



★ CAMP BLANDING ★ CAMP VAN DORN ★

Blood and Fire

63rd Division Association, Inc.

• ARDENNES / ALSACE • RHINELAND • CENTRAL EUROPE •

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and much more!

Board members make decision

When the 63rd Infantry Division board meeting was held on Friday, August 19, 2011 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Indianapolis, they knew they had to make a decision whether to continue or not to continue annual reunions.

Other business needed to be taken care of, but the annual reunion seemed to be the most important issue of the meeting.

All board members except one were represented at the meeting. Those who could not attend asked to be represented by proxy.

Fixed income, health issues, and lack of proper transportation were the main issues discussed and it was decided to discontinue annual reunions.

Because we are still an Association, board members need to meet annually in order to discuss Association business.

IMOK members will host a meeting for board members and all other members who desire to come. The date can be found elsewhere in this issue.

You may contact Ed Fowle or Judy Schaeffer for more details.

If you are interested in attending Smitty's Hot Shots' meeting in March, contact Herman Fabiani.

LOOK FOR INFORMATION REGARDING THE 2012 BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S MEETING AND IMOK MINI-REUNION 2012 ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE

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

ELECTED 2012 OFFICERS

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Telephone: 561-778-2699.....Sp Trps
- Milton Houghton, 11307 Martha Ann Dr., Los Alamitos, CA 90720-3805
.....USAR

FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT ...

Edward F. Fowle, Jr.

To all 63rd'ers,

Those of you who were at our 63rd annual reunion this year in Indianapolis, Indiana already know that it was our last full division Association reunion. We made the decision after much sole searching and conversation.

As you all know the attendance at our annual reunions has been steadily declining over the last 5 or 6 years. This past year there were only 29 63rd men in attendance.

This type of attendance makes it financially impossible to support a fully self-supporting reunion. Consequently we were faced with the decision to halt all yearly reunions. All in attendance supported the decision.

However, we selected a new path to follow this year which is necessary because of our constitution and bylaws.

All members in attendance approved the following be put into action:

The (3) most active chapters or groups, the Philly Chapter, the I.M.O.K. Chapter and the Company "F" group be asked to invite all 63rd'ers on the Association's *Blood and Fire* mailing list to their meetings in 2012. This can be done through the *Blood and Fire's* next 2 issues.

Constitutionally we are required to hold a meeting of the Board of Directors every year. Therefore, the IMOK Chapter moved their spring mini gathering to August. The Board members and the Association's officers will be required to attend this meeting. I might note here that the officers in 2011 agreed to serve in 2012.

This IMOK chapter meeting will be a little longer than usual and take place on Thursday night through Saturday night.

This will be held in Columbus, Ohio at the Embassy Suite Columbus Airport on August 16-17-18.

All members of the Association are asked to attend this meeting. We have some far reaching decisions to make.

Edward F. Fowle, President

A Great New Year to all 63rd members and families!

A Memo from the Secretary and the Editor . . .

Donna LaCosse

Due to a serious illness I have been unable to sent out dues cards, dues due letters and subscription notices and I appreciate you contacting me.

Hopefully I will be 100% in the very near future.

Dues for 2012 are due as are subscriptions for the *Blood & Fire*.

Please keep the line of communication open between us. I'm not always going to be hog-tied!

The minutes of the Board Meeting and the Membership Meeting will appear in the next issue of the *Blood & Fire*.

63rd Regional Support Command Overview

The mission of the 63rd Regional Support Command (RSC) is to provide Base Operation Support and related support for all Reserve personnel in the seven-state Southwest Region of the United States with focus on command support functions, personnel support, soldier and family readiness programs, public works, facilities, maintenance support activities, and resource management.

Our vision is to establish a community based federal operational force of skill-rich Warrior-Citizens providing complimentary capabilities for joint expeditionary and domestic operations.

The 63rd RSC supports over 40,000 Army Reserve Soldiers in the states of California, Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Oklahoma, and Arkansas.

The 63rd RSC is commanded by Major General Michael J. Schweiger, USAR, and is based at Moffett Field, California.

153 Dailey Road Building 152
Moffett Field
California 94035

General Inquiries:
1-650-691-9094

Letter to the Editor . . .

Seeking members who may have served with husband

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to ask if anyone remembers serving with Otto DeNinno in France and Germany.

He was in the Corps of Engineers, Company "A", 263rd Combat Battalion. He received a Bronze Star Medal for his service near Bliesgersweiler, Germany in February of 1945.

If the families of any of those men who served with Otto remember any stories about him, we would greatly appreciate hearing from anyone.

Otto and I were married in 1987 after the death of his first wife, Celia. They had three children and nine grandchildren. There are now seven great-grandchildren.

Otto died July 28, 2004. He had a wonderful life and said his only regret was not getting a higher education. He came from an Italian immigrant family and as was common at the time, he left school after 8th grade to go to work. He became a very successful businessman and enjoyed his family and friends (who still miss him).

Thank you from me to all of you veterans who served our country. May God bless you all.

My name:

Laura DeNinno
321 E. Mitchell Dr.
Phoenix, AZ 85012
Tel.: 602-279-1455
Cell Phone: 623-521-4585
E-mail: LDENINNO@COX.NET

Bill Mauldin

(1921 - 2003)

During World War II, military audiences got a knowing laugh from Bill Mauldin's cartoons featuring Willie and Joe, two characters who gave civilian readers an idea of what life was like for soldiers. After the war, Mauldin's influential work made him one of America's favorite editorial cartoonists.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2011

August 15, 2010

Checking Balance \$ 9156.16
 Certificate of Deposit \$ 17529.82

August 15, 2011

Checking Balance \$ 8058.64 includes compound interest
 Certificate of Deposit \$ 17803.17 includes interest

Liquid Assets \$ 25861.81

Income \$ 8082.69
 Deposits \$16502.00
 Income Interest \$ 5.69
 Expenses \$16800.80

Income Listed

Interest from Checking Account \$ 5.69
 Interest from CD \$ none
 Dues Paid \$ 1530.00
 Subscriptions \$ 480.00
 Donations \$ 2802.00
 Ad Book Ads \$ 1835.00
 Received from 2010 reunion \$ 1430.00
 TOTAL \$ 8082.69

EXPENSES

Blood and Fire Printing \$ 6679.86
 Blood and Fire Mailing \$ 1470.33
 Postage \$ 294.96
 Bill Scott 2010 reunion \$ 1111.20
 Donna LaCosse 2010 reunion \$ 484.00
 Bond Insurance \$ 257.00
 Charter Renewal \$ 15.00
 Blood and Fire Returns \$ 66.41
 Ad Book Printing 2010 \$ 573.00
 Blood and Fire Travel \$ 59.40
 Donna LaCosse Stipend \$ 550.00
 Ed Fowle send material to Calif. \$ 80.00
 Fred Clinton Flag Expense \$ 1230.90
 Travel for Ad Book \$ 99.00
 Printco Note Pads \$ 224.12
 Band 2011 reunion \$ 1200.00
 IMOK Seed Money \$ 2000.00
 Mailing 2010 Ad Books \$ 24.62
 Morocco Post Office stamps \$ 176.00
 Over Pay on Dues \$ 205.00
 TOTAL \$16800.80

63RD INFANTRY DIVISION REUNION EXPENSE REPORT

INCOME

Registrations (54)	\$ 1,890.00
Meals	7,480.00
Donations	781.00
Refunds	562.50
Assoc. Seed Money	<u>2,000.00</u>
TOTAL	\$ 12,713.50

EXPENSES

Refunds	\$ 562.50
Hospitality Room/Meals	7,601.92
Magic Show	800.00
Color Guard	100.00
Bingo	180.00
Name Tags, Table Decorations, Phone Calls, Awards, CD's	605.75
Hospitality Room Treats / Supplies	70.87
Checks	<u>26.99</u>
TOTAL	\$ 9,948.03

Balance as of October 11, 2011	<u>2,765.47</u>
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**63RD INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
HISTORIAN'S FINANCIAL REPORT
TO COUNCIL FOR 2010 - 2011**

From 30-Jun-2010 to 30-June-2011 I have recorded the following:

30-Jun-2010 Checking Account balance	\$2,143.39
Orders for books, printouts, maps, patches, pins, CDs, etc., plus included postage donations, new patches and caps, refunds, and reunion sales	\$2,484.50
Available cash	<u>\$4,627.89</u>
Expenses:	
Postage& shipping out	\$ 298.60
Book copies	1,146.13
Map copies	179.43
Office supplies such as paper, printer & copier, cartridges, envelopes, binders and flash drives	92.92
Pins	76.54
Long distance phone calls	53.64
Transfer to Treasurer and refunds	37.00
Travel to DeKalb	49.84

Expense Total	<u>\$ 1,934.10</u>
30-Jun-2011 Checkbook balance	<u>\$ 2,693.79</u>

**William J. Scott, 3rd 63rd ID Association Historian
9-Aug-2011**

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

-----COMPUTER DATA PRINTOUTS AND COPIES-----

PLEASE PRINT!	UNIT #1 Company,	UNIT #2 Battery, HQ?	COST/EACH
1943-45 Unit Roster of Men (W/rank, serial no., dates, medals, casualties, deaths, etc.).....	_____	_____	\$4 ea. _____
Today's Unit Address-Phone list (for members only).....	_____	_____	\$2 ea. _____
1945 Unit Medals List (w/WWII home towns).....			\$2 ea. _____
1944-1945 Unit Itineraries (in Bn. group).....			\$3 ea. _____
Alphabetical List of CAMPBLANDING CADRE MEN with data.....			\$5 ea. _____
Today's Address & Phone List of CAMPBLANDING CADRE MEN (for members only)			\$2 ea. _____
Today's Address & Phone List by State. (for members only).....	State #1 _____	State #2 _____	\$2 ea. _____
1,030 Killed in Action, Died of Wound. & Non-Battle Death	ALPHA		\$5 ea. _____
KIA, DOW, NBD. with all known men shown and sorted by-----	ALL UNITS.....		\$5 ea. _____
KIA, DOW, NBD, best viewpoint	Sorted by' DATE, organization, unit		\$5 ea. _____
Casualty Summary compiled to date for ALL units with 8 categories.....			\$3 ea. _____
2007 Alpha list #35 with data on casualties, deaths. units, serial numbers, cadre, 70,258 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 Saarbrucken 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 _____
1:27,000 colored map of the 63rd's SIEGFRIED LINE area w/forts and 103 hour battle penetration			\$7 ea. _____
1:25,000 BLIESKASTEL map that shows Kirkel. Wurzbach, & Biesingen			\$5 ea. _____
1:100,000 KAISERSLAUTERN map that shows Homburg. Langmeil & Grunstadt.....			\$5 ea. _____
1:100,000 KARLSRUHE map that shows Bad Wimpfen, Heilbronn & Stuttgart.....			\$5 ea. _____
1:100,000 ELLWANGEN map from Waldenburg & Schwabisch Hall to Oberbobingen.....			\$5 ea. _____
1:25,000 MOGGLINGEN map shows from Obergroningen to Oberbobingen.....			\$5 ea. _____
8.5" x 14" 1:250,000 map shows from Mannheim to Rothenberg and Heilbronn			\$1 ea. _____

-----HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS-----

2nd Bn.-253 4-12 April 1945 events, rosters & Pres. Unit Citation award			\$14 ea. _____
Regimental histories for January-May 1945 in binders. copied from monthly combat reports:			
253rd __, 254th __, 255th __:.....			\$13 ea. _____
General Order Copies for awards to individuals, such as badges and medals			NEW \$2 ea. _____
Reprint of 135-page 1986 softcover book. "With the 63rd Infantry Div. in WWII"			
by Col. James E. Hatcher of 254th and 255th.....			\$20 ea. _____
Unbound Xerographic copy of 1945 history & index for "The Trail of 254 Thru Blood & Fire"			
by Harris Peel, Vernon Kile, Algernon Keith & John Sontag.....			\$7 ea. _____
Bound English copy, w/o photos, of "LA BATAILLE DE JEBSHEIM" booklet of French residents' statements about the horrors.			
Written by Jean Scherer, and translated by Wm. C. Carter. 140 pages.....			\$20 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.....			\$50 ea. _____
Jan-Apr 45 Combat Unit Journals of Hq 1st Bn-254 by date, hour, minute in binder.....			\$16 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".....Not avail.
 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 & BOLATIES-----
 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 deGuerre w/Palm for 254th Inf:.....8.5" x 11" \$5 ea. ___

-----COMPACT DISKS FOR MICROSOFT WINDOWS SYSTEMS-----
 95 of 1943-45 *Blood & Fire* issues ___, 63rd Div. General Orders for medals, etc. _____ \$10 ea. ___
 853 page updated "Chronicles" history book w/photos, rosters, alpha list..... \$15 ea. ___
 Histories w/photos, rosters, & other info: 253rd ___, 254th _____ \$12 ea. ___
 255th ___, All Artillery ___, 263rd Engineer & 363 Medical Bns. ___ all with the "Chronicles"..... \$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. ___

-----DVDs FOR MICROSOFT WINDOWS SYSTEMS-----
 Organization histories w/63rd photos, 63rd Div. general orders, combat unit morning reports, unit rosters, 63rd Div. pictorial history, WWII Blood & Fire issues, all as listed above to get organization information together on one disk for ease of viewing and storage at a lower cost.
 253rd ___, 254th ___, 255th ___, Artillery ___, 263rd Engineer & 363 Medical Bns. _____ \$30 ea. ___
 Special Troops: HQ&HQ Co., Band, MP, QM, Recon, Signal, Ordnance _____ all with the "Chronicles" \$30 ea. ___

-----CAPS-----
 Bright white cap and bill, with adjustable white rear net for spring, summer or fall..... \$10 ea. ___
 Light blue cap and bill, with adjustable blue rear net for spring, summer or fall..... \$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 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. ___
 October 2011 Form #72 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

OUR HISTORY: THEN AND NOW

by Bill Scott, 25-Oct-11

e-mail: wjs631@comcast.net

Fred Clinton, our Webmaster, has made great progress on our plan to furnish history documentation to a variety of museums that are most interested in having the details of the WWII 63rd Infantry Division in combat in Europe. He has come up with a DVD plan that will show the information in a form that will take less space and cost us less. It will be two DVDs. The first one has the division and unit histories that have been compiled. The second one has the unit combat morning reports, general orders, photos, *Blood & Fire* issues, and other items.

