT!

	UNIT #1 Company,	UNIT #2 Battery, HQ?	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.
1944-1945 Unit Itineraries (in Bn. group)			\$3 ea.
Alphabetical List of CAMPBLANDING CADRE MEN with data			\$5 ea.
Today's Address & Phone List of CAMPBLANDING CADRE MEN (for members only)			\$2 ea.
Today's Address & Phone List by State. (for members only)	State #1	State #2	\$2 ea.
1,030 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.
2007 Alpha list #35 with data on casualties, deaths, units, serial numbers, cadre, 70,230 names			\$65 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 1:25,000 maps from S. of Sarreguemines to Saarbrücken w/great detail		\$13 set
Two 1:25,000 maps of the 63rd's SIEGFRIED LINE area w/forts, from 1/45 aerial photos w/legends		\$13 set
1:25,000 BLIESKASTEL map that shows Kirkel, Wurzbach, & Biesingen		\$5 ea.
1:100,000 KAISERSLAUTERN map that shows Homburg, Langmeil & Grunstadt		\$5 ea.
1:100,000 KARLSRUHE map that shows Bad Wimpfen, Heilbronn & Stuttgart		\$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		\$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.
General Order Copies for awards to individuals, such as badges and medals	NEW	\$2 ea.
Reprint of 135-page 1986 softcover book, "With the 63rd Infantry Div. in WWII" by Col. James E. Hatcher of 254th and 255th		\$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		\$5 ea.
Unbound History 7th U.S. Army, 15-Dec-44 to 25-Jan-45, "The Other Bulge"		\$4 ea.
Unbound 1944 "I am a Doughboy" booklet on inf. co. & plt. equipment, weapons, & training		\$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	\$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 & 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.	

-----UNIT & ORGANIZATION AWARDS COPIES-----

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.....			\$1 ea.
French Croix de Guerre 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 <i>Blood & Fire</i> 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.	
Combat Months Unit Morning Reports 2/44 - 5/45: 253rd _____	254th _____	255th _____	\$10 ea.
Artillery _____	263rd Engineer & 363 Medical Bns. _____		\$10 ea.
Special Troops: HQ&HQ Co., Band, MP, QM, Recon, Signal, Ordnance _____			\$10 ea.
63rd Pictorial history w/1,000+ stateside, combat & occupation scenes.....			\$12 ea.

-----CAPS-----

Bright white cap with red bill and adjustable red rear net.....	\$10 ea.
Light blue cup and bill, with adjustable blue rear net for spring, summer or fall.....	\$10 ea.
Light blue cap and bill, with solid light blue adjustable rear for fall or winter.....	\$10 ea.
The new 63rd patch emblem has "BLOOD & 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.....	\$10 ea.
1.5" 254th Infantry Regiment Antique Bronze Challenge Coin with plastic pocket case.....	\$10 ea.
1.5" 254th Infantry Regiment Brilliant Gold Challenge Coin with plastic pocket case.....	\$10 ea.
3.5" x 3.5" x 1.25" Dark Blue Coin Presentation Case.....	\$5 ea.

January 2008 Form #63

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: (____) _____ - _____
 I AM THE: _____ OF _____

(SON, GRANDSON, DAUGHTER, BROTHER?)

63RD VET'S NAME

History of The 63RD Infantry Division

submitted by J. Dennis Bender

The proud legend of the 63rd Infantry Division had its beginning at Casablanca in January 1943, when Prime Minister Churchill of Great Britain coined the phrase that the Axis powers would "*Bleed and Burn in expiation of their crimes against humanity.*" From that statement, Brigadier General Louis E. Hibbs, soon to become the division's commander, designed the shoulder insignia and the slogan "*Blood and Fire.*"

On June 15, 1943, the Division was activated at Camp Blanding, Florida. The cadre manning the new division came from Camp Breckinridge, Kentucky's 98th Infantry Division. Following initial cadre training the division relocated some 650 miles to Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi, arriving there during the latter part of August 1943.

During the month of September 1943, men from reception centers all over the country rapidly brought the division up to strength and intensive basic training commenced. In November 1943 the men of the division had completed basic and small-unit training and were anticipating advance and larger unit maneuvers. This, however, was not to be.

In December 1943, all privates, privates first class, along with some noncommissioned and junior officers were reassigned to other divisions alerted for overseas movement. The process of receiving replacements and training them only to have them reassigned as fillers for other divisions alerted for overseas movement was repeated twice again before the division was at long last alerted as a unit for overseas assignment.

During March and April 1944 the division was brought to full strength with replacements coming from training centers as well as men from the Army Specialist Training Program and the Army Air Corps Cadet Training Program. The latter two programs had been cut back and their participants released for assignment to the Infantry.

As the division reached full strength again, training started anew. By November 1944 the division was ready for movement to an overseas area. On November 6, 1944 the 63rd Infantry Division advanced party left Camp Van Dorn by train for Camp Shanks, New York and ultimate shipment to France. The advance party or forward element of the division was known as Task Force Harris and consisted of the three Infantry Regiments: the 253rd, 254th and 255th plus a small supporting staff. The Task Force was commanded by Brigadier General Frederick M. Harris.

Task Force Harris arrived in Marseille, France on December 8, 1944 and after a few days in a staging area moved by road and rail to Camp d'Oberhoffen, France located about midway between Colmar and Sarreguemines. By the end of December 1944, Task Force Harris was disbanded and all three regiments were reassigned to various divisions of the 6th Army Group. The 253rd was attached to the 44th Infantry Division in Sarreguemines-Riming area; the 254th was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division in the Colmar Area, and the 255th was attached to the 100th Infantry Division near Bitche.

Thus the three regiments, separated from the 63rd Infantry Division control were destined to make their own history until reunited with the Division in Mid-February 1945.

From mid-February 1945 until the end of the war, the 63rd Infantry Division made a path of *Blood and Fire* from Sarreguemines through the Siegfried Line to Worms, Mannheim, Heidelberg, Gunzburg and ending in Landsberg, Germany at the end of April 1945 when the division was pulled from the line for a much needed rest.

By war's end Division units had participated in three (3) battle campaigns and its Infantry Regiments had been awarded seven (7) Distinguished Unit Awards (Now known as Presidential Unit Citations) and a French Croix de Guerre with palm.

During the period of December 1944 to May 1945 the division suffered over 1,000 killed, more than 5,000 wounded, over 1,000 missing in action, 63 captured by the enemy and over 4,000 non-battle casualties. Division forces captured over 21,000 enemy soldiers.

In September 1945 the *Blood and Fire* division was re-staffed with "high point men" from other divisions, returned to the United States on September 29, 1945 and inactivated.

The 63rd Infantry Division came back to life in March of 1952 when it was activated in the Los Angeles, California area as a Reserve Division. The division was deactivated again in December 1965, only to return to life again as the 63rd US Army Reserve Command in February 1968.

During the period after deactivation in 1965 and reactivation in 1968, elements of the 63rd Reinforcement Training Units (RTU) became involved in the staffing of the National Rifle Matches in Camp

History of The 63RD Infantry Division

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

Perry, Ohio in the Spring of 1966. The 63rd RTU along with personnel from five other USAR divisions was tasked to staff the National Rifle Matches in lieu of their two weeks of Annual Active Duty. All reserve members of the support element were designated as the 63rd Div RTU Reserve Support Battalion and were placed under the command of a 63rd RTU officer who displayed the 63rd Infantry Division colors in the Battalion's Headquarters.

In 1967, the 63rd RTU was again tasked with the mission of providing support to the National Rifle Matches in Camp Perry, Ohio and again was assigned responsibility of command for all reserve component elements in the support unit. As in 1966, the support element was commanded by a 63rd RTU officer and the colors were again displayed in the support element headquarters.

In 1968 with the formation of the 63rd US Army Reserve Command, the RTU was inactivated and the 63rd Infantry Division colors were turned over to the 63rd US Army Reserve Command. (63rd ARCOM)

The 63rd ARCOM embraced California, Arizona and Nevada and was made up of Combat Service and Combat Service Support units and one tank battalion. During Desert Shield and Desert Storm 22 units of ARCOM were mobilized. Fourteen (14) of these units were deployed to Saudi Arabia.

In April 1995, the United States Army Reserve Command, in response to a downsized force and redefined mission, announced its largest realignment in decades. As a result the 63rd was once again re-designated, this time as the US Army 63rd Regional Support Command (RSC). Its geographic boundaries were realigned to conform with the standard federal district observed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and other government agencies. This new alignment will help the 63rd support natural disasters and other regional crises much more quickly.

The 63rd RSC's main mission will continue to be that of providing combat support and combat support to units during deployments; to support troop projections by filling in for deploying active troops; providing port, rail and other transportation support; and act as the training base during full mobilization. The 63rd has command and control of approximately 14,000 soldiers in approximately 140 units in the States of California, Arizona and Nevada, with obligation to control budgets, manage supplies and provide personnel support and planning. In addition the 63rd RSC has the increased responsibility to support the major reserve commands located within its boundaries, including the

91st Division (Exercise), 104th Division (Institutional training) and the 31st Support Command (Corps). Support includes resource and logistic management, personnel functions, real property management, and regional planning related to military support of civilian authorities.

In 2003 the command was re-designated as the 63rd Regional Readiness Command (RRC).

The 63rd RRC is currently commanded by Major General Robert B. Ostenberg and is headquartered in Los Alamitos, California. The 63rd RRC continues to support Active Army mission, both foreign and domestic, including participation in the peace implementation force in Bosnia and the conflict in Iraq.

The World War II veterans of the 63rd Infantry Division are proud *Grandparents* of the men and women of the 63rd RRC. Thanks to those who serve our nation today, and for keeping the *Blood and Fire* alive.

It is expected that the current organization will be re-designated in 2008 as the 63rd Regional Readiness Sustainment Command and stationed at Moffett Field, California.

DIVISION ORGANIZATION:

- 253rd Infantry Regiment
- 254th Infantry Regiment
- 255th Infantry Regiment
- 718th Field Artillery Battalion (155 mm)
- 861st Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
- 862nd Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
- 863rd Field Artillery Battalion (105mm)
- 63rd Reconnaissance Troop, Mechanized
- 263rd Engineer Combat Battalion
- 363rd Medical Battalion
- 63rd Counter-Intelligence Detachment
- 763rd Ordnance Light Maintenance

Company

- 63rd Quartermaster Company
- 563rd Signal Company
- 63rd Military Police Platoon
- Headquarters and Headquarters Company,
- 63rd Infantry Division
- Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 63rd
- Division Artillery
- Headquarters Special Troops
- 63rd Infantry Division Band

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

History of The 63RD Infantry Division

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

DETACHMENTS - DIVISION UNITS ATTACHED TO OTHER UNITS:

- 254th Infantry to 3rd Infantry Division -
December 28, 1944 - February 9, 1945
- 255th Infantry to 100th Infantry Division -
December 31, 1944 - January 19, 1945
- 253rd Infantry to 44th Infantry Division -
December 31, 1944 - February 6, 1945
- 255th Infantry to 44th Infantry Division -
January 19, 1945 - February 6, 1945
- 254th Infantry to 100th Infantry Division -
February 9, 1945 - February 17, 1945
- 63rd Division Artillery to 45th Infantry Division -
March 24, 1945 - March 31, 1945
- 2nd Bn, 254th Infantry to 6th Army Group -
March 31, 1945 - April 5, 1945
- 2nd Bn, 253rd Infantry to 35th AAA Brigade -
April 16, 1945 - April 20, 1945

Down Memory Lane

by Bob Anderson B 255

On April 7, 1944 (?), B Company advanced through Berlichengen. My platoon was in the lead as we chased the enemy out of the woods, but we were pinned down by a machine gun. From behind us, Lt. Viehl came with a machine gun crew. He pointed to a spot, the tripod went down, the gun was attached, the bullet belt was attached and in seconds they were firing across the field and silenced the enemy fire. We scouted ahead, set up our defense for the night and settled down with our K-rations. It was getting dark when I was told to report to the company commander. The lieutenant had an aerial of the area. And showed me a map of where we were and where he wanted my squad to lead the company. I was also told that our platoon leader had been wounded that day so Lt. Viehl would be with us as platoon leader. There were crossroads and firebreaks and so with my scouts leading the way, we advanced, counting the roads and breaks to keep track of where we were. In a few hours, we were overlooking our destination. The other platoons were sent to secure the town. Their presence was a complete surprise to the Germans and so they surrendered without a fight. Lt. Viehl thanked the squad for a job well done. He called me Sgt. I told him I would like the stripes, but he chuckled and said that he did not think there would be any more promotions from now on.

Oops! I Goofed!!

Following are corrections for the "goofs" made in the February 2008 issue of the Blood and Fire.

The last day of the 2008 reunion is on August 24, and not August 25.

Bill Scott's telephone number listed with the Board of Directors is incorrect. That number should be 815-895-3967.

On page four, in Celebration of Life, Joseph J. Mazel died August 23, 2007. His last name was spelled incorrectly and the year of his death was not correct.

The Rat Race, featured in the November issue of the *Blood and Fire* was not written by Hal O'Neill. Who is the author?

On page 13 of the February issue of the *Blood and Fire*, Happy Anniversary column, did not have the complete information for Margo and Bill Shier. Their wedding anniversary is May 21 and they were married in 1949. Even their last name was spelled incorrectly! Sorry about that!

Wiley Newman is listed as deceased in Celebration of Life and he is very much alive! He called me and verified this.

Helen and Edwin Smith, ENG 263, were married May 9, 1948. This information missed being printed in the anniversary column.

My Comforting Formula

By Jimmy Butt, A-863rd FABn.

It was while I was under a siege of shelling that I came up with my comforting formula. I knew that due to weather, wind, powder conditions, etc, that artillery projectiles can vary as much as five yards left to right, and 20 yards over or short. That's 40 x 10 or 400 sq. Yards. Yet I occupied, in my foxhole, only about two yards. Therefore, $400/2=200$; so my odds of not being hit were 200 to 1!! Very comforting thought when the shells are flying!!

