

★ CAMP BLANDING ★ CAMP VAN DORN ★



# Blood and Fire

63rd Division Association, Inc.

• ARDENNES / ALSACE • RHINELAND • CENTRAL EUROPE •

VOL. 61, NO. 2

MOROCCO, INDIANA 47963

MAY 2009

## NEW STATEHOUSE



# 61ST

# BOSTON, MASS.

**AUGUST 12 -  
AUGUST 15, 2009**



## OLD STATEHOUSE

# Blood and Fire

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

Three Issues Annually

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## FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT ...

by Robert Capasso

The 61<sup>st</sup> Reunion of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Division Association will soon be here – and the Massachusetts Committee welcomes all our members of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Division and all our new members of the 63<sup>rd</sup> RSC.

From the information that is published in this issue and in the previous issues of the *Blood and Fire*, you can observe that we have kept the Hotel and Tour rates to an absolute minimum.

The Massachusetts committee has worked hard to perform the function as host of the convention and pass savings on to you so that you can enjoy the reunion and your vacation here in Boston.

Whether you take in Boston's historical sites ('The Spirit of America') by tour bus, motor vehicle or by walking tour, I hope you plan to save some time and energy to visit our towns and beaches as well as the scenery on Cape Anne on our North Shore as well as on Cape Cod on our South Shore.

If you want to spend some time at our local beaches you can take the hotel shuttle bus to the transit station and then just walk across the boulevard to our big Carson Beach, which has a large bathhouse. You can then catch the shuttle bus at the station, which runs every half hour, to go back to the Ramada.

If you want to spend some time on Boston Harbor – a drive to Castle Island for a picnic or to do some fishing, would be a different activity. It is only a short drive from the hotel, but you would have to provide your own transportation.

A reminder again – if you are flying to Logan Airport – call the Ramada on their direct phone line and wait for the shuttle – a taxi ride will cost around thirty dollars. Also, make your reservations at the Hotel for the ride back.

The tour on Friday was planned so that you can fit in your own trips. We thought that Plymouth has the double attraction for someone that does not have their own transportation. There is the Plymouth Plantation in Plymouth (a replica of a Pilgrim Village with attendants dressed as Pilgrims) but we have not scheduled a tour there since it could not fit in with our time frame and it requires a lot of walking.

The City motor tour on Thursday will cover all the Freedom Trail and give you a bird's eye view of the historical sites – and if you are not

## From The President .....

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

taking the bus tour to Plymouth on Friday, you can take the public transportation in to the City and take the walking tour of the Freedom Trail, which will give you a detailed and first hand look at history.

We have planned to have the Memorial Service before the Saturday business meeting so that all Saturday afternoon will be free to see the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum or some of the beaches close to the Ramada. We've invited the ladies to the business meeting so they can see what goes on and also keep track of their men to drag them out for some last minute site seeing or shopping.

I hope your plans allow you to come early and stay late in the Boston area and that you allow the Massachusetts committee to be at your service to make your visit a memorable and satisfying occasion.

The Ramada Inn is not a city hotel and is far enough out of the city to give you an opportunity to see our beaches and make some side trips on your own. The tours are all motor tours so you do not have much walking – but enough free time to make your own transportation arrangements if you want to go back for some in-depth visiting. We've provided enough restaurant activities so we can all be together to enjoy some New England delicacies.

Again – if you have not completed the Hotel Registration Form or the Reunion Registration Form, please complete and mail them before the cut-off date so we can make final plans for all your planned activities and have enough buses so we can all go together.

### From the editor . . .

*Donna LaCrosse*

I can hardly believe it is time to publish the May issue of the *Blood and Fire*. This is the last publication until after the reunion is over in August. Hopefully I didn't goof and you will receive all you need to know about the reunion in Boston in this issue.

My plea for donations is paying off. I have heard from some of you – notes of encouragement with money for the till were very welcome and much appreciated. I hate begging for money! It must be a terrible feeling to be poor and have to stand on a street corner with a tin cup, asking for a hand-out in order to eat another meal. I thank the good Lord I have never had to do this – asking for money to help defray the cost of the *Blood and Fire* is hard enough to do!!

Regardless of what has to be done, I will send

you the May issue. At least I will see that it is mailed.

This might be the time to ask for input for the *Blood and Fire*. What would you like to see printed on the pages of this publication? What would you do that is different from what I am doing? Remember, this is your newsletter – what goes inside is what you send and if you send nothing, I shake bushes until I get something to print! Shaking bushes is getting harder and harder to do!! I still need your story, so get busy and send something to share with the readers.

An election will be held in August at the National reunion, and someone else may be doing this publication beginning in November. If this happens, be sure you cooperate with the person serving as editor. Whoever it is, they will need your help and encouragement, so stand up and be counted as a 63<sup>rd</sup> booster.

I have received warm messages concerning the addition of the *Blood and Fire Photo Gallery* pages and the *In Memoriam* pages that appeared in the February issue of this publication. I am so glad the pages met with your approval and I sincerely hope you keep sending information and pictures for those pages.

The pictures sent to me for publication and are not to be returned to the sender, will be sent to Fred Clinton for website use. Fred is aware of this, so he is not going to be surprised when he reads this column!

Again, thank you for the moral support and the financial support so the *Blood and Fire* can continue to be a welcome publication into your home. Some of you are not able to attend reunions and this is the only connection you have with your buddies – others look forward to receiving the newsletter just to read about their buddies – for whatever reason, your interest in the *Blood and Fire* is greatly needed and appreciated.

Have a great summer and keep in touch!

### A Memo from the Secretary . . .

*Donna LaCrosse*

Greetings from Indiana – again! It has been a long, long winter but as I type this, the sun is shining and it is almost seventy, but there were raindrops on the kitchen window earlier. I guess you would say this is typical April weather.

Things are looking great from this angle – my husband is feeling super and received a good report from his pacemaker professionals this past Tuesday. Being outside the past few days has made a tremendous difference in the way he feels and acts. Harold is not a cold-weather person! He continues to harass me and I continue to ignore him so I guess we are even!

We became great-grandparents for the fifth

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**63RD INFANTRY DIVISION REGISTRATION  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS  
AUGUST 12 - 15, 2009**

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 **63RD DIVISION ASSOCIATION, 145 Nichols St., Norwood, MA 02062**; in the form of check or money order (no credit cards or phone reservations). Your cancelled check will serve as your confirmation. All registration forms and payments must be received by mail on or before **JULY 13, 2009**. After that date, reservations will be accepted only on a space available basis. Make a copy of this form before mailing.

**CUT OFF DATE: JULY 13, 2009**

		<b>\$ Per Person</b>	<b># of People per reg</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>REGISTRATION FOR 2009 REUNION</b> (Widows of 63rd Vets do NOT pay registration fee)				
<b>Reunion Registration</b>		\$35.00		\$35.00
<b>NUMBER ATTENDING</b>				
<b>Wednesday, August 12</b>				
Meet Your Buddies, Cash Bar, Snacks	7:00pm-11:00pm	Free		Free
<b>Thursday, August 13</b>				
City Tour, Harbor Cruise	9:30am-3:30pm	\$35.00		\$
<b>Thursday, August 13</b>				
Buffet Dinner, Cash Bar	7:00pm-11:00pm			
<i>Please choose entree:</i>				
Fresh Roasted Turkey		\$32.00		\$
Boston Schrod		\$32.00		\$
Children Plate (chicken fingers & fries)		\$10.00		\$
<b>Friday, August 14</b>				
Bus Tour Plymouth	10:00am-2:00pm	\$25.00		\$
<b>Friday, August 14</b>				
Shopping & Dinner Tour	6:00pm-9:00pm	\$15.00		\$
<b>Saturday, August 15</b>				
Executive Council Meeting	9:00am-10:00am			
Memorial Service	10:00am-10:30am			
Business Meeting (Ladies invited)	10:30am-12:30pm			
<b>Saturday, August 15</b>				
Lunch on your own	12:30pm-2:00pm			
Shuttle Bus to J. F. K. Library	2:00pm-5:00pm	Free		Free
<b>Saturday, August 15</b>				
Cocktail Party Cash Bar	6:00pm-7:00pm			
Dinner / Dance	7:00pm-11:00pm			
<i>Please choose entree:</i>				
Roast New York Sirloin, Au Jus		\$36.00		\$
Filet of Sole w/seafood stuffing		\$36.00		\$
Children Plate (chicken fingers & fries)		\$10.00		\$
<b>GRAND TOTAL DUE TO 63RD DIVISION ASSOCIATION</b>				<b>\$</b>

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Nick Name \_\_\_\_\_ Unit/Co. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Spouse Name \_\_\_\_\_ Guest Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Method of Transportation to Boston: Plane (Yes )  
 Auto (Yes )  
 Person to contact in Emergency: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

**CANCELLATION AND REFUND POLICY**

- Cancellation of refund activities made prior to cut-off date will result in a full refund.
- Cancellation made after the cut-off date will be refunded to the fullest extent that the commitments and guarantees do not result in a liability by the Association.
- **Cancellation of your hotel reservation does not cancel your reunion activities.**

**OFFICE USE ONLY**

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Date Rec'd. \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name Tag Completed \_\_\_\_\_  
 Package Completed \_\_\_\_\_

# A memo from secretary ...

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

time on April 2, 2009. We received our first great-granddaughter! She is really a cute little girl with lots of dark hair and chubby little cheeks – just like her great-grandmother! Not the cute part but the chubby part and definitely not the dark hair part!

In July we are expecting another little girl to join the family via one of our foster grandsons and his wife, another baby is due in November and one in December. Our family is expanding by leaps and bounds and when Christmas arrives in a few months, I will be able to place at least two baby dolls under the tree! I have never been able to do this – our granddaughters were all too old for dolls when they were adopted, and we had all grandsons and foster grandsons, so buying doll babies will be a real treat.

I certainly hope you are planning on attending the National reunion in Boston. Bob Capasso is chewing his nails right up to the elbow waiting for the reservations to arrive, so send them in early – a slightly injured Capasso would not be in the best of spirits when he greets us in Boston if he doesn't know who or how many to expect!

I am looking forward to our trip to Boston - seeing you again and meeting new members who have not been able to attend the reunions for many years. If I don't see you first, stop by and say "hi" – I would like to be a friend you have not met before!

## Public transportation for reunion



Public transportation is available to go to the center of the city from the Ramada Inn:

A): Boston Harbor: 1) Take the hotel shuttle to the Transit Station 'RFK/UMAS'; 2) Ride the Transit 'Red Line' three stops to Transit Station 'South Station'; 3) Walk along New Atlantic Avenue to the harbor at Long Wharf or Rowe's Wharf to take the Harbor Cruises or cruises to the Boston Harbor Islands.

OR

B): 1): Take the hotel shuttle to the Transit Station 'RFK/UMASS.' 2) Ride the Transit 'Red Line' four stops to Transit Station 'Downtown Crossing.' 3) Walk up Summer Street to the Boston Common on Tremont Street at the Information Center to start the Freedom Trail.

When returning: Follow the same above directions in reverse to the Transit Station 'RFK/UMASS' to pick up the next 30-minute scheduled Ramada Inn shuttle bus or telephone the Ramada Inn (617-287-9100) to arrange to be picked up by the hotel shuttle bus.

## Driving directions to the Ramada Inn

The Ramada Inn is located at 800 Morrissey Blvd, Boston, MA 02122. The phone number is (617) 287-9100 or (800) 886-0055.

From the South, follow I-93 North to Exit 13; Left at bottom of ramp – Victory Road; Next left onto Freeport Street (back of Westminster Motors on right; Ramada Inn is 300 yards ahead on the left.

From the North, Follow I-93 South to Exit 12; keep left and follow overhead signs for Morrissey Blvd; Keep left at Rotary and follow overhead signs for Morrissey Blvd; Ramada Inn is three-quarters mile ahead on the right.

## By railroad to Boston South Station

At South Station, go downstairs to the subway Transit Line and ride the Transit 'Red Line' for three stops to Transit Station 'JFK/UMASS.' Wait for the Ramada shuttle bus scheduled every thirty minutes or telephone the Ramada Inn (617) 287-9100 to be picked up by the Ramada Inn shuttle bus.

THE MAP IS OF MBTA SUBWAY  
ROUTES TO ALL PARTS OF THE CITY

# OUR HISTORY: THEN AND NOW

by Bill Scott, 1-Apr-2009

e-mail: wjs631@comcast.net

After many health-related delays, I have finally sent the 63rd Division unit morning reports for July through November 1944 to the Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC) in Carlisle, PA for their great files on our division in WWII. The next group will be for the first half of 1944. I plan to visit the AHEC before or after the Boston reunion to see how the files look so far in that huge facility. It is nice that the AHEC pays for the postage of those heavy shipments.

With that shipment and lots of orders for history items from our members and the families, the number of items given and sold has now risen to over 25,500. They recognize me at the local post office as a result of all the visits there.

The examination of the last alpha set #35 printed and copied in June 2008 is now up to the "S" file to get any known errors corrected on the unit rosters. Depending on the workload, it will likely not be duplicated on paper this year. The plan is to have it on a laptop computer for the up-to-date information. The rosters, the alpha list, the unit paths in Europe, address list, and other items will be available without printing, copying, and carrying, which will take a big load off of my back and the checking account.

The Hewlett-Packard computer has been purchased, and the needed programs will be installed soon so that the files can be seen on it at a lower cost and much lower workload for me. Our President, Bob Capasso, and I have talked about doing this in some detail. The load of stuff to bring to the reunion will be partially reduced as a result. The room for the history display at the reunion after the first day will be crowded with other items. The maps are being reframed in a different design to keep the damage from shipping greatly reduced. There will be no clamps and screws sticking out in back, so the packaging will be less bulky also.

