



THUNDERBOLT

83rd INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION, Inc.
WORLD WAR II

Vol. 68 Issue No. 1

Winter Issue 2014

— NEW ORLEANS —
SITE OF THE 68TH REUNION!



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THE THUNDERBOLT

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A SALUTE TO PAST PRESIDENTS WHO HAVE SERVED US WELL

1947 James C. Hanrahan*
1948 Jack M. Straus*
1949 Shelly Hughes*
1950 Julius Ansel*
1951 Walter H. Edwards, Jr.
1952 Leo Schneider*
1953 Finley Heyl*
1954 Lawrence J. Redmond*
1955 Lawrence J. Redmond*
1956 Lt. Gen. Robert H. York*
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1962 John W. Robinette*
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1974 Bernard O. Riddle*
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1979 William J. Chavanne*
1980 Samuel Klippa*

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1988 Charles Schmidt*
1989 Edward Reuss*
1990 Charles J. Lussier
1991 Edgar H. Haynes*
1992 Ned Smith*
1993 Louis Sandini*
1994 William M. Minick*
1995 Casey Szubski*
1996 Floyd Richmond*
1997 Keith Davidson*

1998 R. C. Hamilton
1999 Pat DiGiammerino*
2000 Salvatore Scicolone
2001 Pat DiGiammerino*
2002 Bob Taylor
2003 Salvatore Scicolone
2004 Allison Shrawder*
2005 Ames H. Miller*
2006 Rudy Zamula
2007 Robert Keck
2008 Michael Catrambone*
2009 John White
2010 Carmella Catrambone
2011 Carmella Catrambone
2012 Carmella Catrambone
2013 Carmella Catrambone
*Denotes Deceased



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

KATHLEEN POWERS

As this issue goes to publication, I hope that all have enjoyed their Thanksgiving and Hanukah celebrations and are looking forward to the Christmas holidays.

Our 67th annual reunion in Crystal City was a success. Those who attended the Twilight Tattoo on Wednesday evening were able to see a historic military production that most tourists do not have the opportunity to attend. Although inclement weather forced the curtailment of the performance, we did get to see most of it and enjoyed the pomp and circumstance of the 3rd Infantry Regiment.

Our tours of the National World War II Memorial and Arlington Cemetery were memorable. Our attending veterans were interviewed and filmed by local students who are creating a living history of World War II and were warmly greeted by visiting high school students.

After our wreath-laying ceremony at the Tombs of the Unknowns, we were honored by the presence of 6 young Marines who took a break from their physical therapy (each had lost at least one limb in their service to our country). They waited to shake the hands of our veterans. It was definitely a touching tribute to witness – two generations of heroes honoring and thanking each other for their service. There were not many dry eyes in our crowd.

We also stopped at the 83rd memorial plaque and tree for a short service and photos. Then, we capped off our trip to Arlington Cemetery with a visit to General Robert C. Macon's grave and a laying of flowers.

Our reunion culminated with our Saturday memorial service and banquet.

Now, I am busily planning our 68th reunion

in New Orleans in conjunction with the 70th anniversary of D-Day which started the countdown to the Victory in Europe. A lesson learned from our DC reunion was the necessity of having a hotel with a restaurant co-located in the hotel. Several of our earlier possibilities did not have one (this is, after all, New Orleans where a good meal can be found on most street corners) and were not amenable to our offering menus and arranging to bring meals to the hotel.

I have found a few that have dining facilities and ample meeting space for our needs. Once we have the contract, I will commence work on our tours. Presently, I am considering scheduling our visit to the D-Day museum on the Friday of the reunion. I envision a tour (primarily of the Atlantic sector), a luncheon in the Stage Door Canteen, and arranging video interviews. I am also looking into a Thursday tour – most probably a riverboat cruise.

Group tours aside, there are so many other things to see and do. The hotels that are under consideration are minutes from the Aquarium of the Americas, the Arts and Warehouse district, Canal Street shops and the French Quarter with great shops, restaurants and the world famous, Café du Monde. Also, the Audubon Zoo and the Garden District are only a street car ride away. A good time can be had by all with a little something for everyone.

On a side note, someone left this year's reunion with my European Thunderbolt newspapers. I would like to have them back so that we can scan them into the publications website and add them to the Thunderbolt library.

I deeply thank all who sent pictures. It made it easy to put together the collages. I think I was able to get just about all attendees included.

As I try to close, I want to thank Carmela for her devoted service to the Association as president. I also thank her for her guidance in making this past summer's reunion a success. It looks like I have big shoes to fill.

In getting into the mood for New Orleans, think of the new motto, "Laissez les bon temps rouler" ("Let the good times roll")!

Respectfully submitted

— Kathleen Macaluso Powers ▼

FROM THE EDITOR

CLIFF WOOLDRIDGE

Please Note: Due to increases in shipping costs the dues for 2014 will be going up to \$30 per year. Anyone who has already paid your 2014 dues will not have to send in the additional \$5.!

— Cliff Wooldridge ▼

COMPANIES

Co. "A" - 330TH

CHARLES ABDINOOR
sgtchuck83rd@comcast.net

A Co. 330th. News

Hi Buddy's;

ALL I CAN SAY IS WOW! The Reunion at DC, was one of the BEST! under the leadership of The POWERS GANG, that is Kathleen and COMPANY, we had one of the most well run Reunion ever. Everything was planned to the minute, and so efficient. THANKS to The Whites, Dimmicks, Digiammerinos and all the other Volunteers. A-Company we missed you. The Barricks had to cancel at the last minute, Nellrita had an emergency operation which she went through and is now recuperating. They were also bringing their daughter Paula to the Reunion her first. Steward to run the household, plus all the work involved since Nellrita's Doctors, and hospital were hours away. Their air flight was non refundable, so they have to use air miles instead. We keep in touch regularly. The Prussman's were coming but canceled out. The Dunn's Phyllis and Earl could not make it, Earl had a medical problem and was in the Hospital, but resting back home now. We are the only one's of A-Co. 330th. left. We will not give up, we will survive. We have to with the Descendants, now that they are the BRASS, they make us HOP TO! We have added three new descendants George Cooley, Jr. you Regulars remember him as our

Secretary in the late 40's and 50's. Well his son George Jr. is like his Father, easy going's like his Dad. We also added the Lavinski Brothers, Joe and Rich. I had a most enjoyable Reunion with those three. We also must not forget Samuel J. (Junior) Heffner, Jr. His Grandson joined our Association in memory of his Grandfather. Junior passed away this year. Travis Arnette is his Grandson and planned on bringing Junior to the Reunion, his first. That is all of A-Company news, we just have to regroup and go from there.

We lost a long time member.

Ernest M. "Dutchy" Smith a long time member of the 83rd. passed away August 8, 2013. Dutchy was in H- Co. 329th. Regt. He is predeceased of his loving wife Helen who died in April this year. They shared 71 years of marriage. Dutchy was 92. Their entire family attended many reunions together. He had been a National Officer for many years as a member of our Sergeant of Arms. Dutchy will surly be missed.

— Chuck Abdinoor ▼

WE'RE ON THE WEB!

Check out our new
online home at:

www.83rdassociation.com

Renew your membership,
keep up to date on the
upcoming reunion,
find useful links, with
more features to come!



MAIL BAG

Dear Mr. Wooldridge,

I would like to renew my membership with the 83rd Infantry Division Association.

My grandfather, Clarence Arvil Hunt PFC Headquarters Company 1st Battalion 330th Inf. was wounded in action 4 July 1944 in France. His MOS was Amm Handler 504.

Maybe somebody will remember him, or the group picture. Can anybody tell me about his MOS?

In the group picture, Hunt is standing 4th from the left. I have been told that the soldier

in front may be Sgt. Turbeyville.

I am interested in sharing info, or hearing from members or descendants who served in his unit.

Thank you,

Matthew Hunt
3385 Toms Road
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okieatheart@juno.com





THUNDERBOLT

83rd INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.

WORLD WAR II

October 31, 2013

Dear Board Members of the 83rd Infantry Division Association,

It has been an honor to serve as President of the Association and its courageous veterans and their families. It has also given me extreme pleasure to have run reunions in the past and to work with the veterans and their family members who have dedicated so much of their time to help make the reunions and the Association successful.

