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THE TWENTY-NINER

Vol. 59, No. 3

Autumn/Winter 2015

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BG Ortner joins us in Fredericksburg, VA

The 29th Division Association held its 97th National Reunion and Convention during the period 15-18 October 2015 at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House in Fredericksburg, Virginia.

The area where our event was held is known as "Central Park". It boasts a multitude of shopping and dining establishments all in close proximity to Interstate 95.

Unfortunately, our National Commander, I. John Vaccarino was unable to attend our event. About a week before the convention, John was hospitalized with a heart ailment and forbidden by his doctors to attend our event.

He underwent one medical procedure prior to our con-



Brig. Gen. Blake C. Ortner
Commanding General
29th Infantry Division

vention and had surgery a few days after our event. We are happy to say that his operations were successful and that John is now trying to resume his active lifestyle.

We lament the fact that he was unable to attend and

officialate at our convention. John did most of the work in coordinating and planning this event and we are sorry that he was unable to enjoy the result of his efforts.

Incoming Commander David Ginsburg has pledged that he will set aside time at the convention next year to honor John for his dedicated work during his tenure as our national commander.

Attendees started arriving on Thursday afternoon. They were directed to the Hospitality Room which was ably hosted by Post 64.

Special thanks go out to PNC Bill & Juanita King; NJVC Frank & Nancy Dillon; Jeff & Chris Banik; Dick & Diane Raymond and Blonnie

(Continued on page 13)



Photos by Robert Wisch

97th National Reunion and Convention attendees gather outside of the National Museum of the Marine Corps for a group photo.

MEET YOUR NEW COMMANDER**David H. Ginsburg**

I cannot put into words how humbling it is to be the new National Commander of the 29th Division Association. I am following many people that were famous leaders of the 29th Division or great National Commanders.

A little about myself - I have been the Commander of Larkspur Post 110 in Pikesville, MD for the last 4 years, and was recently reelected to another 2 year term. It is an amazing post made up of most 110th Field Artillery veterans and other units that were based at the Pikesville Military Reservation, in Maryland.

My journey through the Association is mainly due to one person – PNC Robert Moscati. Bob has been a friend and mentor through this entire process, despite his trickery in getting me to accept the Vice Commander post at 110 six years ago.

I joined the Maryland Army National Guard in 1984 as a Forward Observer in the 110th FA. During that time, I called for fire or planned fire support, working with the mortar sections of all 4 infantry battalions (1st and 2nd of the 115th and 1 and 2nd of the 175th) and the 110th Field Artillery. Unfortunately, my civilian life had me traveling internationally on a monthly basis and I had to quit the Guard after 10 years of service.

In my civilian life I am a Senior Director of Partnerships

and Strategic Accounts at an IT Company based in NJ though I work remotely for them out of Owings Mills, MD. I have been in the software industry since 1987 when I became a test engineer for a defense contractor. I graduated in 1990 from UMBC with a BA degree.

I am very busy with my 2 kids, Rebekah and Daniel and Amy's 2 sons, Dylan and Jared. For hobbies, I play soccer a couple times a week and hold a brown belt in Kenpo Karate. I am also a member of the Board of Directors of the Maryland Military Historical Society.

Since becoming the Futures Committee Chairman as the National Junior Vice - Commander 2 years ago, we have worked very hard to provide more resources to recruit members into the Association and help people find the Association and what we do.

Everything we have done has been aimed to help the posts recruit and keep their members and to help communications. Many of these endeavors have already been launched such as the ability for people to join through the website, pay their dues with a credit or debit card,

and the unit histories which both carry on a key part of the Preamble, as well as help outsiders find our Association through searches on the web for 29th unit histories.

Another initiative was the Post Commander's Workshop. It was created for 2 key reasons – to give a reason for the posts to send more people to the convention and more importantly, to give the posts a chance to brainstorm challenges that face many of the posts and be able to disseminate ideas that have worked with some of the posts. Our first Workshop was in 2014 and was attended by 14 posts, some of which hadn't sent representatives in years and we just concluded our 2nd one this year and it was attended by 13 of the posts. My goal is to have 15 or more posts attend in 2016.

There are 2 more initiatives being launched – the Communications Committee and the expansion of the *Chin Strap*.

The Communications Committee was the brainstorm of Maryland Region Commander Frank Rauschenberg. It was created to solve the problem that the Association doesn't promote itself very well. The purpose is to create collateral for posts to use to tell the 29th's history, as well as help with recruiting. It hopes to create a video recording about the 29th and the Association that posts can use for events and with speakers, and hopefully create a 4 panel traveling dis-

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Editor/Publisher — William S. Mund, Jr.
441 Chalfonte Dr., Baltimore, MD 21228-4017
443-529-4233 — edit-pub29er@hotmail.com

Editor *Emeritus* — Donald McKee
305 Northwest Dr., Silver Spring, MD 20901-1227
301-593-4591 — mckee175@netscape.com

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Contributions to the *Twenty-Niner* Sustaining Fund

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our membership for their generosity in contributing to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund* for this Autumn/Winter issue. From July 1, 2015 through October 31, 2015, these donations totaled \$7,126.80. Note our cut-off time. If your contributions did not reach our National Executive Director by October 31, 2015, then it will not be listed until the next issue. We thank you all and bless you.

Byrne, Tom, Post 93, Associate, Wellesley MA
Cresap's Rifles Post 78, Frederick MD

In memory of John A. Routzahn, B/1-115, Frederick MD

Dillon, L. Frank, Post 64, HQ/116, Boones Mill VA
Florida West Post 2, Sarasota FL

In honor of Post #2's D-DAY Veterans

France, John M., Post 94, Son, Oro Valley, AZ
Headquarters Post 29, Baltimore MD

Healy, Cornelius F., Post 93, Associate, Stoneham MA
Hopkins, Charles A. P., Post 88, 175th Inf, Cambridge MD
Hopkins, Martha, Widow, Darlington MD
Jarvis, Cary L., Post 5, B/111FA, Virginia Beach VA

In memory of Major De Camps, 111th FA, 29th Division

Jordan, Richard F. Jr. Post 729, B/729MT, Hagerstown, MD

In memory of CWO Richard "Dick" Jordan, Post 729

Kelley, Kevin, A., Post 94, HQ 29ID(L), Alexandria, VA
Kruhm, Fred N., Post 94, C/121 ENG, Burtonsville, MD
Linthicum, George E., Post 72, C/175, Lutherville MD

In memory of PNC Sam Krauss, Post 1, A/116

Larkspur Post 110, Pikesville MD

In memory of Harry Wehr, HQ/2-110th FA, Cambridge MD

Larkspur Post 110, Pikesville MD

In memory of William Simms, Divarty, Reisterstown MD

Larkspur Post 110, Pikesville MD

In Memory of Traver Thomas, Divarty, Baltimore MD

Larkspur Post 110, Pikesville MD

In memory of Charlie Black, A/2-110 FA, Westminster MD

Martin, Archer N., Post 110, HQ/110FA, Penn Yan NY
Maupin, Charles A., Post 94, HQ 3/175, Columbus, GA
Miles, Earl E., Post 2, A/115, Dinuba CA
Taylor, Steven G., Post 94, Associate, Sissenville, WV
Thomas, Taylor W., Post 2, D/175, Sarasota FL

In memory of Ed Kent, Post 2, 4th Div D-Day, Englewood FL

Walls, Daniel, Post 94, Mt. Brook, AL
Whalen, Robert, Post 94, St. Louis, MO

French Legion of Honor Recipients

The Editorial Staff of the *Twenty-Niner* and the entire membership of the 29th Division Association congratulate the following association members who have been awarded the French Legion of Honor. We commend the government of the Republic of France for their noble effort to honor these members of the 29th Division Association.

Earll, Arden

H Company, 116th Infantry
Corry, Pennsylvania
Post 64

Jarvis, Cary L.

C Battery, 111th Field Artillery
Virginia Beach, VA
Post 5

Lansing, Wayne E.

B Company, 821st TD
Portland, Oregon
Post 94

Sandler, Henry M.

Anti-Tank Co., 116th Infantry
Ft. Lauderdale, FL
Post 64

Locator Forum

Trying to find someone???
Looking for relatives of a soldier???
Please contact the editor at:

edit-pub29er@hotmail.com or
duster197329@gmail.com

or see the contact information for the editor listed on page 2.

Thank you for your donations to the "Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund". They are greatly appreciated and help keep the newsletter coming. Please continue to support our upcoming issues. Donations can be sent to:

Editor William Mund

P.O. Box 47634,

Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634

*Without our generous readers,
we could not exist. Thanks again!*

TAPS

The following list shows names of known 29ers and their ladies or family members who died and their deaths reported from July 1, 2015 through October 31, 2015. We are indeed saddened and mourn their passing. We extend our deepest sympathy and love to their families and loved ones. We pray that they and all of our earlier deceased 29ers and ladies may rest in peace. Amen.

LAST ROLL CALL

Black, Charlie, Post 110, A/110FA, Westminster MD, 8/14/15
 Britt, Hillar L, Post 94, L/115, Satellite Beach FL, 12/30/15
 Broderick, William J, Post 2, Med/175, Naples FL, 9/11/15
 Brown, John H, Post 48, Associate, Westminster MD Dt Unk
 Brown, Richard H, Post 1, A/110FA, Scituate MA, 7/1/15
 Clay, Reuben E, Post 85, Associate, Elkton MD, 9/2/15
 Cox, Austin H, Post 88, L/115, Crisfield MD, 9/11/15
 Creighton, Everett, Post 88, K/115, Cambridge MD, 7/10/15
 DeSpain, Charles F, Post 48, 729Ord, South Gate CA, Dt Unk
 Dougherty, Joseph H, Post 27, H/116, Mulberry FL, Dt Unk
 Ebersole, Kenneth E, A/729ORD, Waynesboro PA, 9/20/15
 Griffin, Kenneth W, Post 94, G/115, Frankfort NY, 3/12/15
 Hicks, George G, Post 64, Associate, Roanoke VA, 9/23/15
 Jones, Ernest L, Post 48, A/2-110FA, Westminster, MD 12/25/14
 Kent, Edward P, Post 2, Associate, Englewood FL, 8/5/15
 Laborde, Lucian P, Post 2, HQ/115, Hamburg LA, 8/28/15
 Mank, William C, Post 94, 747TNK, Glen Arm MD, 3/30/15
 Mellon, Donald E., Post 2, AT/116, Jenson Beach FL, 6/10/15
 Nabb, Alfree E, Post 85, Associate, Middletown DE, 9/30/15
 Oakman, Carlton, Post 48, A/2-110FA, Baltimore MD, 7/4/15
 Pensock, Robert S, Post 72, Associate, Haxel Tnship PA, 3/7/15
 Price, Edward C, 175th INF, Chambersburg PA, 9/29/15
 Routzahn, John A, Post 78, A/1-115, Frederick MD, 7/4/15
 Schuyler, Willard W, Post 88, Assoc, Cambridge MD, 10/22/15
 Stone, Robert S, Med/115, Frederick MD, 7/11/15
 Stover, Russell T, Post 64, L/115, Belleville PA, 8/13/15
 Sulhoff, John E, TNK/115, Owings MD, 5/15/15
 Thomas, Taylor W, Post 2, D/175, Sarasota FL, 10/5/15
 Thomas, Trevor P, Post 110, Divarty, Baltimore MD, 8/8/15

LADIES

Duncan, Elsie M, Wife, Ashburn VA, 8/2/15
 Gibson, Fay, Widow, Perryville MD, 12/15/13
 Stackowitz, Margaret, Widow, Trevorton PA, 8/2/15

LEST WE FORGET

It was decided long ago, that as long as two 29ers survive, we shall remember and honor our comrades and ladies who have passed to the great beyond. You have just read a list of 29 comrades and 3 ladies who have died and whose deaths were reported to us since our last publication. This includes 4 comrades who were not members of our association but were members of our 29th family. This is how it should be. We ask survivors, friends, Post and Region Officers to forward information, as complete as possible, on the deceased to the National Executive Director so that we can include them in the next issue of *The Twenty-Niner* and in the National Reunion Memorial Service. This will only be possible with your help.

William S. Mund, Jr., National Executive Director
 441 Chalfonte Drive, Baltimore MD, 21228-4017
 Telephone 443-529-4233
 E-mail: edit-pub29er@hotmail.com

Rev. John Schildt, National Chaplain
 P.O. Box 145, Sharpsburg Md. 21782-0145
 Telephone 301-432-0087

Robert W. Moscati, Asst. to the Nat Exec Dir
 1910 Calais Ct., Windsor Mill Md. 21244-1707
 Telephone 410-944-1639
 E-Mail: Rmoscati@msn.com

Legion of Honor Recipients

In recognition of the French government's noble effort to award the Legion of Honor to our members who participated in the liberation of France during the Second World War, the editorial staff of the *Twenty-Niner* wishes to publish the names of those recipients in the upcoming issues.

29th Association members who have received this award must submit the following information:

Name:
 Unit served in:
 Current address (City and State):
 Post number:
 Date award was received:

Please submit this information to the address listed below:

William S. Mund, Jr.
 441 Chalfonte Drive
 Baltimore, MD 21228
edit-pub29er@hotmail.com

Note: If you've already submitted your name and it has been published, please do not submit it again.

I'll Be Home for the Christmas Rush

Letters from Europe 1944-45

Edited by David R. Hoffman, PO Box 247, Harrisburg, PA 17108
traugott928@comcast.net

These are excerpts from letters my Dad sent home while he was in Europe during 1944 and 1945. They are excerpted from the book I'LL BE HOME FOR THE CHRISTMAS RUSH, which may be ordered through booksellers, purchased directly from Merriam Press, the publisher, or the author of this article.

Our family lived in Brownwood, Texas, where Dad had joined the Texas National Guard in 1926, and had risen from Private to Captain. The 36th Division, Texas National Guard, had been ordered to active duty in November 1940, and shortly after mobilization he had been promoted to Major. Dad trained with the activated Division in Texas, Louisiana, Florida, and Massachusetts, and missed sailing to North Africa with the 36th because of the need for surgery. He was sent to Camp Hood, in Texas, for surgery and was subsequently assigned to temporary positions in Camp Maxie and Camp Howze, then Camp Bowie, all in Texas. In March 1944 he received his orders to travel to the East Coast in order to sail to Europe.



The letters begin when Dad was 42 years old. Mother, 43, was in hospital recovering from surgery. Frances was 11, and I was 9. All excerpted here began "Dear Adelaide" and ended "Love, Al".

Dad wrote a V-mail from the ship which carried him across the Atlantic:

We are nearing the end of a rather uneventful journey. I didn't even get seasick and didn't miss but one meal so I can't complain about my cold... My quarters were much better and more private than I expected. Almost like a second rate hotel. Even had fresh water for bathing. The food has been plentiful and very good but I have managed to "stretch" my belt two inches so far. There isn't much more I can say at this time and not even much assurance that we can send cables for a few more weeks. Meanwhile I'll try to write you as often as I can. Hope you are feeling fit again... Did your Easter flowers arrive in time? Hug the kids for me.

He probably landed in Scotland, and moved by train to Bristol, from remarks in his subsequent letters: the next several came from a replacement depot:

We had a nice long train ride that was very interesting. The climate is rather favorable for vegetation. Everything is getting

green. Farmers keep field and wood lots cleaned up and cultivated right up to the hedgerows which make a very pretty country side. One sees practically no houses like the old English prints. Buildings may be old and aged by smoke and weather but some-

how they look clean. Gardens, both fruit, flower and vegetable, are everywhere and about as advanced as ours at home. I was surprised to see so many collards growing everywhere. Sheep have wool more like mohair, probably due to excessive moisture. We passed through some places which have been heavily bombed. That and other things makes one realize the forti-

tude of the people. Nearly every one works. One sees women and boys at hard dirty labor.

Even we are rationed at our P.X.s. We get seven packs of cigarettes, one bar of soap, one razor blade and two bars of candy per week. The big city papers have only four pages and very little advertising and about half of that is for American products.

I didn't say where we were in my last letter, but it is OK to say Great Britain. Dad and you and I'm getting tired of trying to say the same thing in different words so I might as well stop now and hope there will be more I can write next time. I still love you even if "them" old words.

We are temporarily stationed at a replacement depot in one of the larger cities of the United Kingdom. The place is sufficiently large enough to accommodate us very nicely. We are a little crowded for quarters but the grounds are fine. As with most of the larger establishments of older Britain, the place has a high stone wall around it which adds quite a lot to the atmosphere surrounding these old buildings. Stone floors part of the way, high ceilings, enclosed courtyards, antiquated plumbing, added after the buildings were completed are all indicative of the age of this place. We will be here only a short while before being sent to our assignments.

Where that will be, no one knows until the order is published. However we were given to understand that the quarters won't be anywhere as good as these. Nor will we be as near to any large cities. Therefore I'm taking advantage of every pass night we get. So far, I was out Sunday afternoon, Monday from 6 PM to 11 PM and tonight again the same as Monday. As it doesn't get dark until after 10 PM, one can see a lot of sights. The last bus leaves town at just about 10 so it works out very nicely.

I spent Sunday PM looking over some of the sights, visiting the museum, and taking in my first afternoon tea. It is served with milk and sugar. Fortunately I saw some before mine was served so asked for it unsweetened and without milk. The waitress looked shocked and was even more shocked when I asked for a glass of water. They served buttered bread and some faintly sweetened stiff dough biscuits which they called cakes. Maybe the war has curtailed the things they can serve with tea, but I think I will pass it up from now on. Foodstuffs are still much scarcer and much more strictly rationed than in the states, so I am trying to avoid eating in civilian places. Some of the officers have tried it and reported that they had a choice of Spam or tripe and potatoes. Others went to one of the best hotels and had no choice. They just brought in what they had and it wasn't much either in quality or quantity. Civilians present received the same treatment so there just isn't any more. Our food from our own kitchens is just about what we received in the states except for the bread, which is bought locally and is war bread. (Very good though.) I can't complain so far and don't believe I could when I see so much of the things people don't have. Even the powdered eggs are still palatable.

We have to do our own washing. Laundries are two to three weeks behind and deliveries take a week or more. The post has recently acquired a steam press but that takes 3 or 4 days before one can get clothes pressed. I washed the uniforms I wore on the boat in a water bucket and got a fairly good job of pressing. So far I manage to keep ahead by washing my underwear and socks every time I take a bath. Have had two with hot water and the rest cold. First come, first served. This plumbing system wasn't designed for so large a number of people who have different customs of bathing and shaving.