Following is a list of the museums that will have the two DVDs and maybe other records that have been collected:

1. The Library of Congress
2. The George C. Marshall Library
3. The National Infantry Museum, Ft. Benning, GA
4. The USAR Museum, Ft. McPherson, GA
5. 63rd Regional Support Command Museum, Mountain View, CA
6. AWC Library, Carlisle, PA
7. C&G Staff Sp. Collection, Ft. Leavenworth, KS
8. USMA, West Point, NY
9. National WWII Museum, New Orleans, LA
10. Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA
11. Artillery Library, Ft. Sill, OK

12. Artillery, Museum, Ft. Sill, OK
13. The Maneuver Ctr. Of Excellence Library, Ft. Benning, GA
14. FOLD3, Internet
15. Camp Van Dorn WWII Museum, Centreville, MS

This fall has been tiring since the 63rd ID History computer went dead, followed by my personal laptop going black and dead until able to get instructions over the phone to get back and running again.

The 63rd History computer is now an HP laptop that is still in a sealed package until I can take the time to start it up. The change from the old system in which I used a DOS program, Symphony 3, for the work which was also saved on Excel or Word for printing will take some time to do easily.

The new computer was quickly bought after the death of the old system when a great sale was available the following Sunday. The machine is a close relative to the one that I own and am using to write this message. Karin Froberg Marzano has another 63rd History laptop which will be completely away from here for safety sake.

It will take some learning and a great deal of time to reprogram the files where the data is also used in another file.

63rd Infantry Division Association Historian's 2010 - 2011 report

The unit rosters on the computer show changes due to the deaths of 63rd Division men. There has been little more time to do the editing from examining the alpha list.

The main time has been spent on filling orders from our vets and their relatives at a higher rate than ever before. There were two factors in the rate: many more orders and many more in the \$100 to \$200 range. This resulted in an increase of \$324.50 over the previous fiscal year.

At this moment there are 11 unfilled orders. I cannot assemble and mail some of them before leaving for the reunion. My normal schedule requires me to do my cardiac rehab exercises 3 afternoons a week that reduces my available time and energy for filling orders. This has been going on for 7.5 years.

Another factor is trying to keep the lawn mowed and the snow cleared from the walks and driveway. I now have a man mowing the lawn to help with my schedule.

When I can finish the editing of the rosters and the alpha list then the rosters can be printed and then copied on both sides of 11 x 17 papers. The unbound set can then be sent to the Army History and Education Center in Carlisle, PA. A bound set will be sent to the Camp Van Dorn Museum. We will ask the Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, GA if they want a set and whether it should be bound. The Army reserve group that uses our patch can tell us what they want to order and the finish for desired for items, such as binders, covers, frames, etc.

The bound history books now have a binder design that lets the pages lie flatter.

I have a number of books that were written about the war we were in and the veteran's experiences. It might be the best to consider the Camp Van Dorn Museum as they will only have one war to relate to now.

2011 63rd annual reunion registration

Robert (Bob) F. Bennett F253 and Phyllis, 123 S. Indiana St., Chrisman, IL 61924-1407

Karol Bird, 4255 Sycamore St. SE, Iowa City, IA 52240

Bob and Janet Kline, West Branch, IA and Alan and Susan Bird, Cedar Rapids, IA

Barry Black, Assoc. and Lori, 10 Center Road, Gill, MA 01354, Mariah Black

William (Bill) Byrnes I254, 9645 S. Kedvale Avenue, Oak Lawn, IL 60453

Dorothy Van Buskirk (Daughter), Rochester, MN
William P. (Bill) and Susan (Sue) Byrnes, Oak Lawn, IL

Elmer D. Chalcraft D253 and Jean, 127 County Road 650 N, Ellery, IL 62833

Thomas (Tom) W. Chatham 63rd QM and Joan, 74 Darby Cay, Vero Beach, FL 32966-7104

Fred (Clint) Clinton D254, 102 South Jenkins Street, Alexandria, VA 22304

Michael (Mike) and Mary Fran Collier, Assoc., 10812 S. Kenneth Avenue, Oak Lawn, IL 60453

Wayne Crosser 863 FA HDQ, 8435 Mission Blvd., Riverside, CA 92509-2976

Albert (Al) G. De Bliss A254, 22687 Lenox Drive, Fairview Park, OH 44126 – Thersa DeBlasis

Alfred (Al) M. Diaz USAR, 1254 Camino Del Sur, San Dimas, CA 91773-4404

Robert (Bob) E. Dick, G253, 2030 Chester Blvd., Richmond, IN 47374-1215

Charles (Chuck) Dismer Jr. G253 and Helen, 3231 38th Avenue, Rock Island, IL 61201-6459

John Downs F254, PO Box 254, Gilmanton, NH 03237-0254

John Erhardt M254 and Ruth, 8248 Sunfish Lane, Maineville, OH 45039-8978

Wendy Farley, Assoc., 34A School Street, Montague, MA 01351-8918

Edward (Ed) F. Fowle Jr., 862 FA BN HQ BTRY, and Donna, 332 Dayton Ave., Springfield, OH 45506-1208

Melvin (Mel) D. Goebel I254 and Alberta, 7250 Hayward Road, Delton, MI 49046-9755

Gale Hammond C863, 4171 Marquis Way, Salt Lake, UT 84124

LTC Beverly Houghton USAR President and LTC Milt Houghton 63rd USAR, 11307 Martha Ann Drive, Los Alamitos, CA 90720-3805

Gina and Scott Iseminger, Assoc., 2414 E. Southport Road, Indianapolis, IN 46227

Preston E. Johnson B254, 1224 N. Spencer Road, Midwest City, OK 73110

Michael (Mike) Jugan Jr. I253 Medic and Jane, 1551 Franklin Drive, Pottstown, PA 19465, Kathy Batdorf

Al (Big Al) Klingler B254, 26509 Leslie Drive,

Euclid, OH 44132-2529

Harold LaCosse F254, and Donna, PO Box 86, Morocco, IN 47963

Russell Levine, Assoc., 19794 Lincoln Drive, Huntington Woods, MI 48070

Mark Lindemann, Assoc., 14513 S. Shore Drive, Valders, WI 54245 – Fay Jens

John (Jack) R. Linscott A253, 18290 Timber Trails Road, Marysville, OH 43040 – Miriam Looker, Assoc.

Erhardt (Art) Malchow M254, 304 W. Maine St., Amboy, MN 56010

Ovide A. Mallo A254 and Dorothy, 4347 E. Vista Drive, Cottonwood, AZ 86326-5911 – Ovide Mallo Jr.

M. Dolores Milhous, Assoc., 3510 Turtle Creek Blvd., Suite 10 E, Dallas, TX 75219-5542

Joseph (Joe) Palmer, Jr. C255 and Nancy, 1802 Norwood Drive, Midland, MI 48640-2530

William (Bill) A. Pink D254 and Delsie, 168 Pink Road, Slippery Rock, PA 16057 – Donna McKee and Carol Snyder

Dorothy B. Richards, 61 Arlington Ave., Auburn, NY 13021-4426 – John Sawran

Ruth Sandbrink, 809 Westside Drive, Aurora, IN 47001-1175 – Barbara Elder, Assoc.

Judith (Judy) D. Schaefer, Assoc., 6153 George Fox Drive, Galloway, OH 43119-9074

Paul John Schewene, Assoc., 608 Oak Street, Newport, KY 41071-2052

William (Bill) J. Scott E254 and Cecelia, 407 S. Walnut Street, Sycamore, IL 60178-2234

Sam Sue K255 and Han, 1035 West Drive, North Merrick, NY 11566-1339

William (Bill) Taylor HQ CO 1st BN 253, 141 Vernon Street W, Manchester, CT 06042-2209 – Clark Taylor

Mike and Donna Thomson, Assoc., 6748 Lakeshore Dr., Quinton, VA 23141-1206

Robert (Bob) Titterington K255, 19550 Fremont Ave. N, Seattle, WA 98133-3437

Margaret (Peggy) Von Pentz, 110 Hasbrouck Road, Goshen, NY 10924-5103

Pamela and Larry Williams, Assoc., 2 West Street, Montague, MA 01351

Raymond Wise D254, 393 Kenna Drive, South Charleston, WV 25309-2689 – James (Jamie) Farley

Rhonda Wolverton, 310 Northpointe Ct., Danville, IN 46122-1067

Robert (Bob) Zemke D254

Verlin and Lillian Miller

Jim and Sandy Uhl

Karen Froberg Marzano



Bell tolls for 83 63rd vets

Deceased 2010 - 2011

Vernon Altberg - V 253 - 2011
 Ralph Altman - K 255 - 2010
 Harry S. Antink - E 253 -
 1999

Robert Apperson - E 253 - 2009
 Wallace M. Barringer - G 254 - 2009
 Fred Bellwood - K 255 - 2011
 Leroy Bird - M 254 - 2011
 Harold W. Black - 255 AT - 2011
 Glen O. Brando - A 253 - 1987
 Norman Bromley - D 253
 Coleman Burns - MED 363 - 2010
 Walton A. Campbell - B 253 - 1994
 Lawrence Castleberry - F 253 - 2011
 Charles W. Clark Jr. - HQ 253 - 2009
 Fredrick J. Consolmagno - M 254 - 2011
 Richard S. Cook - HQ 253
 Charles Crowley - C 253 - 2011
 Curtis Delehaussay - HQ 253 - 2010
 Jean O. Denault - F & K 253
 Salvatore L. DiRubbo - A & D 253
 Kay Parrish DeVane - L 253 - 2009
 Richard Dooley - HQ 861 - 2010
 Ralph Early - FA 863 - 2010
 Hartwell H. Edmonson - M 254 - 2010
 Francis B. Enoch - K 253 - 2008
 Robert J. Freiwald - FA 862 - 2006
 Edward W. Furbee - A 861 - 2011
 Jacob F. Gesek - SV 861 - 2010
 Dale Graham - 254 - 2011
 Henry M. Greenberg - F 254 - 2004
 Joseph S. Guello - H 255 - 2010
 William Hankinson - A 254
 Leamon Harvey - Cn & H 254 - 2006
 Keith A. Hinsman - D 254 - 1989
 Elsie Howell - B 254 - 2010
 Floyd Hornbacker - SV 254 - 2010
 Vincent Immel - FA 863 - 2009
 Charles R. Jeffery - G 255 - 1994
 Edward Karcheski - B 254 - 2010
 Shirley Kimmerling - FA 63 - 2011
 Richard Kogler - M 254 - 2011
 Bartow Kelley - HQ 253 - 2004
 Francis E Klott - I 255
 Kent P. Kratz - HQ 255 - 2009
 Albert La Vecchia - E 255 - 2011
 Elgin Lemmon - B 862 - 2011
 Joseph Mack - K&L 254 - 2007
 Edward Meusberger - C&E 254 - 2010

George A. Michna - FA 861 - 2007
 Anthony Mucciolo - SIG 863 - 2009
 George F. Murchio, Jr. - A 254
 Leonard Mote - G 255 - 2010
 Jack Needham - SV 255 - 2010
 Robert Owens - HQ 253
 Frank Padula - A 253 - 2010
 Harry Pepler - HQ 253 - 2009
 Arnold Perko - F 254 - 2010
 Arthur Pinkham - MED 363 - 2010
 Nicholas Piazza - M 254 - 2010
 Charles Preyor - L 254 - 2011
 George Putman - FA 718 - 2009
 Norman L. Rappaport - K 254 - 2008
 Gordon Rintoul - L 255 - 2010
 Roy J. Rock - HQ 253 - 2010
 Robert Sayles - HQ 254 - 2011
 Henry Scharzter - AT 253 - 20
 Pasquale Scorzelli - A 255 - 2010
 Fred C. Sain - M 253 - 2010
 William Henry Sears - B 255 - 1999
 John S. Sharrer, Jr. - A.T.C. 253 - 2010
 Sam Shaw - L 253 - 2010
 Raymond H. Sitter - FA 863
 Harold Spector - ENG 253 - 2010
 Robert J. Stallman - H & M 253 - 2006
 Rev. E. Vincent Stratton - H 254 - 2011
 George Strawbridge - HQ 253 - 2011
 Alfred Swackhamer - A 253
 Jean F. Thierry - A 254 - 2005
 Ernest J. Van DeMark - G 255 - 2011
 Edward Wallace - H 253 - 2003
 Norman Walton - C 862-863 - 2007
 William Whitten - A 255 - 2010
 Millard Zeigler - I 255 - 1987

DEATH OF SPOUSE

Charlotte Boling, wife of Walter Boling, F 253, died April 2011.

Belinda Crowley, wife of Charles Crowley, C 253, has passed away.

Lucille Estermyer, wife of Charlie Estermyer, died July 2010.

Reva Kloostra, widow of Chris Kloostra, H 255, died October 2010.

Vertalee Pillsbury, widow of William Pillsbury, HQ 63, died November 2010.

Edith Genova, wife of Salvatore, G 254, died June 2011.

To all 63rd Infantry Division Hot Shots

It is my understanding via Donna LaCosse, our *Blood and Fire* Editor, that at the last Divisional reunion held in Indianapolis this past August, the Board of Directors voted that there shall be no more organized yearly national Divisional reunions.

It is, therefore, that I am extending this invitation to the 63rd Division Hot Shots who would like to participate in

Smitty's Fox Co. Mini Reunion

being held **March 19th to March 24th, 2012**

at the

Grand Oaks Hotel

2315 Green Mountain Dr.

Branson, MO 65615

Phone - 1-800-553-6423

or 1-417-336-6423

Website: www.grandoakshotel.net

If interested, it is your responsibility to make your own reservations by calling the Hotel and telling them you want to be part of Smitty's Fox Co. Hot Shots reunion.