A lot of this information is of great interest to the descendants of the 63rd men, particularly those whose relatives in the 63rd never talked much about his years in the 63rd. Sometimes I have to ask who the 63rd man was, which takes a little of my time. Most of them have gotten their information from the 63rd website which is

handled skillfully by Fred Clinton, or they have seen a *Blood & Fire* issue that has my address on it.

We finally have a reliable copying business located about one-half mile from our house so I don't have to go to Rockford to get decent big map copying done fast. The letter size copying improved earlier with a new business buy-out that I don't care to name, so now these two can compete for that size work. There is some good news in the business world for some of us. The Rockford printer and copier had just recently bought a copier for \$300,000 for large sheets that would amaze you with the speed.

At this time the rosters of the 63rd show 69,531 names, plus attachments in the ETO which puts the total in the records to 70,187. The 63rd lines include many duplications for transferred men, and some who were promoted to commissioned or warrant officers. There was an article in an old *Blood & Fire* that had a quotation from a division postal officer that said the 63rd had 60,000 men that had passed through the division during its short WWII service. So it looks like we might have accounted for most of them.

## PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE 61ST REUNION AUG. 12 - 15, 2009

### Ads needed for Souvenir Ad Book

Several ads for the 2009 Reunion Souvenir Ad Book have been submitted, but many more are needed if the book is to be a success.

It always helps when ads arrive early, so please help support this project by using the form found in this issue of the *Blood and Fire*, and send greetings, honorary messages, memorials, or for a reason of your own, real soon. Please note, the deadline for sending information for the book is earlier this year because the end product will be mailed to Boston instead of being hand delivered.

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 CAMP BLANDING CADRE MEN with data.....			\$5 ea. _____
Today's Address & Phone List of CAMP BLANDING CADRE MEN (for members only) .....			\$2 ea. _____
Today's Address & Phone List by State.(for members only).....	State #1 _____	State #2 _____	\$2 ea. _____
1,030 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, 70,258 names.....			\$74 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 Obergrenningen 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 &amp; 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 12/44 - 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 cap 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 bag.....	\$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.

April 2009 form #65

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



# Ramada Inn Boston update

The Ramada Inn is located at 800 Morrissey Blvd. in Boston, Massachusetts 02122. The telephone number is 617-287-9100 or 800-886-0056. It is located three miles from the center of the City of Boston and five miles from Logan International Airport. It is one mile from the University of Massachusetts Campus and the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum.

It is in combination with Comfort Inn in the next block and both have a combined total of over three hundred deluxe accommodation rooms equipped with voice mail, safes, irons and hair dryers.

If you are coming in to Logan Airport – after you have retrieved your luggage at the baggage area – pick up the direct telephone line to the Ramada Inn at the same baggage area and let them know your airline terminal name/number. Ramada Inn will give you the hourly schedule of the next complimentary shuttle bus that will transport you the five miles to the hotel.

There is also free scheduled shuttle bus service for the return trip back to the airport. Make a return reservation shortly after signing at the Ramada Inn so there will be sufficient transportation for the large number that will require transportation.

There is also free scheduled shuttle bus service every half hour to the public transportation lines for access to the center of the city and to the John F. Kennedy Library and Museum. There is free on-site parking, a family center, billiard, bowling, game room and outdoor pool.

Free deluxe continental breakfast, with an extended menu, is provided each day from 6:00 AM until 10:00 AM, on the first floor of the Inn. Free WiFi in each room, and free cable with HBO, fifty premium and business channels.

**Plan Now to Attend  
the 2009 Reunion  
August 12 - 15  
Boston,  
Massachusetts**

## Hold off on buying plane ticket

On a news program several days ago, it was stated that Southwest Air Lines had announced they would begin flying into Boston instead of the remote locations they now use.

As of now, no date has been announced nor have any fares been announced. Usually when they enter a new market, they set very attractive promotional fares and the other carriers usually meet those fares.

I will be holding off on our ticket purchase until this thing shakes out. Keep in mind, the pricing concerning dates and fares is purely my own speculation and is for information only.

*Bob McCourt, First Vice President, 2009 reunion*

# 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 2009 issue of the Blood and Fire. If you can help, please call, write or email the secretary/treasurer.*

Betty Balestriell, Associate member, 88 Leighton Rd., Durham, ME 04222-5405.

Charles Caverly, SIG 563, 9 Oak St., Winchester, MA 01890-2125.

Robert W. Clayton, C 255, 8443 Travis Lane, Overland Park, KS 66212-1145.

Harris Goldman, L 254, 12001 Old Columbia Pk., Silver Springs, MD 20904.

Ralph R.W. Moore, C 253, 202 Jacob Albright Dr., Johnstown, PA 15904-2328.

Ammon Shelley, E 253, 3435 Beckett Rd., York, PA 17402-4304.

Kenneth L. Shenk, HQ 861, 6151 Richmond Ave., Garden Grove, CA 92845.

Norman Williamson, C 862, R#1 Box 1345, Onamia, MN 56359.

# 61<sup>ST</sup> REUNION

## BOSTON – AUGUST 12 – 15, 2009

### TOUR DESCRIPTIONS

*Thursday, August 13, 2009*  
(9:30 AM – 3:30 PM)

#### **City Tour with Harbor Cruise (Boston established 1630)**

Along the historical sights of the Freedom Trail, Bunker Hill Monument (221-foot obelisk) and museum (battle with British June 17, 1775), Old North Church (oldest church building 1723) (Lanterns in bell tower warning on how British were to march to Lexington), the Old State House where the Declaration of Independence was first publicly read on July 18, 1776.

US Constitution (Old Ironsides) launched October 21, 1797, a 44 gun frigate. Oldest commissioned ship in world.

Faneuil Hall: Original building built in 1742 where meetings were held. Includes North & South Markets and an adjacent Quincy Market, a renovated 19<sup>th</sup> century complex containing over 70 specialty shops & restaurants, produce stands and retail pushcarts. Street performers entertaining continuously.

Short Harbor Cruise of Boston Waterfront: Lunch on your own at Union Oyster House, America's oldest restaurant.

Includes Bus and Harbor Cruise, narrated tour and return to hotel by 3:30 P.M.

*Thursday, August 13, 2009*  
(7:00 P.M. – 11:00 P.M.)

Buffet Dinner at Hotel, Cash Bar, soft Music and Dancing.

Recreation complex at adjoining building, including bowling, billiards and games.

*Friday, August 14, 2009*  
(10 A.M. – 2 P.M.)

#### **Bus Tour Plymouth (40 miles)**

Plymouth Rock – pilgrims landed December 1620. Rock is protected by granite portico. Self guided tours on Pilgrim Path of 20 historical sites. Mayflower II – a reproduction of ship that brought Pilgrims to America. Tours of the vessel and exhibition on the dock. Lunch on your own; many fine restaurants on the dock area.

Return to hotel by 2 p.m.

*Friday, August 14, 2009*  
(6 P.M. – 9 P.M.)

#### **Shopping and Dinner Tour**

Bus transportation to Copley Square in Boston. Prudential Center at Copley Square of 52-story, 28-acre complex of shops, restaurants, plaza and covered walkway. Skywalk Observatory at Prudential Center on 50<sup>th</sup> floor panorama of City and suburbs.

Trinity Church of Romanesque in style consecrated in 1877. Dinner on your own. Many fine restaurants in the center. Return to hotel by 9 p.m.

*Saturday Afternoon, August 15, 2009*  
(2 p.m. – 5 p.m.)

Complimentary Shuttle from hotel every half hour to:

John F. Kennedy (35<sup>th</sup> president) Library & museum. Admission is \$10. One mile from hotel. Next to University of Massachusetts campus. Last film one hour and ten minutes before closing.

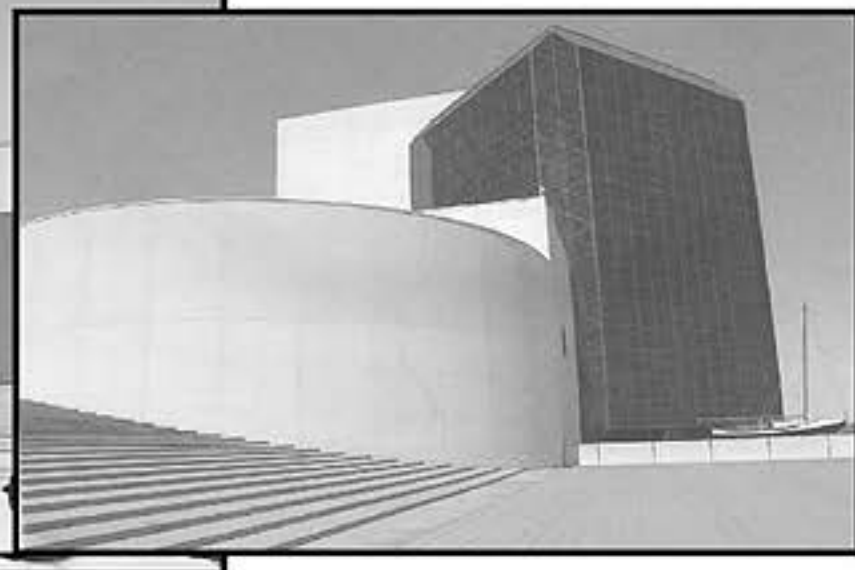
# *Fort Independence on Boston Harbor*



*John F. Kennedy  
Presidential Library and Museum*



*Rear of Building of  
J.F. Kennedy  
Library and Museum*



## WALKING TOUR OF "FREEDOM TRAIL"

A walking tour of Boston's "Freedom Trail" begins at the Visitors Information Center in Boston Common near Tremont Street – the 44-acre park, bounded by Beacon, Charles, Boylston, Tremont and Park Streets. The trail leads through 23 of Boston's historic sites and follows most of the sites that are on our motor City Tour.

It is simple to follow: red bricks or granite stones embedded into the sidewalk form a line that guides you from place to place and in some places, the red line is painted onto the sidewalk or street. Each stop represents a chapter in American history with vivid reminders of events that led to American independence.

The Boston portion may take most of the day if you tour the attractions.

**Charlestown Portion:** The Bunker Hill Monument and the Museum of the battle with the British on June 17, 1775. The U.S. Constitution 44-gun frigate launched October 21, 1797, which has a compliment of Navy personnel on board.

The Charlestown portion may take a half-day if you tour the ship and take in the many sights in the Charlestown Navy Yard.

## AUTOMOBILE DRIVING TOURS

It is a thirty-minute drive to the adjoining city of Quincy, with the house of the second president, John Adams; and the house of the sixth president, John Quincy Adams.

It is a one-hour drive west to Lexington and Concord where the "Shot Heard Round The World" occurred on April 19, 1775. It was the first conflict with British – drove British back and forced retreat to Boston.

A two-hour drive South leads to Cape Cod, with beaches, shops and sand dunes of Cape Cod National

Seashore.

It is a two-hour drive North to the City of Gloucester (fishing center from 1623) and with the Sleeper-McCann house of 40 rooms containing 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century American and European decorative arts and furnishings; the City of Salem which was the capital of the Massachusetts Bay Colony from its founding 1620-30, and where the witchcraft trials were held in 1692, and the City of Rockport with artists' colony and the oldest building on Cape Ann Built in 1658.

## BOSTON BOAT TOURS

Sight seeing cruises of Boston Harbor and the Boston Harbor Islands are available with transportation on your own from the Hotel to Long Wharf or Rowes Wharf.

**Boston Inner and Outer Harbor Cruise** is a 90-minute tour beginning at 11:00 AM, 1:00 PM and 3:00 PM. Cost is \$15.00.

**Sunset Cruise** at the Harbor at sunset with USS Constitution's sunset cannon serenade beginning at 7:00 P.M. Cost is \$15.00.

A forty-five minute boat tour on the USS Constitution will begin at 10:30 A.M., and will take place each hour until 4:30 P.M. Cost is \$10.00.

**Liberty Fleet of Tall Ships** is a two-hour cruise on the 80-foot, 125-foot Liberty Clipper ship. Sightseeing fare is \$35.00 to \$70.00.

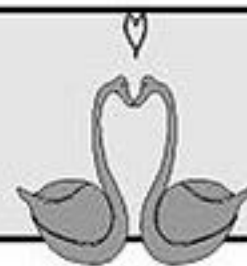
**Whale Watch** tour is a four or five hour cruise to Stellwagen Bank Marine Sanctuary beginning at 10:30 A.M. Cost is \$25.00.

**Lighthouse Cruises** are on August 2, August 9 and August 16. Can see over ten of the oldest lighthouses on the coastline. Cost is \$36.00.

A **Lunch Cruise** is available on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 11:00 A.M. This two-hour cruise offers a plated, three-course menu and costs \$55.00.

The **Ferry service** from Boston to Provincetown, Cape Cod is 90-minutes beginning at 8 A.M. From Boston the schedule is 1 P.M. and 5:30 P.M. and from Provincetown, 10 A.M., 3 P.M. and 7:30 P.M. Cost is \$54.00. A three-hour ferry cruise is \$23.00.