This is one of the oldest cities of Britain and dates back to the 10th century with even some earlier history. It has a lot of old churches and some that look quite modern. Two famous cathedrals and a place where St. Augustine preached during his travels in the Islands. The city is rich in other history and fortunately a lot of places have escaped the bombing raids which were rather severe in the earlier years of the war. There have been none in nearly two years although the Germans claim otherwise.

I started this yesterday. Since then my locker and bedding roll have arrived and I feel a little more at ease. Some officers had left here without receiving their baggage and that means that they might have to wait another week or two before it catches up with them. I didn't really need them as I have long since learned to live out of my hand baggage, but if we don't stop these marches everyday, I'll need some more shoes before long.

I can't write much more now. You understand why and won't feel too badly if I have to wait a long time before I can tell you a lot of things you would like to know. We are kept fairly busy dur-

ing the day time and have passes every other night until 11 PM so I'm seeing what I can and will have that much more to tell you. You know I missed a lot of English history and geography while I was in school and now is my chance to catch up on some of it. Some day you can have the low down too.

We have a small lounge room and can occasionally find an unoccupied chair and once in a while can get a warm coke if we are early in the line. Speaking of line or queues as the English call them, we queue up for everything-meals, baths, shaving, toilets, washing clothes, P.X. and even what sells for beer in the local pubs. The beer is a very insipid infusion that doesn't even remotely resemble the stuff in the States... Hope to get some mail soon.

A month after sailing for Europe, Dad received his first mail from home, letters from Mother and his brother August. He was able to write frequently although because of censorship rules which he followed strictly, still could not write to say where he was.

Our mail has started coming through... Saw my first cricket match Sunday afternoon. Can't say much for it but if the natives like it it's O.K. with me just so as we don't have to bring it back to the States with us. Had another march today. If this keeps up we will soon get to see most of the city on our daily marches.

As you can see from my address there still is no change. Same old place, doing the same old things of trying to make me put in the required numbers of hours each day. I suppose some of us will have the opportunity to look back with fond memories upon our stay here. I find it interesting but it could easily be depressing if one had to stay here too long. Some of the people are very cordial and try to make us feel welcome but others don't even try to conceal their displeasure at having to endure these barbarians. I can't say that I blame them much after my experiences with "Brooklyn Bums" and "Jersey Jerks." It might be "war nerves" or just plain British free speech but I have noticed that people in general and the newspapers in particular say what they think on any subject from growing onions to the king and Churchill. Speaking of newspapers, we can get "Time" and "Newsweek" at our P.X. Usually two to three weeks old, but nevertheless it is welcome and keeps us posted after a fashion. When I get a permanent A.P.O. I want to subscribe to them... I am still well and able to eat and sleep. Scales suggest that I have gained a pound or two so don't worry.

I have been cold all of the time except when I am in bed. One can't dress for the weather because we get too warm after we start moving. Apparently the danger of frost is not over as newspapers do not advise setting out tomato plants until after May. Am going to try to get off some afternoon this week and get to town before the shops (stores to you) close and try to find a few little things to send to you and the kids. I didn't know why the shops don't stay open every day nor do they open at the same hours. It may be war measures but it looks as if they are missing something not staying open as about half of the people are on the streets are American service men. Picture shows open at 6:15 for one showing of some old American film and the last buses leave town before 10 P.M. Mail only once since we have been here but should get some more this week.

I hope by the time you get this that we'll have a new A.P.O. Some of us are moving to another depot but don't know just what

we will do or how long we will be there. I can't say much now, but I am remembering a lot of things that will make good talking when it is safe to talk or write. It was tough being unassigned in the states but at least one had a job that made one feel that they were contributing to the war effort. It is different over here. One either does nothing but time killing jobs or some sort of exercise. I realize that the job ahead requires months of planning and more months of preparation but it doesn't make it any easier waiting to get back with some honest-to-God field soldiers who know the game and know the score.

So far I haven't asked you to send me anything. I still have my coffee and was able to buy a can of Nescafe at the P.X. so that fixes me up O.K. ,,,"would like a carton of cigarettes once in a while. Our ration isn't quite as much as I smoke now, but I may cut down. *[Cigarettes were part of daily rations for men in combat, but not for those waiting. Dad never did cut down on smoking.]*

Well I've just had my first hot comfortable shower since we landed. The place where we were first located had out-of-date plumbing and the water was almost always cold. If it was hot, the valves were out of order and the opening of one cold water tap would take all the cold water out of the showers and we were in danger of being scalded. Today's shower was at a traveling bath unit which has been visiting this camp once a week. It is all open air and one has to go down hill 1,000 ft. and then climb back up and get all sweaty but it's worth it. The water is just right and there is plenty of it. In fact it's one of the two ways to get warm here. The other way is to get into bed. If the wind dies down and the sun is out it's comfortable enough but after sunset it's cold. We've had ice several nights. I wouldn't take \$100 for my sleeping bag and air mattress and could sell it for that any time I want to. Still no prospect for an assignment soon.

This is supposed to be a day of rest but it is really an opportunity to catch up on a lot of personal things. I didn't get up until 8 A.M. Imagine that. When this is all over I'm going to spend a week in a good bed and never get up. The sun was out and really hot for a change so I sunned my bedding, soaped and shined all of my shoes and have just finished letters to the family. Received a V-Mail from Elizabeth and two from you... I also did some washing. Have to keep at it so I will be able to get along for a few weeks if necessary. One of the officers had made arrangements with some of the civilians nearby to do some of our washing. We have to furnish the soap and pay a little more than laundry prices in the states but it's worth it once in a while just to get things boiled and ironed. English laundries and dry cleaners don't take work every day. Some are able to give two weeks service so we just don't take chances on any of these. Send cigarettes as you can, only get five pkg. a week now.

Still alive and kicking. That's about all there is to report at this time. After all that is the main thing you are interested in, I hope. Some of the Majors have left this depot for better places I hope. If I never see any heather again during this war, it will be O.K. with me. It is a small plant about a foot high, very tough and viewed singly it looks like a small cedar. Our hill is completely covered with it. So far it hasn't bloomed. It may be too early for we still have frosts, but the natives say it's real pretty. There are a lot of pretty wild flowers down in the valley. I don't know what



Back row: Dad's younger brother August, then Dad;
front row; youngest brother Victor, father Adolf, mother Martha,
sister Elizabeth. Date uncertain but probably late 1919.

they are but some look like velvet begonias. There is one iris-like flower that reminds me of bluebonnets at a distance. Great patches on the cleared hillside across the narrow valley just north of our tent. We have six to a tent, no stove or lights, so I have to get out and walk to keep from freezing or going nuts. It could be worse, but I hope I get an assignment soon.

I rather imagine that you have been comfortably warm today and are now relaxed after a good dinner which included ripe berries and some fresh vegetables. We have just finished a late supper of steak, potatoes and carrots and what passes for coffee. After a rather boring afternoon the permanent commanders, their staffs and the replacement field officers have been to a tea at the home of some British Colonel. It was rather nice but I didn't like being ordered to go. Just imagine about 50 upper crust Britons and a few more than that of brash Americans sparring each other and watching our Ps and Qs so we wouldn't commit any grave social errors. Both sides have the makings of an international incident when used in mixed British and American company. Hope mail is reaching you O.K. now.

Still no news to tell you as you can see from my A.P.O. number. That's about the most important thing to me at the moment. I want an assignment somewhere. This business of putting in time in some replacement depot where one is neither fish nor fowl is driving me cuckoo. There are plenty of those kinds around here. Also nightingales and I hear them every night but give me an old Texas mockingbird perched high in a tree on a moonlight summer night and someone can have all the nightingales in England. Their song resembles a mockingbird but it just doesn't have as many notes. Keeping well and have been able to eat every chance I get so you see it could be a lot worse even if it is cold and wet most of the time. Love, Al

At last the war is shaping up and I have gained something I have wanted for several years. It's a Zippo cigarette lighter and almost worth the trip over to get it. No matter how hard the wind blows, I can get a light and can even use plain gasoline for fuel if necessary. They have been unobtainable in the states for nearly two years. *[Zippo windproof cigarette lighters were first made in the early 1930s. When the United States entered World War II, the Zippo Company suspended production for the civilian market and devoted all of its production to meeting the needs of military*

personnel.] Took a walk tonight after supper. We passed several nice flocks of sheep and a few beef cattle. These cattle looked good enough to eat—i.e. about two lb. broiled steak would be just about right. We have had steak twice but it was fried, however, it tasted very good. Canned peas and spinach greet us about eight times a week, but are still better than the food during the last war. Love, Al

Finally, a few days before D-Day, Dad was assigned to the 29th Division, although in a temporary position, to be ready to step in to replace a combat casualty.

(June 2, 1944)...I have had to neglect you shamefully the past week but I believe you will forgive me when you hear that I am out of a depot at last. After some starts and a lot of delays I am at last with an Infantry Division and you know how long I have wanted that. Over 14 months in all sorts of places and jobs may make me a little rusty but I believe that I can fit in as soon as I learn some of their local rules and policies.

The best thing is that they seem glad to have you and make me feel welcome. I don't know just what I am to do although I suspect I will know before long. My guess is to go to some regiment eventually but now I'm just getting acquainted and sort of getting my feet on the ground. This is a National Guard outfit originally from Virginia and Maryland and in that neck of the woods. Seems to be a pretty good outfit from what I've seen.

So far I have managed to get along on our ration at the P.X. except for cigarettes. You may use this for authority to send me a carton if you need such a thing.

There isn't much that I can tell you except my new address... Don't forget the serial no. as there is another Major Hoffman in the outfit. Haven't met him yet but I hear he is a regular fellow.

Keep your chin up and no matter what happens, remember one thing. I love you and want to live and that those who want to live have the best chance. What I'm doing is for you and the kids and the kind of life we have wanted and will have again some day. Soon—I hope. Remember that I have said I would be back in the office again before Christmas 1945. Hug the kids for me and tell Dad I love him too. Hope he gets his Father's Day gift on time.

(June 4)...This has been a long day but I have managed to write to the brothers and sister, and you, Have also done a little mending and have had a hot bath in a real tub. Our quarters are in a small cottage with one tub for about 20 but we manage. This is about as comfortable as I hope to be for the duration and really wouldn't be bad at all if we could be together. The home is about like ours except for the floors which must have had carpets on them before the house was changed to billets. We are in a large town again and had a chance to go in until 10:30 last night. Had a fairly good dinner and a few dances with an Englishwoman. I can't say much for their dancing, but the Red Cross Club is a bit of America even if a lot of the workers are English. It is the first one I had a chance to visit. They don't have Clubs for officers everywhere but E.M. have them in about every good sized town. Still like the outfit and have a job for the time being. May get something else before long that may lead somewhere to another leaf. *[Dad did not get that wish until he returned to the post-war Texas National Guard as a Lieutenant Colonel and Battalion Commander.]*

(June 8, two days after D-Day) ...How did the news strike you? People here took it rather calmly and with somewhat of a feeling of relief after all these years of waiting and preparation. *[Dad did not get to Normandy until June 9.]* There doesn't seem to be too much of expression but one can't help but sense the grim determination to keep pushing until it is all over. I can't tell you much about what I've seen or what I am doing but it will make a good long letter as soon as we are permitted to write about such things. I do have a job for the present and will probably have something more definite in a few weeks.

I am now in a rather nice town. Much more modern than any we have been. Nice homes and shopping district and all that but I still have to see plumbing that works all the time. Our quarters and offices are located in rented residences and small hotels. Some equipment such as furniture and cooking equipment is British and some is GI. Ours is 50 years ahead in every way.

That's about all I can think of now that isn't too confidential. Confidentially I love you and would almost say I like everybody in America if it would help out in getting home again soon after this job is done. Take care of yourself. Keep well and don't worry.

(June 11) ...By the time you get this I may be able to tell you more that will be an occasion for a new series of letters. This has been a rather quiet Sunday partly because I didn't sleep late and also because I didn't have enough to do to keep me busy all day. Because of that I suppose I should have written you a long letter but there is so little I could say that would be safe or that would pass the censor. All I can say now is don't worry. As the time approaches I have no misgivings about anything and I can truthfully say that I have that calm assurance that I shall be able to do a good job and come home again sound and whole. I am not over optimistic but I still believe I'll be back in time to help out in the rush next year. By that time all of this should be over. Things are going good from all we can hear from all fronts.

(June 12) It is safe now to say that the 29th Div. was in on the initial landing and that it has accomplished its mission. Newspapers and radio announcements gave that information last night and we are allowed to mention anything from that source if it's American or British sources. I'm still O.K. and have no worries except mail from you, but I know that is on the way and will be delivered in a few days. I only hope that I can find time to read it before I have to burn my letters again... Had steak for supper tonight. It was good but I was thinking of one of ours broiled on the coals. Saw a Coca Cola sign today and remembered that I had not had one since leaving the States and resolved to fill up as soon as I got back.

(June 13) Nothing new today but I know you will want to know that I'm still alive and kicking. There may be days when I can't write but I'm going to try to get one written every day from now on even if it is only a few lines. Fighting isn't always a 24 hour grind. In some ways it's more restful than the training days as one isn't always on the jump seeing that everyone is busy every minute. We still hurry up to wait but some times the waiting is worse than the hurrying. The papers I'm sending today will give you some idea where the outfit is fighting. You can follow the progress by news reports and a good map of France.

(June 14) Still alive and kicking is about all I can say about the operations so far. Some day, soon I hope, I may be able to

give you more details about the last week or so. I know you are wondering what this is all about. No doubt you know the 29th has been in the thick of things for some time because it's common newspaper knowledge over here and yet you can't understand why or how I have been able to write so often. Nevertheless the outfit has covered itself with glory and will be well represented when the decorations are passed out. My group is safe enough for the present. We are camped under good cover. Some of the tallest oaks I have ever seen and so thick that a bird couldn't see through. Haven't missed a meal or too much sleep either but I have no illusions, especially about the sleep. Still no mail but I hear that it's coming in the next few days. Let me know when you received my cable and these new letters.

(June 20) Note the new address [*Dad was finally assigned to the First Battalion of the 115th Infantry, as Executive Officer*]. I have not received any mail yet but if and when it arrives I'm going to need a lot of time to read it because there ought to be a lot of it. Haven't been able to write the past few days because of the situation but so far have managed to eat all meals and even get a little sleep once in a while for short periods. I need a bath more than anything except mail from you. My impressions of France are more like the US than Britain. It isn't quite so thickly settled where we are and looks pretty good but I'm ready to come home any time they let me. I can't tell you much now but hear that it won't be long before we can tell some of it. I can tell you that I have never imagined the amount of ships, etc. carrying men and material across. The Nazis are tough fighters but I believe we can teach them some things. You know as much as I do about the general things. Love and kisses to all and keep some for yourself.

(June 21) This is supposed to be the beginning of summer but it's more like fall weather at home. I have a suit of cotton underwear under my woolens and then woolen ODs and a field jacket on top of that and even then I shiver most of the time except when I am in the dugout and I'm not scared either now. Have run into several more ex 36ers. The Bn. CO [*Major Glover Johns*] was formerly in the 5th Cavalry Brigade also... I'm still O.K. and have had about as much of the necessities of life as I need... I try not to think about the unpleasant things and have gotten along O.K. so far. Still no mail but one of the fellows was in the same fix and got 46 in one day.

(June 22) We have managed to have a few hot meals lately and most of us get a few hours sleep some time during the day. Have just gotten my hair cut. You wouldn't like it but it is very practical just now. Not quite as short as an overall clip, but I can comb it with my towel. All I need now is a number. You ought to see my bedroom for the past few nights. It's a hole about 3 feet deep and just long enough to stretch out good and wide enough to turn over. I have my comforter and a shelter half for bed clothes and that's enough at this time of the year. Besides I don't want to lose my bag and air mattress if we should have to pull out in a hurry. Sometimes we move too fast to bring up our baggage at night and I'd rather leave mine where it won't be robbed if the guard should move away. Still no mail, but I know it will be here some time. I haven't heard from anybody in 5 weeks.

(June 23) Another day and all's well. I can't say much more, but I believe even that much will help some. I know it would do



Christmas 1942, with Elizabeth, Dad, August, and Victor in rear, and their parents in front.

me a lot of good to hear at least that much from you as I still haven't received any mail... I haven't seen much to write about, but I have seen some of the houses Jerry has gone through. Those that are not wrecked have been strewn with contents evidently in search of valuables or drink. What you read in the papers about them and conditions are true. I hope when this is all over people will come to their senses and keep this old world right side up. Haven't time for much more now so had better sign off and get going.

(June 25) Still O.K. Beginning to get some mail today. I happened to be at the regimental CP and saw them passing out mail and asked if by chance they had some for me as I was sent to this regiment after landing... Your letters are probably floating around some place in the various A.P.O.s that have been handling my mail... This is not what I thought it would be. French civilians only a short distance from the front apparently ignore the fact that they are in danger. The other day I was back about 4 miles and saw a good many all dressed up and walking along the road to a small town a mile or so up the road. Life here seems to be back to normal. Women were scrubbing their steps and hanging out washing as if war were 100 miles away.

(June 30) First time in several days that I've had a chance to write, but everything is O.K. so far... There isn't much more to say now. Still safe and eating at least twice a day and four sometimes when we can get it and stay up late. Did get an Expert Infantry award, a nice little pin. It doesn't mean much as far as combat awards but it does look nice. I'm not out looking for purple hearts or silver stars, just want to do a good job and come home again safe and sound. Be good and take a hot bath for me. I've had one sponge bath since D Day.

(July 3) Finally received mail about dark last night—16 letters from you and several from Elizabeth. I finally finished reading them about 4 A.M. this morning. We are only a few hundred yards from the enemy and have dug in well. Our dugout is big enough to black out so it is possible to use lights. Just got it finished before dark and about that time a runner came up with a big packet of letters for me. I had to wait until I could crawl in and get a light. Just about the time I started we had a little excitement which lasted intermittently for several hours. I read snatches of your letters in between a lot of other activity and cannon fire. It

was just like the movies but I just couldn't put the letters away until morning. Everything finally cleared up and I was able to sleep a little after first daylight. These places are comparatively safe even under heavy shell fire so I can't make my self worry too much. I haven't seen anyone hit if he is properly dug in. In spite of all of that we manage to live fairly comfortably. Hot meals part of the time even if it is warmed up canned stuff.