Cut-off date is February 20, 2012. Room rate is \$62.49 per night including tax. Rooms have 2 queen beds, continental breakfast is included. Room rates are good 3 days before and 3 days after reunion dates.

The only planned event is a Banquet and candlelight memorial for our departed comrades on Friday, March 23, 2012 at 6:00 P.M.

For those of you who have never been in Branson, I rate it as one of the finest Christian, patriotic towns around. There are many things to do and see in Branson such as: shows, shopping or having a relaxed luncheon or dinner with your comrades.

During the week you may make any plans and with whomever you wish to, or you may choose to stay in the Hospitality Room and fight the war all over again while the women do what they know best (SHOP)!

If more information is needed, feel free to call me:

Herman Fabiani

352-637-2290

hfabiani@tampabay.rr.com

Philadelphia Chapter news . . .

Members of the Philadelphia Chapter of the 63rd held their annual event on September 11, 2011, at the Resorts Hotel and Casino in Atlantic City.

With 38 people in attendance, we enjoyed a delicious brunch at Resorts. This was followed by a short service to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the September 11 attacks and a short report from those who had attended the National Reunion in August.

We welcomed several of our group who had been unable to attend for the past few years. It was wonderful to see them. During discussions after brunch, all of those present made it clear that they want to continue getting together and socializing with old friends.

The number of veterans who are able to take part may have decreased over the years, but the enthusiasm of those who remain is overwhelming. The desire of their families and friends in attendance to keep the chapter alive and functioning is also overwhelming.

We are happy to report that those who attended on September 11 from the Philadelphia area, New Jersey, New York, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Maryland, voted unanimously to hold another get-together in 2012.

Allan Romanoff, President

What the 63rd Division means to me

The 63rd Division means pride to me. Pride in having served in this unit and pride in knowing any job was well done.

It was 1963 when I first learned of the 63rd Division. My late father, S/SGT Forrest G. Larson of Company A, 263 Engineer was relating to my older brother and me of his experiences in the US Army. Dad rarely spoke of his service so it was quite a treat to hear him talk of being called up in the first peace time draft of January 1941. Of his training and serving with the 202 Coast Artillery of Fort Bliss, TX and his supposed end of service on December 8, 1941. The attack on Pearl Harbor changed that and he found himself and his unit headed to Stockton, California and the Pacific Theater of Operations in mid-December. A lack of transports caused his unit to be sent to Bremerton, Washington to provide aerial defenses.

By May 1944, these defenses were no longer needed, and Dad and many of his comrades were sent to Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi and to the 63rd Division. This unit had been constituted at Camp Blanding, Florida in June 1943, and relocated to Camp Van Dorn in early 1944. Many of its soldiers had been sent overseas as fillers and the 63rd needed fresh troops to be reconstituted.

Dad served at Camp Van Dorn learning what was required of an engineer. He departed there in December 1944, and sailed with his unit in January 1945, where they joined the rest of the Division. He served with the 63rd until September 1945 when he returned to the United States and was discharged in

October 1945.

Like many returning veterans, he wanted to put the war behind and get on with his career and family. He had a successful 30 year career with Montgomery Ward and raised three children.

After I heard the above story, I read all I could about the 63rd Division. But unfortunately, there is not much available. Sometimes a passage discussing 7th Army or crossing through the Siegfried Line, but not much else.

The pride that my father spoke of influenced me to enroll in the R.O.T.C. in high school, and to enlist in the US Army shortly after I graduated. I served for seven years on active duty and then in the US Army Reserve for over four years as I obtained a college education. Upon graduation, I attended Officer Candidate School and was commissioned a 2nd Lieutenant. I served on active duty and retired a few years ago. Had I not heard of the 63rd Division and the pride my father spoke of, I may have taken another career choice. But after attending four reunions and meeting some of Dad's comrades, I understand the pride he and every man that served in the 63rd Division feels. I understand that a "Hot Shot" is a term of endearment coined by "Mess Kit Louie", MG Louis Hibbs, the Division Commander.

So tell everyone you meet that you served with the 63rd Blood and Fire Division and tell them with pride.

Sincerely,

*Ralph M. Larson
September 8, 2011*

My time with Uncle Sam

by Kenneth Erickson

My name is Kenneth Erickson. I was born on a farm south of Wallace, NE on September 15, 1925 and raised on that same farm. I had never traveled very far, but Uncle Sam had different plans for me. I enlisted for the draft when I was 17 years old. In August of 1944, I was drafted into the U.S. Army during WWII. I was still 18 and of course, scared. I boarded the train in North Platte, NE along with others. We stopped along the way to Omaha, NE where others also boarded. In Omaha a young man from Schickley, NE, Maurice "Red" Hendrickson came on board. We were officially inducted into the Army in Omaha and then sent to Fort Riley, KS for several days of instructions including how to make a bed. From there we went to Camp Walters, TX for basic training. It was hard but we did learn to obey orders and respect our officers.

On January 3, 1945 as I had finished basic training and had a delay in route on my way as a replacement to the war in Europe, I was able to come home for a few days. I picked up Bonnie from her job in the Lincoln County treasurer's office. We went to Oberlin, KS and were married by a Justice of the Peace. Probably not the wisest decision at the time, but we have raised a great family and are still together today. I left on January 5th for Fort Dix, NJ, then on to Camp Shanks, NY. We were not able to make any contact with anyone from home, so before we left for Europe, I mailed Bonnie a package that included a sweetheart pillow and a necklace. We then boarded the Queen Mary for an ocean crossing to Glasgow, Scotland. We road a train from there to South Hampton, England and crossed the English Channel to France on a troop ship until I couldn't go any further. We finished the crossing on LST's. "Red" and I became good buddies during this time. We were sent to a replacement depot in France and issued our rifles which had to be cleaned with soap and water. What a job! "Red" and I were both assigned as replacements in the 63rd infantry, 255 regiment of an Anti Tank Company called the Blood and Fire division.

Some of the things I remember are the loud artillery shelling, the German bombs coming in with a terrible screeching sound, the huge explosions and, of course, our own airplanes returning from a bombing mission. They were flying low and you could see holes in their carriage or wings, with engines on fire, maybe only one engine running. You could see they were in much trouble. We were glad when they passed over us as we knew if the plane crashed and

the crew bailed out they had a chance of being rescued and not taken prisoner. Some weren't so lucky.

I drove a truck carrying ammunition. Once our Sgt. Olen Wesner and several others were in the back of the truck with the ammo, they screamed at me to get this truck off the road, there is a German plane coming in behind and shells coming down. I turned off the road and went between two trees without an inch to spare. I still don't know how I got between those trees but at least we weren't caught with all the ammo as we would have been blown sky high. There were many times when war was real and we were just thankful to be alive. Also many days when it was quiet on the other side and we laid low.

We dug lots of fox holes. One time the Germans were shooting at us and were digging fox holes as fast as we could in frozen ground. "Red" was a small man and he knew he'd be the first in the fox hole. Well, when he jumped in the other fellow beat him. They said as scared as they were at least the fox hole offered them some protection. It was a very cold winter and keeping warm was impossible. We had been issued two pair of socks so at night down in our snow filled fox holes we would put the dirty dry pair of socks on and put the other cold, dirty, wet pair in our money belt around our waist to dry out and be ready for the next night, then change again. We received clean clothes and a bath whenever the bath house caught up with us. Maybe every 3 or 4 weeks, sometimes longer.

One night it was so cold and not far away was an empty house. We asked our top Sgt. Harold Miller if we could maybe go there to rest and get out of the cold and wind. Sgt. Miller said, "Dig in boys, you're not going to that house," so we dug in, but asked why. He said, "You'll see." Well, Sgt. Miller was right. The Germans had zeroed in on that house thinking G.I.'s would occupy it. The next day two sides of the house were hit with German 88 artillery. Sgt. Miller saved our lives many times over.

One of the hardest and dangerous assignments we had was to detonate land mines. The Germans had buried them along the roads and routes we would travel. There were several sizes. Some smaller ones could take off a foot or a leg or even kill you if it exploded just right. Larger ones could blow up a jeep, truck or tank resulting in serious injuries and sometimes death. Our job was to find these mines and detonate them. We had a mine detector we used and found many, but to detonate them was very scary and tedious. No one in my unit was injured or killed during

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

My time with Uncle Sam ... - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

that time I was stationed in that area.

I became very sick once and Sgt. Wesner told someone to take me to the field hospital. We were told where they thought it was but we never did find it, so we went back to the front lines again and I did get well. I could eat boiled eggs and keep that down, so that is what they fixed me.

We were in the Battle of the Bulge. Lots of bombing, artillery and noise. Every evening our password was given to us on the radio by the Germans. How they knew it before us, I will never know.

Just before we crossed the Siegfried Line during one battle, we were being hammered pretty hard with lots of artillery. We were behind a big tank. Our commander called in the Air Force P 51's. We were unable to do anything as we were totally pinned down. When the P 51's arrived and shelled the German pill boxes there were no Germans left. What a battle that was!

We were the first infantry to reach the Rhine River. The bridges had all been blown to bits but our engineers built pontoon bridges you could cross on. However, due to the weight of the trucks, only one or two could cross at one time. The bridges weren't too steady but were sturdy enough to hold up. We sat at this location for several days and though we were the first company there, we watched as several other armies, including the 6th army, crossed before we were allowed to. This was a fairly quiet time for us.

One night after we had stopped for the night, we could hear the rumble of tanks coming our way. We all prepared ourselves for a German tank attack, but when they came in sight it was a French tank command. They were lost and didn't know where to go. Our commander turned them around and sent them back. I don't know if they ever found their way.

After we crossed the Rhine River into Germany, the Germans were tired. They were using horses to pull their weapons as they didn't have fuel. Lots of young German boys were among their troops. One day when we were getting shelled pretty heavy, our sergeant with his binoculars could see two women high on a hill directing German fire. The order was given to shoot the women. War is so sad and so devastating, but you learn to protect your own. The 63rd Infantry was under General Eisenhower. I saw him several times.

The war in Europe ended in May of 1945 and I was one of the younger men who only saw a few months of actual war. Those fellows who were in combat for 3 or 4 years had so much more stress than I did. My respect for those fellows is tremendous.

After the war ended, I was assigned to the 3rd army for a very short time and then transferred to the 7th army for the rest of my term. I was stationed in Heidelberg, Germany with the Quarter Master Co. and became a Tech Sgt. I worked in the office with Colonel Little, a great man whom I respected very much. I did office work for him and also drove him many of the places he needed to go. We had a jeep and also an Opal car to drive. I also drove several people to Belgium when they were to be sent home.

"Red" and I became very good friends and remained so after the war was over and all of these years. "Red" died in January 2007 from cancer. It's really hard to lose a good friend and army buddy. "Red" came from Shickley, NE and along with his wife, Joan and my wife, Bonnie, we took several trips together to attend the 63rd Infantry reunion. What a joy and privilege it has been to be reunited with so many of my buddies, but in the past few years, several have died.

After my service time was over in July of 1946, I was sent home. I crossed the ocean on a small ship, The Aiken Victory. What a difference that was from the Queen Mary. I was sent to Camp McCoy, WI where I was discharged on July 6, 1946. I came by bus back to North Platte, NE. What an experience the last 2 years have been.

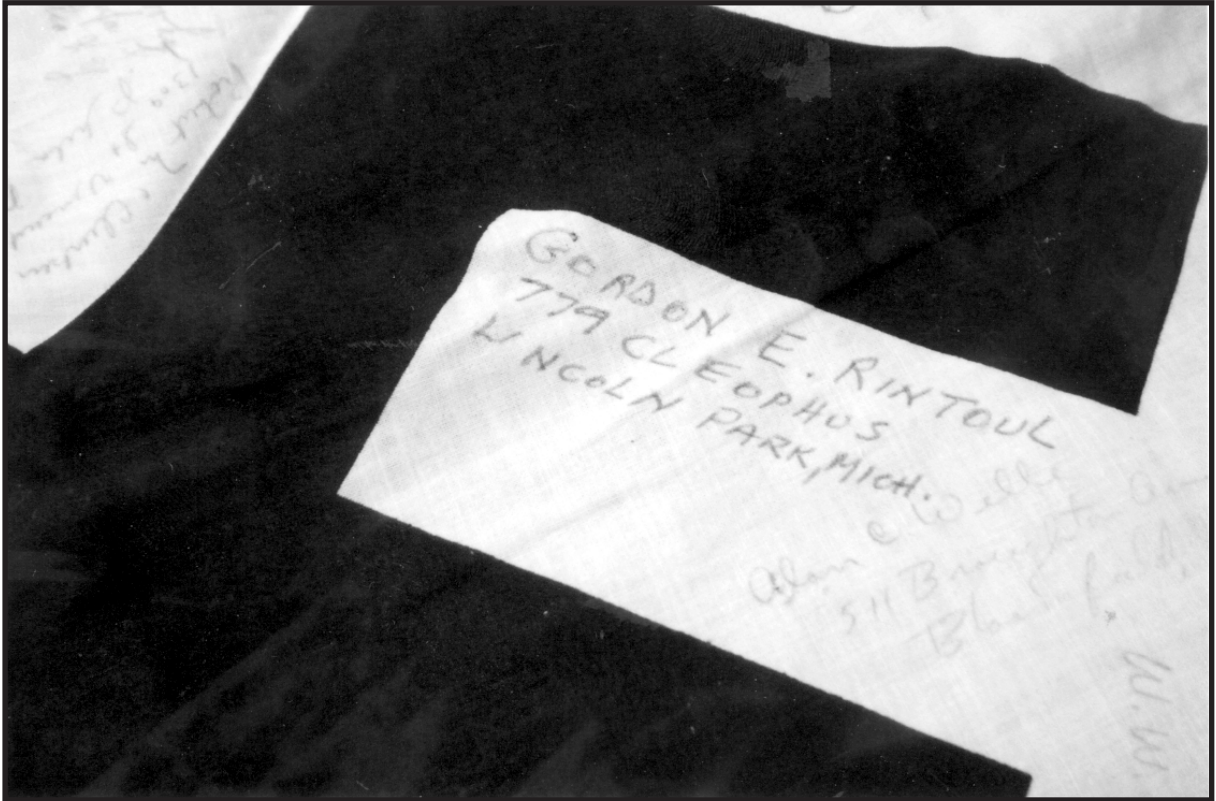
After arriving home, eating was a real problem. Good home cooking just wouldn't stay down. It was about a year before I could sit down and eat a good meal. How great that was!

