



THUNDERBOLT

83rd INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION, Inc.

WORLD WAR II

Vol. 62 Issue No.1

Fall Issue 2006

**Holiday Inn Rosslyn at Key Bridge
LOOKS FORWARD TO HOSTING THE
61ST ANNUAL REUNION
FOR THE
83RD INFANTRY DIVISION**



Arlington, Virginia

August 22-26, 2007

THE THUNDERBOLT

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1963 Manuel C. Martin*	1980 Samuel Klippa*	1997 Keith Davidson	

*Denotes Deceased



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

RUDY ZAMULA

First, I want to thank the members of the 83rd Division Association for the honor of being elected National President for our 61st Reunion in Washington, DC. Georgeanna Slaybaugh et al did a great job in organizing the 60th and it will be a hard act to follow – the colorful Corvettes, the Parade and the tour of the theater immersion training site at Atterbury that replicates conditions soldiers face in Iraq.

Secondly, hats off to Chuck Abdinoor and the Board for negotiating an unbelievably low price for the rooms at the Holiday Inn Rosslyn Key Bridge. (Note: Members can get these prices for the three days immediately before and after the Reunion dates of August 22 thru 25, 2007. So make your reservations early.)

I spoke to Jack Levin, who lives in a retirement home near where I work at the National Archives, and was the Chairman of the first Reunion held in 1946 at the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC. Speakers were General Robert C. Macon, who was retired and living on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, and the 331st commander, Colonel Robert York, who was by then a general. The next time the 83rd met in Washington, DC was on 6 June 1999 to dedicate the Division memorial and dogwood tree on McLellan Drive, near General Macon's gravestone. John Prinzi, then our Historian, organized the ceremony and I did some of the legwork.

Our program for August 2007 includes a ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, a wreath-laying at the 83rd memorial stone, a tour of the Vietnam and Korean War memorials, the new WWII Memorial and if we have time, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial. We welcome

your suggestions for the additional visits. Traditional highpoints such as the White House and the Capitol Building have time-consuming security checks, and are not easily accessible for large groups like ours. We are working on additional visits, military speakers and some entertainment on the lighter side.

Rudy Zamula, National President



George Waple and Rudy Zamula, 83rd President Relax in Arlington Cemetery while checking out Routes to and from Cemetery for 2007 Reunion 83rd Memorial Stone and Dogwood Tree

PAST PRESIDENT'S CORNER

AMES MILLER

We want to acknowledge all who helped in any way to make our 60th Reunion a success. Georgeanna Slaybaugh did a wonderful job coordinating all of the Nashville events. Our Camp Atterbury Memorial was one of the best we have had and put together by Ames and Helen Miller and Manny Goodridge.

Also, Members, Wives and Friends and all who attended - we feel all of them had a great time and they are the ones who supported the Reunion and made it so successful.

Ames Miller

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

ROBERT KECK

It is again a story to be told. The 60th Reunion of the 83rd Inf. Div. Assn. is history.

This is the type of history that makes headlines. The Town of Nashville, Indiana sure gave us the red carpet treatment. This committee is to be thanked and many others included. Georgeanna, thanks for the spark you gave us at the Paducah, KY reunion.

We can now think of the 2007 Reunion to be held at the Holiday Inn in Arlington, VA. Chuck Abdinoor has a great team working a lot of angles to make it a success. We will have a good view of Washington, DC including Arlington Cemetery.

It's always sad to have one of our members with a health problem. Michael Petitti has agreed to step down as a member of the Executive Board of the 83rd Inf. Div. Assn. because of ill health. All members of the Executive Board have agreed to appoint Manny Goodridge to the Executive Board of the 83rd Inf. Div. Assn. Thanks to Manny - he has held many positions and been a hard worker for the 83rd Association.

Hoping you all have Happy Holidays.

We are the best.

Bob Keck
L Co., 329th

FROM THE EDITOR

CLIFF WOOLDRIDGE

The reunion in Nashville was a fabulous event! I had a chance to be with more friends and met a lot of new ones. Some I didn't get a chance to talk with as we didn't have enough time. I never had time go by so fast before. There was a fellow from Illinois who is in advertising and his wife that I would have liked to talk to. And a father and son - son from Illinois and his father was from Michigan. It was too bad we didn't get the names of all the people who came to the reunion for the first time.

The Hospitality Room was beautifully decorated with World War II memorabilia and members raved about all the delicious food.

The Parade down the main street of Nashville was another exciting event. People waving from the sidewalks and that huge flag on the building must have been fifteen feet high and twenty feet long. I walked the whole route carrying the 308th Engineers Battalion Flag. But if it went two more feet, I would have had to give up. Also marching as our color guard - the 329th Co. F Re-enactors.

On Thursday night Ben Patton, General George Patton's grandson, showed a DVD he made on our own Tony Vacarro whose photography was on exhibit Friday night.

Saturday morning the buses that were suppose to be at the hotel at 8:00 didn't show 'til after 9:00 and the Camp Atterbury officials graciously held their Memorial Ceremony until everyone arrived.

We were seated under tents around the reflecting pool and "Walk of Honor" in front of the Memorial. When it was time for us to place the 83rd wreaths each presenter was escorted from their seat by a Camp Atterbury soldier. Our Chaplain Ellsworth Massie read the names of our buddies who died this past year. After each name a requiem bell rang. It was the best Memorial Service I can remember.

After the service the buses took us on a tour of the base, to the Kings Hall Cafeteria for a great lunch, the Chapel for Mass, and the Camp Atterbury Museum with 83rd Infantry Display.

The Saturday Night Banquet was a great success! The empty table with the hats from the different branches of service remembering the Prisoners of War and Missing in Action. The presentation of gifts to our foreign guests - Lt. Col. Marcus Browell representing the United Kingdom, Jean Paul Pitou from France and Eddy Monfort from Belgium. The food was delicious! The prime rib cooked to perfection - no more complaints about shoe-leather beef! The 40's band was great. We just had a wonderful time!

We were most fortunate to have a large group of descendants attending the reunion volunteering their assistance wherever needed - shuttling people from the airport to Nashville; directing buses at Camp Atterbury; dispensing water at Atterbury and during the parade; organizing table groups during the two evening meals in the banquet room, assisting at the Registration Table, and always available if we needed them.

You are the future of our Association!

Well, back to basics – **Membership Dues** - Sometime back (before my time) the 12-month Membership Dues period was changed to “January through December” and it caused a lot of problems. Some people didn’t pay dues until July but some would pay dues at the reunion for the next year. Because of this confusion the executive board decided to go back to the August 1 - July 31 period for our membership year.

I guess for 40 years it was always this way. When they originally changed it everybody got 6-months free. Well, now we are going back to August 1 to July 31. That is why I sent out Reminder Postcards letting everyone know that 2007 Membership Dues were due on August 1, 2006. Some people have called and I’ve explained it to them.

I’ve been busy trying to catch up but as of December we still have over 300 members who have not paid their 2005 and 2006 dues. It is important to pay dues or we can’t keep the Association going. I’ve run out of decals so have been unable to send them out with the membership cards. I should have some by the time you receive this Thunderbolt. If you would like one, just write or call and I will be glad to send one to you.



Ames Miller, “George” Slaybaugh, Helen Miller

I could write a book about the reunion - the beautiful paper weights with sand from Normandy Beach, the Memorial Ceremony at Camp Atterbury put together by Helen and Ames Miller and Manny Goodridge; and all the time, effort and love that was put into all of the Nashville activities by Georgeanna “George” Slaybaugh, her daughter Kelly Slaybaugh, and sisters Lynda Patrick and Sherry Mappes. We needed six days instead of three to do all the great things they had planned for us.

“Yes, Georgeanna, you sure can “put on a national event”!

Cliff Wooldridge
Editor and Treasurer
C Co., 308th Engineers

FROM THE SECRETARY

STEWART BARRICK

The 60th Reunion of the 83rd Infantry Division Association was a huge success, thanks to Ames Miller, Manny Goodridge, and their Committee, the planning of Georgeanna Slaybaugh and the Staff of the Brown County Inn. The citizens of Nashville really went all out with the parade. A town with 800 residents surely must have imported visitors because there were many spectators all along the parade route. And where could you have seen so many vintage GM Corvettes?

Remember the old saying “The Best is Yet to Come”. Chuck Abdinoor and Rudy Zamula (2007 President) are doing an excellent job making contacts and coordinating next year’s reunion. Let’s work as a team to get the word out about the 2007 Reunion in Washington, DC. If each of the 299 members who registered at Nashville invited another member, we will have even a greater reunion. Washington, DC has a lot to offer, the WW II Memorial, Korean Memorial, Vietnam Wall, Arlington Cemetery and other attractions that will make for a very busy and memorable get-together.

Stewart Barrick
Secretary
A Co., 330th

FROM THE CHAPLAIN

ELLSWORTH MASSIE

As we approach the Christmas Season let us be bound together by our faith in God and our place in the world as American citizens tried and tested and triumphant in our day-to-day responsibilities. We are included in his plan and experiment in human brotherhood and let us each pray and labor

that God's will will be done in our lives and the life of our nation.

Let us praise God for his keeping us in the palm of his hand, so to speak, and strive to live so that he may be glorified in all that we do, think, or say. Keeping ever before us the ones that have given their all in the cause of freedom and the loved ones left behind! Also, a prayer of continuing watchfulness over these old Soldiers in the 83rd Association!

These very thoughts were expressed in a prayer by our then Chaplain Bill Shuman way back in 1960. They are still fitting and worthwhile for our consideration in this day some 46 years later!

Yours,

E. Massie
Chaplain 83rd Assn.

CHAPTERS

BOSTON CHAPTER NEWS

AMBY TYNAN

On Tuesday, October 31, 2006, the men and women of the Boston Chapter had a get together at 12:00 noon. We all met at the home of Ginny DiGiammerino. It was more of a social gathering than a regular meeting.

We all enjoyed a buffet lunch courtesy of the Boston Chapter. Our hostess Ginny with help of her sister Louise and friend Ann did the preparing of the food and table set-up. Cliff Wooldridge and Roger Dumont picked up the food at a local caterer. The ladies brought the desserts. There was more than enough food and goodies.

After we all filled up, we sat and talked about the 83rd Reunion last August. Cliff Wooldridge showed us a lot of pictures that were taken at the reunion. A few Boston Chapter people were there at the reunion and were in the pictures among many others. Our President Larry Arrigo did not attend because he is in Florida close to his son and family for the winter, soaking up the sun.

Amby and Nancy Tynan could not make the gathering because he carries oxygen and cannot climb stairs, etc. He said he can come if we could get a place level so he won't have to climb stairs. I think that Charlie Abdinoor fell and broke his knee cap so he could not come. A few others could not make it for some reasons of the same kind. We did have about 14 members and auxiliary. We all had a good time.

We want to thank Ginny DiGiammerino for using her home and hosting the affair. She is determined to keep our chapter going.

We are hoping to get together again soon. So until next time, stay well and God Bless you all.

Boston Chapter Secretary, Tony Piantedosi

P.S. Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Xmas to all.

CLEVELAND CHAPTER NEWS

BOB GROBELNY

We, the Cleveland Chapter, still meet three times a year – May, July & Sept. the 3rd Thursday of the month, at Emely Czech's (Chester's) Czech's wife's place. She fixes us up a nice luncheon and we are very grateful to her.

We had a couple of men die this year –

Kid Williams, July 19, 2006 – He was a radio man for "Headquarters Co.", 330th
and

Michael Mizerock, Sept. 29, 2006 – He was a mess Sgt. for "G" Co., 331st

Kid was buried at Mentor Cemetery, Mentor, Ohio and Mike was buried at the Ohio Western Reserve National Cemetery. Mike cooked for us for years at our monthly meetings. The Cleveland Chapter would like to wish everyone a Healthy Holiday and a healthy Happy New Year.

Our ranks are getting smaller but we're trying to hang in there.