We had a treat for the past few days. One night we stopped near a collard patch and things were quiet. I walked through the patch and made a midnight snack out of collard leaves. They were good. The first fresh green stuff I've had in over a month. Then I had a pleasant discovery at daylight. We stopped near a huge cherry tree that had been blown over by shell fire and made my breakfast from cherries. They were very good and almost like the big cherries we get at the store.

Some people even get a chance to buy a meal at some farm house only a mile or two from the fighting. These French move right back in as soon as they can. Most places I've seen aren't damaged too much if there aren't too many buildings around.

Fighting isn't continuous all along a front every minute of the day. One spends most of the time feeling around for a time and a place to strike and it's sometimes possible to be still and quiet for several hours at a time. However, there are always things that have to be done and time is short.

Incidentally, this letter is written on captured stationery. We took a place that had a few things left that the enemy couldn't or didn't destroy or move out. My dugout has a small table and a couple of chairs and an oil lamp. Hope we can carry these with us as we move forward.

(July 6) This day shouldn't be too hard to remember as it marks the date of my second sponge bath and even more memorable is the fact that we had fresh white bread for supper. White bread is a treat. While in England we got our bread reverse lend lease. British war bread is O.K. but nothing like our army bread. Now that we are in France, our own bakery companies are beginning to operate and we may soon have bread every time it is possible to bring our meals up front. Since D Day all the rations we have had are C and K with a hard cracker-like biscuit which is very palatable, but not as satisfying as bread. Have been feeling fine and able to sleep most of the time I get the chance although the thump of some of big guns shakes the ground and turns one over some times just by reflex action. It is more noticeable on the air mattress. Incidentally I've been able to use it and my sleeping bag twice. The rest of the time it has been a blanket only.

(July 8) Your package of Kleenex arrived today. Many thanks. I am gradually becoming reconciled that man's wants here below

are very few. Food, shelter and warmth would just about satisfy any of us and we have been able to get those things nearly every day; food, always. This will save my handkerchiefs until I will need them again. We even get all the cigarettes we need so far, but I imagine if and when we are able to get miles from the front they will not be so plentiful. I have been able to spend 50 francs so far for 2 haircuts from our company barber. A franc is worth 2 cents... This part of the country is very similar to England. Small fields and orchards of 1 to 10 acres, each with a hedgerow with earthen walls around it. This makes fighting almost like house to house combat and slows things up considerably at times, but as soon as we have advanced a mile or two the people move back and begin living again. You and the others have asked if there is anything I want. For the present it's letters even though I can't write everybody.

(July 9) Received Frances' letter and yours this morning. I reread both letters and then burned them. That is one thing we all do so Jerry can't get any information. Also one has to travel light and take only the things one needs to fight with and a meal or two. You should see me with my short haircut, helmet, belt with rifle ammunition, pistol, 1st aid pouch, canteen, knife, pistol ammunition, shovel, and hand grenade. I don't even use my field bag or map case, carry

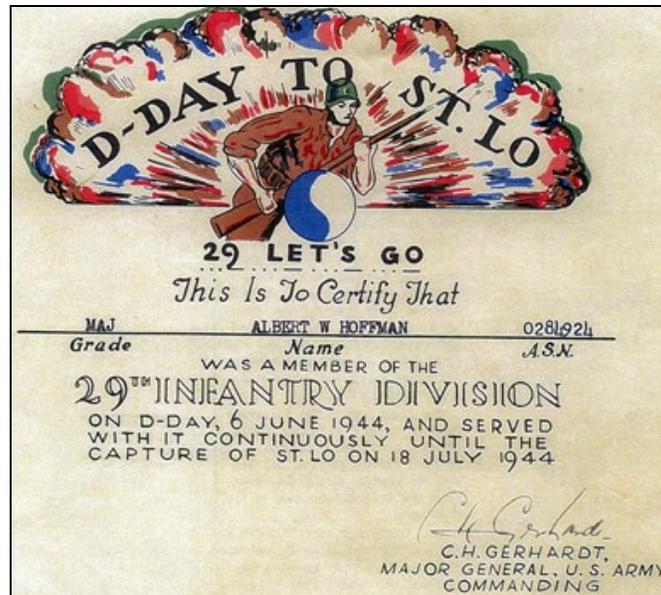
my map in my pocket and a package of K rations in my other pocket. All my other stuff comes up at night or whenever it can. So far it hasn't been too bad, but I'll admit that I look forward to sleeping in a bed again and sitting with you in front of the fireplace and telling you of the things I've seen. I try not to think of that too much right now because I've seen men crack under the strain and apparently lose all control. Those cases are more pitiful than the man who is only wounded. I hope I never have either experience. I love you and want to come back to all of you.

(July 10) Yesterday was a red letter day for me. Two regular air mail letters were delivered to me last night. I didn't have time to answer them right away and since they have been burned I can't be sure of the dates...

Your hot weather would be welcome. Also some of your dry summers. The only time it's warm here is when the sun shines and it's cloudy most of the time. We haven't had any real rainy weather but it rains just often enough to make it disagreeable and the constant dampness goes through everything. Paper and envelopes are especially susceptible.

A few days ago I had a chance to sit in a chair and eat my meal off of a table. I never thought it would make such a difference. I was tempted to just sit and sit and give my shoulders a rest. They get so tired with nothing to lean on except trees or hedgerows. I'm sure that I can sure use that old Morris chair when I get a chance again.

I think of all of you often and want the kids to know that I'm



going to write them soon. Also that I'm doing my best to get this over with so I can come home again.

(July 15) I don't know if I can stay awake long enough to finish this or make much sense out of it. The last four nights have brought little sleep and I've had to stay in pretty close. Had a chance to clean up a little today and got on some clean clothes. Believe it or not I can now wear 36 trousers with comfort. This combat chow isn't conducive to excess weight. It's a lot better than it was in the last war but after so long a time it all tastes alike.

I could use a can or so of Nescafe. It comes in very handy on these nights when one has to be awake all night. We have a small gasoline stove we use in our dugout and it doesn't take long to make coffee. Also helps a lot in heating C rations. So far the cigarettes haven't arrived but I've done all right since leaving England. As long as we are in combat we get plenty. It is only in areas where P.X.s can set up that things are rationed. While in England we would occasionally get only 5 packs a week. So don't send me any more until you hear from me.

Things are looking better for us and it looks as if I may be home by the time I told you and the office gang. It is a long time yet until that date but I don't think it is over conservative.

Better stop now and get some chow. Don't know what it is but it should be good as it's B ration. Then I have a big job ahead. I haven't received a receipt for the money that was to have been sent to you so it may not be on the way. Let me know as soon as it arrives. Hug the kids for me and know I love all of you.

St. Lô, about twenty miles inland, had been a D-Day-Plus-9 objective for the Division, but the Germans mounted a much greater defense of the town than had been anticipated, and St. Lô did not fall until nearly six weeks after the invasion. The 115th Infantry Regiment (Albert was Executive Officer for the 1st Battalion) was the lead unit which finally entered the town. Dad was hit by shrapnel as the town was occupied and was flown back to England in anticipation of quick recovery and return to combat.

(July 20) I hope this reaches you before War Department notification because I don't want you to worry. I'm doing fine and have absolutely no pain. A mortar shell hit near me yesterday morning and I got fragments in my back, thigh and calf of my right leg. I was moved to the rear and flown to England, as are all wounded who need more than 1st aid, before the day was over. I was operated on this morning and had the slugs removed from my wounds and honestly feel fine except for a little stiffness in my leg. The doctor says I'll be out again in about two weeks. This good hot food, good beds and sheets are hard to take. My back aches from being on springs and something soft. I have asked the nurse to just put a few boards in my bed and cover them with earth so I can feel comfortable and get some sleep... Don't worry and just be thankful with me that it wasn't worse. I'm getting penicillin every 4 hours and that bothers me more than my wounds. Chin up and know that I love you.

To be continued in the Spring 2016 edition.

Attention! All Post Adjutants and Finance Officers

New member information should be forwarded to National Headquarters as soon as possible. Some posts send the information weeks and in some cases months later.

This results in the new member not receiving the latest issues of the *Chin Strap* and *Twenty-Niner* to which they are entitled. Email this information to Bob Moscati at rmoscatti@msn.com or by telephone to 410-944-1639. To delay their addition to the mailing lists is a disservice to our new member.

Email addresses are an important tool in lowering the cost of sending the *Chin Strap*. We will now be mailing over 1400 of them. With the increasing prices of printing, envelopes and postage, the costs will continue to rise. We are now emailing the *Chin Strap* to around 450 members. We feel we can double that number and ask all posts to canvas their members for email addresses.

If any members gets a printed copy and would like to get it electronically, email Bob at rmoscatti@msn.com and you will get it quicker and help us reduce costs.

Remember: Do not delay sending in new member information.

Thank you for your cooperation.

SPECIAL NOTICE!

The National Auxiliary desires to honor all former National Auxiliary Presidents.

Therefore, if anyone knows names and term dates, please forward to: Juanita King, NAP. Additionally, any activities and/or information which occurred during their terms would be appreciated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
Please forward to:

JUANITA KING
National Auxiliary President
4715 Glen Ivy Circle SW
Roanoke, Virginia 24018
sargking1@cox.net

Virginia Beach, VA, MP platoon begins federal active duty

VIRGINIA BEACH, VA. — Senior leaders from state government and the Virginia National Guard joined family members, friends and members of the community in bidding farewell to the Virginia Beach-based Delta Platoon, 229th Military Police Company, 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group Oct. 18, 2015, in Virginia Beach, Va., at a ceremony to mark their start of federal active duty.

The platoon of approximately 30 Soldiers will report to Fort Bliss, Texas, for approximately 30 to 45 days of additional training before heading to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, where they are expected to conduct security operations for approximately nine months.

“You are part of a great history,” said Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe. “You are joining a group of 15,000 Virginians who have served our nation and our commonwealth on federal active duty. On behalf of the commonwealth of Virginia, thank you for all that you do, and most important thank you to all the families.”

McAuliffe, Virginia Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran, Deputy Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Adam K. Thiel, Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, Command Sgt. Maj. Alan M. Ferris, Virginia National Guard Senior Enlisted Advisor, and Command Sgt. Maj. Cheyenne Johnson, Virginia Army National Guard Command Sergeant Major, were on hand to bid farewell to the Soldiers and thank them and their families for the service and sacrifice.

“We are in awe of what you are about to do,” Moran said. “Know that the Governor and I are here to express the appreciation of all Virginians. In fact, it may be the only thing that all Virginian can totally agree on during these splintered times is the love, respect and admiration for the jobs that you are about to perform overseas. You make us all very, very proud.”

The platoon will be in support of Joint Task Force – Guantanamo with the mission to conduct safe and humane care and custody of detained enemy combatants.

“This platoon is certainly a fantastic team, and they represent the entire Virginia National Guard,” Williams said. “They are the epitome of the Citizen Soldier. They trained hard, and they will train even harder when they get to Fort Bliss, Texas. They will accord themselves with what we know is that spirit of the Citizen-Soldier: dignity, respect, honor and professionalism. Thank you for what you do and what you are about to do, and thank you to the families for your support in the months ahead.”

“On behalf of my fantastic platoon, I would like to thank everyone for their support,” said 1st Lt. Jennifer Rauch, platoon leader for Delta Platoon. She recognized the support of the American Legion and Family Programs office, and gave a special thanks to family members for their support. “If we didn’t have support at home, we could not do our mission abroad. Your support means a lot to us.”

To prepare for their upcoming federal mobilization, the platoon completed more than 100 pre-mobilization tasks dur-



Family members, friends, members of the community and senior leaders from state government and the Virginia National Guard bid farewell to the Virginia Beach-based Delta Platoon, 229th Military Police Company, 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion, 329th Regional Support Group Oct. 18, 2015, in Virginia Beach, VA.

ing their annual training held Aug. 1-20, 2015, at Fort Pickett, Va. Rauch said there was a highly-effective balance with classroom training where Soldiers were encouraged to actively take part in discussions to enhance their learning along with hands-on field training focused on Army Warrior Tasks and battle drills.

Every Soldier qualified on both the M9 pistol and M4 rifle, a requirement unique to military police Soldiers. In addition, 100 percent of the Soldiers qualified as combat lifesavers, she said. The platoon also completed a number of administrative requirements like equipment issue and medical screenings.

“We have trained tirelessly for the last year, so I can say with confidence we are ready to do the commonwealth of Virginia and the United State of America proud,” Rauch said. “We are excited for this opportunity and excited to get started.”

Soldiers from the Clifton Forge-based 29th Division Band provided music for the departure ceremony and the American Legion provided refreshments for the Soldiers and their guests.

The 229th MP Company last mobilized for federal active duty from August 2009 to July 2010. The unit was expected to provide police training to the Iraqi Police, but was task organized and provided additional training to also conduct protection service detail missions. The unit was also very active in conducting humanitarian missions while in Iraq.

Since September 11, 2001, more than 15,000 Virginia National Guard Soldiers and Airmen have mobilized on federal active duty for homeland security missions and combat operations, sustainment support and peacekeeping in Iraq, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Kosovo and other locations around the world.

*Article and photo by Mr. Cotton Puryear
Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office*

29ers enjoy several sunny days in Fredericksburg, Virginia

(Continued from page 1)

Garrison for their outstanding efforts in providing food and beverages to our attendees.

Late Thursday afternoon, an American Civil War symposium was held by our National Chaplain, Rev. John Schildt

Chaplain Schildt spoke movingly about how the Fredericksburg area suffered through a series of horrific battles during the "War between the States", noting how Fredericksburg was midway between the two capitals of Richmond and Washington.

Friday morning, our bus departed for Quantico, Virginia, and a tour of the National Museum of the Marine Corps. The Marine Corps museum is a huge place with many displays depicting the Marines participation in all of our nation's conflicts. What stood out to this editor was the lifelikeness of the many mannequins.

After boarding the bus, we headed back to Fredericksburg for lunch and a tour of the Blue & Gray Brewery. Both of these Friday events were coordinated by David Ginsburg.

Returning back to the Hospitality House, our attendees were treated to a symposium by our Historian Joe Balkoski.

Joe spoke about several very "important" days nearing the end of the war; i.e. the 29th's meeting with the Russians and the surrender to the 29th of a German command that was responsible for the research and execution of the "V2 Rocket Program".

Later, we gathered in the Washington & Jefferson rooms for a buffet dinner. SRVC Ginsburg welcomed everyone to the convention and implored them to have a good time. Following the buffet, many members headed to the Hospitality Room to socialize.

Saturday morning, our annual business meeting commenced at 0900 hours. Please read the minutes included in this edition beginning on page 34 to see what was discussed and acted on.

The highlight of the meeting was the presentation given by Kati Kissane of Fredericksburg, VA. Kati was the recipient of the 29th Division Association's grant to *Nomandy Allies* enabling her to participate in a trip to Normandy this past July.

Kati spoke about her experiences there and her interaction with the people of Normandy. Please read more about Kati and her presentation on page 26 of this issue.

At this meeting, David H. Ginsburg was elected National Commander of the 29th Division Association.

Following the meeting, the second annual "Post Commander's Workshop" was held. This workshop was conducted by Commander-elect David Ginsburg.

The evening banquet began with Commander-elect David Ginsburg leading everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance. This was followed by a prayer given by Chaplain Schildt.

After dinner, Commander-elect Ginsburg thanked those who were responsible for the coordination and execution of our annual event. He then read a brief statement from PNC Donald McKee concerning his absence from this year's event. This is the first convention that Don has missed in 30 years.

Gavin Dent, grandson of PNC Bill & Juanita King then read an essay that he had written honoring Bob Slaughter. This essay is published on page 33 of this issue.

Editor Mund of this publication, made a few remarks about an event that occurred 30 years ago – The Reactivation of the 29th Division on 5 October 1985.

Editor Mund then introduced several individuals who were instrumental in the coordination, preparation and execution of that event in 1985. William Bilo; Pete Combee; Tom McCandless; and John McLaughlin, were recognized by the editor and received a round of applause from the banquet attendees. Editor Mund was also part of this group back in 1985 as an enlisted soldier.

PNC Ivan Dooley, on behalf of Richard "Dickie" Jordan, Jr. presented the National Association and the Maryland Region with significant donations to the *Twenty-Niner* and the *Chin Strap*, in memory of Past National Welfare Officer Richard "Dick" Jordan, Sr. who passed away this past January.

The 29th Division Association was honored to have as its guest speaker, Brigadier General, Blake C. Ortner, Commanding General of the 29th Infantry Division. General Ortner spoke about his military career beginning with the ROTC at the University of Minnesota, and his regular army assignments with the 9th Motorized Division and 2nd Ranger Battalion.

General Ortner said he was reluctant to join the Army National Guard until he found out about the 29th Infantry Division of Normandy/Omaha Beach fame. He spoke about how the 29th fits in with the current Army Force structure, and the parameters concerning mission capability.

PNC Robert Recker then installed the new officers, ladies and men, for the 2015-2016 year. Those names are listed on page 27 of this newsletter.

Following the closing prayer, many attendees headed for the Hospitality Room for the final time until next year.

The Memorial Service was conducted by Chaplain Schildt on Sunday morning. Those members who passed away during the past year were honored by the announcement of their names and the ringing of a bell. The names of those deceased are listed on page 32 of this publication.

The very brief NEC I was held after the Memorial Ceremony. Commander Ginsburg announced the names of the appointed officers for the 2015-2016 year.

The 97th National Reunion and Convention was then officially concluded and all attendees headed for their home stations.

William S. Mund, Jr.
Editor

Be sure to check out our new and improved website at: www.29thdivisionassociation.com

Your New National Commander is David H. Ginsburg

(Continued from page 2)

play that will tell the history of the 29th in WWI, WWII and the Global War on Terror – to honor all of our soldiers throughout the wars. This is something that can be displayed at events such as the Convention, the 116th Muster, the 175th Pass and Review, and can be left at libraries and other applicable events. It will have a banner at the top or the bottom that will drive people to the Association website for more information or to join. There will also be coordinated Public Relations efforts in both MD and VA.

