



# THUNDERBOLT

83rd INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION, Inc.

WORLD WAR II

Vol. 57 Issue No. 3

Summer Issue 2002

THE LANDMARK RESORT HOTEL  
LOOKS FORWARD TO HOSTING THE  
56<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REUNION  
FOR THE  
83<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION



*Myrtle Beach, SC, September 11 – 15, 2002*

# THE THUNDERBOLT

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The THUNDERBOLT is written for all members of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division World War II and is published at East Side Drive, P. O. Box 406, Alton Bay, NH 03810-0406

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## A SALUTE TO PAST PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE SERVED US WELL

*James C. Hanrahan.....1947	*William M. Doty.....1966	*Bernie Cove.....1984
Jack M. Straus.....1948	Albert B. Belvedre.....1967	Carroll Brown.....1985
*Shelly Hughes.....1949	Vito C. Palazzolo.....1968	John Hobbs.....1986
*Julius Ansel.....1950	Pat DiGiammerino.....1969	George Fletcher.....1987
*Walter H. Edwards Jr.....1951	Casey Szubski.....1970	*Charles Schmidt.....1988
Leo Schneider.....1952	*Charles Altomari.....1971	Edward Reuss.....1989
Finley Heyl.....1953	*Harold H. Dopp.....1972	Charles J. Lussier.....1990
*Lawrence J. Redmond.....1954-55	Louis J. Volpi.....1973	Edgar H. Haynes.....1991
*Lt. Gen. Robert H. York.....1956	Bernard O. Riddle.....1974	Ned Smith.....1992
*Harry W. Lockwood.....1957	Robert G. Taylor.....1975	Louis Sandini.....1993
*Raymond J. Voracek.....1958	Mike Skovran.....1976	William A. Minick.....1994
Charles Abdinoor.....1959	Manlius Goodridge.....1977	Casey Szubski.....1995
*Joseph F. Minotti.....1960	Joseph A. Macaluso.....1978	Floyd Richmond.....1996
*Frank J. McGrogan.....1961	*William J. Chavanne.....1979	Keith Davidson.....1997
*John W. Robinette.....1962	*Samuel Klippa.....1980	R.C. Hamilton.....1998
*Manuel C. Martin.....1963	Michael Caprio.....1981	Pat DiGiammerino.....1999
*Julius Boyles.....1964	Ralph Gunderson.....1982	Salvatore Scicolone.....2000
*Samuel Klippa.....1965	*Arthur Doggett.....1983	

\* Denotes Deceased

## President's Corner

To all 83<sup>rd</sup> members, families & friends,

The time is fast approaching for our annual reunion, our 56<sup>th</sup> to be exact, and I want to thank you all again for the privilege of serving as your National president.

Plans are coming along nicely, and I believe we have something for everyone and I thank every one for their help. Hopefully some of you have pre-registered, so the registration lines will move along faster.

We're all aware that our ranks are thinning fast and so many of us have health problems, so our group won't be as large, but for those of us who can let's try to attend.

I'm looking forward to meeting you in Myrtle Beach in September. God bless you and our country,

Pat DiDiammerino  
Nat'l President

## Secretary/Treasurer

No report submitted

## From the Editor

Our reunion is fast approaching. Time goes very fast. First summer started then before you know it, the reunion is here. I hope all have their registrations in and we will have a big crowd.

Thunderbolt magazines that have been sent out and have the wrong mailing address on are costing

the Association money. The Post Office takes off the back cover and sends it to me. I have been paying 60 cents to get it back (the returned cover is used to get any address changes). Now that postage has gone up the covers will cost 70 cents now. We are putting together a mailing list for people that have winter and summer addresses. If you have a change of address, telephone number, zip code or anything else, please let us hear from you.

We had a difficult year with changing Secretary-Treasurer and trying to do the Thunderbolt, and now the Ad Book at the same time. With the help of my son and some printers I have known for years I will make it. I don't have room to name all that have helped.

Make sure that your membership cards have the date 2002 or more. Some members pay more than one year at a time.

The weather has been hot some days, cool others. Yesterday it was in the high 90's and today it is 64. The wind is 10MPH. Now you need a sweater but it is nice and clear.

\*\*\*\*\*

*In tears I watched him sinking,  
I watched him fade away,  
My heart was almost broken,  
He fought so hard to stay.*

*But when I saw him sleeping,  
So peaceful, free from pain,  
I could not wish him back,  
To suffer that again.*

*Lord keep your arms around him,  
And in your loving care,  
Make up for all he suffered,  
And all that was unfair.*

Author unknown



# DECEASED LIST

*Our sympathy goes out to all the families of these veterans. We will miss all of them.*

<u>Name</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Reported By</u>
Alicandri, Ezio F.	D 329 <sup>th</sup>	Sal Scicolone
Aller, John A.	F&H 331 <sup>st</sup>	Don Hinz
Anderson, Clifford		Pat DiGiammerino
Atkocius, Vitie	H 331 <sup>st</sup>	Capt. Mac
Banas, Edward A	453 A.A.A.	Wife, Stephanie
Beeler, Ted	AT 329 <sup>th</sup>	Pat DiGiammerino
Biggers, William (Billie)	H 331 <sup>st</sup>	Emanuel Lamb
Farrell, William (Bill)	B 330 <sup>th</sup> Inf.	Chuck Abdinoor
Foster, James	783 <sup>rd</sup> Ord.	Rags Rangnow
Goodman, Leon	K 329 <sup>th</sup>	Pat DiGiammerino
Hayden, Marvin D.	D 329 <sup>th</sup>	Sal Scicolone
Jeffrey, Wetzel	HQ 329 <sup>th</sup>	Jackie Mercer, daughter
Kerr, Willie	F 331 <sup>st</sup>	Family
Komjourn, Gene	F 331 <sup>st</sup>	Capt. Mac
Lary, Charles P.	Regt. HQ	Marian Lary
Litrenta, Bill	783 <sup>rd</sup> Ord.	Rags Rangnow
MacLeod, Melvin	HQ 329 <sup>th</sup>	Donald, son
Meyer, Kenneth E.	83 <sup>rd</sup> Signal	Wife
Mutinani, Victor	783 <sup>rd</sup> Ord.	Rags Rangnow
Pastirik, George B.	HQ 3 <sup>rd</sup> BN 331 <sup>st</sup>	Sal Scicolone
Phillips, Frank	C 308 <sup>th</sup> E.	Pat DiGiammerino
Pope, Stanley	HQ 329 <sup>th</sup>	Delores Pope
Reisinger, Nelson	B 908 F.A.	Janet M. Plas, daughter
Riddle, Bernard D.	HQ 329 <sup>th</sup>	Wife
Ridgway, John W.	B&E 331 <sup>st</sup>	Wife, Margaret
Runion, Lawrence E., Sr.	B 330 <sup>th</sup>	Family
Salontay, Frank	783 <sup>rd</sup> Ord.	Rags Rangnow
Salvatore, Anthony	B 329 <sup>th</sup>	Pat DiGiammerino
Schmidt, Francis	F 331 <sup>st</sup>	Pat DiGiammerino
Soucy, Florent	G 330 <sup>th</sup>	Pat DiGiammerino
Stoffan, Albert	H 330 <sup>th</sup>	Mary S. Goodman, daughter
Turlo, William	AT 331 <sup>st</sup>	Pat DiGiammerino
Vallomy, Mario	D 331 <sup>st</sup>	Al Shrawder
Welling, Coen E.	H 329 <sup>th</sup>	Nina L. Reigle, daughter
Wise, Albert L.	A 329 <sup>th</sup>	Gary J. Wise



# CHAPTERS

## BOSTON CHAPTER NEWS

By Amby Tynan

We have been doing very well in our Chapter with so much sickness and hardships, plus hot weather. April 27<sup>th</sup> the monthly meeting of the Boston Chapter was held at the home of Pat and Gin DiGiammerino. Ted Gorczynski said prayers for Mike Caprio and Franny Arrigo. Mike and Fanny passed away since the last meeting. Tony Piatidosi was filling in for Hy Goodman, our Secretary, as Hy was unable to come to the meeting. Our Treasurer, Ron Platt, gave our report and stated the Chapter is financially stable. Pat DiGiammerino added two new members to the Chapter. Twenty-three members were present at this meeting.

Meeting on May 16<sup>th</sup> by Louie Sandini in Marlborough, MA which was a full course turkey dinner at the cost of \$8.00 a person. Louie Sandini had an operation but came to the event. Dinner and meeting was very successful with a full house at the Marlborough Senior Center.

June meeting was at Maria Gonsalves house in Dartmouth, MA. Maria is a good friend of Fred Sylvia. I did not attend this meeting but I was told it was successful. Thanks to Maria from the Boston Chapter. Fred Sylvia told a few I Company stories.

Since the last report I was told Joe & Rose Collette's son Paul passed away. He lived in California after spending 22 years in the U.S. Air Force and 21 year in private Industry. The Collette's went to California for the funeral. Their son received full honors. Condolences to the Collette family.

I was talking to Hy and Lucy Goodman on the telephone. Hy tells me he is doing better. Nancy

and I are going out to eat with them in the near future.

R. D. Willis should be at the Reunion to tell about his golf game. However, only the good days.

I recently spoke on the telephone with Dallas Williams (he still fits into his Army uniform). He now serves as his County Chaplain for all the Veteran's funerals. He plans to be at the Reunion this year.

I talked to Walt Harding on April 19<sup>th</sup>. Walt and wife Esther are doing well. Ed McCouch went hunting with his son. I guess he learned not to go next time as it was too much for his health. Eddie still has the last bottle and is planning to make it to Myrtle Beach.

Dr. Monroe Coleman called me last week. We had a few things to talk about, which gave us a few laughs. I hope to see him in the next few months. Leo Miller, 323 pilot on the Piper Cub, is doing well.

The following report was received from Laurette Wenzel, Erwin Erhardt's daughter.



Erwin Erhardt, Mr. Like, Norma Erhardt

“ERWIN ERHARDT'S 80<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY  
Respectfully submitted by Laurette Wenzel, daughter

On January 1, 2002 our Dad, Erwin F. Erhardt turned 80 years old. We celebrated this milestone birthday with a surprise party on January 5<sup>th</sup>. The evening was a huge success with music, dancing, family, friends, a scrapbook of memories, food, birthday cake, and a bugle call performance by the birthday boy himself. However, we planned another surprise. . . General George S. Patton.

Motivational speaker Barry Liker was flown in from Santa Barbara, California to Cincinnati, Ohio for a very special tribute. For nineteen years Mr. Liker has performed the infamous George C. Scott speech from the movie "Patton". After he addressed his audience with the original speech, he exits the stage then returns and does a customized speech changing the words and phrases geared to the group he is addressing (in this case the individual).

The Erhardt family supplied all kinds of stories about our Dad for the roast. Although, Mr. Liker usually performs for corporations with hundreds in attendance, he claims the trip to Cincinnati and the speech he prepared for our Dad was a his favorite through all the years. Mr. Liker "Patton" had our guests laughing and crying as he delivered his wonderful address to an even more wonderful man our Dad.

Thank you Laurette. That's all the news for now.



Anne Tisdell and Betty Crites from NJ  
At Marlboro dinner meeting



Tony Vaccaro, Ginngy DiGiammerino Sharing breakfast



Anna & John Tisdell and Pat & Lou Sandini



Serious Business  
Pat DiGiammerino, Lou Sandini



Pres. John Tisdell and guest at Marlboro dinner Meeting



Hand-sewn American Flag made in Belgium by  
Boston Chapter member's Mother

## CLEVELAND CHAPTER NEWS

By Bob Grobelny

## DIXIE CHAPTER NEWS

By Ellsworth Massie

Dixie Summer Meet  
June 16, 2002

Tuesday/Wednesday – I feel a strong urge to go to Winston Salem so I leave Jappa, MD and make the 550 miles with no problem. I find two couples there and starting to celebrate. Joining them, Kathryn and I have supper with them and settle in. It's good to be together again.