Many things change in each of our lives and most times we are able to move on in spite of these changes. Unfortunately, because of personal issues, I am not able to move on in my position as President. I think you know how much the Association means to me, you are like family, and I do not take this lightly. It was an extremely difficult decision for me and I regret having to resign this position, but I have no choice and believe it is in the best interest of the Association.

I am sorry that I cannot give you any further explanation. Thank you for understanding my need for privacy with my personal reasons.

I wish you all the best and pray for health and happiness. I wish you great success as the Association moves forward.

Sincerely,

Carmella DiMartino Catrambone (Mell)

Mel — We cannot thank you enough for all you've done! We miss you terribly but wish you all the best — the Executive Board

August 16, 2013

Dear 83rd Infantry Division Association,

As a descendant of a WWII 83rd soldier I will attempt to put into words how honored and blessed I was to help represent the 83rd Infantry Division at the wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Standing up there with three spunky 83rd Veterans was a most humbling experience that I will forever cherish and proudly remember.

When Kathleen Powers asked the night before if I would help, I initially declined as I felt there were scores of others much more deserving than I. I still feel that way.

Didn't sleep much that night as my head was spinning trying to remember all whom I would be representing.

My father and the men he served with came to mind. All the 83rd veterans and their families I have met over the years that I have been blessed to call friend, brother and sister. I thought of the war orphans who never got a chance to know their father. Then I started thinking about all the wars this country has fought from Revolutionary onward. How many of them are unknown but to God? For an instant my mind flashed back to a cold snowing January morning at Henri Chappelle Cemetery when the sun appeared briefly to light up 8,000 headstones before my eyes. I lost it then and just about did at Arlington but Chuck Abdinoor helped maintain my composure. The tomb guards are an amazing example of our American soldiers. They don't know the word quit and found out WWII soldiers don't quit either. ☺

(Thanks to the Old Guard for providing the Color Guard at our 83rd Memorial Service. They were THE Presidential Color Guard and if truth be known they did it on their own time.

I would also be remiss if I didn't thank the Afghanistan Wounded Warriors who lined up to shake hands. That was true class.)

As an American this wreath laying reminded me that each of us are a small grain of sand in the larger scheme of protecting and preserving our Constitution. Each grain of sand contributes to build a foundation of Freedom. Guess that's why the founding fathers called us United States. Our Blessings are many and the Spirits do work in mysterious ways.

May we always honor those who have served, those who are serving and those who will serve to protect our American freedoms and liberties.

Thank You to the 83rd for allowing me this once in a lifetime honor.

God Bless America – America Bless God

Respectfully,



Dave Dimmick

Update on John Thomas Helms, Dixie Chapter

Due to serious health concerns, **John Thomas Helms, Company F, 331st Regiment** will no longer be able to attend the Dixie Chapter Reunion, being held early this December at the Graystone Lodge in Gatlinburg Tennessee. This photo was provided by C. Donald Stevenson, John's son-in-law, along with this message:

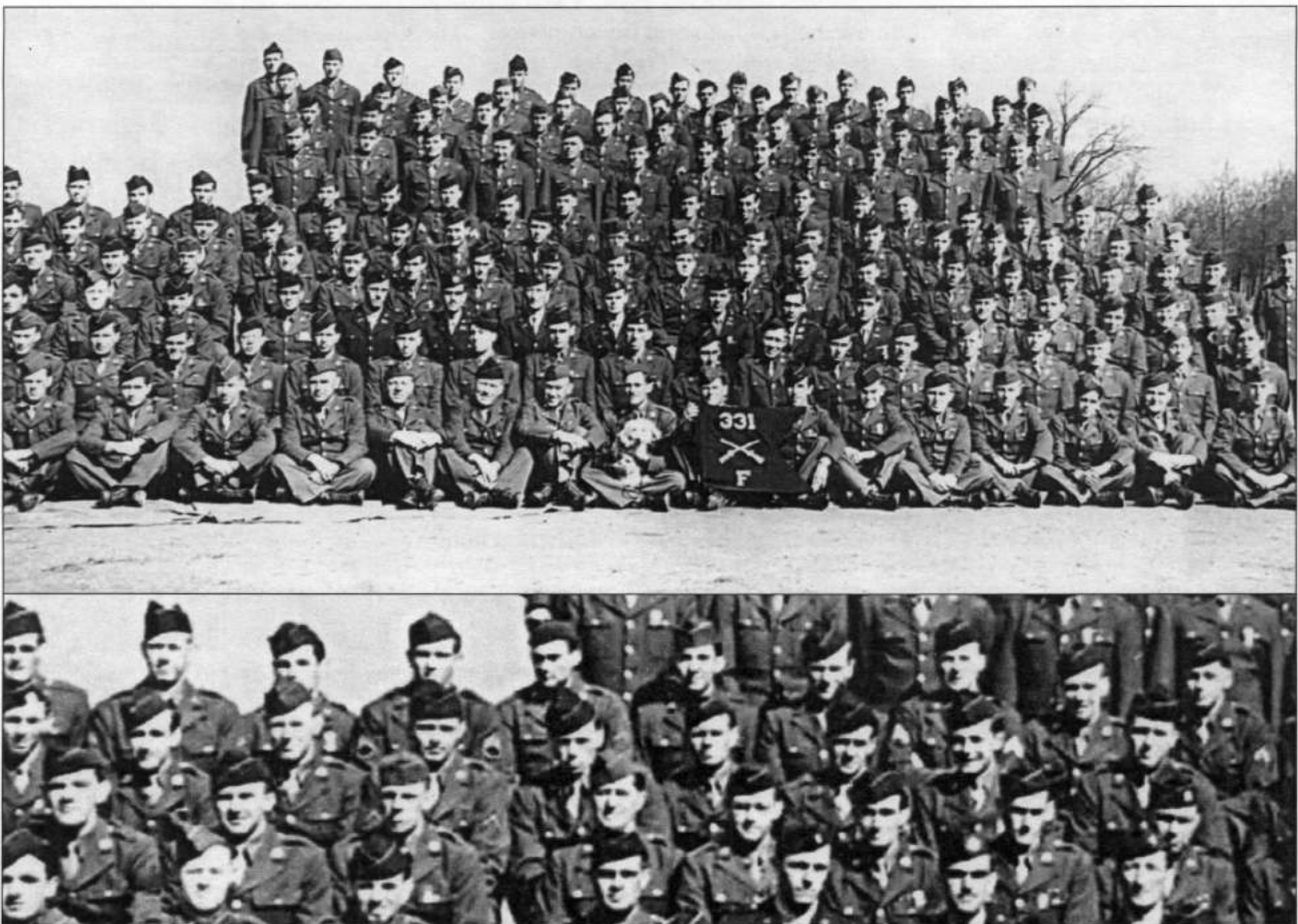
The photograph was made in the winter of 1943. During his service, Private Helms was, upon the death of his unit's leader, promoted in the field to the rank of Sergeant. He was wounded twice; once in the shoulder, once in the neck. He was awarded the Bronze Star for valor upon his action having taken out a German machine gun nest while under heavy enemy fire. John Thomas Helms and his unit were among those liberating Langenstein Concentration Camp. He was among the first 18 to be sent home after the Germans' unconditional surrender at Berlin. John Thomas Helms is 91 years of age. "All gave some, some gave all."

These men and their comrades have become know as "America's Greatest Generation."

Thank you for your service!

Sincerely,

C. Donald Stevenson



John Thomas Helms is in the fifth row from the bottom, the 9th serviceman from the left.

Notes from the Field

Larry Scheerer, son of Lt. Richard 'Dick' Scheerer, H, 331st is Chair of the Association's Veteran's outreach committee. Larry has been busy this fall and has much to report. Larry is looking for volunteers to assist in his outreach. As you can see from his notes, it is truly rewarding work. If you 'd like to help, you can contact him at scheerer@aol.com / 972-567-0305.