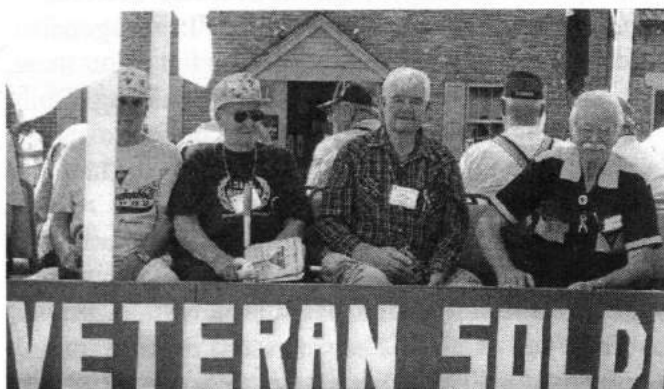
Paul Dallos and his wife Mary still go to the Company "D" 331st reunions and also the national reunion.

This is all for now – Stay Healthy and God Bless.

Bob Grobelny

DIXIE CHAPTER NEWS

ELLSWORTH MASSIE



60th Reunion Parade - Main Street Nashville
Francis Markuns - Daniel McCabe - Ellsworth Massie

We've been blessed to have been a part of the 60th National Meeting (Reunion) of the 83rd Division.

Renewing old friendships and making new ones is a terrific experience. Just can't quite imagine the effort put forth to make this come to pass. From all over the U.S. we came together once again to celebrate our friendships and honor those who have given their very lives for the cause of freedom. We were able to do this with the help and leadership of our very own comrades in arms, but more important the descendants who pitched in and performed above and beyond! They have reaffirmed my faith in my fellow man. The officers and volunteers have my undying gratitude for all they have done. Let us never forget the debt we owe each one!

For me beginning on Tuesday it just got better each day! Each event was so meaningful and fitting. I wrote down the new names so I could write about them in a special way but, alas this 85 year old has lost his notes so you have to remain without names but you have a special place in my heart for the rest of my life!

Let us welcome those who came for the very first time. We recognized 5 men in the meeting. I'm planning to see you all in '07 in Washington, DC.

Listening to the stories around the Hospitality Room was the experience of a lifetime - 4 (four) Ex- Prisoners of War sitting together for the first time in 60 years - Descendant members looking for and finding for the first time a comrade of a father or uncle who was killed in action.

The tremendous outpouring of love and respect for the veterans by our descendant members and volunteers who worked so hard to make our meeting a huge success. I can't describe how much I personally appreciate these efforts.

The Memorial Ceremonies at Camp Atterbury were meaningful and very touching as we especially recognized 66 men who have left us in the past year!

It was the first time I ever rode on a parade float in my life and it was so enjoyable seeing all who turned out along the route - I look forward to going back some time in the future!

All who could not join us really missed "The Experience of A Life Time".

I forgot that I was writing as the Dixie reporter so I need to mention that we had 22 members present with many friends from the Kentucky Chapter who visited with us in Gatlinburg in December. I'm hoping to have some of them sign up this year. We welcome each and see a great potential especially in the descendants for our Dixie Chapter and also our National Association.

Just keep on carrying on! Many of us won't make another meeting but I'd like to think that our association will be alive and strong for as long as it has already been going!

Your Reporter for Dixie,
E. Massie

FLORIDA CHAPTER NEWS

ROBERT TAYLOR
B Co. 329TH

By the time that you read this we'll be back in Florida for the winter and our Florida Chapter November meeting will be history. We always get together around Veterans Day for a chapter meeting and to enjoy the gathering of good friends after months of separation.

We had a pretty good turn-out of our Chapter at the Division Association's 60th Reunion in Nashville, IN. Our two National Executive Board Members, Manny Epstein and Mike Petitti, were there, along with Mike's wife, Nina. Also attending were Charles and Martha Miller, Henry and Esther Hauser, Bill and Jeanette McKee, Al Shrawder and friend Charlotte, Paul Dillon, and Harry Gravelyn. Harry was with his Son Bob,

since his wife Barb could not attend due to physical problems. And the Petitti's were accompanied by their Daughter. Also, Gladys and I were there.

We all agreed that it was an exceptional, if not outstanding, reunion. The people who were responsible for this party did a remarkable job, and the entire town of Nashville co-operated, to make us feel welcome and appreciated.

As with all Chapters, a lack of willing people to accept officer positions is affecting us, too. As a result 'yours truly' is now the President/Secretary of the Florida Chapter and John Prinzi is the Treasurer. As you can see I'm acting as the Chapter Reporter. Things are getting tough all over. Hope that you all have a **Happy Holiday Season!!**

Bob Taylor
B Co., 329th

KENTUCKY CHAPTER NEWS

FLOYD J. RICHMOND

The action to disband was the final action of the November, 2005 Meeting of the Kentucky Chapter. The floor was open for nominations for each office – No one accepted any office except the Office of Chaplain. Al Henry would have continued as chaplain.

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER

NICK FRANCUCCO

We would like to thank President Ames Miller and his wife Helen, Manny, and Georgeanna for putting on a great 60th Reunion in Nashville, IN.



60th Reunion - Dot Brennan, Mary & Nick Francullo

We had at our dinner Jim & Dot Brennan, Nick & Mary Francullo, Al & Ann Tartaglia, Nina, Michelle & Mike Petitti, Bill & Jeanette McKee, & August "Mousie" & Hazel Farias. It was good to see Larry Arrigo & Manny Epstein.

I would like to thank Helen Miller for asking me if I would like to take the 83rd wreath up to the Memorial Service. It was a great honor and thank you Helen.

Called the Ferreiras and they are not too well. John is walking with a walker. Esther can't walk up steps. She fell in the bathtub and broke two ribs and not well. They missed making the reunion and they can't drive.

The people in Nashville, IN were very friendly and they thanked us for what we did in WW II.

Jim & Dot Brennan sent some news also. The reunion was the best we have had in a long time. Everyone there in Nashville and in close proximity must have worked very hard.

We really didn't want for anything and the food was great. Also, thanks for the souvenir paper weights. It was a great idea. We had a great time, a good trip both ways, and once again we say thank you.

Have a good and healthy winter and a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Your Buddy,
Nick Francullo
Hq. Co. 3rd Bn. 330th Inf.

NEW JERSEY CHAPTER NEWS

STAN BIELEN

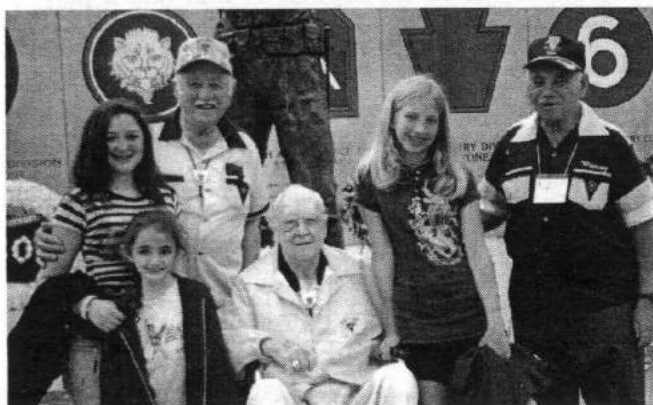
stanfran83rd@aol.com

"It's time to make the donuts." How many times have you heard that commercial for Dunkin Donuts? Well, it's time for me to write the New Jersey Chapter Report again. Yet it seems just a short while ago since the last report that was written in May. Time does fly.

As I didn't attend the reunion I will relay the information given to me by those that did attend. First – the chapter members that were at the reunion – George and Dot Foster, George Waple and companion, Manny Epstein, Joe DePeri and his daughter Joanne's family, Andy Socha, Charlie Sihlanick, Russ and Margurita Whitehead, Cookie

Seneca with daughter Maryann and son Jim with wife Darlene.

The day after returning home, Manny Epstein called to say I had missed a great reunion. He went on to tell me of the wonderful treatment that the folks at the hotel and the people of Nashville gave to make it so special. George Waple told me he felt like General Ike during the parade riding in one of the Corvettes, waving to all the spectators and they waving back and applauding. Charlie Sihlanick told me that there was so much food at the hospitality room that you didn't have to go out to eat. That reminds me of the times we went to the Dixie Chapter meetings in Williamsburg, so many of the southern ladies brought goodies to their hospitality room for all to enjoy.



Joe DePeri Jim Burton Manny Epstein
Granddaughters Granddaughter
Casey & Nina Kaitlyn

Just last week – DePeri and Socha came to our house to show us the video and some pictures taken at the reunion. It sure looks like all were having a great time. It was great to see how good Cookie Seneca and his family looked. Cookie is in his 90's but doesn't look it. I missed seeing them as they are really great folks and have treated us royally when we were at the reunion in Peoria, Illinois.

I have included pictures that DePeri gave me taken at the reunion and one of Charlie Sihlanick's 85th birthday party.

There is an inquiry by Daniel Shomer, nephew of Captain Daniel Moore, who served as C.O. of "B" Company of the 331st regiment on Dave Curry's website asking for information about Captain Moore who was considered one of the best company commanders in the division if not the best. Those of you who served with Captain

Moore and would like to help Mr. Shomer can write him at 7521 Rockingham Road, Prospect, KY 40059.

I received an email from Margo Raikos telling me of her father John's passing last July and along with it I was able to download his obituary from the Indianapolis Star (included in this issue). We were saddened by his passing and send out heartfelt sympathy to his wife Mary and his Family. In the obit was much about his service in the 83rd Infantry Division. This brings to my mind that after all the hardship and suffering that was endured by those that were involved in combat it still was the greatest adventure of our life. And I'm sure that John felt that also.

It would be of interest to many to read John Raikos' obituary especially by our descendant members. I am including a copy with this article for Cliff to put in the Thunderbolt.

HOLIDAY GREETINGS TO ALL YOU THUNDERBOLTS AND YOUR FAMILIES AND MAY THE NEW YEAR BE GOOD FOR ALL OF YOU !!

Stan Bielen

COMPANIES

Co. "A" - 330TH

CHARLES ABDINOOR
sgtchuck83rd@aol.com

Hi Buddy's;

Sincerely hope all is well and what about Nashville. My hat is off to Helen and Ames Miller, and Manny Goodridge for the work that they put in on a most successful 60th Reunion. But I will not stop there, Georgeanna Slaybaugh and her committee put on a spectacular agenda.

The trip to Camp Atterbury, Parade, High School visit with the pupils, etc. My hat is off to them all. They have given the committee of our upcoming reunion at Washington, DC a challenge. What do we have to do to compare theirs with ours? WORK, WORK, WORK!

I must remind all that we are getting a spectacular price at the hotel for rooms. The price we got is unheard of in the Washington area, but through hard work and being at this for two years already, I believe it will turn out to be one of the best.

I urge all to make your reservations early. The hotel registration form is in this issue. We have rooms set aside but I feel we are going to have a record number of members and descendants coming.

I have received inquiries from as far as California, and they are bringing families with them to take in all the historical monuments, and the War Memorials as such.

We are also planning to tour the Holocaust Museum and hopefully we can put this on our agenda. This requires a group reservation, and also a separate tour, away from our regular scheduled one.

We are also planning a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the Grave of the Unknown Soldier. This is an honor accorded to a select few. There is also numerous more tours that we are planning on. This is going to be a very busy one, so be prepared to enjoy the hospitality of the 61st Reunion Committee.

HOLIDAY INN, ROSSLYN at KEY BRIDGE
AUGUST 22 - 25, 2007
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA
(800) - 368 - 3408

PLEASE BOOK EARLY TO INSURE YOU HAVE THIS SPECIAL RATE. WE DO NOT WANT TO LEAVE ANY PERSON OUT. LIMITED ROOMS AT THIS PRICE.

Rudy Zamula, National President
Charles Abdinoor, Reunion Coordinator
Vice-Chairman, Executive Board

P.S. I must mention our A-Company men that were at Nashville, Indiana -

Mr. & Mrs. Edwin Brown
Mr. & Mrs. Neal Prussman
T. Steward Barrick
Cookie Senica
Charles Abdinoor

Missing were -

Mr. & Mrs. Walter Pillion

Mr. & Mrs. Earl Dunn
Mr. & Mrs. Paul J. Reed, Jr.
Shorty Glasser
Butch Klug

We will be looking forward to seeing all in August, 2007.