Thursday – Up early for breakfast and morning paper in the Days Inn Lobby. Things are shaping up fast. A small shopping tour by the ladies while the battle plans are worked over by the troops brings us to the supper hour. By now 17 hearty souls are present and head for K&W cafeteria for a great meal seated together. We go over the sick list and remember them with cards. There are more to come, excitement runs high.

Friday – Another big day, up early, worked hard. By supper we have 29 hungry comrades heading for Oyster Bay for a great meal and fellowship. All goes well. We retire to the Hospitality Room and show our appreciation to the ladies by eating and eating. What an enjoyable evening.

We meet many new folk. Whole families come with as many as three generations. What a pleasure to meet the young people! In a few years we'll be gone, hopefully they will be able to carry on.

Saturday – Our hostess Elaine Watkins had arranged for our Banquet at her church Banquet and Fellowship Hall. What a beautiful facility! Multi-million dollar complex. The ladies do all the cooking and meet our every need. We are picked up by bus and transported there and back.

There are 43 of us from eight states. We spend time in prayer and meditation for the deceased, sick, and those left behind. Then we celebrate being able to be together again. After carrying out our business.

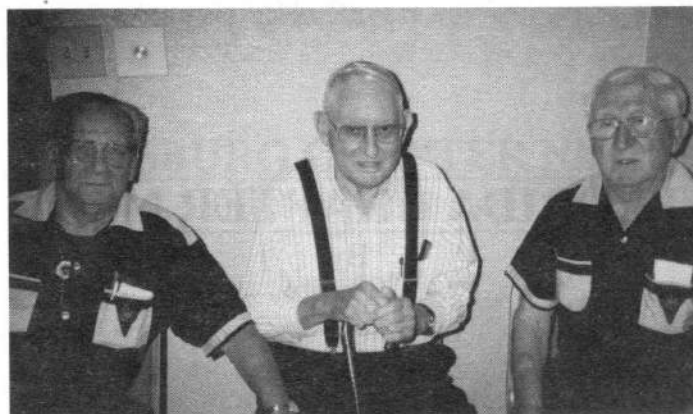
We plan to go to Williamsburg, VA, March 7-10, 2003 after Gatlinburg in December 2002, on the 5<sup>th</sup> thru the 7<sup>th</sup>. I am glad to see a strong group of associate members present. Hopefully one day we can welcome you as full members with voting and office holding responsibilities. We enjoy you so much.

Most overate and look forward to the next time together.

One more time, thanks to each for all the good spirit shown and all the food you brought and shared with us. Good stories came out of this meeting! Ask Haran Martin about the Fifty-Fifty experience. I trust all got home safely and plan to be together again soon. Our prayers are with each.



Dixie Ladies



Dixie Vets (Purple Heart Men)





50/50 Winners fight it out



Winner pays off the one who drew the number



Two of "The Good Time Boys" – Fred & Bill

## FLORIDA CHAPTER NEWS

By

No Report

## MICHIGAN CHAPTER NEWS

By Vito Palazzolo,  
Harper Woods, Michigan



Michigan Chapter Member Christmas Party 1958  
Steve Benson, Nick Barbu, Ed Zerucha, Mario Musio, Nick Boyde, Santa  
Claus, Dan Spano



Vito Palazzolo with cap decorations, April 18, 2002



Michigan Chapter Luncheon, April 18, 2002  
Evelyn & Charlie McAulliff, Joe & Mary Romano, Vito & Virginia  
Palazzolo

## NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

By Nick Francullo  
Hq. Co. 3<sup>rd</sup>, Bn 330<sup>th</sup>

## NEW JERSEY CHAPTER NEWS

By Stan Bielen

This is the last issue of the Thunderbolt before the reunion in September at Myrtle Beach. We here in the Jersey Chapter are looking forward to being together with the great 83<sup>rd</sup> family again.

I have heard from some of the chapter members who are planning to attend. Charlie Sihlanick and Andy Socha are trying to persuade Joe DePeri to drive with them. Joe is giving them a hard time but I'm sure when the time comes he will join them. Sam Manzi and his buddy Fred Messina both called me to get the telephone number for the Waikiki Village Motel across the street from the Landmark Hotel where we will be staying. Sam and Fred were in Co. K 330 and after the war were teammates on the baseball team. Sam was the pitcher and Fred was his catcher. I believe they played for the 330<sup>th</sup> Regimental Team. Fred and Nellie haven't been to a reunion for a number of years. They were enjoying travel to distant places. It will be good to see them again.

I heard from Manny Epstein and he also will be going to the reunion and will be at the Waikiki Village. Manny did tell me he went to Princeton, not the university, but to see our buddy Frank Reichmann who lives in that town. Told me Frank looked great for a 90 year old.

I am sure there will be others who will attend. I know George and Dot Foster will be there. George and Vi Waple will make-up for their last visit to Myrtle Beach making this a more enjoyable one. If you remember, they had to leave early as Vi had injured her leg in a fall. George is very active with the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge that meets monthly at Fort Monmouth.

I haven't heard from Russell Whitehead but I know he and Marguerita will be there. I will

probably see them on the road going there. I don't know if Cookie Seneca will be there. I hope he and son Jim and wife Darlene and daughter Mary Ann will come as they were missed last year in Hampton.

I received a call from Dan Pelose telling me that our buddy Fred Policastro had passed away. Fred was in Co. C, 331<sup>st</sup> with Dan.

Carolyn Voelkner phoned to ask me why she was receiving so many calls from veteran organizations asking for money. I told her to be careful with anyone using the phone to solicit monies, too many phonies using that way to make a buck.

Emil Wehling is still in the nursing home in Cresskill. Haven't heard anything about Ted Guzek. No news about Mike Skovran. Keep them in your prayers.

Have a safe trip to the reunion.

## NEW ORLEANS CHAPTER NEWS

By

No Report

## PHILDELPHIA CHAPTER NEWS

By

No Report

## PITTSBURG CHAPTER NEWS

By Francis Beerhalter

No Report

# COMPANIES

## Co. "F" – 329<sup>th</sup>

By C. R. Bob Whitcomb

No Report

## Co. "K" – 331<sup>st</sup>

By Norm Malo

No Report

## Co. "A" – 329<sup>th</sup>

By Bob Grobelny

No Report

## 783<sup>rd</sup> Ordnance Co.

by Rags Rangnow

Have you guys noticed how fast this year is flying? As you read this, the summer is over and hopefully many of us will be going to the reunion. But first things first.

Unfortunately, I must report that four of our buddies have joined our ranks of deceased. Frank Salontay died of a heart attack at home in June of 2001.

Good friend, Fred Pearson, from the 453A.A.A., called me right before Christmas. He wanted to invite Frank over for Christmas dinner and found his number disconnected. When I told Fred I hadn't heard from Frank in awhile he drove right over and received the sad news from a neighbor. So we thank Fred for also being a good neighbor and an Army buddy.

Jim Foster, of "Supply," died sometime in late 2001. His Christmas card came back and when I

Called the number was disconnected. A you may recall Jim had been quite sick the last three years.

Bill Litrenta (86) died this January, which I discovered when I called to inform him of Victor Mutinani's passing on April 22, 2002. As many of you are aware, I had been seeing Mute at the Fox Chase Cancer Center regularly over the past couple of years. "Old Mute" (81) was a great guy, always humorous and always up. Strangely, I never realized how great he was until I sat and listened to the speakers at his funeral. Mute really did himself and his wonderful family proud, as he was a renowned teacher at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Business.

Mute wasn't just a beloved teacher but on more than one occasion he was awarded "Distinguished Teacher of the Year." In all our hospital chats not once did Mute ever mention this "secret" part of his life. I'm sure you can visualize how much this came as a SURPRISE to us at his memorial service.

In Mute's honor I took the liberty of making a donation from our 783<sup>rd</sup> fund to the Fox Chase Cancer Center. We give a final salute to these four buddies. I'm sure their names will cause you to recall many fond memories.

On the lighter side, we've heard from Joe Brown a couple of times and he's doing just great. Of course he's bragging about his golf scores and rightfully so. Joe, at 83, sent me his scorecard on which he shot an 83! If this doesn't make Ray Wiggins jealous I don't know what will.

Paul Bryers also came through with flying colors as he also wrote two letters. Poor Paul's daughter asked him to move in with her so now Paul is getting three square a day and enjoying his first great grandchild. Paul is one year older than his "Lt. Joe" and he is extremely jealous that he can't compete with him on the golf course. This is what age does to us. Thank heavens Paul will always have his sense of humor.

Just had a call from Doc Pfeifer and thank goodness he too will always have his humor. Agnes is "just about the same" which means Doc



gets two nights of sleep a week. This is when he has a girl in for sixteen hours at \$20.00 an hour. Doc never complains. In fact, he told me about the three sisters living together. The one called down from the bathroom, "I need help. I have one foot in the bathtub and I don't know whether I'm coming or going." The second sister replied, "Wait a minute I'm coming." She got half way up the stairs and called down to the third sister, "Was I coming up or going down?" The third sister, being frustrated with all this knocked her knuckles on the table and replied, "Just hold it I'll be there as soon as I answer the door."

Calling in was Sam Hoffman inquiring about the reunion and the missing Thunderbolt. Sam brought up a good point. Many of us are causing Cliff Wooldridge mailing problems, as we have not renewed our 83<sup>rd</sup> membership. Check your cards now fellows so you don't get left out. Sam was writing Al Bensimon to make sure he was coming to Myrtle Beach.

Al and Ruth are well and enjoying picking that fresh Florida fruit. Charlie Rohrer is right up the road (in the winter) and enjoying what fish are to be caught. Phil Reese is hanging in there with many of the same health problems we all have.

The breaking news is I finally broke down and got me a computer. This means I can be reached online at a very appropriate [Hut\\_rags@hotmail.com](mailto:Hut_rags@hotmail.com). You will please note the line between Hut and rags is an underscore and not a dash. I have to emphasize that for Stan Bielen, as most Jerseyites have trouble with their ABC's. This is a good quick way to stay in touch so if any of you are on the Internet, let's hear from you. Already I've made contact with Ivan Gilman. Ivan is doing well. Still taking college French so he can talk to his grandson from Lebanon. He is preparing for the daughters summer visit from that far off land. Bob Burns has also signed in and likewise he is busy as ever. It amuses me as we all talk about our aches and pains but we still stay involved. Milly Doggett has also E'd us and likewise is doing so well she went out and bought herself a flashy bright red Dodge with a skylight. As she is doing hair dressing a couple of days a week, she can do this.

Have talked to Reese Phillips who also lives around the corner from Litrenta's. Reese is ok and is now the sole heir of South Philadelphia.

Just got off the phone with Herschel Weaver and his news was heartbreaking. Midge has had a relapse and Hersch is spending all his time at the hospital. They are putting Midge on hospice. In these trying times our thoughts and prayers go out to the Weavers.

At the same time I thought it best to check up on Jim Jones. What do I do but call his daughter Winnie out near Pittsburgh. It turned out great as Jim's visiting in Florida. Had a enlightening conversation with Jim's charming daughter and was informed, like the rest of us, Jim doesn't like this "getting old bit". Jim's massive leg muscles are giving him some problems but otherwise Jim is doing okay.

Lastly, we'll end this on a good note. After another amazing operation, Ginny has regained 20/40 eyesight and after they clean off the lens next week, they are hoping for 20/30. She is one happy gal, which makes me happy too. The only problem I see is she'll again demand the car for these shopping tours.

### 453<sup>rd</sup> A.A.A. (AW) Bn.

By Fred C. Pearson  
Email [k8uet@lightsteam.net](mailto:k8uet@lightsteam.net)

No Report

### Co. "D" – 331<sup>st</sup>

By Geri Gunderson (acting)

No Report

### Co. "G" – 331<sup>st</sup>

By Capt. Mac

I know that my article for the Thunderbolt is late, but I usually wait until I receive the No. 2 issue before sending in the article for No. 3.

I attended the Dixie Chapter meeting at Williamsburg in March. There is still a good turnout, but nothing like the past years. Too many of the members cannot attend, because they cannot travel. At the reunion, I received word that two members of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn had passed away.