Why do banks charge a fee on "insufficient funds" when they know there are no funds?

Why doesn't glue stick to the bottle?

INDIANAPOLIS MARRIOTT EAST - 317-352-1231

The Indianapolis Marriott is located at 7202 East 21st Street, Indianapolis, IN 46219. Please contact the Hotel directly for accurate driving directions. At the Marriott you will discover a rare blend of elegant decor, midwestern hospitality, and exceptional facilities and services. There are 255 guest rooms, which were completely remodeled in 2001. The Hotel is just six miles from downtown, ten minutes via the interstate. All attractions & the airport are easily accessible due to hotel proximity to interstates 1-70 & 1-465 on the east side. There are indoor and outdoor pools, a health club, sauna, whirlpool, and exercise room. Valet and dry cleaning services, safety deposit boxes, in-room iron/ironing board, and morning complimentary coffee in the lobby are just a few of the services offered for hotel guests' convenience. Hotel parking is free and ample. Check-in time is 4:00pm and check-out is 12:00noon. The hotel offers handicapped accessible and nonsmoking rooms, which are based on availability. Please request these special accommodations when making your reservation. Indy Steak & Rib serves American cuisine for breakfast, lunch, and dinner in a cordial environment that invites relaxation. Room service is available.

Carrie Limousine Service provides Shuttle Service to and from the hotel. Please call (317) 241-7100 for information and reservations. The current fare is \$31.00 per person one way, prices are subject to change. They are located outside of the baggage claim area at the airport.

RV parking is allowed for guests of the hotel. There are no hookups on the premises. Indianapolis KOA Campground is approximately ten minutes from the Indianapolis Marriott. For information, please call (317) 894-1397. For reservations, please call 1-800-562-0531 at least a month in advance. Indianapolis KOA is located at 5896 West 200 North Greenfield, IN 46140.

Should you need to rent a wheelchair for the reunion, ScootAround rents both manual and power wheel chairs by the day and week. Please call their toll free number at (888) 441-7575 for details. All prices quoted include delivery fees.

Vendors, Schedules, and Prices are subject to change.

-----CUT HERE AND MAIL TO THE HOTEL-----

63rd INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION - HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

REUNION DATES: AUGUST 20-24, 2008

NAME _____ SHARING ROOM W/ _____
 ADDRESS _____ ZIP _____

TEL. NUMBER () _____ MARRIOTT HONORED GUEST CARD # _____

ARRIVAL DATE _____ APPROX. TIME _____ DEPARTURE DATE _____

OF ROOMS _____ # OF PEOPLE IN RM. _____ HANDICAP ACCESS _____ SMOKING _____

NON SMOKING _____ KING BED _____ BEDS _____ If room type requested is not available, nearest room type will be assigned.

RATE: \$94 + tax (currently 15%). Rate honored 3 days before/after official reunion dates, based on availability.

CUTOFF DATE: 07/17/08. After this date, reservations will be processed on space & rate availability.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Deposit is refundable if reservation is canceled by 6pm on your arrival day. All reservations must be guaranteed by credit card or first night's deposit enclosed.

_____ AMEX _____ DINERS _____ VISA _____ MASTER CARD _____ DISCOVER

CREDIT CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____

SIGNATURE (regardless of payment method) _____

Mail to: Indianapolis Marriott, 7202 East 21st Street, Indianapolis, IN 46219, **Attn: Reservations**

TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

CITY TOUR

Thursday, August 21

Board bus for a driving tour of Indianapolis, home to the American Legion since 1919 and the Amateur Sports Capital of the World. The professional guides will give you an informed narration of the past and present as you ride by the State House, the RCA Dome (home of the 2007 Superbowl Champs), Lucas Oil Stadium (the Colt's future home), and Meridian Street, where the Governor's mansion is located. Also see the Indiana World War Memorial that pays homage to the Indiana men killed in World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Also located there is the Medal of Honor Memorial. A stop will be made at the Scottish Rite Cathedral, judged in its early days by the International Association of Architects to be one of the most beautiful buildings in the world. Enjoy free time and lunch on your own at Circle Center Mall. Proceed to the Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum with one of the world's largest and most varied collections of racing, classic, and antique passenger cars. See thirty-two Indy "500" winning cars on display and view the half-hour film depicting the history of the track. For an extra charge you may board the Speedway buses for a spin around the track (weather and race schedule permitting).

9:00am board bus, 3:30pm back at hotel

\$42/Person includes bus, guide, and admission. Lunch on your own.

CONNER PRAIRIE

Friday, August 22

Today we'll leave the 21st century behind. Arrive at Conner Prairie, a living history museum. The first stop is the theater for an introduction and short film. Enjoy a boxed lunch at The Eatery, Conner Prairie's Restaurant, before beginning your tour of the re-created 1836 pioneer village. You'll be able to chat with the doctor, the innkeeper, the blacksmith or the baker about life, religion, or politics of their day. Don't miss the Pioneer Adventure area, where you can try your hand at 19th century activities such as candle dipping, weaving, or barn dancing! Visitors may choose to tour the historic estate of William and Elizabeth Conner for an additional charge. The minimum for this tour is 50 people.

10:30am board bus, 3:00pm back at hotel

\$59/Person includes bus, guide, lunch, and admission.

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 (\$7 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 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.

Tour descriptions ...

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

TIMELINE

CITY TOUR

August 21

9:00 – Board bus for a driving tour of Indianapolis - Please be sure to include time at the Medal of Honor Memorial.

12:00 – Lunch on your own and free time at Circle Center Mall. Please offer suggestions for lunch.

1:30 – Reboard bus for Indianapolis Motor Speedway Hall of Fame Museum. Please provide details for those wanting to board the Speedway buses for a spin around the track (weather and race schedule permitting).

3:00 – Reboard bus to return to the hotel by 3:30pm.

CONNER PRAIRIE

August 22

10:30 – Board bus for Conner Prairie.

11:00 – Arrive at Conner Prairie.

11:30 – Enjoy a lunch at the Eatery.

12:30 – Tour the re-created 1836 pioneer village.

2:30 – Reboard bus to return to the hotel by 3:00pm.

Bed check Charlie

By Hal O'Neill, 83rd Signal

The Normandy invasion had massive air cover that dominated the skies by day. Each evening after dark, a German recon aircraft appeared to take photos. On a clear night, the plane would swoop in and out quickly, hoping to avoid our fighter aircraft. On cloudy nights, the German pilot would dodge in and out of the clouds. Bed Check Charlie was the nickname the G.I.'s used and we guessed that it was the same plane every night. Each time the plane appeared, a barrage of anti-aircraft guns opened up, filling the night with tracers and making life interesting for our fighter pilots.

What goes up must come down, so we all wore our helmets and some got under trucks. I never saw the German plane get hit as it flew from cloud to cloud. One night the unit next to us found a German tripod mounted, light machine gun with ammo. When Charlie appeared, they opened up and added their tracers to the night sky. The Germans used a different color tracer than the Americans and the Division Defense Platoon of the Division Headquarters Company

assumed that the Germans had infiltrated our lines. Why the Germans would shoot at their own plane did not give them pause. A jeep roared through our area towing a 37mm cannon, usually referred to as the popgun and had not been used since we landed. Whistles blew, officers yelled, and sleeping G.I.'s awoke confused by all the uproar. Fortunately, no one was shot and the German plane disappeared. No Germans were found on the ground and we all went back to sleep.

The next morning I went to an unused foxhole to dump ration left-overs, and there in the hole was the German light machine gun. I took out the bolt and threw it far away. Then I filled in the foxhole. Why? Because no one would get in trouble and the incident would be forgotten.

Besides, it was all Bed Check Charlie's fault.

.....

In Evanston, Illinois, it is unlawful to change clothes while inside a car with the curtains drawn, except during a fire.

**63RD INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
AUGUST 20-24, 2008
INDIANAPOLIS MARRIOTT EAST**

Wednesday, August 20

- 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 21

- 8:00am - 8:30am - Reunion Registration Open
9:00am - 3:30pm - CITY TOUR (description follows)
4:00pm - 5:00pm - Reunion Registration Open. Additional hours will be posted at the reunion, if necessary.
Meet your Buddies Ready Room open
6:00pm - Cash Bar
7:00pm - 10:00pm - Group Dinner and entertainment

Friday, August 22

- 8:00am - 10:30am - Board of Directors' Meeting
10:30am - 3:00pm - CONNER PRAIRIE (description follows)
Meet your Buddies Ready Room open

Saturday, August 23

- 9:30am - 11:30am - Women's Social to include a Continental
9:30am - 12:00pm - Breakfast Men's Business Meeting
1:30pm - 2:15pm - Memorial Service
6:00pm - 7:00pm - Cash Bar Reception
7:00pm - 11:00pm - Banquet begins, followed by dancing

Sunday, August 24

Farewells and departures

63rd Infantry Registration
August 20 - 24, 2008 - INDIANAPOLIS, IN

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. Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. Returned checks will be charged a \$20 fee. You may also register online and pay by credit card at www.armedforcesreunions.com/63inf. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before July 17, 2008. 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 _____

CUT OFF DATE: JULY 17, 2008	\$ PER PERSON	# OF PEOPLE	TOTAL
Join us in Indianapolis!			
REGISTRATION FOR 2008 REUNION (Widows of 63rd Vets do NOT have to pay the registration fee)	\$ 35	Per Registration	\$ 35
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20 2:00pm - 7:00pm Reunion Registration			
WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 20 7:00pm - 11:00pm Meet your Buddies, Cash bar, snacks, soft listening music	FREE	# attending	FREE
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21 8:00am - 8:30am & 4:00pm - 5:00pm Reunion Registration			
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21 9:00am - 3:30pm City Tour	\$ 42		\$
THURSDAY, AUGUST 21 CASH BAR 6:00pm - 7:00pm GROUP DINNER (CHICKEN PICCATA) 7:00pm - 10:00pm	\$ 28		\$
FRIDAY, AUGUST 22 BOARD MEETING 8:00am - 10:30am			
FRIDAY, AUGUST 22 10:30am - 3:00pm Conner Prairie	\$ 59		\$
SATURDAY, AUGUST 23 MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING 9:30am - 12:00pm			
SATURDAY, AUGUST 23 WOMEN'S SOCIAL <i>Including Continental Breakfast and Entertainment</i> 9:30am-11:30am	FREE	# attending	FREE
SATURDAY, AUGUST 23 MEMORIAL SERVICE IN HOSPITALITY ROOM 1:30pm-2:15pm			
SATURDAY (EVENING), AUGUST 23 COCKTAIL PARTY CASH BAR 6:00pm - 7:00pm DINNER/DANCE (Assigned Seating) 7:00pm - 11:00pm			
<i>Please choose your entree for the</i> Prime Rib	\$ 36		\$
<i>Saturday Banquet:</i> Grilled Salmon	\$ 36		\$
GRAND TOTAL due to Armed Forces Reunions, Inc.			\$

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 (____) _____ - _____

For refunds and cancellations, please refer to our policies outlined at the bottom of the reunion program. **CANCELLATIONS WILL ONLY BE TAKEN MONDAY-FRIDAY 9:00am-5:00pm EASTERN TIME (excluding holidays).** Call (757) 625-6401 to cancel reunion activities and obtain a cancellation code. Refunds processed 4-6 weeks after reunion.

Past Presidents

1950: Fred M. Harris
 1951: Lester Noel
 1952: Ed Cronin
 1953: Jerry Rosenberg
 1954: Tom Hactor
 1955: Robert Capasso
 1956: Bill Smith
 1957: Frank Esslinger
 1958: Gil Stevens
 1959: Charlie Weaver

1960: Ed Sullivan
 1961: Al DeBliss
 1962: Jerry Rosenberg
 1963: Gerry Davidson
 1964: Charlie Beaver
 1965: Grant Simmonds
 1966: Ed Witt
 1967: Ed Sullivan
 1968: Bernard Brooks
 1969: Jerry Davidson

1970: William Martin
 1971: Irvin Schlocker
 1972: Ed Musial
 1973: Del Conroy
 1974: Phil LaChance
 1975: Irvin Schlocker
 1976: John Deba
 1977: Charlie Stewart
 1978: Ed Fowle
 1979: Nile Douglas

1980: Ervin Yarbrough
 1981: Joe McElroy
 1982: Irvin Schlocker
 1983: Irvin Schlocker
 1984: Nate Spiegel
 1985: Arch Hamblen
 1986: Charlie Stewart
 1987: Mag Froberg
 1988: "Gene" Rombach
 1989: John Santangelo

1990: Hank Greenberg
 1991: Albert J. Conti
 1992: John Santangelo
 1993: Fred Halverson
 1994: Thomas Chatham
 1995: Harry Wolverton
 1996: Gene Spagnoli
 1997: Albert J. Conti

1998: Harold Specktor
 1999: Edward Fowle

2000: Albert J. Conti
 2001: Gene Spagnoli
 2002: Martin Beer
 2003: Leonard Zimmerman
 2004: Albert J. Conti
 2005: Martin Beer
 2006: Leonard Zimmerman
 2007: Marsh Allen
 2008: John Dietrick

Secretary / Treasurer

1950: Ed Thompson, secretary
 Al Widmer, treasurer
 1951: Bob Leiding, secretary
 Al Widmer, treasurer
 1952: Henry McNalley, secretary
 Grant Simonds, treasurer

One member was elected to fill the position of both offices combined from here on in:

1953: Jerry Rosenberg
 1954: Tom Hactor
 1955: Robert Capasso
 1956: Robert Capasso
 1957: Robert Capasso
 1958: Robert Capasso
 1959: Robert Capasso

1960: Ed Witt
 1961: Ed Witt
 1962: Ed Witt
 1963: Ed Witt
 1964: Ed Witt
 1965: Ed Witt
 1966: Ed Witt
 1967: Charlie Weaver
 1968: Charlie Weaver
 1969: Charlie Weaver

1970: Charlie Weaver
 1971: Charlie Weaver
 1972: Charlie Weaver
 1973: Charlie Weaver
 1974: Charlie Weaver
 1975: Ed Witt
 1976: Ed Witt
 1977: Ed Witt
 1978: Ed Witt

- Letters and Opinions -

HUSBAND HAS PASSED

This is to inform you of the death on November 29, 2007, of my husband, Clement E. Dasch, who served in E Company, 253rd Regiment. He read thoroughly the *Blood and Fire*, which I and our sons would like to continue to receive. I could never get him to do an oral history, but those months in the service were life long memories.