We all thought we could bring an end to war and a promise of peace. How wrong can a man be. But I was honored to serve my country and I still believe we are the greatest nation on earth. For we are one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all.

These are a few of my memories of a time in my life when I was young, scared and also proud to be able to stand up and defend my country.

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.



Nazi flag brought home by Gordon Rintoul

Celebration keeps focus on the fallen

by Joe Barron
News Editor
Springfield Sun

William Geppert Jr. was wounded in Saint-Malo, France, on August 14, 1944. He was hit in the shoulder and the hip and spent the next 44 months in a hospital.

"They didn't have the orthopedic surgeons that they have today," his daughter, Annamarie Hellebusch, explained Monday morning, shortly before the start of the annual Wyndmoor Memorial Day Parade.

Geppert ultimately made a full recovery and went on to a long and successful career in the demolition business, retiring only two years ago. Today, at 87, he lives in Wyndmoor, and he recently joined the Arthur V. Savage Post 100 of the American Legion.

On Memorial Day, he rode in a car at the head of the parade and raised the flag at Veterans Park to begin the Legion post's memorial service. With him were his granddaughter, Morgan Hellebusch, who hugged him as he sat in his wheelchair, and Frank Perri, another veteran of the Second World War, who assisted in the

flag raising.

The only reminder of the grievous wound Geppert suffered 67 years ago was the Purple Heart he wore modestly on his lapel.

(The above article was "reprinted courtesy of Montgomery Media.)

[(To the editor:)]

June 15, 2011

At the Wyndmoor Memorial Day Parade last week, I was honored to ride in the lead car and raise the flag at the memorial ceremony.

It was a wonderful day to remember our veterans.

Annamarie, Stroud and my two granddaughters, Morgan and Grace joined me for the festivities.

I wanted to share of this special day with my family and friends. Being part of this celebration made me very happy and proud.

God Bless America!

Warmest regards,

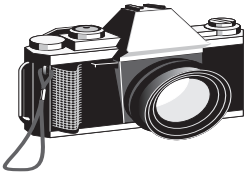
Bill Geppert, Jr.]

Reunion 2011 . . .



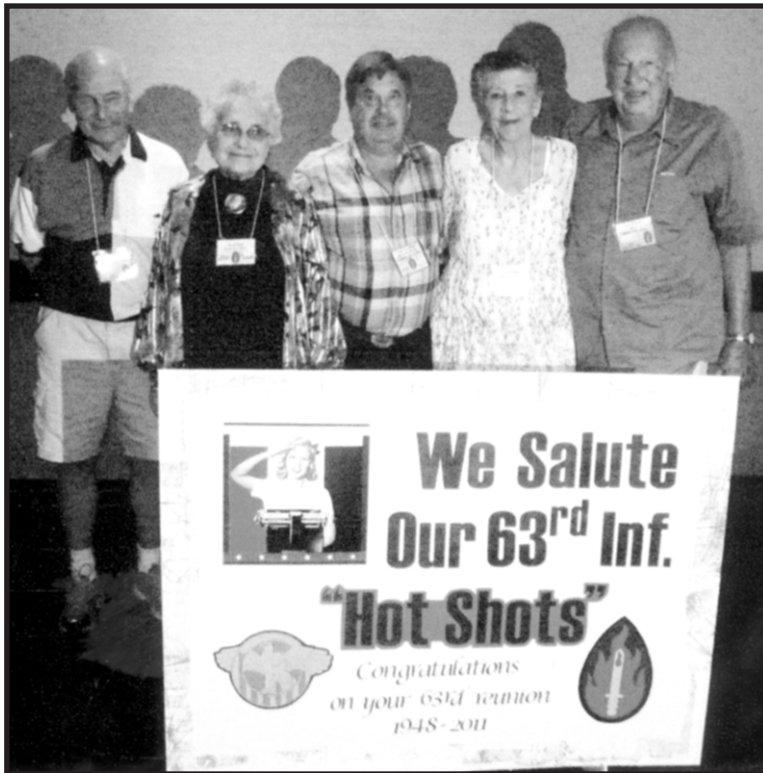
Gina and Scott Iseminger and Rhonda Wolverton enjoy each other's company at the banquet.

A Safe and Happy New Year to each and everyone!



BLOOD AND FIRE PHOTO GALLERY

2011 Reunion Photos



Pictured at the 2011 Reunion are those who represented Company M of the 254th Inf. Reg.

Pictured (left to right) – Art Malchow, Karol Byrd, Mary Lindeman, Ruth Erhardt and John Erhardt. – *(photo contributed by John Erhardt)*

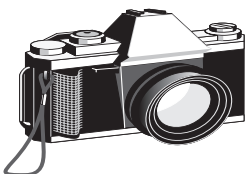
The Last Reunion

We were young then
 Late teens and early twenties
 The Infantry's mission
 Was simple and direct
 Engage the enemy and
 Continue to engage the enemy
 Day and night
 And into the next day and night.
 Deep snow concealed
 Limb shattering mines
 Shell fire blackened
 The pure white snow cover
 Bitter cold and sleep deprivation
 Inevitably produced exhaustion.
 Many bled
 More than one thousand died.
 There was never time to mourn.

The mission trumped
 Normal human emotions
 Finally the snow melted
 Yet the violence continued
 Into the warm days and balmy nights of Spring.
 Then suddenly it was over.
 We who survive are old now,
 We have never again in our long lives
 Encountered such men as those magnificent
 soldiers.
 But where would we? How could we?
 As the flag flies over this our last Reunion
 And we sadly but proudly linger over our
 goodbyes,
 We salute the memories
 Of those young warriors of long ago.
 Well done, boys, well done!

August 2011

- contributed by John Erhardt, 8248 Sunfish Ln,
 Maineville, OH 45039, COM 254th INF



BLOOD AND FIRE PHOTO GALLERY

2011 Reunion Photos



Ruth Sanbrink, widow of Willis Sanbrink FA 861, attended the 46th consecutive reunion in August.



Second generation of the 63rd Division Association.



Committee of Ladies' Meeting – (Front row): Judy Schaefer, Rhonda Wolverton, Gina Iseminger.

(Back row): Dorothy Van Buskirk, Barbara Elder, Doroles Milhouse, Mary Fran Collier.

Celebrating the life of LeRoy J. “June” Bird

May 22, 1926 - May 7, 2011



Darlene and LeRoy



LeRoy and Karol



*Santa with
granddaughter Sarah*



*LeRoy and Karol
dancing at the 63rd Reunion*



LeRoy J. Bird

Bird's Eye View by Karol Bird

In Memory of LeRoy J. Bird, 63rd Infantry, M254; born May 22, 1926, died May 7, 2011

By his wife, Karol Bird, June 2011

LeRoy grew up in the small town of Belle Plaine, Iowa. He had five brothers and sisters. Everyone in the family played an instrument and sang. It was in the depression and money was tight so his dad sold his watch so LeRoy could have a trombone to play. This family was very musically talented and even played in bands outside of school time. LeRoy played in the Army band until they told him to send it home. "We'll give you a new instrument to play!"

LeRoy and many of his classmates tried to enlist while in high school, but he was turned down because of a health problem. But by the time LeRoy graduated from high school, he was drafted on his 18th birthday. It seems that the need for men was so great that if you were breathing, you were in. One of his friends was just under the height limit to get into the Air Force, so his friends put him on a stretching machine all day and then had them measure him quick. He passed! Another friend forged his papers and got in at 15. When they discovered it, he had been fighting for five months! They sent him back home. He did this three times until they finally let him stay! After the dreaded shots, the new draftees were lined up and sorted Navy, Army, Army Air Force, Coast Guard. LeRoy quickly figured out that he didn't want to swim or to fly, so he traded places with the guy next to him and "you're in the Army now!"

Two months of training at Camp Hood, Texas in the terrible heat, gave the men ideas of going over the hill. The only problem was - no hill! Soon he was headed for Germany aboard the Queen Mary, which was made into a troop ship. It was so crowded that they slept in shifts: one night below deck, with three layers of bunks. It seems the higher bunks got seasick and chocked up the lamb stew they were always getting. LeRoy never ate lamb again, never, ever! On the next night, the soldiers were tied down on the deck. Sometimes the turbulent waves soaked them. A cruel night watch guard had a habit of kicking the soldiers as they tried to sleep. One night, he disappeared! He must have "fallen" overboard! That solved that problem.

LeRoy arrived in Germany as part of the Blood and Fire replacements, during the Battle of the Bulge. He was told, "We don't have any guns to issue you. Pick them up along the way!" He also fought at the Siegfried Line and the Argonne Forest. He related trying to dig a fox hole during heavy fire. The roots of the tree made that impossible!

He carried a small New Testament in his shirt pocket. During one battle, LeRoy was hit and the bullet lodged in the book. God was certainly looking out for him that time! LeRoy believed that there were no atheists in the fox holes. He recalled worshipping in the open air, in bombed out buildings or even barns. If anyone tells you that they

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 23



Pictured at left – The Bird Family Band, with their instruments. Mom played piano. LeRoy has his trombone.



Pictured at right – LeRoy stationed in Germany, 1944.

The Gramolini Family

serving our country



My father – Corporal Pietro Gramolini, Company B 301st Infantry, World War I in France.



Staff Sergeant John Gramolini, HQ Co. 254th Infantry at Platoon 63 Division, World War II, European-Theater.



E r n e s t Gramolini, my brother – U.S. Navy, fought in the Pacific, World War II.



J o s e p h Gramolini, my brother – fought in the Korean War.

Driving for the first time

By William Carl Younger
1st Sgt. Co. L. 254 Inf. Reg. 63rd Div.
(334) 272-1560

When we came down off of that rocky hill to board the Army trucks to go in a convoy up to the front, we were short one truck driver.

I had never driven an Army truck but I was an experienced truck driver in civilian life before I enlisted in the Army in 1940.

By that time it was dark and the convoy was travelling under black out conditions. You had to follow the little red dots of the truck in front of you. I said that I would drive the truck in order to let the convoy proceed on schedule. The only information that I needed was the location of the gears.

It seemed like we drove for hours. I followed the truck in front of me and did not get lost. All of us were lucky. I do not remember what happened next.

Note: We travelled from New York in the Sea Robin zig-zagging across the Atlantic in 14 days.

I read in the February issue of the *Blood and Fire* that the Germans blew up the Sea Robin as we left in the convoy.

I was 91 this past November 2010.

My wife of 67 years died April 16, 2010. I can tell you that it is tough without your mate!

Bird's Eye View . . . - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

weren't afraid, they are lying or are nuts! It takes real courage to feel the fear and then to do it anyway. He fought until VE day. His unit helped to liberate Dachau and a camp in Poland. He earned many awards including the Bronze Star. His unit was getting ready to be shipped to the Pacific when the A Bombs were dropped. Many felt that if they went to Japan, they would not come back. He was in a hospital in France for phosphorous burns from a land mine. The horrors of war haunted him most of his life. He suffered PTS nightmares, which were so vivid that he was frozen. It was very difficult to rouse him. When you wake up and hear fighting snipers and he tells you to "Sshh! I see him. It's okay, I've got a knife!" You look around the room to see if there might be something he could use to kill you, it's time to sleep in another room. He wouldn't get help for his PTS, so I got an intercom and used it so I could hear him when he was having a nightmare. War is hell and a lot of soldiers never get over the effects of it, even though they don't talk about it.

Music was a part of surviving during the war. Tony Bennett was a fellow soldier in the 63rd. The music of Glenn Miller and others helped the homesickness, better than taps or reverie. He also remembered Ernie Pyle, the news correspondent. LeRoy shared fond memories of a furlough in Switzerland. Princess Elizabeth of England, was on tour, meeting servicemen. She wanted to dance. LeRoy danced with her all

evening! The next day, they went roller skating. Not bad for a small town boy from Iowa! LeRoy always was a great dancer. He also shared what good conversations they had. He could have been a prince consort! I added, "It's a good thing you behaved. She probably had plenty of guards around her." They both had May birthdays and were the same age. She married three years later. She was crowned Queen of England on June 2, 1953. So much for a special moment in time! When Japan surrendered, those who had enough points, got to go home to ticker tape parades and celebrations everywhere. LeRoy didn't. He was assigned to Headquarters and given the job of arranging entertainment for the officers. Quite a change from combat! He even started to plan to study in Heidelberg to become a teacher. He had completed Normal School Teacher Training while still in High School. But he got word his mother was sick and they needed him at home. He was offered a teaching job in a small farm community with low pay, lots of behavior restrictions and tough farm boys who didn't want to be in school. So he accepted a telephone job until he started to work at Link-Belt Speeder/FMC as a crane assembler for 39 years and 4 months until the plant closed down. He ruined his rotator cuffs in both of his shoulders using a bumper bar, instead of having them

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 24

Bird's Eye View . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

retool the part. During the last 5 years of his life, it was very painful whenever he tried to raise his arms, even to wash himself, shave, dress or even to dance. The doctors refused to operate on him.

After the war, LeRoy married Dar, made a home and started a family. They had two girls, Janet and Diana and three boys, Ronald, Michael and Alan. Even though he worked a lot of overtime, they still made time to dance, hardly sitting out a dance. They were married 31 years until Dar died, at age 50, after fighting 3 kinds of cancer over 5 years. LeRoy was suddenly alone and felt his dancing days were over. He didn't want to be a burden to his grown kids and considered "checking out."