- ▼ Former Association president **Salvatore Scicolone of Pittsburgh, PA (I 329th)** stays in touch with **Cliff Wooldridge**. He could not attend the reunion this year due to health issues but hopes to attend next year
- ▼ **Aloysius R. Klugiewicz of Erie, PA (HQ 331st)** is in good health except for painful arthritis. He was grateful for recent relief from that. He is interested in the next reunion and possibly going to Sainteny in 2014- would like more information
- ▼ **Art Jones, Spokane, WA (HQ 330th)** said he is doing pretty well. However he takes care of his wife which limits his ability to travel. He knew another veteran in Spokane named Pittman - Art does not know what happened to him . Art was in Sainteny in 1998
- ▼ **Vinson Freeman Jr., St. Louis, Mo (HQ 329th and his wife Flo)** reported he had a fall July 9 and fractured his C-2 vertebrae. He has been in a neck brace since for 13 week and hoped to get it off soon. They could probably drive to a reunion in New Orleans. They would like to consider travel for the Normandy anniversary, but that will depend on his health.
- ▼ **Forest Brown (I, 329th)** passed away August 9th. **His wife Dorothy** shared that she is "so proud of him". They were blessed to have 62 years together and yet "62 years just isn't enough". She recalled returning with him to Europe for the first time in 1989 and traveling to the areas of his war service. Before joining the 83rd Division Forest had been the 125th AAA and was in the second wave of the D-Day invasion. She had never seen him cry, but when they arrived at Omaha Beach she said he wept. Forest was reluctant to return to St. Lo which he remembered as being devastated. However they did go and it was inspiring to see the town completely rebuilt with much of the original architecture restored. Dorothy also recalled an occasion when a woman approached them in a restaurant and expressed that when the Americans arrived she was a young girl. She first saw the Americans through her window and couldn't believe it – she told Forest and Dorothy that people just can't imagine the feeling—what it means to be liberated. Forest was highly decorated and was chosen to represent the 83rd Division as a flag bearer at General Patton's funeral. He also had a few days in Paris at the end of the war with another veteran from Texas and Audie Murphy.
- ▼ **Ed McLaughlin, Erdenheim, PA, is the nephew of Sgt. Joe McLaughlin, (H, 331st) (deceased)**. Ed and **Larry Scheerer, son of Lt. Richard 'Dick' Scheerer, (H, 331st)**, spoke by phone and discovered a mutual connection. **Dick, now 97**, was wounded on July 4, 1944. Over the years Dick has shared with Larry and his family that while hospitalized in England he was joined by Sgt. McLaughlin who had lost a leg. Dick thought very highly of Sgt. McLaughlin and it was through him that Dick learned of the fate of his comrades, including **Lt. Col. Faber, CO of the 331st** who was killed in Sainteny. Ed provided Larry a photograph of his uncle Joe from a 1956 reunion. Dick saw the photo for the first September 28 this year and immediately recognized Sgt. McLaughlin — the photo is now a treasured memento thanks to Ed. ▼

The Association's 2014 Strategic Plan

With its 67th Reunion in Washington D.C., the 83rd Infantry Division Association marked another milestone, and also another turning point. The Association is facing some significant challenges, some more pressing than others. The makeup of our membership is changing (more descendants, fewer veterans) while total membership is decreasing. Our remaining members, especially veterans, are losing close touch with each other as the geographic chapters have disbanded. Our long-time Publisher/Treasurer, Cliff Wooldridge, is no longer alone able to carry the load of the combined positions of Publisher/Treasurer. Overall content contributions to the Thunderbolt have been decreasing and participation at the annual reunion is falling.

At the reunion, I presented to the general membership the results of a strategic planning session that the Executive Board sponsored in Manchester New Hampshire in June to address these challenges. These sessions essentially focused on four questions:

1. Where are we today?
2. What keeps us going?
3. Where do we want to be in the future?
4. What should we be focused on today in order to make it more likely we will be where we want to be in the future?

On behalf of the Board, I presented to the General Membership the recommendations developed during those sessions based on our answers to these questions. Our recommendations took the form of a draft 2014 strategic plan. The recommendations were well received, improved and were subsequently adopted by the Executive Board. For the benefit of those who were unable to attend the reunion, here is a brief summary of what we discussed and adopted. You will also find more information regarding these recommendations, including our expanded mission statement, our new website and the opportunity to order a roster, elsewhere in this issue of Thunderbolt.

- 1. We should update our mission statement.**
- 2. We should set a goal to contact every regular (veteran) member by phone and/or by mail who is on our 2013 roster, arrears in dues, and who did not attend the reunion. This contact is not to collect dues, but to see how the veteran is doing.**
- 3. We should set a goal to increase our membership by at least 20% or up to 100 members in 2014.**
- 4. The Association should establish its own website to: (1) make it easier for potential members to find us; (2) join the Association; (3) promote our reunion activities; promote those existing websites and social media currently dedicated to preserving the 83rd's legacy and honoring its sacrifices and accomplishments**
- 5. We should provide a free roster of members who are veterans and widows, to include names, company and regiment, address and phone number, listed both alphabetically by name, and alphabetically by state, to any veteran or widow who requests one.**

6. **The Executive Board should reorganize the Publisher/Treasurer's Duties by creating the following additional positions: Financial Secretary, Assistant Treasurer and Assistant Publisher. In addition, the responsibilities of the Reunion Chairperson should be clarified.**
7. **The Thunderbolt should be slightly reduced in size, but should continue to be published three times per year on a regular schedule with regular features. Dropbox or a similar account should be utilized and publicized to make it easier for contributors to submit articles, including photos and graphics. Email and web-based options for receiving the magazine should also be explored.**
8. **The Executive Board should establish a committee to: (1) evaluate and to provide guidance to the membership regarding available repositories for 83rd related materials that members may wish to donate; and (2) find a permanent home for the Thunderbolt collection and any other materials that the Association may have or will be given for safekeeping.**
9. **We should sponsor one more 'first class' reunion in honor of the 70th anniversary of the D-Day and the Normandy campaign at the World War II Museum in New Orleans.**
10. **Subsequent reunions should be scaled down and scheduled at the same location each year.**

Respectfully Submitted,
John Markuns (Descendant Member)
Judge advocate ▼



Keep the 83rd Alive!

On page 11, you will find an invitation to join the Association. If you are reading this Thunderbolt, you are likely already a member. If you support our mission, please use the invitation to invite one or more family members or friends to also join the Association (feel free to make copies). Membership forms can be returned by mail (see the back of the invitation). You can now also join or renew membership online. Just go to:

www.83rdassociation.com

Spread the word about the 83rd!



THUNDERBOLT

OL. 1, NO. 2

WASHINGTON, D. C.

AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1947

Thunderbolts Elect 1947-48 Officers

JAMES C. HANRAHAN
VOTED PRESIDENT

Thunderbolts unanimously elected twenty-two officers for a one year period at the Cleveland Reunion on August 16. A nominating committee representing the major units of the Division prepared a potential slate of officers which was discussed at separate unit meetings. Colonel Robert H. Berk, former CO of 331st Inf, appointed chairman of the nominating committee, handled the election meeting and submitted each nomination to the body. The whole slate was elected without undue voting. The following men were elected to office: James C. Hanrahan, 195 E. Bridge Street, Berea, Ohio was elected first president of the 83rd Infantry Division Association.

VICE PRESIDENTS NAMED

Three Vice Presidents were elected: Vice President—Gurney S. Jaynes, Sgt, H Co, 331st Inf, now in C Co, 2nd MP Bn, Army War College, Washington, D. C.; 2nd Vice President—William O. Shuman, Sgt in Hq 1st Arty, Greencastle, Pa.; and 3rd Vice President—Ralph Neppel, Sgt, Co, 329, holder of the only 83rd Congressional Medal of Honor, from Madison, Iowa. At this point everyone present approved the suggestion that R. Neppel be made a life-member so that all of his expenses to the next reunion be met by the association so that he may attend.

Other Thunderbolts elected to office were: Secretary—Julius Ansel, special service non-com of 329th, 22 Dale St., Dorchester, Mass.; Secretary-Treasurer—Lt. Col. George W. Rhyne, commanding 83rd Signal Co, now with Personnel Division, War Department, Room 2E923, The Pentagon, Washington, D. C.; Secretary in Charge of Publications—S/Sgt. Raymond J. Goguen, public relations sergeant for 329th, now with Hq Military District of Washington, Room 5B539, The Pentagon, Washington, D. C.; Asst. Secretary in Charge of Publications—John C. Neff, Major, Asst. Division G-2, now residing at 1058 Homewood Drive, Lakewood, Ohio; Historian—Thomas Roberts, Major, PRO for the division, Brewster Road, Massapequa,

(Continued on page 8)

Welcome VETERAN THUNDERBOLTS

FIRST ANNUAL CONVENTION
83RD INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION WAR II



Left to right on the cycle: Michael Champey, 133 Maple Street, Lawrence, Mass.; William T. McCartin, 437 Merrimac Street, Lowell, Mass.