One was Bob Parsons of F Co. At past reunions he was telling how he taught me to be a good soldier. We were both stationed at Fort McClellan in Alabama at a replacement training center. He was an NCO with the cadre, and I was a new 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. From ROTC. I knew very little about training soldiers, but I can assure you Bob Parsons was not able to teach me anything.

The other soldier was Vitie Atkocius from H Co. While at Pocking I was transferred to H Co. as the Commanding Officer. Vitie was one to the old regulars with the Company. It was always a good argument when those two got together, Vitie was a diehard Democrat, and Bob a diehard Republican. Both very good soldiers. Talked to Phillip Graff a couple weeks ago, he had written an article about G Company's activity up to the town of Barby on the West Bank of the Elbe; and our positions across the Elbe River, up to the last attack in the town of Hohenlepte. A very good article and it has been accepted by the Library of Congress. He also included in the article how he and Jack Strauss took off in a jeep and went into Berlin to meet the Russians. He has a Court Martial pending.

Dale Housley called from Oregon, he is trying to get in touch with Graff.

When I check back over the roster for G Company, I find nothing but good men. What an outfit we had and what a great bunch of men to command. I tell people that say you were a good commanding officer that for every good commander, I will show you some one that had a good supporting cast. Believe me G Company had more than its share of good officers, NCOs and enlisted men.

I asked a woman married to an 83<sup>rd</sup> man, "What rank did your husband have?" She told me he was only a PFC. My answer, don't feel bad about that

because the PFCs won the war. He was the first one out there to get shot and the first one to bring down an enemy. I was fortunate to be surrounded by a lot of good men and I will always be thankful for that.

G Company has an excellent record, but it wasn't because of me. It was because of the good men I had in the supporting cast. For your information, I always thought that the 83<sup>rd</sup> was scheduled for the March invasion of the island of Japan. In a book that I read and a diagram of the invasion of Japan the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division was to be a floating reserve in the November 1945 Invasion of Southern Japan.

## Co. "A" – 330th

By Charles Abdinoor

Hi Buddies,

Sincerely hope all is well with you all, have not heard to much from our buddies. On the way back from Florida, stopped to see Dolores and Paul Reed in Baltimore. We had an enjoyable night out on the town. He showed us the historic landmarks. He is still playing golf, but he has slowed down a little. He kept us moving on the line, him being our Platoon Leader. Now that we are having our Reunion at Myrtle Beach, I hope we have a good turnout from "A" Co. Looking forward to see Walt Pillion, Shorty Glasser, Earl Dunn, Adolph Senica and any other members of "A" Co. I know Bob Gangnath will be there, him being our sec.-treasurer. I received some sad news from Doris Farrell. Her husband, Bill, who was in my C.O. in "B" Co. passed away in April. He was in a soldier's home in Washington State. He moved from Hawaii to Washington to be near his family. This makes two of my "B" Co. C.O.'s that passed on. Joe DeSantis preceded him last year. We don't seem to have too many of our Line Company comrades attending. They have either passed on, or cannot do any extensive traveling. We had a beautiful turnout From "A" Co. at Lexington, KY. We almost had two tables at our banquet. I called Lee Milligan, who lives in Kansas, and he is still taking care of his wife. Hope all is well with them. Anxious to hear from Walt Pillion. He was going to move near his son. Hope all is well with Pearl and him. While I was

in Florida, I had the opportunity to meet a world-class boxer named Arturo Gatti, posed with him, at his training camp. He happens to be training for a fight with a local fighter from my town. When I told him of it, his trainer wanted to know if I was a spy, sent to watch him train. I know he was kidding and they made me comfortable watching him train. It is unusual that they let outsiders watch. I already have my reservations for Myrtle Beach and will get in touch with our new members from the company namely George Brackett, "Spike" Spychala, and Whitey Czyinski. Also John Bullard, who lives in NC. Hope we have a good turnout for our reunion. Looking forward to seeing all my old buddies. I want to thank Manny Epstein for the beautiful tie he sent me. I was also sorry to hear the passing of Mike Caprio. We go back almost 50 years. Take care of yourselves and hope to see you all soon.

P.S. Amby Tynan you better be there this year. Also, my thanks to Cliff Wooldridge for the extra AD books.

## Historian

Louis Gormori

Tony Vaccaro had a Photo Exhibit in Lexington, VA at the George C. Marshall Museum, located at the Virginia Military Institute. The photographs are fantastic and I believe this to be a fine location as the Cadets there will certainly take their parents to see these great photographs developed under very difficult conditions. From what I understand, his documentary is now in England and will be shown in the States in the future.

I have been receiving E-mail from a Debbie Holloman and I'm quite certain that quite a few 83<sup>rd</sup> Veterans have also been contacted regarding information on her uncle – Eddie Hart that was in "G" Company, 329<sup>th</sup> Inf Regt. She had plans, with her husband, mother and 2 children to go to the Netherlands and visit his gravesite. Then go to Barby, via the route the 329<sup>th</sup> Inf Regt took and find the house he was killed in. I have furnished

information that I believe had been of some help. At the time, I was not aware of Debbie's plans to make a documentary. Her last message to me on 3/27/02, prior to departure was "As for the video, we plan to try to raise finishing funds for it – and from there, hope to get distribution etc." Another message I received on 4/02/2001 was from Peter Kschmiede, the young man that has a small museum in a town in Germany, has been traveling to this country, interviewing Veterans from 83<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Armored for his book to be published in Germany – along with other authors. It appears as though somebody else is going to beat us to the draw if our project doesn't get off the ground. I am certain that if the doctor at the hospital in Hamburg would have given me the anti-biotic she said she couldn't give me, I could have stayed for completion of my trip and the information I seeked, 5 extra days. As it was, I could hardly wait to get home to get medical treatment.

We have had articles in the Thunderbolt regarding the action and fighting. Let's take a breather and check into what the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division (and as always – the support units) did after the surrender on May 7, 1945.

### REPORT OF OPERATIONS Period 8 May to 31 May 45

At the close of the war in the European Theater, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division was operating under XIX Corps, United States Army and were occupying positions at their bridgehead east of the Elbe River. On 080600, the Division with the attachments passed to control of XIII Corps and began moving to the province of Braunschweig to relieve elements of 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division, 8<sup>th</sup> Armored Division and the 102<sup>nd</sup> Infantry Division. Principal duties of all regiments and Division Artillery were the establishment of security posts in the form of roadblocks and patrols. Training during the month was secondary to occupational duties. A fragmentary training day was installed for available personnel, which stressed disciplinary drills, military courtesy and familiarization firing. Relations with civil population were satisfactory. A system was installed whereby the military government officer of an assigned area worked with the Burgomaster



of the towns in his area who was responsible to him for civil administration. Surveys of displaced persons in the area were instigated as the first step toward repatriation of many homeless people. Several movements were made out of the area, chiefly western DP's; however, plans were being made for the shipment of eastern DP's pending coordination with the Russian forces. The non-fraternization policy was strictly enforced in the area. On 17 May 1945, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division established the Thunderbolt Staging area at the Waggum Air Field, Braunschweig, to facilitate the movement of U. S. troops to Berlin. This area was later turned over to the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division for operations.

Counter-intelligence activities comprised the bulk of intelligence operations following V-E Day. The 83<sup>rd</sup> CIC Detachment was responsible for the entire 83<sup>rd</sup> Division area. The number of former party members and categorical arrestees apprehended each day was quite large. There was no noticeable decrease in the number of arrestees during this period. The Military Intelligence Personnel, IPW, MII, PI and OB, then attached to the Division were used in screening disarmed enemy forces in PW enclosures, preparatory to discharge. The hospital in the area containing German wounded were likewise screened and the SS concentrated in one hospital under guard in Goslar (C8571). Other personnel from these teams were used in locating, inspecting, and reporting intelligence targets, of which there were approximately 150 in the province of Braunschweig.

On 30 May 1945, 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div issued a warning order and initiated plans to relieve the 5<sup>th</sup> Inf Div in its zone of occupation in the vicinity of Vilshofen, (Q0118), Germany. The 643<sup>rd</sup> TD Bn (SP) was relieved from attachment to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div and was attached to XIX Corps 24 May 1945. At the close of the period the 5<sup>th</sup> AGRA (BR) and the 84<sup>th</sup> Med Regt RA was in the process of relieving elements of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div in the province of Braunschweig.

Postal service to the men of the Division was exceedingly high, 135,000 pieces of mail being delivered. Outgoing mail was slightly below the

number received, which indicated a rise of moral and a new interest in the duties confronting the Division. A large number of money orders were issued because of limited opportunities to spend money, and general frugality learned in combat. Leaves, passes and furloughs were limited but provided pleasure, rest and high standard of morale to those who received them. The receipt of 1,177 men and officers raised the strength of the Division to 875 officers, warrant officers and 14,196 men, which completed the T/O with a small surplus. The Division Band participated in a Follies Review, presented to all men of the Division. A definite moral factor was music both martial and modern tunes. Special Service presented the Four Phillips, an acrobatic show, which was attended by 12,500 men of the Division.

During the period inventories were made on Wermacht and civilian food stores repatriation of displaced persons in the Netherlands was halted; rations for U.S. Troops were reduced. The Division turned in captured enemy vehicles and on 30 May 1945 made an inventory of all property in the Division.

The I&E program of the Division was conducted with 31 I&E officers appointed and functioning during that period, for the Division and attached units. This period was primarily one of adjustment from combat operations to the program outlined in Phase II of the Army Education Program. Five officers were sent to AIESS in Paris during the period, four to the General course and one to the Instructors Training course. Thirty-eight men were enrolled in USAFI courses.

Preparations were completed to embark upon Phase II of the Army Education Program. In order to set up unit schools, all students were surveyed for course interest, instructors were canvassed and trained, school locations were selected, and survey of equipment needed initiated. Bulletin boards were placed in all Battalion CP's and Company CP's with latest news bulletins. Situation maps were maintained at regimental level and Division level showing the campaign in the Pacific and the operations in the European Theater. Outline for discussion group leaders were prepared and

distributed. The film "Two Down and One to Go" was shown to all personnel of the Division. A four page weekly newspaper was devoted to general news stories, division news and orientation material.

On 1 June 1945, 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div was placed in Category II, which meant that the Division must be prepared for possible redeployment to the Pacific Theater.

On 5 June, the 5<sup>th</sup> AGRA (Bn) assumed responsibility for military government of the Braunschweig sector located in North Central Germany. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Ren Trp and 331<sup>st</sup> Inf Regt, leading elements of the Division began moving by motor on 8 June to relieve 5<sup>th</sup> Inf Div in the vicinity of Vilshofen (Q0118), Germany. No difficulties were encountered on this move and by 130600 all troops had closed in the area and the responsibility for the zone of occupation had passed to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div. (U8339), Germany. The 329<sup>th</sup> Inf relieved the 11<sup>th</sup> Inf and opened up their regimental CP at Deggendorf (U8339), Germany. The 330<sup>th</sup> Inf relieved the 10<sup>th</sup> Inf Regt and opened its regimental CP in Freyung, (Q2639), Germany. The 331<sup>st</sup> Inf relieved the 2<sup>nd</sup> Inf Div and opened its CP in Greishach, (V0398), Germany while the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division Artillery relieved the 5<sup>th</sup> Inf Division Artillery and opened its CP at Passau (Q2213), Germany.

On 9 June 45, 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf Division was relieved from XIII Corps and attached to XII Corps, located in Regensburg, Germany. The 803<sup>rd</sup> Tank Bn formerly with the 5<sup>th</sup> Inf Division was attached to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf Division effective 13 June 45. The primary duties of the division continued to be occupational but upon settling in the Vilshofen area a new training program was initiated to include review of all basic subjects, marksmanship and training program was initiated to include review of all basic subjects, marksmanship and small unit tactical exercises. On 26 June this training program was revised to include long range training objectives (See TD#3) and all units began familiarization and record firing, squad and platoon combat firing problems in preparation for redeployment to the Pacific Theater. At the close of this period 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf Division was making plans

to receive and accommodate the 102<sup>nd</sup> Inf Division and attachments in the division occupational area.

The 308<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Bn constructed and repaired the Prisoner of War Stockades, constructed an airstrip in Vilshofen (Q0118), Germany; maintained and repaired roads in the division area.