He decided to start a new life. He joined a widowed support group, where he met a lot of people who were also starting a different life that they did not choose. When he met me, he shared his loss and wondering if he would ever be able to dance and have fun again. He asked me to go dancing with him. I said "no". I hadn't danced for 26 years. My husband had decided that he wasn't going dancing again because he didn't like to dance. He said he didn't have to now because we were married, even though we danced when we were dating. I said, "That's almost grounds for divorce." We were married 25 years, without dancing, even though I loved to dance and missed it. My husband died when his big Allis Chalmers farm tractor flipped over into a ditch during a sudden sleet storm. I was towing him, trying to get the tractor to start when it happened. Later, I changed my mind, but he told me, "Too late! He had another date." [There were 42 widows wanting to dance with him!] He taught me to dance again. I felt like Cinderella! We always got compliments whenever we danced. We even waltzed in Vienna in 1990, during a three week vacation in Germany. We went to see the famous Passion Play at Oberammergau. This happens every 10 years to celebrate the town being spared during the Black Plague in the Middle Ages. The acting and the songs were all in German. You could hear a pin drop in the huge outdoor theater. It was well worth the trip!

Music connected us to the 63rd when I was singing in the Arts Festival in the City Park. LeRoy saw the Blood and Fire Banner and he stopped on a dime! Here were his WWII buddies! They invited us to join him. That summer, we went to the 63rd's National Reunion at Nashville and we were hooked! We came every year we could from then on. He always looked forward to sharing good times with his buddies from

the 63rd! There is certainly a Bond of Brothers in the 63rd! LeRoy and I spent three weeks in Germany in 1990, returning to areas he had been during WWII. This included a day long tour of Dachau Prison Camp, which is now a museum. We went on our own after the 14-day tour because the German tour guide had denied knowing anything about it. Her husband had been a German officer and the Germans were big about denying information about the war or about Hitler. So we went on our own. It was very hard to understand how a country with such beautiful music, religion, art and culture could be so cruel.

When we were in East Germany, we stayed at a hotel called the Zoo. We decided to go dancing that evening so we rode the trolley to the dance. The last trolley returned at 11 o'clock. We got on to go back to the hotel, but the driver stopped halfway to the hotel and told us to get off because the Zoo closed at 9:00 p.m. He would go no further! So we got off. The street was dimly lit. I was glad I had brought my flashlight. We had no map, so now what? We decided to follow the tracks back to the Zoo. We saw a telephone, but we had no German money, did not speak German, and had no phone number for the hotel. As we walked, I spied an East German policeman. "Let's ask for a ride to the hotel." LeRoy reminded me, "This is East Germany. The police are not your friends!" So we decided to keep walking and to act like we belonged here. The streets were deserted. It was dark and scary, but I felt safe because LeRoy was brave and strong and had survived the war. The tracks stopped at the gate of the Zoo. When LeRoy suggested climbing the fence, it was my turn to panic. I reminded him, "This is a real zoo! It has wild animals who will eat you!" So we decided to walk around the Zoo. But which way? Right or left? I wanted left. LeRoy wanted right, so we went right.

Hours later, we were back where we started, no way out! By now LeRoy's speech was slurred and that meant trouble! It signaled a mini-stroke! At home when this happened, he would fall into a deep sleep for about an hour. LeRoy wanted to sit on the curb. No way, not in the middle of the night in East Germany! So we went left, up the hill and around the corner to the hotel at last! But the door was locked! We banged on the door for a long time before the clerk opened it. Our tour guide almost had a heart attack when she realized what had happened! We didn't go dancing away from the tour after that!

We decided to visit Zugspitze, the tallest mountain

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Bird's Eye View . . . - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

in Germany. There was a cable car there that James Bond had fought on top of, in one of his films. On clear days, you could ride it to the top. We decided to go. On the way up, the beauty of the countryside was breathtaking! The huge, stately pine trees looked like tiny miniatures! We were rising above the birds, who were soaring below us! It felt like being in a hot air balloon, only safer! I turned to talk to LeRoy, but he wasn't there! I knew that we got on the car together. I found him in the middle of the cable car. He was pale and refused to go over to the rail to look down, out or up! He told me he was scared of heights! Later, when we were safely on the ground, away from the mountain, I asked him why he felt safer in the middle of the cable car. If the cable broke, we would have all went down! He said that he didn't want to spoil the fun by not going. Instead he had prayed that the mountain would be fogged in and the ride would be cancelled. When we reached the top, the car finally stopped its creaky, slow, rocking climb. LeRoy headed for the nearest bench and solid ground. He didn't want to climb the rest of the way to the very top. I went to the top. Then I asked him how he was going to get down the mountain. It was too high to walk without the proper hiking gear. There wasn't even a trail down.

He decided to ride the tunnel car down. That was really scary! It was dark, damp, stinky and wet! It went

very fast, with lots of sharp curves; like riding a roller coaster in the rain, blindfolded! That was the end of our mountain climbing adventure.

We went to Vienna to attend the opera. The Opera House was very old, just like you see in the movies. The music was spectacular. Afterwards, we went waltzing. It was so romantic. I will always remember dancing with LeRoy. It was always very special. We would have been married 29 years on July 17. We certainly had a lot of good times together.

LeRoy was Santa for almost 25 years. He brought joy and good memories to a lot of families who returned yearly to feel the magic as Santa's twinkling blue eyes and his teasing sense of humor endeared him to all who met him. This kind, strong, yet gentle patriotic, family man, with his winning smile certainly will be missed! He's one great guy! He is loved by many.

All too soon, LeRoy's many health problems ended his dancing. But we still enjoyed his favorite music: WWII songs, patriotic songs, polka and religious music. Whenever the pain became unbearable, we sang. During his final days, when he didn't open his eyes or talk, I continued to sing his favorite WWII love song, "Always", to him. When I did, he raised his eyebrows to let me know that he heard and I knew we were still dancing.

Changes to our regular web site notice

Visit the 63rd Infantry Division Website at <http://www.63rdinfdiv.com> to find a detailed history of the 63rd Infantry Division. Included in the over 580 pages of the website is a listing of unit awards, descriptions of battles, a listing of battle and non-battle deaths, a description and view of all 63rd Infantry Division memorials and many other items of interest.

There are also over 2800 pictures of 63rd Infantry Division soldiers in training, combat and on occupation duty.

You will also find a list of memorabilia items for sale, information about reunions and inquiries from members and relatives searching for information about members and buddies. There is also an alphabetical listing, by unit, of active 63rd Infantry Division Association members, a listing of related websites and other information of interest to veterans.

Webmaster, Fred Clinton (D 254th Inf.) is seeking photos and memorabilia images to be added to the website.

Send photos by e-mail to joyclint@comcast.net or by regular mail to:

Fred Clinton,
102 S. Jenkins Street
Alexandria, VA 22304.

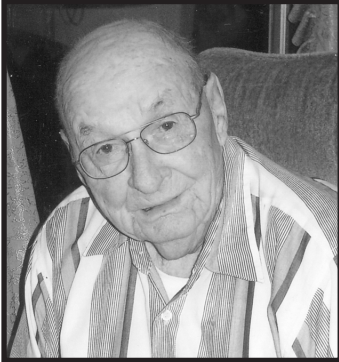
Fred's phone number is 703-751-7548.

All items will be returned when processing has been completed.

Celebration of Life



Harold W. Black



Harold W. Black loved this country and was devoted to his family.

He is sorely missed by his wife of 63 years, Viola, by his 4 children and their spouses and by his 7 grandchildren and 7 great-grandchildren.

Harold served with 255th Anti-tank.

Joseph Mack, my dear husband of 53 years passed away on September 5, 2007. He enjoyed every issue of *Blood & Fire*. We attended the Chicago reunion 1953. – contributed by his widow, Joanne K. Mack.

Henry Shartzter, Anti Tank 253, age 97, of Leitchfield, KY, passed away on March 2, 2011. He leaves 3 daughters. He loved the *Blood & Fire*. – contributed by his daughter, Carolyn Elmore.

Word has been received that Robert Owens, HQ 253, Tuscon, AZ has passed away. – contributed by daughter Dion Owens.

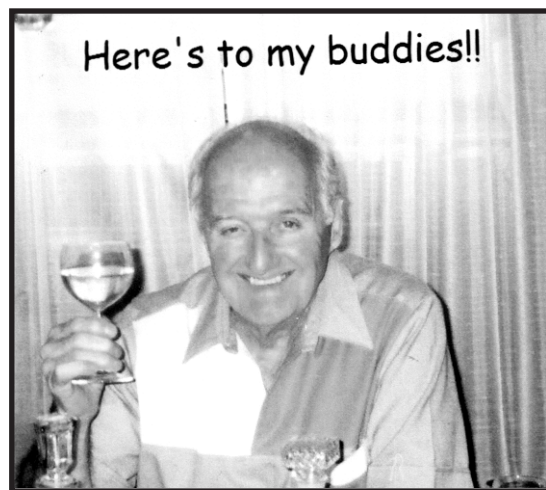
John J. Dooley, H254, passed away April 6, 2011. He was my companion of over 31 years. – Joan Renninger.

Francis B. Enoch, Co. K 253rd Infantry Regiment, passed away December 25, 2008. His wife preceded him in death. He enjoyed “Blood and Fire” reunions when he could attend. – contributed by his nephew, D. W. Clayton.

Lt. Lawrence McKelvy (Mack) Castleberry, Fox Co. 253rd Regiment, passed away February 4, 2011

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Fred Bellwood



Fred Bellwood died January 25, 2011. He was the last of his platoon (Co K-255th Inf.).

He enjoyed receiving the *Blood and Fire*.

He is survived by his wife “Gini” of 65 years, three children, four grandchildren and 1 great-grandson.

Celebration of Life



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in his hometown of Sherman Texas. – contributed by Herman Fabiani.

Richard “Dick” Kogler, Co. M - 254th Inf., passed away April 27, 2011. – contributed by John D. Erhardt.

Robert Apperson, E253, passed away December 11, 2009. - contributed by his son, Craig Cramer.

Wallace M. Barringer, G254, passed away October 11, 2009. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge at the age of 18. – contributed by his wife of 57 years, Marion M. Barringer.

Dale Graham, 254th Infantry, passed away April 2011. – contributed by Thomas E. Glunt.

Dennis F. Smith, 254th Infantry, Co. “M”, passed away October 19, 2011. – contributed by his wife Bonnie E. Smith.

1st/Sgt. Glen O. Brandon, A253 63rd Infantry, passed away November 1987. – contributed by his wife Josephine Brandon.

SPOUSE DEATH

Charlotte Boling, wife of Walter Boling, F 253, died April 1, 2011.

Coleman L. Burns

Coleman L. Burns, 85, of Jackson, NJ, Medic 363, entered into eternal rest on Monday, December 13, 2010 at his home.

He was the son of John and Barbara Molloy Burns of Perth Amboy, NJ.

Born in Perth Amboy, NH, he was considered the most gifted athlete in Middlesex County and was the last 4 letterman from St. Mary’s High School. He tried out with the Jersey City Giants and the Brooklyn Dodgers shortly before World War II in which he served as a medic and ambulance driver in the course of which he lost his right arm.

He received his Bachelor’s Degree in Science in Education from Temple University and taught at Pennsgrove High until retirement.

He was considered by his peers to be a master teacher.

He is survived by Joan, his adoring wife of 30 years. By his first marriage, he leaves behind his beloved daughter, Ann and her husband, John Umstetter and

beloved son, Jason Burns.

He leaves his granddaughter, Chelsea Umstetter and Sara Burns; he also leaves his brother, Jack Burns and a sister, Barbara Burns, along with many nieces and nephews.

Ralph E. Earley

Ralph Ernest Earley, 85, Manor of Wayne, Wayne, MI, died May 23, 2010.

He was born May 16, 1925 in Woodsfield, the son of the late Asher O. Earley and Rose Yockey-Earley.

He served proudly in the U.S. Army, 63rd Infantry Division, during WWII in Germany and France, where he was awarded the Bronze Star.

He graduated from Ohio State University with a long career in pharmacy in both Ohio and Michigan.

He is survived by two daughters, Lorraine Demeter of Westland, MI and Cheri Bosworth of Mt. Morris, MI; a son-in-law John Demeter; brother-in-law Franklin Scott, a sister-in-law, Beatrice Pifer and numerous nieces and nephews.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by his wife, whom he met and married in Berlin, Germany, Sarah M. Childs-Early. She also served four years in the U.S. Army during WWII.

A sister, Martha Lou Earley-Scott also preceded him in death.

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

DEFINITIONS THAT MAKE SENSE ...

ADULT: A person who has stopped growing at both ends and is now growing in the middle.

Jesse Ott's war experiences (continued) ...

I was so lucky that I didn't receive so much as a scratch in combat. But all during combat I said the 23 Psalm during the dangerous times of battle. I still look back on that time and silently repeat, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil," etc.

As I remember my closest brushes with death were in action at the Siegfried Line. The first close call was from a German "88" high explosive shell that landed about 3 feet from me. When we took our section of the fortifications I put my radio on top of a small ridge behind the pill box we captured. This was the highest point of Company A sector which gave me greater radio range for contacting my battalion fire direction center. There was a shallow groove in the earth leading up to my radio position. It was just deep enough to get about half my body below ground when I was lying down. Every time I crawled up to my radio to get better observation of the enemy controlled territory and raised the antenna, the German "88" would fire a round at us.

This one close call came after I had checked the enemy area and was crawling back to the safety of the communications trench connecting our pill box with other German defensive positions. Just before I reached this deep trench an "88" high explosive round came in landing about 5 feet to my left front. The explosion covered me with dirt down the neck of my shirt and jacket, in my helmet, face and trousers.