There are more details on the *Chin Strap* in the Convention Section of the 29er, but we wanted to give the posts a chance to communicate what is going on every month of the

year rather than 3 times a year in the *Twenty-Niner*. It will also free up a few spacious pages for Will Mund to put in another article so it kills two birds with one stone. It also gives a chance for the more remote posts to keep their own members up to date at a time when many are facing communication challenges.

We want to help your posts grow, and we want to give you tools to help you communicate. If you can think of anything that can help your post, please do not ever hesitate to contact us.

Again, thank you for your trust.

David H. Ginsburg
Commander
29th Division Association

29th Division Association

Wreath Laying Ceremony

Arlington National Cemetery

Tomb of The Unknowns

Sunday, 29 May 2016, 1215 EDT (12:15 PM)

On 29 May 2016, the 29th Division Association will be honored by having its National Commander, lay a Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown at Arlington National Cemetery. The ceremony will be held at 1215 hours. Following the ceremony, there will be a group photo.

Information on bus transportation and the annual luncheon following the ceremony has not been determined at this time. Please refer to the *Chin Strap* and the Spring edition of the *Twenty-Niner* for this information.

NEC II

Thursday, 21 January 2016, 0930 hours

Weinberg Center, Camp Fretterd, MD

Cost is **\$15** with checks made payable to the **29th Division Association** and mailed to:
Executive Director, **William Mund, P.O. Box 47634, Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634.**

As always, a Continental breakfast and catered lunch will be provided.

**Be sure to check out our
new and improved website at:
www.29thdivisionassociation.com**

Bob Key's Military Life

By Robert E. Key of Post 64

In March of 1945, a cousin of mine and I left Liberty Academy and went out one evening from Bedford, Virginia to sign up in the Army. We wanted to go shoot some Germans, as neither of us liked school. We were both too young to join, but the recruiter said if we would say we would be 17 years old, he would sign us up if we would get our parents to sign our enlistment form. We had to walk 7 miles home, as we had missed the bus. When I showed the form to my mother, she said, "Son, if something happened to my little boy, I would be very sad." I told her I wasn't getting anything out of school, so my mother signed the form. So now I had to get my dad to sign it.

When he and my other brothers came in from the fields, I had covered up all the words in the title of the form, and asked him to sign this note as I had to return it to school. My dad was trying to see the heading on the form, but I told him he just needed to sign it. He informed me that he never signed anything without reading it first. Well when he saw that eagle stamped on that form, he looked at me and said he wasn't about to sign me up for something when I didn't have a clue what I was getting into. You can sign for yourself when you get old enough. So that was the end of that.

The next year Captain Ray Nance came back to Bedford and was to be the Commanding Officer of Company A, 116th Infantry Regiment of the Virginia National Guard. He said he was putting out a notice that he was looking for some young men to help start Company A up again after World War II. He said we would get a dollar for each drill. Now a dollar was a lot of money to us young boys as most of us didn't have a dime to our name.

I went out to Bedford with a brother who was old enough to join. I was standing there with him as the Supply Sergeant was giving out his uniforms and combat boots. Each boot had two buckles on it and really looked good to an old boy from Keytown. First Sergeant Earl Johnson pointed his finger right at my face and said, "Boy, you can get all this stuff too. Just say you're seventeen." So I said, "I'm seventeen."

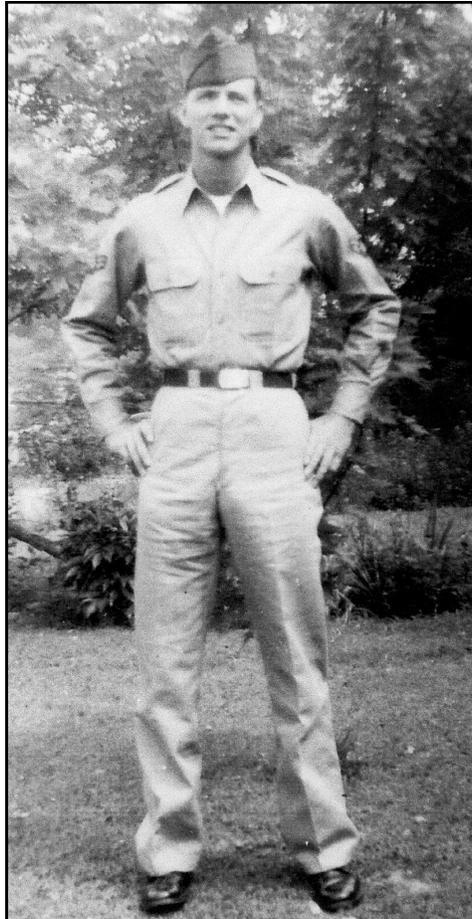
Man!! I had summer and winter uniforms and two pair of boots. I can tell you I was very proud of that uniform and we marched all over Bedford at night during drills and I felt very proud to be a part of Company A. The people would come out and line the sidewalks. I went to my first summer camp at a place called Camp Pendleton near Virginia Beach. That old M-1 rifle wore blisters on both my boney shoulders. My brother Tom Key gave me his handkerchief and put it on one of my shoulders and my handkerchief on the other shoulder under my shirt. That helped a lot.

At our first camp they marched us into the ocean, just like we were making a landing. There were holes in the sand under the water and some of us thought we would drown cause we couldn't

swim with those WW II packs on our backs. But we walked out spitting out sea water. I got pretty good with my M-1 rifle. A master Sergeant, Charlie Perry, told me I was an expert. They also trained me on the 60mm and 81mm mortars and told me I was a natural.

This brings to mind my second Summer Camp at Indiantown Gap (Indiantown Gap Military Reservation - IGMR). While in training, a Corporal rammed a rifle grenade on the barrel of my M-1 and said, "Shoot this from your shoulder." When I was just about to fire my weapon, a hand of steel grabbed the wood under the barrel and said, "Don't touch that trigger." He had fire in his eyes and told the Captain not to ever pull that anymore on these young men. Then he said to me, "Put that rifle butt on the ground and shoot the same as you would a mortar." The man was Master Sergeant Perry again. So this will give you insight into why I visited him until he passed away a number of years ago. He was 89. When I told Captain Nance about his age, he told me that MSG was of the old guard. This was a few years before Captain Nance passed away.

Getting back to our training at Indiantown Gap. We had been back in the mountains there in our pup tents and had to break camp in the dark. I remember the cooks had these big wash tubs filled with soft drinks. We were told we could drink all we wanted, so I also filled my canteen up with them. My brother Tom told me to pour it out and put water from a nearby lister bag in my canteen. Later on, about dinner time, we had a break and I could take a drink. I put that canteen up to my mouth thinking about that cool soft drink. That hot stuff spewed out of my mouth like a water hose. Tom just shook his head and handed me his canteen. He said to take just one swallow, as now his canteen had to last us both. I felt bad that Tom would only have half his water as he



was sharing it with me. So much for dumb kids.

Later in the day I told brother Tom I couldn't walk another step. He said, "Don't let these other young boys show you up. Just keep putting one foot in front of the other, that's all you have to do."

Later that evening we got back to our barracks. We lined up Parade Rest in front of the Orderly Room. Two of our men got in a fight; one of them a Sergeant and the other was the Corporal who had told me to fire the rifle grenade off my shoulder. They were fighting and cussing and both got pretty bloody. Some of us hoped they would kill each other. One had a brother with us and asked us to help break them up. Not a man moved. He ran into the Orderly Room and came back with Captain Nance and a Lieutenant.

Captain Nance told the men to stop fighting, but he wasn't a real stern commander. His face got a little red and then he went into action. He pulled up the flap of his holster and yanked that 45 caliber high up between them and pulled the trigger and yelled, "Stop that damn fighting." They fell apart. He told them to get their damn

a.....es into the Orderly Room or he would really hurt them. That was the only time I ever heard Captain Nance say a cuss word. I told him about this incident a few years before he passed away. He said, "Robert, did I really do that?" I told him we were hoping he would shoot them both. One of these men had made First Sergeant by the time I went back to Bedford's Company A in 1975. His brother made Colonel later in the regular Army, but that's another story.

I served in Company A from 1946 until 1950 when I got out of the National Guard. Two weeks into 1951, Uncle Sam sent me a little notice that I was to report to my draft board. My dad did not want me in the Army, so I joined the Air Force for 4 years. I went to the Roanoke, Virginia, armory and during the swearing in I raised my hand. When the Captain there asked me why, I said, "Well, it's my understanding that when I take this oath, you are going to put me on a train, plane or bus and ship me away." He said that was right and asked what my problem was? I said, "I can't leave today as I have a few things to take care of." He asked if a three-day pass would do, and I said "Yes Sir." So he got started with the other men there after telling the Lieutenant to write me a three-day pass and give me meals and a train ticket.

I had my brother Tom and my youngest brother take me up to Roanoke train station on 14 July 1951. It was 6:00 p.m. and I was feeling pretty lonely as I was all by myself. This was also my first train ride. I remember that about 4:00 a.m. the next morning, a big man came to where I was seated and said, "We will be in Philly (Philadelphia, PA) pretty soon sir, and I thought you might like to freshen up a bit and get you a bite to eat.

After getting to Philly, I had some time so I walked around for a bit, but not very far from the train station as I did not want to get lost. Finally a train came in from Washington, DC and I remember 3 brothers from Manassas, Virginia. It sure felt good to have some southern friends from Virginia. We left by bus and got into Sampson Air Force Base on Lake Seneca, New York after dark. We got off the bus with some guy hollering and maybe cussing a little too. We were given a field jacket with no lining, which wasn't very warm, a pillow and pillow case, some sheets and blankets and marched to our barracks.

We didn't get much sleep as we were back up at 4:00 a.m. and marched to the chow hall where we were given metal trays. The cooks put a dipper full of them little green marbles with the red eyes in one of the compartments on my tray. I bit into that thing, locked my teeth and spit it back into the tray.

The Flight Chief said, "You're going to eat every one of them." And I said, "I'm not going to eat even one of them nasty things." He asked me why I got them if I didn't want them and I told him that I did not ask for them. The cook just threw them on my tray.

It got a little bit hairy around there during training with all them young men with two left feet. Marching and running went on for about 12 weeks. I had some late classroom training and it was hard to stay awake, with all the young men sitting in there. We went through training with tear and mustard gas. Some of the boys passed out as they didn't get their gas mask on soon enough.

I remember it was very cold up there as the wind came off Lake Seneca. I remember pulling guard duty and was cold during the night while patrolling along the lake. The barracks along the lake side were built high up, so I sat down so I could see both ways and put my back up against one of those post and took a rest as I could see the Corporal or Sergeant of the Guard coming in time to start walking my post, so I didn't do all that much walking.

While we were there, we were marched onto a large open field that had a stand in the center and Mrs. Roosevelt came and gave us a little pep talk. When she got through, it made us want to stand a little straighter and appreciate America a little more. So I guess she did a good job.

My first choice in the Air Force was to be a gunner on a B-17 bomber. I made out pretty good until the last day. I remember it was 4:00 in the evening and I was taking an eye test. This Captain reached out and cut the machine off and told me I would never be a gunner on a plane as I was color blind. I was very irritated as he told me I was doing good with all the tests leading up to this one.

Later, we were in our barracks in the hallway with our noses pressed up against the wall. The Flight Chief was walking back and forth calling out names and asking about the General Orders, Number 1 through 10. Some of these boys were not ever going to remember and was getting put over the coals. The Assistant flight Chief said, "If any of you guys don't like it, fall out of ranks." I had come to the boiling over point and whirled out of ranks and he came rushing right up to me with his nose a couple inches from mine and told me to get my ass back in ranks and I did. A little later he came to me and said, "Key, you were fixing to tear into me weren't you?" I told him if he had said anything else to me, I was going to stomp the crap out of him. He came to me a little later and said, "Key, you were in the National Guard for four years and should know that if we didn't train these young men like we do, we would have these "eight balls" messing up all the training." I think I already knew that.

Later this young man, Robert C. Hunter came to me while waiting to ship out to Medical school at San Antonio, Texas and Brooke Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston and asked me to go home and meet his father and mother, and also wanted me to meet his sister. My next words to him have bothered me every day since. I said, "I don't want to go with you, or any damn Yankee anywhere." He asked me not to leave there feeling like that about him. Then before I shipped out, he came to me again and we shook hands and said goodbye. I now wish I could see him and tell him what a great trainer he was.

I was then taken to Syracuse and put on my first plane ride. I also saw my first fighter jet take off. Sure was a loud noise. I think our plane was a C-47 and before we landed in Chicago, one engine had quit. I sure was glad the other one didn't stop. I got to San Antonio, TX late at night and it was raining and cold. I had a bad headache and I asked the girl on the plane if she had anything for headaches? She said they didn't even have water to drink.

I was put onto a bus to Fort Sam Houston Medical Center and would be there for several weeks learning to be a medic. At Brooke Medical Center in Texas we ran from one class to another. It seemed like we stayed tired all the time. I thought I would never get home again. I remember a paratrooper from Fort Campbell, Kentucky. The soldier looked like everything any service man would like to be. You could comb your hair looking into the shine on the toe of his boots.

A Captain (Doctor) called his name and he stood up as we all did when called on. The doctor asked him why he was having problems understanding this class. The soldier replied with a deep southern drawl, "Sir, have you ever been in a 7th grade class and you're only a 3rd grader?" That doctor laughed and said it was costing the taxpayers \$44,000.00 to school each of you, and you're all going to pass if it takes the rest of this year. I felt a little better after that, knowing I wasn't the only dummy in that school.

I was walking guard duty there one late night and had a long, dark post and could see nothing behind me. But I kept hearing something, and to tell the truth, I was ready to run and hide as the weapon I was toting was empty. I'm sure everyone remembers that, and it was for a good reason as I might have shot a WAF who was following me on her way to see the chaplain. Come to find out later, she was afraid of me. So we had two of a kind out there in the dark. Come to find out, her father was Dan Blankenship who owned a paint store next to the old bridge theater in Bedford.

One night as I was coming home from study hall, someone grabbed my arm as I was going into my barrack. It was a friend I had worked with at Rubatex Corp. in Bedford. I sure was glad to see him as I had not seen anyone from home for 6 months. The reason I was coming home from study hall so late and met my friend Shelllie Arthur, was because I was having the same trouble as that Kentucky paratrooper.

With all these medical terms, it was a nightmare to a country boy who felt like a 3rd grader in a 7th grade class. It took me two extra weeks to get through. Even though I wanted to be a gunner on a plane, I would not take anything for that medical diploma I received at Fort Sam Houston Medical center. And by the way....that WAF went on to become a regular nurse in the Army.

I remember coming home from Ft Sam Houston one time and met up with a pretty girl on a Greyhound bus. Somewhere in Arkansas, her parents met her at a bus stop to take her home. She tried to convince her daddy to take me along home with them. She began to cry and it made me want to cry also, as I did want to go, but knew I could not because I had orders to report elsewhere. Her daddy finally made her understand that Uncle Sam owns this boy and he must go where he's told to go.

So at this point, my orders were for 10 days leave and then Korea. I came home on leave and it sure was great to be with my family, mother, father, seven brothers and eight sisters and only one was not at home. Later, my oldest sister married a Navy man named Jake Crawford of Covington, VA. Jake and Mildred still live in Covington today.

I went back to Texas following my leave around the end of 1951. My orders were changed and I was to ship out to Bostow, Florida to a flying school for cadets. But that didn't last long as Moody Air Force Base near Valdosta, Georgia needed a medic who had been to school. I was given some back pay and went into Winterhaven, Florida and bought a Gibson guitar. Hitchhiked to Moody with duffle bag crammed full along with overseas bag and that guitar, I was feeling kind of Hotsy Totsy with all my stuff. Got a ride pretty quick with a young lady driving a Henry J. It rode about like a wagon, but I sure was glad to be riding rather than be walking. She told me her husband had told her never to pick up anyone hitchhiking again. Before, she had picked up three Sailors and one put his arm behind her and asked, "what would you do if someone tried something with you?" She said that by then, she was so nervous she could hardly drive, so she reached into the side pocket on the door and pulled out a pistol. She pointed it right in his face and said, "I'd blow his damn brains out." With that I said, "Ma'am, all I need is a ride."

I spent that night in Lake City, FL. Next day I got on a Greyhound bus and rode to Valdosta, GA. I called Moody AFB and they sent a ride for me. I was soon put in charge of a Medical Ward. Green as a gourd, but picked up my duties pretty quick, as I made rounds with a

Dr. Carlson. He was always very kind with me even though I was green as a gourd. Pretty soon with his help, I was giving shots, bandaging those who had undergone surgery and other things.

My next duty, I was assigned to be in charge of a Surgical Ward. I remember being called to surgery to help wrap a pilot who had crashed. His entire body had been burned and we wrapped him like a mummy. This was just one of many such events that I took part in.

By now my duties had become routine and I was ordered to report on Monday morning to Ward # 6 which was O.B. I really did not want this duty and went to see the Base Surgeon, LTC Swartz. I went into his office, saluted him and received his return salute. He said, "What's on your mind Airman?" I told him all the reasons I should stay at my current assigned job. I was the only Airman that had been to Medical School and the Surgical Ward needed me. He looked a hole through me and never once blinked. I was still at attention. He said, "I respect Capt. Perl, Capt. Hardman and Maj. Fallon's judgment. You be at your new post on Monday morning." I saluted him, did an about face and went to my private rooms. I was waiting for chow time and a knock came at my door. It was Captain Hardman, Head Nurse of Ward # 6. She told me she knew I didn't want this assignment, but she promised it would be the best duty I would ever have in the Air Force. (Turns out she was right.) She mentioned that she and I were both from Virginia and we would get along fine. We did and I got to eat with the officers in the chow hall and was waited on there.

On Monday morning I walked into Ward # 6 and was met by two Lieutenant nurses, one with a surgical mask and one with a surgical gown. They said to hurry as Dr. Perl was waiting for me in the delivery room. By now, I could feel a little knot in my belly. I had never worked with this Dr. before. He told the lady that this is Doctor Key. He will be assisting me with delivering your baby. He then instructed me to get a mask and drops. I was to allow so many drops of anesthesia into the mask. By now, she can see my eyes wondering what the devil she's talking about. Dr. Perl said, "you know, it's right behind you on the cart." Well I got that going and he told me to check her eyes. Here's the kicker.... I said her eyes had rolled back in her head like a Moony chow. He told me not to give her anymore as we wanted the lady to help a little with the delivery. Then he says, "Come round here Dr. Key" and he backed out and put me right between the stirrups. By now my belly really had some knots. Dr. Perl hands me a sterile towel and says, "Don't drop him. Put one hand on her stomach and push." I pressed on her stomach and he popped right out, kicking and squalling.