Your Buddy Chuck
B & A 330th

Co. "D" - 331ST

GERI GUNDERSON
BILL MCKEE

Congratulations to EVERYONE that had a part in making the 60th Reunion such a great success. What a terrific time was had by each and everyone that came to Nashville, Indiana between August 23-27, 2006. Your e-mails and phone calls to me had nothing but praise for this 60th Reunion. A Harry Gravelyn comment: The food surpassed everything we had for at least the last ten years!

Company D had a great turnout - Ken Barker, Paul & Mary Dallos, Harry Gravelyn & son Bob, R.C. Hamilton & son Mike, Jimmy & Harriet Lynch and daughters, Bill & Jeanette McKee, Al Shrawder & Charlotte Literal, Dan & Doris McDermott, Ray Richter, Bill & Dorothy Sauer, Jim & Elaine Hogan (George & Polly Odenweller's daughter & son-in-law.)

And the one's who almost made it:- Louise Hamilton was detained in the hospital, and Geri Gunderson purchased her airline ticket, and then "chickened out" at the last moment. Doris & Dan McDermott had to return home early due to an injury. Elaine & Jim Hogan graciously drove them home and then the next day, the Hogan's joined the others at Clifty Falls State Park in Madison, Indiana. All of the GANG "thanks you" for being so kind to us older ones! (R.C. had to return home early due to Louise's illness.) This was the second time Co. D enjoyed this beautiful Indiana State Park and being together for an extended time as we have done since the 83rd Reunion in New Orleans, is something to look forward to.

Missed were: Nick & Sylvia Barbu, Arthur & Peggy Haight, Frank & Dana Sharp, Harvey Clements, Marcella Nolte, Barbara Gravelyn,

Harry Adkins, & George Komlos, (Harry & George are now in nursing facilities.) We are looking forward to next year's reunion in Arlington, VA.

The accommodations were better than excellent. Nashville has only about 800 residents, with nearly 300 shops, mostly in red-white-and blue and apple butter-a-plenty. They had a native daughter, Georgeanna Slaybaugh. She was there to promote her father and the 83rd Division Reunion and the whole town honored in style with a Hometown Parade down main street. *Nashville prepared for Thunderbolt invasion* was an understatement! The Camp Atterbury Memorial Commemoration was so well done.

The donation of a quilt for the women's get together was very much appreciated, Ames & Helen Miller for the Paper-Weights that so thoughtfully represented the Beaches of Normandy! A great article in the local paper interview of Mike Petitti, Jim Brennan, Stanley Duff, & Nick Francullo was so vivid of their experiences when at Camp Atterbury.

What a great way to honor each of you, and for you to know that after more than 60 years, YOU are still part of the great history of this town and this Nation.

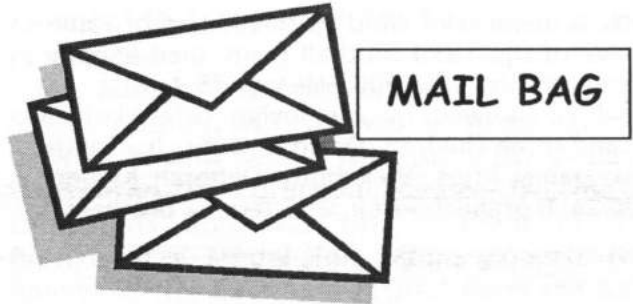
YOU are the "GREATEST GENERATION" that so deserve the recognition, praise and honor.

The division did come home! A salute to the mighty 83rd! "The Best of the Best"!

Bill McKee & Geri Gunderson



USO - Indianapolis Airport - 60th Reunion
Steward Barrick - Chuck Abdinoor - Cliff Wooldridge



Dear Clifton,

9-7-06

David (Kribs) was in the 331st Headquarters.

Sincerely, Bernie (Kot)



Dave Kribs (with ball) played running back and defensive back at Western Michigan University from 1937-39 and holds several records, including career and single-season interceptions and career and single-season punt returns.

**Teammate remembers Kribs,
first player to score at Waldo**
by Graham Couch, Kalamazoo Gazette

Western Michigan University football historians remember Dave Kribs for scoring the first touchdown at Waldo Stadium in 1939.

"He was certainly a real nice guy. He was well-liked by everybody," said Streidl, former teammate. "Even though he was so small, he was a heck of a ball player. He was so competitive."

Kribs still holds the Western Michigan record for career interceptions with 24 and has the top two season totals with 11 and 9 in 1939 and 1938, respectively.

Following his career at Western Michigan, Kribs played minor league baseball for the Chicago White Sox and, after serving in the 83rd Thunderbolt Div. during World War II, he spent his career in sales for the Sutherland Paper Co.

Kribs, a member of WMU's Athletic Hall of Fame and MVP of the 1939 football team, died Sunday morning, August 13, 2006. He was 88.

David is survived by his loving wife Marilyn Kribs and three children, David A. Kribs, Jr., South Haven; Daniel Kribs, Vicksburg; Deborah Kryger, Mattawan; 6 grandchildren, 2 sisters, 2 brothers

October 8, 2006

I am enclosing a check for my 2007 Association dues. I read every article in the Thunderbolt hoping to find someone writing in that served in my husband's crew and would describe some of their experiences, but, so far haven't found any. Eddie never talked to me about any of his war time experiences and I didn't push it. Now it is too late. Eddie had five bronze service stars so maybe there is some member of the Association still living who remembers him.

Would it be possible to run a request in the Thunderbolt to see if there is someone out there that **remembers Eddie and wouldn't mind talking about their war experiences?**

My address is 1040 Old Salem Road, Martin, TN 38237. Phone number is (731) 587-4874.

Mrs. Bennie (Eddie) Fuqua
Widow of

**Staff Sgt. Eddie T. Fuqua
Co. H, 329th Inf. Reg, 83 Div.**

Oct. 2, 2006

Cliff,

Enclosed are pictures of Nepple Field in Honor of Sgt. Nepple C.M.C. At that time Zwisel, Germany was Headquarters of the 3rd Battalion, 329th Regiment.

The onionskin paper was my copy of the 3rd Platoon Roster on May 1, 1945, L Co. 329th Infantry.

Thought you might like to have it for the 83rd Archives.



Nepple Field in honor of Sgt. Nepple

Best regards, Ray Wall
309 B Tall Pines Ct.
Abbingdon, MD 21009

Dear Sir,

I wanted to let you know that our Dad passed away on September 05, 2006. I wanted to let you know that we buried with him his 83rd Infantry jacket and his WWII Veterans cap. He was so proud to wear both of them when we took him off. I am enclosing a copy of his obituary that was in the local paper. I am also enclosing a check so you can send me a copy of the next Thunderbolt, so I can keep it with my Dad's personal items that I have. My Dad loved receiving and reading the Thunderbolt every time it came to him in the mail. Thanks so much, and keep up the good work that you all are doing.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Debbie Kight Yancey
3501 Thomas Moore Circle
Virginia Beach, VA 23452

Obituary
PERRY J. KIGHT

Virginia Beach - Perry J. Kight, 86, went to be with the Lord on September 5, 2006. He was born in Clarksburg, WV to the late Boyd and Mary Kight. Perry served his country during WWII in the U.S. Army, 83rd Infantry

Division. He proudly wore his WWII Veteran hat everywhere he went and was always approached by strangers thanking him for his service. He resided in the Woodstock subdivision since January of 1952. He loved to sit out under his carport and wave at the neighbors as they passed by. He was know as a very friendly person and loved to joke with everyone. He never met a stranger and was always willing to help anyone at anytime.

He retired from Colonial Stores after 20 years and 18 years with the Federal Government. He loved discussing anything that involved refrigeration/air condition; that was his trade and he was proud of it. He was the perfect grandfather. He loved his grandchildren and jumped at the chance to baby-sit whenever asked. He was known as "Day-Day", Grandpa, and Grandpa Kight; he was predeceased by his loving wife of 63 years, Helen Olivia Kight; son, P. Wayne Kight; and daughter, Helen (Snookie) Kight.

Left to cherish his memory are two daughters, Ruth K. Barrett and Debbie K. Yancey; a son Chuck M. Kight; a brother and sister; 6 grandchildren; and a very dear friend, Mike Hoggard of Woodstock.

* * * * *

Nov. 10, 2006

Cliff,

Here is a copy of Meadors' obituary sent to me by a Dixie member. . . .

Ellsworth Massie



WILLIAM MEADORS MINICK

Lexington, SC - William Meadors Minick of 104 Kwanzan Drive, Lexington, formerly of

Kinards, died Tuesday, Oct. 24, 2006, at his residence.

Mr. Minick was born on May 1, 1922, in Saluda County, SC. He was an Army veteran of WWII having served with the 83rd Infantry Division in the European Theatre, five major campaigns and was the recipient of the Bronze Star Medal for action against the enemy in the ETO. He retired from the S.C. National Guard with the rank of major.

He was an alumnus of Newberry College and a retired businessman and tax accountant.

He was a member of St. Paul United Methodist Church in Saluda and a former member and Elder of Little River Dominick Presbyterian Church. He was a member and past commander of American Legion Post 24, member of the 40&8, member and past governor of the Loyal Order of the Moose, member and executive board member of the 83rd Infantry Div. Assn., member and secretary of the Newberry County Review and Appeals Board since its inception in 1969, member of the National Guard Assn. of S.C. and the U.S., and a member of the Saluda Lions Club.

He was twice married, first to the late Mildred Wallenzine Minick and second to Grace Prater Minick of Lexington. Besides his wife, he is survived by three daughters, Brenda Frazier, Elaine Cornwell, and Sandra Minick; and a son, T. Wayne Minick; two sisters; seven grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; three step-children, Sherry Murphy, Rusty Prater, and Kim Hunt; nine step-grandchildren; and four step-great-grandchildren.

Funeral services at the St. Paul United Methodist Church in Saluda. Interment in Newberry Memorial Gardens with full military honors.

* * * * *

Dear Cliff,

May 2, 2006

I am writing a few lines to let the 83rd Div. know they should be very proud of Sgt. Henry Scheitler and his lovely wife. They go to the American Cemeteries in Belgium and also Luxembourg, where General Patton is buried with his fellow soldiers; and they place a wreath and American flag on every 83rd buddy's

grave. And so I salute them both. They go there on Memorial Day and Veteran's Day, rain or shine.

I'd also like to thank those in charge of the cemeteries and they are two brothers. The one in Belgium has Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts to help him. I wish that when the families go there they ask them to play the taps and they would be very pleased to do it.



**Boy Scouts & Girl Scouts
August Farias & Henry Schietler**

The soldiers who are buried in Europe and Italy have been there more than 60 years and never came home to their Mom, Dad, family, friends, or wife - and that is why I am home because of these heroes. We should be very proud of them. I have been over to Europe six times.

I salute all the 83rd Buddies and Veterans of the Armed Forces. God Bless you all.

Sincerely, August Farias (Mousie)

P.S. Please Mr. Bush, bring back the boys.

Dear Cliff,

I hope this letter finds you well. I wanted to write to you and tell you how much my family and I enjoyed the reunion. It was a great weekend. I really enjoyed seeing my army buddies that I haven't been able to see for a long time. I was very touched that everyone wanted

me to sing. I was reluctant to sing for the 83rd since I don't have the breath I used to have, however you all made me feel so special that I was glad I did it. It was a very special weekend.



**Jim Burton singing "My Buddy"
60th Reunion - Nashville, IN**

Since that weekend I've had a little setback, I fell and fractured my back. I was in the hospital for 2 weeks. Now I'm at a rehab hospital to hopefully recover my health and mobility. My daughter Judy has moved me to the windy city (Chicago) to be by her so she can mother me! This has been a very painful experience! I don't recommend it! Please send any news of the 83rd to her address at:

**James Burton
c/o Judy Peterson
2222 Grove Ave.
Berwyn, IL 60402**

I hope to recover fully so that my family and I will see you all in Washington, DC next year!

Warmest regards,

**Jimmy Burton
Co D 320th reg.**

Dear Cliff,

I just wanted to write and let the families of the 83rd know what a memorable weekend we had at the reunion!! It was wonderful sharing the

experience with my dad, husband, and daughter. Since my mom passed away in June, this reunion gave my Dad something to look forward to. Seeing his old army buddies really raised his spirits. Hearing stories of what the men of the 83rd went through will stay with me and I will pass it on to my daughter so the new generation will never forget what special men you all are and what you did for our country.