I couldn't believe I was still alive. The reason was that the round had landed right on the lip of the deep trench, thus sending all the shrapnel from the explosion down into the trench. As soon as the round landed, I jumped into the deep trench where I saw a rifleman sitting hunkered down against the wall of the trench. I thought he was in shock and unable to move. I reached down and shook his shoulder, "Let's get into the pill box before the next round comes in."

There was no reply, but he slumped against my legs. He had been riddled by the shrapnel from the "88" that had landed right behind him. He was bleeding from so many wounds that in the few seconds he had leaned against me, my pants had been completely soaked in his blood. There being no laundry facilities in the front lines meant I had to wear those blood-soaked pants the rest of combat operations.

My second close shave was from a German sniper while we were dug in in the small depression near the road through the Dragon's Teeth. This was the day after our first taking our section of the Siegfried Line and pulled back when we had lost contact with our adjacent units. I was leaning against the back of my foxhole when it sounded like an "88" shell exploded behind me, again with dirt down my neck and in my helmet. It wasn't an "88", it was the report of the sniper's rifle which had landed just behind me and ricocheted over my helmet, which he had been aiming for.

My third narrow escape came the evening of the second time we took our section of the Siegfried Line and stayed there.

I remember we were the left flank unit in this operation so we and the German Army unit was on our left flank, not friendly forces. There was no enemy activity to our front so I walked down our communications trench to the rifleman on left flank outpost. Night was falling so we felt fairly secure from enemy fire. The guard and I were so exhausted we were leaning against each other shoulder to shoulder and talking quietly. Our heads weren't over a foot apart when I heard the report of a German rifle and the blood, brains and bits of flesh from my companions' head sprayed over the side of my face, helmet and neck. A German sniper's bullet had flattened out as it penetrated the left rear of his helmet and skull and blew the left front of his face onto me.

After these incidents I soberly began to consider the odds that I would survive much longer.

After the Siegfried Line we continue our attacks into Germany. When we reached the Main (pronounced "Mine") River, there was only one pontoon bridge across it. This was a short distance north of Heidelberg, an old university city on the Neckar River. Because the only crossing for miles we were allowed to take only combat vehicles across. Our kitchen trucks and supply vehicles had to be left behind on the west side of the river.

Because we had no kitchen or supply trucks, we were issued "D" rations which consisted of a hard, concentrated tropical chocolate bar, about 4" long x 3/4" high by 3/4" wide with two grooves across it dividing it into three equal pieces: one piece each for breakfast, for lunch and for dinner. This chocolate was so hard it couldn't be eaten, we had to put a trench knife or a bayonet into a groove and pound it with something to cut

a piece off. Then foil a half-canteen cup of water, melt the chocolate in the water and drink it as hot chocolate.

After we crossed the Main River, I was assigned as the artillery officer in a task force tasked with bypassing Heidelberg to the east and trying to capture a bridge over the Neckar River at a small village a few miles south of Heidelberg.

The task force of one or two tanks, one or two 105mm howitzers, a 2 1/2 ton truckload of infantry and a couple of jeeps; one for the task force commander and one for me. One of my 105mm howitzer's prime mover had an opening cut into the roof of the cab and a .50 caliber machine gun on a ring mount, which gave it a 360° field of fire.

As we traveled along these back roads, we passed through some small villages where white sheets were hanging from a window of every house. I was glad to see that because it meant we wouldn't have to destroy any of them. Nevertheless we were alert for any hostile action as we passed through them. We had enough fire to completely destroy any village that threatened us.

We didn't see a single enemy soldier until we were descending a narrow valley down to the Neckar River. About halfway down to the river we received rifle fire from a slit trench across the valley. It was only about a hundred yards from us. The gunner in my truck with the ring mounted 50 caliber machine gun returned fire with a short burst. Immediately a white flag went up at the trench and the German soldiers came out with their hands up.

The German soldiers knew the devastating fire power and would surrender when we used a 50 caliber. It's range was about 7,000 yards if I remember correctly. You couldn't hit anything at that extreme range, but it was deadly up to about 500 yards.

I'm sure the Germans weren't expected to stop us but to give notice to the German engineers to blow the bridge before we could capture it. If so, it worked. Before we could get to the bridge it went up in smoke. Our primary mission failed, but we had shown there was no opposition on the east side of the river which enabled our forces to rapidly exploit the absence of any forces to delay our advance on both sides of the river. While we were looking at the destroyed bridge, we saw a jeep with a driver, an officer passenger and a gunner with a pedestal mount machine gun speeding down the highway on the other side of the river.

When our task force was dissolved, we all went back to our respective units. From this point on we advanced with our infantry motorized in 2 1/2 ton GMC 6x6 trucks until we met more resistance, where we went back to foot -- slogging pace of advance.

As we passed through the mountains between the Rhine River and the flatter area toward Bavaria and the German Alps the highway was a breeze to follow, again in motorized columns. The autobahn (super highway or freeway as we call our equivalent) provided swift, smooth passage for our vehicles except where canyons had been spanned by soaring bridge. At these places the retreating Germans had blown them up the same as they had the river bridges.

That would have stopped us but the U.S. Army Engineers had cut a bypass into the mountainside for us to use so we hardly had to slow down before continuing our march. Thus, just as blowing the river bridges had stopped us only temporarily, so did blowing the soaring spans across the small side canyons in the mountains.

As we moved along the Autobahn, we encountered blown overpasses where local roads passed under it. This senseless destruction was useless because when we encountered these places, we merely drove down the off-ramps, crossed the road and went up the on-ramp and continued on our way/ We did this until we met opposition and then dismounted and resumed the ground attack.

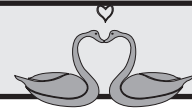
Our division fought on for about two weeks after we were notified we would be relieved by another division as soon as it caught up to us. We were told our relief was taking so long because the other division commander wanted his entire division intact when he relieved us.

Company "A", 1st Battalion, 255th Regiment fought cross-country, passing through woods north of Ulm, a city on the Danube River (I think it was on the Danube River).

As we advanced through this forest, we ran across an airfield with Luftwaffe fighter planes camouflaged under the trees. There were paved roads leading from the plans out to the Autobahn, which we crossed later in our advance. This pavement was the taxiway for the plans to reach the

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 29

Happy Anniversary



JANUARY

1: Doris & Herbert Cameron – FA 862 – 1949
 3: Bonnie & Ken Erickson – AT 255 – 1945
 7: Jane & Mike Jugan – MED. 253 – 2006
 7: Josephine & Vincent Tramuta – K 255 - 1950
 11: Bonnie & Edward Bundick – D 254 – 1946
 21: Marian & Merlin L. Myers – FA 861 – 1939
 27: Ginny & Wayne Lawrence – HQ 253 – 2001

FEBRUARY

2: Rhea & Lloyd Phillips – C 253 – 1949
 6: Joan & William R. Creamer – HQ 253 – 1944
 9: Caryl & Herbert Hubble – B 255 – 1952
 10: Barbara & Roy Lermond – HQ 254 – 1946
 14: Debbie & Warren F. Neumann – C 253 – 1978
 14: Jean & Elmer Chalcraft – D 254 – 1948
 18: Jana & Edward Phillip – Associate – 2000
 21: Edyth & Kenneth R. Mancini – G 254 – 1943
 22: Jane & Howard L. Hannum – AT 255 – 1957
 26: Frances & Charles Rhodes Jr. – H&I 253 – 1960
 27: Elva & Walter L. Stoner Jr. – MED 353 – 1949
 28: Karin & David Marzano – Associate – 1986

MARCH

4: Rowene & Frederick Kroesen – E 254 – 1944
 5: Jo & Martin Beer – L 253 – 1948
 7: Barbara & Craig Ethier – Associate – 1981
 10: Franceska & Donald Meeker – L 253 – 1951
 12: Donna & Harold LaCosse – F 254 – 1948
 14: Marjorie & Jacob Gesek – FA 861 – 1953
 14: Bertha & Walter E. Harmon – G 253 – 1947
 18: Jacquelin & Charles King – SV 254 – 1946
 30: Joyce & Paul Schwene – Associate – 1994

APRIL

2: Joyce & Andrew Kidwell – ORD 763 – 1949
 2: Leota & John J. Toom – FA 718 – 1941
 6: Lucille & Levy O. Collier – D 255 – 1950
 6: Barbara & Sherman Kumpf – FA 863 – 1947
 8: Betty & Ralph J. Almstrom – I 253 – 1962
 9: Helen & Donald Ivie – USAR – 1947
 13: Dale & Donald Lindstrom – FA 718 – 1957
 14: Gwynn & Tom Malan – A 255 – 1946
 19: Gloria & Mario Antoci – E 253 – 1947
 19: Marilyn & Jeffrey Rushing – Associate – 1985
 24: Mary & Sam Fittante – RECON 63 – 1954
 24: Brenda & Nicholas Piazza – MED 254 – 1981
 30: Eleanor & Stanley Kozlowski – I 255 – 1949

Jesse Ott's war experiences (continued) ... - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28

Autobahn, which was their runway for take-offs and landings. Our Air Force had destroyed so many of their airfields that they were hiding their planes in forests and using the Autobahns for runways.

We continued advancing until we reached the river just west of the city of Landsberg. The city, incidentally, where Hitler had been imprisoned after his failed attempt to take over the government of Bavaria in the city of Munich. While imprisoned there he wrote "Mein Kampf" (my struggle) in which he laid out his plans for the conquest of the world. At least this little Austrian Corporal of WWI had great ambitions.

In our advance through the forest just west of Landsberg, we passed a short way south of the concentration camp uncovered by another unit of the 63rd Division. This was a satellite camp of the death camp, Dochan, in Munich. This whole camp was an efficient killing and cremating machine. More on this later.

When we were relieved at Landsberg, we were pulled back for occupation duty until the end of the war. At this point I was transferred to Battalion HQ as the assistant S-2, assistant intelligence officer.

(A note about the fighter planes we found in the forest north of Ulm -- they were complete planes with nacelles ready to receive engines, so we thought. We figured the planes had been built faster than the engines and propellers and be built. Wrong! They were jet-engined fighters, which we had never heard of.)

One of my first assignments as assistant S-2 was to take a fleet of 20 GMC 2½ ton trucks north to Cologne in the British zone of occupation for coal to

heat the displaced person's camp in our sector.

Upon arrival in Cologne I reported to the military government office and presented my request for the coal and for gasoline to get my trucks back to my battalion.

The coal was no problem for the coal mines were in the British zone of occupation. The gasoline to get my trucks back home was a different matter. The Brits had no oil fields, so they had to depend on imports for their supply. I could tell they were cringing at the thought of depleting their limited supply by enough to get my 20 trucks back to my battalion. I felt for them but the gasoline dump they had was supplied by the U.S. Army, which would be replaced at the next shipment.

The trip to Cologne from our occupation area in southern Germany had taken two days so there was no way I could make the return trip without the fuel.

My next assignment as the assistant S-2 was a quick trip to Mannheim to arrange for the move of the 863 F.A.Bn to Mannheim to restore order. The problem was that the army unit which had captured Mannheim had disarmed the German troops and given their arms to the men in the displaced persons camp. This proved a serious mistake, for the former slave laborers were taking their revenge on the local citizens. It was mob violence on a scale that the local U.S. Army Military Government unit couldn't handle.

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The Ordinary Man

Given by Gina Iseminger at the 2011 Reunion

I believe God places within every man and woman the potential to be extraordinary. I believe He has designed each of us with the capacity to be heroes. A hero is not someone who lacks fear; a hero is not someone without failings; a hero is not someone who has never doubted. A hero is the one who answers the call in spite of his fear, despite his failings, and rises above his doubt to meet the challenge. A hero is an ordinary man who breathes deeply when called to an extraordinary moment in time, steps out of himself and yields to the Creator's plan and purpose of his life.

The men of the 63rd Infantry were ordinary men when they entered the service of their country. They were not all the cream of the crop; not all the brightest and the best; not all courageous and clear minded. Most, if not all, were fearful they would never return home; more were reluctant than eager to put on the uniform and pick up their rifle. Still, they answered the summons to serve and in that moment a spark of the extraordinary man God had placed within them was ignited.

Events do much to hurry the process in the development of heroes, and the events of World War II demanded that the ordinary men who entered into its history become extraordinary men with due haste. And the extraordinary men God had ordained to be in this place at this time fully co-operated and rose up inside to overtake the ordinary forever. In fully yielding themselves, they were transformed forever into what has become known as the "greatest generation". For none who served fell as just an ordinary man; none who returned came back unchanged. They had come face to face with evil, and with every fiber of their being they fought against it and with the grace of God they conquered it. They made a difference, they established a legacy, they honored those who died too early, those who returned forever maimed, and their country who asked them to stand united and persevere until the job to which they were called was completed.

When these men and women returned to the life they had once known, having completed their mission on the battlefield, they could not shake the extraordinary from their shoulders. They returned from war to serve during peace time with integrity, with resolve to live in a manner that would honor those who couldn't return, with purpose to continue

making a difference. They have continually fulfilled that purpose.

These were vibrant, strong men who served our country. They were men who bonded together under pressure, amidst horror none who did not serve could fully imagine. They relied on one another, laughed together, cried together, prayed together and together became committed to living extraordinary lives that would call others from a state of ordinary in the next generation and in the generation after that, and in the generation after that. Men of the 63rd who now live in their 80's and 90's; whose bodies belie the soldiers who still live within; who have more years behind them than before them; rest assured that your legacy continues on in those generations beneath yours. It is easy to look around and see a youth seemingly content to live common and ordinary lives, who have lost their moral compass, who seem to seek to serve only themselves and do so in a most unworthy manner. Remember, they too, are ordinary youth, as once you were and they've the same capacity to be extraordinary heroes as still you are.

Vibrant, strong, young men and women are serving across the sea this very day. They are discovering the extraordinary within them just as you did. This too, is an extraordinary time in our history. The future of our country is more uncertain than ever, we live in an economy that threatens to never recover, and fight an enemy we have trouble identifying. The events of this time demands heroes to rise up once again and make a difference. And those heroes are rising up. You taught them how. That's what extraordinary men do.