Betty Dasch

BROTHER WAS ROBERT WELCH

I am an Associate Member and the brother of Robert Welch, who was awarded the Silver Star during World War II. He was in the Engineer Battalion of the 63rd.

George E. Welch

FATHER HAS PASSED

This is to inform you that my father, Harry H. Heck, passed away February 19, 2003. Also, my mother, Jean J. Heck, passed away June 19, 2007. My dad had been with the 63rd Division originally stationed at Camp Van Dorn. He met my mother there - she was working for the Red Cross - in 1943. They married in 1944 and had a long, happy life together. They had three children and two grandsons. Please discontinue his membership.

Jennie Heck

DECEASED, I AM NOT!

My friend, Bob Fraissinet, recently asked 63rd Division Historian Bill Scott, for a list of the original Quarter Masters that assembled at Camp Breckinridge and when he received the list, noticed that I had been listed as being deceased November 16, 1989, and was member of the 98th Division, in which I never served! I am indeed still alive and would appreciate the correction being made.

Mike Habermann

ARTICLES INTERESTING

I have been impressed recently with the quality of the *Blood and Fire*. Not only is it a source of information about the old timers but the articles on war experiences are particularly interesting. Although I have only been able to attend one meeting, I have followed the progress of the Association and regret that I did not learn of its existence when it was first formed. I am most appreciative of the hard work that you and the leaders do to keep things going. Please accept the enclosed donation to help with expenses.

William A. Pillsbury,
Division Headquarters

WIDOW ENJOYS MAGAZINE

I am sending a donation for you to use anywhere it is needed. Thank you for sending the 63rd magazine. Bill enjoyed it and I read it too. Bill has been dead for three years.

Madeline Lovekin

HUSBAND PASSED IN 2006

My husband, Ronald Dunlap, passed away September 2006. He was a life member of the Association and enjoyed reading the *Blood and Fire*. We miss him. Enclosed is a donation to help with expenses.

Dorothy Dunlap

DISCONTINUE FUTURE MAILINGS

Please be advised my husband, William Bostwick, passed away May 6, 2006. I am sorry I did not inform you sooner. Please discontinue any future mailings.

Joan Bostwick

- Letters and Opinions -

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since January 14, 1993.

Theresa Joyce

PLEASE CONTINUE SENDING MAGAZINE

I am sorry to have to write this to you, but my husband, Lester, passed away on January 9, 2008. He had been ailing for quite some time, been on dialysis for almost three years, in addition to cancer and a heart and diabetes problem. You name it – he had it! It was his decision to stop dialysis. He was so tired of it all. His quality of life had become practically nil, he was in such a weakened condition and there was no hope for improvement.

We had celebrated our 61st anniversary in November, had two wonderful children and two beautiful granddaughters so life has been good to us. I would like to continue receiving the *Blood and Fire*.

Harriet Swallowood

WIDOW MAKES CORRECTIONS

I am the widow of Robert Le Marbe and I want to thank you for seeing that I get the *Blood and Fire*. On page 4 of "Celebration of Life," Robert is listed as a member of the 63rd Division, C Company and that is incorrect. He was a member of G Company, which he always said, "When I pass away, please put on my stone 'G Company 253.'" Robert was buried in the New Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan. The last *Blood and Fire* I received was addressed to June and my name is Lucille, so please make that correction. I am 83 years old and, I and my children and grandchildren will continue to read the *Blood and Fire*.

Lucille Le Marbe

DONATION TO HELP DEFRAY EXPENSES

Received your *Blood and Fire* and enjoyed it as usual. It is easy to understand why we are having financial problems. I am enclosing a small check hoping it will help. My husband, Richard W. Joyce has been deceased

SENDING ARTICLE FROM LOCAL PAPER

Enclosed find a news article from our local Star paper published in Cambridge, Minnesota. You must be familiar with Ray Restani, who has contributed to the 63rd Infantry Division Association. He put this article in the January 25, 2003 issue of the paper. He was my commander at the time I was 19 and he was 23, I think – that was a long time ago! But, we fought together till the war was over. I thought you may want to print this sometime. I haven't seen Ray since we were together in Germany, but he was one of the best I ever knew.

Jerry Mattson

(Editor's note: This article can be found in this issue)

Travel from Airport

Information on traveling from the airport in Indianapolis to the Marriott East Hotel has been made known to us by Bob McCourt that cab fare is a much less expensive way to travel. Make your own travel plans with the AIRPORT TAXI COMPANY. Their phone number is 317-839-0756.

Fare one way for up to four (4) persons per cab is \$30, which is a zone fare. This rate includes any tax and there is no additional baggage charge.

A home cooked meal

When the power failed at the elementary school, the cook couldn't serve a hot meal in the cafeteria. So at the last minute she whipped a great stack of peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwiches. As one little boy filled his plate, he said, "It's about time, At last – a home-cooked meal!"

Reunion dates: Aug. 20-24, 2008

A word from your buddies . . .

253rd Regiment

Marvin E. Karr – C Company - sent a group picture that you will find elsewhere in this issue of the *Blood and Fire*. Is the editor correct in assuming Marvin has a twin, Melvin? Marvin lives in Clinton, Illinois, and has been married to Betty for 60 years.

Carroll J. Black – D Company – said: "I'm not as good as I would like to be. I had knee replacement last October and then had a heart attack three days later. I am up and doing what I want but not as strong as I would like. I am waiting on some warm weather so I can start stirring up some soil, but it is still too cold. I stayed in the hospital three weeks but I feel like I am feeling pretty good." Carroll lives in South Carolina.

Henry Shartzner – AT Company – wrote: "I was 94 years old on December 31 of this year (2007). I drive and attend church every week. I do all my housework and feel great. I was in the World War II in Germany." Henry lives in Leitchfield, Kentucky.

William P. Greutzner – HQ, 2nd Bn – sent a brief note: "Shorty Myers and I have been friends since day one, 1943. We keep in touch by phone." William lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

254th Regiment

Harold LaCrosse – F Company and his wife, Donna celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on March 12. They are the parents of two sons, one daughter and a foster son; two daughters-in-law; one son-in-law and one foster daughter-in-law. Everyone is married, so they have a total of eight adult children. All together, they have sixteen grandchildren and three great-grandsons. There will be a baby in July and another wedding in August.

George C. Murphy – K Company, wrote: "I am 82 years young. Not many of us old birds still alive. I moved from Heart Fields to Agape Senior Center. I have two daughters in South Carolina." George lives in South Carolina.

Joseph W. Thoman – Cannon Company, wrote: "I am 92 years old, have been married to Maryellen for 56 years. I joined the 63rd, 254th September 1943 and shipped out for New York November 24, 1944 on the S.S. Saturnia for Marseille, France. I fought in the Colmar Pocket, crossed the Siegfried Line, went south to Danube River. After WW II ends, I entered the service in SHAEF Headquarters. Returned to the US

April 1946. After the war I served in the US Foreign Service until retirement in Tucson, Arizona in 1970 and I am still here! Maryellen and I have four children, ten grandchildren and four great-grandchildren."

255th Regiment

Windall Aguillard – F Company sent this note: "Ms Flo and I are doing as well as can be expected for our age. Will try and get in touch with the gentleman in Lake Charles, LA. We have many friends and family in Lake Charles. You and the rest are doing a fine job. Bless You." Windall lives in Louisiana.

John F. McKenna – M Company had this to say: "Enjoy keeping up with 63rd information. I still can't find Woodhouse. Don't have a clue as to where he is or what happened to him and his wife." John and Yolanda live in Wytheville, Virginia.

Robert O. Wederath – HQ and K Company – wrote: "I am retired from Ladish Company after 34 years. Fly a Cessna 150 for fun. Go ballroom dancing three times per week. I have two daughters, five grandkids and two great-grandkids. Hope to see old war buddies in August." Bob lives in Franklin, Wisconsin.

Jack H. Bayer – HQ Company reported he will be 83 years old in May and he and his wife, Phyllis were married 60 years last November. They have one son, one daughter and five grandchildren, who are all adults now.

363 Medic

Stephen Shores - A Company, sent a brief note saying he gets slower as the years pass and that he enjoys reading the *Blood and Fire*. He lives in Massachusetts.

Field Artillery

John J. Toom – 253 – 718, wrote: "I will be 86 this year and Leota and I are still in our home of 54 years. It's been a long winter and looking forward to spring. I look forward to each issue of the *Blood and Fire*. Keep up the good work!" John lives in Iowa.

Engineers

Richard (Dick) Kretschmer – C Company – 263 sent this message: "I was a \$21.00 a day, once a month GI. I

A word from buddies ...

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

joined the 63rd Division, coming from a Searchlight Bn. as a replacement, and put in the 263 Engineer Bn, Company C and was discharged October 7, 1945" Dick and Juanita live in California.

Associate Member

Sybil Nails wrote: "I have not been feeling well lately. I always enjoy the *Blood and Fire*, just don't know many of the people any more. Seems to be only a few 861 FA left. Hope to see everyone in Indiana in August." Sybil lives in Georgia.

1007 German prisoners

by Jimmy Butt, Hdq. Battery, 863rd F.A.

At one point, I was placed in charge of a convoy of twenty-two, 2 1/2 ton trucks and told to haul a load of prisoners from an inadequate collection point to a more secure compound some 100 miles away.

The prisoners were herded onto the standing-room-only trucks, officers and soldiers mixed together, and my detail consisted only of 22 drivers, me, and one armed soldier in the last truck. I signed for 1007 prisoners. I had not counted them, and I was concerned that I might not have 1007 when I arrived at the larger prison compound.

It was chilly and the Germans were cramped into a tight space so after a few hours driving, they wanted us to halt for a bathroom stop. I didn't dare let them off the

trucks, but we stopped for a while to allow them to switch about and relieve themselves over the sides of the truck. Also, as we wound through towns and villages, citizens, mostly women, would dash out and hand them water and food. Had they wanted, the prisoners could have overwhelmed us, but they were glad to get the war over.

When we arrived at the larger compound, the guards opened the truck gates and shouted at the Germans to hit the ground running, into the compound. They tried, but after having stood in those trucks, and in the cold, for several hours, their legs didn't work well. So most of them fell into piles, unscrambled, then raced into the compound.

Nobody counted them so my worries about the receipt for 1007 was superfluous.

Author needs information from 255th Infantry Regiment

Michael Hirsh, is writing a book about the American military liberators of the concentration and slave labor camps during the final weeks of World War II. The book, with the working title *The Last Liberators - America's Final Witnesses to the Holocaust*, will be published by Bantam Dell, a division of Random House.

He needs to get in touch with members of the 255th Infantry Regiment of the 63rd Infantry Division who participated in the liberation of the Landsberg concentration camp (s) in April 1945, and who would be willing to be interviewed for his book. He wants to talk with them about their experiences then, but also about how that event may have affected their lives some sixty years later.

This is his fifth non-fiction book. He was embedded with US Air Force Pararescue units in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Uzbekistan to write *NONE BRAVER - US Air Force Pararescuemen in the War on Terrorism*. He was an army combat correspondent with the 25th Infantry Division at Cu Chi, Vietnam for much of 1966, and earned the CIB for the time he spent covering the 1st/27th Infantry and 2nd/27th Infantry "Wolfhounds."

He needs information from anyone who can help him locate liberators of Landsberg (Kaufering), or any other camp. He can be reached by e-mail mh@hirshmedia.us or by writing him at 26181 Stillwater Circle; Punta Gorda, FL 33955. His telephone number is 941-639-3506 and his cell phone number is 941-916-0450

World War II veteran shares his World War II experiences

by Mike Habermann

(Editors note: Mike sent me a cover letter explaining why he was sending me a copy of the article he sent to the Octofoil. I thought it was interesting reading, therefore I am including that letter at the beginning of the article.)

You may wonder why I am enclosing a copy of a letter I sent to the editor of the 9th Division Newsletter. Let me explain. In March 1943 I was inducted into the Army and served with the 63rd Quartermaster Company until April 1944.

Our inductee group entrained at Newark, New Jersey and was sent to camp Breckinridge, Kentucky, where we formed part of the Quartermaster Company just being organized in the 63rd Division. We completed our basic training there which, for me, meant learning how to drive and service a two and a half ton truck. I mention this because this training became all-important to me when I joined the 9th Division in Normandy, June 1944.

After completing our basic training in Kentucky, our equipment was loaded on railroad cars and we ended up at Camp Blanding, Florida and underwent another period of training. Following this second basic training period in the terrible heat of Central Florida, our unit once again was shifted. This time we drove our trucks and equipment from Florida to Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi. Again, we had to endure a third training period.

By this time I had had it and for a misdemeanor the captain shunted me over to an Infantry Rifle Company and, of course, retraining as an infantry rifleman. So I went through that again, only to be soon separated from that unit and sent overseas to become part of the June Normandy Invasion.

I lost contact with the friends I had made in the 63rd, although I am delighted to say that through some odd stroke of fate, I met once again, some fifty years later, the chap who was my closest pal in the old Quartermaster Company. We have continued to see each other ever since and enjoy many of the same interests and experiences.

I am sending you a write-up I prepared for the Newsletter of the 9th Division in which I relate my luck in living through the deadly campaign in Normandy.

A great part of that luck was because I learned how to handle a two and a half ton truck when I was with the 63rd. When I landed on Utah Beach and assembled with replacements, my name was called because my records

indicated I knew how to drive and maintain such a truck. I, among others, was tested to determine my ability to do so. It happened that a driver had just been killed and they needed a replacement. We were told to drive a two and a half ton truck with trailer behind it, turn it around on a narrow dirt road with speed and safety. Due to my 63rd Quartermaster training, I was able to do it quickly. Result: instead of going into the line as a rifleman replacement, I was assigned a two and a half ton unit and maintained contact between battalion, company and platoons; a dangerous job but far less dangerous than that of a replacement rifleman.