Charter Memberships Reach 1000; 2000 Goal Set For Next Reunion

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The primary mission of our association is to keep firm the friendships and fraternal companionships that had their conception at Atterbury but matured and ripened through the thorough aging of war. Within our ranks, in peace as in war, there are rich and poor; Republicans and Democrats; lawyers and laborers; farmers and factory men; Protestants, Jews, Catholics and agnostics. The patch of the 83rd is big enough to shade and merge all differences.

Once a year we will meet in a physical sense at our reunions. Six times a year we will assemble through our association newspaper. For the rest of our lives I pray we will be together constantly in the pleasant grip of comradeship.

JAMES C. HANRAHAN

The 83rd Infantry Division Association, in operation for only five months, has already reached the 1000 mark in charter memberships. Everyone of us is to be congratulated but we shouldn't stop here. We must all remember what our President said at the reunion, when he urged that we all get in back of this organization and push the total over 2,000 before our next reunion.

John R. Skipp, 1957 Midway Drive, Youngstown, Ohio, formerly of 83rd Signal Company, became the 1000th member of the association when he attended the reunion at Cleveland. Mr. Skipp was more than happy when after registering he was informed of the fact. Present at the desk was Lt. Colonel George W. Rhyne, his former commanding officer, who was equally glad that the honor had fallen to a Signalman. Who will be the 2000th member be?

The first Thunderbolts of the different units in the 83rd Division to become members of the association are as follows: 308th Med Bn—Adam F. Dormuth, Jr., 302 Button Ave., Painesville, Ohio; 308th Engr Bn—

(Continued on page 8)

Cleveland Reunion Success For 83rd

INDIANAPOLIS SITE
1948 CONVENTION

More than 600 members of the 83rd Infantry Division mixed liquids, legal matters, logistics and long-time friendships at the first reunion of Thunderbolts held at Hotel Carter, Cleveland, Ohio, August 15 and 16, the third anniversary of the liberation of the Brittany port of St. Malo, France.

Thunderbolts came to the convention from thirty-five states and France, by air, rail, automobile, motorcycle and even on foot. Some men covered more ground reaching Cleveland than they had dogged and shuttled over in Europe. Quentin Pease, Div Arty, made it from Pittsburgh, Kansas; Edward A. Shipman, E — 330, Provo, Utah; Claude H. Brown B — 330, Bellingham, Wash.; Walbridge J. Powell, G — 329, Overton, Texas; Isadore D. Serkin, F — 329, Miami, Fla.; and Richard V. Templeton, K — 329, Greenville Jct., Maine. Former French liaison officer, Jean A. Pages, temporarily in the United States, gave Paris, France, as his registration address. What 331 lacked in distance traveled was made up by members present.

From early Thursday, Aug. 14, until late Sunday, Aug. 17, Thunderbolt streaks flashed and clashed throughout the Carter lobby and mezzanine floors with outbursts of "Hey, you old dog, Wby, you old son . . . Well, if it isn't," and "I'll be hanged," as fox-hole buddies spotted each other. Some went European and exchanged warm embraces. For those of you who couldn't possibly make it, the whole scene was heart-warming, and one very difficult to describe.

Cleveland's Mayor Thomas A. Burke became a Thunderbolt favorite

(Continued on page 8)

BBC HONORS THUNDERBOLTS

While Thunderbolts celebrated at a rapid pace in Cleveland, an unexpected tribute was paid the 83rd Infantry Division by the British Broadcasting Company when Bob Barr, BBC correspondent with the 83rd in the ETO, broadcast a special message to the 83rd via short wave on Friday, August 15, the anniversary of the fall of St. Malo.

An Invitation — Help spread the word about the 83rd!



“Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it”
Sir Winston Churchill

Did you know the 83rd, the “Thunderbolt Division”...

- ▼ *landed at Omaha Beach soon after D-Day, relieving elements of the 101st Airborne on June 26th, 1944.*
- ▼ *fought through the hedgerows of Normandy*
- ▼ *engaged in the battle for St. Malo and the Citadel*
- ▼ *fought through Brittany, the Loire Valley, Luxembourg, the Hurtgen Forest, and the Ardennes, entering the Battle of the Bulge on December 27, 1944.*
- ▼ *crossed the Rhine, liberated Langentstien concentration camp, a subcamp of Buchenwald, and gave the Allies the only permanent bridgehead across the Elbe. As part of Patton’s 3rd Army, the 83rd moved so fast, “borrowing” anything on wheels that Cornelius’ Ryan’s book, The Last Battle, referred to the 83rd as the “Rag Tag Circus.”*
- ▼ *had 270 days of contact with the enemy from June 1944 at Omaha Beach to the meeting of the Russians in April 1945 and suffered over 15,000 casualties, including 2,850 KIA*
- ▼ *was earlier nicknamed “Ohio” based on the division’s insignia (which includes the name “Ohio,” where the division was raised during World War I). Its new nickname, the “Thunderbolt” division, resulted from a division-wide contest held in early 1945 to find a name representing the nationwide origins of its members during World War II.*

As part of the 83rd family, you’re invited to join the 83rd Infantry Division Association. Our mission is to build on the camaraderie first developed among the members of the 83rd Infantry Division and attached units during World War II by bringing these veterans together at an annual reunion and through the Association magazine, the Thunderbolt; by expanding the Association’s membership to include relatives and friends of the 83rd; by honoring all those who served in the 83rd and attached units, living and deceased; and by preserving and promoting the 83rd’s historical legacy for all.

Want more information? Visit www.83rdassociation.com or write to us at info@83rdassociation.com.

83RD Infantry Division Association



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

PLEASE ENCLOSE A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER
FOR
\$30.00 (YEARLY MEMBERSHIP
DUES) 2014

83rd Infantry Division Association
Judy Breen, Financial Secretary
138 East Side Drive, P.O. Box 406
Alton Bay, NH 03810-0406

RENEWAL ___ NEW ___

NAME (please print) _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY, STATE ZIP _____

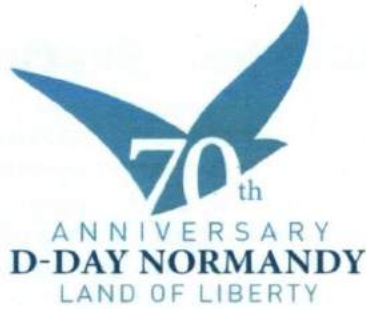
Company _____ Regiment _____ 83RD Division

Phone _____ e-mail _____

DESCENDANT ___ ASSOCIATE ___ OTHER ___

Name of 83rd Division Member _____

Date: _____ Signature _____



— 2014 Sainteny —

The 70th anniversary of D-Day and the liberation of France will be celebrated in 2014. There will be major events throughout the beach landing areas of Normandy and historical sites. 2014 is also the 100th anniversary of the start of WWI and the 200th anniversary of the Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812 between England and America. Locations across Europe are preparing for these commemorations.

D-Day events in Normandy will be attended by international heads of state, placing a high level of demand on infrastructure of transportation, public facilities and hotels. With increased security we anticipate controlled access for some events and venues. Advance planning is recommended.

Veterans and family members are invited to participate in a ceremony Monday June 9 in Sainteny. Also on Tuesday, June 10 veterans and family members are invited to speak with students at schools in Sainteny. For a detailed list of events, see <http://www.sainte-mere-eglise.info/en/70%20th%20%20anniversary%20dday.html>.

For those considering participation in these events on June 9 and 10, information is requested to assist our friends in Sainteny who are coordinating arrangements.

Please tell us what you can now about your plans to participate in anniversary events; send to Larry Scheerer (scheerer@aol.com / 972-567-0305). We will consolidate the information and forward to Jean-Paul Pitou and the Sainteny 70th Anniversary Committee. Thank you!