What a mess. I thought to myself that I would not be able to eat chow today. But by 11:00 that morning I had helped deliver 6 babies. And when I got to the chow hall, all my buddies were staring at me. I bet I ate double that day.

Many things happened in the Ward. Many nights, particularly during bad storms, the nurse would call the CQ (Charge of Quarters) to get me and I would have to go down to get the generator going. However, I soon gave a class to the men who would be pulling CQ instructions on how to start and maintain that generator. One night Nurse Captain Laura Hughes sent the CQ to my barracks in the dead of night. He woke me and told me I was to get over to the Medical Ward right away. Ward # 2 was no longer my station or that of Captain Hughes. They were both more for emergencies during the night as there was a doctor and nurse stationed there.

They had a problem they didn't know how to treat. It seems an

Airman had stopped breathing and his temperature had gone sky high. I told the night corpsman to go to all the other wards and bring all the ice they had. Capt Hughes and I put the patient in a bathtub and covered him with the ice. Now his temperature went to the bottom and he stopped breathing again and his heart stopped. This went on for awhile with the ice bath and then hot water bottles. I got pretty mad with him the last time his heart stopped that I hauled off and hit him in the chest several times. The nurse told me I was going to kill him and I said I didn't care if I did. I smacked him and hit him again as hard as I could and his eyes popped open. I shook him and told him that if he died on me again, he could stay dead. Later on, he got okay. The nurse told me later she would put me in for some kind of ribbon or something, but I never received anything but the satisfaction for saving his life. That was enough, as it was my duty to do so.

Another story about Captain Laura Hughes. She came to my section one day and asked me if I would be on a team with her to bring wounded back from Korea. She said that I would get an additional \$50.00 for every trip as she was going to have us put on flight status. I wish I could see her now and tell her what a good nurse she was. At the time this was to take place, the Chief Nurse went to the Base Surgeon and told him the 3550th Medical Squadron could not do without Sgt Key or Captain Hughes. My Lord, I didn't know a woman could curse so much. She said words I had never heard before about Major Fallon. That was the end of that.

One night Major Fallon caught me in the Nurse's Quarters with one of her Lt. nurses. All she said was "Good Night," and went to bed. Next morning she woke up beside me in my section and said, "Some of us have forgotten our place." I just said "Yes Ma'am" and never went there again.

Captain Laura Huges was probably the best nurse I ever knew. She was a World War II nurse and worked on the O.B. Ward with many other nurses. One of these was a Civil Service Nurse. Her name is Mrs. Burnell Dykes and she still lives in Valdosta, Georgia. I call her a few times each year and she always says, "This is S/Sgt Key, the best NCO we ever had." She was a very smart nurse.

Time marched on at Moody. One day I got a call from the Company C.O. He wanted me to come to the orderly room where he asked me if I had some "kin" on the base who held high rank? He said that he had been forced to ship someone overseas in my place on three separate occasions. I didn't have a clue what was going on. I went back to my Captain Frederick Perl and told him the Company Commander had just chewed me out because someone on the base was keeping me at Moody. He told me no one would bother me again as long as he was there, but he gave me the chance to make up my mind. I told him I wanted to go to England, France and Germany. I was never approached again, but wished I had been shipped over. (NOTE: I have stayed in touch with Dr Frederick Perl for many years. Last time I saw him was at Moody in July 1955. He lives in Somerset, New Jersey and is still in practice.

I also had another good friend. He was a full Colonel by the name of Alexander. He called me to his office one day. He had replaced LTC Swartz who had a heart attack. A nurse Lieutenant called me to the phone and said that the new Base Surgeon wanted to talk to me. I was to report directly to his office and I did. I knocked, went in and saluted him. He gave me one of those sorry salutes that some officers gave and said, "let me hear you say there's a mouse in the house and I can't get him out." That was very hard for me because

of the way I talked. He got up, came around his desk and said, "You are a damn true Virginian." "Don't ever let no SOB look down on you for the way you talk. And if you ever need me for anything, my phones are always open to you." I wished many times I had sense enough to listen to the advice he gave me.

While stationed at Moody AFB I wrote to quite a few young women. I liked to receive mail and found that the best way to do this, was to write first. Some of the other Airmen would ask me to let them read my mail as they never received any.

I left Moody AFB in July 1955. This was a hard decision for me as I had met several good officers who tried to talk me out of leaving. I will never forget the nice recommendation that Captain, Dr. Frederick L. Perl wrote to Wing Headquarters. He also told me that I was to be the next T/Sgt of the Squadron, and would be the youngest man in the Squadron to have made that grade so fast.

Another 20 years passed after my discharge and I reenlisted in Company A - 1-116th Infantry VAARNG in Bedford, Virginia. The commander was Captain Glenn Nalls and the First Sergeant Pope Powers. During this hitch I met some good Americans. SSG Jay Kincannon was a good friend and has remained so ever since. Jay and I continue to stay in touch as we are both members of Post 64 in Roanoke.

Lt. Bu Loo was platoon leader and T/Sgt. Carl V. Arrington was the second platoon sergeant and was a good one. One time we were in training back in the Blue Ridge Mountains. 1st platoon was Blue Dog and the 2nd platoon was Red Dog. I was acting as the RTO (radio/telephone operator) at the time and said something to 1SG Arrington. He didn't pay any attention to me and I raised my M-16 rifle just over the top of his head and pulled off one round. It would have knocked his helmet off if he had not had that chin strap buckled.

He and all the men close to him hit the ground and he yelled to ask what was going on? I said, "next time I ask you, or any of these others a question by damn, I want an answer." "Great God Key, he said, you liked to have killed me" I have to admit, I didn't think that blank ammunition would do that much damage.

Another time while we were at Camp Picket, we had some men they called "fillers." They showed absolutely no respect for our Lieutenant. I said to the lieutenant, "you get me three live rounds and I'll leave those sorry SOB's out here in the pines." He asked me if I really meant that, and I told him I never meant anything more in my life. He told to make sure I never let anyone else hear me say that. We eventually got rid of them.

I need to say here that I remember making some good friends in the Army and Air Force. How sweet it would be to be able to go through it all again.

I still visit my old armory and have gotten to know some of the men such as Sgt. James Austin Bartell, SSG Tuck, Sgt. Mullens and Sgt Fink. They are all fine men. They bring me back to remember how proud we were as young men in 1946 under Capt. Ray Nance to march on the streets of Bedford. Also to have had the opportunity to serve and train with some of the WW II boys who came back and stayed in Company A. I looked up to them then, and still do today.

It's a real treat to be able to meet with men such as Lt. John Kessler, Bill King, Don Englar, Alvin Hudson, Jay Kincannon, Bob Lemon, Chuck Neighbor, Freddie and Paul Oliver and Hubert Hobbs. Also, Mr. Roger Talmadge, all of Post 64. May the Lord bless these men and all the others who have served our country.

My Father's Longest Day

Cornelius Ryan was only thirty-eight years old when he wrote "The Longest Day". He and his small army of researchers compiled over one thousand accounts of the harrowing events of June 6, 1944. My father was able to relate his account to one of those researchers of that day when he took his company to the sea wall of Omaha Beach.

My niece, Bridget Vogtman, was fortunate enough to be in contact with the official historian of The 29th Division, Mr. Joseph Balkoski, through her association of the 29th's presence on Facebook. Mr. Balkoski was able to locate an after-action report/interview that was submitted to Mr. Ryan and his research team for inclusion in his manuscript for "The Longest Day".

What follows is that recounting, untouched and unedited. Actual phrases and words were, however, edited out in its original form, possibly for security reasons. It still remains an eye-opening story for a son who has always viewed his father as a hero.

My father was able to witness the ceremonial events of the 50th Anniversary of D-Day before he died. He stood and saluted his friends as they told their stories, with tears streaming down his face. I will continue to salute my father, forever. Thank you Dad for what you and your friends did for all of us on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

*Sean Patrick Malloy
Punta Gorda, Florida*

On June 6th Company B, 121st Combat Engineers, attached to the 116th Combat Team, landed on Dog Green and Dog White Beaches in two waves. The 2nd and 3rd Platoons under the command of Lieutenant C.E. McNicholas, later killed, and Lieutenant Sidney W. Smith, respectively, landed at H plus 40 minutes. Five minutes later the 1st Platoon under my command landed, out of its wave, on the wrong beach, and five minutes ahead of the scheduled time of H plus 50 minutes.

As the LCM in which 1st Platoon of B Company landed, touched down on a sandbar, the water at step-off was so deep that swimming and floating were necessary. Enemy MG's had opened as soon as the ramp went down. The first man off the boat, Captain S.A. Holmstrup, (Company Commander, Company C), jumped into the water and failed to reappear. His body was later washed up on the beach. He had been shot through the head.

Due to the strong wave action and the unexpected depth of the water and the combined enemy fire from 88's and MG's, the movement through the water up to dry land was slow and confused. The first patch of beached reached was another sand bar, this unexposed and covered with anti-landing craft obstacles. These offered some covering. The platoon disbursed momentarily while the men caught their breath after the arduous and harrowing swim from the craft. With about 200 yards of open beach yet to cross, it was



**Lieutenant P.W.J. Malloy
B Company
121st Combat Engineer Battalion**

decided to move the squads up to the cover of the dune line, in squad column, in order to avoid the long cone of dispersion from enemy MG's which seemed to be firing from both flanks. Despite the intense cross-fire, the bulk of the platoon safely reached the wall along the beach road and reorganized.

Some wounded were still in the water and having difficulty in getting ashore. One of these called to my attention and, after a brief order to the squads to move up along the wall to the site, I dashed back towards the water's edge, calling for

one man to come with me. Sergeant Joseph Peters without hesitating ran out to aid men bringing the wounded man out of reach of the rapidly incoming tide. Unfortunately, the man's left leg was badly shattered about the knee and the process of dragging him along the sand was slow. As we were under fire, it was necessary to stay low. This hampered the movement of the wounded man. Having gotten within 50 yards of the sea wall we decided to pick up the wounded man and dash for cover. As I rose to one knee, several bursts of MG fire cut across us. The Sergeant was mortally injured and I was wounded through the right shoulder. Several men came from cover of the sea wall and carried the Sergeant and the other man to cover. I was able to make my way to the sea wall. The remnants of the platoon still at that point were sent to the right along the wall to join the two squads making their way to the exit. Unfortunately, after that I lost control of the situation.

Carrier conditions- morale was high and keen interest in the impending operation was exhibited by the men. Facilities for religious services, mass and confession were appreciated by the troops.

Landing craft conditions-in our case the LCM used was too crowded for the 90 men (2 platoons were aboard; one from B and one from C Company), and the rest amount of equipment. Less than five minutes after boarding the LCM, every man was drenched from the heavy seas. Many men were seasick and due to the conges-

tion several could not properly use the bags provided. The constant drenching made the bags useless after about an hour and their contents were strewn about the craft. Despite this combination of uncomfortable conditions, the grim faces of the troops frequently broke into a half smile at the remarks of one or two of the lads. "Looks like Slapton Sands again-I don't think!". Or the inevitable burlesque of some officer's statement, "Remember men, this is for Record!" or again, the last clear statement that rang out as the craft made the shore and we braced ourselves to disembark, "Make it look good, men, this is the first time American troops have been here in 25 years!".

The depth of the water at step-off was not determined, diving equipment not being available. However, it was well over the height of a man.

Beach obstacles- the craft had no trouble with the beach obstacles. We hung up on a bar well out from any obstacles.

Overloading men- with the landing conditions which prevailed in our case, the individual loads (TNT charges, bulky mine detectors, mine-field gap marking equipment) were definitely too much as many men had to jettison the equipment to save themselves in the heavy surf. It is remarkable that so many men were able to render hand-carried loads ashore in the extremely unfavorable conditions. The operation was planned (blank) the individual loads were consistent with the conditions, (enemy action and weather) expected.

Losses- the Company Commander whom I later met at the hospital could muster only about 90 men on D plus 1 out of an initial landing strength of 140.

Enemy saw landing craft and we were under both small-arms fire and artillery fire, probably 88mm. Occasionally a terrific blast of mortar fire hit the beach and was said to have come from the Germans 6-barrel mortar.

Nebelwerfer. MG fire seemed to be directed along the beach in lanes from positions on the flank. This made for a very effective cross-fire and its efficiency was increased by 88's which dropped in between the lanes of MG fire.

Effect of casualties on others- as might be expected the men were affected



Patrick and Margot Malloy

by the sights of others about them, dead and wounded. However, it is believed that the (blank) training to expect casualties did much to keep the men in the realm of realism. Conditions on the beach, horrible as they were, might well have suggested a nightmare. The dead, even the mutilated half-bodies that shared the cover of the sea wall, were only of passing interest. Every man realized his job and there was no hesitancy in carrying out the few orders given. The (blank) did not dominate them.

The beachhead- when we landed at H plus 45 no fighting was going on the beach itself, but the beachhead for the first several hours was no more than 50 yards past the dune line.

Leaving the beach- the route used by Company B to move off the beach when most small-arms fire was lifted was through exit No.1 on Dog Beach up into Vierville-sur-Mer. I was still on the beach at nightfall awaiting evacuation. The Company had gotten into a point about 300 yards past Vierville-sur-Mer.

Food-I do not know when the men ate on D-Day. Most of the wounded did not eat until reaching the LST hospitals, about 3am on D plus 1. I enjoyed a cup of coffee and an injection of plasma at the same time and it is difficult to decide which helped the most.

The Pause- my men moved quickly off the beach after the first dispersion under cover of the beach obstacles. The stop in dispersion was necessary after the difficulty we had experienced in the water.

Air Power- disregarding the oversight of the Air Force (blank) the covering presence of lightning (blank) gave one a feeling of security and undoubtedly bolstered morale. As night fell German planes came out of hiding and caused some concern by strafing the LST's and the small boats evacuating wounded. Our small craft was attacked about midnight just after pulling away from shore, but none of the wounded aboard was hit again.

Prisoners- while I lay near the sea wall many prisoners came over the dune line and surrendered to the M.P.'s on the beach.

Mines- no booby (blank) mines were encountered on the beach as far as I know. Some teller mines were in place on top of the anti-landing craft obstacles and several of these were exploded by craft coming in when the tide covered the obstacles.

Training valuable- I feel confident that the long months of training and anyone of the numerous landing exercises spelled the difference between a very difficult situation which the 29th eventually fought out of, and annihilation which the German defenders might have inflicted on the elements landed on Omaha Beach. From an engineer's viewpoint, I had no opportunity to see the men in action, but all reports are to the effect that B Company has yet to be given a job which it could not handle.

Briefing- probably due mainly to the unannounced presence of an entire German Division in our sector, I believe the briefing did not completely prepare the units for the rigidity of the tough task it actually faced. However, the numerous aids available during the briefing period cannot be too highly praised. The aerial photographs, schedules, and models proved quite accurate from what could be seen on the beach. Conversations with those who pushed in will confirm this. The enemy strength was apparently underestimated by G-2 and the fighting quality of the enemy troops apparently was far greater than anticipated.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR:

Stolen Valor, missing faces and the *Chin Strap*

I did not receive any feedback from anyone on the "D-Day Imposter" part of my "Editor's Message" that was published in the Summer edition.

When someone misleads and deceives others like the "D-Day Imposter" did, it is officially known as "Stolen Valor". This is a federal offense and a crime, only if the "imposter" used his lies and deceptions for personal gain.

We do not know if the "D-Day Imposter" was guilty of this. So, those who claim to have landed on D-Day or D+1 and never really joined the 29th until July, August or later, are not guilty of anything other than just "stretching the truth."

We have just concluded our 97th Convention and Reunion in Fredericksburg, Virginia. We may be the oldest division association that is still conducting this type of event.

Each year, our attendance gets fewer and fewer. This year was no exception. Please make an effort to attend our convention and reunion in 2016. We do not know how much longer we will be able to hold this annual event.

Our Immediate Past National Commander, I. John Vaccarino was unable to attend our convention and officiate at any of the activities. John was sidelined with some heart issues and underwent surgery a few days after the convention.

John has since recovered from his surgery and is doing fine. He regrets deeply not being able to join with us at our annual event.

Another familiar face that was missing from this year's event was that of PNC Don McKee. Don has had some health issues concerning his back and it is very uncomfortable for him to travel in a vehicle for over a certain amount of time. Don says that this is the first convention he has missed in 30 years.

Several other missing faces were:

Edith Paul of Post 175 who was unable to attend our event this year due to recent hospitalization. Last year, Edie was recognized as only missing one convention since 1974.

PNC Dick Smith has had several health problems over the past year and was also unable to attend.

National Parliamentarian Tom Insley and Bob Bryant both of Post 72 were also among the missing due to various illnesses

We truly hope to see all of these individuals next year at our annual event.

You will find additional accounts of our convention elsewhere in this issue.

Please read the article concerning the Commander's Workshop on page 28. In this article is an explanation of what we are calling the "*Chin Strap Initiative*". This involves everyone in the association receiving the Maryland Region publication, the *Chin Strap*.

The *Chin Strap* is a monthly publication and will be distributed to all members of our association.

Something else that has been brought up at one of our meetings is that many times when one of our members pass away, there is no mention of the deceased being a member of the 29th Division Association in the death notice or obituary.

Those affiliated with the Association do not look for gratitude from the family or the public, but only seek to let everyone know that this deceased soldier was a honored member of the 29th Division Association and will be missed by his comrades.

So please consider adding this small bit of information when the time comes to honor your husband, father or other soldier who was also a member of the 29th Infantry Division. If he was a member of the 29th Division Association, please add this mark of distinction by letting everyone know.

I am personally grateful to PNC John Wilcox for providing me with the previous two paragraphs which he has written better than what I could write concerning this matter.

Please note: I can only accept editorial content for the *Twenty-Niner* that has been typed on a "Word" document and sent to me in an email as an attachment. It

must be sent to me this way so that I can "further process" it.

I do not have the time to type or re-type content that has been sent to me in any other format. It does not matter what type face or type size that you use. However, I cannot process text that has been typed in all capital letters.