Due to the unusually large border along the Czech and Austrian frontiers three 970 CIC border teams were assigned to the Czech-German Border, while 970/42 and 970/23 were assigned the Austrian-German frontier. The G-2 office, this HQ., coordinated the efforts of the CIC Border teams and the tactical troops. The problems of the border teams increased with the movement of German refugees and displaced persons.

The screening of disarmed enemy forces continued in the PW enclosures and hospitals with the view toward discharge, parole and arrest. Three PW enclosures at Sonndorf, (Q2841), Schalding (Q1515) and Pocking (V1293) contained the PW's in the area. At one time the number of hospitals having German wounded PW's numbered 30. This was later reduced to 12. Again, the SS personnel in the hospitals were concentrated so as to be placed under guard.

In keeping with responsibility for security and sanitation of the area frequent inspections were made of our DP Camps and PW enclosures. Strict measures for adequate food, clothing and shelter of DP's and PW's were installed.

The reaction of the German civilians during this entire period had been one of submission and cooperation with the U.S. Forces. There was no evidence of unrest or any apparent desire to organize any resistance which would endanger the security of our forces.

During the month of June the division strength increased slightly. The number redeployed on high points was 174 officers and men, while shipments into the unit numbered 448 officers and men.

The I&E program of the division continued to function under the supervision of 32 I&E officers, 5 of which were sent to AIESS in Paris. The survey of all personnel was completed and 20 unit schools were established. Textbooks were requisitioned for all school subjects. Regularly scheduled orientation periods were conducted with 2 hours weekly as the minimum time allocated for discussion.

#### Period 1 July to 31 July 45

For the first 2 weeks of this period, the 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf Div was engaged primarily in duties consistent with occupation of the area in the vicinity of Vilshofen (Ref. Periodic Report No. 243, 14 July 45). Included in our training was the initiation of a program designed for the purpose of giving our "Non-Infantry Units" training in the Infantry methods used in fighting the Japanese. To assist in this program, demonstration and instructor teams from the infantry units were formed and trained.

On 14 July 45 the Division was completely relieved of responsibilities in the area by the 102<sup>nd</sup> Inf Div. Immediately following this relief, preparations were made to undertake the proposed "Intensive Redeployment Training Program", (Ref TD No. 5). The object of this program was to weld all echelons into efficient combat teams and service units, prior to, during, and upon completion of redeployment of personnel. The scope of the Intensive Re-deployment Training Program, to applicable to Category II units, included eight weeks training, climaxed by a 2-week period of field exercises for the Battalion and Regimental Combat Teams at the special training area near Grafenwohr, Germany. (See enclosure #3) The following subjects were to be covered by all units of the Division with special emphasis on preparation for combat against Japan: Japanese Tactics and Technique, Japanese Material, Physical Training and swimming, Individual and team firing of all weapons and Combat Firing Problems.

On 24 July 45 General Patton, then Commanding General, Third United States Army, reviewed a composite Regimental Combat Team, made up of

one Battalion per Infantry Regiment. This review was conducted at the Pocking Airstrip. The Division received a letter of commendation from General Patton on its excellent appearance and performance at this review. A platoon combat problem demonstration was conducted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn of the 331<sup>st</sup> Inf Regt on the General's visit and received a rating of excellent.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Division Artillery, following its relief of occupational duties by the 102<sup>nd</sup> Inf Div Artillery and the 803<sup>rd</sup> Tank Destroyer Battalion on 14 July, was engaged for the remainder of the month in a period of intensive training in preparation for firing problems at the Grafenwohr Training area, scheduled to commence 15 August 45.

Commencing 15 July 45 all units began conducting "Training Inspection Tests". These tests were given to teams from the following units: Each Infantry Regt, Div Artillery, Division Signal Co, Engineer Bn, and Reconnaissance Troop. Each team conducting tests in their appropriate echelons with the objective being a high level of efficiency obtained by all units prior to the field tests to be given at the Grafenwohr Training Area. These tests were continued throughout the remainder of the month.

At this time the difficulties encountered by supply were mainly characterized by the decrease of certain items, for example, mid-July brought on the rationing of gasoline in the Third Army Area. This necessitated strict supervision over the issue of gasoline. Each Regiment received 1200 gallons daily and additional supplies of gasoline for the Division operations had to be requested from Army. During the period, the Division was cleared of all wrecked equipment and on 15 July 45, the first inventory of captured Enemy Material was completed.

During the early part of July the 308<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion continued to construct and repair PW Stockades and maintain and repair roads within the Division area. Extensive work was also being done in the way of repairing sport parks, tennis courts and swimming pools.



On 24 July 45 the 308<sup>th</sup> Engineer Combat Battalion moved from Deggendorf, Germany to the vicinity of Vilseck, Germany to construct a tent city, complete with wooden floors and sides, electrical systems, water supply line and roads to the camp area. This camp was built to accommodate troops that were to be engaged in training in the Grafenwohr Maneuvers.

There was no apparent change in the security situation within the area and our intelligence operations followed the same course as that of the previous month. This included further screening of hospitals and PW enclosures. Upon relief by 102<sup>nd</sup> Inf Div, Intelligence operations consisted solely of maintaining security in the immediate area occupied by our troops.

During the period 1-31 July 45, redeployment was not at too large a figure, the total being about 2,000 men transferred out and 1300 transferred in. (Ref G-1 Rep. Optns. Ind #3, 30 Oct 45). Awards for the month issued to officers and men of the Division for their heroic services and deeds were of a goodly figure; over 1,000 Bronze Stars were awarded to deserving persons.

One of the largest achievements during this period was the opening of the Oberhaus Rest Center for enlisted men and the Niederhaus Club, for the officers of the Division. These clubs were located in Passau. Baseball, swimming and cruises on the Danube and other summer sports were enjoyed by the men. This recreation was made still more pleasant by numerous U.S.O. and Special Services Shows.

The finance department was busy with the conversion of money for the officers and men going on leave as over 1100 leaves and furloughs were given to various places outside of Germany during the month of July. The strength of the Division at the close of July was 700 officers and 13,000 men.

The I&E program of the Division for the month of July was conducted with twenty full time I&E officers functioning during that period. Highlights of the program included attendance at the AIESS in Paris by 32 Officers and 5 EM. The unit school

phase was subordinated during the month to prepare the way for the 44 hr. intensive combat training program to be instituted by the Division on the 1<sup>st</sup> of August. However, allotted quotas for the students in the civilian universities and agencies were filled and an automatic issue of textbooks from Paris was made at Battalion level. This, and the self-studying USAFI courses were intended to take the place of the unit school. Information and Orientation courses were initiated and supplemented by tours conducted to places of interest, such as, Salzburg, Temple of Valhalla, Berchtesgaden, Landshut and Munich.

Period 1 August 1945 to 31 August 1945

Continued next issue.....



Hattie Holloman, Johan Vrouchen



Brenda Hugh, Adam Alphin, Hattie Holloman



Deb Holloman, Hattie Holloman, Rebecca Walker, Robby Walker

I received my Thunderbolt magazine and was pleased with the amount of information that was included. I'd like to congratulate Brenda Hughes and Heather Gnegy for a great story in regards to Eddie Hart. Although I did not fight alongside Eddie Hart, my name was mentioned because of the information that I had provided and feel that this is one of the functions of a Historian. I was happy to provide what I was able to. I neglected to get the photographs that were taken on the trip to Cliff for publication and have apologized to Brenda Hughes. Perhaps it can be in the next Thunderbolt.

I believe that it is time for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Association, Inc. to allow Descendant, Associate and Honorary members to take over the positions in office held by 83<sup>rd</sup> Veterans. I myself having injections in my neck called a nerve block did slow me down somewhat and don't know how long I can continue as the Historian.

Cliff Wooldridge called me and asked me if I had anything on the "Four Chaplains". I said that I did not and he explained it to me. I then contacted Dave Curry, who has a great web page about the 83<sup>rd</sup> and asked him if he had anything on them. I had then gotten a web page address from Dave Curry which is very interesting. It's about the 4 Chaplains that gave up their lives by giving their life jackets to soldiers that didn't have one while the ship, SS Dorchester that was torpedoed on February 3, 1943, was sinking. This will be forwarded in detail to Cliff Wooldridge. Again, remember – we were the best of the best. I am getting a list of all of the addresses and send these

for publication. Best wishes and regards to all and stay well. See you at Myrtle Beach – if you can make it – be there.

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SOURCE: Field Order No. 32, Hq.XIX Corps, 082000B April 1945, (Top Secret, down graded).

According to this Field Order, the XIX Corps assumed the following: the enemy is incapable of organizing a defense line west of the Elbe River in one week. The enemy is not capable of mounting a substantial counterattack in the Corps sector west of the river either and further there has been prepared no defenses of the line on the east bank of the Elbe. Enemy troops on the front of the Corps are similar to the type that faced Task Force Twaddle on the south. That is, they were made up of various groups.

The objectives of the XIX Corps were that the "western force" (Task Force Twaddle) was to attack south and west to clear the Ruhr pocket in its zone in conjunction and coordination with the XVI Corps plus elements of the First US Army. The "eastern force" was to continue to attack east in its zone and seize in their sector crossings of the Elbe and be prepared to attack east or northeast.

Primary troops: Task Force Twaddle; 8<sup>th</sup> Armored Division, 194 Glider Infantry Regiment, 809 TD Battalion (SP); 95<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 709 Tank Battalion, 802 TD Battalion (SP), 15<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Group, 5 field artillery battalions, and 1 chemical motor battalion; eastern forces: 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, 743 Tank Battalion, 823 TD Battalion (SP), 125 Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron; 2 Armored Division, 702 TD Battalion, 119 Infantry Regiment; 83d Infantry Division, 736 Tank Battalion, 643d TD Battalion (SP), 113<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron; 6 field artillery battalions.

In the attack proposed by this field order, 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was to protect the north flank of the Corps. They were to maintain contact with XIII Corps on the left (north) and 2d Armored Division on the right. 2d Armored Division was to seize and secure crossing of the Elbe River after

attacking east and clearing the enemy in its zone. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Division was to protect the Corps' right flank and maintain contact with VII Corps on the right or south and the 2d Armored Division on the left or north. The 83d Division was also to seize and secure crossings over the Elbe. 1 RCT (removed from the 83d Division) was to act as Corps reserve and be assembled in the vicinity of Halle (C2578). The RCT was to be prepared to advance to the east or to control the civilian population in the area.

The task assigned to the Task Force Twaddle was to clear the enemy from the zone west of the line Geseke (B5338) Nuttlar (4708) and north of the Ruhr River. They were to maintain contact with the III Corps. They were then to continue west to make contact with the XVI Corps. Once that was accomplished they were to work in conjunction with the XVI Corps to reduce the Ruhr pocket.

SOURCE: Field Order No. 33, Hq.XIX Corps, 192100B April 1945, (Classified Top Secret, down graded).

At this date enemy units in contact on Corps front from north to south were: 3 battalions (300 each), Combat Team Burg, Regiment Langemeir, Scharnhorst Division, 2 battalions (400 each) and Regiment Mahlow; Scharnhorst Division with 2 Corps front of any consequences but there was expected to be met a variety of self-propelled armored guns. It was estimated that there were 50 armored guns and tanks available along the entire front at this time. In the Harz Mountains it was estimated that in the Corps zone there were 1,500 troop remnants of Potsdam Division. The Corps' mission, as set-up by this field order, was to defend the line of the Elbe River in its sector, maintain and defend the existing bridgehead and occupy and govern the assigned areas. The troop list of the Corps on 19 April had as its primary units 2d Armored Division, 8<sup>th</sup> Armored Division, 83d Infantry Division (113<sup>th</sup> Cavalry Group attached), 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and in the Corps artillery 5 field artillery groups and 13 field artillery battalions. The missions assigned the individual units were; 30<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division: To relieve elements of 2d Armored Division, defend the line of the Elbe River in its sector and perform

military government duties in its area. 83d Division: Was to defend its line along the Elbe River and maintain its bridgehead. It was also to occupy and govern its area. The 8<sup>th</sup> Armored Division was to continue to carry out its assignment in the Harz Mountains while the 2d Armored Division was to maintain the sector in the Braunschweig-Immendorf-Wolfsenbuttel area.