# 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  
 7: Mamie & Douglas Shaheen – FA 863 – 1946  
 8: Rita & Louis Maslinoff – G 253 – 1953  
 9: Audrey & Fred Consolmagno – H 254 – 1948  
 13: Charlene & Gene Hollifield – Assoc. – 1991  
 14: Mary & Ernest H. Klimek – D 255 – 1956  
 15: Margery & Joseph Olinde – H 253 – 1950  
     Wanda & Harold G. Heavins – 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: Josephine & Harold D. Betts – HQ 253 – 1943  
 7: Helen & John Bradley – A 253 – 1954  
 11: Helen & George Putman – FA 718 – 1995  
 12: Arlene & Robert Williams – F 255 – 1948  
 13: Helen & Max Gourley – C 253 – 1948  
     Deatra & Jonpatriock Anderson – USAR – 1995  
 14: Iona & James A. Gregg – I 253 – 1947  
     Helen & John H. Bradley – A 253 – 1954  
 15: 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: Lillian & Dick Mertes – I&R 254 – 1949  
     Marion & Anthony Nargi – Band – 1960  
 22: Della & Lewis Disbrow – E 255 – 1940  
 23: Susan & William J. Stratton – Assoc. – 1975  
 25: Billie Jean & Jack H. Haight – HQ 255 – 1956  
 26: Dorothy & Robert L. May – K 255 – 1950  
 27: Laura & Arthur W. Harckham – 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  
 Jean & John W. Brown – K 255 – 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: 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  
 10: Catherine & Frank Tedesso – E 255 – 1949  
 11: Kathy & Richard Flaig – Associate – 1965  
 12: Eva & Harold Hibbs – HQ 718 – 1948  
 16: Villa & Harold Black Sr. – AT 255 – 1947  
     Jean & Kent Scholl – HQ 253 – 1950  
 18: Peggy & Robert Michajla – FA 718 – 1942  
 20: Lois & Lee Axsom – G 253 – 1952  
     Sue & George McIntosh – E 253 – 2002  
 21: Brenda & Nicholas Piazza – MED 254 – 1989  
 22: Cherri & Len Zimmerman – C 263 – 1943  
 23: Nancy & Ralph Fink – AT 254 – 1960  
 27: Virginia & Leamon J. Harvey – C 254 – 1952  
     Maggie & Robert E. Herzler – SV 255 – 1946  
 30: Janna & Edward Phillips – Associate – 2000

## 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: Mac & Garrett Hocksema – M 255 – 1946  
     Bernice & Carlton Peck – K 255 – 1949  
     Vivian & Robert Cohlmeier – C 363 – 1948  
     Peggy & Joe Kerns – E 254 – 1948  
 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  
 15: Flora Nell & Kenneth Gordon – Associate – 1948  
 16: Jean & Russell R. Hill – HQ 253 – 1949

# A word from your buddies . . .

## 253<sup>RD</sup> REGIMENT

Jack T. Vierling, Company C, wrote: "I do tours with my 1939 Packard. It still has the gas sticker on windshield from World War II."

Thomas O'Farrell, Company E, sent a donation to help with the expenses of publishing the *Blood and Fire*.

Ed Kelly, Company E, wrote: "Enclosed is a donation for the Association. I will always be proud to have served with the 63<sup>rd</sup> – a great Division."

The Rev. Dr. William T. Schumaker, Company G, is 83 years old, in remarkable good health and has a doctorate in Divinity. He has earned three master's degrees and has plans to attend college in the fall of 2009 to earn another master's degree.

## 254<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT

Orvide Mallo, Company A, sent this message: "We just received the February issue of the *Blood and Fire*. Donna, you sure put a lot of time and effort in putting together the issues of the *Blood and Fire*. I hope you live to be one hundred and two years old so you can keep the good work going! I am 86 years old and Dorothy is 84 years old. We raised five boys and four girls and we will celebrate our 66<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary the 7<sup>th</sup> of August. Thank you for what you are doing and we hope to see you at the next reunion."

Duane L. Franz, Company C, is keeping an open mind about the Boston Reunion and might see us there.

Fielding R. Magness, Company C, wrote: "Just received my *Blood and Fire*. Enjoyed reading about the last reunion. I am writing about the stamps for veterans on the last page. My wife, Elizabeth, sent over 4,000 stamps with seven dollars in postage and we received notice they could not use one stamp! I really don't know what they want. We are sending no more stamps."

Grady Esco, Company K, sent this information about the ship *Saturnia*: "Received my *Blood and Fire* and as usual I enjoy what I can read. My sight is bad, hearing is bad and breathing is bad, but I am in no pain. Read the article about the ship *Saturnia* – I am not familiar with that ship, but when I wanted a picture of one I was on, I contacted Seaweed's Ships Histories, P.O. Box 154, Sistersville, W.V. 26175. That phone number is 1-800-732-9333. They sent me a picture of

USAT Brazil, the one I went overseas on. Maybe they can help the gentleman looking for his picture."

Fred Consolmagno, Company M, wrote: "The Indianapolis reunion was great! We learned so much and enjoyed every minute. I am now 87 years young, still golfing and still kicking! Thanks to all who made the 60<sup>th</sup> memorable. Looking forward to Boston."

## 255<sup>TH</sup> REGIMENT

Stanley E. Sulenski, Company A, wrote: "My wife died Palm Sunday, 2008 and then I came down with cancer. I went through a rough time – didn't recognize any of my friends. At the age of 85, I started a new business."

Ray Miserendino, Company B, sent an email telling us that his wife, Annette, tripped over a four-inch fire department hose on April 18 and broke her shoulder in three places. She underwent surgery on April 24, and Ray brought her home from the medical center April 29. She is feeling better day-by-day but will need therapy for the damage to her left shoulder. Please keep Annette in your prayers.

William Bolak, Company D, wrote: "I was in the Machine Gun Squad in combat. The last four months of the war, I played the accordion to help entertain the troops."

Ernest H. Klimek, Company D, and wife Mary have plans to attend the reunion in Boston.

Edmund J. Simmons, Company I, sent this message: "I am 85 years old and have Parkinson's. Are there any girls out there interested?"

Edward W. Schane, Company I, wrote: "I just received the latest *Blood and Fire* and again it brought back old memories. In the news section for the 255<sup>th</sup>, it was reported that Edmund Simmons, Company I, is suffering with Parkinson's and is having trouble writing. Eddie was a good friend when we both trained in Camp Van Dorn and on the trip across the Atlantic, and in the days following in France. He was always a source of fun and a very good friend. The Christmas card I sent him last year was returned to me, so apparently he has moved. If you have a new address for him, please send it to me."

(*Editor's note:* Simmons' letter came one day, Schane's letter arrived the next day! How cool is that? I sent Schane the new address for Simmons.)

# A word from your buddies . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

Robert Titterington, Company K, wrote: "Enjoy reading the newsletter—keep it coming!"

## MED 363

James A. Altimari, 363, had this to say: "Thanks for reminding me to pay my dues. At my age of 95, I am a little forgetful. I still drive a car and still go hunting. I recently shot a four-point buck in New York."

## QUARTERMASTER

Robert L. Wilson sent a nice donation and said: "I think I paid for this year last January but am sending some extra money to help out. You should not have to be low on funds. Thanks for the good work you do."

## HEADQUARTERS

Willard Pounds, Regiment 253, said: "Please change my address and accept the donation enclosed. My outfit was AT, 1<sup>st</sup> Bat. 253<sup>rd</sup> Regiment from Camp Van Dorn to the end of the war. I am now 85 years old. Good luck in the future and may God Bless."

Russ DeMar, Regiment 255, sent a donation and this message: "The February issue of the *Blood and Fire* brought tears to my eyes when I read of the financial threat to our newsletter. The *Blood and Fire* has been my only contact with the 63<sup>rd</sup> and the IMOK Chapter for many, many months. Due to health problems, I can't travel any distance and the painful bursitis in my legs is giving me great fun! The February issue is another one of your wonderful pieces of work."

Art Keigh, Regiment 255, sent this message: "Sweet Jo and I have been Life Members since forever. We read your memo in the February issue of the *Blood and Fire* where you discussed mailing fees and decreased assets. We want to donate a little "dab" to make up for the "free ride" Life Membership gives. Thanks for being such a super secretary. We know all too well the meaning of 'older I get the behinder I get.' Keep on keeping on."

Jack Haight, Regiment 255 wrote: "Still among the living and doing quite well, all things considered. Thanks for the good work you do."

William D. Weller, 862, sent a donation and these remarks: "I am a Life Member of the Association and am happy to contribute to the funds. We truly appreciate your being the secretary of the Association for all these years. Your dedication and service to the veterans included in the Association is unequalled – we all salute you. Thanks for keeping it going."

Before his death in November, Gordon "Shorty" Myers sent his dues for 2009 and his wife, Betty, enclosed a poem written by Martin A. Floon that was sent to her by Marty's wife, Patty. Marty, who had a big band in Pittsburgh prior to his death a few years ago, was in the Carmen Show. Betty asked that the poem be included in the *Blood and Fire* so look for a copy in this issue. Betty also reported they received a great-granddaughter last June and now have a little princess and two little princes.

William Taylor, 1<sup>st</sup> Bn, 253<sup>rd</sup>, asked: "Do you have a friend who will translate some articles from a German newspaper? There are several articles about conditions around the towns *Tauberbischsoheim* and *Wertheim* where some of the units of the 63<sup>rd</sup> were stationed for the Occupation. Some of the articles could be interesting for the *Blood and Fire*." (Editor's note: I do have a friend who is from Germany and will translate the articles. Please send them to me at PO Box 86, Morocco, IN 49763.)

Ray W. Peterson, 255<sup>th</sup>, sent this message: "I will be glad to see 2008 end! It has not been a good year. Merlene lost her brother; our daughter was diagnosed with cancer and our granddaughter has some serious bladder and kidney problems. We remain optimistic and are hanging in there." (Ray's article, *My Close Encounter with Forty German Rocket Scientists*, appears on one of the pages of this issue of the *Blood and Fire*.)

## FIELD ARTILLERY

Daniel O'Conner, 862, sent greetings for 2009 and said all was well at their house.

## ANTI TANK

Angelo J. Bartato, 254<sup>th</sup> Regiment, is planning to take a ride to McComb, Mississippi to visit the Camp Van Dorn museum. He and Mary live in Florida.

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

**USAR**

This message came from our newest member, LTC Beverly Houghton, who wrote: "I am currently Vice President of the 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division, UHAR and hope to be elected President for the next year."

**ASSOCIATE MEMBER**

Mildred Hendry sent this message: "My husband passed away on November 14, 1994, which was also his 69<sup>th</sup> birthday. He didn't know there was an Association nor did he know of the reunions. I found the information after his death, and also found a close army buddy of his miles away."

Syble W. Nails, widow of Buron Nails, FA 861, wrote: "It has been a busy year as usual - yard work, gardening and all the other that goes with it. I have lived on this 69-acre farm for 59 years and it is getting more than I can handle. We had some sickness in the family this year - my Becky had her second surgery for cancer and her husband had five stints - it's been rough but we have been blessed again. I would love to go to Boston - never been there."

**Anniversaries . . .**

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

- 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
- Mary Lou & Jack Kerins - D 255 - 1947
- 20: Patricia & James R. Pritchett - HQ 254 - 1979
- Margaret & John J. Morgan - AT 255 - 1951
- 23: Carol & Fred Bing - HQ 63 - 1983
- 27: Georgee & Albert Kidney - FA 863 - 1941
- 30: Lois & Charles G. Sunyak - G 255 - 1983
- 31: Evelyn & Olaf E. Miller - AT 253 - 1945

**RECEIVED TWO COPIES?**

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

Thank you so much.

Donna LaCosse

**Join the Army  
and have your  
dreams come true**

by Harold O'Neill

Most of us, while small boys dream of becoming a fireman, airplane pilot, truck driver or locomotive engineer. After a week in the Army they gave me a half-ton truck to drive. It was rather elderly and required double clutching to shift.

Also, it sometimes needed cranking because of a temperamental starter. My dream was short lived because it had to be washed every day before Retreat Formation. Another reason was the tests designed by some sadistic Engineers for Vehicle Operators. We were sent to take tests on the Red, White and Blue torture tracks. The Red was fairly easy and most of us got through the White. But the Blue led us into a swamp. I was winched out of mud holes four times. Finally only two and a half were left and I rode one as extra labor. The truck was on led off and we bogged down in three feet of water. The Engineer Major, clean, booted and polished stood on a nice dry platform. He ordered us to stay in the truck to better watch the Engineers at work. Two powerful winches on solid ground multiplied their pull by pulleys anchored to a large tree. Engines roared, the winches wound up cable and our truck didn't budge. I was puzzled until I looked back and saw the anchor coming down right at the truck. We all jumped into the water as the tree missed the truck, but drenched the Major in the mud. It made our day!

Much later, we took the Herman Goering Steel Works as part of our dash across Germany to meet the Russians. There were dozens of abandoned locomotives standing around. One G.I. built a roaring fire in the locomotive cab to build up steam - it was a Diesel engine. Several of us got an elderly switch engine moving, but it had to be hastily abandoned by jumping when we could not figure out how to stop it before it rammed a box car.

Next, we overran an airfield. By tinkering with a fighter plane, a Messerschmidt, I believe we got it to run. We used it to taxi across the field from our billet to chow or just for fun. We rode a half dozen men straddling the fuselage or on the wings. At times we got the tail up before throttling back. It was inevitable, one man taxiing by himself took off. When he ran out of gas, he came down. One thing about flying, you never get stuck up there!

Three dreams came true or almost.



# **- Letters and Opinions -**

## **WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ATTEND REUNION**

I have received the February 2009 issue of *Blood and Fire* and commend you, as the editor, for making *Blood and Fire* a newsworthy publication, reminding us again and again of our friends and comrades who served our nation in World War II and in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. I was privileged to command Headquarters Battery of the 862<sup>nd</sup> Field Artillery Battalion during our engagement in Europe. The success of the Division in combat was due to the bravery, dedication and resourcefulness of men like them.