Concerning photos: I can only "further process" "jpeg's". Please send all photos as "jpeg's". Do not send "pdf's" as my software is not compatible with them.

"Further processing", as I define it means copying the typed text and flowing it into the pages of the *Twenty-Niner* file. It then has to be broken into columns, indented properly, and justified horizontally so that all the lines are lined up evenly as you see here.

Additional processing is required for articles that exceed one page in length. Photos need to be cropped, sized and placed in the columns. Outlines need to be written.

As a former professional newspaperman of 33 years experience, I am aware of proper journalistic publishing decorum and I strive to maintain a publication that meets those standards.

Our Constitution and By-Laws have been amended. This document, along with the "Memorial Service and Ritual" is available for downloading on the website.

You may also request electronic versions of these documents by contacting the undersigned. My contact information is listed on page 2 of every edition of the *Twenty-Niner*.

This editor, along with several national officers attended the 48th Annual Muster of the 116th Infantry Regiment on 14 November 2015, in Staunton, Virginia

This event was well attended by many current and former members of the 116th Infantry Regiment. MG Timothy Williams, TAG-VA was the guest speaker. Several WWII veterans were in attendance.

William S. Mund, Jr.

Editor/Publisher

National Executive Director

Ceremony marks start of federal duty for Task Force Normandy

FORT A. P. Hill, VA. — More than 450 Soldiers from the Virginia National Guard's Winchester-based 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team marked the start of their federal active service at a departure ceremony Sept. 9, 2015, at Fort A. P. Hill, VA.

The battalion, also known as Task Force Normandy, is made up of units from around the state. They are now deployed in Qatar where they are expected to conduct security missions in support of contingency operations in the region. The mobilization is expected to be for about 12 months.

Lt. Col. Kurt K. Kobernik, commander of Task Force Normandy, and Command Sgt. Maj. Alvin N. Martin, the battalion command sergeant major, cased the unit's organizational colors to signify the unit's departure from Virginia, and the colors will be uncased when they begin their mission in Qatar.

"Task Force Normandy stands in front of you due in large part to the strong sense of duty of our Soldiers and their families, as well as the great vision, leadership and commitment of the command team of the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and the Virginia National Guard State Headquarters," Kobernik said. "Their tenacity and expertise helped set conditions for successful preparations in such a short window of time."

Normally units receive anywhere between six and 18 months notice to mobilize for federal active duty, but 3rd Battalion received less than 120 days notification.

"Due to the short notice, the leadership and I laid out a clear path on how we would make this a cohesive team from disparate organizations, a team that shares the same vision and do this all in less than 120 days," he said.

Kobernik said the successful integration was the result of "fantastic leadership at the company, platoon and squad level" as well as superior work by the battalion staff.

"It is this kind of dedication to duty that all the Soldiers and leaders of the task force demonstrated in all that they do, and it reinforces my belief that we can take on any challenge," he said. "You should feel a sense of pride in the unit. I know I do."

Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran joined Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, and Col. William J. Coffin, commander of the 116th IBCT, in thanking the Soldiers for their service and expressed their appreciation to families for their support of the unit's mission.

"Your professionalism and your dedication to our commonwealth and our nation is inspiring to us all," Moran said. "It is my privilege to say thank you on behalf of Governor Terry McAuliffe and more than eight million fellow Virginians."

Moran recounted the federal mobilizations for 3rd Battalion in recent years and said, "Much has been asked of 3rd Battalion, and they have answered the call every time. They could not do this with the support of families and communities," Moran said. "You represent the best of us, and these Soldiers and families have met all the challenges and are mission ready."

Coffin echoed Moran's praise of the unit. "The men and women you see standing in formation represent our best citizen-Soldiers, ready to go into harms way and support our nation's efforts overseas," he said. "Soldiers from every battalion in the brigade are taking part in this mission, and they show us the best things the Army stands for."

The next step on the battalion's journey is to report to Fort Bliss, Texas, for approximately 30 to 45 days of additional mobilization training. From there they will deploy to Qatar, and they are expected to operate as a security force providing access control, tower guards and other security support.

"I am very proud of these fine Soldiers, but their families are also very deserving of recognition," Kobernik said. "You are the ones who keep the household going while we are deployed. We acknowledge your sacrifice, and our family and friends are the source of comfort and hope that keep us going in our most challenging days."

Kobernik stressed to the families the importance of using the resources available to them through the Family Readiness Groups, and Moran, Williams and Coffin all emphasized the support available as well from the brigade and state level.

"There are many challenges that lay ahead of, but I know the Soldiers of Task

Force Normandy will succeed in all they set out to do," Kobernik said. "Your sense of duty and selfless service will be the legacy you leave."

The battalion is headquartered in Winchester and is made up of the following company-level units:

Soldiers assigned to the Headquarters Company, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment and Company F, 429th Brigade Support Battalion based in Winchester.

Soldiers assigned to Company B, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment based in Woodstock with additional Soldiers assigned to the detachment in Warrenton.

Soldiers assigned to Company C, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment based in Leesburg.

Soldiers assigned to Troop B, 2nd Squadron, 183rd Cavalry Regiment based in Suffolk.

Soldiers from Company A, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment based in Charlottesville with a detachment in Harrisonburg as well as Soldiers assigned to Company D, 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment based in Fredericksburg and will also take part in the mission and deploy with the battalion.

Soldiers trained at Fort Pickett for about three weeks to accomplish a number of administrative and field training tasks to prepare for the mobilization including weapons qualification, equipment issue and medical evaluation.

Soldiers from 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry mobilized for federal duty in Afghanistan from March 2004 to July 2005, and mobilized for duty in Iraq and Kuwait from September 2007 to May 2008.

Soldiers from Troop B last deployed to Iraq from August 2011 to December 2011 as part of Task Force 183 where they conducted convoy security operations in support of Operation New Dawn.

Soldiers from the 3rd Battalion, Company F and Troop B have also supported numerous state active duty missions in support of snowstorms and other hazard weather conditions.

The Covington-based 29th Division Band provided ceremonial music for the ceremony.

*Article by Mr. Cotton Puryear
Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office*

Planning underway now to commemorate the formation of the 29th Infantry Division and its involvement in the First World War

By Joseph Balkoski

Since its inception in 1982, the Maryland Military Historical Society has been one of the strongest proponents of the 29th Division Association's famous Preamble: "To keep alive the spirit that never knew defeat, to glorify our dead, and to further keep before our country the record of the 29th Division in all wars."

Housed in Baltimore's historic Fifth Regiment Armory, and officially recognized in U.S. tax code as a non-profit corporation, for more than three decades the Society has actively supported the Preamble's intent by maintaining and continually expanding the 29th Infantry Division Archives, which includes thousands of the 29th's official records, photographs, journals, and correspondence.

Among the unique elements of this collection are thirty-two bound volumes containing transcripts of every word spoken at General Gerhardt's "war room" tent during World War II; a complete collection of 29th Infantry Division morning reports; a full set of 29 *Let's Go!* newsletters, the daily journal published at 29th Division headquarters for front-line personnel; and dozens of memoirs and self-published books by 29th Division veterans. This is considered the finest collection in the United States of archival records devoted to a single U.S. Army division.

The Society also manages thousands of physical artifacts related to the 29th Division since its formation in 1917, the finest of which are displayed in the "Blue and Gray Room" of the Maryland Museum of Military History. Here, General Gerhardt's command jeep, *Vixen Tor*, is carefully preserved as a centerpiece.

Among other sacred items displayed in the Museum are the 29th Infantry Division Guest Book, signed by the likes of Dwight Eisenhower, Omar Bradley, Bernard Montgomery, Nancy Astor, and Bill Mauldin; the key to the German city of Jülich, captured in February 1945; the cloth used to blindfold a German general during surrender negotiations at the siege of Brest in September 1944; and a ballistic cap of a gigantic 11-inch German shell that failed to explode near 29th Division headquarters in Normandy.

September 2017 will mark the 100th anniversary of the formation of the 29th Division, created by the unification of National Guard units from Maryland, New Jersey, Delaware, Virginia, and the District of Columbia at Camp McClellan, Alabama, in September 1917. Nicknamed the "Blue and Gray Division" because its component units were drawn together from both sides of the Mason-Dixon Line, the 29th moved overseas to France in June 1918, entered the front shortly thereafter, and participated in the great Meuse-Argonne Offensive in October 1918, during which

division personnel gained three Medals of Honor in a single day and contributed materially to Allied victory in World War I. The following year, division veterans established the 29th Division Association and created the by-laws that our beloved organization still adheres to today.

To mark those glorious events, the Maryland Military Historical Society intends to create a major museum exhibit featuring World War I artifacts, museum-grade mannequins, descriptive panels, and contemporary artwork, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the period when the Blue and Gray Division first joined the ranks of the American Expeditionary Force and eventually entered combat in France. The exhibit will be presented in the Fifth Regiment Armory—the iconic edifice in which thousands of World War I 29ers entered military service. We also plan to create a traveling display, telling the story of the 29th Division from its 1917 birth to the present day, when National Guardsmen still proudly wear the Blue and Gray patch in defense of their state and nation.

The Maryland Military Historical Society has no annual budget and receives no financial support from state or federal governmental

sources. Since 1982, the Society's essential missions have been carried out by countless faithful unpaid volunteers, supported by donations from individuals and occasional grants by philanthropic organizations.

The Society recently completed a major exhibit on the bicentennial of *The Star Spangled Banner* and the defense of the Chesapeake region in the War of 1812, an effort that was made possible only by the generosity of donors. However, the Society does not expect funding for the 29th Division centennial to be nearly as plentiful as it was for the War of 1812 exhibit. Hence, to continue its vital mission of "keeping alive the spirit that never knew defeat," the Maryland Military Historical Society must promptly energize its fundraising efforts and establish a secure financial footing in preparation for the 29th Division centennial.

We fervently hope that those individuals and groups dedicated to the history of the 29th Division will actively support the Maryland Military Historical Society's effort to pass this glorious history on to new generations of soldiers, veterans, and civilians alike by considering a financial donation.

If you wish to donate to the society, please make checks payable to the **Maryland Military Historical Society** and mail to **P.O. Box 34, Perry Hall, MD 21128.**

Thanks, and as always... 29, *Let's Go*



General Gerhardt's command jeep, *Vixen Tor*.

Doc's Corner**National Surgeon's update:**

By the National Surgeon
 Dr. William N. Bernhard, MD
 Post #85

Bad news: No COLA for those collecting military retired pay, Social Security, VA compensation or survivor benefits and 7 million Medicare beneficiaries will see steep fee increases.

VA report: Our Congress has provided the VA with \$3.3 billion to keep VA medical facilities operating for the rest of 2015. But, VA secretary Bob McDonald says he does not have the authority to spend money where it is needed most.

Also, wait time for appointments continues to increase allegedly because more veterans are seeking medical care at VA facilities. So it is our fault. VA fix your problems!

A few improvements were made in the VA's Choice program; (1) the VA can now waive the 30 day wait time for vets; (2) more providers were selected for "choice" patients; (3) distance requirements were changed to driving distances.

Also, Congress has requested the VA provide a plan to them by 1 Nov detailing how it will consolidate all non-VA care programs into one program. Bottom line: the VA continues to fail to provide medical and administrative services to vets in a timely fashion.

Now for service members pay: Earlier this year the House of Representatives agreed to authorize a full active duty pay raise of 2.3%, but Senate lawmakers and the president want to cap the pay raise to 1.3%.

This eroding of pay and benefits for service members and their families for a third straight year is a trend that could well affect readiness and recruiting a quality force.

Tricare update: Beginning Oct 1 Tricare beneficiaries were required to refill select maintenance meds through Tricare Home Delivery or at a MTF pharmacy or pay the full retail price. But, some prescriptions are not being filled because of a supply lack.

Allegedly this saves the government 32% on brand name meds. There is at least one exception. USFHP Tricare prime members may continue to use their retail pharmacies. But this may not last as Tricare Prime will probably be targeted in the 2016 legislative session.

In fact the 132,000 presently enrolled in USFHP could be switched to Tricare standard or Tricare for life (TFL) if at age 65. Then Medicare would be the primary carrier and Tricare the secondary payer. In fact USFHP alliance members have 1/3 less inpatient days and 28% fewer ER visits. Expect changes!!!

Military retirement changes in 2016: Defense officials are backing a "blended" system that would shrink the size of the current defined pension plan by about 20% while bolstering the benefit to individual investment accounts.

Bottom line: this proposal would give a modest benefit for the roughly 83% who leave service short of 20 years and not qualify for retirement benefits.

But, those of us with retirement benefits earned for 20+ years of service may well see a decrease in our retirement checks. With retirement pay and benefits decreasing and Tricare and pharmacy co-pays increasing, we, the military beneficiaries, will be paying more and receiving less.

I personally feel that Congress needs to look at other ways to save money before raiding the wallets of Tricare beneficiaries, active duty and reserve duty pay and benefits and retirees' pay and earned benefits.

Continued now, for a limited time only!

All merchandise orders \$25 or more will come with a

free 29th Division Association Bolo Tie!!!

Please see merchandise list on page 39!

You can now buy 29th merchandise using a credit, debit card, or "PayPal".

Just go to the new updated website at:

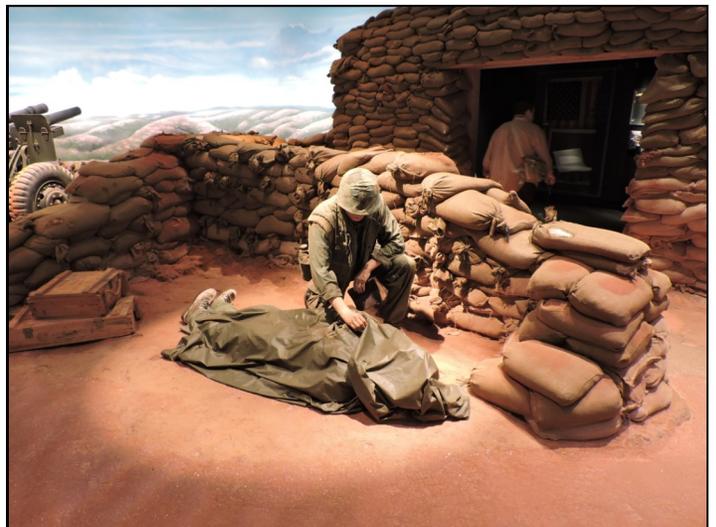
www.29thdivisionassociation.com

and click on "Merchandise".

97th Annual Reunion & Convention 15-18 October 2015



National Museum of the Marine Corps, Quantico, Virginia



Various displays of the Marines involvement in Vietnam.

All photos by William Mund

Recipient of the 29th Division Association's Student Travel Grant Speaks at the 97th Reunion

Kaitlyn (Kati) Kissane received the 29th Division Association's student travel grant in support of her participation in the 2015 Normandy Allies International Experience. She spoke at the business meeting of the Association during its 97th National Convention and Reunion.

After thanking the members for their service and sacrifice, and the Association for helping her participate in the July history-study tour, she told about her experience in France.

Kati said that she was struck by how the Norman people "appreciated that Americans were there learning about what had happened to them," and by how welcoming the Normans were at receptions and as hosts for students to stay in their homes.

She was deeply moved by the stories told by Normans who lived under the German occupation and witnessed the D-Day landings. Kati carries strong memories of remembrance ceremonies honoring fallen British, Canadian, and American soldiers, and the group's visit to the 29th Division Monument, where she delivered prepared remarks to her fellow travelers about the Division's history, particularly as it related to D-Day. Although the many museums, monuments, cathedrals, and other sites were "incredible," there was "nothing quite like being on the beaches."

Many parts of the experience qualified as a favorite, but "visits to the cemeteries in Normandy were some of my most memorable and touching moments of the trip.

Both of my grandfathers, my mom and



Kaitlyn "Kati" Kissane

my dad were active members of the military, and two of my brothers and my older sister are currently serving in the military.

This, coupled with the importance that was placed on honoring these men, made for some very moving moments in the British cemetery while I was reading the epitaphs on the graves of men no older than my youngest brother.

When we visited the Normandy American Cemetery at Coleville, we were each assigned a grave to visit. They told us that many families could not come to visit their loved ones buried here, and it was quite possible that

we might be the only people going to visit that soldier specifically.

This time spent in the cemetery was our last day, and I feel that it wrapped the trip up perfectly. This trip was about learning about, remembering, and honoring all those who sacrificed everything for a people that they did not even know. This trip changed how I understood the Invasion of Normandy. Not only have I a greater respect for men who gave it all for the people of Normandy, but also for the people of Normandy themselves, their culture, food, and the beautiful place they call home."

Kati Kissane, of Fredericksburg, VA, is a junior at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, VA. She is majoring in history with an emphasis on public history as well as American military history. She was introduced at the reunion by Peter Combee (Lt. Col., Ret.), historian and vice president for the 116th Regiment Foundation, historian and board member for Normandy Allies, and Adjunct Instructor of Military History at James Madison University.

[Public history is the profession whose members "work in museums, archives, government agencies, libraries, historic preservation organizations, businesses, contract history firms, cultural resource management firms, and historic sites. [They] are known as public historians because they use their skills as historians to serve a public audience." - See more at: <http://www.jmu.edu/history/programs/public-history/>]

Article by Walter Carter

Thank you for your donations to the "Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund".

They are greatly appreciated and help keep the newsletter coming.

Please continue to support our upcoming issues.

Donations can be sent to: Editor William Mund at

P.O. Box 47634, Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634

Without our generous readers, we could not exist. Thanks again!

National Officers - Elected and Installed for 2015 - 2016

National Commander: David H. Ginsburg
 Senior Vice Commander: Robert E. Wisch
 Junior Vice Commander: Lewis Frank Dillon
 Finance Officer: J. Brian Becker
 Chaplain: Reverend John Schildt
 Welfare Officer: Frank Rauschenberg
 Service Officer: Walter Carter
 Surgeon: Dr. William Bernhard
 Historian: Joseph Balkoski
 Judge Advocate: Houston Matney
 Sergeant-at-Arms: Randall Beamer
 Southern Region Vice Commander: Lewis Frank Dillon
 Maryland Region Vice Commander: Frank Rauschenberg
 At-Large Region Vice Commander: Edward Tolzman



Appointed Officers

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 Assistant to the National Executive Director: PNC Robert Moscatti
 Adjutant: William S. Mund, Jr.
 National Property Officer: Franklin Shilow
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 National Parliamentarian: Thomas Insley
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 Chaplain: Edith Paul
 Communications Officer: Nancy Dillon
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Post Commander's Workshop

I want to thank everyone for a very productive Post Commander's Workshop at the Convention last month.