So I think you can appreciate my thanks to the 63rd and why I am sending you a copy of the letter I wrote to the Octofoil newsletter of the 9th Division.

There are always a series of incidents in Army life worth recalling and I want to describe several of them.

When I was seated in the train that took us to Camp Breckinridge, I asked the fellow next to me where he came from and his name. I was surprised when he said his name was Bob Fraissinet. I told him I knew Tad Fraissinet, who was a classmate of mine at a Prep School. Tad was Bob's brother and we became close friends until I was separated and sent to Europe. I lost contact with him, although I often wondered how he was making out. Later I tried to contact him through his brother Tad, who after the war went into Cornell. Sometime in 1991, the 50th year Reunion of Prep School alumni, I searched for his name on the internet. By sheer luck, Bob's name showed up. I naturally contacted him at once and we renewed our long lost friendship ties with the 63rd. Both of us were and remain delighted that our friendship has been renewed and strengthened. I urged Bob to get in touch with the 63rd *Blood and Fire* Newsletter, which he did and in fact he sent in a photo of himself in Europe with men of the 63rd.

Another incident related to the 63rd happened on Utah Beach when I landed. There at the top of the sand dune of the beach was a wounded soldier, again one of my friends from the 63rd Quartermaster Company, a very unlikely meeting. We greeted each other, amazed at the unusual coincidence, and wished each other good luck!

Another one-in-a-million meetings took place at a hospital tent near Cherbourg, Normandy. During my recuperation in Normandy, I was sitting on the hospital bed when I recognized another friend from the 63rd

World War II veteran shares . . .

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Quartermaster Company. He had been wounded in Brittany where he served with a unit of Patton's armored tank corps! We chatted and recalled many incidents from our basic training period with the 63rd. He soon disappeared, probably sent back to his Armored Unit. I never heard from him again.

I always look forward to receiving the 63rd Division's newsletter and read it with pleasure. It recalls those "old days" again!

(Following is the article Mike sent in response to Operation Cobra Revisited by Dr. Martin Gross, published in the *Octofoil* publication)

I received the most recent *Octofoil*, which I found excellent, perhaps the best issue of the *Octofoil* I have received so far. To me, it was relevant because I was with the 39th Infantry Regiment from the third week in June until the middle of August when the Normandy Campaign ended.

This issue is particularly moving because I read that Dan Quinn passed away. I frequently talked with him and wrote him, so I was very much affected. Also, I notice that among those receiving taps were quite a number of men from the 39th Infantry, many of them born in 1922 the same year that I was born. So, you never know what is going to happen or when.

In any case, I read about "Operation Cobra Revisited" by Dr. Martin Gross and his description of Operation Cobra parallels mine. It seems to me that we were nearby, although not in the same field. In any case, I wanted to add to what Marty said in his account and give more details about my experience.

I arrived in England in April 1944 and was taken to the pier to go to Normandy about three days after the June invasion. There was a big storm over the channel at the time. As a result, we were sent back to a temporary camp waiting for the storm to subside. I then landed on Utah Beach early the third week of June.

I went in as an Infantry replacement, which is not the safest way to go into battle. We were then taken to an assembly area and while there, my name was called three times. The third time the Sergeant asked if I could drive a two and a half ton truck with a trailer on it. I said yes I could. I knew how because I had had my preliminary basic training in a Quarter Master company and had driven a two and a half ton truck. There were several candidates for the same position. We had to drive down a narrow lane with a trailer in tow and back it up and around. When I returned the Sergeant said that I had done it the best. So I got the position. As far as I'm concerned it saved my life because the truck was then used between battalion headquarters and company headquarters and I did not

have to go into the line as an Infantry replacement.

I carried troops, arms and materials in the trailer from battalion headquarters to individual companies and platoons. Artillery shells would be crossing above.

In any case, I drove up to Cherbourg; going through terribly destroyed towns, which affected me greatly. I got to Cherbourg just about the time the Germans surrendered. From there, the 9th division worked its way down the whole Cotentin Peninsula very, very slowly, to the road between St-Lo and Periers. Each field, surrounded by a hedgerow, was an independent battlefield and was very, very tough going. It took us from the third or fourth week in June all the way to the end of July to advance that short distance in the face of very fierce German resistance. As Marty says, Operation Cobra to break out was then decided upon by the allied high command.

General Bradley decided to throw five thousand tons of bombs into a small area, only four miles deep and a mile and a half wide. The 9th division, of which the 39th Infantry was part, was on the right flank; the 4th division was in the center and the 30th was on the left flank. These were the spearhead divisions, to be followed afterwards by armored divisions of the third army once the bombing had been completed.

The morning of July 25th we pulled into a big field. In that portion of Normandy, the fields were larger and wider and the trees on the hedgerows taller. In fact, I remember looking down and seeing a wide sweep of hedgerow fields bigger than I had seen before. I parked my truck alongside a hedgerow. There were five or six fellows with me on the truck, and I placed us in a spot facing the German lines about 500 yards in front of the target zone. When we pulled into this particular field that morning, none of the men I was with bothered to dig foxholes.

Soon the bombers began to come over. They started with B-25's and B-26's and other aircraft that dropped their bombs onto the German positions. The planes marking the drop were P-38 Lightning's. They had a two-tail fuselage and we watched them as they dropped their flares.

When the big bombers, the B-17's came over at about 7,500 to 10,000 feet, they began to bomb the small target area in front of us. The bombing was so intense the earth shook and we bounced up and down. The sound was absolutely tremendous. The dust that came up from the bombing began to drift towards us, and I told the other fellows something was going to happen. Then I looked up and I saw the P-38's dropping their flares closer and closer to us.

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World War II veteran shares . . .

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At that moment, I turned around and saw hundreds of bombs, literally hundreds, coming up the field. Huge red flashes on the ground were racing right across the fields. Bradley originally had planned for the bombers to bomb parallel to the St-Lo, Perier road, which was in front of us. Somehow the Air Force decided otherwise and the B-17's flew right over us. As I looked around, I saw hundreds of bombs coming at me like giant footsteps, all fire and flame. I took one step and said, "I'm dead. There is no way I'm going to live through this." I took another step or two and suddenly I was thrown to the ground. It was as though a horse had kicked me in the head, in the chest, and in the face. I lost my breath and was half buried in the ground.

When the closest bomb exploded, it was twenty yards away at the very most. The shrapnel went over my head and slammed into the truck. One of my friends had his hands up and his hand was cut off by that shrapnel. I was smothered in dirt and dust and my whole uniform was burnt. I really didn't know where I was; I was completely dazed. I had suffered a concussion without even realizing it. I remember looking up and seeing one of the fellows nearby. His neck was red. In the moment of confusion, I said to myself, "What a silly thing to do, to be wearing a red scarf here in the middle of a bombing raid." Of course, he had been hit but I didn't realize that until much later.

I was extremely lucky because instead of turning and running toward the front of my truck, I ran towards the back. I took one step and was knocked down. But later on, after I came to, I was pulled out and recovered. I walked towards the front of the truck and there was an unexploded bomb maybe ten feet in front of the truck. It had made a big hole! I believe the bombs were 250 pounders because if they had been 500 pounders, they undoubtedly would have killed me.

Eventually the medics came and I was taken away. I do remember looking across the field and there was a great rush of soldiers. On that side, the trees were taller, the bombs hit in the trees and shrapnel came straight down and struck the men beneath the trees. I believe sixteen of our men were killed at that particular time. I really don't know exactly, but I heard it was between twelve and sixteen.

In any case, these men had been in the invasion in Africa, they had fought in Tunis and in Sicily and then they had invaded Normandy at Utah Beach. And here, they were killed in this very unfortunate incident. I remember one young fellow running around the field not only dazed but, practically crazy. He was shouting, "They were my best friends. We all went through Africa, we lived through Sicily and come here to be

killed by our own bombers."

When the medics revived me and I began to look around, I saw that the truck was pretty much intact except for some holes on the sides. A Sergeant came up to me and said, "Move that truck." I replied, "I'm not going to move that truck! Not with that unexploded bomb maybe eight to ten feet away." He tried to order me to move the truck but I told him he could do it himself because I was not going to do it, and I never did.

The Germans had been tremendously bombed in that target area but as the 39th was on the right flank, after the bombardment, German artillery began to fire at us again. That particular German area had not been bombed because it was just outside the target zone. One of the men said, "Gosh, we won't be able to make a break through after all." But of course, we did. It took maybe a day or two to get things organized; then we went down the whole southern Normandy coast of France beyond the town of Mortain. There were German bodies all over the place, German horses killed, German carts overturned and many bodies on the road. I ran over some of them since it was impossible to avoid them. Behind us Patton's third army then attacked and swept into Brittany.

When we got to the other side of Mortain, the Germans counter attacked and isolated the village of Mortain. The 30th division was holed up there and surrounded but they fought their way out of it after a very famous siege. The Canadian and British armies then came down from Caen and Falaise to close the gap where the German armies had penetrated. The German army took a terrible beating. I remember the US Air Force, the British Air Force and their Tomahawks and our P-47's flying over that area smashing everything in site. I was severely shaken by a German shell that came very, very close to me. It was at that point I was taken back to a hospital near Cherbourg before being sent to a hospital in England.

I thought I would add this to the account that Dr. Gross gave in the recent *Octofoil*. Reciting it now my hands are shaking, just thinking of it. But I thought you would be interested in using it or any part of it for your publication.

**Visit the USS Indianapolis
CA-35 National Memorial
during the 2008 Reunion**

Rush City soldier earns entry into "Greatest Generation"

by Raymond Restani, A 254

(The following article was written in 2003 and appeared in the Star Weekend section of a local newspaper)

Jerry Mattson and I shared hard fighting in Company A, 254th Infantry Regiment of the 63rd Infantry Division. I have not seen him since that time.

Nineteen year old Jerry was one of a large group of replacements assigned to Company A in mid-February, 1945. Their arrival brought us back to full strength after a most bitter campaign of the entire war in Europe: The Colmar Pocket.

During the last week in February and the first two weeks in March, the 254th Infantry occupied an area near Sarreguemines, France, twenty miles south of Saabrucken. Extensive patrolling against the enemy provided new men excellent combat training. Concurrently, Company A prepared for a mission which was soon to come, the breaching of the Siegfried Line.

This was a fortified belt extending from Holland to the Swiss border. Americans knew it as the Siegfried Line. Germans called it the West Wall. In our sector, the pill boxes which studded the ridges were mutually supporting. That is, even though six might be destroyed, the others could still lay down fire to stop an attack. The ground between pill boxes was honey-combed with networks of barbed-wired trenches. The West Wall was protected from our tanks by "dragon teeth," curious objects that were pyramid-shaped reinforced concrete blocks. If these obstacles were not enough, several miles in front were heavily fortified villages, which would first have to be engaged.

Mattson was assigned to the third platoon and received special training in an assault squad designed for attacks against pill boxes.

H-hour had come! Seventh Army began to move tens of thousands of men forward to crack the Siegfried Line. At 12:30 in the morning of March 15, 1945, a tremendous artillery barrage, whose flashes made night seem like day, and whose terrible roar rendered hearing impossible crashed down to "soften up" the enemy.

The 63rd Division, chosen to make the initial assault, directed the 254th Infantry to spearhead the drive. Its first battalion was picked to lead the entire regiment. The battalion would strike the enemy with speed and



A Company 254 with unidentified horse. Picture taken 1945 in Germany.

fury so that all fortifications and outposts would be zone of action. There were three well garrisoned, and fortified towns – Eschringen, Ensheim and Hartingshof.

The key to success was the immediate capture of Eschringen. Located there were two bridges across the Eschringen River – over which one of our tanks and supplies had to cross. Located at opposite ends of town, they had to be seized intact. Company A was ordered to attack Eschringen and seize the two bridges. Company B and C would assault Ensheim and Hartingshoe respectively.

At one o'clock in the morning of March 15, 1945, Company A departed the Hinterwald woods and advanced by stealth toward Eschringen, about a mile away. Seventh Army meanwhile temporarily halted its protective bombardment. The column had carefully and noiselessly cleared the woods when two explosions near the rear of the column shook the silence of the early morning. Men froze in place. Two men of Mattson's platoon had stepped on hidden Schu-mines. An aide man (medic) was left with two casualties. The Company sped on, fearing that surprise had now been lost.

Advancing an additional 800 yards, the company came upon barbed wire entanglements. As cutters were being applied, the third platoon leader fired at an enemy officer hidden in the tree line bordering the Eschringen River. A field telephone was at his side. Wires were cut immediately.

At a point 400 yards from Eschringen, the company

Rush City soldier

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commander directed assault platoons to attack. The first platoon to the eastern bridge and the second platoon to the western bridge.



S/Sgt. McClellan, squad leader of 3rd platoon, taken in Honhardt, Germany, 1945.

The enemy was surprised and shocked by the violence of the attacks. It took several minutes before their machine guns and small arms began to fire on us. Then artillery and 88 millimeter tank guns came screaming into town from our rear. However, so swiftly and daringly had the platoons carried out their attacks that both bridges were quickly secured. Heavily mined wires were quickly severed so that the enemy could not set off the detonators.

Enemy troops in position up-town had now been aroused. The third platoon now played its designated role, and began to fight its way up-town. Enemy artillery became more active. But the third platoon continued to advance steadily, deployed on both sides of the main street. Every man in that platoon gave a solid performance.

At daylight the opposition had been effectively neutralized. Some 40 prisoners were taken.

At 6 a.m., the battalion commander entered Eschringen. He alerted Company A to prepare to assist in the fight for Ensheim, located three kilometers north. At 1:30 p.m., Company A proceeded to Ensheim where Company C was meeting stiff resistance. It had replaced Company B, diverted elsewhere.