Jim Burton's Family - 60th Reunion - Nashville
 Son-in-Law Paul & Daughter Judy
 Granddaughter Kaitlyn

We will look forward to the reunion next year in D.C. hopefully my Dad will regain his health so he can go too. At rehab part of the program is speech therapy, so who knows maybe he'll get that strong tenor voice back!! It was so special to us that he was able to get up and do what he loves most...sing for you all.

God bless you, men and families of the 83rd.

Sincerely,
 Judy, Paul and Kaitlyn Peterson

Nov. 15, 2006

Dear Mr. Wooldridge,

I would first like to apologize to you for wasting the division association's time and money by taking so long to contact you regarding this matter. It is not something my father would have condoned. However, I want to inform you

that he passed away in October 2005 after a brief illness. He was identified in your records as John T. Garrison and he served in Company B of the 329th Regiment. I am not sure what he was called during his time with the 83rd. His hometown nickname was "Tom" but I've seen a reference to him in a division newsletter as "Red" Garrison. I would appreciate correspondence from anyone who remembers him and would like to contact me.

Although he rarely talked about it, I know he was proud of his service. And though he didn't join the association until 1996, he enjoyed running into several men from the 329th at the World War II Memorial ceremony two years ago. I was lucky enough to attend with him.

I've attached a copy of his obituary. Again, please accept my apologies for my tardiness in getting you this information. And please accept the enclosed money as a contribution to the 83rd Infantry Division Association. Sincerely,

John T. Garrison, Jr.
 806 Green Passage Lane
 Apex, MC 27502

Obituary

JOHN THOMPSON "Tom" GARRISON, SR.

BADIN—John Thompson "Tom" Garrison, Sr., 80, of 13 Tallasse St. in Badin, NC died Oct. 17, 2005, at Duke University Hospital. He was born on May 25, 1925 to the late Banks Thompson and Myrtle Kirk Garrison.

Mr. Garrison was educated at Badin School and completed post-graduate work at Staunton Military Academy. In September of 1943, Mr. Garrison entered the Army and played an active role in the European Theater of Operations for 22 months. He received a battlefield commission and was decorated receiving the Silver Star and other honors.

After returning home, Mr. Garrison married Rebecca Anne Marbry and graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He also served stateside in the Korean Conflict and retired after 20 years with the North Carolina National Guard. Mr. Garrison's professional career was in the insurance and real estate fields until his retirement in 1995. He was an active

member of the First Baptist Church in Albemarle for over 50 years, serving in numerous capacities.

He was an active community member for many years in Albemarle, and more recently, in Badin, serving as its Mayor from 1990 to the present. Mr. Garrison was a past president of the Albemarle Rotary Club and recipient of the Paul Harris Fellow. He also served on the Troop Committee of Boy Scout Troop 82, Stanly County Chamber of Commerce, and Stanly Cnty. 200 Committee.

Mr. Garrison served as a member of the Stanly County Visitor and Tourism bureau and the Yadkin Pee Dee Lakes Project Board of Directors and on various committees as a member of the League of Municipalities. He was also a board member of the Badin Museum and Better Badin Committee. Mr. Garrison was especially proud of serving on the NC Parks and Recreation Authority and the Morrow Mountain State Park Advisory Committee with the goal of improving the public recreation areas in North Carolina.

Surviving: daughter Ellen Garrison Philpot, of Goddlettsville, TN; son John Thompson Garrison, Jr. of Apex, NC; daughter Lenora Garrison Council of Fayetteville, NC; seven grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren.

Dear Cliff,

Thank you very much for my membership card. How are you? I hope you are in good condition of health. Here in Europe everything is OK.



Memorial Day 2006
Henri - Chapelli Henry & Maria

This month I visit all U.S. Cemeteries here in Belgium and Luxemburg. It's very important because for our good

boys who gave their lives and health for our Liberty. Don't ever forget this sacrifice.

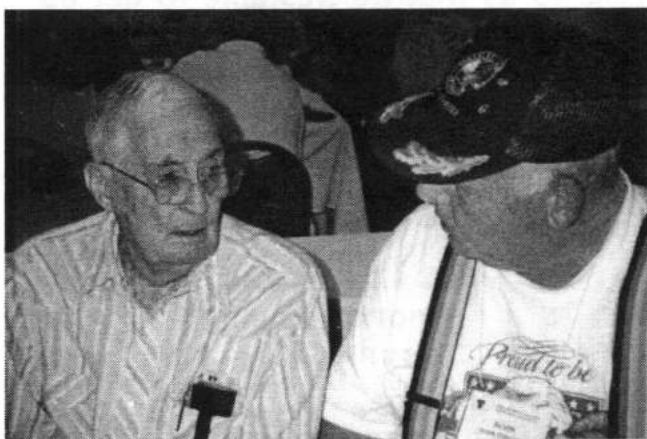
Dear Cliff I wish you all the best.
God Bless.

My new address from Nov. 16, 2006 is -
Henry Scheitler
Lengler House N: 33
B-4790 Reuland
Belgium
Best Greetings to all MEMBERS of the
83rd Infantry Division.

First Timers - 60th Reunion



Al & Shirley Toellner, F Co., 331 Inf
from Mayville, Wisconsin



Finally Together after 60 years
Larry Dalton & Al Toellner

RESERVATION REQUEST FORM

HOLIDAY INN ROSSLYN at KEY BRIDGE
1900 N. Fort Myer Drive, Arlington, Virginia 22209
83rd Infantry Division Association

Check-in Time: 3PM
Check-out Time: 12 Noon
Name _____ Phone _____
E-mail _____ Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Arrival Date _____ Departure Date _____
PLEASE RESERVE _____ (#of rooms) for _____ (# of people per room)

Rates: (all rates are INCLUSIVE – THEY INCLUDE ALL TAXES)
Arrive Wednesday, August 22, 2007 Depart Sunday, August 26, 2007 - \$392.48
Arrive Thursday, August 23, 2007 Depart Sunday, August 26, 2007 - \$294.36

PLEASE CHECK TYPE OF ACCOMMODATIONS REQUESTED:

_____ Regular Room- 1 King
_____ Regular Room – 2 Double
_____ Fully Ambulatory Wheelchair Room Required
_____ Veteran/ Immediate Family/ Widow _____ Other

Payment Type:

_____ Visa _____ Master Card _____ Discover _____ American Express
_____ Check _____ Money Order

(Check/Money Order payable to Holiday Inn, Rosslyn)

Credit Card Number _____ Expiration Date _____

I authorize the Holiday Inn to charge my account for one night's deposit and all applicable taxes.

Signature _____ Daytime Phone _____

ROOMS BLOCKED FOR YOUR GROUP WILL BE RELEASED JULY 22, 2007.

Reservations will continue to be accepted after this date based on availability.

Forty-eight (24) hours cancellation required.

Please complete this form and return to:

Holiday Inn, Rosslyn,

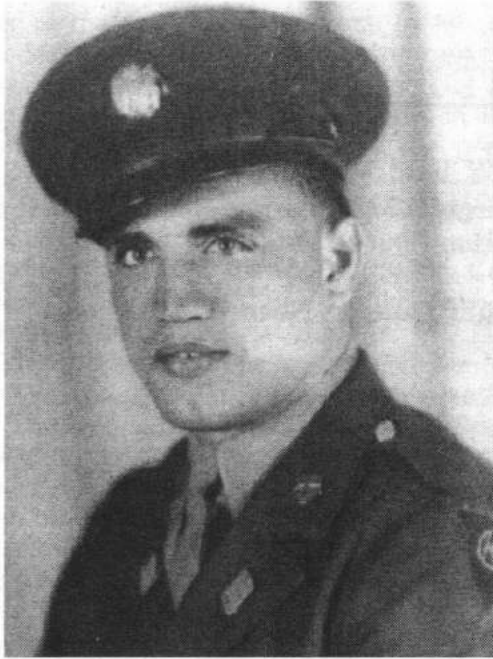
1900 N. Fort Myer Drive

Arlington, Virginia 22209. Tel. (703) 807-2000 or (800) 368-3408

Fax: (703) 522-7480

Log on to take our virtual tour at www.holidayinn.com/rosslynkbridge

The Washington area is very expensive for hotel rates, and they only block so many rooms at our rate. Once these are sold out they revert to their regular rates. The average room rate for a single is \$179.00 per night. We do not want this to happen to our group. As reservations keep coming in, they are obligated to give us our advertised rate. I had talked to the hotel and they suggested that as reservations keep coming in they will honor them.



INDUCTED OCTOBER 29, 1942

S/Sgt. Albert Vitantonio started his training with the U.S. Army at Camp Atterbury, Indiana; later Tennessee; and then at Camp Breckenridge, Kentucky

Carmen Jim Vitantonio (and Family of Nephews and Nieces) are Looking for Information about Uncle Albert Vitantonio (Born Feb. 12, 1920), Wickliffe, Ohio

**S/SGT. ALBERT J. VITANTONIO
83RD INFANTRY DIV., 331ST INFANTRY REGIMENT
3RD BATTALION, COMPANY "L"
3RD PLATOON (RIFLE PLATOON)**

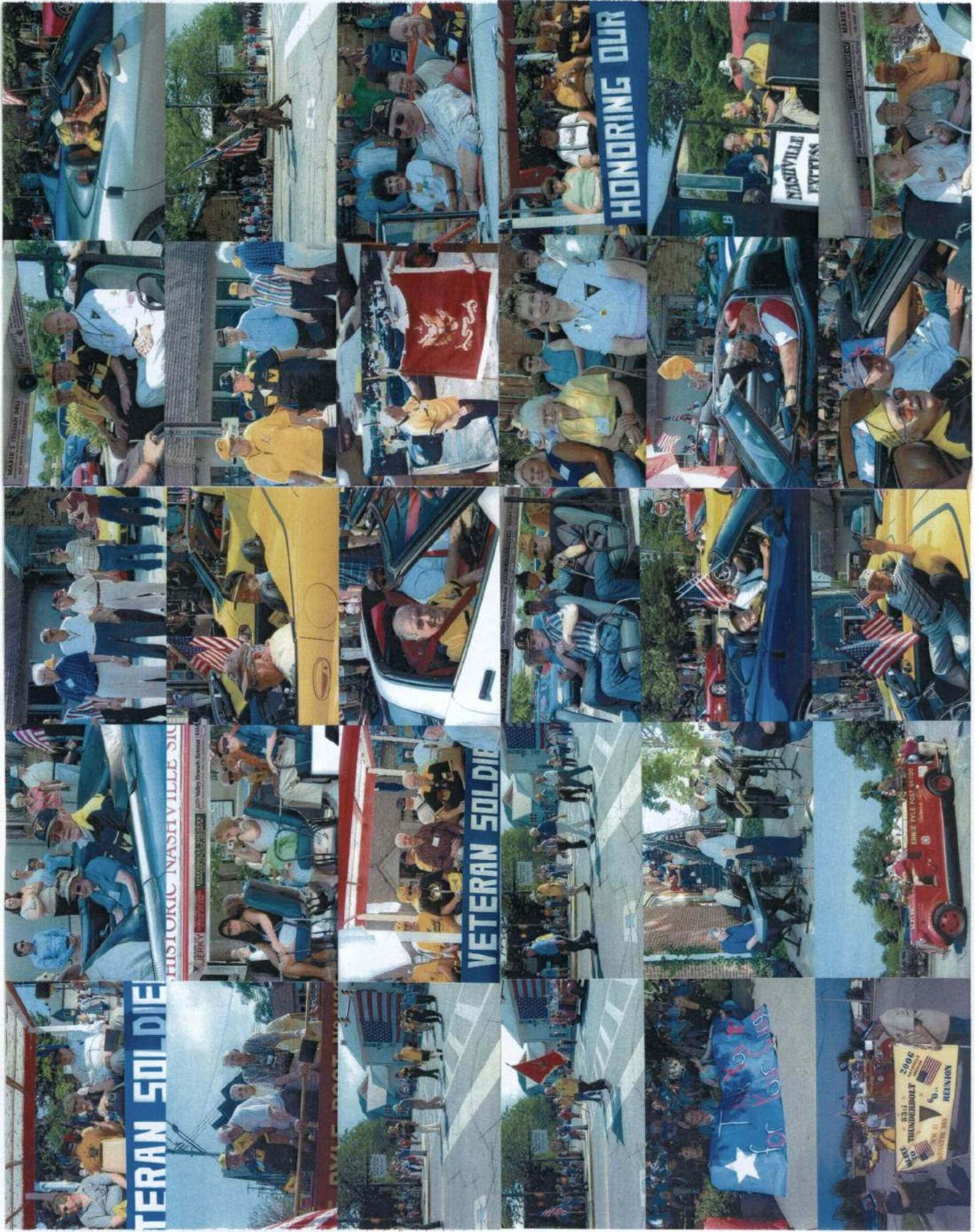
S/Sgt. Albert, a.k.a. "VIT" - "Platoon Guide" to July 04, 1944 and thereafter, "Platoon Sgt." of 3rd (Rifle) Platoon - L Co. S/Sgt. Albert Vitantonio was killed in action on July 12, 1944 by a machine gun from a Nazi tank behind Hedgerows in "Bois Grimot", Normandy, France. "Bois Grimot" (next to Town Sainteny) is approx. half way between invasion beaches of Normandy and St. Lo. St Lo is 12.7 miles ENE from "Bois Grimot".