My wife, Virginia, and I will not be able to attend the reunion in Boston this year. I am just over 90 years of age and we don't travel much now. The program looks very interesting and is a worthy effort by the reunion committee. The 63<sup>rd</sup> Division Association is a great organization. Thanks for keeping it going.

William D. Weller

## **WHAT I DO REMEMBER**

For reasons unknown to me, I cannot remember many of the details between our arrival in France in early December and the night in early February when I stepped on a schu mine. However, I do remember a very heroic medic coming to my aid that night. I don't even know his name, but he crawled into the area where I was laying, took care of my wounds as best he could, and crawled back out with me on his back. He literally saved my life and I can still see his face.

I hope the reunion is a success. Boston is a great city. I spent my time for recuperation in Camp Edwards on Cape Cod, Massachusetts, and we visited Boston when we were getting our legs back.

Edward W. Schane. I 255

## **MAKING SCRAPBOOK OF SERVICE**

I am including a check for membership to the 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Association. My father Willis H. Tompkins, T5, was a member of the 861<sup>st</sup> and died in 1982. I am doing a scrapbook of his military service and this website is wonderful. I have learned so much and passed the history on to my sisters.

Chris Tompkins

## **SAW RECENT SHOW ON HISTORY CHANNEL**

I saw a show recently on the History Channel. Confederate Gen. Van Dorn had his eye on a doctor's wife and the doctor killed the General and then headed north to union territory, I served in Morocco, North Africa from November 1951 to December 1952 at an air base called Sidi Sli Mane. It was run by the French Air Force but all were American troops. We had four Grumman SA-16 – Amphibian Air Craft to cover half of Africa and out into the Atlantic Ocean.

Phil Lavorgna, Associate

## **GRANDSON PROUD OF PURPLE HEART**

My six-year old grandson is so proud of his grandpa Robert's Purple Heart that I got all the information together for him so he can keep it with the Purple Heart. My children, grandchildren as well as myself, love to read the *Blood and Fire*.

I also would like you to know that the Great Lakes Cemetery in Holly, Michigan is a wonderful cemetery for our beloved departed veterans. It does remind us of Arlington.

Keep up the good work. I am 84 years old and we do slow down. God Bless you and God Bless America.

Lucille LeMarbe, widow of Robert LeMarbe

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## DIFFERENT DIVISION PATCH

I was in the 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon of D Company, 255. I am very proud of having served in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Division and having served under Platoon leader Jack Kerins. I also keep in touch with Calvin Mason in Morristown, Tennessee. I am sending you a patch, that I understand, they are wearing in Afghanistan and in Iraq, too. The patch is tan with a brown flame and the sword is tan with a brown tip. I like the original better!

While addressing your envelope, I noticed the last two numbers of your zip code are 63. (How cool is that?) Keep up the great job that you are doing.

Richard Gutierrez

## CHURCH WELCOMED RETURNING SOLDIERS

*(This item that appeared in the June 25, 2008 issue of the San Gabriel Valley Tribune was written by Thomas Hines, and submitted by Richard Gutierrez. El Monte is only ten miles from where Richard lives.)*

Army Reserve Master Sgt. Ceasar Torres and 39 fellow soldiers, recently deployed in Afghanistan with the 155<sup>th</sup> Combat Sustainment Support Battalion for more than a year, were guests of honor at the New Hope Community Church in El Monte last Tuesday, where they were greeted by eighty people holding welcome home signs and throwing confetti.

Eyes were filled with tears as troops and their families were later honored at an awards ceremony held in the Church social room. Following the final congratulatory speech, Torres, his wife Isabel and four children headed home. Torres is from this community; his fellow soldiers had yet to complete their journey home; one was going to Phoenix to see his wife and three-year old son.

## VISITS GREAT LAKES NATIONAL CEMETERY

I agree that mice are uninvited guests, but I would rather deal with mice than with the problem we have with skunks – especially when my neighbor's dog thinks the skunks are a playmate, then comes running to me to give him a bath!

My daughter Ida, granddaughter Bella, and I attended the Veteran's Day program at the Great Lakes National Cemetery in Holly, Michigan on November 11. Even though there was no rain or snow, the service was cold but very beautiful.

My husband, Robert passed away in January 2008 but I have been very slow at going through his things, especially his hunting and fishing stuff, but am managing to get the job done. And while doing this, I found some letters from Sam L. Redfield of Watsonville, California. There was a note in one of the 2002 issues of the *Blood and Fire* that Sam's wife had passed away. I am wondering if Sam is still alive? If you find any info on Sam, please put it in the next *Blood and Fire*.

Lucille LeMarbe

*(Editor's Note: I have Sam Redfield, G 253, in my membership roster as living at 811 Delta Way, Watsonville, CA 95076.)*

**61st Reunion  
August 12 thru  
August 15, 2009  
Boston, Mass.**

## **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.

# *My close encounter with 40 German rocket scientists*

*by Ray W. Peterson*

During WW II, I served with an Intelligence and Reconnaissance (I&R) platoon, 255<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division in France and Germany.

In August 1945, as the war ended, I was transferred to the 29<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment stationed in Frankfurt, Germany. We were part of General Eisenhower's Supreme Headquarters (SHAEF) at that time.

On or about October 11, 1945, I was called into 1<sup>st</sup> Sgt. Michael Mastrangelo's office. He told me I was to accompany him and an Army medic on a highly classified mission called Operation Overcast. He said we were to transport 40 German men and their families from the Frankfurt/Hanau area by train to Landshut, Bavaria. He said they were to be handled as displaced persons.

On October 13, 1945, we loaded these so called DP's into twelve 40 x 8 boxcars at Hanau, Germany and started our journey to Landshut, Bavaria. We encountered many delays as a train carrying DP's had very low priority on the U.S. Army operated railroad. My brief journal shows we arrived there late on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of October 1945. Upon our arrival, we turned them over to Military Government Officials and started our journey back to Frankfurt.

I was totally confused as to the identity of those individuals. Over the next 53 years, I often thought about them and wondered why the U.S. Army would single out 40 German men and their families for special treatment when there were literally millions of DP's trying to get back to their homes in Europe.

Mike Mastrangelo and I have kept in touch with each other over these many years. In a Christmas card in 1998, Mike said, "I often think about our trip with Dr. von Braun and the other scientists." I immediately wrote to Mike and told him I didn't understand what he was saying. He sent me a number of documents verifying that those 40 men were indeed German scientists, who had designed and built the V1 and the V2 rockets that rained destruction on England during the war. These scientists came to the United States as illegal immigrants through Mexico and became the nucleus for all our missile and space exploration at Fort Bliss, Texas. A total of 132 rocket

scientists eventually came to America.

The story of Dr. Wernher von Braun and his fellow scientists goes back many years prior to my encounter with them. Adolph Hitler kept telling the German people and his enemies that he was developing secret weapons that would eventually win the war. British intelligence personnel took these threats very seriously and through spies and aerial reconnaissance, discovered a facility called Peenemunde. During August 1943, the British RAF bombed this facility and forced the scientists to move to underground facilities in Southern Germany. In May 1945, they surrendered themselves to U.S. troops. The Russians and other allied nations were clamoring to capture these scientists and the tons of documents from the rocket development projects. They much preferred going with the Americans, but many were captured, by the Russians, and by other nations.

When the Russians launched their Sputnik satellite in 1957, we in the U.S. realized just how valuable Dr. von Braun and his associates really were in our space program. Dr. von Braun was a great visionary on space travel and got our astronauts to the moon before the Soviet Union. The Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) he developed was instrumental in defeating the Russians during the long "Cold War."

As I look back on this experience, it is a bit frightening to think that the Army placed the safety and well being of these German scientists in the hands of three G.I.s and jeopardized the whole future of the U.S. missile and space programs. I am not sure we could have protected them from former Nazi SS, Russians, or other nations who desired their knowledge and documents, especially when two of us did not know how important they were to our country's future.

However, the guise of shipping them to Landshut as displaced persons obviously worked. I am very grateful that I was able to play a small part in protecting 40 of these original rocket scientists prior to their coming to the United States.

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*Perhaps the best reason for having calendars is that the cycle itself offers hope.*

# A combat medics' escapes and escapades

At the end of August and the beginning of September 1944, my fellow warriors and I completed our schoolroom and book training. The warlike maneuvers and living in the field began: sleeping in cold and wet tents, crawling through the mud to avoid machine gun fire over our heads, enjoying meals from trucks, and eating off our tin trays. I was kidding about the enjoyment part because "war is hell," and the rest of the next twelve months would prove it to be true.

With the completion of the field exercises, I returned to camp to pack for two-weeks furlough at home. Captain Baker commended everyone for completing the training and posed with us, and the Cadre for the company picture. I want to note it here that these draftees were from locations that had saturated the available young men to call up for service. One recruit was blind in one eye; another had one short leg, and another was thirty-seven years old, weighed 125 pounds, plus had seven children at home. Some others were older than I, being in their late twenties and early thirties, but all of these persevered and were honored for completing basic training. All received their assignments along with their furlough papers. After spending my time at home with my family, I headed for Centreville, Mississippi, to join the 63<sup>rd</sup> Division as a medical replacement. God had answered my prayers because now I would not have to carry a weapon of death.

The new adventure for me was all these train rides on my own. My first was going home after basic training and then returning to duty at camp Van Dorn, Mississippi. As the train left Chicago, I found a seat next to a beautiful young woman by the name of Jean, who was from Butler, Pennsylvania, and was seventeen years old, but shy. I managed to get very friendly with Jean before we parted in Jackson, Mississippi. I exchanged a few letters with her before I shipped out for overseas duty, but never heard from her again.

The train stopped at McComb, Mississippi, where I picked up a bus to complete my journey to Camp Van Dorn in Centreville. My assignment was as an aid man working with an ambulance driver. For the next six weeks, work consisted of first aid training and learning the anatomy, plus some overnight field trips where I would sleep in the ambulance if no one was checking.

The recreation around this camp consisted of storytelling, which included how several soldiers died on bivouac when bitten by coral snakes that had crawled into their sleeping bags. Other stories dwelled on all of the deserters that numbered in the hundreds,

including officers and even a chaplain. Early in November 1944, the 63<sup>rd</sup> Division packed and boarded a train for a POE location in upstate New York.

The trip to the POE was my fifth long train ride during the past seven months. The division left Mississippi and traveled through Alabama, then turned north to Tennessee and Kentucky. At night, when the bunks were made up, I'd lie there staring out the window, gazing at the city lights that passed before my eyes. As usual, the troop train spent a lot of time on sidings to let high priority trains get past our car. At this rate, it took more than two days to travel to Camp Shanks just north of New York City.

Camp Shanks was a small camp on top of a medium-sized Appalachian peak overlooking the Hudson River. The railroad followed the Hudson River's path right into Penn Station in Manhattan, New York. Our activities at camp were minimal, just enough to keep us busy until the other troops and I would be heading for the New York Harbors. On Monday, November 13, 1944, when I was supposed to be out around camp keeping busy and fit, I went back to my barracks instead. One of the Division officers was inspecting the barracks and found me asleep in my bunk. He marched me off to the commandant's office to report my actions. I was ordered restricted to the immediate barracks area to haul firewood and keep up the stove fires for the rest of stay at Camp Shanks.

On Thursday, November 16, 1944, the Officer of the Day ordered me to check with all personnel in our group to see who would like to make one last trip into New York City. After checking with everyone, I was returning the list to the company office when I decided to add my name to the list. To my complete surprise, being under discipline, a pass for me was available the next morning, so I took off for New York. Upon arrival at Penn Station, I looked for directions to the nearest Y.M.C.A. to reserve a bed for that night. My next stop was at the St. Nicholas Club on West 48<sup>th</sup> Street, looking for tickets to Friday and Saturday shows or parties. One of my choices was the Victory Center on West 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and the U.S.O. dance late in the evening. On Saturday, I visited Rockefeller Center and the RCA building where I had the opportunity to get on a television transmission that appeared on trial TV sets around the building. Throughout this entire weekend, I don't remember when I ate or slept. Saturday night I had a ticket for the Lincoln Square Center where the Dick Gates Orchestra started playing after 8:30 P.M. My stay here lasted just over an hour when some of the

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other servicemen said to try the dance at Hunter's College. It was being held at the Roosevelt House in Upper Manhattan. This was a beautiful old stone mansion that the Roosevelt Family loaned to the College for these special occasions and dances.

There were dozens of young ladies, so beautiful that the mere sight of them took my breath away! I was introduced to one striking lady with whom I chatted for some time. But, true to form, I was too timid to ask her for a dance. So Beth Myerson, who was Miss America in 1945, moved on to talk with some of the other servicemen. I once again, had a golden moment get lost into my past. Once again, my shyness arose, and another opportunity for a golden memory was forever lost.

On Sunday, I returned to Broadway visiting the different clubs and theaters. I checked out the Jack Dempsey Bar and went up to the top of the Empire State Building, then watched the skaters at Rockefeller Center ice rink. Late afternoon I caught the train back to Camp Shanks, and when I reached the gates, what a surprise! My squad leader and the platoon sergeant were waiting for me, and I was quickly escorted to the company headquarters. Major Carlson and two other officers were across the table from me. They informed me that I was being court-martialed for desertion and asked me what I had to say on my behalf. I explained that I had a pass signed by the Major, giving me permission to leave camp. They looked at me with quizzical faces, and one officer stammered that I was told to stay in camp and should have honored the verbal order. My reply was that in a few months, I could be killed, and I had decided to take my chances with one last fling in New York City.