Now supported by a platoon of tanks, which had just crossed the bridges at Eschringen, both companies released a furious attack to eliminate the last town lying in our path before the Siegfried Line. The town was ours as darkness approached. The way was now paved for a regimented assault on the Siegfried Line itself.

On March 17, 1945, the 254th was moved and poised to attack the Siegfried Line. There was only one way the reduction of this maze of steel and concrete could be made - by moving straight into all the fire they could throw at us, take our casualties as they came, and reduce the pill boxes one by one. It was in this manner that Company A reduced the 23 pill boxes in its zone action. It was in this fashion that the 254th Infantry became the first unit in the Seventh Army to blast a path through the Siegfried Line.

In five days, the 254th Infantry was awarded two Presidential Citations for extraordinary heroism in



Jerry Mattson is pictured on the right. He does not remember the names of the other soldiers.

military operations against an armed enemy.

Gerald Mattson had earned entry into the Greatest

The War and the Veterans History project

THE WAR is as much about storytelling, about sharing unique experiences, as it is about World War II. The film provides only a small window into the much larger experience of the hundreds of thousands who have served during times of war.

The story of WORLD WAR II is a story shared by millions of Americans, but as time goes by, many of these stories are being lost. For those who served our nation, from the battlefield to the home front, every story deserves to be heard. That is where you can help.

PBS and FLORENTINE FILMS have partnered with the Veterans History Project (VHP) in a massive effort to capture the stories of men and women who experienced the war first-hand before the generation that witnessed WORLD WAR II has passed.

The Veterans History Project is part of the Library of Congress and honors American war veterans and

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 27

Happy Anniversary



JULY

- 1: Carol Ann & Jim Crum – HQ 253 – 1951
 3: Joyce & John J. Best – L 254 – 1953
 Irene & Vernard O. Riggs – D 255 – 1946
 4: Melba & George Dodson – K 255 – 1951
 6: Pat & Clark Utley – G 253 – 1992
 7: Mamie & Douglas Shaheen – FA 863 – 1946
 8: Rita & Louis Maslinoff – G 253 – 1953
 9: Audrey & Fred Consolmagno – H 254 – 1948
 14: Mary & Ernest H. Klimek – D 255 – 1956
 15: Margery & Joseph Olinde – H 253 – 1950
 Wanda & Harold G. Heavens – A 254 – 1946
 16: Naomi & Gordon Rintoul – L 255 – 1983
 17: Jo & Thomas Lazare – I 254 – 1948
 18: Jane & Wilbur Braithwaite – A 253 – 1952
 23: Carolyn & Sam Taylor – F 254 – 1949
 26: Alberta & Melvin Gobel – I 254 – 1980
 Helen & Robert E. Parke – B 254 – 1943
 ??: Grace & John Harmon – MED 363 – 1947

AUGUST

- 5: Imogene & Alf L. Crutchfield – I 254 – 1947
 Josephine & Harold D. Betts – HQ 253 – 1943
 7: Helen & John Bradley – A 253 – 1954
 10: Elish & Greg Bonifield – Assoc. – 1991
 11: Helen & George Putman – FA 718 – 1995
 12: Arlene & Robert Williams – F 255 – ??
 13: Helen & Max Gourley – C 253 – 1948
 Deatra & Jonpatriock Anderson – USAR – 1995
 14: Iona & James A. Gregg – I 253 – 1947
 15: Karen & Peter Donald – Assoc. – 2003
 RaeAnn & Donald L. Wirth – USAR – 1958
 16: Gina & Scott Iseminger – Assoc. – 1975
 18: Betty & David Montgomery – E 253 – 1950
 19: Jean & Bill J. Moss – B 254 – 1946
 Janice & Glen Rovenhagen – M 255 – 1951
 20: Ann & Jim Payne – F 254 – 1948
 Lillian & Dick Mertes – 254 – 1949
 22: Della & Lewis Disbrow – E 255 – 1940
 Joan & Henry W. Talbert – M 253 – 1945
 23: Susan & William J. Stratton – Assoc. – 1975
 25: Billie Jean & Jack H. Haight – HQ 255 – 1956
 26: Dorothy & Robert L. May – K 255 – 1950

The War and Vet . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

civilian workers who supported them by preserving stories of their service to our country. VHP collects and archives the one-of-a-kind stories that represent the diversity of the veterans who served our country – veterans from all conflicts, from all branches of the military, all ranks, all races and ethnicities.

- 27: Dorine & Gerald Bungert – FA 718 – 1949
 Laura & Arthur W. Harekham – HQ 253 – 1949
 29: Gertrude & Ernest Morrell – L 253 – 1958
 30: Cele & Bill Scott – E 254 – 1949

SEPTEMBER

- 1: Jan & Quintin Sella – F 254 – 1977
 2: Irene & Seymour Kunis – F 255 – 1950
 Anna & Rocco F. Stango – RECON 63 – 1950
 3: Angela & Carmine Soranno – K 253 – 1949
 Marianne & Robert Koller – Assoc. – 1994
 5: Mayellen & Joseph Thoman – CN 254 – 1941
 5: Anne & Kenneth Greene – HQ 63 – 1949
 Gayle & Richard A. Glazer – USAR – 1970
 6: Viola & Harold Black – AT 255 – 1947
 7: Rose & Michael Cairo – L 253 – 1947
 8: Carol & Roger Bonifield – Assoc. – 1973
 Germaine & Roland Dandurand – G 255 – 1945
 Betty & Bob Anderson – B 255 – 1946
 Margaret & Donald B. O'Neill – D 254 – 1986
 9: Angeline & Howard Diepenhorst – MED 253 – 1947
 Patricia & Joseph B. Mueller – SV 861 – 1950
 12: Eva & Harold Hibbs – HQ 718 – 1948
 15: Corine & Hugh Boettcher – D 254 – 1946
 16: Villa & Harold Black Sr. – AT 255 – 1947
 18: Peggy & Robert Michajla – FA 718 – 1942
 20: Lois & Lee Axsom – G 253 – 1952
 21: Brenda & Nicholas Piazza – MED 254 – 1989
 22: Cherri & Len Zimmerman – C 263 – 1943
 27: Virginia & Leamon J. Harvey – C 254 – 1952
 Maggie & Robert E. Herzler – SV 255 – 1946

OCTOBER

- 1: Louise & Rune Josephson – FA 718 – 1950
 7: Marilyn & Henry Comb – Assoc. – 1961
 Cindy & Jimmy Montgomery – Assoc. – 1979
 8: Tobi & Jack Mayrsohn – QM 63 – 1950
 Dorothy & Herbert B. Houghtaling – HQ 253 – 1949
 9: Mae & Garrett Hocksema – M 255 – 1946
 Bernice & Carlton Peck – K 255 – 1949
 10: Betty & Rudy Lencioni – F 254 – 1951
 Anna Lee & Murrell Grant – K 253 – 1946
 11: Marlene & Anthony Dondona – H 255 – 1953
 12: Dorothy & Claude Denison – A 253 – 1940
 13: Elsie & Roy E. Sjoblad – HQ 253 – 1945
 16: Jean & Russell R. Hill – HQ 253 – 1949
 17: Mardellya & Ray L. Anders Jr – Sp Tr 63 – 1942
 18: Helen & Charles Rudibaugh Jr – SV 253 – 1947
 Louise & Lecile D. Self – HQ 255 – 1941
 20: Patricia & James R. Pritchett – HQ 254 – 1979
 23: Carol & Fred Bing – HQ 63 – 1983
 24: Frances & Joseph DeClerk – C 255 – 1953
 27: Georgee & Albert Kidney – FA 863 – 1941
 30: Lois & Charles G. Sunyak – G 255 – 1983
 31: Evelyn & Olaf E. Miller – AT 253 – 1945

ADDITIONAL ANNIVERSARIES

- May 8, 1948 – Helen & Edwin Smith – ENG 263
 May 21, 1949 – Margo & Bill Shier – MED 263

Lost Sheep Need To Be Found

We need new addresses for the following people. Listed below are the last known addresses taken from the returned February 2008 issue of the Blood and Fire. If you can help, please call, write or email the secretary/treasurer.

Ralph Bond - SV 255 - Life Member 72 - 29144 Ridge Road, Wickliffe, OH 44092.

Donald L. Charters - ENG 263 - Life 1495 - 12778 Charters Lane, Redding, CA 96003.

Evelyn Cooper - Associate Member - Tic-Toc Farm, Box 215, Chalfont, PA 18914. Her husband Theodore E. Cooper, HQ 253, Life Member died December 12, 1997.

Clarence P. Eddy Jr. - I 254 - Life Member 1295 - R#1 Box 279, New Port, OH 45768.

Richard A. Fossum - AT 254 - 1130 Floweree, Helena, MT 59601.

Evelyn Hartney - Associate Member - 874 Manitou Ave., Akron, OH 44305-2250. Her husband was Roy Hartney, D 254, Life Member 111, who died February 1992.

Jack E. Henshaw - HQ 862 - Life Member 126 - 2538 Lakeland Dr., Nashville, TN 37214.

Charles F. Jones - C 263 - Life 746 - 174 Calle DeLogos, Ft. Pierce, FL 34951.

George N. Kronic - B 253 - Life Member 1149 - 38200 County Road 439, Eypitis, FL 32726.

Mary Reitz - Associate Member - 515 Packer, Sunbury, PA 17801. Her husband, William, SV 255, Life Member 179, died December 30, 1994.

Charles David Strawn - K 253 - Life Member 447 - 7677 Country Club Road, Athens, OH 45701.

It is not good manners to add cream and sugar to your coffee - after you have poured it into your saucer.

When I was in Hollywood Marilyn Monroe asked me out twice - I was in her home at the time.

New members

Joyce Watson Miller of Box 1646, Red Lodge, MT 59068 is a new associate member. Her husband is Phillip Miller, who served in the Navy during the Korean War. He is now retired from Sysco Food Services.

Her brother, Arthur A. Watson, was a member of the 63rd Infantry Division. He died September 24, 1945 and is buried in Marseille, France. He and his wife, Frances, were married March 1938. She has since remarried and carries the last name of Jansen.



Arthur Adrian Watson
2 Hq 255

Want to preserve WWII military items?

Jeffrey A. Neberman, Associate Member

Those of you who are considering the donation of your military items should consider the long-term ramifications of donating to an accredited museum. There is no guarantee that items donated to non-accredited individuals will ever be preserved or used for educational purposes. In fact, they become the private property of the individual you donate them to and can be sold immediately.

If you really want to preserve your WW II military items, here are two locations where there is a reasonable guarantee that your items will be preserved and be available for public study forever:

The Camp Van Dorn World War II Museum
138 E. Main
Centreville, MS 39631
infocmvandorn.or2
(601) 645-9000

Want to preserve . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

The Army Historical Foundation

2425 Wilson Blvd.

Arlington, VA 2220

Phone: 703-522-7901

Fax: 703-522-7929

Toll Free: 800-506-2672

NOTE: This Army Museum is scheduled to open in 2013.

Both of these museums are accepting donations. Additionally, there are numerous accredited military museums throughout the country. Even local museums in your home town will in most cases preserve and display items in perpetuity.

(Editor's note: Anyone who wishes to discuss these matters further, may contact the editor and your name and address will be forwarded to Mr. Neberman.)

Honor Flight April 2008

By Jim Stephens, F 253

I just got home from a wonderful experience shared with a group of WW II veterans! The trip was sponsored by Honor Flight, an organization formed to honor WW II Veterans with a free trip to Washington, D.C. to tour the WW II Memorial. All expenses, including flight, hotel, and meals are paid for by HonorFlight.org. They are funded by grants and donations and do not accept any monies from the participating veterans.

We flew from San Diego to Baltimore, were picked up by the hotel shuttle, had dinner, and spent the night in a very nice hotel. We were met by Honor Flight staff, presented with an Honor Flight T-shirt which was to identify us on the tour and to allow free meals when worn at the hotel. I wore mine home and got lots of attention, many kind comments, and considerate questions by other airline travelers.

My daughter accompanied me as my guardian. Each veteran may choose a guardian to accompany him or her, or Honor Flight will provide assistance if needed. The guardian does make a monetary donation to cover

costs; however, it is much lower than actual costs would be to make the trip independently. My daughter met several other 'kids' and they seemed to enjoy the tour and new friendships as much as the veterans.

The next morning we had a delicious buffet breakfast and socialized while waiting for our tour bus. I discovered that four of our group had done basic training in Camp Crowder at the same time, though we did not know each other then. Our group was comprised of individuals from across the nation including California, Wisconsin, New York, Nevada, Washington, etc. Other tour groups were made up entirely from one community and many already knew each other.

Our planned tour included Arlington Cemetery, the Changing of the Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, the WW II Memorial, the Korean War Memorial, Viet Nam Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Iwo Jima Memorial, and the new Air Force Memorial. We also had a narrated tour as we drove through the city, pointing out the Capital building, Washington Monument, White House, many important government buildings, museums, and the repairs done to the Pentagon. While riding the bus to and from our hotel, we were also treated to the PBS video of the making of the WW II Memorial. That video was so well done that I bought a copy for myself and my family.

After boarding our bus, which was delayed due to mechanical problems, we had to miss Arlington and went directly to the WW II Memorial. On that day, Senator Dole was there personally greeting every veteran and visitor he could. He willingly posed for pictures and took time to speak with everyone who wanted to talk with him.

The WW II Memorial is arranged so that you can walk the entire circle and stop to rest whenever needed. Our group had one veteran on oxygen and in a wheel chair, and he didn't miss anything. There were extra wheel chairs, with guardians to push them, provided for anyone who needed one at any point during the tour.

We came home with tons of pictures and even more wonderful memories. Talking and sharing helped all of us to recognize our memories with our families as well as each other.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity that EVERY Veteran deserves. I urge you to participate as soon as possible. You won't regret it!

Contact: Honor Flight Inc, 300 E. Auburn Ave., Springfield, OH 45505-4703. Office telephone is 937-521-2400. Jim McLaughlin is the president and his phone number is 614-558-6220.