Anybody remember S/Sgt. Albert? Any photographs of important scenes or events in the STATES; or on ship "USS Washington"; in England; or in Normandy, France? Please contact nephew -

Carmen Jim Vitantonio
28932 Hazel Avenue
Wickliffe, OH 44092-2537
Phone: 440-585-3368











Anne Tisdell Singing at 60th Reunion

Anne Tisdell (Descendant) Singing the Ed McCurdy Song below at Friday Night's Chuck Wagon Buffet

Last Night I Had The Strangest Dream

Words and music by Ed McCurdy

Last night I had the strangest dream
I'd ever dreamed before
I dreamed the world had all agreed
To put an end to war

I dreamed I saw a mighty room
Filled with women and men
And the paper they were signing said
They'd never fight again

And when the paper was all signed
And a million copies made
They all joined hands and bowed their heads
And grateful pry'rs were prayed

And the people in the streets below
Were dancing 'round and 'round
While swords and guns and uniforms
Were scattered on the ground

Last night I had the strangest dream
I'd never dreamed before
I dreamed the world had all agreed
To put an end to war.



New White 83rd Inf. Div. Shirts

Several 83rd veterans, wives, sons, and daughters at the Nashville reunion wore a white 83rd ID shirt with 83rd arm patch front left, Thunderbolt with a lightning bolt left shoulder with "The Best of The Best" underneath and American Flag with "It's About Respect" underneath on right shoulder.

A limited number of shirts were originally ordered for the reunion. Several people have asked how they could acquire such a shirt.

Dave Dimmick, descendant member Co I 330th, designed the shirt and has agreed to order more. Dave is not in the shirt business and said he absolutely has no desire to do so but for the "Old Boys" he said he would order more if folks are interested. He just wants to come close to covering his costs.

The shirts come in long or short sleeve and men's and ladies' styles and sizes.

If you want more information, contact Dave at 217/473-9524 or better yet email him at davedimmick@irtc.net.

THUNDER STRUCK IN INDIANA

The late summer air was hot and still, filled with the palpable energy of thunderbolts in the distance. It was not the, "It's going to rain, get the clothes off the line", kind of thunder but a deep, vibrating roar that rocks your soul as you live the experience. A magnificent phenomenon, a moment of living history lay within my grasp view. I hastened past a lush state park. Drawn toward a low rustic building, my search was not for shelter but for a life I had lost.

I entered a homey lobby and nodded to two gentlemen engaged in conversation in well used rockers. They smiled back with plaintive "must be another new one" looks on their faces. A jolly fellow came up and pointed to a reception area down the hall.

"They're waiting", he grinned. Equally pleasant Nancy and Cliff stepped from behind a table. "Mary Jean?" they asked with warm smiles that broke my heart.

The roar increased in my ears. I felt the skin tickling sensation on my arms when she directed me to a pad of scrawled names divided by numbers. It was my history, it was his history, the family tree that I would come to know and love. I showed her a handsome picture and asked about the others, would they know? Just as she described them, the two men from the lobby appeared as if on cue.

I offered the picture, arteries visibly pulsating in my neck. "No, don't remember him", one smiled apologetically. Tony looked deep into the picture and beyond as if reliving a violent thunderstorm. My breath could not escape from my chest. It was all or nothing. He handed the picture back as if in a trance. "Yes, Walter Knapp, I knew him". And thunder struck in Indiana.

"I remember him. He was in the foxhole next to mine. He was friends with two sergeants, Doolittle and Striker. He was particular about his uniform. We came over from England together. Then as if closing the door on a beautiful dream, he raised his brows and said, "After the middle of July, I didn't see him any more."

The thunder rolled across Indiana as the Army of the free world, the "Greatest Generation" claimed its country roads once more from Nashville to Camp Atterbury after 64 years. The rush of leaves flying before a mid-west, green sky storm pales compared to the excitement of old buddies reuniting. They cheated death in the 1940's and they had cheated it once more.

It was a heady and happy time entwined with the stories, oh the stories! The young people of the town, a page out of pure Americana, listened with stunned attention and sometimes disbelief. Could they have done this, could they do it now? The football jerseys didn't seem quite so big in that setting. Young students left those sessions in silence as young, more thoughtful men and women.

Late, on the first night I wandered into the hospitality room where an animated and pleasant fellow was surrounded by maps and descendants with note pads. He was animatedly describing the battles, the hell of the hedgerows, and the uncommon courage of the 83rd Infantry Division, as it rolled across Europe. And thunder struck once more as the killing fields that claimed our fathers became alive and real to us. But there was the joy and solace of knowing that he, this Frenchman, really cared about them and about our hopeful searches. It was Jean Paul Pitout's mission to fill the gaping holes in our lives from exploding shells. Into the wee hours he fast forwarded us to the sites where they gave their all so we could finally say good-bye in peace. Nearby, Eddy Monfort of Belgium captivated the heroes of that campaign and they him-ConEd was no match for this natural electricity.

Morning brought a general session and a resolute Pledge of Allegiance, not rote recited but cried out with experience, appreciation and true love of this country earned by their own blood! An enthusiastic suggestion for a group, "oohrah! The thunder of nearly 200 young and strong voices rang out louder and longer and if you shut your eyes you could picture them massed to save the world. And they did. And the ladies worked and waited and wept. Today they crafted together a magnificent quilt in tribute to their soldiers, their sweethearts, their daddies and their own uncommon courage.

The stories, our nation's history, flowed all day and into the night weaving the next generations into a tapestry that will endure. Students read my parents letters. They touched the lock of baby hair never received in the envelope marked "deceased". Hate and tyranny has slept only to awaken in their own time. Vigilance and action known too well so many years ago is still the watchword. I don't have to challenge them. The stories, the letters, the headlines eloquently guide them to the understanding that the threat is great. From whence will come a great generation to fight it? Not from party boats and party towns, not from drug houses and confused kooks but from this classroom, in this school, in this small town of Nashville, Indiana. They too were thunder struck by the legacy these men were passing to them, this unique group of the finest young people and teachers America has to offer.

As if still used to hurry up and wait formations, the "Greatest Generation" and their ladies patiently waited to honor the citizens of Nashville. They paraded to thunderous applause as a huge post flag carried in their honor and memory claimed the warmhearted people, the valor and the beauty of Indiana for itself. Shiny faced toddlers waved and teens digitally recoded the greatest army the world as ever known as they thundered across this little slice of the America they saved.

A bell tolled, the wreaths were laid and the tears flowed at Camp Atterbury. Oh, so many memories, so many hard days of training, even a sort of melancholy for your old barracks. "It was right there!" From their wheelchairs, they bounded across the obstacle course only separated by time and space. From the doorways, sinewy, young soldiers review the passing buses of heroes. A mess hall meal from the future and a Mass for the souls of the dead and the living. How beautiful the readings, how reverent the deep genuflections of legs that walked their own Way of the Cross. Memories of Mass on the hood of a jeep- the last one that sanctified my father.

A magnificent banquet that lasted late into the night, no one wanting to end this day. An audible gasp is heard as the unseen angels of the town reveal the quilt of their history and heartbreak. A poignant toast to the Missing, awards all around, wine and roses and accolades from the honorables. A night to remember, a meal to relish, new friendships forged and old ones strengthened. The journey to Washington calls. The nation must see them, it needs to see them and they will heed the call.

A last swim in the pool as the steam rises from the verdant hills. My goggles are filling up with water though they fit tightly. I try to swim faster, away from the raw emotion. As the thunder breaks my tears spill from the reality of all I have experienced-from all I have been given these last few days. I came to this rustic place in search of one man and left with the 83rd in my soul. In my lifetime, in them, he lives at last. We can both rest now, Daddy. The best of the best have brought you home.

**Mary Jean Knapp Houlahan, 7127 S. E. Waldan Pond Ct., Stuart, FL 34997
Former Captain USMC**

In Memory of Her Father

**SSgt. Walter A. Knapp, USA
Hq. Co., 2nd Battalion
331st Infantry, 83rd Division
KIA 17 July 1944
Near Sainteny or St. Lo**



Father- SSgt. Walter A. Knapp



**Daughter- Mary Jean Houlahan
60th Reunion-Nashville**

Dear Cliff,

Thank you so much for representing the 83rd, and especially the 308th Engineers, at my dad's memorial service at Arlington National Cemetery. It was especially good of you to bring the battalion flag. I was proud to display it when we went to the Officers' Club for lunch, along with other family memorabilia and photos.

The Army - 83rd Infantry, 308th Engineer Combat Battalion - was a big part of his life. When we were kids, he talked a lot about The Army and The War - we thought there had only been the one, but of course he meant WW II.

He didn't tell us the bad stuff - he would tell us about Camp Atterbury and how the huge German-born recruit, Jacob Kramer, could pick up one of the big guns and run with it. And how "Schmitt" always had nightmares and sleepwalked away with his tent. And how the unit sandbagged the Wabash River and you all slept in the gym of a local Catholic school afterwards.

We heard about how beautiful Luxembourg was, and about the Pleimling family in Steinsel who invited him to their home for Thanksgiving dinner in 1944, just before the Battle of the Bulge. We heard about the Christmas tree he and some other guys decorated that winter with beautiful ornaments found in a ruined farmhouse. One of the guys took a picture of it, but no one ever saw the photo - the soldier was killed in the Bulge.

On two occasions some of us had the great privilege of revisiting Europe with him and the guys from the 83rd. In 1994, my sister, my son and I were with him for the 50th Anniversary of D-Day, standing side by side at Utah Beach and Omaha Beach, with presidents, prime ministers, kings, queens and princes and veterans from all the Allied Forces. At the time, my son was the same age my dad had been when he landed - a fact that hit me as I watched the two of them, grandfather and grandson, and wondered what it must have been like for my grandmother.

We drove thru the Hurtgen Forest, and the bus got very quiet except for whispers about 'tree bursts'.

We traveled through Belgium, France, Luxembourg and Germany with the 83rd and their families and experienced some deep moments. In small villages and big towns, the people remembered their liberators and welcomed "les anciens combattants," the old warriors, with open arms, from the youngest child to the oldest granny.

In the small Norman village of Sainteny, one young man asked me in French to tell them "thank you for letting me be born in a free country".

In Paris, the guys from the 83rd marched with other veterans up the Champs Elysees and thru the Arc de Triomphe, just as they had in the summer of 1945.

And in Luxembourg, believe it or not, we found the youngest brother of the Pleimling family in Steinsel who had taken dad into their home for the long-ago Thanksgiving.

A group of us returned to Europe for the 55th Anniversary of D-Day, and this time dad had one of his sons with him, Harry. It was fun for Harry and me to walk with him through the dragon's teeth of the Siegfried Line and to be there together to see places and happenings we had talked about all those years ago.

My dad was not in the military for a long time, but his military service came during a critical period in world history. He and his buddies from the 83rd made history; you changed history, you did it because it had to be done and you didn't think you were doing anything extraordinary. In fact, you saved the world.

You guys didn't think of yourselves as heroes, however. You were simple men who did their best when it was needed. Now your ranks are thinning but you were - and you are - the greatest generation.