The final outcome of my general court martial on November 19, 1944, was that I was a deserter, but I would return to my company and ship out when they left on the following week. Nothing was ever said to me again about this day, and I do not even know if it was included in my service records. The following Thursday, November 23<sup>rd</sup>, was the one time in our history that Americans had two Thanksgiving dinners. The first was for the Republicans, and the second was by the Roosevelt Democrats that is still used to this day, which is the last Thursday of November.

On the following Thursday, I, along with the rest of the Division, packed up and boarded the train for New York Harbor. At the dock, I boarded the *S.S. Thomas H. Barrie*, which held the 253<sup>rd</sup> Regiment Headquarters Group. The balance of the regimental group was boarded on the *S.S. Sea Robin*, including the

medical detachment. The *S.S. Thomas H. Barrie* was a converted prewar Caribbean cruise ship by the name of *Oriete* that had, among its other luxuries, a small hospital section that included two small rooms with four bunk beds in each of them. The balance of the Division was on other troop ships that made up the total convoy. We sailed out into the Atlantic the next morning where the entire convoy assembled into formation and proceeded to head south the first day. A large portion of land lovers and I were seasick the first couple days, but the bunk bed held me fast and saved my stomach until I was able to maneuver out on deck. The convoy passed by Bermuda, then swung east across the middle Atlantic. Our entire stay on board the ship was to last fourteen days. Six days out to sea, I had my second Thanksgiving dinner on November 30, 1944. It was served to me on a large divided tray that I carried to a high bar table where we stood to eat because there wasn't a chair or stool in sight. Thank goodness, I was over the seasickness and enjoyed every bite of turkey and trimmings.

As the convoy approached the Canary Islands, our ship pulled away in a big circle followed by one of the destroyer escorts. The *S.S. Thomas H. Barrie* met up with a merchant ship for refueling that took several hours to complete. I watched from the stern of the ship with others and quizzed a seaman about being separated from the rest of the convoy. I was told that a convoy only travels about nine knots an hour, and the *S.S. Thomas H. Barrie* would catch up easily, doing 28 knots an hour. This speed also helped the ship to outrun any subs that might come into the area. We caught up to the convoy just as we were passing the Straits of Gibraltar where the lights of the city of Algiers were visible to us. The last two days were spent going through the Mediterranean Sea until we passed Corsica, then made a left turn north, headed to Marseille, France. We entered the harbor late afternoon on December 7, 1944, and waited until the next morning to disembark. My walk down the gangplank was with mixed emotions, and the dreariness of the day did not help to calm the fears of my first steps on foreign soil. I carried my heavy duffel bag to a waiting two-and-a-half ton truck that was to transport the Division to a rural mountaintop north of the city. It was called the Delta Staging Area where we would wait until the entire Division had assembled before moving up to the front lines.

"War is cruel and you cannot refine it."  
(William Tecumseh Sherman, 1864)

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While the world anxiously awaited the Normandy Invasion and the liberation of Paris, almost unnoticed, the Allies invaded southern France to open a third front against the Wehrmacht. Cornered on three sides, the Germans began to crumble.

My fellow medics and I sat on top of the stone mountain, doing nothing but attempting to keep busy. I had a week of cold and wet miseries without a building, a cave, or a tent to get comfortable in during the bleak daytime hours. At night I crawled into two large cardboard boxes I found in the nearby railroad yard. It was cramped inside the box, and I was unable to fully stretch out inside my sleeping bag. Of course, this was better than attempting to erect a pup tent when the pegs would not pierce the rock on which I was resting.

The time came on Friday, December 15, when the entire 253<sup>rd</sup> Regiment was loaded on trucks and some very old 40x8 railroad boxcars, designated 40x8 because they would hold either 40 people or 8 horses. We were squeezed into the boxcar till all forty were aboard and our duffle bags stacked at each end of the boxcar. My miseries continued to mount being in these unheated boxcars in mid-December with no sanitary facilities, so I did without and made do with whatever. During daylight hours, stops were made to eat, stretch, and relieve ourselves. At night we had to lie on our sides and face each other to have enough room for all forty to lie down to get some sleep. Those in front of the sliding doors had even more misery when a GI needed to relieve himself by crawling on top of everyone and then have the spray blow back into their faces. A couple of hours into the first night, I got off the floor and climbed on top of the duffle bags and found the lumpy bags much better for sleeping.

I spent two days and two nights on this leg of my odyssey. The one good thing that I liked on this ride was joining a group to form a singing quartet. We spent many hours harmonizing at night for as long as possible to avoid going to sleep.

On day three, December 17, the Regiment arrived at Camp Oberhoffen, France. Weeks before I arrived in France, this camp held a German garrison, but now it was completely abandoned and unoccupied. The bunk bed that I was assigned still had the old straw mattress on it, which I covered with my bedroll. We spent two nights at this camp, then we were moved to Roppenheim, France, where the medics stayed, and the balance of the Regiment set up camp at Munchausen and Neuhaeusel, France. I was at this location for one week, until December 29. It was on the Rhine River, and the Germans occupied the east side of the river. On

Christmas night, I could look across the river and make out the German campfires as well as hear them singing Christmas carols. I thought to myself, "What a crazy war."

On Christmas day, the Catholic chaplain came around to see if any of us wanted to attend Christmas Mass. I said, "Yes, I would like that." And so did PFC Dekever who walked with me to the Catholic Church in town. The chaplain and his jeep driver, who doubled as altar boy, Dekever and I made up what must have been one of the smallest services attended in history.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> of December, the regiment motored back to Camp Oberhoffen for a couple of days to regroup, and then on New Year's Eve, we moved to Oermingem, France. I was at this location for three days, then on to Sarreguemines, France, located in Alsace-Lorraine but further up the Sarre River (region) which I learned many years later was the home of my family forefathers until 1709 when they migrated to Limerick, Ireland. The war at this moment seemed to be in limbo with no action anywhere along this front. The civilians were returning and the city had some semblance of normalcy with some stores and shops opening up.

I found a photography shop open and had a posed photo of myself in wartime uniform taken for my nineteenth birthday that was the following month. Unknown to me at this time was the fact that Sarreguemines was the jumping point into Germany on our final push to subdue the enemy. These past weeks were the last tokens of tranquility I would have to relish until the end of the war in Europe.

Of course, there were some isolated moments of excitement within my squad. As medics, we usually commandeered some large home to stay in and use it as living quarters as well as a field medical office. Being the low man on the totem pole, I was assigned the fireplace duty, but never being a boy scout, I did not know how to start fires. I loaded these massive stone fireplaces with paper and wood and poured on gasoline. I was lucky enough to survive two large explosions that shook the entire mansion. Clearly, I was not learning my lesson.

At 3 A.M. on February 16, 1945, the squad leader came into our second floor sleeping area and informed us to get out of our sleeping bags, for it was time to push off. This was where emotions kick into action as excitement and fear clashed within me, but as I learned in the coming months, it is better when our instincts are followed. I had to push fear to the side at all

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times in order not to paralyze myself or to look cowardly. This probably was the norm for all the GI's on this mission to free all people.

I was assigned as the balance of one litter-bearing squad and one field medic to B Company of the 253<sup>rd</sup> for the day's action. I was the very last person in the single-line procession crossing the Sarre River on a hastily constructed pontoon bridge. We felt our way along in the darkness on the German side of the river, scrambled up the embankment to our destination, the railroad tracks. We by-passed Hanweiler, Germany, and walked the tracks further into enemy territory. I was cautioned to step on each tie and not in between, as that was where the foot mines were planted. The darkness at 4 A.M. was bad enough to slow us down, but there was also low-lying fog with which to contend. My nearsightedness was a real problem, and I was falling behind the column. Now my fear was really growing. I thought I might lose the entire company in front of me and be left in this foreign land by myself. I struggled to move along faster by bending over with my face closer to the railroad ties, hoping for a quick dawn light. One hour into the march, I noticed a spot with a rail tie missing. I attempted to step to the outside of the rail to avoid the hole in the rail bed.

That was a bad move! This I later learned when I regained consciousness from my fall into a small, dry riverbed below the tracks. Now I was really terrified as I scrambled up the bank to get back onto the tracks above me. I had lost my helmet, and I don't know what else. All I wanted now was to catch up to my fellow troops as soon as possible. I raced across the rail ties in a desperate mind set, not caring if I stayed on the ties or in between. If I did not catch up, I would be dead anyway. After an hour or so I spotted the last man in the column, which happened to be from the litter-bearing squad. He didn't even know I was missing! About 6 A.M., a sliver of light appeared on the horizon, but also an eerie fog still lay low over the tracks, giving us some cover. Not for long, as gunfire soon erupted. The entire company dove down between the tracks for some protection.

With my helmet gone, I grabbed a 30-caliber ammo canister to hold over my head. Yet another dumb move on my part as the ammo canister was full, and one direct shot would have taken my head off. Machine gun fire raked over us for a half hour or so until a squad moved in from the flank and captured the location.

The infantry company left the tracks and headed in to form a large circle, cutting off all the German troops back to the Sarre River. Within the next

hour that morning, my litter squad was given our first call to pick up a wounded GI at the new front line. He was lifted onto our litter. And I grabbed a handle on the back as all four of us picked him up to start the long trek back to the aid station. I was exhausted before one hour had gone by. The four of us would rush for thirty or forty feet, then set the litter down for a few minutes. We attempted to move along the same area that was covered by the advancing troops. Unfortunately, this was high and open ground. The next thing I knew, we were spotted by German mortar gunners who had us zeroed in with two quick shots. Before the third round landed, we were up and running again and the spot where we were resting became a big crater. I ran with the rest of the team till we all dropped with exhaustion again. The German gunners were still on us, and again two rounds landed even closer. In terror, we leaped up again to clear the spot we were resting in before round three hit. This continued for nearly a quarter mile till we cleared the open area and got back into the woods nearby. All of the time that I was carrying this 200-pound plus Iowan farm boy, he was pleading with us to just set him down and save ourselves. Through all of his pain from his wounds that wouldn't even let him walk, he could see the agony and pain in our faces as we struggled to save him.

When we arrived at the railroad tracks, we were over halfway back to the footbridge where we would cross back into France and the waiting ambulance for our wounded GI. I learned later that it took us six hours to cover two-and-a-half miles to save our patient, and for this I, along with the rest of the litter squad was awarded the Bronze Star. A follow-up note to this adventure occurred when a second infantry company coming up the tracks to support Company B found my helmet with the large Red Cross painted on it, picked it out of the river bed, and returned it to me when told of my losing it that morning.

After the division gained a hold on the German side of the river, our 253<sup>rd</sup> Regiment pushed to the Siegfried line, and we busted through with little opposition.

My next adventure was in St. Ingbert, Germany, where we set up the next aid station. The following morning I walked to the center of the city and looked around at the different stores and homes that were still intact, but deserted. I entered one nice looking home on the main street and went from empty room to empty room. In a back bedroom, there was a chest of drawers all by itself which I did not look into,

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but did notice something on a shelf in the closet. There were two albums, each containing one hundred photos with a special kaleidoscope lens in a sliding holder. The photos and lens were in pockets made in the front and back covers with one slot for the viewing lens. A story explaining each photo was in the middle of each album.

I picked up both albums plus some photos that were loose without any cover, put them under my arm and headed back to the aid station. I was again reminded by the sergeant, that picking up souvenirs was dangerous because of all the booby trap mines that Germans left behind. Not one hour later a wounded GI was brought in with both hands missing. He told us that he was looking for souvenirs in town when he went into a nice home that still had a chest of drawers in the bedroom. When he went to open one of the drawers, it blew up in his face taking his hands off. I knew then that I had a guardian angel, and I was protected from this disaster.

In the coming weeks, the other medics and I had many calls into the no man's land of this war. Some of our calls were routine, but others were the horrors endured by many in the line of duty. The calls at night made my blood run cold almost every time. On one such run, I had to lie on the hood of the jeep, and with only the dim light of the slits over the headlamps, I was supposed to look for land mines in the road or land depressions to avoid. If they had known how bad my eyesight was, I am sure they would have chosen another for this job.

The next real challenge for my guardian angel occurred on a call where the wounded GI was in a foxhole some ten yards into no man's land. Across the one-quarter mile field, lay more woods filled with German troops and tanks. The other three medics in my litter squad and I crawled out to the foxhole on our stomachs, dragging the litter behind us. When we attempted to lift the wounded GI out of the foxhole, he let out one hell of a scream. We quickly pulled on him to get the GI out and set him on a litter just as fast as possible, then started running for the protection of the woods behind us. His scream had been heard across the meadow, and the Germans opened fire from their tanks. We all dove for the ground in front of us, leaving the poor wounded GI on the litter next to us. I was so sure that this was my final hour that I took a small prayer book from my pocket and proceeded to read it, although my face was only inches from the ground. After what seemed like hours, but was probably no more than fifteen or twenty minutes, the barrage ended. When I looked up, the entire forest of trees

around me was blown off at the top. I then stood up and looked down at the ground where I was lying. In a near perfect outline on the ground was a line of splintered wooden spikes from two to five feet long. It looked like a chalk outline of a murder victim. I just could not believe that there were so many splinters and not one hit any of us.

Once again we picked up our wounded patient and carried him to our jeep on a road behind the woods. We strapped him on the hood and jumped into the jeep for our ride back to the aid station.