Primary contact for your group:

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Number in your party: _____

Primary Destination(s): _____

Dates of travel: _____

Name of Veteran(s) attending: _____

Special needs: _____

Other information / Comments: _____

As we receive additional communication about 70th Anniversary events we will post the information on our website and communicate directly with those who have indicated they plan to participate.

William 'Neal' Prussman



William 'Neal' Prussman, Haxtun CO (A 330th) passed away September 23. Neal was a farm boy, graduated college and after his graduation worked for the State Department in Washington D.C. where Neal met his **wife Virginia** who worked at the Pentagon. They were married June 12, 1943. In the book *Sterling Heroes*, Neal was on the cover as "The 4 AM Messenger" for his 4 a.m. delivery on Dec. 7 to President Roosevelt's Secretary of State. The message was a portion of Admiral Hirohito's notice to Roosevelt that an attack by the Japanese was imminent. He was drafted by the Army and sent to replacement boot camp during January 1944. Neal was shot and captured in France on Nov. 5 and was a German prisoner of war until May 8, 1945. He was listed MIA (missing in action) from the time of his capture until February 1945

when Virginia received a postcard that he had given to a prison hospital nurse during November 1944. After he was released from the hospital at Fort Simmons, his parents offered him two quarters to farm north of Paoli. Neal and Virginia began their married life as a farm family for the next 60 years or more and even though the opportunity was there, they never looked seriously at moving back to Washington, D.C. ▼



BERNARD M. KOT - PASSED AWAY
 MARCH 23, 2013.
 CORPORAL COMPANY C. 330TH, INFANTRY
 REGIMENT, 83RD COMBAT INFANTRY
 BRIDGE - RIFLE SS - THEATER RIBBON
 W/ 3 BRONZE STARS, GOOD CONDUCT
 MEDAL, PURPLE HEART, BRONZE STAR
 MEDAL; VICTORY MEDAL MEDAL WWII
 ARDENNES; RINELAND; CENTRAL EUROPE
 BATTLE OF THE BULGE

JENNIE KOT - WIFE

Jennie Kot

KOT, MR.
BERNARD M. "BERNIE"
 Of Kalamazoo



Bernie Kot passed away Friday, March 22, 2013 in Kalamazoo. He was born December 16, 1925 in Kalamazoo, the son of Michael and Barbara (Rycaj) Kot. Bernie proudly served his country in the 83rd Infantry of the U. S. Army during WWII, and was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. He was a member of St. Mary Catholic Church in Kalamazoo and St. Ambrose Catholic Church in Parchment. Bernie was active in many organizations serving his local community: Knights of Columbus 3rd Degree, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, VFW Post 36, and St. Mary Men's Club. He was employed in sales for A.C. Foundry. Bernie was an accomplished golfer and took special pride in his ethnic heritage particularly dur-

ing the Easter and Christmas seasons. He was preceded in death by his sisters, Walla Doleski, Stella Fisher, Sophie Juzwiak and infant sister Felice. He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Jennie (Haslec) Kot, whom he married April 17, 1948 and several nieces and nephews. Friends will be received Sunday, March 24 from 4-7PM at **Parchment Redmond Funeral Home, 2300 East G Ave., 269-349-7735**, where a rosary will be recited at 6PM. Mass of Christian Burial will be Monday, March 25 at 10AM at St. Mary Catholic Church, 939 Charlotte St., Kalamazoo, Fr. David Grondz, celebrant and Fr. Stanley Witek, concelebrant. Interment with full military honors will follow at Mt. Olivet Cemetery, Kalamazoo. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to St. Mary Catholic Church or the Kalamazoo Humane Society.
www.redmondfuneralhomes.net

Deceased List

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

Name	Unit	Reported by
Wallace E. Bostick		
Forest Brown	Co I 329th	
William Cole	HQ 329th FA	
Earl Dunn	Co A 33th	Chuck Abdinoor
Ralph C. "R.C." Hamilton, Jr.	Co D 331st	
Charles Ray Hunter	HQ 331st	
Bernard "Bernie" Kot		
William "Neal" Prussman	Co A 330	
Elaine Tessmann	(Widow of Otto Tessmann)	
Frank J. Testa	Co L 330th	
Ernest "Dutchy" Smith	Co H 329th	Chuck Abdinoor



God's Garden

*God looked around his garden
 And He found an empty place.
 And then he looked down upon the earth,
 And saw your tired face.
 He put His arms around you,
 And lifted you to rest.
 God's garden must be beautiful,
 He always takes the best.
 He knew that you were suffering,
 He knew you were in pain,
 He knew that you would never
 Get well on earth again.
 He saw the road was getting rough,
 And the hills were hard to climb,
 So he closed your weary eyelids,
 And whispered
 Peace be thine.
 It broke our hearts to lose you.
 But you didn't go alone,
 For part of us went with you,
 The day God called you home.
 ~author unknown*

REMEMBERING

Wallace Earl Bostick

Wally's Life Milestones:

*West Seattle High School Graduate of 1943
 University of Washington Graduate, Masters Degree
 Washington Dept of Fisheries
 Teacher/Vice Principle at the Seattle and
 Lake Washington School Districts
 Military Career of 30 years, Colonel USAR
 Retired*

Wally's Passions in Life

*Family, Friends
 Grand Puppies
 Reading
 Military History
 Classical and Russian Music
 The Ocean
 Travel*



Honoring Ceremonies

*Military Honors: 28 March 2013
 at Tahoma Cemetery
 Celebration of Life: 13 April 2013
 at the Huntington Park Club House*

HUNTER
WINSTON-SALEM



Charlie Ray Hunter
Mar. 4, 1921 - Mar. 28, 2013

Mr. Charlie Ray Hunter, age 92, departed this life and stepped over into Glory Thursday, March 28, 2013 at Forsyth Medical Center in Winston-Salem. Mr. Hunter was born March 4, 1921 in Yadkin County to Charlie S. and Viola Ridings Hunter. He was a member of Gospel Light Baptist Church in Walkertown and was a World War II United States Army veteran having survived D-day on Omaha Beach. He enjoyed gardening and was just recently honored by the VFW Post 1090 of Clemmons on his 92nd birthday.

In addition to his parents Mr.

Hunter was preceded in death by four sisters and three brothers.

Mr. Hunter is survived by his wife of 69 years and four months of marriage, Agnes Jean Hunter. Two daughters; Carolyn Jean (Bill) Collins and Pamela Sue (Earl) Bowles both of Germanton. Two granddaughters; Michelle (Tony) Inman and Tammy Gunnell Duggins. Two grandsons; Charles D. (Stephanie) Collins and Steve C. (Tina) Gunnell, Jr., Five great grand-children; Jason, Will, Adam, Matthew and Joshua. Several nieces and nephews.

Funeral services for Mr. Hunter will be held Tuesday, April 2, 2013 at 2:00 p.m. at Gospel Light Baptist Church in Walkertown by Brother Bobby Roberson and Brother Frank Shumate. Burial will follow at Gardens of Memory in Walkertown. Military Burial Honors will be conducted by VFW Post 1090 of Clemmons. The family will receive friends at Gospel Light Baptist Church Monday evening April 1st from 6:00 until 8:00 p.m.

Memorials may be made to Gospel Light Baptist Church, P.O. Box 38, Walkertown, NC 27051.