The first time I visited Arlington National Cemetery was with an 83rd reunion - I was about 9 or 10. After that, my dad always talked how he would like to rest here - he mentioned it frequently over the years. And so we carried out his wish. He would have loved it.

Now here's what I imagine happened up in the Celestial City on December 14 when Harry arrived at the Pearly Gates:

He checks in with Peter, passes muster, and fills out the paperwork. He hands it in and is issued a robe and some Golden Slippers. No boy from 2nd Street in Philadelphia can go to heaven without Golden Slippers!

He heads for the Pearly Gates when suddenly they fly open and Rita (our mom) comes out. "Harry", she says. "How are the kids? I see we have grandchildren - and a great-grandson! By the way, thanks for all the roses. And what took you so long?"

Harry shrugs, "Well, babe, it wasn't all up to me!"

"Never mind", she says, tugging his arm. "Come on in - you'll love it here - and you're just in time for Christmas. Wait'll you see who else is here - Muz and dad, and Aunt Irm and Uncle Jim - and there's a dance every night"

Thank you for being with us to celebrate our father's life. It meant a lot to all of Harry's family, kids, grandchildren and great-grandchild.

Sincerely,

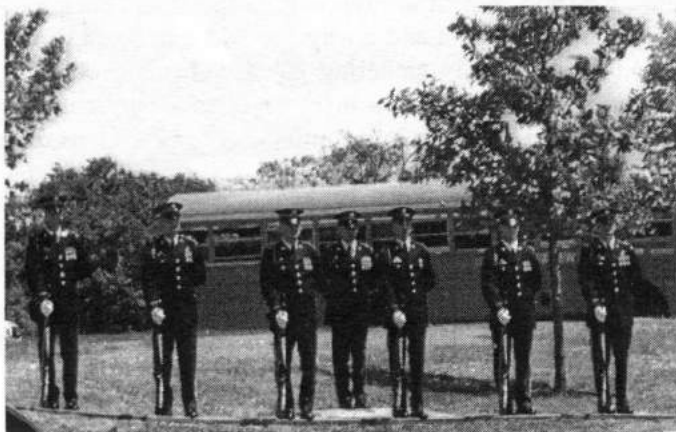
Marianne Kirby Rhodes
Harry J. Kirby III
Joan R. Kirby, Esq.
Michael Rhodes
Jill Rhodes Dow
Ryan A. Dow



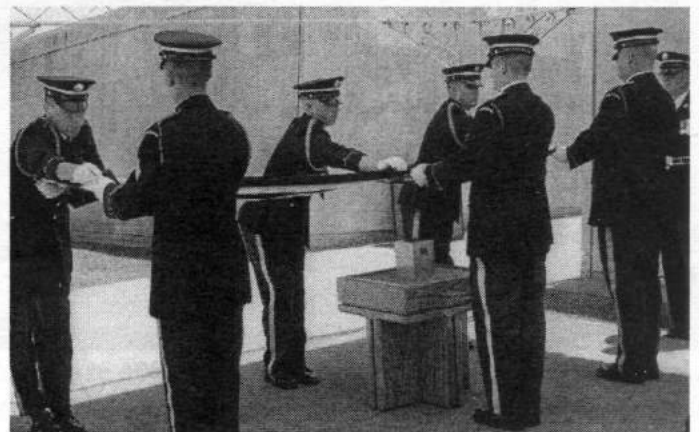
Playing of Bagpipes
Arlington Ntl. Cemetery



308th Battalion Flag displayed with Family
Memorabilia and Photos - Officers' Club

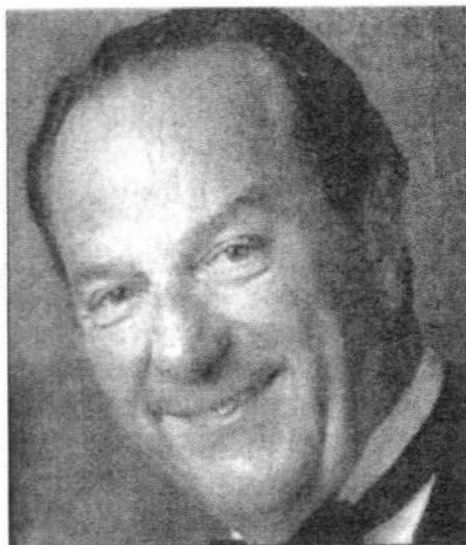


21-Gun Salute - Arlington Ntl. Cemetery



Honor Guard folding US Flag to present to Family

John D. Raikos March 8, 1922 - July 24, 2006



He was a graduate of Manual High School and joined the Army on January 30, 1942. He was part of the original cadre which reactivated the 83rd Infantry Div. "Thunderbolts" at Camp Atterbury on Aug. 15, 1942. He was trained in Tennessee Maneuvers, to Fort Benning and came ashore in the Normandy Campaign as 1st Lieutenant with 329th Infantry landing at Omaha Beach, with mission orders to seize the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin, awarded 5 battle stars for participating in campaigns in Normandy, Brittany, Central Europe, the Rhineland and Ardennes Forest (Bulge). Raikos served as a combat liaison officer, comm. platoon leader and Regimental Headquarters Co. Commander, during the war, promoted to Capt. and decorated with the Silver Star, Bronze Star for valor, Oak Leaf Cluster to Bronze Star and OLC. Lt. Raikos rode on the lead tank into Cherbourg Belgium. On Sept. 1, 1944, he and Lt. James Bagley liberated Tours France and Mayor Albert Joubert made Raikos a Tours' Citizen d' Honneur and Grand Marshall at the 1964 liberation commemoration and parade in his honor. Raikos was also honored with the esteemed citation from Yom H'ashowa Holocaust Remembrance for his role with

the 83rd Division's liberation of Nazi concentration camps. Raikos was the first American to make radio contact with the Russians. The 83rd Division, near war's end after constructing the Truman Bridge over the Elbe and making furthest penetration into Germany by Allied forces, was ordered to pull back across the Elbe. With "permission with disavowal" of his co Capt. Raikos advanced within 20 miles of Berlin and waited 10 days for the Russians to physically link up. He served as Provisional Governor of Deggendorf Germany, before returning home. Raikos continued his military career in the reserves, graduated from the Army's Command and General Staff College and retired as Colonel in 1982. Raikos was extremely proud of serving his country and remained active in the 83rd Infantry Division Association, serving as its Judge Advocate until 2003. He was a member of the World War II roundtable. Raikos also attended Indiana University Bloomington undergraduate and law schools in 1950 was admitted as an attorney to the practice of law in Indiana, which he actively pursued until his January 8, 2003 stroke. He joined the law firm of Cook Mendenhall and Bose and later formed, Raikos, Barton, Rochford and Thomas, which became Raikos and Raikos. Raikos was a lawyer's lawyer; tenacious, fiercely loyal, compassionate and always eager to serve as advocate and adviser with generous time and open to all. A warrior and a healer. His soldiering moved to the courtroom and he enjoyed an illustrious and varied legal career, championing causes from "Step 'n Fetchit," one of Hollywood's first African American actors, in his defamation suit against CBS for its portrayal of him as a chicken stealing, crap shooting, slow shuffling Negro, to an original action in the U.S. Supreme Court of behalf of Robert L. Montgomery to mandate Congress to cease deficit spending and restore the gold standard. He successfully tried numerous cases which garnered media attention from procuring the release by a tearful jury of a client wrongfully committed to Central State Mental Hospital, to will contest of a murdered bank heiress from 1st Amendment to Sunday Blue Laws and OSHA, and was a pioneer in using psychologists in jury voir dire and selection, resulting in substantial verdicts. He was elected attorney for the Indianapolis Sanitary District and was a founding board member and legal counsel for many years for the Indianapolis Kroger Credit Union (KEMBA). Raikos also enjoyed the coal business with Kentucky Mountain Coal Co. and Western Minerals Corp. and prior to that his business activities as President in developing South Side Sanitary Landfill, American Reclamation and Earth Equipment Leasing Co. John lived everyday to the fullest, each day after the war as a gift. "Time and tide wait for no man." Driven and determined, he raced up and down steps rather than wait for elevators and moved always with purpose and energy. John was proud of his Greek heritage and proudest of all of his family. First, foremost and always he was a devoted son, brother, husband, father and grandfather, never missing the opportunity for a family gathering filled with his cooking, stories and love. His emotions were as transparent as his words were direct. Raikos was a member of the Indianapolis Murat Shrine Temple, Scottish Rite, the Mystic Tie Lodge, American Legion Broad Ripple Kennington Post, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Reserve Officers Association, Indianapolis Colombia Club, IAC, Indianapolis and Indiana State and American Bar Associations and the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church. He was preceded in death by parents; brothers, Nicholas, George and Andrew Raikos and sisters, Mary and Katherine Raikos. Survivors include his loving wife of 60 years, Mary P. Raikos; sons, Gustin J., John Dr. Jr.; daughters, Lili Marlene (Michael) Dehen, Margo Elaine; grandchildren, Melissa Denise, GJ, Nicholas and Jake Raikos, Tiffany, Alyssa and Michael Jr. Dehen; nephews, James A. Raikos, William James Raikos, Springfield, MO and nieces, Pamela Jean Raikos and Denisa Raikos.

Funeral services will be at 11 a.m. Fri. July 28, 2006 in the Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, with calling from 10 a.m. at the church. Additional calling will be on Thursday, July 27, 2006 from 5 to 8 p.m. in Flanner & Buchanan Funeral Center - Broad Ripple, with a Trisagion service to be held at 5:30 p.m. Burial will be in Crown Hill Cemetery.

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>
Cooley, George	A Co., 322nd, FA	Son George
Cox, John L., Jr.	C Co., 908th, FA	Virginia Cox, wife; Ames Miller
Dalzell, George	E Co., 331st	Ginny DiGiammerino
Fuhrman, Robert W.	AT 329th	Diane McQuaid, daughter
Galonka, Joseph	I Co., 329th	Forest E. Brown
Garrison, John "Red"	Co. B, 329th	Son John Jr.
Grimes, William	H Co., 331st INF	Emanuel Lamb
Hobbs, John	B Co., 908th	Ames Miller
Kerr, Charles A.	F Co., 330th	Wife Audrey & George Footer
Kight, Perry J.	B Co., 330th	Daughter Debbie Yancey
Kribs, David A.	H.Q., 331st	Bernie Kot
Kujawa, John J.	K Co., 330th	Daughter Melanie
Maggi, Henry R.	D Co., 308th MED	Wife Marilyn
Minick, William	L Co., 330th	Sal Scicolone, Ellsworth Massie
Mizerock, Michael	G Co., 331st	Robert Grobelny
Perry, Ernest L.		August "Mousie" Farias
Query, Julian J.	I Co., 329th	Wife Clare
Raikos, John	H.Q., 329th	Wife Mary
Rickert, Donald E., Sr.	H Co., 329th	Ellsworth Massie
St. John, James J.	I Co., 329th	Pat Kwiatkowski
Vaughan, William R.	H.Q. Div. Arty.	John Livingstone
Wallace, Loyd Dennis	C Co., 331st	Son Dennis
Williams, Kid L.	H.Q. Co., 330th	Robert Grobelny

**Buddies Remembered for their Dedicated Service to the
83rd Infantry Division Association
60th Reunion in Nashville, IN**



Bob Taylor accepting plaque in Recognition of Bruce Winchell's Loyal Service



Mary and Margo Raikos receiving plague in Appreciation of John Raikos' Long Service

From the Assistant Historian

Dave Curry



I was unable to make the reunion this year. I had made plans to attend, but in early August we learned that my mother (Wilma Curry Byham) had breast cancer, so plans had to be changed. The good news is that she made it through the surgery (radical mastectomy) with flying colors, and after a few weeks in rehab she has returned to her home in Pennsylvania. By the time you read this, she will have celebrated her 94th birthday (October 12). She is still living independently, but we insisted that she have a nurse come in a couple of times a week to check on her, and that she get meals on wheels. We also got a "lifeline" phone for her just in case she has a fall and can't reach the phone. She is already keeping busy cleaning windows and pruning hedges and bushes around her front porch. If you aren't already amazed by her endurance, I should tell you that she is also legally blind. I'm including a photo of mom taken a few weeks after the surgery.