We had 20 attendees representing Posts 1, 5, 48, 58, 64, 72, 78, 85, 88, 93, 94, 110 and 729 - so 13 of the posts were represented.

Furthermore, there were meetings with BG Ortner at the Convention to get Post 84 (Fort Belvoir) back up and running and PNC Bob Moscati has been working hard with members of Post 2 to keep that post going following the passing of their long-time commander, Taylor Thomas.

One of the initiatives to help the posts was the expanding of the *Chin Strap* to our national membership. That means as of the December issue, it will be going to ALL members of the Association - not just the Maryland Region, where it has lived for decades.

The purpose of this is to help communicate with the entire Association monthly and not just 3x a year with the *Twenty-Niner*. One of the key parts of this is the Post Reports. This will serve 2 purposes - it will allow the posts to let everyone know what is going on with their post and even more importantly, it will allow the posts to communicate with their entire post membership for free every single month - a challenge for many of our posts.

We MUST capture as many emails from each post as possible to send it out electronically and cut down on our costs for expanding this nationally - a good amount of the MD Region already receives it electronically, which is a better version than the paper version due to the color photos, etc. and it actually arrives a week earlier than the paper version as well.

If you have an email address, you will get the electronic copy, so please send as many emails as you have for your members to Bob Moscati at rmoscati@msn.com

The deadline for *Chin Strap* submissions is the 10th of each month. They go to Chip Boblitz, the Editor, at boblitz@icloud.com

A few more ideas/subjects were thrown around:

1. QR Codes - these are the barcodes you frequently see on billboards, handouts and commercials now. It allows the younger generation to scan it using their phone and get a lot more information. We will look at adding these to the trifolds going forward to drive people to our national site, and allow posts to do this to drive people to their own sites for membership, information and recruiting.

2. The *Twenty Niner* has proven to be an invaluable leave-behind tool at armories and events for recruiting. We will work at getting more posts extra copies to be able to give out and help grow their posts.

3. It was suggested that phone calls were a very good tool for getting new members acclimated into posts and coming to meetings - much more personal than emails are. Several posts are doing it with great success.

4. For any posts that have done more than \$25,000 in revenue through events, merchandise, etc, that effects how Brian Becker needs to submit the IRS forms. Please contact him if you have any questions at all with the IRS and tax forms at jbrianbecker@verizon.net or 410.442.1230.

Any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at dginzu@gmail.com or 443.641.7208.

Legal Talk

If you are a prospective barrister, counselor or other practitioner of the law and are bored by fascinating stories of our soldiers and heroes - this is the section for you. There were a number of by-law changes at this year's Convention and we wanted to highlight the changes for you.

PNC Richard Smith put together a committee consisting of Michael Tanczyn and Bill Bullock and they had 3 main goals: 1) match the by-laws to current Association operations, 2) eliminate duplications and contradictions, and 3) modernize the membership requirements.

After a few meetings and some hard work they had a working version to bring in front of the Command Committee. The two committees put their heads together and the proposed changes were approved unanimously, first at the National Executive Committee III meeting in Winchester, and then at the National Convention in Fredericksburg.

Skipping the redundancies, duplicate clauses etc., here are the summary of the changes:

Expanded membership so that "family members" are full members of the Association. This helped close a loophole where nephews and nieces of 29ers were not full members, despite the fact that 90% of all 29ers that died in World War II had not yet had children and so there were no sons of daughters to carry on their legacy.

Added an age requirement (18) for a member to hold a leadership position at any level in the Association.

Allows Associate Members to hold any office in the Association except for National Commander and the National-Vice Commander's positions. This reflects the growing willingness of our Associate Members to take positions that have not been taken by full members.

Allowed the National Auxiliary to define their own requirements for membership as long it is clarified that a person can be a member of the 29th Division Association or the Auxiliary but cannot be a member of both.

I am sure this will not be the last time the By-Laws are addressed but it was a very productive job by PNC Dick Smith and his team.

David H. Ginsburg
National Commander

Attendees at our 97th Annual Reunion & Convention

Balkoski, Joseph
Banik, Jeff & Christine Nicholes
Beamer, Randall
Becker, Brian
Bernhard, William & Theresa
Bilo, Bill & Diane
Carter, Walter & Bonnie
Combee, Pete
Crosby, Gil & Carolyn
DeHaven, Bill
Dent, Jane & Greg
Dent, Chase & Gavin
Dillon, Frank & Nancy
Dooley, PNC Ivan
Duncan, Norman & Neuite Fudge
Earll, Arden & Shirley
Elwood, John & Vivian
Faulconer, Buddy
Faries, George & Kent Lewis
Foreman, Charles
Garrison, Jay & Blonnie
Ginsburg, Dave & Amy Colton
Ginsburg, Mel & Bev
Hawkins, Val, Ken S. & Marg E.
Hayden, Grant
Hess, Randy & Janice
Higgs, Edward
Hofmann, Lee
Houck, David
Jebson, Sallie Howie
Jones, Bob & Helena
Kahl, Bruce
Kassane, Kati
Kaufman, Jack & Lois
King, PNC Bill & NP Juanita
Krauss, Michael
Kutcher, PNC Jack & Maxine
Lane, John & Shirley
Leamy, Martin
Linthicum, George & Dorothy
Liswell, Bernie
Lockard, PNC Buck & Betty
Matney, Houston
McCandless, James & Paula
McLaughlin, John & Kathleen
Melnikoff, Steve & Steven A.
Moscati, PNC Robert
Mund, William
Neighbor, Chuck
Ortner, Blake & Kristen
Parker, Virginia & Thomas
Pulket, Dennis
Rauschenberg, Frank & Peg
Raymond, Richard & Dianne
Recker, PNC Bob & Pat
Roush, Bruce & Carolyn
Schildt, John
Sherr-Davino, Fran
Shilow, Franklin & Alice
Shuey, Ted
Snyder, Richard
Swift, Vivian
Talley, Nancy J.
Tolzman, Edward
Vaccarino, John & Mary
Wisch, JVC Robert & Linda
Yusna, Carl
Zang, PNC Joe & Shirley

Saturday Evening Banquet



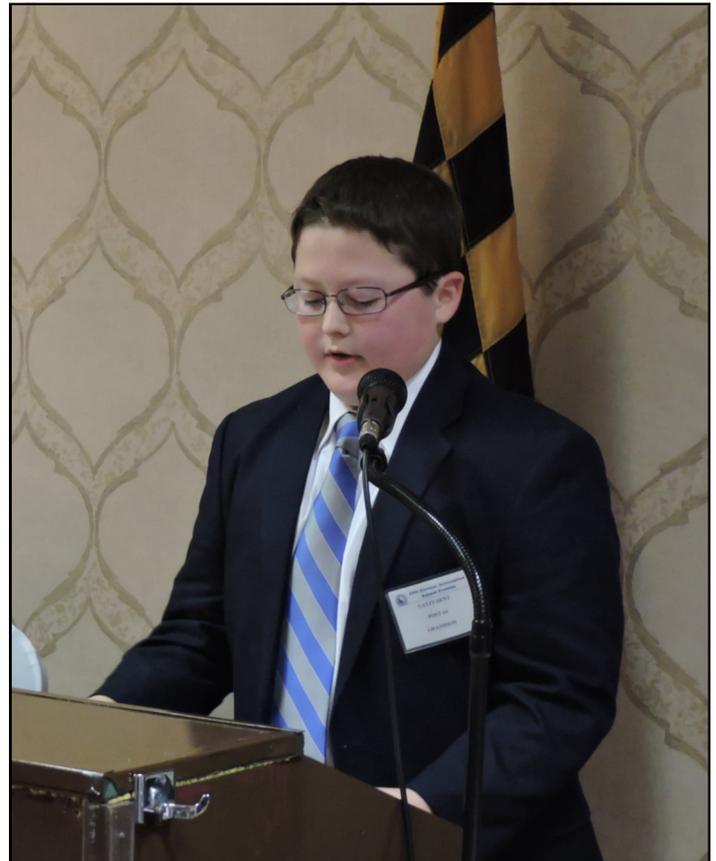
NC David Ginsburg presenting Kati Kissane of Fredericksburg with a book by Joseph Balkoski.



Our guest speaker, Brig. Gen. Blake C. Ortner, Commanding General, 29th Infantry Division.



PNC Ivan Dooley presenting a donation to the *Twenty-Niner* and the *Chin Strap* from Dick Jordan, Jr. in memory of Dick's father, Richard F. Jordan, Sr.



Gavin Dent, grandson of PNC Bill King and Auxiliary President Juanita King reads his essay about Bob Slaughter to the banquet attendees.

Saturday Evening Banquet

Left to right: Arden Earll; Norman Duncan; Steve Melnikof, NC Ginsburg and Chuck Neighbor, as the WWII veterans participate in the annual Calvados toast.



Photo by William Mund



Left to right: National Auxiliary officers installed: Juanita King; Dianne Raymond and Nancy Dillon.

Photo by William Mund

PNC Recker congratulates David H. Ginsburg after his installation as National Commander of the 29th Division Association.



Photo by PNC Jack Kutcher

Sunday Memorial Service

Every year at our Memorial Service on Sunday morning, we honor those who have departed us during the past year. Listed below are the names of all the deceased since our last Annual Reunion and Convention in 2014.

Anderson, Robert A.

Bailey, Fairel

Barranco, Frank T.

Barnes, Jerry F.

Barton, Ronald

Black, Charlie

Bowermon, Tommy J.

Britt, Hillar L.

Brown, Richard H.

Burton, Roland

Bussard, Ralph D.

Coleman, E. Hampton

Cox, Austin H.

Creighton, Everett

Crum, Paul L.

Davey, Raymond O.

Dougherty, Joseph H.

Englar, Donald G.

Ewing, James P.

Finks, Alan P.

Fiore, George M.

Fournier, Jean P.

Gambill, Joseph

Gilland, Kenneth L.

Gouker, Thomas E.

Griffin, Kenneth W.

Grubbs, Ken B.

Hacket, Maurice A.

Hahn, Paul

Hamill, Ephraim J.

Hankins, PNC Glenwood

Harris, James R.

Hedlund, Walter R.

Hewitt, John P.

Howard, Merrill C.

Howell, Joseph E.

Humm, Arthur W.

Hurd, Cletus L.

Johnson, J. Robert

Jordan, Richard F.

Kent, Edward P.

Kinsey, Irvin L.

Koslow, Aaron

Lang, Charles T.

Lillis, Charles J.

Manahan, Donald M.

Mank, William C.

Martin John M.

McElroy, James C.

Mellon, Donald E.

Moore, Curtis

Morris, Donald A.

Mosgai, John

Oakman, Carlton

Ogle, Norman

Pensock, Robert S.

Proffitt, Carl D.

Quigley, Richard H.

Routzahn, John A.

Sales, Robert L.

Scattergood, John

Shevchuck, Harry

Simms, William R.

Spadell, Michael

Steinmann, Fred

Stevens, Lenwood N.

Stone, Robert S.

Stover, Russell T.

Sulhoff, John E.

Thomas, Trevor P.

Vickery, Norman C.

Wallenfang, Ellis J.

Wehr, Harry, III

LADIES

Duncan, Elsie M.

Grossman, Natalie

Stackowitz, Margaret



Essay by Gavin Dent

Gavin Dent is an active member of the 29th Division Association. He is the son of Jane King Dent and Greg Dent and brother to Chase Dent, also an active member of the Association. Additionally, he is the grandson of Past National Commander Bill King and National Auxiliary President Juanita King.

Currently, Gavin is an advance placement student at Hidden Valley Middle School, Roanoke, Virginia. He is a member of the Hidden Valley High School Archery Club, and Hidden Valley Middle School Band. He is an avid reader, enjoys the outdoors and a variety of interests. He is a devoted fan of the Washington Nationals, Washington Capitals and the Virginia Tech Hokies.

Gavin and his brother, Chase, at an early age had the opportunity to know Bob Slaughter and always enjoyed his company. Reading Mr. Slaughter's book "Omaha Beach and Beyond: The Long March of Sergeant Bob Slaughter" at age 10, which he read in its entirety in five hours, 42 minutes, inspired Gavin to write his essay. He entered the Library of Congress's essay contest "A Book That Shaped Me". Fifth and sixth grade students were asked to write a one page essay about a book they had read that shaped their lives.

Gavin placed first in Virginia and was named a grand prize recipient in the contest. He was honored at an awards ceremony in Washington, DC, in 2014. The essay has been published and can be found in the archives of the Library of Congress.

Gavin's Essay

I often wonder what my classmates think about when the Pledge of Allegiance is said in school? When people go to the grocery store and see the American flag flying in the parking lot, what does that mean to them? Do people notice the older man in the restaurant wearing a hat that says WWII vet on it?

After reading the book "Omaha Beach and Beyond, The Long March of Sergeant Bob Slaughter," by John Robert Slaughter, I think of the brave veterans of World War II every day.

This book has made me realize how his generation of men has affected my life. This book is about Mr. Slaughter's personal account as a soldier in the D-Day invasion on Omaha Beach, France during WWII.

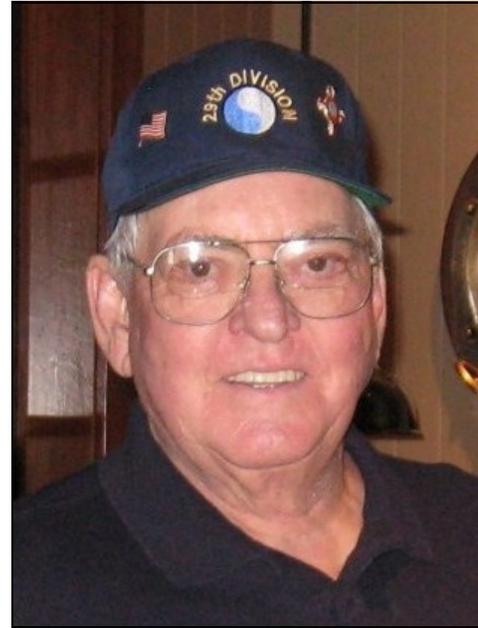
Mr. Slaughter wrote, "Time changed for me at that moment, and my life would never be the same." I feel none of our lives would be what we know if it were not for what Mr. Slaughter and the other soldiers did, and I am thankful for those men every day.

Mr. Slaughter also wrote in his book that he and many of the men did not like to talk about their experiences. They felt like they did what they were expected to do and are not heroes. But, there are heroes in this world and we might see them every day without realizing it.

This book has intrigued me to learn more about history and the world around me. I am aware of more than school, friends and video games. I have become active in my community and in the 29th Infantry Division Association. I am grateful for other members of my community and I am proud of my community and country. I strive to have the character of these humble and brave men.

Reading this book is why I stand proud to say the Pledge of Allegiance. If I had not read this book, I might not think of the battles our flag has been through. It is why when I see a veteran in the store, the park, or anywhere, I hold out my hand to shake theirs and say thank you.

Taylor Thomas, Commander of Florida West Post #2



The 29th Division Association regrets to announce the death of Taylor Thomas, Commander of Florida West Post #2.

Taylor passed away in his sleep on 6 October 2015 at his residence in Sarasota, Florida.

Taylor took over as Commander of Post #2 sometime around 2006 or 2007. He published a newsletter that was sent to all post members every month.

Every year Taylor was responsible for holding a Post #2 "Special Luncheon" that was held at a restaurant in Sarasota, Florida. He always invited national officers to attend this event.

Taylor was born on 16 August 1938 and enlisted in D Company, 175th Infantry, 29th Division on 21 November 1955. He spent his entire military career as a soldier of the 175th Infantry.

Taylor had the unique ability to make everyone he met feel like they were important. Many people were fond of Taylor.

PNC John Wilcox recalls that "He was a fine gentleman who loved his wife and family and held a special respect for the World War II veterans and all his friends".

He is survived by his wife Judie, several children, and grandchildren.

*William S. Mund, Jr.
Editor*

Minutes

of the 97th Annual Convention & Reunion
Business Meeting held on 17 October 2015 at the
Fredericksburg Hospitality House, Fredericksburg, Virginia

The 97th National Reunion and Convention Business Meeting was called to order by National Senior Vice Commander David H. Ginsburg. SRVC Ginsburg asked everyone to stand and pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States and recite the 29th Division Association preamble. National Chaplain John W. Schildt offered a special prayer asking our Heavenly Father to bestow His guidance on the members of the 29th Division Association and especially on the families of our recently departed comrades. SRVC Ginsburg welcomed everyone to the convention and briefly reviewed various administrative details.

Adjutant Mund called the "Roll of Officers" and reported that a quorum was present and a regular meeting could be conducted. The minutes of the 96th National Reunion had been published previously in the Autumn/Winter 2014 edition of the *Twenty--Niner*. As there were no corrections or alterations, these minutes were approved as published.

Officer's Report

National Commander – I. John Vaccarino was not in attendance at this meeting. He has recently been hospitalized with a serious illness and will be undergoing surgery in the next week. SRVC Ginsburg spoke on behalf of Commander Vaccarino and reported on his health status. SRVC Ginsburg said that Commander Vaccarino was extremely disappointed that he was unable to attend this convention due to his recent hospitalization and impending surgery. SRVC Ginsburg said that there will be time set aside at next year's convention to honor Commander Vaccarino for his leadership during the past year.

Senior Vice Commander – David H. Ginsburg submitted a written report. *(This report may be obtained by contacting the undersigned.)*

National Junior Vice Commander – Robert Wisch submitted a written report. *(This report may be obtained by contacting the undersigned.)*

Southern Region Vice Commander – Frank Dillon submitted a written report. *(This report may be obtained by contacting the undersigned.)*

Maryland Region Vice Commander – Frank Rauschenberg submitted a written report. *(This report may be obtained by contacting the undersigned.)*

At-Large Region Vice Commander – PNC Dick Smith has been ill for several months and had no report to submit.