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I have just received news that Horst Reinhold had passed away as the result of a heart attack on Sunday, July 21, 2002. He had many friends in the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Association, Inc.

Horst has been very helpful and without him, I would not have gotten the complete picture of what happened after the 83<sup>rd</sup> was ordered to attack Barby and capture the railroad bridge, intact if possible. I know that there are some members that frowned on my visits to Germany to get information that was not available in any other manner. These were obtained from the participants – those that opposed us. I have a newspaper article in regards to the services for the fallen American and German Soldiers. The article is about the senseless action east of the Elbe River and they were forced to defend their Homeland – like it or not. A statement was in the newspaper "War No More". A letter from Michael Gottlieb, a Descendant member in the 83<sup>rd</sup>'s Association made me aware of the fact that he is an orphan and his Mother is a Widow due to action faced by his Father at St. LO. I have unknowingly ignored this vital sore spot so to speak and I apologize to Michael, his Mother and the other 183,000 widows and orphans. "Rubbing elbows" with the former enemy had a purpose. The 2 trips were fruitful but there was room for additional activity to search further for more information. If this activity is wrong, then I should be replaced as the Historian. Brenda Hughes of Wetbird Productions obtained information while there that I too should have had. Her crew did a great job.



I would like to ask our American Veterans if they volunteered for Combat. I would also like to hear from those that did. I didn't but – like it or not, I was required with millions upon millions of American GI's to get on the ship and go to Europe to shoot at German soldiers that were also forced to go into combat and shoot at us. Like it or not. I acquired 2 books while in Germany that dealt with the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division. These books were published in German, by German Veterans that opposed the 83<sup>rd</sup> in combat. I do not believe that any other Division has the same experience.

My father, while living in the Yugoslavian section of Hungary was approached by German soldiers in WWI. They told him that he will put on a German uniform or be shot on the spot. This was also true in WWII – wear the German uniform or die on the spot. This I believe was enforced by the SS.

There you have it. We must remember that we were still the BEST of the Best. The books I have prove it. Best wishes and regards to all and stay well. See you at Myrtle Beach – God willing.

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The following letter was sent on June 3, 2002 to George W. Bush, President of the United States:

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division Association of World War II, its survivors, and families, request the honor of your presence as our Commander in Chief to join us at the Landmark Resort Hotel, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, your schedule permitting, anytime on September 12, 13 or 14, 2002. We would like for you to receive an Honorary Membership in our Association, and we ask that you assist us in bringing an honorable closure to the war in Europe in World War II that little has been written about in our history books. Your recent visit as our Commander in Chief to Normandy to commemorate the sacrifices made by the invasion forces (including the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division) and honor our fallen comrades as

eloquently stated by you is greatly appreciated and will be recorded in history.

The 83<sup>rd</sup> Division was 9<sup>th</sup> in descending order of casualties killed and wounded from Normandy to East of the Elbe River of all American Divisions, and was the only Division to fight an armed enemy of the United States in Eastern Europe. The 83<sup>rd</sup> Division and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division transferred from General George Patton to the Ninth Army, where the only Divisions in the entire Allied Expeditionary Force who received written orders to seize the Brandenburg Gate, Berlin. (His grandson Benjamin Patton is doing a documentary with 83<sup>rd</sup>'s Tony Vaccaro that will air in Long Island, Channel 21, this fall). Combat Command "R" of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored Division, a reinforced Brigade with awesome firepower was attached to the 83<sup>rd</sup> on April 14, 1945. In the book "Conquer: Story of the Ninth Army", copyrighted 1947 by the infantry Journal Press, at pp 303, 304 the 83<sup>rd</sup> had expanded its Elbe River Bridgehead to an area of 30 square miles, and could have easily motored into Berlin, at any time had it been allowed to do so. There would have been no Iron Curtain that president Ronald Reagan requested be taken down and the entire partition of Berlin and the Cold War would have been averted.

Cornelius Ryan, author of "The Longest Day" the book that made a movie, also wrote "The Last Battle" (1966) {Simon & Schuster} that was to be a movie. (Ryan died from cancer). "The Last Battle" described in detail the historically accurate 83<sup>rd</sup> crossing of the Elbe River at pp. 319-325. The excuse given by the high for not allowing the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division to capture Berlin was a projected cost of 100,000 casualties. This is not true. There is no evidence that the 83<sup>rd</sup> of approximately 18,000 men and officers, plus Combat Command "R" of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Armored would suffer 100,000 casualties, driving less than 40 miles to the center of Berlin, to Germans willing to surrender to the Americans, not the Russians.

As Historian of the 83<sup>rd</sup>, I am enclosing a PROPOSED (PRESIDENTIAL) CITATION that was drafted and submitted for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division for that specific accomplishment during World War II. Your issuance of such Citation at

the time, would historically establish that the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division "attained the deepest penetration into Germany...crossed all natural barriers and broken all organized resistance until the enemy was completely defeated".

Should you come and present this belated Citation to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division Association, it will historically bring final closure to the end of the European War. The alternative is having history record on the Internet for all to read that

*Hitler had committed suicide and the tattered mantle of his authority had fallen to Admiral Doenitz. The Admiral directed that all his armies everywhere should surrender to the Western Allies. Thousands of dejected German soldiers began entering our lines.*

As Historian, I attended a German Reunion of our opposing forces on the Elbe River Bridgehead, (the enemy) most of whom were young teenagers who were conscripted out of classrooms to fight. They gave all they had but never received any recognition for bleeding and dying for the Fatherland, and they and their descendants want closure. See cover of a book printed by Germans in Germany about the 83 Div. It is the youngsters who are interested in how World War II in Europe actually came to an end.

The country and its historians would greatly benefit, if you could find time to award, and attend our reunion to present your PRESIDENTIAL CITATION to the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division. Your presence in so doing will be an official and historical recognition of the final battlefield closure that ended the European War.

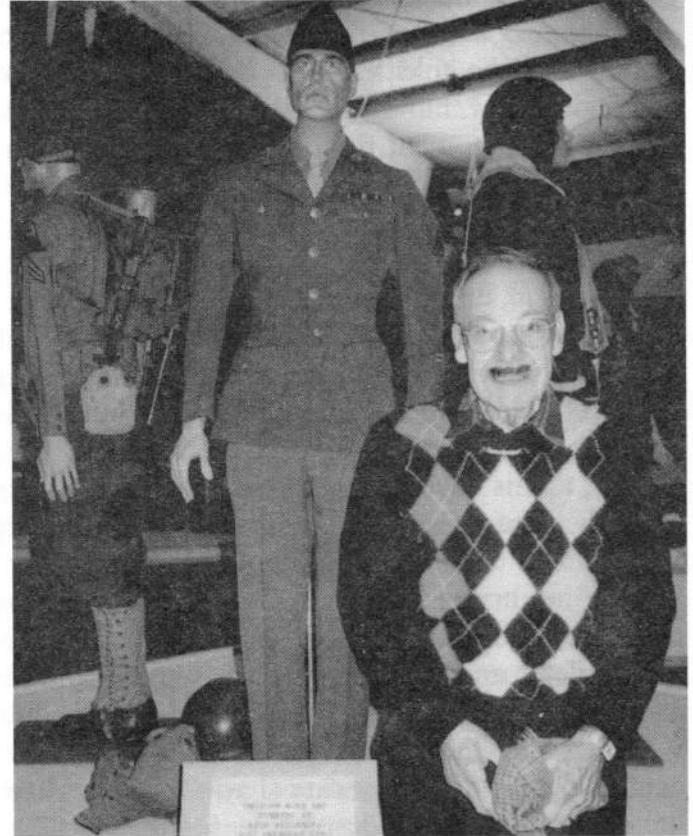
Yours Sincerely,

Louis Gomori, Historian  
John D. Raikos, Judge Advocate



I recently donated my Army Uniform and equipment to World War II Vehicle Museum and Learning Center, located in Hubbard, Ohio at 5959 West Liberty Street,

My Uniform was put on display. Here is a picture of me standing by my uniform.



Ezio F. Alicandri  
Company D  
329 Infantry Div.  
(nickname "Smokey")  
PITTSBURGH CHAPTER

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"ARE YOU BEN'S SON?"  
by Michael Gottlieb

I was sitting in a little synagogue on Stanton Street in the lower east side when someone tapped me on the shoulder. "Are you Ben's son?". I turned around, a bit startled, and this man added; "I mean the "Ben" who is president of this synagogue". I tried to explain that my Ben, my dad, had been killed in combat in Normandy in 1944 when I was a baby but he didn't seem to hear me. I dropped

the subject, but inwardly I felt a reminder of just who I am and where I came from.

“Will Michael Gottlieb, son of Benjamin Gottlieb, please come up to the podium.” I was thunderstruck. I had never heard that name before. Who was Benjamin Gottlieb? I was 13 years old and the rabbi called me up at my bar mitzvah. As soon as possible I approached my mother and she told me that Benjamin Gottlieb was indeed my biological dad and that he had been killed in combat fighting the Germans as an American-Jewish soldier. She showed me some pictures of this man. This terrible, terrifying secret was finally out of the closet. Yet I felt largely numb, empty inside. I didn't feel anything nor did my mother or I pursue this subject.

As I got older I yearned to learn more about this stranger who gave me my last name. But my mother, to this day, has been unable and unwilling to really open up and share. Even a professional bereavement counselor could not help my mother to open her heart. The wound is just so deep, so painful and has festered for so long. Sudden, violent death and, yes, unexpected. When my dad was killed, my mother was deeply and profoundly wounded too. And there was no bereavement counseling, no maternity care (I was a baby). My mother's sisters, in a despicable act of heartless cruelty and coldness, abandoned both my mom and me. Same with my dad's brothers.

I am now 54 years young. I have been able to piece together a little of what this stranger-dad was like as a person. He loved sports, including ice skating, hockey, boxing, etc. He dabbled with fixing cars. He railed against the corruption, insincerity and dishonesty of politicians. He loved his young wife and baby deeply. There was a very deep bond of love between my dad and my mom. He had no desire to kill Germans or anyone else but he had no choice. He and his brother soldiers believed that if anything happened, the government and the army would care for the widows and orphans left behind. These brave, dedicated men were badly betrayed. They endured unimaginable and unspeakable horrors, bloodshed in order to defeat the Nazi butchers.

It is Nov. 11, 1995. I am standing in the midst of WW2 veterans preparing to march in “The Nation's Parade”. It is the last big hurrah for WW2 parades, marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of that bloody slaughter. I am marching as a contingent of one person to represent the 183,000 American children who lost their dad-soldiers (infantry, navy, air force, marines) during WW2. Ironically and tragically, my research indicates this is the first public recognition of war orphans since Abe Lincoln delivered his 2<sup>nd</sup> inaugural address in 1864. Lincoln said: “... to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who borne the battle and for his widow and orphan...”. We are marching along 5<sup>th</sup> Ave. There is patriotism and friendliness in the air. My heart is bursting with pride and happiness. The crowds lining both sides of the avenue wave, smile, and applaud us. I feel like it's a holiday, a celebration. An Irish band is playing military tunes. I feel so thrilled and excited. Then I look to my left and I see a little boy holding the hand of a man about 30 years old. Suddenly, I feel a knife-like pain in my heart. This pain must have showed in my eyes because the man looked right into my eyes. I could feel the searing pain. My dad had never held my hand. I never had the love and affection from my daddy.

Daddy, I never knew you.



Sunday May 28, 2000      Memorial Day  
Arborcrest Cemetery

Summary of Remarks made by Michael Gottlieb,  
B.Sc.

Member of AWON (American WW2 Orphans Network)

On this soggy day (the sun emerged just as I was about to begin, after a night and a day of dark



skies and heavy rains), I thank you all for coming out: the color guard, the cub scouts, the veterans and our political leaders. Just as our veterans were baptized by fire, so today were we baptized with water.