Mr. Charlie Ray Hunter, age 92, departed this life and stepped over into Glory Thursday, March 28, 2013 at Forsyth Medical Center in Winston-Salem. Mr. Hunter was born March 4, 1921 in Yadkin County to Charlie S. and Viola Ridings Hunter. He was a member of Gospel Light Baptist Church in Walkertown and was a World War II United States Army veteran having survived D-day on Omaha Beach. He enjoyed gardening and was just recently honored by the VFW Post 1090 of Clemmons on his 92nd birthday. In addition to his parents Mr. Hunter was preceded in death by four sisters and three brothers. Mr. Hunter is survived by his wife of 69 years and four months of marriage, Agnes Jean Hunter; two daughters, Carolyn Jean (Bill) Collins and Pamela Sue (Earl) Bowles both of Germanton; two granddaughters, Michelle (Tony) Inman and Tammy Gunnell Duggins; two grandsons, Charles D. (Stephanie) Collins and Steve C. (Tina) Gunnell, Jr.; five great-grandchildren: Jason, Will, Adam, Matthew and Joshua; and also, several nieces and nephews. Funeral services for Mr. Hunter will be held Tuesday, April 2, 2013 at 2:00 P.M. at Gospel Light Baptist Church in Walkertown by Brother Bobby Roberson and Brother Frank Shumate. Burial will follow at Gardens of Memory in Walkertown. Military Burial Honors will be conducted by VFW Post 1090 of Clemmons. The family will receive friends at Gospel Light Baptist Church Monday evening April 1st from 6:00 until 8:00 P.M. Memorials may be made to Gospel Light Baptist Church, P.O. Box 38, Walkertown, NC 27051. Online condolences may be made at www.hayworth-miller.com. *The family would like to express their appreciation to the staff of the 2nd floor ICU and 8th floor Palliative Care at Forsyth Medical Center for the care given to Mr. Hunter.*

IN MEMORY OF
Mr. Charlie Ray Hunter

BORN
March 4, 1921

DIED
March 28, 2013

SERVICES
2:00 P.M. Tuesday, April 2, 2013
Gospel Light Baptist Church
Walkertown, NC

OFFICIATING
Brother Bobby Roberson
Brother Frank Shumate

SONG LP73

© 2002 Rick Kelley Printed in U.S.A.
"On Eagle's Wings" © 1979 Michael Joncas

Obituary for Ralph C. "R.C." Hamilton Jr.

Earl M. Dunn



LA GRANGE PARK — Earl M. Dunn, 88, of La Grange Park, formerly of Chicago and Normal, died Friday (Sept. 13, 2013) at La Grange Adventist Hospital, La Grange.

A visitation will be from 3 to 9 p.m. Monday at Coglianesi Funeral Home, Burr Ridge. The service will be at 2 p.m. Tuesday at the funeral home. Interment will be in Evergreen Cemetery, Evergreen Park.

Dunn spent 41 years as a Normal resident. He was the beloved husband of Phyllis A. Flaherty Dunn; loving father of Karen (Edward) Caspers, Joyce (Terry) Wogan and Janet (Brian) Gale; and grandfather of Margaret and Elizabeth Caspers, William, Michael and Daniel Wogan, and Ezra, Ethan and Naomi Gale.

He was a veteran of World War II, serving in the European Theater in Normandy and earned the Purple Heart.

Ralph C. "R.C." Hamilton, Jr., 87, of Marion, KY died Tuesday at Livingston County Hospital in Salem, KY. He was an Army Veteran of WWII, member of Marion United Methodist Church, Lifetime Member of American Legion, Disabled American Veterans and Veteran of Foreign Wars and owner of Hunt's Department Store.

Surviving is his wife of 69 years, Louise Hamilton of Marion, KY; daughters, Patsy Hamilton Peek of Hopkinsville, KY and Robin Hamilton-Folks of Brentwood, TN; son, Mike Hamilton of Marion, KY; sister, Rose Hill of Marion, KY; 9 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren.

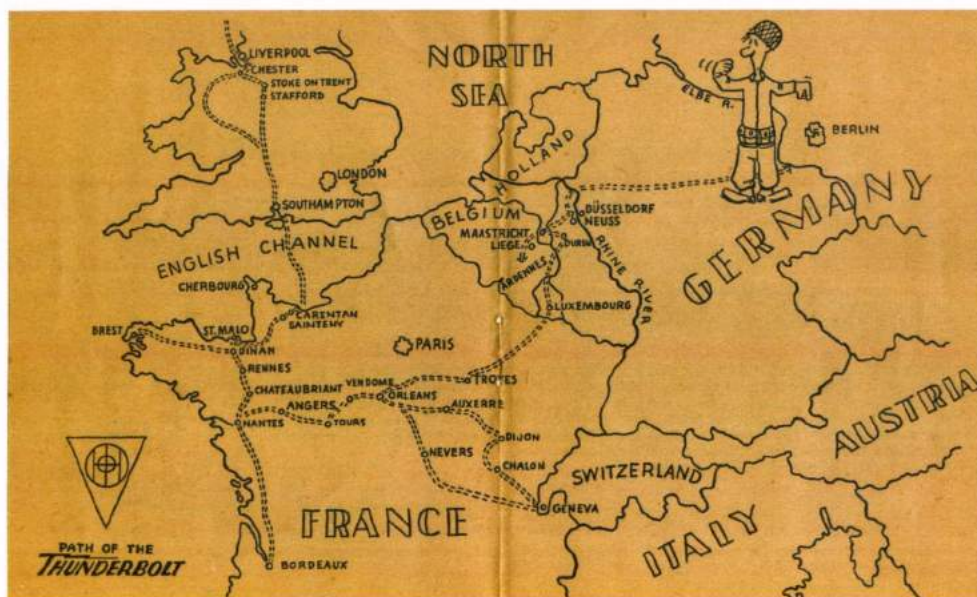
He was preceded in death by his parents Ralph C. and May Belle Hamilton, Sr.; 3 brothers and 1 sister.

Services are scheduled for 11 AM Friday at Gilbert Funeral Home in Marion, KY with interment in Mapleview Cemetery. The family will receive visitors from 5-7 PM Thursday at the funeral home. Military Rites will be given at the cemetery on Friday.

Donations may be made to Marion United Methodist Church Elevator Fund, 112 S. College St., Marion, KY 42064.

To send flowers or a memorial gift to the family of Ralph C. "R.C." Hamilton Jr.:

Cemetery Details
Mapleview Cemetery
Marion, KY,



The Thundering Herd

Here's a story you ain't heard

It's a story about the 83rd.

Normandy, Brittany and all the rest.

Hedgerows and villages, they're the test.

East of St. Lo they got their start.

The going was rough, but they had the heart.

Rifles and machine guns were the bait.

Mortars, artillery and their eighty-eight.

Through swamps and hedgerows they did go.

It was defeat after defeat for the foe.

Through rain and mud they did fight.

The 83rd was showing its might.

Point Muls was one of their stops

It was here the 83rd showed they were tops.

Others had gone to Merleux,

Dal and Binocamp were also freed that day.

Our mortars and artillery did their part.

Seamwork with our air force sure was smart

But it was Lt. G. Joe with his M-1

That really got the Jervies to run.

Our General Nixon is a right smart guy.

Among our generals he rates high.

20,000 Heinies in one big haul.

It's divisions like this that'll make Hitler fall.



453rd. AAA.(AW) BN.
NORMANDY BRITTANY
CENTRAL EUROPE
ARDENNES RHINELAND



This will be a short item about the 453rd Anti Air Craft Battalion Assoc. It is my sad duty to report that we had three of our former members leave us this past year

Bob Hemstreet of Sheridan Oregon. The first part of the year

Normand Perreault from New Port Richey Florida ,

And two weeks later, Frank Wombaugh from Brick N.J.

I know there must be more than these that are no longer with us, but as I have no way of contacting them I am not sure what has happened

I only have addresses for 9 men who are still kicking., But not very high.

My late report of our Reunion in Arlington VA. Was that it was greatly appreciated by all that were able to attend.

WE did have more of our Veterans attend this year than last year at Nashville TN.

I do want to acknowledge the effort that was put forth by our committee and especially Kathleen Powers, who did a great favor to me in behalf of a couple of 453rd's Who would have liked to attend , but were stopped by physical troubles.

AS I have mentioned previously, I had been in search of Sam Magill for some time, but now have succeeded.

Submitted by Fred C. Pearson Pres. Of the 453rd AAA (AW) Batt. Assoc.

THE HUNT FOR SAM MAGILL
by Fred C. Pearson AAA(AW) BN. Assoc.

As most persons know about my search for Sam Magill and the trouble I had with the search I will try to explain all the details.

About 20 years ago another Member of the 453rd. Sam Daiello, (who is now deceased) and I Drove to Ashtabula County, were sam Magill originated, we chased around for two days, but no help.

Imade my first attempt at calling Sam in late 2012

Then in 2013, I started again , but was getting no where. Then I got in contact with Antoine Noslier, my friend in Normandy, Who gave me a name and address that was supposed to be Sam Magill's Daughter, but he said he got no response in trying to contact her.

I don't know if he tried to call her or not, I know his English is not to good and doesn't like phone contacts because of this.

I took a flyer and called, and she said she certainly was his daughter and was suprised that I called, She said it pleased her to know that after all these years that the 83rd still had an interest in her Dad.