The last two weeks of March 1945 were spent in a fast-paced chase of the retreating Germans. I had minimal work in the field on my ride to the Rhine River. Early one morning, the aid station received a call to pick up another wounded GI in the area inaccessible to our jeep. The litter team did get a ride to the trail close to a high ridge from which we started to walk. The four of us climbed this slightly wooded ridge up about twenty to thirty feet high and slid down the other side to a large open meadow. We all spread out to look for signs of where the forward troops were as we marched across this meadow. We gained the woods on the other side and continued on for another thirty minutes or so before coming across the forward position of our 253rd Regiment. They directed us to our patient, and we proceeded to load him on our litter. After a few minutes rest, we picked up the GI and started back through the woods and the meadow beyond. The four of us again struggled with the long haul and the heavy load. We stopped often to rest and catch our breaths.

As we exited the woods, what we saw in front of us really shook us up. The company engineers had come up behind us, clearing the area for land mines. The entire meadow was crisscrossed with white tape showing where each land mine was located. We explained that just hours before that we had come that way on our mission of mercy. We were told that might be so, but we would have to go around the meadow through the white taped corridor the engineers had staked out. To this day, I am unable to understand how we did not set off one of the land mines. We safely made the ridge and started our climb. Halfway up, I somehow twisted my ankle and dropped to my knees. I struggled to keep the litter level and the patient on it. The other team members lowered their corners quickly to keep all of us from rolling back down to the bottom of the ridge. After a few minutes rest, I was able to step on the foot, although still in some pain. We practically slid the litter down the far side of the ridge to the waiting jeep that

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**HOTEL REGISTRATION FORM**  
**RAMADA INN - AUGUST 12 - 15, 2009**

----- CUT HERE AND MAIL TO: -----

**Ramada Inn**  
**800 Morrissey Blvd**  
**Boston, MA 02122**

Attn: 63rd Division Association - Group Code **INDI**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone No. ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Sharing room with \_\_\_\_\_

Arrival Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ AM/PM: Dep Date \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL REQUESTS: Wheelchair accessible room \_\_\_\_\_ Non smoking \_\_\_\_\_

Queen Bed \_\_\_\_\_ Two double beds \_\_\_\_\_ (Bed type not guaranteed)

**RATE:** \$129.00 + tax (currently 12.45%). Rate honored two days before and after reunion dates, based on availability.

**CUT OFF DATE:** July 13, 2009. Reservations received after this date will be processed on space available basis, at the prevailing public rate.

**GUARANTEE:** Reservations must be guaranteed by credit card for first night lodging (no personal checks accepted)

\_\_\_\_\_ MC \_\_\_\_\_ Visa \_\_\_\_\_ AM Express \_\_\_\_\_ Discover

Credit Card Number \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Deposit refundable if reservation cancelled twenty hours before arrival date.

**SIGNATURE** (same as credit card holder)

\_\_\_\_\_

# In Memoriam

## RICHARD R. KRETSCHMER

Dick Kretschmer was born in Chicago and lived in the vicinity of the St. Valentine's Day massacre during the depression and prohibition. Bad ankles forced him to give up his dream of being a professional baseball player. He enlisted in the Regular Army for twenty-one dollars a month.



Following his enlistment period, he continued to serve in the US Army National Guard until he retired as a Chief Warrant officer in March of 1982. He also worked 43 years for San Diego Gas & Electric as an Emergency Crew Dispatcher.

He and his wife, Juanita, were married 65 years. They first met

at the Palace skating rink in San Diego. They are the parents of Barbara Ann Brown and Georgiana Birch; two grandchildren, Todd Brown and his wife Lynne and Melisa Duschane and her husband Jeff; four great-grandchildren, Nathan and Lauren Brown and Gabriel and Carlyle Duschane. Other survivors include son-in-law Martin Haase and son-in-law Greg Birch; one sister Georgie Henry and one sister-in-law, Marge Kretschmer.

## EDGAR TORRENCE

Edgar Torrence died December 3, 2008 from cancer related causes. He died in Eugene, Oregon after he and Mary moved back from Black Mountain, N.C. to be near their daughter.

He was 98 years old, active and in good health until his cancer moved into the advanced stage.

He was a member of the 254<sup>th</sup> regiment at Camp Van Dorn but did not go overseas into combat with the regiment. He remained in the Army Reserve for twenty years, retiring as a Lt. Col.

His career was with the YMCA for 42 years, part of his job was with Work Services in several countries – Turkey, Egypt, Tangier and Sri Lanka.

Survivors include his wife, Mary, three children and four grandchildren.

## ROBERT H. KELSEN

Bob died September 14, 2008 after suffering

with bad health for several years. He is survived by his wife, Gloria.

He served with the C 255 as a replacement and saw front line action during that time. He was not able to attend many of the reunions due to his health, but was very proud to be a part of the *Blood and Fire* group, and always enjoyed receiving the magazine.

## IRVING "FRED" KOFFMAN

Fred died January 5, 2009. He is survived by his wife, Sophie; two daughters, Susan K. Rubin and husband, Carl and Judy Goldberg and husband, Mark, four grandchildren, Nicole and Allison Rubin and Adam and Samantha Goldberg.

## ALF CRUTCHFIELD

Alf Crutchfield, Weapons Platoon, Company I 254 Regiment died at his home in Claremore, Oklahoma on Sunday April 26, 2009. Surviving members of I Company will remember "Crutch" as a memorable character. He attended at least one of the Company I reunions conducted by Charley Jenkins and held at Franklin, North Carolina, the home of the Captain Coss, the company commander.

## A TRIBUTE TO LOUIS WARMOTH

The late Louis Warmoth was the honored guest at a special program sponsored by the American Legion Post 15 in June 2008. He was recognized as a Leader Among Scouts, after volunteering over 80 years to the Scouting program.

Lou was twelve years old when he joined Boy Scouting in 1927. At that time, the scouts concentrated mostly on camping and tying knots. Since he joined the scouting program, there was not a time when he was not engaged in scouting activities.

He had served as assistant troop leader, a troop leader, a Cub Master, a leader, and a trainer. During his scouting years, he trained "worlds and worlds" of people to do Scouting and enjoyed every minute of it.

After moving to Sumter where he worked for

# In Memoriam

## Warmoth tribute . . .

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Carolina Coca-Cola Bottling Company for 45 years, he was asked to be the assistant Cub Master and it was not long before he became the Cub Master. Lou had a Cub Scout Pack at the Trinity United Methodist Church in Sumter for 17 years.

In 1969, Coca-Cola transferred Lou back to Chester to operate the York and Chester plants, and he organized two packs there, one being the first

integrated pack in the area, and worked with the Cub Scouts in Chester for the next 15 years.

While he never attained the rank of Eagle Scout, he did receive the Silver Beaver, the God and Country Award, the Palmetto Award, the Outstanding Commissioner Award, the Spark Plug Award, the Trainer's Key, the Trainer's Award, and is in the Henry Shelor District Scouting Hall of Fame.

## Smitty's Fox Company reunion members meet in Baton Rouge

Submitted by Herman Fabiani, Fox Co. 253 Reg.

dances held back in the Camp Van Dorn days. Thank you, Elsie.

After the tour the group met at Drusillas Seafood Restaurant to indulge in oysters on the half shell or whatever the pallet desired. This was compliments of Joe Aguzzi. Thank you, Joe.

A 25-passenger bus, and driver, was donated by Doug Traylor's son-in-law, Bruce Chittom, owner of a Limousine service. Our hats off to Bruce for his generosity. The driver shuttled 25 Hot Shots to Centreville, Mississippi where the Camp Van Dorn WW II Museum is located. We visited the museum and then went to the church hall to have our

annual dinner with about 100 Centreville town folks.

After dinner a Hot Shot courier, appointed by our leader Dr. Mack Castleberry, handed Vicki Natterville, Director of the Museum, a check for \$1,000.00 as a token of appreciation for their fine southern hospitality. Compliments of Smitty's Hot Shots. Mayor Olson also was given a certificate of our appreciation.

Vicki Natterville, Director of the Museum and Emma Zell, volunteer worker, were made Honorary Members of Smitty's Hot Shots. They also each received a personalized clock with a plaque indicating so. We were then shuttled back to our Hospitality room.

Thursday morning. The ladies did what they

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Once again success has prevailed for the Hot Shots of Smitty's Fox Company 253 Regiment, by having such a fine camaraderie reunion. The 39<sup>th</sup> mini reunion was held at the Ramada Inn Motel in Baton Rouge, Louisiana Monday, March 15 to Saturday, March 21, 2009.

Smitty's Fox Company, 253 Hot Shots started to arrive Monday, March 16 and the rest came in on the following day, Tuesday, March 17.

On Wednesday morning the group was given a very informative tour of Louisiana's capital building located in Baton Rouge. The tour guide was Elsie Holmes, who has been a tour guide for 26 years. She was also one of the faithful attendees at the U.S.O.

# Smitty's reunion . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

know best (SHOP) and in the evening we had our banquet at Ruffino's Restaurant where we held a candle memorial for four of our departed comrades. The Invocation, written by Dr. Jerry Gilden, was read by Phyllis Bennett, due to the illness and absence of Dr. Gilden. Twenty-eight members attended the dinner.

Friday morning we had a meeting to see where we wanted to have our 2010 Mini Reunion. After much discussion, it was voted to hold it in Branson, Missouri. At noon a lovely luncheon held in the Hospitality Room, was hosted by Margaret Aguzzi and Karen Fabiani. Following lunch, many of the Hot Shots said their good-byes and departed for home.



Sunday morning the rest of the group bid each other good-bye until next year, where the reunion will be held in Branson from March 22 to March 27, 2010.

Branson is a good, clean Christian and patriotic fun town.

All 63<sup>rd</sup> Hot Shots and friends are welcome to attend. Information can be obtained by calling Dr. Mack Castleberry at 903-893-0937 or Herman Fabiani at 352-637-2290.

## Need to replace your DD 214?

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

The website is:

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

## — 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 LaCrosse.

**DEADLINE FOR  
THE  
NOVEMBER 2009  
ISSUE OF THE  
BLOOD AND FIRE  
IS ON OR BEFORE  
OCTOBER 1, 2009**



# BLOOD AND FIRE PHOTO GALLERY



**John Elmovics and Carl Brass on climbing ropes between barracks (1943) 2nd BN, 254 Communications Platoon.**

*- submitted by Carl Brass, 2nd BN - 254 Communications Platoon*



**Left to right: Bob Nielsen, Ohio; Carl Brass, Pittsburgh and Roy Lermond, Mass.**

**Picture, submitted by Carl Brass, was taken the day they attacked and broke the German Siegfried Line. These three had just liberated a tailor shop in Eschringer, Germany, March 19, 1945.**



**2nd BN - 254 - Communications Platoon – starting with Delbello and ending with Brass. Other names are not known.**

*- submitted by Carl Brass.*



**2nd BN - 254 Communications Platoon – Sgt. John Kramer, is in the front row, far right. - Submitted by Carl Brass.**

**Front row, L to R: Abbotti, Grandl, Herring, Eddy and Kammermeier.**

**Back row is Kern and Brass, 2nd BN, 254, Communications Platoon.**

*- submitted by Carl Brass.*





# BLOOD AND FIRE PHOTO GALLERY



Lewis Disbrow, left, and David Montgomery, tour the 500 Museum in Indianapolis, August 2008. — picture submitted by Lewis Disbrow



Back row: Bill Byrnes, Barry Jacobson and Mike Jugan.

Front row: Stanley Rusinek and Lewis Disbrow.  
— Picture submitted by Lewis Disbrow.

## Indianapolis Reunion Memories



Left to right: Stanley Rusinek, Mike Jugan and Lewis Disbrow “laughing it up” during the Indianapolis reunion. — picture submitted by Lewis Disbrow



A thorn between two roses? Or, a rose between two thorns? Neither, just a happy threesome.

Jane and Mike Jugan and Peggy von Pentz enjoy each other during the Indianapolis reunion. — picture submitted by Lewis Disbrow

# A combat medics' escapes . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

drove us safely back to the aid station. I was able to rest my ankle for a couple of days before our next move to the front lines.

The countryside in this area was hilly and had some small mountainous locations that we had to march through. In one such small village, a row of houses was next to the road on each side and a second row of houses higher up the hillside. As we neared the halfway point through the village, gunfire came at us from the second row of houses on the left side. I dove to a deep gutter on my left to seek cover while the troops at the front of the column swung quickly to the left side. They circled to the rear of the houses to flush out the Germans who were still raking us with gunfire and a few German grenades, called potato mashers. One of the grenades rolled to the edge of the sidewalk near my head and exploded. The shrapnel bounced off my helmet, leaving a ringing in my ears for several hours. Soon we had the all clear and continued our march.

We arrived at Heidelberg, Germany on April 1, 1945, Easter Sunday. Before entering the city, all the troops were informed that there would be no shooting in the city. That was an agreement reached on both sides that Heidelberg had been designated as an open city. We learned that the city had a medical college and many of the students were German soldiers in uniform as well as workers at the school. I spent the day looking over the city in our immediate area. The streets had many civilians out shopping, and they stared at us, and we stared right back at them. This was really an awkward situation for me, and I thought to myself, "War is hell, but this is really crazy." This break gave me a chance to clean up and get my supplies ready for the next day's push further into Germany. The next morning as we pulled out of Heidelberg, I noticed some of the jeeps and three-quarter ton trucks with their trailers were weaving and moving erratically. Later that day information filtered down to us that some of our troops had raided several wineries and replaced the trailer supplies with their hoard of ill-gotten brews. The drunken drivers and many others, including several officers and noncoms, were busted to a lower rank and chastised for their actions.