I represent 183,000 children who lost their dads in combat during WW2. And the uncounted thousands of children who lost their dads in combat in Korea, Vietnam and the Persian Gulf. Even now, right now, American sons are risking their lives flying combat missions over Iraq. At this very moment, as I speak to you, American pilots face artillery fire and hostile missiles.

We are eternally grateful to the members of our armed forces; the army, the air force, the navy, the marines, the coast guard and the merchant marines for their service. And to our combat military nurses. We honor the losses of the family members left behind: the widows, the orphans, the mothers and other family members.

We recall that Abraham Lincoln said in 1865: "To heal him who hath borne the battle, and his widow and orphan". We recall what another President, John Fitzgerald Kennedy, said: "I will do anything, I will go anywhere and I will endure any hardship to defend and protect the United States of America from all enemies, foreign and domestic".

It is healing that I want to talk about. We need to heal our wounds. We need to heal our physical and emotional wounds so that we can move into a brighter future. I have lived through many wars" WW2, Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf. We need to heal our psychological and physical wounds so that we can create a society and a planet where our children and our grandchildren never have to experience the horrors of war.

Freedom is not free. There is a price to be paid. My mother has paid that price. My father (Pvt. Benjamin Gottlieb; kia July 23, 1944 St. Lo, Normandy; Battle of the Hedgerows; 83<sup>rd</sup> Div.; 329<sup>th</sup> Inf. Reg.) has paid the price and I have paid the price. We hope and pray that our children and grandchildren never have to suffer the horrors of war. Enough lives and families have been

destroyed. Enough blood spilled. Let us look to the future. Let us create a healing.

Please join me in this prayer: "Dear God, we seek to build a society of brotherhood and sisterhood so that our children and grandchildren will be spared these horrors. We seek personal and planetary healing. A planet of peace and sharing and co-operation. We thank you God, God bless each and every one of you, my brothers and sisters. AND GOD BLESS AMERICA. AMEN.

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### 83<sup>rd</sup> – Alive and Well in Reading

It was another June 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as the people poured into the Reading, PA Airport for the 12<sup>th</sup> annual WWII Memorial. Once again, the organization did itself proud as many new exhibits were displayed and there was much added participation of men and WWII equipment.

Once again, the weather was letter prefect and some 32,000 people took advantage of the blue skies to come and watch, and listen, to the roars of the vintage aircraft diving low over the airport. Who can forget the sight and sound of the B-17 and the P-51 flying overhead? As I watched some of the vets looking at these flights, I could almost see the memories in their eyes as they followed the planes to the horizon.

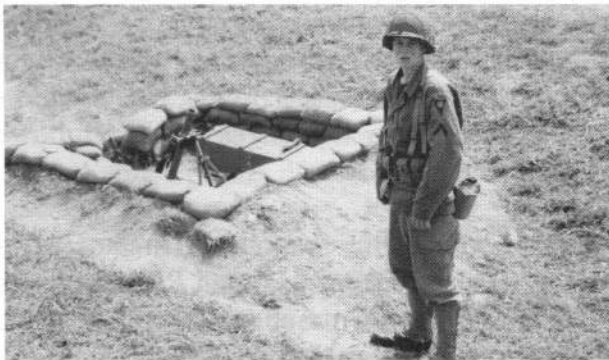
Also once again, Jim Swope, a Director of the Museum, and the self proclaimed PR man for the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division, did us proud with an 83<sup>rd</sup> Hdqts. Tent aptly named after Norman Shuster D331st K. People by the hundreds stopped by to look at Jim's original 83<sup>rd</sup> Jeep with its seats signed by some 30 members of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division. Bob Keck and his wife, L-329, along with Russ Whitehead F-329, Dixie Dickson B-329 and George Suchomelly A-329<sup>th</sup>, gave all these people flyers that described the history of the 83<sup>rd</sup> and answered their many interesting questions. Was the 329<sup>th</sup> well represented or what? Rev. Hap Resser Band conducted services off the hood of the Jeep on Sunday and I representing the 783<sup>rd</sup> Ord. took photos and got sunburned.

This year Jim Swope had the cooperation of the wood shop of the Woodrow Wilson High School and they made a neat wooden sample of the old Atterbury barracks. The “barracks” was staffed by the students who were in uniform with the triangle on their sleeve. They were stamping out original dog tags and selling shoulder patches. Right behind the 83<sup>rd</sup> tent Jim had the students dig out a motor emplacement, sand bags and all. These too were manned by the young, handsome students in their 83<sup>rd</sup> uniforms. It was hard to imagine that Dixie Dickson once looked like this.

The motor and machine gun emplacements were a great attraction for the young ones who were allowed to play soldier.



83<sup>rd</sup> Hdqts. Tent – note fighter in background



Remember these days



(L to R ) Bob Shuster, Jim Swope (Director), Bob Keck – L329, Russ Whitehead – F329, Rags Rangnow – 783 Rd.

It’s a shame it is so late in our lives for this would have been the perfect place to have an 83<sup>rd</sup> reunion but it’s not too late to mark your calendars for a mini vacation next June. Jim and his crew are already working up new ideas for next year. Your reminders will be in the Thunderbolt.

Lastly, we take our right hand to the brim of our cap and salute you Jim, your staff, and your students, for not only remembering but for honoring all the veterans everywhere. A “Thank You!” seems so inadequate but we do thank all of you from the bottom of our hearts.

Rags Rangnow  
783<sup>rd</sup> Ord.

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This was the first car I bought when I returned to the U.S.A. in 1945. We started restoration in 1990, finished in 2001.



1940 Pontiac, Business Coupe

Forrest Brown  
I Co. 329<sup>th</sup> 83<sup>rd</sup> Div.

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Ezio (Smokey) Alicandri, one of the original members of the Greater Pittsburgh Chapter of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Inf. Div., died Thursday, July 4, 2002. His funeral was attended by family, friends and members of the Pittsburgh Chapter. A military memorial service was performed by two army personnel and at the end they played taps and they folded an American flag from the President of the United States and presented the flag to Ezio's wife, Francis. It was a beautiful ceremony.

Sal Scicolone  
Pittsburgh Chapter President

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Mr. Gangnath,

Thanks so much for taking the time to send me the reunion registration forms, roster and last issue of the "Thunderbolt". They arrived yesterday and I enjoyed very much reading through the Thunderbolt last night. Interestingly, I ran across the article from Kathy Hathaway about her father (Sgt. Harold Moore) who was in the same unit as my father (Cpl. Wallace Duke), Company M of 331<sup>st</sup>. I had corresponded briefly with Kathy about a year ago but had not heard from her since then. At that time she knew very little about her father's experiences but it appears she has since found out a lot more. I was not much help to her then. I did send her a picture I had of M Company taken at Camp Breckinridge before the 83<sup>rd</sup> shipped out to England in April 1944. She could not identify her father in the picture and now I know why, he was a replacement and joined the 83<sup>rd</sup> in May 1944 after they had arrived in England. I plan to re-contact her and compare notes again.

I also enjoyed very much reading the essay written by the granddaughter of Mr. Caruccio regarding her visit to Normandy after graduation from high school. I was very moved by the obvious love and affection she had for her grandfather and the understanding and appreciation she had for what he and all of you did for our country. It

sometimes seems those attributes are rare in our youth today, but perhaps I watch too much cable news.

To give you a brief rundown on what I know of my father's experiences, he was a transportation corporal in Company M of the 331<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon. He was with the 83<sup>rd</sup> from basic training at Camp Atterbury (October 1942) through to the end of the war and occupation duties somewhere in Bavaria. He was discharge in October 1945. I am in the process of getting his service records which should give me more specifics. He was awarded the Purple Heart in France in August 1944 and the Bronze Star for action on March 1, 1945. I have most of the letters he wrote my mother (he wrote almost every day when he could) and I am in the process of matching the letters with the after-action reports to write a daily log of his experiences. As you can imagine, this is a very time consuming process, but I am slowly making headway. I have only been able to locate one of his buddies of that time and have contacted him. He has filled in some of the details, but is reticent to talk too much about those times and was wounded in January 1945 and was not with my dad after that date. I would be most interested in meeting and talking with any members of the 83<sup>rd</sup> that can fill in some gaps in my father's experiences, especially during the occupation duties from May through August 1945, which are not in the after-action reports.

Sonny Duke  
5515 Windmill Lane  
Raleigh, NC 27606  
919-362-9222  
sonnyduke@msn.com

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NATIONAL WWII MEMORIAL  
A Newsletter of the World War II Memorial Society  
Spring 2002, Volume 5, Number 1

GERMAN SURRENDER



It was with great interest that I read the article in the Fall 2001 newsletter about the surrender of the German division under the command of General Elster.

My late husband, then 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Isadore Hamlin, was the Order of Battle specialist for the Intelligence Section of the 83<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division under the command of Gen. Macon. He told me that when the surrender was to get underway, he was in charge of setting up the means to accurately count every one of those 20,000 German soldiers and their officers. A turnstile arrangement was set up to do this. He also interviewed the officers and supervised his staff, who interviewed other soldiers for intelligence purposes for future battles.

On a trip to Sydney, Australia, I visited the newly opened Jewish Museum. On an upper floor dedicated to WWII and the role of the American Army in liberating many of the German concentration camps, I saw a well-preserved copy of the New York Times front page of September 13, 1944, describing the surrender.

You can imagine my emotions on seeing the article again and recalling the stories my husband later shared. I appreciated reading the article in the newsletter very much. I am pleased to be a supporter of the WWII Memorial.

Helen R. Hamlin  
New York City, NY

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"FORTITUDE The D-Day Deception  
Campaign

By Roger Hesketh

The book isn't easy to read, but has some fascinating information. There are many mentions of the 83<sup>rd</sup> in charts and maps, and several mentions of the 83<sup>rd</sup> in the text. After reading the material, it became clear to me why the 83<sup>rd</sup> was on the "secret list" for so long. The FORTITUDE operation continued to feed false information to the Germans long after D-Day so that they would think that the

Normandy Invasion was merely a diversion for a much larger invasion yet to come.

One example of this false information is a paragraph in the book which says that a fictional counterspy BRUTUS (who was invented by the FORTITUDE group) reported to the Germans on July 6<sup>th</sup> that the 83<sup>rd</sup> Division, which he had recently reported to be in Elham, England, had been removed from the FUSAG Order of Battle.

Of course, as we know, the 83<sup>rd</sup> was neither in Elham, nor had they been removed from the Order of Battle!

Dave Curry

LANDMARK RESORT HOTEL  
1501 SOUTH OCEAN BOULEVARD  
MYRTLE BEACH, SC 29577

**ROOM  
RESERVATION  
FORM**

**83<sup>RD</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION  
SEPTEMBER 11-15, 2002  
(800) 845-0658/fax (843) 448-6701**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ ROOMMATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

NUMBER OF ROOMS REQUIRED: \_\_\_ INTERIORVIEW ROOMS (YOU DO NOT SEE THE OCEAN) - \$60.00  
\_\_\_ OCEANVIEW ROOMS (VIEW OF OCEAN) - \$68.00      \_\_\_ OCEAN FRONT ROOMS - \$78.00

**ADD \$5.00 FOR EACH ADULT OVER TWO IN THE ROOM (MAXIMUM 4 ADULTS PER ROOM).**

**NOTE: RATES ARE SUBJECT TO SOUTH CAROLINA STATE & LOCAL TAXES, CURRENTLY 9.5%**

ARRIVAL DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTURE DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

GUARANTEED BY: CHECK # \_\_\_\_\_ ENCLOSED IN THE AMOUNT OF \$ \_\_\_\_\_

CREDIT CARD: NAME OF CARD: \_\_\_\_\_ CARD NBR: \_\_\_\_\_ EXP. DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

ALL ROOMS WILL BE HELD UNTIL **AUGUST 12, 2002**, OR UNTIL ALL ROOMS HAVE BEEN RESERVED, WHICHEVER DATE COMES FIRST. ON **AUGUST 12, 2002**, ANY ROOMS THAT HAVE BEEN BLOCKED AND NOT RESERVED BY YOUR GROUP WILL BE RELEASED FOR SALE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC.