Web Address: www.HonorFlight.org, and the e-mail address is: info@honorflight.org

Walter "Bo" Harmon carried Bible in wrong pocket but the right pocket

(The following information was taken from an article written by Bill Archer, a reporter for the Bluefield Daily Telegraph who interviewed Walter "Bo" Harmon for a Veteran's Day special newspaper feature November 11, 2007)

In April of 1945, Bo Harmon was still puzzled by the Bronze Star medal he received a month earlier for heroism in ground combat. But he wasn't thinking about that when a German bullet fragment ripped through the pages of the government issued Bible he carried in his right shirt pocket and punctured his lung.

Constant combat had become part of his day-to-day life from Christmas day of 1944 until April 15, 1945, when the bullet fragment took him out of the war.

"I carried a couple grenades on my jacket like soldiers did back then," Harmon, 82, said. "I guess the bullet must have hit one of the grenades first before it broke apart and went through the Bible." Several of his fellow soldiers teased him about carrying the Bible in his right pocket. "They said I didn't even know what side my heart was on," he said.

He didn't feel anything at first. He was acting as squad leader that day because he was the most experienced. He had just turned 19 in January, but the twelve guys in his squad were all new kids - just in from the states.

"Our objective was to take a hill," he said. "We did that without too much trouble, and we were walking down the other side when I got hit. After I realized I was hit, I told one of the other guys I had been shot, then I sat down by a stack of poles to rest until someone came along to help me."

Almost as soon as he sat down, two German soldiers stood up on the other side of the poles waving a white flag. The guys in his squad wanted him to shoot the German soldiers but when Harmon put his rifle to his shoulder and had one of them in his sights, he couldn't pull the trigger. He said all the German soldiers had white flags at about that time of the war, but he couldn't see killing another man.

Walter E. "Bo" Harmon had never been further than 30 miles away from his Abbs Valley home when he turned 18, received his draft notice and was told when to go to Bluefield to catch a bus to Abingdon, Virginia to get his draft physical. He caught the old black Diamond Bus that ran daily from War to Bluefield and spent his first night away from home in the city.

He had to spend the night in the old Matz Hotel in order to catch the bus to Abingdon the next morning,

and was worried that he wouldn't be able to get up in time, so he asked the girl at the desk if she would wake him up at 6 a.m., the next morning. For some reason,



Harmon

Harmon thought that the hotel desk clerk would come up to his room and shake him on the shoulder to wake him up. As a result, he was surprised when the telephone in his room rang at 6 a.m. the following morning.

"We didn't have a telephone at home," he said. "We didn't have a car. Times were pretty hard back then." Eventually, he figured out the telephone was ringing in his room and answered it. It was the desk clerk giving him a wake-up call.

Although he was still a little groggy, Harmon bathed, dressed and got on the elevator to check out, have breakfast and catch his bus. "When I got off the elevator, it was kind of dark. When the elevator door opened, there was a full-length mirror on the wall across from it. I saw it, and thought it was my brother, Wimpy. I said, Hey Wimpy. What are you doing up here? My brother and I looked a lot alike. When I realized it was just a mirror, I looked around and hoped that no one had seen me."

Harmon passed his physical exam with no problems, was sent briefly to Fort Mead, Md., then on to Fort Hood, Texas for basic training. He was at Fort Mead in May of 1944. They were needing guys bad back then, so they were moving everyone along quickly. After he completed basic training, he went to Mississippi where he was assigned to the 63rd Infantry Division. He got a leave to go home just before he was to be shipped out to Europe.

"I didn't have any money," he said. "The pay for a soldier back then was \$50 a month and I sent \$35 of it

Harmon carried . . . - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

home to my mother so she could get by." He was able to buy a train ticket to Bristol, Virginia, but had to ride on the steps of a passenger car. He got a bus ticket from Bristol to Abingdon, and hid behind a seat so the driver couldn't see him. By doing that, he could ride free the rest of the way to Bluefield. "I think he saw me, but he didn't kick me off," he said.

The most touching moment on that trip occurred during the first day when the train had a brief lay-over at Bessemer, Alabama. By that time Harmon was really hungry and almost penniless. "I went into a Woolworth's Store and stole a box of Clark Bars," he said. "That was all I had to eat on my entire trip home." After he completed his rehabilitation from his wound and came back home, he found the address for the Woolworth's in New York City and sent them money to cover the price of the candy.

"I've always tried to be honest in everything I've done in my life," Harmon said. "They were nickel candy bars. I sent them a letter explaining what I had done

and telling them I wanted to pay for the candy bars I took. Honesty is something that I've thought of as being very important in life." He never heard back from Woolworth's.

He shipped out of New York on Thanksgiving Day 1944, arrived in Marseille, France, where he and the soldiers he was serving with were loaded on railroad boxcars and went straight to the Sarreguemines area. They arrived on Christmas Day and were sent straight to the front lines. He will never forget the first night they were in action. Their weather was about the same in that part of France as the weather is around his home, but that was the toughest winter France had had in several years."

During his first night in combat, Harmon said he came to the realization that if all politicians were required to spend a few days in combat, they would be less likely to send troops into battle. "They should talk it out," he said. "None of my neighbors know what I went through there. I've never talked about it until right now, but I thought it important for my grandson, Michael Beavers, to hear my story. He is seven years old. Maybe his generation won't have to go to war."

Almost as soon as the 63rd Infantry arrived on line, several of the troops were sent to fight the German offensive known as the Battle of the Bulge, but Harmon's unit remained on line in the Sarreguemines area. On February 17, 1945, four German tanks and a company of soldiers overran their position.

"I was just a lazy old country boy," he confessed. "We were ordered to dig foxholes that morning, but I didn't want to dig any more foxholes. We had already dug so many. When I heard the German tanks coming, I started digging right away, but about everyone where I was fell back. When I looked up, the only one I saw was a lieutenant who was laying in a ditch. He was talking to someone on the radio. Usually there was another soldier with him to carry the batteries, but he was there alone."

He went over to the lieutenant to see if he could help, and was told to go up to the top of the hill and tell him where the smoke shell landed. Harmon did as he was

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 33

Visit Website to find detailed history of 63rd Infantry Division

Visit the 63rd Infantry Division Web Site page at <http://www.63rdinfdiv.com> to find a detailed history of the 63rd 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 63rd 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 63rd 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 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.

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.

AD BOOK RESERVATION FORM

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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:
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Authorized By:

Signature:

Date:

Harmon carried . . . - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 31

told and after the first shell hit, he told the lieutenant it was too short and corrections were made. When the second shell hit, Harmon told him the distance was right, but they needed to aim more to the right. "I heard him change the coordinates and say, 'Fire for effect!' said Harmon and it was the most awful thing I ever saw. It was like the whole artillery opened up on them at the same time. They got two tanks right away, but all I could think about was all of those German soldiers. I had been in plenty of fights with a lot of people shooting, but in the whole time I was there I never aimed a shot and fired at another person. I really felt bad about all of those soldiers who died that day." The lieutenant told Harmon he had done a swell job and had saved everyone's life but all he could think about was all the soldiers who had died.

Less than a month later, Harmon was a squad leader. After he was hit, the squad took prisoners and moved on. He assumed that they would send a medic to get him help. "I got shot at around noon, but nobody came for me. It was getting dark, and I must have drifted off to sleep. Sometime in the night, a voice came to me and said: 'You're going to be all right.' And that was all. When daylight came the next morning, the same voice woke me up, only it was louder the second time." "I told you you're gong to be all right," the voice said. It was about nine o'clock and I woke up to see five or six birds right there on that stack of poles. Two or three were chirping and two or three were singing. I realized then I was going to have to try to get back to my unit."

He stripped off his field jacket, dropped his rifle and started back up the hill his squad had taken over the previous day. He could only make two or three steps at a time before he had to rest, so it took about all his energy to climb back to the top of the hill, but after getting there, it wasn't long before he made it back to his unit.

When he saw his lieutenant, he asked why they had not sent someone to get him and was told that another guy in the outfit named Jarmon had gotten killed that day, and there was confusion with the name issue. When he got back to the aid station, the medic told him the Bible had saved his life. Harmon had always carried the Bible in his right shirt pocket and the guys used to rib him about that, but, "I guess I had my Bible in the right pocket after all," said Harmon.

He was transported to a field hospital filled with two rows of canvas cots first and then sent to a better facility where he was in a regular hospital bed. A surgeon removed the bullet from his chest but whoever cleaned the room also threw the bullet away. He did manage to hold on to the blood-soaked Bible that also contained a letter from his brother.

After he returned home, he went to work in the Pocahontas Fuel Company store in Boissevain, and married his childhood sweetheart, Bertha, on March 14, 1945. Money was short at the company store, so Harmon worked at the Pocahontas Fuel coal mine at Jenkinjones for three years so he could save enough money to buy a home in Abbs Valley with a G.I. loan.

He really didn't have the strength to work in the coal mines but felt he had to do something so he could earn enough money to put a down payment on the house. He went back to the company store for a short time, and even though his formal education ended in eighth grade, he earned his GED and passed the Civil Service test. He got a job as postmaster of the Boissevain Post Office, and retired from that position after thirty years of service.

Tazewell County mapping personnel called the street where he and Bertha have lived for 60 years, "Bo Street." Their daughters, Brenda Gale Harmon and Diane Beavers, and their grandson, Michael Ryan Beavers, all live there as well. Harmon thinks they call it Bo Street because they had the first house there.

Bo said he served in the military for 18 months, but never told his story to any of his neighbors. He told this story because he thought his grandson should know what he did during World War II.

Harmon's fabric-covered Bible was published in 1942, where on the cover page it says, "Prepared for use of Protestant Personnel of the Army of the United States." On a cold day in April just 22 days before Germany surrendered, Harmon's little G.I. Bible meant the difference between life and death for a 19-year-old teenager from Abbs Valley.

Robert P. Daly trained in field battles

By Donna Gandi, for the Washington WWII Memorial

Robert P. Daly was drafted from Providence, Rhode Island on February 12, 1944 at Fort Devans, Massachusetts. He prepared for Infantry Combat duty as a rifleman at Camp Van Dorn in Mississippi. He was assigned to the 63rd Infantry Division, Company L, Regiment 253, where he was trained extensively in field battles, speed marches and infiltration courses.

He reported to Camp Shanks in New York on November 4, 1944 as a Private First Class and traveled

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 38

Past Secretary / Treasurer CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

1979: Ed Witt

1980: Ed Witt

1981: Ed Witt

1982: Ed Witt

1983: Ed Witt

1984: Ed Witt

1985: Ed Witt

1986: Murray Moore

1987: Murray Moore

1988: Tom Liszka

1989: Tom Liszka

1990: Lydia Liszka

1991: Lydia Liszka

1992: Lydia Liszka

1993: Lydia Liszka

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2001: Lydia Liszka

2002: Donna LaCosse

2003: Donna LaCosse

2004: Donna LaCosse

2005: Donna LaCosse

2006: Donna LaCosse

2007: Donna LaCosse

2008: Donna LaCosse

Editors of Blood & Fire

1951-1953: Lester Noel

1954-1959: Robert Capasso

1960-1970: Bernie Brooks

1971-1979: Earl Kipp

1980: Bernie Brooks

1981-1984: William Martin

1985-1995: Nate Spigel

1996-2005: Albert J. Conti

2005-2008: Donna LaCosse

NOTE: A booklet, size 6" x 9", was distributed to members from 1949 until 1951. No editor was identified.



C COMPANY 253 – Back row, from the left: Piper, 19 of Alabama; Panteline, 19 of New Jersey; Marvin Karr, 20 of Illinois; Melvin Karr, 20 of Illinois; Olinski, 19 of New Jersey.

Front Row, from the left: Wright, 26 of Virginia; Gregg, ?; Goosen, ?; Souck, 19 of Illinois and Stowe, 35 of Oregon.

For our new Company Commander Lt. Harold O'Neill

submitted by Hal O'Neill

Suggestions for one-line evaluations:

Among evaluations of subordinate officers included in annual military efficiency ratings – on which careers hinge – were the following, compiled by PARADE, September 28, 1958:

He hasn't any mental traits.

Needs careful watching since he borders on the brilliant.

A particularly fine appearance when pointing at the blackboard.

Believes sincerely in the Power of Prayer and it is astonishing to note how many times his prayers are answered.

Open to suggestions but never follows same.

Never makes the same mistake twice but it seems to me he has made them all at least once.

If any change in policy or procedure, he can be relied upon to produce the improbable hypothetical situation

on which the new policy will not work.

Is stable under pressure and is not influenced by superiors.

Is keenly analytical and his highly developed mentality could best be utilized in the research and development field. He lacks common sense.

Tends to over-estimate himself and under-estimate his problems, being surprised and confused by the resulting situations.

An independent thinker with a mediocre mentality.

Maintains good relations unilaterally.

An exceptionally well-qualified teacher with a broad base.

Tends to create the impression of un-positive personality through needless and undiscerning gentility and soft-spokenness.

Of average intelligence except for lack of judgment on one occasion in attempting to capture a rattle snake, for which he was hospitalized.

This officer, by staying in the military, has deprived some village of an idiot.

Tried him drunk. Tried him sober. No good either way.

The year 1943 at Camp Van Dorn



This picture was taken at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi in 1943. Harold "Hal" O'Neill is driving the jeep and Casey is in the passenger seat; Behind him is Trostle and Taylor is standing behind Hal.

– 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.

Notice

**DEADLINE FOR
THE NOVEMBER 2008
ISSUE OF THE
BLOOD AND FIRE
IS ON OR BEFORE
SEPTEMBER 1, 2008**

Did You Know? Roosters cannot crow if they can't fully extend their neck?

William Frank Arket publishes *The First Born*, story of his life

(The following information was taken from the Houston Chronicle, Neighborhood News. Credit given to Kim Morgan)

William "Frank" Arket began writing down his life history, the history of his family, his military family, and what was planned to be a keepsake for his children, became a novel and was published through BookSurge, a subsidiary of Amazon in 2003. Arket, 90, said he didn't call it an autobiography because it is a story and he wanted to tell it as a story.