For the next two weeks, our medical group spent our time following the fast-moving companies, just chasing the Germans with very few casualties. The weather was improving every day, making the fighting easier for us. Early on Monday morning, April 16, Sgt. Archer informed us that we had to leave right after breakfast to find Company B to pick up a wounded GI. The litter team moved into the jeep around 9 A.M., and

to my surprise, the sergeant and 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Jordan joined us. With the driver, Corporal Phillips, this made seven of us crowded into the jeep. The area was heavily forested and mountainous, and I hoped the driver knew where he was going because I was completely lost in this foreign countryside. We were moving quickly along a narrow blacktopped road through the woods when we came upon a large home that was several hundred feet off to our right side. The driver for some reason pulled to a quick stop. The reason, it turned out to be, was the sight of four or five German soldiers washing up in a watering trough near the house. They were half dressed and as soon as they spotted us, they all dashed into the house. Our short-lived conversation was that the medics were about to take some more German prisoners. To our surprise, the German soldiers came running out of the house followed by the rest of their army squad.

They were all carrying automatic weapons and were blasting away at us. In unison we all leaped from the jeep to the ditch on our left side. Miraculously, no one was hit, but Sergeant Archer did get skinned as one bullet passed between his legs and another between his nose and the glasses he was wearing. When the barrage ended, the jeep was almost cut in half from the hail of fire. The Germans called out to us to surrender, so I put my hands on my head and marched out of the ditch with the other six medics.

The war was winding down, and I could think of no reason for the Germans to keep us alive. I don't know what the others were thinking, but I was so terrified that it's a wonder I didn't have a stroke, due to my high blood pressure. In a short time, the German soldiers had gathered their things and readied us to march further to the rear, but before we left, they had Cpl. Phillips pull this jeep under the trees to hide it from aerial view. We entered this small village of Michelbach, and the German soldiers led us to a home that was their Company Headquarters. We were placed along a fence and were told to sit down. One by one they took us in to be interrogated. When the guards were not looking, I took some letters and other personal items I had on me and buried them in the dirt behind me. I did not want to give any helpful military information to the Germans. When my turn came, the guards marched me into a back room in the house and sat me on a kitchen chair. The German who did the interrogating spoke intelligible English. He was quick to point out who I was and with what division and company I served. I thought to myself, "I just got rid of

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# A combat medics' escapes . . .

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some very precious letters, and I don't remember what else I buried."

The interrogator continued to seek information from me, but I said I was just a field medic and had no access to military information. I would continue to also give just my name, rank, and serial number as we were all instructed to do. At one point, the interrogator blurted out that the war was going badly for them and that they were losing a lot of good soldiers. Without thinking, I replied, "Good," and for that the guard behind me gave a slug to the side of my head with a rifle butt. It stung for a moment, and then I was pulled up and marched out of the house. The guards again stood all of us up and started a second march back to what might have been their Division Headquarters. Again all of us had to be re-interrogated. This went just as quickly, and soon we were on the march again.

On this leg of our march, we encountered a couple of P47's returning from a raid. As they dove down toward our column, everyone made a leap for cover to the side of the road. Fortunately for us, they appeared to be out of ammunition, for the P47's then flew right back into the sky and kept on going.

When darkness arrived, we were led into a barn and waited there for some time. The doors of the barn opened, and guards with lanterns came in with an officer who proceeded to read off names. The first name called was for 1<sup>st</sup> Lieutenant Jordan. He was led to the door behind the officer. The next name called got no response because it was not understood. Again the name was called, and again no response, so one of the guards came over, grabbed me by the arm and shouted at me for not understanding my own name. Whatever he was saying in German just did not sound like Shier to me. Lt. Jordan and I were taken away for further interrogations back to their Corps and Army Headquarters. I don't know where I slept that night, and I never heard what happened to the medics we left behind. (They were all released at the war's end.) I later learned that as a courtesy to all officers, an enlisted person was assigned as an aid. On the following morning, Lt. Jordan, and I, were escorted to Army Headquarters by a German soldier driving a Mercedes convertible. We were led into a back room of this farmhouse that served as an office. A German general in a tattered gray uniform proceeded to ask questions of Lt. Jordan through an interpreter. It turns out that the general was the chief medical officer of this Corps area and only wanted to discuss the latest medical information. After this latest questioning, we were

never bothered by any Germans seeking military information. The comment I heard was, "They are only medics. What do they know?"

That evening we were marched to a farmhouse leading out of town. This was where we met up with a small company of German soldiers that escorted prisoners back to the Prisoner of War camps. Lt. Jordan and I joined five other POW's already traveling with about twenty-five Wehrmacht soldiers in this small company. The other POW's were a captain and lieutenant from the Royal Air Force, two noncom airmen from the 8<sup>th</sup> Air Force, and one other GI from the 7<sup>th</sup> Army who had escaped from a POW camp and had been recaptured.

The next two weeks were spent marching to the rear at night to avoid strafing by U.S. Army planes. Our daylight hours were spent in barns of any farm that was along our path of retreat. This was when I would try to cleanup and get some sleep. I marveled at how these old soldiers of the Wehrmacht could keep up the nightly march and the little rest they received. My amazement of these men was that because they were so old, they were kept from the front lines. All of them were in their early to late 40's. Some of them did not even bother to carry weapons, and others had rifles with broken bolts and stocks. All their food and other supplies were carried on a horse drawn flatbed carriage from World War I.

When we marched at night, the German soldiers would take turns getting onto the carriage for a rest because once the troops got started at night, there was no stopping until morning daylight. On one such night, I had the need to relieve myself and finally convinced the one English-speaking guard to let me drop out of the column and urinate down the side of the mountain we were on. As bad as I had to go, I was still too slow for the guard left behind to watch me. The guard was losing sight of the column in the darkness, and he, like me, was afraid to be left behind. So he poked me with his rifle butt, and said, "March or else." Well, I wasn't finished but wet pants were better than a bullet to the head.

Some nights it was so dark I was afraid to take one step in front of me, and on other nights there might be a full moon that lit up the valleys below or the mountain peaks on which I walked. The area I was in and the conditions around me would not even let me consider a possible escape. To help ease the tension of these nights, I started singing as I was being marched back, and for some unknown reason, the guards never

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# A combat medics' escapes . . .

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told me to stop. My fellow prisoners and some of the German guards did comment on my singing, saying I was flat or a miserable monotone, but never directed me to stop. One evening I was crossing over a large stone bridge that was still intact, and I asked the English speaking guard if he knew the name of the large river, and I was told it was the Danube.

One evening after that crossing, we had to pass through a city that was still active with a large population. The officers found a "brenn haus" open and got the okay for the guards and prisoners to go in for a drink. Not everyone went in, but I did, and the first thing I was asked was if I was a "flieger" (air force member). I quickly said, "Nein" because we had heard that at one time or another if the civilians got to a downed air force person first, he might be killed on sight. The second question for me was did I have any money to pay for a drink. I dug into my pocket and pulled out some army marks issued to me, and to my surprise, the waitress accepted them. "War is hell"...and also very strange.

During the daylight hours, the Germans continued to hide out in various barns they commandeered from local farmers. Since there were so few of us, the Germans fed us whatever they were having. This was one meal a day of a watery potato soup with some kind of greens in it with a pork bone to give it a little flavor. They picked up loaves of black bread as we marched along, but I never saw from where. Each of us received a quarter loaf each day and this I would munch on as the day went on. One day the Germans found a stash of Swiss chocolates and Schnapps. I received one piece of the chocolate, but they kept the drinks for themselves.

One of the hardships the other prisoners and I had to endure was the cool spring temperatures and how to keep warm. One of the things to which we resorted was sleeping near or on the manure piles in the barns. Thus, in the afternoon when it warmed up a bit, the others and I would strip down to our waists, air out our clothes and check for ticks. We had found them on our bodies several times in the past.

On the first Sunday after my capture, I sighted a church near where we had stopped for the day. I asked if it was a Catholic church and was told that it was. So I continued to inquire if it would be possible for me to attend a service there. The shocked response was they did not want to have the enemy sitting next to them in "their" church. This was strange and upsetting reply to me, but in retrospect I think I would feel the same. The next week passed quickly, and the pace for

German guards was more intense. This was due to the speedy advancement of allied troops deeper into Germany. Now they feared capture themselves. I heard that several times in the past couple of days the Wehrmacht officer who had charge of us was in contact with some German SS soldiers. They insisted that all seven POW's be turned over to them for execution. Our officer guard was just as insistent that all of the POW's were his responsibility, and he was not giving them up to anyone except the Camp Commandant. I later learned that the real reason we were kept from the SS Nazi Special Police soldiers was the officer guard wanted some security. All of us would be used as hostages to bargain with when we ran into the Allied troops.

On Monday, April 30, 1945, the other prisoners and I were told that this was the end of the run. Our German guards learned the Russian troops were a short distance to the east of our location and were making arrangements to surrender. Lt. Jordan and the British officers said they would accept the surrender of the Germans. But the German officer wanted more security for his men and himself.

After some discussion, it was agreed that a Polish POW that was working this farm would go out and make contact with the closest Allied troops. This turned out to be the Third Division of the U.S. 7<sup>th</sup> Army. They arrived the next morning, Tuesday, May 1, 1945, to complete the surrender of our German guards to myself and the other POW's. I know that the Germans would not surrender to the seven POW's until the other Americans arrived to back us up, but the fear of being a Russian prisoner made the surrender a reality. I consider this moment the craziest of the war in which I served. With great relief the troops of the Third Division took the Germans off our hands and marched them away. They also provided us with a two-and-a-half ton army truck to transport us back to the nearest camp for repatriated prisoners. That camp was at Mannheim, Germany. It would take us all day to drive the more than 200 miles from the small village of Biberg, Germany, where I was repatriated back to the camp. This was about thirty miles southeast of Munich that we drove through until we came to Dachau, the death camp northwest of Munich. The driver of the transport truck asked if it would be okay to stop there for a few minutes. The Dachau camp was just liberated the day before.

The driver stopped and parked on the street right in front of the main gate to the camp. Everyone

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# A combat medics' escapes . . .

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jumped out of the truck and ran into the camp. I was still too terrified by the war and my recent experiences to do as they were doing. The war had not ended as yet, and I was always afraid of another desperate counterattack by the Germans. When my companions did not come right out of the camp, I got out myself and walked over near the gate. I looked down the iron fence to my left and saw arms hanging through, but barely moving. I moved over for a closer look and was horrified to see that these skeletons were alive, but hardly able to move. My heart began to ache, and tears started to well in my eyes. To this day, I see the sunken eyes in their meatless skulls and wonder, "How could one human do this to another." The sight was so horrifying to me that I turned right around and got back into the truck. There are some things from this war experience that no human should ever forget.

After an hour or less, everyone left the Dachau camp and returned to the personnel truck. We continued our journey back to the Ex-POW camp at Mannheim. The first order of business was to strip bare-naked in a large tent where we were cleaned up, deloused, and issued all new clothing. Everything that we were wearing was taken and burned. I was allowed to keep my dog tags, Red Cross armband, plastic covered ID card and my bandage shears. I also kept my prayer book and medical folder.

When we had completed dressing, we were escorted to an old German barracks, where I took the first bunk, stored my belongings and headed for the mess hall. The food was great even though I don't recall what it was. The next day, May 2, the other new arrivals and I had checkups for our general health and a visit to the dentist. From this day forward, my time was spent in the camp waiting for transportation assignments. The war was still on officially, so I stayed close to camp.

Five days later on May 7, the camp was notified that the Germans had surrendered and the signing would be the next day. All those in camp had their own little way of celebrating, but most of it was just a lot of hollering and whooping it up. The lights came on in the cities and lit up the streets, and civilians appeared everywhere.

It was the second week at camp, and I had another brush with death. I was carrying one of the souvenir German pistols I had acquired from my former guards after my liberation. I took it out of my pocket in the mess hall to show a new replacement. When I let this green kid hold the pistol, he pulled the trigger. A 25-caliber slug whizzed right past my ear, hit the wall behind me, and then ricocheted around the

dining room. I grabbed the pistol back, stood and shook for a few minutes and thanked God no one was hit. On May 16, I packed my belongings and made ready to leave camp. To lighten my load, I sold off five of the relic pistols I had picked up from the German guards that held me. There were personnel troop trucks to transport all of us leaving for the airport. We boarded a DC3 cargo plane and took off for Le Havre, France. The plane was only equipped with metal bucket seats along each wall. We had a parachute for a seat cushion. This was to be my first plane ride, and I experienced a little bit of stomach queasiness.

Soon into the flight, I fell asleep and missed the low Paris flyover, that the pilot provided. As soon as we landed in Le Havre, all were driven to the shipping docks where we boarded a converted Kaiser liberty ship. The name of the ship was the Wm. T. Berry, and it had the appearance of having survived the entire war. It's crew was merchant marines, but had a small group of navy seaman to man the guns onboard.

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

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

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

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

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

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

All items will be returned when processing has been completed.

## Music



If there were no more music  
To soothe the aching world  
Sin would be multiplied thousand fold  
And a devil's flag unfurled.

"Bow Down," this devil would command  
"Close ears to all but me"  
Stop all this chords and rhythm  
And swell the misery.

"Give all your thought to sadness  
Give up your soul to gloom"  
Nature would rebel and cause  
The flowers not to bloom.



But this can never happen  
This can never be  
Music must be in this world  
To chase out misery.



There's music when the sun comes up  
A firey ball in the east  
The birds are singing cheerfully  
To every man and beast.

The birds sing gaily all day long  
As the dew shakes hands with the sun  
When wind sings melodys through the grass  
This is natures fun.



At even' birds sing a song of sleep  
The winds rock  
The cradle of slumber  
And starts her watch to keep.

The wind watches over  
The birds and the bees  
And plays melodys through  
The leaves of the trees.



Music is part of nature  
Part of everything that lives  
So enjoy it to the fullest  
For look at the joy it gives.