**PLEASE NOTE: ONCE THE BLOCK HAS BEEN FILLED OR RELEASED, RESERVATIONS AFTER THAT DATE ARE SUBJECT TO ALL SURCHARGES, ADD-ONS, MINIMUM NIGHT STAY REQUIREMENTS, ETC. THAT MAY BE IN EFFECT AT THE TIME THE RESERVATION IS MADE (AFTER THE BLOCK IS FULL OR HAS BEEN RELEASED).**

WE DO NOT ACCEPT 6:00 PM RESERVATIONS. ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE GUARANTEED BY A CHECK COVERING ROOM AND TAX FOR ONE NIGHT (MUST BE RECEIVED WITHIN 10 DAYS OF THE DAY THE RESERVATION IS MADE WITH THE HOTEL OR THE RESERVATION WILL BE CANCELLED) OR BY A MAJOR CREDIT CARD.

**CHECK-IN TIME: 3:00 PM OR LATER . . . . . CHECK-OUT TIME: 11:00 AM**

PLEASE FILL OUT THIS RESERVATION FORM AND MAIL IT DIRECTLY TO THE HOTEL WITH YOUR CHECK, MONEY-ORDER OR CREDIT CARD NUMBER, OR CALL THE HOTEL DIRECT AT 800-845-0658.

**PLEASE NOTE: ALTHOUGH THE HOTEL WILL ACCEPT YOUR CHECK FOR THE ADVANCE DEPOSIT, WE DO NOT ACCEPT PERSONAL CHECKS WITHIN 15 DAYS OF YOUR SCHEDULED ARRIVAL DATE OR UPON CHECK-IN ....ONLY CASH, CASHIERS CHECKS, MONEY ORDERS, CREDIT CARDS OR TRAVELERS CHECKS.**

**CANCELLATIONS: A \$25.00 ADMINISTRATIVE CANCELLATION FEE APPLIES TO ALL CANCELLATIONS. YOU MUST CANCEL YOUR RESERVATION AT LEAST THREE DAYS PRIOR TO THE DAY OF ARRIVAL TO RECEIVE ANY REFUND OF YOUR INITIAL DEPOSIT.**

**TELEPHONE DEPOSITS: A \$25.00 DEPOSIT AT CHECK-IN IS REQUIRED TO ACTIVATE YOUR TELEPHONE. IF YOU DO NOT ACTIVATE YOUR TELEPHONE, YOU WILL BE ABLE TO RECEIVE CALLS FROM ANYWHERE, BUT YOU CAN ONLY MAKE CALLS WITHIN THE HOTEL**



RETURN HOME OF THE DEFEATED SOLDIER – FRANKFURT – 3, 1946

Submitted by Tony Vaccaro

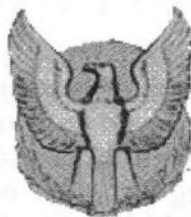


# The Brotherhood of Soldiers at War

The True Story of the

## Four Chaplains

**Rabbi Alexander Goode**  
**Rev. George L. Fox**  
**Rev. Clark V. Poling**  
**Father John P. Washington**



Brotherhood has nothing to do with the similarities between men. Even among twins, no two brothers are exactly alike. These differences can create challenges to family harmony, incite jealousy, and lead to sibling rivalries. At the same time, it is these differences that make a family stronger, better rounded, and best equipped to face the challenges of life. In time of crisis, when a family pulls together, these differences make it possible to approach a problem from different perspectives and find solutions for the common good. There is strength in diversity, and perhaps a family should rejoice more in the differences between brothers and sisters than in the things they share in common.

In November, 1942 four young men "found each other" while attending Chaplain's School at Harvard University. They had enough in common to bond them together. At age 42, George Fox was the "older brother". The youngest was 30-year old Clark Poling, and less than three years separated him from the other two, Alexander Goode and John Washington. A common cause brought them together, the desire to render service to their Nation during the critical years of World War II.

Between the early days of May to late July, the four had entered military service from different areas of the country. Reverend Fox enlisted in the Army from Vermont the same day his 18-year old son Wyatt enlisted in the Marine Corps. During World War I, though only 17 years old, Fox had convinced the Army he was

actually 18 and enlisted as a medical corps assistant. His courage on the battlefield earned him the Silver Star, the Croix de Guerre, and the Purple Heart. When World War II broke out he said, *"I've got to go. I know from experience what our boys are about to face. They need me."* This time, however, he didn't enlist to heal the wounds of the body. As a minister he was joining the Chaplains Corps to heal the wounds of the soul.

Reverend Clark V. Poling was from Ohio and pastoring in New York when World War II threatened world freedom. He determined to enter the Army, but not as a Chaplain. *"I'm not going to hide behind the church in some safe office out of the firing line,"* he told his father when he informed him of his plans to serve his country. His father, Reverend Daniel Poling knew something of war, having served as a Chaplain himself during World War I. He told his son, *"Don't you know that chaplains have the highest mortality rate of all? As a chaplain you'll have the best chance in the world to be killed. You just can't carry a gun to kill anyone yourself."* With new appreciation for the role of the Chaplains Corps, Clark Poling accepted a commission and followed in his father's footsteps.

Like Clark Poling, Alexander Goode had followed the steps of his own father in ministry. His first years of service were in Marion, Indiana; then he moved on to York, Pennsylvania. While studying and preparing to minister to the needs of others, "Alex" had joined the National Guard. Ten months before Pearl Harbor he sought an assignment in the Navy's Chaplains Corps, but wasn't initially accepted. When war was declared, he wanted more than ever to serve the needs of those who went in harm's way to defend freedom and human dignity. He chose to do so as a U.S. Army Chaplain.

One look at the be-speckled, mild mannered John P. Washington, would have left one with the impression that he was not the sort of man to go to war and become a hero. His love of music and beautiful voice belied the toughness inside. One of nine children in an Irish immigrant family living in the toughest part of Newark, New Jersey, he had learned through sheer determination to hold his own in any fight. By the time he was a teenager he was the leader of the South Twelfth Street Gang. Then God called him to ministry, returning him to the streets of New Jersey to organize sports teams, play ball with young boys who needed a strong friend to look up to, and inspire others with his beautiful hymns of praise and thanksgiving.

Upon meeting at the Chaplains' school, the four men quickly became friends. One of Clark Poling's cousins later said, *"They were all very sociable guys, who seemed to have initiated interfaith activities even before the war. They hit it off well at chaplains' school. Sharing their faith was not just a first-time deal for them. They were really very close. They had prayed together a number of times before that final crisis."* (Reverend David Poling)

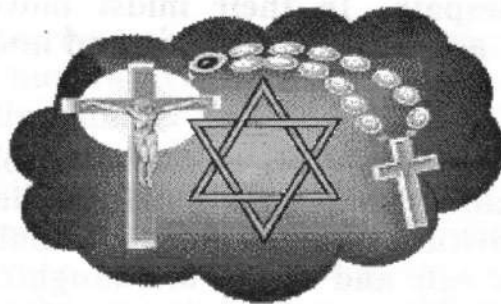
The observation pointed out by Clark's cousin is of note, for the men of whom he spoke were unique. Their close bond might easily have marked them as "The Four Chaplains" long before a fateful night three months after they first met, when their actions would forever make the title synonymous with the names of George L. Fox, Alexander D. Goode, Clark V. Poling, and John P. Washington. The differences in their backgrounds and personalities could have been easily outweighed by their common calling to ministry, had it not been for one major difference:

- Reverend Fox was a Methodist Minister
- Reverend Poling was a Dutch Reformed Minister
- Father Washington was a Catholic Priest
- Rabbi Goode was Jewish



In a world where differences have all too often created conflict and separated brothers, the Four Chaplains found a special kind of unity, and in that unity they found strength. Despite the differences, they became "brothers" for they had one unseen characteristic in common that overshadowed everything else. They were brothers because:

**They All Four Shared the same Father!**



## *U.S.A.T. Dorchester*

The *U.S.A.T. Dorchester* was an aging, luxury coastal liner that was no longer luxurious. In the nearly four years from December 7, 1941 to September 2, 1945 more than 16 million American men and women were called upon to defend human dignity and freedom on two fronts, in Europe and the Pacific. Moving so large a force to the battlefields was a monumental effort, and every available ship was being pressed into



service. Some of these were converted into vessels of war, others to carrying critical supplies to the men and women in the field. The *Dorchester* was designated to be a transport ship. All non-critical amenities were removed and cots were crammed into every available space. The intent was to get as many young fighting men as possible on each voyage. When the soldiers boarded in New York on January 23, 1943 the *Dorchester* certainly was filled to capacity. In addition to the Merchant Marine crew and a few civilians, young soldiers filled every available space. There were 902 lives about to be cast to the mercy of the frigid North Atlantic.

As the *Dorchester* left New York for an Army base in Greenland, many dangers lay ahead. The sea itself was always dangerous, especially in this area known for ice flows, raging waters, and gale force winds. The greatest danger, however, was the ever present threat of German submarines, which had recently been sinking Allied ships at the rate of 100 every month. The *Dorchester* would be sailing through an area that had become infamous as "Torpedo Junction".

Most of the men who boarded for the trip were young, frightened soldiers. Many were going to sea for the first time and suffered sea-sickness for days. They were packed head to toe below deck, a steaming human sea of fear and uncertainty. Even if they survived the eventual Atlantic crossing, they had nothing to look forward to, only the prospects of being thrown into the cauldron of war on foreign shores. They were men in need of a strong shoulder to lean on, a firm voice to encourage them, and a ray of hope in a world of despair. In their midst moved four men, Army Chaplains, called to put aside their own fears and uncertainties to minister to the needs of others.

Perhaps Chaplain Fox thought of his own 18-year old son, serving in the Marine Corps, as he walked among the young soldiers on the *Dorchester*, giving strength and Spiritual hope to those he could. Before leaving he had said goodbye to his wife and 7 year old daughter Mary Elizabeth. It was Chaplain Fox's second war, for the "war to end all wars" ..... HADN'T!

In other parts of the ship Father Washington likewise did his best to soothe the fears of those about him. As a Catholic Priest he was single and hadn't left behind a wife or children, but there were eight brothers and sisters at home to fear for him and pray for his safety. Now his closest brothers were the other three Chaplains on the *Dorchester*. They leaned on each other for strength, as they tried daily to mete that strength out to others. Surely as he prayed for his make-shift parish, Father Washington also whispered a prayer for Chaplain Fox, Chaplain Poling and Rabbi Goode. Not only had Chaplain Fox left a son and daughter behind, Rabbi Goode had left behind a loving wife and 3 year old daughter. Chaplain Poling's son Corky was still an infant, and within a month or two his wife would be giving birth to their second child. In time of war, perhaps being single had its advantages.

With so many men crammed into so small a space, all of them so much in need of the ray of hope Spiritual guidance could afford, differences ceased to be important. All of the soldiers shared the same level of misery and fear, whether Protestant, Catholic, or Jew. The title "Rabbi", "Father", or "Reverend" was of little consequence when a man needed a CHAPLAIN. A prayer from Rabbi Goode could give strength to the Catholic soldier as quickly as a hymn from the beautiful voice of Father Washington could warm the heart of a Protestant. The Jewish soldier facing an uncertain future on foreign shores could draw on the strength of a Protestant to help him face tomorrow. When sinking in the quicksand of life one doesn't ask for the credentials of he who offers the hand of hope, he simply thanks God that the helping hand is there.

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The crossing was filled with long hours of boredom and misery. Outside, the chilly Arctic winds and cold ocean spray coated the *Dorchester's* deck with ice. Below deck the soldiers' quarters were hot from too many bodies, crammed into too small a place, for too many days in a row. Finally, on February 2nd, the *Dorchester* was within 150 miles of Greenland. It would have generated a great sense of relief among the young soldiers crowded in the ship's berths, had not the welcomed news been tempered by other news of grave concern. One of the *Dorchester's* three Coast Guard escorts had received sonar readings during the day, indicating the presence of an enemy submarine in "Torpedo Junction".