He began with his parent's courtship in 1917, to their marriage and to their deaths when Arket was eleven. It also includes his struggles to escape life in the steel mills of Pennsylvania and to his Army and military intelligence careers.

After his parents died within six months of each other in 1929, Frank was raised by his grandparents. His mother was accidentally shot while working in a sporting goods store and his father died from a three-story fall after jumping from a window to escape with his gambling winnings.

This changed Frank from a street kid to a good kid - his grandparents were people of faith, therefore Frank went to morning Sunday school and evening church services every week.

He worked in the steel mill following his graduation from high school until he was drafted shortly before World War II in 1941. He was a member of the original cadres of the 9th, 82nd, 84th and 63rd Infantry Division in France where he fought in the Battle of Colmar Pocket. Arket received the Combat Infantryman Badge, Bronze Star and the Oak Leaf Cluster.

After being discharged, he worked in a steel mill in Ellwood City for less than a year before returning to the army and training as a special agent in military intelligence for the Counter Intelligence Corp (CIC). He was assigned to a detachment in Munich, Germany where he worked on projects to counter Cold War objectives by communists against the U.S. Army.

Later he was assigned to the Pentagon as an Army Security Detachment, during which time he earned a



bachelor's degree in military science from the University of Maryland. He retired from the army in 1981 with a rank of chief warrant officer IV.

Frank and his high school sweetheart, Dorothy Hill, were married before he left for the war and had more than 50 years together before her death in 1993. They had four children. Their first-born son, Bill, died at age 27 in a 1971 hunting-related accident in California, and Bill's six-year old son died two weeks later in a car accident in El Paso.

Because the family grew up in a military family, the kids only had occasional visits of a very short duration with their relatives, so they had always been curious about the family and its history.

Frank's second son, Jim, a West University Place resident, encouraged his father to write the book which took about three years to finish what he began in 2000. "We asked him to sit down and put everything on paper," said Jim. Frank did, and the project became a book, which included things he hadn't talked about when his children were younger.

Frank, who resides in Houston, Texas, now spends time visiting his children and playing bridge.

Never break your bread or roll in your soup.

IMOK Chapter members hold fall mini reunion in Springfield, Ohio

IMOK Chapter members met at the Fairfield Inn in Springfield, Ohio on October 9, 10 and 11, 2007 for their fall mini reunion. Donna and Ed Fowle hosted the affair.

After arriving on Tuesday afternoon and checking into their rooms, members gathered for cocktails and visiting before having dinner at Ryan's Steak House. A business meeting followed with Ed Fowle presiding.

Since IMOK will be hosting the National Reunion in August, 2008, business centered around plans for the reunion. This included naming the officers for the National Reunion with John Dietrick as president; Carl Anderson, first vice president; Jack Linscott, second vice president; Claire Gerity, treasurer, and Ed Fowle Will serve as advisor.

Judy Schaeffer was appointed as chairman of the Women's Meeting, with Rhonda Wolverton and Gina Iseminger assisting. Donna LaCosse will be in charge of the Ad/Souvenir Book.

Several suggestions, including a city tour, Speedway and Museum tour, a visit to Conner Prairie, plus other points of interest were made by the members. This information will be given to the Army Reunion Planners.

The 2008 National Reunion will take place at the Marriott East in Indianapolis, Indiana August 20 to August 24 with the Armed Forces Reunion Planners making the arrangements.

The spring chapter meeting will take place at the Marriott East on May 20, 21 and 22, 2008. This will be a work meeting; no activities have been planned.

LaCosse suggested each member of the Chapter buy an ad to be placed in the Ad/Souvenir Book. Since this is the 60th anniversary for the Association, she would like to see thick pages of honors, memorials and/or congratulations in this booklet that is presented to everyone attending the reunion and to those who supported the ad book but were unable to attend.

Following breakfast at the Inn on Wednesday, the group car-pooled to their first tour of the Frank Lloyd Wright Home, after which they enjoyed lunch at The Family Restaurant, and then toured the Pennsylvania House. Down time followed at the Inn and it was off to Simon Kenton Inn for dinner.

Following breakfast at the Inn on Thursday, there were good-bye hugs and last minute "gabbing" before members began their journey home.

Finds coat in aid station pile



Harold "Hal" O'Neill wearing a long coat he took from a pile of clothing at the Aid Station. He thought it a big improvement over the mackinaw! This picture was taken after the Battle of the Bulge was over.

Robert P. Daly . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16

by Troop Ship convoy on November 25, 1944 for Marseilles, France, arriving on December 8, 1944, where he continued on the front line to Sarrenghem, France, arriving on December 16, 1944 for combat.

He was wounded on January 23, 1945 from shrapnel by an 88 German tank shell in the Battle of the Rhineland. The troops were pinned down on the Hill for 16 hours in the bitter cold.

Suffering from Shrapnel wounds and frostbite, he

was brought to an Aide Station, then transferred to Reims, France where he was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, the Purple Heart and the European African Middle Eastern Theater Ribbon with one Bronze Star.

He was returned to the United States to a Convalescent Hospital at Camp Butner in North Carolina, where he remained until honorably discharged on September 6, 1945.

International Relations

By Harold O'Neill, 83rd Signal

We could see Paris in the distance, but we had orders to stay put and let the French troops take it. Eventually, a column of trucks appeared carrying French Seneglese. They all seemed to be six foot plus, wore big smiles, and were carrying World War I rifles with two-foot bayonets. Later, we bivouacked in a field near a small airstrip and found some Seneglese already camped there.

When off duty, the black Africans were friendly and helpful, even though they did not speak French. When a small plane needed gasoline to be poured in from five-gallon cans, two Seneglese picked up a fifty-five gallon drum with a hose and held it overhead to fill the tank. Another time, one of our jeeps had a flat and we lacked a jack. Two grinning Seneglese took turns holding the jeep level until the wheel was changed.

At night we had a problem. They patrolled the perimeter next to our latrine area. It was a thrill to see a flash of teeth in the dark and find a two-foot bayonet at your throat. When nature called, some of us learned to walk into a field away from the latrines carrying a shovel. Others just became constipated.

O'Neill in 1943



Harold "Hal" O'Neill in 1943 at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi. The mackinaw was worn by the Signal during the Battle of the Bulge.

Remember - Be nice to people until you make a million. After that people will be nice to you.

My dad – James L. Bender served in the Single Company

by J. Dennis Bender

After watching Ken Burns' "The War," it gave me a much better idea of what things must have been like in the Infantry fighting in France and Germany.

My father, James L. Bender, a Technical Sergeant (Technician 4th Class – Cryptographic Technician), had been designated to attend OCS but the Division Commander nixed it because the Division was about to be shipped out to France and refused to release him for OCS. Dad said that the advantage of being a cryptographer on the troop ship was that they were housed in special quarters guarding their cryptographic machine, much like the German *Enigma* machine. As such, he did not have to wait in the long never-ending chow lines aboard the troop ship. Dad earned a rating of "Expert" for the .30 cal. M-1 and the .30 cal. Carbine he carried all during the war.

My father served in the following campaigns and battles: GO (General Order) 33 & 40 WD (War Department) 45 (1945) Rhineland Central Europe. Service schools included Basic Training at Fort Ord, California; German Intelligence School at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi; Message Center School; School of Cryptography and Vocational Counselors School.

His activities consisted of supervising twelve (12) men in the 63rd Division's Message Center in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). He was responsible for their control and coordination and enciphered/deciphered classified messages using all types of cryptographic systems and equipment used by the Army. He handled secret communications and maintained the cryptographic files after being cleared by Army Intelligence for such work.

Fortunately, he was never wounded but he was very disappointed that he had been prevented from going to OCS. He was awarded the Good Conduct Medal; American Campaign Medal; European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with two bronze stars; WW II Victory Medal; and the ASR Score 59 (Advanced Service Rating Score) Lapel Button at discharge.

Dad had a really wonderful collection of German mementos that I really wished he had kept but he was apparently pressured into selling all of them by a relative who was apparently very anti-war.

One of my conclusions about the downside of his being away during the years I was two and three was that I think I bonded more closely with my Mother and Grandparents, with whom I then lived, than I did with him, through no fault of his own.

Prior to World War II, my parents lived in Cleveland, Ohio. I was born March 16, 1942. My father had graduated from Wooster College with a B.S. in Chemistry and was placed on the Roster of Scientific and Specialized Personnel by the War Manpower Commission. He was working for my Grandfather's West End Lumber Company when he was drafted into the Army on February 19, 1944. I was not yet two years old. He received his first shots March 2, 1944; served in the US for 15 months and in Europe for seven months until his honorable discharge on December 13, 1945, just in time for Christmas.

I can still remember living in Cleveland, and I remember living with my Mother and Grandparents on Forest Road in Lakewood, Ohio. I can also remember my Mother reading his letters from Germany, including one written on a million-Mark German banknote.

My playmate across the street was the daughter of Vernon Stouffer, the founders and owners of Stouffers Corporation. Little did I know that I would be living on Stouffers frozen dinners during the Summer Session in Ann Arbor while in Graduate School! One thing I clearly remember about my Grandparent's home in Lakewood was the oriental carpets. When you are that age, and spend a lot of time close to the carpets, you remember!

Jim was honorably discharged on December 13, 1945 at the separation center at the Indiantown Gap Military Reservation in Pennsylvania and we moved to St. Charles Street in Lakewood, Ohio.

My father never talked about his war experiences while my brother and I were growing up and, unfortunately, having developed Multi-infarct dementia, and being 87 years old, it was no longer possible to talk to him about those experiences prior to his passing, though he had apparently occasionally commented on them to folks at his nursing home in Montana.

Smitty's 38th Fox Company Hot Shots mini reunion held in Baton Rouge

Smitty's 38th Fox Company Hot Shots Mini Reunion was held at the Ramada Inn in Baton Rouge, Louisiana from March 10 to March 15, 2008.

Dr. Mack Catleberry, our leader, informed us that forty Hot Shots were signed up to attend; but as D-day approached, ten had to cancel due to health problems.

Hot Shots started to arrive on March 10. The seventeen present had dinner at Don's Seafood Restaurant that evening.

The following day the men reminisced, telling old stories in the hospitality room while the women did what they know best, SHOP. That evening, twenty of us went to Brunet's for dinner.

On Wednesday, six of us were dinner guests of the Centreville town folks. We arrived at Centreville Van Dorn World War II Museum at 5:30 p.m. and was greeted by Museum Director, Vicki Natterville and staff. We toured the museum, then proceeded to the church hall where Dr. Fields and town folks greeted us for our annual dinner. We Hot Shots wish to express our sincere deepest appreciation for the fine hospitality bestowed up on us to all who participated.

The next day, Thursday, we had our banquet at Ruffino's Four Star Restaurant. It began by Phyllis Bennett reciting the invocation written by Dr. Jerry Gilden, due to his being absent for health reasons. We

My dad - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 39

"More than 16 million Americans served in the armed forces during the war. Fewer than a million ever saw serious combat. The infantry represented just 14 percent of the troops overseas. But wherever they fought - in North Africa or the South Pacific or Western Europe - the infantry bore the brunt of the fighting on the ground - and seven out of ten suffered casualties.

Those in the infantry - in the Army and Marines - endured hardships and horrors for which no training could ever have prepared them. The infantry was the workhorse of the military; not only faced with battling the enemy but also often asked to do physical labor at the front lines transporting the food, clothing, weapons and medicine needed to win the war. They experienced the war as no one else did."



Herman and Karen Fabiani pose with Emma Zell Kingston as she welcomes them to the annual Camp Van Dorn Museum dinner.

then held a candle memorial for four of our departed comrades.

After dinner we were surprised by Cynthia Landry, daughter of Agnes Shoats and the late Durphy Shoats by giving each man a Bass Pro Cap and the women a Bass Pro Coffee Mug.

Friday was an open day. Lunch was served in the hospitality room and then some of the Hot Shots started for home. The rest of the group said their good byes and Saturday and this concluded the event.

The reunion in 2009 will be held at the same place; Ramada Inn Hotel, 10045 Gwenadele Ave, Baton Rouge, LA 70816.