I then went on to tell that I had called him on the Phone, the later part of 2012, but that I thought that he might be suffering with althiemers disease. She then expained that he was afflicted and had gotten a lot worse in the last three months. He can just remember her name, she contacts him every other week and her brother contact him the odd weeks.

He had a job with the Army while in Germany that was very important, I can not tell you just what he did.

The the War in VetNam was going on and the Army said that if he would volunteer for gounng to Viet Nam it would mean a Higher jump in rank. Aftter dicussing this with his daughter they decided that at his age at that time, he had fought to many Wars and retired from the Army as a Lt. Colonel.

Enclosed in the Thunder bolt is a fullpage article when he was interview by the Ashtabula Star Beacon. The copy that will be in the Thunder bolt is a reedited copy of the interview he gave them in, I believe was 1994. I had gone to the Paper to try to get them print a rundown on his life, last year but they ignored my request and printed what they had on file. It makes good interesting reading.

Fred C. Pearson 5704 Middle Ridge Rd Madison Ohio. 44057-2838
Phone 1-440-428-3237. Email 453aaa@windtream.net

Ed. Note: Since this submission from Fred, we are saddened to report Sam McGill's passing. See next page.

DECORATED WWII HERO PASSES

Samuel W. Magill, Sr., Lt. Col., (Army Retired) passed away peacefully in Munich, Germany, on October 30, 2013, at the age of 94.

As one of the "greatest generation", a young 24 year old, Lt. Sam Magill was a member of the 83rd Infantry Division, (The Thunderbolts), 329th Intelligence & Reconnaissance Platoon during WWII. In September, 1944, he and his platoon went behind enemy lines and convinced German Major General Erich Elster that his fate was sealed and any further fighting would be a useless waste of life. General Elster surrendered his 20,000 troops in the largest surrender of the war.

As he and the Thunderbolts continued their sweep across Europe, Sam and his platoon liberated several POW, labor, and concentration camps, and made the first radio contact with the Soviets near the Elbe River.

Sam was a very humble man who seemed a bit awkward with the attention and fame his WWII feats attracted. He always gave his platoon the credit stating that were it not for each man doing his part, it could have ended very differently. Lt. Magill and his platoon were honored on Ralph Edwards' "This Is Your Life" TV program in 1955, as well as numerous articles in publications, such as Life Magazine, Reader's Digest, Saturday Evening Post, many newspapers, and several books, including "Never A Shot In Anger", by Col. Barney Oldfield. (Additional information on Lt. Magill's heroics can be viewed at <http://83rdinfdivdocs.org/sam-magill/>, and indianamilitary.org/83RD/Surrender/Magill.htm, as well as other locations).

The platoon was also known as "Platoon International" due to the presence of men from various European countries. These men were translators and negotiators who, of their own accord and without pay, worked and fought along-side the GIs.

Lt. Magill was born in Monroe Township, Ashtabula Co., OH the son of William J. Magill and Lucy (Ackerman) Magill. He and his family returned there after the war and settled in Ashtabula, Ohio. Sam's National Guard unit was activated for duty in Korea, but the Korean War ended before they were sent. His decision to remain in the military lead to a career in Intelligence during the Cold War.

He retired in Germany in 1969 after which he worked in the film industry on several movies in the capacity of technical advisor and production assistant.

Sam was very active in the Federation of German American Clubs and the German American Men's Club of Munich. He served in many capacities, including several times as president of both.

Samuel W. Magill is survived by his wife of 51 years, Bea (Lefkowitz) of Munich, Germany; son Samuel W. Magill, Jr. & wife Daisie (Sykes) of Ft. Worth, TX; daughter Lyn Magill-Hoch and husband Bill Hoch of Albuquerque, NM; grandchildren Molly (Magill) Massey of Ft. Worth, TX and Liam and Maggie Hoch of Albuquerque, NM; great-grandson Pressley Massey of Fort Worth, TX; a sister Mrs. Lucia (Magill) Weidknecht of ME; a sister-in-law Mrs. Alberta (Howard) Magill of Painesville, OH; and numerous nieces and nephews. His first wife of 18 years, Merle (Stinson) Magill; as well brothers William J. Magill, Frank A. Magill, and Frederick D. Magill preceded him in death.

There will be a memorial service for Samuel W. Magill, Sr. in the Ashtabula, OH area in the spring. The exact date and location will be announced at a later time. ▼



Sam McGill's family is planning an internment, military ceremony and display event in May 2014 at the Kelloggville, Ohio cemetery where other family are buried. This will likely be an event that has press coverage. The 83rd Infantry Division Association Executive Board has approved funds for a memorial plaque to be placed on the VA-provided gravestone that will recognize the significant contribution Lt. Sam Magill and his 329th I&R platoon made to the war by their actions leading to the surrender of 20,000 Germans at Beaugency, France.

Be a part of it! To help the Association defray the cost of these special memorial, you may send a contribution of any amount to 83rd Infantry Division Association Inc., P.O. Box 406, Alton Bay, NH 03810.

Help extend the legacy of the 83rd!

— George Studor, Chair, Legacy Chapter ▼

Monroe's WWII hero

Lt. Sam Magill arranged surrender of nearly 20,000 German soldiers — without firing a shot

By CARL E. FEATHER

Staff Writer

cfeather@starbeacon.com

It was one of those bizarre scenes that only a romance or war could produce.

The date was early September 1944. The town, Romorantin, France, a drowsy place some 49 miles behind the German lines. The setting, a large home where Lt. Samuel W. Magill of Monroe Township, Ashtabula County, and a German artillery colonel were eating dinner. A buxom blonde German woman, who formerly worked as an interpreter for the Gestapo, facilitated the terse conversation between the officers of opposing forces.

Accompanying Magill was a platoon of 18 to 24 men who had crossed the Loire River with him several days earlier to assist in what was supposed to be a relatively routine reconnaissance mission. But this one took an unexpected turn when they learned that nearly 20,000 German troops were poised to surrender.

Opportunity came knocking, and Lt. Sam Magill was about to open the door on the largest surrender of World War II.

Magill was born on a farm Oct. 22, 1919, and grew up in the Monroe/Kingsville townships area. An industrious teen, he worked as a night desk clerk at the YMCA/YWCA and a maid and handyman in the M.C. Robinson home. He graduated from Kingsville High School in 1938 and gave up a scholarship to Baldwin Wallace in order to serve in the 37th Division with his brother, Fred.

The division filled up just a few days before Sam was drafted. Fred headed to the Pacific Theater; Sam ended up in a musician's company. He trained at Camp Wolters, Texas, and Camp Joseph T. Robinson, Ark., before Officers Training School at Fort Benning, Ga.

He was commissioned a second lieutenant on Oct. 23, 1942. Magill desired to become a pastor, but he traded being a spiritual leader for leading an intelligence and reconnaissance platoon of the 329th Infantry, 83rd Infantry Division. He approached the task of protecting and leading the men under him as seriously as if he were saving their souls. The men did extra training in everything from survival techniques to radio and heavy equipment operation. When they shipped out for England in early 1944, "Magill's Boys" were well

prepared for their assignment — the Normandy Invasion.

Despite their extra training, the odds were stacked against the "boys." While anchored in the English Channel and awaiting the invasion, officers on the transport ship made bets on which of them had the greatest chance of survival. Magill's men were given just 20 minutes on the beach before they would be annihilated.

They landed June 9, 1944, three days after the D-Day invasion began. They got lucky.

"When we came in on the beach, we hardly got our vehicles wet," Magill said. "They had cleared a path through the mine field. There was a little artillery fire, but the bunkers had been knocked out."

The platoon served on Normandy and Brittany, then moved into central France, along the Loire River. By early September 1944, the division was strung along 200 miles of the Loire to protect a flank of the Third Army, which was preparing to make a drive toward the German border.

White flag

Magill's platoon was assigned to the 45-mile-long area between Blois and Orleans. The men were to check on enemy strength south of the Loire and make their reconnaissance as deep as possible.

A farrago of human oddities attached themselves to the platoon: a derelict French lieutenant, three Polish soldiers who served in their nation's army prior to being captured and conscripted into the Nazi forces, a Belgian underground operator who served as a translator, a Senegalese with saber scars on both cheeks and six German prisoners — courtesy of the French Maquis resistance. There also was a former Foreign Legion sergeant who was a cross between Groucho Marx and the "Man Who Came to Dinner."