Hans Danielson, the *Dorchester's* captain, listened to the news with great concern. His cargo of human lives had been at sea for ten days, and was finally nearing its destination. If he could make it through the night, air cover would arrive with daylight to safely guide his ship home. The problem would be surviving the night. Aware of the potential for disaster, he instructed the soldiers to sleep in their clothes and life jackets....just in case. Below deck however, it was hot and sweaty as too many bodies lay down, closely packed in the cramped quarters. Many of the men, confident that tomorrow would dawn without incident, elected to sleep in their underwear. The life jackets were also hot and bulky, so many men set them aside as an unnecessary inconvenience.

Outside it was another cold, windy night as the midnight hour signaled the passing of February 2nd and the beginning of a new day. In the distance a cold, metal arm broke the surface of the stormy seas. At the end of that arm, a German U-Boat (submarine) captain monitored the slowly passing troop transport. Shortly before one in the morning he gave the command to fire.

Quiet moments passed as silent death reached out for the men of the *Dorchester*, then the early morning was shattered by the flash of a blinding explosion and the roar of massive destruction. The "hit" had been dead on, tossing men from their cots with the force of its explosion. A second

torpedo followed the first, instantly killing 100 men in the hull of the ship. Power was knocked out by the explosion in the engine room, and darkness engulfed the frightened men below deck as water rushed through gaping wounds in the *Dorchester's* hull. The ship tilted at an unnatural angle as it began to sink rapidly, and piles of clothing and life jackets were tossed about in the darkness where no one would ever find them. Wounded men cried out in pain, frightened survivors screamed in terror, and all groped frantically in the darkness for exits they couldn't find. Somewhere in that living hell, four voices of calm began to speak words of comfort, seeking to bring order to panic and bedlam. Slowly soldiers began to find their way to the deck of the ship, many still in their underwear, where they were confronted by the cold winds blowing down from the arctic. Petty Officer John J. Mahoney, reeling from the cold, headed back towards his cabin. "Where are you going?" a voice of calm in the sea of distressed asked?

"To get my gloves," Mahoney replied.

"Here, take these," said Rabbi Goode as he handed a pair of gloves to the young officer who would never have survived the trip to his cabin and then back to safety.

"I can't take those gloves," Mahoney replied.

"Never mind," the Rabbi responded. "I have two pairs." Mahoney slipped the gloves over his hands and returned to the frigid deck, never stopping to ponder until later when he had reached safety, that there was no way Rabbi Goode would have been carrying a spare set of gloves. As that thought finally dawned on him he came to a new understanding of what was transpiring in the mind of the fearless Chaplain. Somehow, Rabbi Goode suspected that he would himself, never leave the *Dorchester* alive.

Before boarding the *Dorchester* back in January, Reverend Poling had asked his father to pray for him, "*Not for my safe return, that wouldn't be fair. Just pray that I shall do my duty...never be a coward...and have the strength, courage and understanding of men. Just pray that I shall be adequate.*" He probably never dreamed that his prayer request would be answered so fully. As he guided the frightened soldiers to their only hope of safety from the rapidly sinking transport, he spoke calm words of encouragement, urging them not to give up. In the dark hull of the *Dorchester*, he was more than adequate. He was a hero.

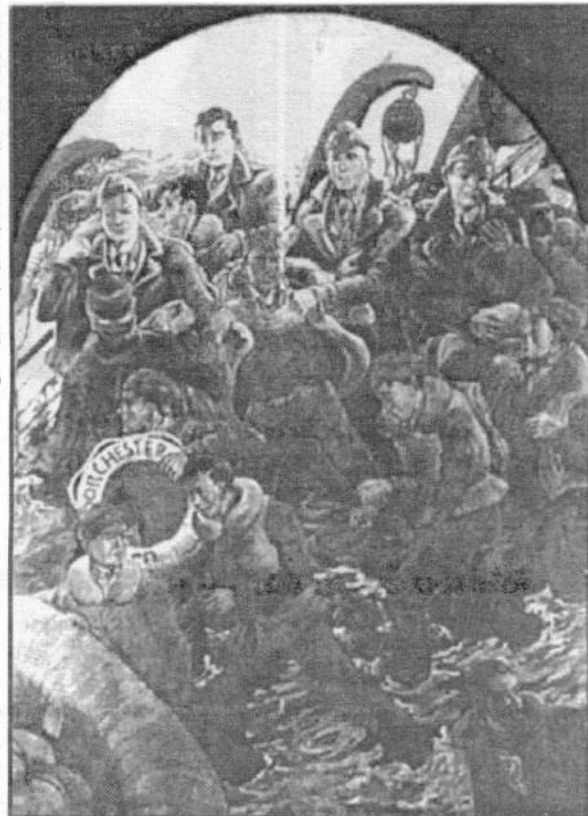
Likewise Reverend Fox and Father Washington stood out within the confines of an unimaginable hell. Wounded and dying soldiers were ushered into eternity to the sounds of comforting words from men of God more intent on the needs of others, than in their own safety and survival. Somehow, by their valiant efforts, the Chaplains succeeded in getting many of the soldiers out of the hold and onto the *Dorchester's* slippery deck.

In the chaos around them, life boats floated away before men could board



them. Others capsized as panic continued to shadow reason and soldiers loaded the small craft beyond limit. The strength, calm, and organization of the Chaplains had been so critical in the dark hull. Now, on deck, they found that their mission had not been fully accomplished. They organized the effort, directed men to safety, and left them with parting words of encouragement. In little more than twenty minutes, the *Dorchester* was almost gone. Icy waves broke over the railing, tossing men into the sea, many of them without life jackets. In the last moments of the transport's existence, the Chaplains were too occupied opening lockers to pass out life jackets to note the threat to their own lives.

In less than half an hour, water was beginning to flow across the deck of the sinking *Dorchester*. Working against time the Chaplains continued to pass out the life vests from the lockers as the soldiers pressed forward in a ragged line. And then....the lockers were all empty...the life jackets gone. Those still pressing in line began to realize they were doomed, there was no hope. And then something amazing happened, something those who were there would never forget. All Four Chaplains began taking their own life jackets off....and putting them on the men around them. Together they sacrificed their last shred of hope for survival, to insure the survival of other men.... most of them total strangers. Then time ran out. The Chaplains had done all they could for those who would survive, and nothing more could be done for the remaining...including themselves.



Those who had been fortunate enough to reach lifeboats struggled to distance themselves from the sinking ship, lest they be pulled beneath the ocean swells by the chasm created as the transport slipped into a watery grave. Then, amid the screams of pain and horror that permeated the cold dark night, they heard the strong voices of the Chaplains. "Shma Yisroel Adonai Elohenu Adonai Echod." "Our Father, which art in Heaven, Hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done."

Looking back they saw the slanting deck of the *Dorchester*, its demise almost complete. Braced against the railings were the Four Chaplains...praying...singing, giving strength to others by their final valiant declaration of faith. Their arms were linked together as they braced against the railing and leaned into each other for support, Reverend Fox, Rabbi Goode, Reverend Poling, and Father Washington. Said one of the

survivors, "It was the finest thing I have ever seen this side of heaven."

And then, only 27 minutes after the first torpedo struck, the last vestige of the *U.S.A.T. Dorchester* disappeared beneath the cold North Atlantic waters. In it's death throes it reached out to claim any survivors nearby, taking with it to its grave the four ministers of different faiths who learned to find strength in their diversity by focusing on the Father they shared. On that day.....

## They Made their "Father" very proud!



Reverend  
George L. Fox

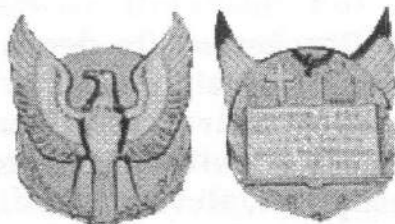
Rabbi  
Alexander D. Goode

Reverend  
Clark V. Poling

Father  
John P. Washington

Of the 920 men who left New York on the *U.S.A.T. Dorchester* on January 23rd, only 230 were plucked from the icy waters by rescue craft. In addition to the Four Chaplains, 668 other men went to a watery grave with the ship. Had it not been for the Chaplains, the number of dead would certainly been much higher.

On May 28, 1948 the United States Postal Service issued a special stamp to commemorate the brotherhood, service, and sacrifice of the Four Chaplains.

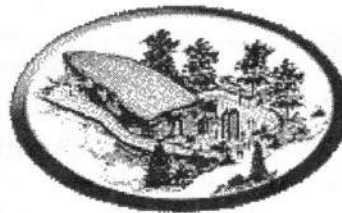


On July 14, 1960 by Act of Congress (Public Law 86-656, 86th Congress), the United States Congress authorized the "Four Chaplains Medal". The Star of David, Tablets of Moses, and Christian Cross are shown in relief on the back of the medal, along with the inscribed names of all four heroic Chaplains.

On January 18, 1961, Secretary of the Army Wilbur M. Brucker presented the

award posthumously to the families of the Four Chaplains at Fort Myer, Virginia.

**THE CHAPEL OF THE FOUR CHAPLAINS** became one of the most enduring tributes to Reverend Fox, Rabbi Goode, Reverend Poling, and Father Washington. Time has dimmed the memory of the four great men, and with that fading memory the chapel itself has slipped into the background of the American conscience. Please click on the button at right for more information on the Chapel of the Four Chaplains.



**Sources and Credits:**

**Chapel of the Four Chaplains**

**Florida Atlantic University Libraries (Jewish Heroes and Heroines in America)**

**"American Legion Dispatch" (January 15, 1998, Vol. 7, No. 8)**

**SPECIAL THANKS:**

**Background image by ART SEIDEN, illustrator for "Jewish Heroes and Heroines in America"**

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**Special acknowledgment also to SEYMOUR "Sy" BRODY for his assistance**

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## 2002 REUNION PROGRAM

### Wednesday Activities, September 11, 2002

(Please note: Today's Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner are on your own.)

- 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Registration  
2:00 – 5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open  
(Optional: Let us have a minute of silence for the 9/11/01 tragedy.)

### Thursday Activities, September 12, 2002

(Please note: Today's Breakfast, Lunch, and Dinner are on your own.)

- 9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Registration  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 n. Board Meeting  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 n. Ladies Activities – Beauty Make-up Demo  
2:00 – 5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open  
p.m. Ol' Opry Entertainment  
Thursday: Live Theater including transportation, \$35.00

### Friday Activities, September 13, 2002

(Please note: Today, only Breakfast and Lunch are on your own.)

- 9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Registration  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 n. General Business Meeting  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 n. Ladies' Activities – The House Clown with Mrs. Norma Hornack  
2:00 – 5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open  
7:00 – 10:00 p.m. Dinner/Dance Entertainment

### Saturday Activities, September 14, 2002

(Please note: Today, only Breakfast and Lunch are on your own.)

- 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 n.. Registration  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 n. Business Meeting  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 n. Ladies' Activities – Historic Ladies with Mrs. Norma Hornack  
2:00 – 4:00 p.m. N+Memorial Inter-Denominational Service  
3:00 – 5:00 p.m. Hospitality Room Open  
7:00 – 10:00 p.m. Dinner/Dance Program

### Sunday Activities, September 15, 2002

- 7:00 – 10:00 a.m. Buffet Breakfast

**Departure after the Buffet**

**HAVE A SAFE TRIP HOME  
AND HOPE TO SEE YOU ALL NEXT YEAR!**

**A MESSAGE TO ALL 83<sup>RD</sup> MEMBERS . . . . .**

Anyone wishing to purchase coats and caps may write to:  
Vito C. Palazzolo, 20000 Lancaster, Harper Woods, Michigan  
48225 for information. He will send you an application form.

**83<sup>rd</sup> Reunion will be held at  
Landmark Resort Hotel  
Myrtle Beach, SC  
Dates are:  
September 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 2002**

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For the year 2002**

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**Monroe, CT 06468-2008**

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Descendant Membership \_\_\_\_\_ Name

Name of 83<sup>rd</sup> Division Member \_\_\_\_\_

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When you move and change your address, **PLEASE**, send your change of address. It does no good to mail you a Thunderbolt at your old address. **The Post Office WILL NOT** forward this magazine. It will just go to waste. With the cost of printing and postage this is very costly to the Association to have even one go to waste. Send your address change to the Association Office and not to someone else. Thank you for all your cooperation. **Send old and new address.**