Everyone is welcome. If interested in joining the group, call Herman Fabiani, 352-637-2290, or write him at 820 Balmoral Ct., Inverness, FL 34453.

~~~~~ 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.

Stephens will once again be treated like a hero

by Donna LaCrosse

(Information for this article came from a newspaper interview done by Garth Warth for North County Times March 23, 2008)

James Stephens, F Company, 253, trained in electronics and communications after enlisting in the Army in 1942. He was shipped overseas in 1945 and his first night in combat was spent in a foxhole with another new soldier; being paired with a veteran soldier was impossible because of the lack of men, so friends were made quickly.

The fighting was part of the Battle of the Bulge, December 16, 1944 to January 26, 1945. This was the last major German offense on the western front. A few days later, the Germans started shelling them and when Stephens heard the shells coming in, he flattened himself out in a plow furrow. The mortar hit three feet from his head and exploded; the shrapnel going right over his back. One nearby buddy was killed and Stephens was deaf for the rest of the day. He never fully regained his hearing.

After several days of fighting, they crossed the Danube River, entered Gunzburg, Germany and had the enemy on the run, however they all suspected the Germans were up to no good. The American soldiers were right! Early that evening, they got word that it looked like a counterattack was organizing just past one of the platoons that was on security. Stephens said it would have really been rough had they come in as a surprise.

Under sniper fire and artillery shelling, Stephens and another soldier walked about a mile to look for imperiled Americans. With no lights anywhere, it was very dark, and the only thing they could go on was instinct. They arrived at a house where they thought the soldiers were and, asking his partner to cover him, he made a break for the door. Even though it was frightening, Stephens did what was expected of him - he had a job to do and he did it. His actions earned him a Bronze Star for valor, the fourth highest combat award given.

Stephens also helped capture a disguised German soldier in Gunzburg after he and his buddy noticed

something strange about the man they saw step into a street about 50-feet ahead of them. The man wore civilian clothes, but his heels made a tale-tell spark of the hobnail boots worn by German soldiers. Stephens and his buddy had on rubber-heeled boots and could sneak up behind him without being detected. They stuck a rifle in his back and told him to halt. He threw up both hands and was taken prisoner.

On April 29, 1945, they reached the Dachau concentration camp where the prisoners were mostly skin and bones. A few were still strong enough to get around, and one fellow spoke very good English. The Americans gave them all the food they had, even though they did not know from where their next meal would come. Medics tended to the prisoners, but some died before they could be treated. Stephens remembers seeing gas chambers used to kill prisoners and he saw a room filled with piles of shoes and clothing. A day was spent at Dachau and then Stephens and his company moved to another location.

Adolph Hitler committed suicide on April 30, 1945, and victory in Europe Day was celebrated on May 8. Stephens had advanced to the town of Tauberbishofsheim, after which he was sent to Paris where he worked on communication machines for the military newspaper *Stars and Stripes*.

As a civilian, Stephens repaired teletype machines for *The Associated Press* and *Los Angeles Times* before retiring in 1979. He and his wife, Vesta, were married December 5, 1944

After sixty-three years, Stephens looked forward to one more trip - one where he would once again be treated like a hero. He left his Carlsbad home on April 18, with his daughter, Sue Jenkins, and flew to Baltimore where he met with other veterans on their way to the capital. He has now seen the World War II Memorial! A dream come true.

The trip to Washington D.C. was organized and funded by Honor Flight, a nonprofit program created by Earl Morse, a physician assistant and retired Air

Stephens . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 41

Force captain. While working at a small clinic in Springfield, Ohio, Morse asked veterans who were his patients if they planned to ever see the Memorial and heard them say they would like to go if they had the money and the strength. A private pilot, Morse volunteered to fly some of his patients to Washington to see the memorial and was soon recruiting other pilots to do the same.

On the first flight, 12 World War II veterans saw the memorial in 2005. Within three months, the program had flown 300 veterans to that site. Since then, about 7,000 veterans have visited the memorial. The veterans do not pay to make this trip, however their escorts - three for every eight veterans - are asked to pay no more than \$300 to accompany them. Money is raised privately, with fund raisers often including school and church events such as baby-sitting, snow shoveling and bake sales. Flights take place April through November, with four flight days a month.

World War II Veterans are given priority, however veterans of any war who have a terminal disease are moved to the front of the line. The trips to the memorial are a way of saying thanks to the veterans of World War II - something that is long overdue.

Soldier played letter carrier

by Jack H. Bayer

When I was in Germany with the 63rd Infantry Division my father worked with a man who was born and raised in Germany. Crammer would periodically ask my father if he knew where I was.

When the war ended, the 255th Headquarters moved to Kunzelsau as an Occupational Force and when Crammer found out I was stationed there he told my father he and his friend Holocker were from there and still had relatives in that town they had not heard from because of the war.

Crammer asked my father if I would take letters to their families and my father wrote me, asking if I would do this. Of course I said I would. I knew we were not to fraternize with the Germans but was sorry that they

hadn't heard from them all those years.

I didn't know that our 254th was the unit that took Kunzelsau.

Crammer's Butcher Shop was heavily damaged. Holocker's Electric Store was on the first floor and living quarters on the second floor. The building didn't suffer any damage although the Germans blew up the bridge over the Kucher River not too far from their home.

My father sent me the letters and I asked my buddy, Ray Peterson, if he would go with me. After he said he would, I asked Tillman, who spoke German, if he would go and the three of us went to deliver the letters.

I knocked on the door and a woman opened it. I believe she was quite frightened seeing three American soldiers at her door. After Tillman explained that we had letters from Cincinnati, Ohio, she was relieved and invited us in but Tillman declined. It would have been much better to have an interpreter with Ray and me, but Tillman remained outside.

Ray and I followed her upstairs and went into the kitchen, where there were young children and an old man. I assume she told them why we were there and they appeared more relaxed. She motioned us to sit down at a large round table and she placed glass jiggers in front of us. She left the room and returned with a new bottle of cognac. She filled our jiggers and as soon as we drank them down, she would refill them.

The youngsters knew some English which helped while the old man kept leafing through a German English dictionary.

I don't know how long we stayed but the woman gave Ray and me each a bottle of Grape Schnapps. I told her I would come back and get letters to send to Cincinnati. She was very thankful for the news of relatives.

The next morning I went for breakfast and didn't see Ray, so I asked the fellows where he was, and was told Ray was sick in bed. As soon as I finished breakfast, I went to check on him. When I asked him how he felt, he said those people were trying to poison us!! I said I guess I didn't drink as much poison as he had!

After two weeks I went back to get the letters, and again the woman asked me in. When I said no, she went upstairs to get them and when she came down she had tears in her eyes. She thanked me many times.

After getting back to the states, Holocker invited my mother, my father, my girlfriend and me to his home where we had an enjoyable evening. He came to the states at nine years of age but only went back two times when he was older. He showed us movies and pictures of Kunzelsau.

He was grateful for the exchange of letters and gave me a set of leather luggage as a gift.

Out on the range

by Harold O'Neill, 83rd Signal

Part of our Army basic training involved skill in handling various weapons. After hours of dry run practice (no live ammo) on safety, firing positions – standing, kneeling, squatting and prone, we were marched to the firing range. We worked in pairs, one firing and the other handling the ammo and score card. Depending on the weapon we fired from 100 up to 500 yards. After firing, we cleaned weapons, policed the brass and took our turn in the target pits, pulling, patching and scoring targets. We fired carbines, grenades, Thompson sub-machine guns and Springfield bolt actions. Each section stayed at the range until all qualified (minimum score) or it got dark.

There were mal-functions – jams, misfires, a carbine that turned into a machine gun and emptied fifteen rounds, fingers caught in the bolt, face burns from a round that fired with the bolt partially open, etc.

In the pits we had problems when two men fired at the same target or the inept who missed with every shot. To

prevent re-firing and delaying our return to the barrack and chow, we passed them all. Once during a five-minute break, a rabbit ran for the target pit and fifty men opened fire. The range control officer had a fit, mostly because no one hit it. But then it had four rabbit's feet for luck!

The Thompson sub-machine gun, the gangland favorite, with 100 round drum always fired up and to the right. Therefore, you aimed low and to the left. It worked or I was lucky and I made expert – the highest qualification.

We were held up one cold afternoon by a lone firer – a 2nd Lt. out for a perfect score. He was not popular and the pit crew gave him a Maggie's Drawers flag (a complete miss) once out of every seven or eight shots even though all were bulls eyes. He became furious, changed weapons, changed the pit crew and finally gave up.

It made our delay worthwhile.

Men assigned to Artillery Headquarters



This picture was submitted by Joseph Zeiner. It was taken in August 1944 at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi. These are enlisted men who were assigned Artillery Headquarters.

Row 1: Left to right: Cpl. John Norris; M/Sgt Hicol Lein; T/4 C.S. Zeiner and T/S Chas. Romeo.

Row 2: T/4 Milo Starnes; M/Sgt Myron Mackland; Sgt Frank Sunseri and T/S M.J. Milano.

Top Secret

by Harold O'Neill, 563 Signal

This would be a realistic training exercise in the red clay hills and swamps of Mississippi with the Blues against the Whites. It would be a secret operation with coded orders, blackouts and blank ammo. All night we stumbled through woods and small streams seeking the foe. Our biggest worry was the unfilled foxholes from previous training missions. One could only break a leg, but some holes were now home to local snakes. Some found their blankets shared by a lonesome skunk and the host found himself a social outcast.

At dawn the mosquitoes left and the flies took over. Many men were now carrying ticks that had to be backed out of the skin with a lighted cigarette. Our patrol was tired, straggling and had not yet seen the enemy. The Mess Truck got lost or stuck somewhere and we were hungry. The Lt. in command sighted the big hill that was our objective. It was sure to be held by the foe. I was sent out alone to scout the hill and report

back I had hopes of being captured and fed. A large tree that I climbed gave me a view of the hilltop.

Eureka! We were saved! I went back and spread the word that resulted in the entire patrol rushing up the hill without taking cover and making lots of noise. The Lt. had a fit and kept blowing his whistle. On top of the hill there was a Swanky Franky Hot Dog truck with a grinning driver, who asked why it took so long for us to get there. He charged 10 cents for a 5 cent hotdog, but we bought them anyway. By this time the enemy had arrived along with a few umpires and we shared our food with them. How had the driver known where to go? Everything was a big secret according to our Lt. The driver smiled. It was easy – his sister was a clerk at Division Headquarters.

So much for Top Secret.

Fishing for dinner . . .



Tired of Army food, tough chicken, and "camped" in a small village near this stream, Sam Speranza, E 254, went fishing for trout using his rifle. After much shooting, he was able to get enough fish for two men. The next day, they wanted a goose, but no dice, they were too aggressive. Sam spotted a young rooster, that made a good meal for the two of them but the farmer was not very happy! This picture was taken in Germany in 1945.



Sam Speranza, E 254, sent in this picture taken of him with enough fish to feed more than just two! This photo was taken in 1960 while Sport Fishing in Sandy Nook, New Jersey.

Are we old?

by Harold O'Neill, 83rd Signal

The fifth grade at a local elementary school invited WW II veterans from several VFW Posts to attend a World War II USO show and a replica of a USO Club. A USO club meant to me – doughnuts, girls and dancing. If I was to dance with fifth grade girls I would like a tall one. The mailing was late and only eight veterans attended, six of them from my Post. All wore suntans uniforms except for myself in dress greens.

The theater was decorated with posters, photos, Mauldin cartoons and drawings of Kilroy. There was an American flag with a color guard and we gave the Pledge of Allegiance. The hundred plus students had a slide presentation with many student narrators covering from Pearl Harbor to the Japanese surrender. They sang, Kilroy Was Here, Rosie the Riveter and Hello, USO. About twenty did an arm-waving dance to Jitterbug music.

The USO Club had doughnuts and other food, home made banners and old WW II items – helmets, web equipment, a field telephone whose leather case was black with age, pictures of Betty Grable and others. There were twenty pairs of students with clipboards to interview us. I was interviewed about fifteen times, partly because of the different uniform. Each pair had questions written in advance as well as off the cuff questions.

Some of the questions – Is Major your first name? Why aren't you a Sergeant? Why do you have that colored stuff over your pocket? What is the red ribbon for? The Good Conduct Medal for staying out of trouble for a year. Why doesn't the Sgt over there have

one? What hobbies did you have in the military? Where you wounded or injured? I was hurt playing soccer. They had soccer back then? What was your favorite radio program before the war? Bergan and McCarty. Was Charlie an early Sesame Street Muppet? What music did you listen to during the war? What is Glenn Miller? I listened to Axis Sally. You mean the Germans played music for the enemy? Why did General MacArthur walk in all that water? Didn't he have boots? Ask the Sgt. over there, he was with him. What did you do after the war? Used the GI Bill. What was that? Where did you sleep? Anywhere would do. How did a pup tent get it's name? Where did you hide when bullets were shot at you? Far away! If you did not have a foxhole with you, what did you do? Got under a truck. That Sgt. says an officer should not be in a USO. Don't tell anybody. Where were you when you heard the war ended? I was swimming in the Danube, I think. That Sgt. said the war ended with music. That is because he was in Manila at the Kay Kyser concert. How come none of you flew a plane or drove a tank. We were not asked.

A first for all of us – we were asked for our autographs with rank on clipboards and books. If they should have value someday we will put sheets with our signatures with our wills to enrich our offspring.

A teacher thanked us for coming and said the students were thrilled to be able to talk with people from back when. She reminded us that if we returned in the Fall, they had wheelchair ramps.



Photo from December 1944

This photo was sent by Bernie Horowitz, who identified only the soldier in the middle as Fergie. The picture was taken December 18, 1944.

Members of F Company 255



F Company 255. Photo sent by Bernie Horowitz, who is not in the picture. At the time this photo was taken, Bernie was in the Camp Polk Hospital with a broken ankle.

Bernie Horowitz, F 255, submitted this photo. He is the fifth man from the right.



Field Artillery liberates bus



Picture, submitted by Joseph Zeiner, was taken in Gerstetten, Germany April 25, 1945, when the Field Artillery liberated the bus. Standing l to r; Major ?, 53 section; Col. Jark, second in command under Hibbs; and M/Sgt Hicol Lien.

Moving?

Please let us know six weeks before you move what your new address will be. Be sure to supply us with both your old and new address. Copies we mail to your old address will not be delivered by the Post Office and we must pay 70¢ for each returned *Blood & Fire*, and pay \$1.36 to mail a copy to your new address.

Please remember to notify the Editor when you send out your "Change of Address" Cards.

**Important -
Change of Address, etc.**

Please send ALL CHANGES, (address, zip, phone, death notice, new and discontinued membership, etc.) to:

Donna LaCosse, P.O. Box 86,
Morocco, IN 47963

Did You Remember To Pay Your Dues?

**CUT
THIS
OUT** 

STAMPS FOR VETERANS

Tear off all stamps - yes, the cancelled ones from envelopes, etc. and save them in a bag.

When you have a pouch of postage, mail it to: "Stamps for Veterans" send to:

SO. ARIZONA VA HEALTH
CARE SYSTEM VETERANS
NATIONAL STAMP & COIN CLUB SC #135
3601 S. 6th Ave., Tucson, AZ 85723


**60th Reunion
August 20 thru
August 24, 2008
Indianapolis, Indiana**





HELPFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

DEPT. OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
VA BENEFITS - 1-800-827-1000

VA LIFE INSURANCE
1-800-829-8477 

63rd DIVISION ASSOCIATION DUES FORM

PLEASE PRINT OR USE MAILING LABEL

TO: DONNA LaCOSSE, P. O. BOX 86, MOROCCO, IN 47963

Name _____ 63rd Unit _____ Rank _____

Street _____ P.O. Box _____ Serial No. _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Date _____

Wife's Name _____ Phone (_____) _____ E-Mail _____

Annual Dues \$15.00 \$30.00 2 yrs. DUE ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1 EACH YEAR

Tell us about yourself _____