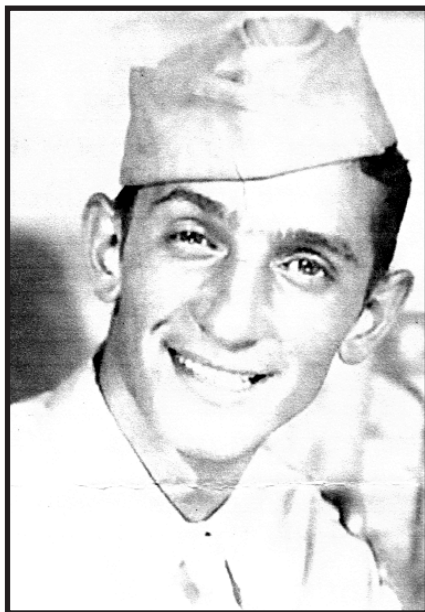
Every day fewer 63rds serve on this side of eternity. Every year the bell tolls in remembrance of more who have completed their journey and every year less who served hear its peal. More wait in eternity than live in the present. You who yet wait please be assured, you will never be forgotten. You will always make a difference. You have called all of us to a standard higher than ourselves and we will answer that call. Like Joshua who conquered Canaan by heeding God's call to, "be strong and of a good courage"; like the men of World War II who conquered evil by heeding God's same call to them, so, too, are ordinary men and women answering that call still today. It is your legacy and it will be honored. You will never be forgotten. Heroes never are.

The President of the United States in the name of The Congress takes pride in presenting the
MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to
FIRST LIEUTENANT
JAMES E. ROBINSON
ARMY

For service as set forth in the following:

CITATION:

For The President of the United States of America, in the name of Congress, takes pride in presenting the Medal of Honor (Posthumously) to First Lieutenant (Field Artillery) James E. Robinson, United States Army, for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity in action above and beyond the call of duty. First Lieutenant Robinson was a field artillery forward observer attached to Company A, 253d Infantry Division, near Untergriesheim, Germany, on 6 April 1945. Eight hours of desperate fighting over open terrain swept by German machine gun, mortar, and small-arms fire had decimated Company A, robbing it of its commanding officer and most of its key enlisted personnel when First Lieutenant Robinson rallied the 23 remaining uninjured riflemen and a few walking wounded, and, while carrying his heavy radio for communication with American batteries, led them through intense fire in a charge against the objective. Ten German infantrymen in foxholes threatened to stop the assault, but the gallant leader killed them all at point-blank range with rifle and pistol fire and then pressed on with his men to sweep the area of all resistance. Soon afterward he was ordered to seize the defended town of Kressbach. He went to each of the 19 exhausted survivors with cheering words, instilling in them courage and fortitude, before leading the little band forward once more. In the advance he was seriously wounded in the throat by a shell fragment, but despite great pain and loss of blood, he refused medical attention and continued the attack, directing supporting artillery fire even though he was mortally wounded. Only after the town had been taken and he could no longer speak did he leave the command he had inspired in victory and walk nearly two miles to an aid station where he died from his wound. By his intrepid leadership First Lieutenant Robinson was directly responsible for Company A's accomplishing its mission against tremendous odds.



Does anyone remember Joe?

Joseph Anthony Pulichene, PFC
 63rd Infantry Division
 255th Infantry Regiment
 Company L
 3rd Platoon

Entered service in August 1944
 Arrived European Theater of Operation in January 1945
 Left for the US in August 1946.

If anyone remembers Joe, please contact his son at:

Joe Pulichene
 21 Kensington Circle, Apt. 205
 Wheaton, IL 60189
 Phone (630) 430-2700
 Pulichene@hotmail.com

Three days in combat

During the first five months of 1945, there are three days permanently embedded in my memory. They are the first day, the last day and March 19. I was a point scout in the 63rd Recon. I still wonder how that came about.

I enlisted in the summer of 1943 when I was 17. The Army sent me and about 100 other 17-year-olds to Lehigh University to study engineering, under the ASTP program. When the semester ended we were all called to active duty and sent to Ft. Benning, GA for 16 weeks of infantry basic training and that was the end of the ASTP program. After basic training we were all sent to Camp Van Dorn outside of Centerville, Mississippi where the 63rd Infantry Division was in training. The group was split up and most of the regimental companies received one or two of us. I was sent to Company C of the 255th Regiment. The spot they assigned me to was first squad, first platoon – the position was platoon scout. After a few weeks, the regiment began an Intelligence and Reconnaissance school and all scouts were assigned to attend during the day. After a couple of months we were all sent back to our companies. For reasons not given, I was assigned instead to the Recon troop. This time I was put in the first squad, first platoon, as point scout. The point scout sits in the back of the jeep with the corporal in front with the driver. The corporal (later sergeant) was Robert Manning Armstrong and the driver was an ex-ambulance driver from Denver. The troop was made up of people with civilian driving experience and Army Air Corp cadets let go from the schools because the Army had too many navigators, pilots and bombardiers at that stage, mid-1944. They did not have a surplus of riflemen.

We arrived in Southern France in early January and proceeded to drive north to the area of Saarguimines, at the eastern shore of the Saar River. My friend, Ed Beidermann, and I and four others were summoned to Troop headquarters where we were told to get ready for a mission late at night, but were not told what it was all about. We crossed the river on a narrow wooden bridge and turned north and followed railroad tracks. At some point, Lt. Snyder informed Beidermann and me we were to return to the troop with a message. That reminded me of a movie I had once seen, “A Message to Garcia” and I felt something important was being thrust on the two of us. But, it wasn’t to be – the message was “our radio was not working”. Beidermann and I proceeded to retrace our steps back down the tracks hoping we would be able to spot the bridge. By then it was beginning to get light and as we passed a small railroad shack, a German

officer came out the door only about 30 yards in front and to the right of us. He pulled out a pistol and we frantically tried to take the safety of our rifles – the gloves didn’t make it easy. As we lifted the rifles to our shoulder, the German crossed in front of us firing and then disappeared in the morning mist. I felt lucky not to have been hit but Beidermann hit the jackpot. He was hit in the left arm at the shoulder. He spent the entire spring of 1945 in a hospital and finally came back to the troop in the summer – one day of combat and a Purple Heart for a million dollar wound.

The troop was excited when we got back because this was what we had all thought and worried about for a month. The message was delivered.

March 19

The Troop was assigned to replace a rifle company on a hill overlooking the Siegfried Line. We had front row seats of the combat engineer’s attack on the pillboxes under the sometimes cover of smoke. At intervals, when the smoke blew away we could see the combat engineers crawling up to the pillboxes and leaving Bangalore Torpedoes at the edge. All afternoon, though we were in plain sight of the Germans, there was no action against us even though we were like the ducks at a carnival shooting gallery. Then it got dark and the mortars began to fall – with proximity fuses that caused the airbursts.

The foxholes offered some protection but not enough and we had many casualties including our medic who had crawled to several holes. We expected some help from Troop headquarters, set up just over (and behind) the top of the hill. When nothing happened, I assumed that they were not aware of what was happening. So I and one other trooper began crawling up the hill and over the top. The scene that greeted us was gruesome. All of our officers and top NCOs were flat on the ground in a circle. The only one alive was Lt. Ginn and he had what looked like a small shaving nick on his cheek. He was on his feet and the front of his jacket was splattered with blood and brains.

He blubbed and we could see he was in no condition to assume command and we could expect no help from any source. So, we crawled back to the foxholes and told each pair what had happened and that they should stay put. Much later that night word came down that one man from each foxhole was to leave and go up the hill. My hole mate was Rudy Leu Muslonio and we argued. He won the battle because he was older and bigger than me and besides that, he was a corporal. I wondered if he would survive the night (he did).

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Three days . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 32

Late in April

On April 14 we hear the news that FDR died. We again had replaced a rifle company outside a village named Stein, in Swabia. A terrible battle had just take place there and the field was covered by dead German and U.S. soldiers.

The next few days were hazy in my memory but near the end of the month we were assigned to lead one of the regiments on a dash to the Danube. Behind us were tanks and trucks filled with infantry men. Our method of reconnaissance, perfected by months of driving the back roads of Mississippi, was for the lead jeep to approach a curve and stop while Bob Armstrong leaped out on the right and ran forward while I ran up the left side. When we could see around the curve we waved the jeep forward. The same approach was used on hills.

When we could see there was no ambush, the column (the rest of the recon platoon) moved forward. We used the same technique as we drove across Germany. You might say that Bob Armstrong and I ran our way across Germany. I remember one very clear deviation. The platoon leader decided one day that the M8 armored car (a 6 wheel lightly armored vehicle with a 37 mm turret) would lead the way. His suspicions were correct and the car ran into a hail of bullets. Ray Ferreti, who manned the 30 caliber machine gun on the top of the turret, was hit in the forehead and died instantly. The armored car somehow was able to turn around and we beat a retreat. The recon troop's job was to find the enemy, not fight them, and we headed back. That was not the only ambush the recon troop ran into. The second platoon also suffered casualties from a different ambush. The platoons always operated separately.

At the end of April, leading the regiment, we operated by the rule book. It wasn't long before a jeep came rushing up from behind and a very upset colonel began shouting for us to hurry it up. We tried to run faster but he again showed up, red in the face, shouting at us. So we had no other choice than to stay in the jeep and keep it moving. As we approached one small village we could see white sheets hanging out of windows. We could also see several German soldiers hanging from houses. I spotted several German soldiers as they ran up the steps and entered a house. Despite the colonel, we stopped and I ran up the steps, opened the door and shouted, "Commasee rause mit der handa ho". They must have understood my German because two or three came out and they were followed by a dozen more. I had visions of Sgt. York in WWI who captured more than a hundred enemy. Just then the colonel reappeared, mad as hell for holding up the column and damning us for burdening him with prisoners. I didn't expect a Bronze star but I didn't expect a dressing down. Morris Schocket, who spoke Yiddish, had

questioned several of the prisoners who told him that the SS had hung the Germans for wanting to surrender and then had withdrawn, intending to make a stand in Jettingin, a village near the bottom of the hill.

As we started down the hill, off to our right we could see the spires of Ulm and another column in the flat of the Danube valley heading toward the river. That explained the colonel's wrath. He wanted to be the first to cross the Danube and we were thwarting him. As we slowly drove toward Jettingin expecting an ambush, I mentioned to Bob Armstrong that it might be wiser to have one of the tanks to lead the column. But he wasn't about to confront the colonel. He was more willing to confront the SS. I think I held my breath for the five minute drive to Jettingin, all for naught. We reached the valley floor and drove across a bridge over the river, only to discover the 12th Armored division had beaten the colonel. The bodies of the German soldiers were stacked up like cord wood.

Our orders were to head back to the Bad Mergentheim area for occupation duty in Koenigshofen on the Tauber River. So ended the last day in combat.

Pfc. Russell Sherman (nee Goldberg)
Recon Troop
russmetal@aol.com
592 Dryad Rd.
Santa Monica, CA 90402

Jesse Ott . . .

- CONTINUED FROM PAGE 29

My 863 FABN was tasked to move to there, thus my trip. One of our two liaison planes were small 2-seat Piper Cubs with an air-cooled 65 HP engine. (As I recall the top speed was about 90 miles per hour.)

Upon arrival at Military Government, I completed arrangements for the reception and deployment of the battalion. By the time this was done it was time for supper and getting dark. We could hear gunfire from all over the city.

The next day Lt. Townsend, our pilot, and I headed back to the 863 F.A.Bn. Mannheim is north of Heidelberg, an old university town on the Neckar River. Between Heidelberg and Mannheim the land is fairly flat, but Heidelberg is at the northern end of a deep canyon which the Neckar has cut through the mountains.

Lt. Townsend elected to fly south just above the river at the bottom of the canyon. When we arrived at a point approximately due west of our battalion area, he started climbing out of the gorge up a small side canyon. The air was dead and the plane was mushing along, gaining altitude slowly. By the time we realized we might crash into the mountainside before we cleared the lip of the canyon, the sides of the small side canyon had closed in so close we didn't have room to turn back and try again.

As the plane continued to climb slowly, we got closer to the canyon. It was "sweaty palms" all the way for those last few yards.

I think we were trying to sit as lightly to help the plane clear the top of the canyon. We finally cleared the top edge of the canyon only to see a farm

- CONTINUED ON PAGE 40

A word from your buddies . . .

253RD

By several miracles, we managed to complete the Lockheed Electra Model 10A airplane and was given quite a celebration. It took 14 years. – WILLIAM TAYLOR, HQ Co. 1st Bn 253, 1st Lt.

I turned 85 in January. My dear wife is deceased. We have 28 grandchildren and one great-grandson (6 months old). We had 9 children - 7 daughters and 2 sons. – PAUL KILLION, Col. 253, Pfc.

254TH

I am enclosing my payment for the *Blood & Fire* Magazine. I enjoy receiving it and the memories that it recalls. I am in good health and still remain active. My wife died in June 2007. I live in our apartment in a retirement community but I continue to practice as a lawyer. I was sad to learn that John Burney died. – DICK BLEWETT, 254TH REG., 1ST BATTALION, CO. "A".

Is James Cummings still a member? We were good friends in C. Co. 254th in '43 & '44. – CARLETON NAEGELE

I am the widow of Alan Charles Marcher and I so enjoy receiving the *Blood and Fire*. The recent copy, one veteran tells of the 254th and Seigfried Line across Germany which Alan was a part of. On the photo gallery is a picture of Melvin, Marvin and Henry West. I am wondering if those men are related to me as my maiden name is West and I grew up in southern Ohio. Can you locate those people as I would like to contact them? If so, I would be indebted to you greatly. – MAXINE MARCHER.

I'm subscribed. What I need, please, is our insignia (Blood and Fire patch) to glue to my bumper in case I run over any hotshots. – SHELDON TODER, 254 CN Co., Cpl.