Someone told me once that wives of combat veterans are pretty special people. They had to learn to fend for themselves and their families while all the time worrying and wondering about their husbands--not even knowing where they were most of the time. Mom managed to work and raise me on her own, and even bought her own home at a time when it was very difficult for women to get any kind of credit. (She finally remarried after I grew up and left home, but lost her second husband who passed away

after 10 years of marriage.) Mom is a special example of all that is great about these special women.

I thought I would also tell you a little about my dad, Thomas D. Curry. He was in F Company/331st Infantry and was KIA on 10 December 1944. He was 30 years old when called to active duty on 26 October 1943, and was sent to the active duty reception center in New Cumberland, Pa. From there he went to Camp Blanding in Starke, Florida where he underwent basic training. He was in Company B, 231st Infantry Training Battalion. He was not a large man, but my mother said the Army "built him up, and he never looked better." Even so, his ETO Enlisted Man's Identification Card lists his weight at only 139 pounds.

I don't know the exact date, but he came into the 83rd as a replacement. I know that he was with F Company in the middle of July because of the date on the letter that he carried, and also a couple of F Company veterans have told me that they remembered him from Normandy. He served in the second platoon with Larry Dalton, Hershell McIntosh, and quite a few other F Company vets, many of which are in the photo I'm including.



My dad was killed in action on the morning of December 10, 1944, as the GIs slugged their way out of the Hurtgen Forest and advanced to the villages of Gey and Strass. John Helms said that my dad was taken out by an 88-mm artillery shell. My dad's Individual Deceased Personnel File indicates cause of death as "Shrap. Chest."--confirming John's recollection.

The most complete report of the battle for Gey that I have seen was written by Major John F. Staples for an Advanced Infantry Officers Class at Ft. Benning in 1948. This is a very extensive report, and there is not enough room to reproduce all of it here. So I'm just including those parts that cover the morning of December 10th when F and E companies began their attack:

"The Regiment's plan of attack was for the 2nd Battalion with a platoon of tanks and the Anti-Tank Mine Platoon attached, to attack Gey from the edge of the woods west of the town. The attack was to jump off at 0600 on 10 December, about one hour before daylight, following a heavy artillery preparation and supported by the Heavy Weapons Companies of the 1st and 3rd Battalions. The 3rd Battalion was to occupy positions of the 2nd Battalion and be prepared to pass through Gey after its seizure and take the ridge southwest of Berzbuir and Lendersdorf. The 1st Battalion was to

remain in position and block the enemy in the woods north of Gey.

The 2nd Battalion's plan of attack called for E and F Companies to make a direct frontal assault from the edge of the woods. E Company, on the right, to attack across the open terrain between the west and south legs of town and seize the south and southeast portions. F Company, with a platoon of tanks attached, was to seize the west and north parts of town. G Company was to protect the right flank of the battalion from positions along Gey Creek near the right limiting point and be prepared to attack Gey from the southwest.



This photo was taken around Thanksgiving time in Luxembourg. According to Larry Dalton, these were all that was left of the 2nd platoon/F Company. Larry was able to identify most of the GIs in this photo. They are, from left to right, first row: my dad--Thomas D. Curry; Larry Dalton; Dominic Colestro (runner until Luxembourg); and "Doc" Berrardi (platoon medic). Second row, left to right are: Willard Strauss (B.A.R. man); Pfc. Clarence W. Brown; Pvt. Smith; S/Sgt. William T. Oliver; unidentified GI. Third row, left to right are: S/Sgt. Kerr; Pvt. Leon Collins; S/Sgt. D. Root; S/Sgt. Charles P. Nelson; and James R. Duncan (runner after Luxembourg).

The 2nd Battalion jumped off at 0600, but ran into difficulty immediately. F Company got a good start and secured the first buildings on the edge of town. E Company, however, was detected before it overran the enemy outpost and heavy artillery, mortar, and small arms fire caught them in the open area southwest of town. The company continued forward until it ran into a barbed wire entanglement which had not been reported by patrols. Unable to advance and suffering casualties from the heavy fire the men sideslipped to the left and became intermingled with F Company. With the intermingling, both companies became disorganized and the attack bogged down except for some of the leading elements of F Company which had pushed on ahead.

By 1100 hours the leading elements of F Company had advanced to a point about 100 yards west of Gey Creek against very determined resistance. The Company Commander, who was with this group, held up the attack because the group was considerably weakened by casualties and the remainder of the company was not following up the assault echelon. Enemy fire was increasing. Machine guns were firing on the attacking troops from positions at the northern and southern ends of town. Enemy artillery fire was pounding the western end of town and the edge of the woods with the heaviest artillery and mortar concentrations ever experienced by members of the regiment.

In the meantime, the platoon of tanks had been trying to move up on the road leading into town from the west. The road was narrow and muddy, and after a great deal of difficulty the lead tank got to within 100 yards of the edge of town

where it hit a mine. This happened in a narrow defile where it was impossible to get any other tanks around it. Efforts to get the tank out were started immediately, but because of the difficulty of working in the restricted area under enemy artillery fire the road was not cleared until after dark that night.

It was not until 1100 that the Regimental Commander was informed of the true situation. The battalion had reported the progress of F Company hoping to be able to get F and E Companies reorganized and the attack moving. The Regimental Commander immediately went forward to contact the 2nd Battalion Commander. Investigation revealed that enemy observation and fire precluded the possibility of any effective reorganization and resumption of the attack by E and F Companies.

Reports from the 2nd Battalion and from prisoners captured in Gey indicated that the buildings in the town had thick walls through which the enemy had blown holes for use as firing ports, and deep basements into which the enemy moved during our artillery fire. There were mines and booby traps in the yards around the houses and dug-in positions in the fields outside the town. Prisoners also reported that there was approximately a battalion in Gey and another one on the ridge about 2200 yards to the northeast, and that they had seen several anti-tank guns a short distance to the northeast of Gey.

G Company with one platoon of tanks attached, was ordered to attack Gey along the Grosshau-Gey road. However, upon the receipt of information that Strass had been taken and a report of a large mine field on the Grosshau-Gey road, the plan was changed. One platoon of G Company plus one platoon of tanks was to move through Grosshau, Schafberg, and Strass for an attack on Gey from the southwest. Permission was obtained from the 330th Infantry for movement of this task force and it moved out on its mission.

Strass, however, had been erroneously reported as captured. Two companies of the 3rd Battalion, 330th Infantry, had gotten into the town but had not cleared it. The enemy had cut these units off and when the G Company task force attempted to enter the town it became engaged in a fight, knocked out two enemy tanks, and withdrew. This erroneous information had unnecessarily endangered the lives of the men involved and disrupted another attack on Gey."

Of course, the battle for Gey continued on for several more days, but I don't have the room here to include more of Major Staples report--I'll try to include the rest of it in the next issue.

Other info

I recieved some very interesting information from several of you. Thanks very much for responding to my requests for information about your experiences. James Gatten sent me an extensive story about his experiences in Normandy with the 83rd Recon Troop. His harrowing tale about crossing the big swamp (Prairies Marecageuses de Gorges) is quite astounding! Harry Gravelyn also sent me his memoirs from Normandy. Harry was the CO of D Company/331st Infantry, and his memoirs are an incredible document that provide a lot of new information about the Normandy campaign of the 83rd. I'll include some information from both James Gatten's and Harry Gravelyn's stories in an upcoming issue of the "Thunderbolt." I also got a nice letter from John Governor who was with I and M Companies/331st and who was in Normandy on July 4th, the first day of the 83rd's attack. Thanks much for your letter. Another nice letter came from Rudy Zamula who was with the 83rd Signal Company, and now does research at the National Archives at College Park, MD. Rudy tells me that there are about 126 boxes of records from the 83rd Division stored at the National Archives!

Finally, a new 83rd Division history has just been published. "My Father's War" by Beth Chittenden is subtitled "An Oral History of the Experiences of Lawrence Lee Chittenden During World War II." The large format book is printed on heavy stock and contains the complete oral history that Beth conducted with her father Lawrence Lee Chittenden, who was a platoon leader in I Company/330th Infantry Regiment in Normandy and Brittany, and later was the regimental liaison officer (assistant S-3) for the 330th. Contact Beth Chittenden at her email address, lizzydesignsinc@yahoo.com , or you can contact me and I'll pass along your request to Beth.

Well that's about all I've got room for this time. Take care and stay well!

Dave Curry

Phone:440-942-5030

email: davecurry@ncweb.com

"So Humbled in the Presence of Heroes"

I look back at your 60th Reunion

Georgeanna Lewis Slaybaugh

The sky was beginning to show the soft grayness of oncoming rain, but enough of the afternoon August sun was still shining bright enough to hold the earth in extreme warmth. What an analogy to how I felt - the tears were just about to fall, but I was being held in the warmth of so many beautiful memories. Standing on the steps of the Brown County Inn, I watched as my step-daughter, Kris, helped Manny Epstein to her car for the trip to the airport and his eventual journey home. A wonderful friend; the last of the 83rd to leave, and with a good-bye wave of hands Manny was gone. Along the sidewalks, small American flags barely fluttered in the humid air and suddenly, the world seemed very, very quiet. Looking up to the heavens, I thanked God for every blessing with the reunion, and said a prayer for everyone's safe return home. "We did it, dad", I whispered. "We did it." I went back into the Inn and made my way slowly down the hall to Room 109. No Nancy in the boardroom, feverishly working at the computer. No Helen stopping for a chat in the lobby. No Mousie bounding around a corner at full speed, and full glee! No laughter pouring from the Hospitality Room. The decorations everywhere still beckoned a festive welcome, but all the heroes and their families were gone. The 60th reunion of the 83rd Infantry Division WW II was now officially over.

What an amazing journey from our presentation in Paducah to the final farewells in Nashville! In such short order, it seems, we went from a wish to a hope - a hope to a plan - and a plan to a reality. When we heard several years ago that your reunions would probably be ending, I prayed for the circumstances that would bring you "Back Home Again in Indiana" for your 60th. From the very beginning, deep within my heart was this belief: that it would be an absolute honor and a privilege to be given the opportunity to help plan your 60th reunion and I would do everything I could to make it as memorable as possible.

With so little known about me but sharing my desire and hope that reunions would continue, you gave me your trust and your support throughout the months of planning. So many of you called or wrote during this time, and your words of encouragement were such a blessing! One of you asked me at Paducah, "Can you do this? Can you put on a national event?" and I answered, "I don't know that I can't". I just knew where my heart was, and what kind of family and community I came from. I knew what my focus was, and what I wanted to accomplish.

From my perspective, you all come together each year and continue weaving an incredible tapestry of your shared history as you reminisce and mingle, but it always seemed that for the most part, wherever you convened, not many "outsiders" - the local people - ever took notice of your presence. This was simply amazing to me! You fellows are our "greatest generation"! In a world sadly lacking in the "real deal" - you are true heroes! More than simply a location for your annual gathering of buddies, families and friends, I wanted this reunion to also be a tribute to all of you; a heartfelt embrace of gratitude for your service and sacrifice to our nation, and an expression of love that would assure you, after all these years, that people still care; people still remember.

How do you plan an event for heroes? Sitting in our room after the vote in Paducah, my daughter, Kelly, my sisters, Lynda and Sherry, and I shared a lot of hugs, tears and prayers as

we drew up a big "wish list" of some things we hoped to accomplish. Once back home in Nashville, I formed a committee of people who shared our vision and we went right to work - the reunion was less than a year away!

During the last meeting before you arrived, I told our committee that while I may have had a certain vision going into this, vision without support and accomplishment means nothing. With such an overwhelming response from family, friends and community, in those things we were, indeed, so richly blessed.

In the ensuing months, if someone asked me to speak, write an article, do an interview, make a presentation or whatever about the 83rd reunion, Lynda and I (who was fast becoming an unofficial resident of Brown County by staying with us nearly every weekend to help!) made the rounds. And we are not comfortable speakers! Always looking for volunteers, though, Kelly would tease me about how quickly I could meet someone and regardless of what the conversation was about, I would find a way to bring up the reunion!