*Written by Martin A. Floon on August 15, 1940*  
He was nineteen years old

## 'Carentan O Carentan

..... by Louis Simpson

Trees in the old days used to stand, And shape a shady lane  
Where lovers wandered hand in hand, Who came from  
Carentan.

This was the shining green canal, Where we came two by  
two  
Walking at combat-interval, Such trees we never knew.

The day was early June, the ground, Was soft and bright  
with dew  
Far away the guns did sound, But here the sky was blue.

The sky was blue, but there a smoke, Hang still above the  
sea  
Where the ships together spoke, To towns we could not see.

Could you have seen us through a glass, You would have  
said a walk  
Of farmers out to turn the grass, Each with his own hay-  
fork.

The watchers in their leopard suits, Waited till it was time  
And aimed between the belt and boot, And let the barred  
climb.

I must lie down at once, There is a hammer at my knee  
And call it death or cowardice, Don't count again on me.

Everything's all right, Mother, Everyone gets the same  
At one time or another, It's all in the game.

I never strolled, nor ever shall, Down such a leafy sane  
I never drank in a canal, Nor ever shall again

There is a whistling in the leaves, And it is not the wind  
The twigs are falling from the knives, That cut men to the  
ground.

Tell me, Master-Sergeant, The way to turn and shoot  
But the Sergeant's silent, That taught me how to do it.

O Captain, show us quickly, Our place upon the map  
But the Captain's sickly, And taking a long nap.

Lieutenant, what's my duty, My place in the platoon?  
He too's a sleeping beauty, Charmed by that strange tune.

Carentan O Carentan, Before we met with you  
We never yet had lost a man, Or known what death could  
do.

*Submitted by Paul Vermillion!*

*(Carentan is a section of France and this poem is about this  
combat early in the invasion)*

## *Members of IMOK Chapter gather in Michigan for fall mini reunion*



*From left to right: Kit Anderson, Joan Dietrick, Howard Van Schoor, Judy Dietrick and Carl Anderson enjoy breakfast and each other's company during the fall meeting in Kalamazoo.*

Eighteen members of the IMOK Chapter traveled to Kalamazoo, Michigan on October 21, 22 and 23, 2008 for their fall mini reunion. Alberta and Mel Gobel, Jan and Quint Sella hosted the affair.

After arriving on Tuesday afternoon, members gathered in the Hospitality Room for snacks and drinks; gossip and laughter until it was time for dinner in the dining room of the host hotel, the Fairfield Inn Marriott.

Following dinner, Ed Fowle presided over a business meeting held in the Hospitality Room. The National Reunion held in Indianapolis last August was discussed and deemed a great success – except for the miles and miles of walking!! The 2009 reunion will take place in Boston, with Bob Capasso making the arrangements, after which the IMOK group will host the 2010 reunion in Dayton, Ohio. Armed Forces Reunion Planners will be in charge.

Wednesday morning members car-pooled to the Gilmore Car Museum, where the men enjoyed looking at the many antique cars and the ladies browsed in the House of Miniatures. They all enjoyed lunch at the Blue Moon Diner. A tour of the Kellogg Manor House and a drive-through of the Fort Custer National Cemetery completed the day of busyness for a group of old people!

Dinner was a welcome “event” in the dining room of the hotel, after which they all returned to the

Hospitality Room, where everyone enjoyed more snacks and liquid refreshments before retiring for the night.

Breakfast on Thursday found members packed and ready for their return trip home. Representing the Chapter were members from Indiana, Michigan, Ohio and Kentucky.

One couple decided that since it was only a three-hour drive from Morocco to Kalamazoo, they would take the scenic route; travel the country roads so they would have less traffic, less road construction and less wasted time. They arrived in Kalamazoo six hours after leaving home! The “man of the house” planned the trip. The “woman of the house” planned the return trip and it took three hours. All this traveling since June 2008 – three trips to Indianapolis, one to Kalamazoo and numerous jaunts to Lafayette - was all done on an expired license.

**61st Reunion**  
**August 12 thru**  
**August 15, 2009**  
**Boston, Mass.**



# Celebration of Life



*The following deaths were reported after the February 2009 issue of the Blood & Fire was printed. Please notify the secretary when you hear of the death of a person from the 63<sup>rd</sup>.*

**Frederick L. Burger**, I 254, passed away March 4, 2009. No further information was available.

**Steven Bernat**, FA 718, passed away March 7, 2009. No further information was available.

**Louis Campbell**, QM 63 and Life Member 1517, passed April 11, 2009 at the age of 83. No further information was available.

**Alf Crutchfield**, I 254, passed away April 26, 2009. (for more information see In Memoriam in this issue)

**William S. Hopps**, SV 253, passed away January 20, 2009. No further information was available.

**Robert H. Kelsen**, C 255, passed September 14, 2008. He was Life Member # 1423. His widow Gloria lives at 4007 S. Hempstead Cir., San Diego, CA 92116.

**Irving "Fred" Koffman**, MED 253 passed away January 5, 2009. No further information is available.

**Richard R. Kretschmer**, ENG. 263, passed away February 14, 2009. His widow Juanita lives at 6005 Albemarle St., San Diego, CA 92139.

**Henry L. Markley**, FA 63, passed March 7, 2008. He was Life Member # 503. His widow Grace lives at 300 Pleasure Road, Lancaster, PA 17601.

**Joseph M. Martillotti**, F 255, passed away April 2009. No further information was available.

**Orville Oehler**, F 254, passed December 29, 2008. His wife, Helen Louise, died in 2007. They were the parents of three children and lived in Iowa.

**John Reid**, FA 863, passed away November 24, 2008. No further information was available.

**William B. Robinson**, G 253, passed away April 16, 2009. He was Life Member #1147. His widow Rachel, lives at 4117 N. 29<sup>th</sup> St, Tacoma, WA 98704

**Daniel Skiba**, HQ 863, passed June 12, 2007. He was Life Member #1425. His widow Diane lives at 5818 Bullard St., Fenton, MI 48430.

**Paul B. Taylor**, B 255, passed away March 7, 2009. No further information was available.

**Edgar Torrence**, G 254, passed December 3, 2008. For more information see In Memoriam in this issue.

**Clark D. Utley**, G 253, passed away February 17, 2009. His widow Patricia lives at 5217 Cedar Lake Rd., Oscada, MT 48750-1504.

## SPOUSE DEATH

**Norma Tenney**, wife of Frank E. Tenney, Associate Member, died February 19, 2009. She suffered with Alzheimer's disease for a lengthy time. Her husband, Frank, lives 5204 Telford Lane, Louisville, KY 40241.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR . . .

### DO YOU REMEMBER THIS MAN?

S/Sgt. Vincent J. Collins was born in Pennsylvania and lived in Trenton, New Jersey with my Aunt Wilma. Uncle Vince was a bus driver for the Trenton Transit Company and enjoyed hunting and fishing. He served in the 63<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division and was killed in Germany on Tuesday, March 5, 1945 by sniper fire. His platoon buddy had the nickname of "Spud." I would greatly appreciate any information I can get about my Uncle Vince. Write me at 500 W. Hoffecker Rd., Pottstown, PA 19465.

*Harry A. Hall, Army ret.*

### MAKING PLANS FOR BOSTON REUNION

As a past president (1974), I am making plans to be in Boston this summer. I believe this is the fourth one to be held in New England. So I won't miss this one! The first one was in Hartford when I was vice president; the second one was in Windsor Locks, CT., when I was the president, and now Boston.

I am 84 years young and feel like I am 34 years old. Except for having three operations to get circulation back in my legs and one heart attack, I still feel good. I don't need a cane or a wheel chair!

I was just re-elected Post Commander of my VFW Post for the 28<sup>th</sup> time. We believe this is a record for one member to be elected this many times. I have been a member of the VFW for 62 years

I joined the 63<sup>rd</sup> Association in 1967. My daughter is coming to the reunion with me.

*Delbert Conroy*

# AD BOOK RESERVATION FORM

*August 12 thru 15, 2009*

CUT-OFF DATE  
 JUNE 1, 2009

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

FULL PAGE ..... **\$60.00**  
 1/2 PAGE ..... **\$35.00**



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

|                     |                   |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| FULL PAGE = \$60.00 | (4 3/4" x 7 3/4") |
| HALF PAGE = \$35.00 | (4 3/4" x 3 3/4") |
| 1/4 PAGE = \$25.00  | (4 3/4" x 1 3/4") |
| 1/8 PAGE = \$20.00  | (2-3/8" x 1 3/4") |

|                             |                                               |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <b>1/8 PAGE<br/>\$20.00</b> | <b>3 LINE<br/>BOOSTER<br/>\$10.00</b>         |
|                             | <b>SPONSOR<br/>NAME<br/>(EACH)<br/>\$2.00</b> |

2009 Boston, Massachusetts  
**63rd Division**  
**Association** BLOOD and FIRE  
 • ARDENNES • CENTRAL EUROPE • RHINELAND

## "HOT SHOTS" WE NEED YOUR HELP

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

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

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

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

**Make check(s) payable to:**  
**61ST REUNION 63rd DIVISION ASS'N.**  
**and mail to:**

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

Ad Copy: (PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY) \_\_\_\_\_ Ad Size: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

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

# Moving?

**P**lease 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?



**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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## 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

# 61st Reunion

## August 12 thru

## August 15, 2009

### Boston, Mass.



**HELPFUL  
TELEPHONE  
NUMBERS**

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

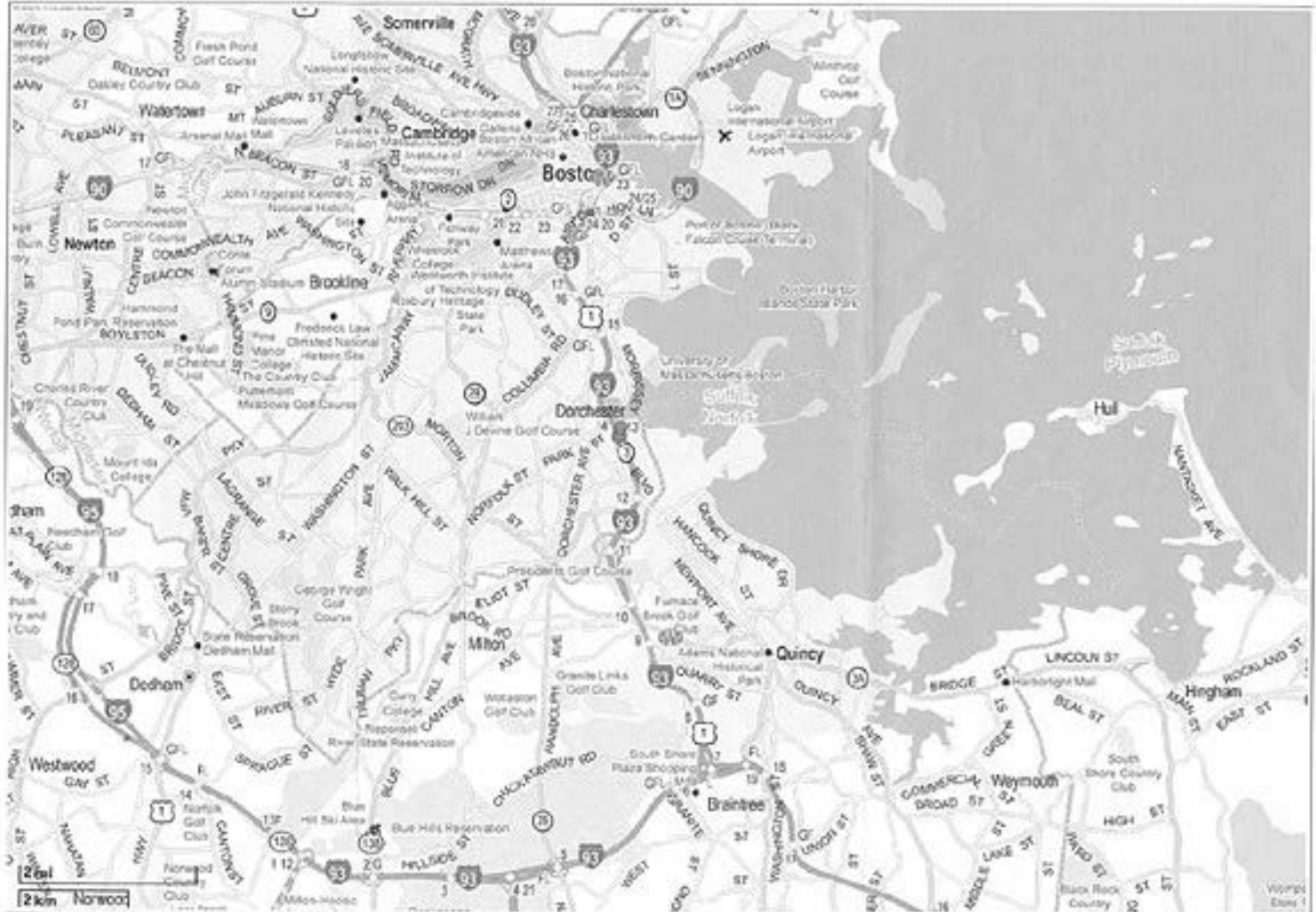
**VA LIFE INSURANCE  
1-800-829-8477**



# 61ST REUNION

## BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

### AUGUST 12 THRU AUGUST 15, 2009



## 63rd Division Association

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Donna LaCrosse, Secretary/Treasurer  
Post Office Box 86  
Morocco, Indiana 47963

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#### CHANGE OF ADDRESS

To ensure prompt delivery of the 63rd Blood and Fire and all mail, please advise National Secretary of any change.