Married 63 years; 7 children - 6 boys, 1 girl; 21 grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren. Have a landscaping stone business. (Quarry sandstone for landscaping, retaining walls, and structural accents). I continue to work each day. – FRED A. MUELLER, 254th 2nd BN HQ, Pfc.

255TH

Completed Armor School and command general staff college 1983. – ROBERT E. McCLURKEN, CO. 255, LTC. ARMOR

I was one of the Air Force cadets that found their way to Camp Van Dorn. Took basic training three times. The medics, the Air Force and the infantry. Went overseas with the 63rd Division, Co. I, 255 Inf., on the Saturnia. Wound up at 7th Army Headquarters in Vienna and discharged at Camp Sheridan in Illinois. – KERMIT DUBBELS

ASSOCIATE

Enclosed is a check for *Blood & Fire*. I could not be without it, as I have always waited for it since I became a member when I attended Nashville reunion. I will so miss it if the majority don't want it – make my vote count! I read it cover to cover and have a lot saved. I go back to remember the names of those I met and still are in the magazine. Please don't remove my name as my daughter likes to read it too; she lives in Canada Ont. and visits me every summer. – ROSE DALTON

263RD

I was a truck driver in Co. "B" motor pool. When we got shipped to France, I was transferred to HQ motor pool as a welder for the duration of the war. I'm slowing down now, I'm 92 years old. – FRANK DUVA, 263 B Co. Combat Eng. - T5.

FIELD ARTILLERY

Marion and I are married 67 years on May 25, 1944. Marion is 90 years old and I am 91 years old. We are in a Board & Care for 3 years now due to health problems. – ALBERT SAFRANEK, A Btry. 861st FABN – PFC.

**DON'T FORGET TO
CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS
SUN., MARCH 11, 2012**

Hotel Registration Form

Board of Directors Meeting - August 16th – 19th, 2012

Mail /Call or use the 63rd's Hotel Web Page to make hotel reservations:

Embassy Suites Columbus – Airport

2886 Airport Drive

Columbus, OH 43219

614.536.0500

Mention: Group Name: 63rd Infantry Division Association or Group Code: 63D or use the web page address: http://embassysuites.hilton.com/en/es/groups/personalized/C/CMHATES-63D-20120816/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone () _____ **Sharing room with:** _____

Arrival Date _____ **Time** _____ **Departure Date/Time** _____

SPECIAL REQUESTS:

King Bed _____ Two Queen Bed _____ Wheelchair Accessible room _____
Embassy Suites has designated smoking areas and some rooms are designated.

RATE: \$119.00 per room + State and Local Tax *

* Check in 3:00pm; check out 12:00pm Rates are for 2-day pre/post meeting

Complimentary cooked-to-order Breakfast daily included in the price of the room.

Complimentary nightly Manager's Reception cocktails, (subject to OH state and local laws. Must be of legal drinking age) and appetizers.

Complimentary shuttle service to and from Columbus Airport (call **614.536.0500 for pickup**), Easton Town Center (shopping), and anywhere within a 5 mile radius of the hotel

198 Two-Room Suites with separate living area with a sofa bed & private bedroom, private bath with walk-in shower or tub, two- 42inch HDTV televisions, refrigerator, microwave, coffeemaker, wet bar, iron with board, & laptop safes in guest rooms. 24/7 fitness center, an indoor pool, whirlpool, and sun deck.

Live streaming flight information in lobby with capability to print boarding passes

CUT OFF DATE: July 13, 2011. Reservations received after this date will be processed on space available basis, at the same rate.

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

MC _____ Visa _____ American Express _____ Discover _____

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date: _____

CANCELLATION POLICY: Cancellations must be made 24 hours before arrival date.

SIGNATURE: (same as credit card holder)

63rd Infantry Division Association Board of Directors Meeting and IMOK Mini-Reunion for 2012

To all 63rd Infantry Division Association Members and Associate Members, (Family/Friends),

This year, since there will no longer be a reunion, the IMOK Chapter Mini-Reunion will be held in conjunction with the Board of Directors Meeting in August in order to meet constitution and by-law requirements. All board members and the association's officers will be required to attend this meeting.

The IMOK Chapter will be hosting the meeting which will be a day longer than usual and take place from Thursday afternoon/evening, August 16th through Saturday August 18th evening dinner buffet with checkout on Sunday morning, August 19th. All members of the 63rd Infantry Division Association are invited to attend this meeting. We have some far reaching decisions to make. **The IMOK Chapter would love to see everyone in August!**

Accommodations:

Embassy Suites Columbus Airport Hotel, 2886 Airport Drive, Columbus, OH 43219 is located 2 miles from the Port Columbus International Airport. It is accessible to major freeway systems. (Registration forms & directions enclosed) The rooms with amenities are \$119.00 plus state and local taxes per night. Amenities include: complimentary cooked-to-order breakfast daily, complimentary nightly Manager's Reception (subject to OH state and local laws) with appetizers, **complimentary parking and shuttle service** to Columbus Airport, Easton Town Center, and anywhere within a 5-mile radius. More amenities listed in detail on hotel registration form. **The reservation deadline is Friday, July 13, 2012. Any reservation received after the 13th will be offered based upon availability and will receive the group rate.**

Registration Fee will remain the same at \$35.00 per member and per associate member (spouses excluded, donations are welcomed).

Per day per person charges as follows:

- Thursday – Meet Your Buddies, Hospitality Room – No Charge
- Friday – days events, lunch, dinner and entertainment – \$55 per person per day
- Saturday – days events, lunch, dinner and entertainment – \$60 per person per day

We would like to offer a tour for those who are interested and able. The tour is to the **Motts Military Museum**. In order to reserve the bus (handicap accessible), we need a minimum of 18 participants. The tour will be on Saturday, August 18th, 1:30pm until 4:30pm. The cost, which includes the bus and entrance to the museum, is \$32 per person. The deadline is May 1st for this information (number going with payment). The May 1st deadline is only for the Motts Military Museum Tour. Please respond to Mary Fran Collier, IMOK Treasurer, collierfm@sbcglobal.net, call **312.497.7785**, or send request to 63rd Infantry Division Association, 10812 S. Kenneth Ave., Oak Lawn, IL 60453. A short summary about the Motts Military Museum follows in this issue.

Edward F. Fowle, Jr.

Edward F. Fowle, Jr.

President, 63rd Infantry Division Association

Judith "Fowle" Schaefer

Judith "Fowle" Schaefer

1st President, 63rd Infantry Division Association

Directions to Embassy Suites for the 2012 Board of Directors' meeting

Directions to Embassy Suites Columbus-Airport,
2886 Airport Drive, Columbus, OH 43219,
614-536-0500

- **From Port Columbus International Airport** - East on International Gateway Drive to 670 West to Exit 9 Cassady Avenue through the light onto Airport Drive hotel will be on the right.
- **From Downtown Columbus** - I-670 East exit #9 Johnstown Road / Airport staying right at the fork onto Johnstown Rd. Right on Cassady Avenue left on Airport Drive hotel on right.
- **From the North** - I-71 South to I270 East to I-670 West exit #9 Cassady Avenue through light on Airport Drive, hotel on right.
- **From the South** - I-71 North to I-670 East-Airport, exit #9 Johnstown Road, stay right at the fork onto Johnstown Rd, right on Cassady Avenue, left on Airport Drive hotel on right
- **From the East** - I-70 West to I 270 North to exit #35 I-670 West to Cassady Avenue exit #9 through the traffic light onto Airport Drive hotel on right
- **From the West** - I-70 East to I-71 North exit #101A left hand exit toward Cleveland, take I-670 East exit towards Airport, Exit #9 Johnstown Road, stay right at the fork onto Johnstown Rd, right on Cassady Avenue, left on Airport Drive hotel on right

The **Embassy Suites Columbus Airport** brings you the quality amenities and services that you've come expect from a Hilton family brand. Additional property features:

- 198 two-room suites offering a separate living area with a sofa bed and Private bedroom with Serta Suite Dreams™ mattresses featuring our Embassy Essentials Bedding™ Collection
- Complimentary cooked-to-order breakfast daily and a complimentary nightly Manager's Reception (subject to OH state and local laws. Must be of legal drinking age).
- Complimentary parking with complimentary shuttle service to Columbus airport and Easton Town Center, an upscale lifestyle center with numerous restaurants, shopping center, spa and other amenities
- Private bath w/ Blooms Energy Collection™ bath products, walk-in shower or tub
- Two 42-inch HDTV televisions with in-suite movies
- Wired and wireless HSIA, and Complimentary wireless HSIA in all public areas

- Refrigerator, microwave oven, coffee maker, wet-bar, iron with board, and laptop safes in guest rooms
- Spacious desk with ergonomic chair and mobile furnishings so guests can create their own living space
- Open air-atrium with a signature water feature and full service restaurant
- 24-hour complimentary BusinessLink® Business Center and Sundry shop
- Enlarged 24/7 fitness center featuring leading-edge cardio and resistance training equipment from Precor® and an indoor pool, whirlpool, and sun deck

A short summary – Motts Military Museum was founded in 1987 by Warren E. Motts of Groveport, Ohio who established the museum as a not for profit tax exempt educational organization. The mission of Motts Military Museum is to: “To educate the public on the importance of America's military past through the documentation, collection, interpretation, and preservation of tangible artifacts and personal stories of the men and women who served and are serving in the United States Armed Forces.” Originally established in the Motts family's 1870 residence, the museum moved in 1999 to a more modern 5,100 square foot facility with near four acres of land. The new building and grounds were given to the Museum through the generosity of Columbus Attorney Robert R. Richards who was a former special agent of the War Department during World War II. The next several years the museum grew in leaps and bounds. Donations poured in from veterans and their families. The museum secured many vehicles, military aircraft, and a Higgins Boat from World War II. In 2001, the museum broke ground for a new wing and as funds were available the museum's volunteer crew, many of whom were professional carpenters, electricians and other skilled tradesmen, worked on the 5,200 sq. ft. area. By 2006, the entire structure was completed and paid in full. Currently items are being selected and installed in this new wing.

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.

Moving?

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

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

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

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

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

**Did You
Remember To Pay
Your Dues?**

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., Tuscon, AZ 85723

**send all articles
and photos to:
Donna LaCosse
PO Box 86
Morocco, IN 47963**

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TELEPHONE
NUMBERS**

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

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Jesse Ott . . .

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house, a tree in the yard and farm people and animals scattering in all directions to get away from those crazy Americans who had just popped up over the edge of their farm yard and headed straight toward their tree.

We cleared the top of the tree but the wheels of our landing gear ripped through the topmost foliage snagging some of the tiny new branches and leaves which we pulled from the wheels where they connected to the landing gear struts.

Our battalion headquarters was located in a house just outside a small village. Because the land was gentle rolling hills, we had to level area for a landing strip. There were two fields a few hundred yards from the house that had short green ground cover: winter wheat or just pasture grass. One of these fields was chosen by our pilots as a landing and take-off strip. They took off down the slope of the fields and landed going uphill.

My efforts on this task were to no avail, for when I returned from my harrowing airplane ride I was told that the orders for our assignment in Mannheim had been cancelled. I believe an infantry battalion bivouacked nearer to that city had been given the job.

We continued the motorized patrols of our sector until ordered to a new division area.

When we reached our new area we were informed that the 63rd Division had been converted from a combat division to a carrier division to take high-point men home to the United States. That meant that most of us who had entered combat late in the war would be transferred out of the 63rd into other units slated for German occupation duty or into units slated for deployment to the Pacific Theater of Operations to join the battle against the Japanese, which was still raging fiercely closer and closer to the home islands of Japan.

At this time I received orders through channels to report to Brigadier General McGaw, our division artillery commanding general. My anxiety level jumped high. I wondered where I had fouled up because Generals don't have much to do with lowly lieutenants directly. It's usually through channels for the lieutenant's lower echelon commanders to deal with. To be ordered to report directly must mean my transgression must be very serious. Thus it was with real trepidation that I arrived at his headquarters.

When I reported in to the duty officer at Division Artillery headquarters, I found two other 1st Lieutenants who had received the same orders to report. None of us could think of a reason for our being

there, try as we might.

When we were told to enter, we found not one, but two Generals sitting behind the desk -- General McGaw and General Frederick Harris, the assistant division commander. At the sight of these two our hearts really sank. We reported in the prescribed manner and stood stiffly at attention, shaking in our boots. But something was wrong -- there were three straight-backed chairs in front of the General's desk, which he smilingly seated us. What kind of a dressing down does any C.O. give to a seated miscreant. Still we sat stiffly at attention on the edge of our seats ready to spring to attention as each of us felt the blow that was to come.

Now, both the Generals were smiling, probably at our evident discomfort. Without another word General McGaw reached down and produced a fifth of top-of-the-line whiskey. General Harris put five glasses on the desk, which were filled with the whiskey. We all toasted each other and emptied our glasses. While we sat there a little more relaxed, the two Generals reminisced about our days at Camp Van Dorn, Mississippi and their conquests of some of the ladies of the area. We lieutenants were still mystified until General McGaw brought the proceedings to the point of the meeting -- to present each of us with the Silver Star Medal. We were stunned, for none of us had the slightest inkling that we had been recommended for this honor.

After presenting our medals, he informed us that the division would be transferring all of us out and that he would approve our transfer to any new unit we could find that would take us.

Fortunately, at this time the U.S. Army Military Government under General Lucius Clay was recruiting men, both enlisted and officers. This sounded to me like an interesting assignment as it would provide ample opportunity to learn the culture, political system, people and language of the natives of our U.S. Army Zone of Occupation. I learned this and much more during my three years as an Army Military Government officer and then another year as a U.S. State Department doing the same job as a Civil Affairs Officer.

I learned so much and made so many European friends. I would have stayed in the job longer, but my parents were getting along in years and were in poor health. I knew that if I stayed in Germany on another two-year contract, I might not see them again while they stilled lived.

(More of my military government experiences later.)