It was already a given that the opportunity to go to Camp Atterbury would be a part of your 60th reunion activities, and due to the devoted and tireless efforts of Ames and Helen Miller, they arranged a very moving memorial service, a tour of the base, and a luncheon. In their desire to find something that would especially commemorate this 60th reunion, they also commissioned a remarkable artisan who crafted exquisite, glass globes swirled with sand from Omaha Beach. What could be a more perfect, appropriate, and cherished gift to mark your reunion? I am personally so grateful for the support that Ames and Helen offered as our committee finalized plans in Nashville, but even more so for the lasting bonds of friendship that were formed between us.

In trying to plan events that would encompass the "Salute to the 83rd" theme, I wanted your incredible, loving families to be involved. The result became the Ladies Tea with the "quilt of all quilts" project that still makes me weep when I try to tell people how amazing and emotional that morning was. Those 83 decorated squares, so simply and beautifully adorned by each person, speak of more love and pride and hope and heartache than any poet or artist could ever hope to convey. I will be forever grateful to the wonderful women of our church who labored around the clock so we could at least see during Saturday's banquet a semblance of what the finished quilt will look like. They also made the colorful banner for the parade, and you can be sure that both items will be with us next August in Washington, D. C. ! Judging by the long lines, I think everyone enjoyed having their caricature sketches done after the tea. Karen is a wonderful lady and graciously stayed well past her scheduled time, but even then, many of us did not have the opportunity to be "caricaturized"! (Maybe next time?!) Did you know her work hangs in the White House?

Getting approval for the parade was fantastic, but I never dreamed there was so much work involved to pull it off - the logistics were phenomenal! We are so thankful that The Lion's Club, who organize our annual Spring Blossom parade each year, agreed to help us. The parade was truly everything we hoped for, except maybe that blazing August sun! From the classic cars to the Ernie Pyle Post fire truck; from the veteran's float to the 329th Re-enactors; from the proud 83rd marchers to the huge American flag carried up Main Street by volunteers, it was small town America at her best!

Almost immediately, the idea to contact people around the world who may have had any link to, or interest in, the 83rd and might therefore be inclined to send best wishes for your 60th

reunion became a top priority to implement. After months and months of letter writing, phone calls, e-mails and follow-ups, we were thrilled with the truly personal and heartfelt messages we received.

Any regrets concerning those who, for whatever reasons, never responded to our requests were certainly negated by the incredible news that the British Consul, on behalf of Prime Minister Tony Blair, was sending the dashing Lt. Col. Marcus Browell to formally represent the United Kingdom at the reunion!

For the banquet on Saturday, we thought it would be very appropriate and meaningful to include the Missing Man Table and Honors Ceremony in remembrance of POW/MIA's. The solemn presentation was a deeply moving and eloquent reminder that the cruelty of war does not always give a closed accounting of those who answered their call to duty. I hope we all continue to pray for those who suffered as a prisoner-of-war, and especially for those whose fate remains unknown.

We petitioned our Governor, Mitch Daniels, to issue a Proclamation naming a day in your honor, and he gave us a Proclamation for all four days of the reunion! (I did not know that when you make such a request, you also have to write all the reasons the Proclamation should be issued, so I'm guessing he was quite impressed with all the details we sent!) Through Senator Dick Lugar's office, we also made arrangements to have a flag flown over the nation's capitol in honor of the 60th reunion of the 83rd Infantry Division. An invitation was extended to Benjamin Patton to attend the reunion and he not only graciously accepted, but offered to show his documentary focusing on the photography of Tony Vaccaro. After his extraordinary presentation at the reception following the parade, Mr. Patton generously offered to provide copies of the documentary for those who were interested.**

When Jean-Paul Pitou from France and Eddy Monfort from Belgium confirmed that they would be attending this event, we were thrilled. These fine, young men brought with them such an immense knowledge of, and respect for, your storied history and I think their presence at the reunion added immeasurably to the festivities. With France, Belgium and England on the way, we felt having the flag of each country displayed in the Hospitality Room would be a nice welcome gesture. (Likewise, we also thought having "Betty Grable" greeting you at the door would be good, too!)

I doubt if a stone was left unturned as we searched for entertainment venues, bought or created decorations, made flower arrangements, centerpieces and new memorial wreaths, put together door prizes and raffle baskets, tried to find the perfect gift of appreciation for our foreign guests, and selected menu items for the Hospitality Room. Regarding the food - we remembered the fellow who asked, "Can we please have more than chips in the Hospitality Room?" and we hope he found enough to his liking!

We did try to book national acts for your entertainment, but the closest we came was meeting with Lee Greenwood (he performed at our Little Nashville Opry the week before you came) who deeply regretted not being able to perform for you due to scheduling conflicts. He sent his best wishes and signed some books and CD's for door prizes. However, I think our local talent came through beautifully, from bluegrass to country vocals to the big band sound of the 40's. They were all terrific!

Our plan was to have either patriotic colors or Thunderbolt colors everywhere (except for the lovely pink and pale green at the Ladies Tea!) and Friday night's dinner arrangements were

just spectacular! The sea of red, white, and blue against the backdrop of Mr. Vaccaro's stunning black and white photography exhibit was just breathtaking. There were so many people for Saturday's banquet that we had to forego all the decorating we had planned except for the table centerpieces we made! (Did you know that several people who were driving by and saw the 83rd banners on the hotel stopped in to see if they could join us? Amazing!)

We wanted to provide little touches of welcome here and there throughout your stay instead of just giving a "goody bag" when you arrived. Hence, we posted "Welcome" signs outside each room, (this task was done by Jean-Paul and his lovely friend, Christiane, who arrived in Nashville several days early and quickly became two of our best volunteers throughout the reunion), we left jars of our famous apple butter, passed out "I'm a Fan of the 83rd" fans that we made (very useful during the parade!), arranged for 60th reunion memento pictures to be taken Saturday evening and had dad's grandchildren make little souvenir folders for the photos, and then we slipped a keepsake booklet under your door that we made to commemorate your 60th reunion. We also had free raffle carts running, kids passing out gaily decorated jars of candy, and volunteers on hand everywhere to assist with anything you needed.

With heartfelt thanks to my wonderful husband, Jack, he took over the "airport detail" maneuvers and arranged through his network of friends, family and co-workers to personally pick up and then return anyone flying to Indianapolis instead of using the somewhat cumbersome shuttle service. We also contacted the USO center at the airport and they graciously offered to keep their hospitality room open with staff and refreshments for as long as we needed.

So many things that we hoped to accomplish could only happen in a community-driven place like Brown County. After setting a basic agenda, I began contacting people who might be willing to volunteer and the response was incredible. They were eager to greet you with welcome signs in their shops, to offer discounts for your shopping, and to place flags throughout the town, as well as a huge flag across the facade of the Hobnob Restaurant on Main Street. They signed up to help in the Hospitality Room, and offered to escort anyone who wanted to go on a personal tour or a shopping excursion. For the parade, they volunteered everything from their cars to their musical talents, and brought their families to cheer you as you marched proudly through town.

Our high school had been eagerly anticipating your arrival from the moment I announced you were coming. After the news traveled through the high school about your first visit to their classrooms and assembly, the hallways at the Brown County Inn were jammed with staff and students who planned their classes and assignments around your agenda so they could interview and film you. They made English and French signs of welcome and practiced their marching program for the parade. They sang for you in the Hospitality Room, donated and set up equipment for Mr. Patton's presentation, and helped take down and re-pack Mr. Vaccaro's photography exhibit.

As with any endeavor, the quest to reach a successful conclusion is best achieved with vision, planning, commitment and cooperation. What a blessing that our committee and our volunteers shared this belief which made planning the reunion so much easier, but there were certainly moments when the task of executing our ambitious agenda still seemed almost overwhelming. Becoming discouraged with constant computer problems, the early lack of media interest or the endless waiting for responses from officials, I would start "stressing" and worrying about all that needed to be done. That little voice within my heart would then gently remind me that you

once had a quest, too - a far, far greater and much nobler quest. You accomplished yours while immersed in the unimaginable horrors of a global war, and here I was, sitting in the peaceful comfort of my home, fretting about such small, insignificant problems! Quite sobering, quite humbling, and once the issues were put into perspective, we were fine!

Throughout the months of planning, Cliff and Nancy Wooldridge became, whether they were ready for it or not, my sounding boards, dream encouragers, and sage advisors. Already fully immersed in other 83rd business for the reunion in addition to publishing the "Thunderbolt", they always made time for me and addressed any questions or concerns I had with a healthy dose of New England common sense and humor. It truly would have been impossible for us to host a reunion with any measure of success in the absence of their incredible insight and wisdom! But best of all, as phone calls and e-mails intensified between us over the months, we discovered an amazing commonality with each other. (Colts/Patriots rivalry aside!). With the deepest love and gratitude, thank you, Cliff and Nancy, for all your help, but mainly for the very treasured joy of your beautiful friendship.

Looking back on that wonderful week, I am amazed by all that was accomplished from our original "wish list" but there were still several things we didn't get around to simply because we ran out of time - or space! (Perhaps these items could be added to the agenda for your next reunion in Nashville!) Based on your kind and gracious comments after the reunion, we are absolutely delighted that you felt well fed, entertained, comfortable, and happy! To everyone who wrote or called, we deeply appreciate and sincerely thank you for sharing your thoughts and good wishes.

When I first began attending 83rd reunions, my father had already passed away. My focus was to find someone who remembered "Louie", as he was known; someone who might have shared a moment with him at Atterbury, battled along side him through the hedgerows, or went into that fateful abyss, the Huertgen Forest, with him. Though dad and I had spent long, poignant hours taping his recollections shortly before he died, there were still so many things I wanted to know. Finding someone he literally knew, I thought, would be the only hope in finding those answers. I came to realize that in the 83rd, everyone shares a part of each other's soul. Regardless of where he served, or with whom, when I listen to your stories, meet your families, see your photographs, or hold your embrace, I find my father everywhere. It is enough, I have found, simply knowing you.

To every Thunderbolt of the 83rd Infantry Division WW II:

What each of you have done for us, and for this nation, remains every generation's infinite debt. In the annals of the greatest war this world has ever suffered, it is the blood of your courage, the blood of your spirit, and the blood of your supreme sacrifice that has written victory's chapters. Because of you, "Ole Glory" waves outside my living room window in this peaceful valley of Brown County as it does all across this great land, and not the despicable flag of tyranny. Because of you, we live in the glorious freedom of a democracy, and not in the iron clasp of a dictatorship. When this country needed its bravest, when the world cried out for our strongest - you were there. As the war sprawled across the globe, hard-fought campaigns were won but new ones seemed never ending, and amidst the anguish of such relentless, unspeakable horror, you marched on with

gallantry, resolve and valor to even greater victories. And whether you waged war on the battlefields or the planning fields, all of your efforts contributed to freedom's triumphant call, and to mankind's hope for peace. Yours is a legacy we pray the world will never have to experience again, but it is a legacy we must never, never forget.

On behalf of my family, friends and community, thank you once again for your distinguished service to our great nation. It was an honor to host your 60th reunion of the 83rd Infantry Division WW II; to cheer you and to salute you, but more than anything, it was such an honor to just stand, as one said, "so humbled in the presence of heroes".

May God bless you and your families in this coming New Year with health and happiness, and may we all be united in prayer for peace upon this earth.

Be kind, Be good, and Be careful".

With much love to all,
George

PS: Someday, if circumstances ever permit, I hope to re-trace the remarkable journey of the 83rd Infantry Division through Europe in World War II and then write a book using those experiences as a backdrop for the stories that my father and so many of you have shared with me. To be able to write from the perspective of actually watching the sun rise where you came ashore on Omaha Beach, or from the experience of being able to touch the scarred timbers of the Huertgen Forest, or from the reflections found after a quiet walk through the streets of St. Malo is a dream I've harbored for many years. Perhaps this journey is too much of an impossible dream, but the quest to continue learning and sharing whatever I can about our "greatest generation" is a journey that will never cease.

****Editor's Note:** If you would like a DVD copy of Ben Patton's documentary on the photography of our own Tony Vaccaro, please write or call George and she will send you one. You may contact her at - Georgeanna Slaybaugh, 5690 N Turner Rd., Morgantown, IN 46160 or call at 812-988-9106.



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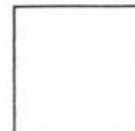
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