"It was against all regulations to have this foreign staff, but they were very good," Magill said in a 1994 interview with the Star Beacon.

Indeed, thanks to these "irregulars" who were associated with the platoon, Magill gained access to the French Underground forces, which helped protect the platoon while they looked for German strongholds. The men encountered heavy small-arms fire on the south bank of the Loire during their first two days in the area. On Sept. 4, two of Magill's men rowed across

Odd Tales of ASHTABULA COUNTY

the river with a Maquis lieutenant to investigate German strength. They reported that the Germans appeared to be retreating. With the help of the French underground, Magill's platoon moved its seven Jeeps across the river on rafts constructed from rowboats chained together and covered with planks.

They pushed south along the river, encountering and capturing about 30 Germans, mostly rear guards of outfits defending the river bank. Near Romorantin, on the morning of Sept. 8, Magill met up with the commander of the local Maquis. He told Magill that one of their patrols had reported that a German general at Chateau Neuf wanted to surrender, but only to Americans. The Germans feared execution at the hands of the Maquis. The general's other stipulation was that there be a token battle against two battalions of Americans.

Two Maquis and two of Magill's men were sent to meet Major Gen. Erich Elster, who commanded the area from the Pyrenees Mountains to the Bay of Biscay. Allied intelligence reports placed the number of German troops strung along this line at 5,000. The discussions revealed a force four times as large.

Elster had, in late August, rounded up the 20,000 Wehrmacht, Luftwaffe and Marine troops along the Spanish border and Bay of Biscay. As the entourage made its way north, it acquired 400 civilian automobiles, 500 trucks and 1,000 horse-drawn vehicles.

The Seventh Army, operating in the south of France, and the fast moving columns of the Third Army dashing for the West Wall, put Elster's polyglot force in a tail-end position. Stretching 30 miles along the road, nipped by the Maquis and with the 9th Air Force reducing the rolling stock to scrap metal, Elster and his troops felt as trapped as a man in a midlife crisis.

The Belgian bluffing Elster into believing that there were two American battalions and they were ready to oblige. He then reported back to Magill, who had no authority to negotiate a surrender. Further, he was out of radio range.

Magill's only option was to ferry across the river and dash for headquarters, 45 miles away. He had

but 12 hours to make the trip, receive his orders and get back to France for his meeting with Elster.

At 5:30 a.m. the next morning, the lieutenant woke up his commanders, Col. Pete Crabill and Major Gen. Robert Macon, to talk about the surrender of 20,000 Germans.

"I don't think they believed this back at the Third Army," Magill said in the 1994 interview. "They thought it was some harebrained thing this lieutenant had thought up."

Crabill nevertheless sent a message to Army headquarters to request other high officials go to Issoudun to talk surrender terms with Elster. Macon agreed to accompany Magill to the village, but doubted the lieutenant's story.

Magill also talked the Ninth Air Force into providing a show of air power during the meeting with Elster. He arranged signals — a white panel if they were to withhold bombs; a red panel if an attack was needed.

Back at the village, Magill, the Belgian translator, a British major and Frenchman on a motorcycle met at the bridge. It was the Frenchman's job to rush to the designated spot and place the appropriate signal panel for the pilots.

"I was really concerned when we got to the bridge. Across the river on the bank there were machine gun positions, mortars back in the trees. That's when I figured it was a trap and we wouldn't get out," Magill recalled.

The four Germans came out of the house — Major Gen. Elster and his chief of staff. They began negotiating through the Belgian; Magill kept one eye on the sky and the other on the guns across the bank. Finally, 16 American aircraft appeared on the horizon. Magill panicked when it occurred to him that he did not know if the Ninth Air Force was fulfilling his request or running reconnaissance. If it were the later, he could expect the bombs to start falling.

"BLANC!" yelled Magill at the Frenchman, who dashed off on his motorcycle to spread the white signal.

The Germans surrendered. Macon, Crabill and other officers of the Ninth Army arrived and worked out the details of the surrender. Macon later told Magill that President Dwight Eisenhower had ordered full support of Magill's operation. And Macon told Magill that his personal opinion of the situation was that he'd

never make it out of the rendezvous point alive.

Thus, without firing a shot, Magill and his platoon worked out the capture of 19,360 troops, hundreds of vehicles and 4,500 machine guns.

Their immediate reward: A 24-hour pass.

Liberating force

Magill observed that the significance of what he did in France would be lost to future generations because there was not a fierce, bloody battle with huge loss of life. For Magill, the significance of the surrender was 19,360 fewer German soldiers and guns with which to kill Allies at the Siegfried line. And, at the end of the war, there were thousands of fathers and sons and husbands who would return to their families and help rebuild their lives.

"Today, there are thousands of young men and women whose fathers and grandfathers were among those young men who would have been wiped out," he said in 1994.

Magill's experience with a German general who wanted to retain his honor, as well as his contact with the foot soldiers who surrendered that day, gave him an appreciation for the the German officer and soldier that other GIs could not gain.

"I began, over the period of time that I was there, to understand the difference between the ultra-nationalists and the average German military man. There really was very little difference between them and us; they were just better disciplined," he said.

Success seemed to be the lot of Magill's platoon as they continued their push farther into France and on into Belgium and Germany. In January 1945 the patrol captured 50 Germans in Bovigny, Belgium. In Germany, during the drive from the Rhine to the Elbe, the platoon discovered a large political prison camp, one of Hitler's underground war factories. The hell hole entrapped 1,500 political prisoners who were literally being worked to death.

East of the Elbe River, in April 1945, the platoon made a truce with the German troops and passed through a mine field to evacuate prisoners of war. The first to be removed were 1,200 Americans from the 106th Division. Hundreds of European prisoners also were

See MAGILL, C7

Magill

Continued from C1

liberated.

Magill, in a 1994 interview, said those two acts of rescue overshadowed what he accomplished in France.

"You fight the war from day to day. In our position as a reconnaissance operation, every step we took could have been our last one. We never thought it being about a heroic deed or medals," he said.

Sam Magill returned to Ashtabula County a war hero. On Oct. 18, 1945, a crowd of 2,000 gathered at the New York Central Railroad depot in Ashtabula to get a glimpse of the hometown hero they had been reading about in the national newspapers.

Back in Ashtabula, Magill settled into civilian life, but when the Korean War erupted, he re-enlisted and served in numerous intelligence and security positions. That led to work in film production — Magill served as a technical adviser, dialogue coach and assistant director of a number of films, including "Brass Target," "The Never Ending Story,"

"Babes in Toyland" and "War and Remembrance," a television mini-series.

His own story almost became the subject of a motion picture twice, but the studios backed out. Magill felt the absence of blood and violence made the executives shy away from his story. Nevertheless, in February 1955, Magill was the surprised guest on Ralph Edward's "This is Your Life" TV show. Members of his family and his former platoon were united with Magill in the television studio for the live broadcast.

Magill's greatest accomplishment during the war may have been the way he protected his men. The platoon, which was placed in danger virtually every day, lost just one man.

"At the beginning, when we were landing the crafts and tanks, I told the men a few of the rules, and one of them was, 'Never leave a wounded man if there is any possible way to drag him back.' All throughout the war, I lost only one man, killed. Several even went AWOL from their hospital beds so they could get back to the platoon. We had a team *esprit de corps*," Magill said.



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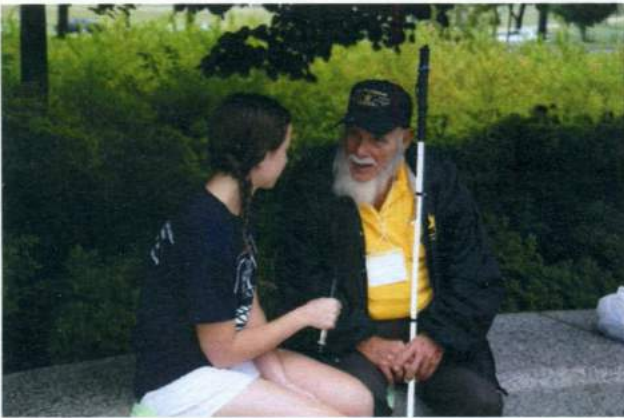
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