National Executive Director – PNC Bob Moscati announced he will be stepping down as National Executive Director. He has recommended that incoming National Commander, David H. Ginsburg, appoint William S. Mund, Jr. as the new National Executive Director tomorrow at NEC I. William S. Mund, Jr. has indicated that he will accept the appointment. This change will necessitate the addition of William S. Mund, Jr.'s name to the official banking documentation of the 29th Division Association and the removal of the names of John E. Wilcox, Jr., Charles W. Lockard, and Robert W. Moscati.

Membership – PNC Bob Moscati explained his report that was distributed to the members present. 89.9% of our members have paid their dues for 2015. Several of the smaller posts, Post 175 and Post 27 are in danger of folding.

Finance Officer – J. Brian Becker made some comments on our IRS tax status. He made mention of a new tax status: 501(c)17. He has filed all appropriate required tax documents with the IRS.

Chaplain – Reverend John Schildt mentioned several individuals who were not able to attend this convention due to health issues.

He recognized PNC Jack Kutcher who was in attendance and is recovering from an illness.

Service – Service Officer Walter Carter commented on the Veterans Health Administration Scandal of 2014, which had to do with the difficulties that many veterans are experiencing obtaining the medical services to which they are entitled to by law. A reply to our correspondence that was sent to the President of the United States and to the proper VA authorities has not been received. This official correspondence from our association will be resent to the proper authorities. After further discussion, it was determined that the NEC would continue to monitor this issue and to respond to and/or act on any further developments.

Surgeon – Dr. William Bernhard followed up on the comments made by the Service Officer concerning the problems with the VA Health Administration. He mentioned that the best option for renewing prescriptions is to stay in touch with the nurse, as the doctors usually get moved around and are difficult to contact. He said he will continue his column in the *Twenty-Niner* and will keep everyone updated on all VA issues.

Welfare – National Welfare Officer Jordan passed away in January 2015 and this position has been vacant.

Historian – Joe Balkoski advised that the 100th anniversary of the formation of the 29th Division and its participation in the First World War is fast approaching. He said that the Maryland Museum of Military History is planning to create a significant exhibit devoted to both of these events. He said he will solicit a donation from the 29th Division Association later on in this meeting.

Sergeant-at-Arms – Randall Beamer had no report.

Property Officer – Frank Shilow thanked NED/PNC Moscati and SRVC Ginsburg for their help and support. He lamented the fact that he has not done much business selling 29th merchandise at this convention.

Judge Advocate – Frank Rauschenberg had no report.

Parliamentarian – Thomas Insley has been ill and was not in attendance at this meeting.

National President, Ladies Auxiliary – Juanita King submitted a written report. *(This report may be obtained by contacting the undersigned.)*

Committee Reports

2016 Convention Planning – NSVC Ginsburg gave an update on his efforts concerning selecting a site for our 2016 event. He has formed a Convention Committee to advise him on this effort. He noted that the Philadelphia area has not been receptive to hosting our 2016 event. The committee expects to explore the Harrisburg/Carlisle, PA area.

2017 Convention Planning – NJVC Wisch said he hopes to have the 2017 Convention in Baltimore. He proposes to have a Blue & Gray Ball held in the Fifth Regiment Armory.

Budget Committee – Finance Officer Becker called on NJVC Wisch to report on the audit of the association's finances that was conducted recently. NJVC Wisch reported that his audit found no discrepancies in the financial records of the 29th Division Association. NJVC Wisch commended the NFO on his recordkeeping and documentation. NFO Becker presented his budget for the 2016 fiscal year. A motion to accept the budget was made by PNC King and seconded by PNC Moscati. Motion was passed. *(This report may be obtained by contacting the undersigned.)*

Futures Committee – With the aid of a power point presentation, NSVC David Ginsburg spoke about what has been accomplished over the past year with the Futures Committee. He spoke at length about the website, the Announcements page; the Facebook page, and how these new

additions have positively influenced its viability. He outlined the goals and objectives of the Futures Committee for the next year.

Changes to the Constitution & By-Laws – SRVC Ginsburg, with the aid of a power point presentation, presented the proposed changes that the Constitution & By-Laws committee recommended. A motion to accept these changes “en masse” was made by NFO Becker and seconded by PNC King. Motion was passed. It was noted that these National By-Laws should not be contradicted by Region or Post By-Laws.

Nominating Committee – PNC Zang proposed the following individuals to be elected for 2015-2016. They are: Commander – David H. Ginsburg; Senior Vice Commander – Robert E. Wisch; Junior Vice Commander – Lewis Frank Dillon; Finance Officer – J. Brian Becker; Chaplain – Rev. John Schildt; Welfare Officer – Frank Rauschenberg; Service Officer – Walter Carter; Surgeon – Dr. William Bernhard; Historian – Joseph Balkoski; Judge Advocate – Houston Matney; Sergeant-at-Arms – Randall Beamer; Southern Region Vice Commander – Lewis Frank Dillon; Maryland Region Vice Commander – Frank Rauschenberg; and At-Large Region Vice Commander – Edward Tolzman.

Special Reports

Normandy Allies – Walter Carter updated everyone on the general activities that Normandy Allies have been involved in during the past year. Comrade Carter then introduced LTC (Ret) Pete Combee, an adjunct professor of military history at James Madison University. Comrade Combee made some brief comments and then introduced Kati Kissane of Fredericksburg, VA, a recipient of the 29th Division Association grant who traveled to Normandy this past July. Kati thanked our association for our support which enabled her to participate in this year’s Normandy trip. She gave an account of her daily activities and the locations she visited and how she was emotionally moved by her experience.

The *Twenty-Niner* Newsletter – Editor/Publisher Mund asked for comments and questions concerning the *Twenty-Niner* Newsletter. Hearing none, he then stated that there are several positions within the national association that are in dire need of someone to step up and take over that position should the current incumbent become “unavailable”. He recounted the problems several years ago that transpired with the death of PNC McCleaf, who at that time was the National Property Officer. He encouraged all posts to advertise and solicit members to learn how to take over the various important offices should a misfortune occur to a current post or national office holder within the association. He identified these important national offices as the: National Property Officer; Editor/Publisher of the *Twenty-Niner*; and National Membership Chairman.

Old Business

WWI American Memorial Church in France – This issue will be addressed at the NEC II in January 2016.

Medal of Honor Project – PNC Zang updated everyone on the effort to erect an obelisk in honor of Maryland recipients of the Medal of Honor at the Medal of Honor Grove in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. He noted that two-thirds of the funds needed have been donated. It is hoped that completion will be in the summer of 2016.

New Business

Election of Officers 2015 - 2016 – PNC Zang asked if there were any other nominations from the floor for any of the positions. After PNC Zang repeated this request three times for any other nominations from the floor, a motion to close the nominations was then offered by Kahl and seconded by PNC Moscati. Motion was passed. A further motion was made by PNC King and seconded by PNC R. Moscati to elect the officers by acclamation. A single vote was offered by the Adjutant to elect all candidates. The names of the elected officers appear in the “Nominating Committee” report of these minutes. The installation is to occur after the evening banquet.

Realignment of Posts – SRVC Ginsburg suggested that Florida Post 2 and Post 27 of the Southern Region be moved into the At-Large Region. A motion to this effect was made by PNC King and seconded by Dillon. Motion was passed. The dwindling membership numbers of Post 29 was brought up by NSVC Ginsburg. After much discussion a motion was made by Linthicum and seconded by PNC Lockard to distribute the members of Post 29 to other active posts. This motion was passed.

Chin Strap Initiative – The *Chin Strap* is a monthly newsletter published by the Maryland Region and distributed to all members of that region. It is thought that by distributing this publication to all members of the association, posts that do not have their own newsletters will be able to better communicate with their members. The minimal extra costs associated with this initiative will be borne by the NEC. The Maryland Region has already agreed to this initiative. A motion was made by Dillon and seconded by PNC King to send the *Chin Strap* to all members of the association. Motion was passed.

National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) – Bruce Kahl of Post 58 informed everyone that the NGAUS 138th General Conference & Exhibition will be held at the Baltimore Convention Center, 9-12 September 2016. He offered our association an opportunity to present the history of the 29th Division and our association to the attendees at this event. He asked that our association begin coordination with NGAUS to support this event.

MDMHS Support – Historian Joe Balkoski made a motion that the 29th Division Association donates \$3,000 to the Maryland Military Historical Society, Inc. (MDMHS) for the creation of a significant exhibit commemorating the 100th anniversary of the formation of the 29th Division and its participation in WWI. This donation has already been budgeted for 2016. Motion was seconded by PNC Dooley. Motion was passed.

Public Affairs/Relations committee: Maryland Region Commander Frank Rauschenberg, with the aid of a power point presentation, requested that a “Public Affairs/Relations” committee be established to further the scope and purpose of our association to specific patriotic groups and the general public. A motion was made by Becker and seconded by PNC King to form a standing “Public Affairs/Relations Committee”. Motion was passed.

Deaths, Sick & Distressed

The following members were unable to attend this convention due to health issues: PNC Don McKee; PNC Dick Smith; Edie Paul and Thomas Insley. Comrade Norman Duncan made some comments about Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. He implored the National Surgeon to keep us aware of any information on these illnesses. He made some additional comments about the operating hours of national cemeteries.

Good of the Organization

PNC Moscati stressed the need for the association to adhere to the donation parameters that have been established by the budget committee. Over the last several years, our donations to organizations have increased significantly.

116th Museum Open House on 14 November 2015 in Verona, Virginia.

Closing

Commander-elect Ginsburg began the closing ceremonies and the meeting was adjourned at 1405 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.
Adjutant
National Executive Committee

NEC Members please note:

**These minutes will no longer be distributed individually.
This is your copy.**

Smith named new CSM for 29th Infantry Division

SANDSTON, VA. — Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald L. Smith, Jr. will succeed Command Sgt. Maj. Cheyenne Johnson as the command sergeant major of the 29th Infantry Division, according to an announcement made Sept. 30, 2015, by Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia.

Johnson now serves as the command sergeant major for the Virginia Army National Guard.

"I am very pleased with the assignment of Command Sgt. Maj. Smith to the 29th Division," said Brig. Gen. Blake C. Ortner, commander of the 29th. "His vast range of experience, both in peacetime and combat, as well as his sincere concern for Soldiers, makes him the right person to take on this challenging position."

As the division prepares for a strenuous Warfighter exercise, while also preparing for the nationally-critical Command and Control CBRN Response Element – Bravo mission, Command Sgt. Maj. Smith brings the con-



summate professionalism that will help the 29th Division continue to achieve the success that it is historically known for."

Smith started his military career in 1989 as an infantryman on active duty with the U.S. Army and joined the Virginia National Guard in 1995.

He served in numerous leadership positions in field artillery units including platoon sergeant and battery first sergeant.

He served as an operations ser-

geant major in 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment prior to becoming command sergeant major of the 529th Combat Sustainment Support Battalion.

He has served as the command sergeant major for the 329th Regional Support Group since 2011.

He has served multiple combat tours include Operation Just Cause in Panama, Operation Desert Shield / Desert Storm in Iraq as well as Operation Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

Smith deployed as the command sergeant major of the 529th CSSB during their deployment to Afghanistan from 2010 to 2011.

Smith is a graduate of the United State Army Sergeants Major Academy and earned a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Columbia Southern University.

His military awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, the Combat Infantryman Badge and Parachutists Badge with Bronze Jump Star.

*Article by Mr. Cotton Puryear
Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office*

Minutes

of the NEC I Meeting

held on 18 October 2015 at the

Fredericksburg Hospitality House, Fredericksburg, Virginia

The NEC I meeting was called to order at 1040 hours at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House, Fredericksburg, VA., following the National Memorial Service by Commander David H. Ginsburg.

Commander Ginsburg appointed the following officers for the year 2015-2016: National Executive Director, William S. Mund, Jr.; Assistant to the National Executive Director, PNC Robert Moscati; National Property Officer, Franklin Shilow; Editor/Publisher "The Twenty-Niner", William S. Mund, Jr.; National Parliamentarian, Thomas Insley and National Adjutant, William S. Mund, Jr.

A motion for the NEC to approve these appointments was offered by PNC Zang and seconded by Judge Advocate Houston Matney. Motion was passed and all appointees were approved.

Commander Ginsburg asked if there was any old or new business to come before the committee at this time. Commander

Ginsburg then stated that NEC II would be held at the Weinberg Center, Camp Fretterd, MD, on Thursday, 21 January 2016.

With no further business, Commander Ginsburg asked for a motion to close. A motion was offered by PNC Lockard with a second by NSVC Wisch. The motion carried. The meeting closed at 1058 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.

Adjutant

National Executive Committee

NEC Members please note:

These minutes will no longer be distributed individually. This is your copy.

A Summary of the Normandy Allies International Experience of July 2015

Normandy Allies took another large group (21 travelers) on its 17th annual trip to visit the sites of the 1944 Normandy landings and battles of World War II. During July 12-24, 8 students, 4 teachers, and 9 other travelers toured with a leadership team of four Normandy Allies' Board members: Marsha Smith (President), Peter Combee (Lt. Col., Ret.), Charles Frick (Sgt. Major, Ret.), and Walter Carter (board member).

For the third year, James Madison University (JMU, Harrisonburg, VA) sent 5 students and the chairman of its history department, Professor Michael Galgano. Dr. Galgano has made the Normandy Allies program a part of his summer study-abroad course at the university, and hopes to continue this arrangement indefinitely.

The other 3 students were from the State University of New York in Geneseo (1), and high schools in Pennsylvania (1) and upstate New York (1). All 8 students enjoyed staying for four nights in the homes of French residents of Grandcamp-Maisy. They typically reported that this home-stay was one of the highlights of their experience. The 4 teachers included Dr. Galgano plus 3 high school teachers from upstate New York, New Jersey, and Illinois. Dr. Galgano also served as a member of the leadership team.

The students' and teachers' travel costs were partially funded by grants from the following sources: the 29th Division Association; Post 94; Post 78 Cresap's Rifles of the Maryland Region in honor of PNC Major General Boyd Cook; WWII veteran 29er Archer Martin; the First Division Museum at Cantigny; a legacy of Stella Wawrynovic, the late widow of WWII 29er Frank Wawrynovic; Diane and David Pennock in honor of Mr. Pennock's uncle, 1st Lt. John Garvik, a 29th Division soldier who was killed in action in Normandy. The overall costs of the trip were also partially covered by donations from many individual members of the Association.

Eight members of the group had family connections with WW II's Battle of Normandy or other parts of the European Theater of Operations: four fathers, two uncles, one great uncle, and one brother. Peter Combee guided us to the spot where traveler Glen Cooley's father, a 29er, was taken prisoner near St. Lô.

Our itinerary covered the landing area from Pegasus Bridge and Sword Beach on the east to Utah Beach and Ste. Mère Eglise on the west. We visited major museums, battle sites, monuments (particularly for the 29th and 1st Divisions on Omaha Beach), cemeteries, and other points of military interest along this 50-mile stretch. We met with French citizens who lived through the occupation, the landings, and the post-war recovery. We added the Brittany American Cemetery at St. James and nearby Mont St. Michel to this year's itinerary. Throughout our trip we were warmly welcomed and given generous hospitality by our French hosts, who are also devoted to keeping alive the memory of Allied accomplishments and sacrifices in World War II.

Some of the comments made by our travelers about significant aspects of the trip:

The most important thing for me was meeting the French people, especially those who lived through the occupation and the liberation. These people were able to impart their gratitude and personal experience in the war, and experiencing these emotions was something that I could only do by being there. I also had the chance to visit with a French family, and saw that the gratitude carries through the generations. The kids, who were my age, were participating in re-enactments and collecting antiques from WWII. While many of the WWII generations are slowly disappearing, it is still important to talk to the French people and maintain the bond between the Normans and the Americans. **C.C., teacher, New Jersey**

I enjoyed learning about the French culture and being immersed in it for three weeks. It was eye-opening to learn how their politics work in daily life, their customs and their food. I really liked conversing with the French because of how polite, thankful, and helpful they are to the Americans. **S.T., student, Virginia**

The most meaningful part of the trip in my opinion would have to be visiting the beaches, as well as the area where Glen's dad was captured, and the spot where Walter's father was killed. Although both situations sound horribly morbid, hearing the stories from people that you have created relationship with makes you think a little bit harder. Watching Glen take dirt from the spot where his dad was captured choked me up a bit, but hearing Walter's story really hit home. Sometimes I feel as though many people often forget, or don't even understand for that matter, what it was like for people living during the war. Those experiences definitely meant a whole lot to me personally.

Besides that, visiting the Wall of Remembrance and seeing four members of our team honor their relatives was humbling. Not to mention, the plaque with the name of Marsha's uncle on it made everything seem more real, it made me think about how serious this all is. **M.L., student, New York**

All of it! To find the place where my father was made a POW (THANKS!). To hear Walter Carter's story at the site of his father's death. Hearing the French people talk about their experiences. Being honored to help lay a wreath in St. Lô! To go to Pointe du Hoc. **G.C., son of a soldier, Louisiana**

This trip has taught me a lot about the specifics of the landing itself, as well as the struggle to move inland. Being in the places where these events took place and having Pete explain how they happened really helped me grasp the concepts better. For me the most significant experiences were being on the beaches, listening to the stories of the men who landed there. That experience really impacted me and brought my appreciation of the whole event to another level. Also the trip to Mont Saint Michel was really awesome. **K.K., student, Virginia**

I felt the logistical aspect of the war was something that stood out to me. The Mulberry Museum was interesting. Pete, Walter, Marsha and



Pictured here at the grave of Sherwood H. Hallman are: **Kati Kissane, 29th Division Association Travel Grant recipient; Dr. Michael Galgano, James Madison University; Madeline Leon, Maryland Region Travel Grant recipient; SGM Charles Frick, Normandy Allies Team Member.**

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(Continued from page 37)

Charlie were all well versed in the material. Pete could explain virtually everything I asked him, and I asked a lot of questions. I especially enjoyed hearing survivor accounts, in particular Madame Chedal-Anglay. The personal stories we heard at her house, the Cider Farm and Chateau Colombières added a level of understanding you can't get from a book. The Ritchie Boy Exhibit was something I had very little knowledge of before. The Ranger Museum was small, but was good in telling their story/the logistics of their training – two years and many didn't get off the beach! Seeing the beaches/cemeteries in person was most valuable to me. I have read/seen countless things on D-Day, but I actually ran across Omaha Beach, which really put things in perspective. Also, seeing the cliffs of Pointe Du Hoc showed me the true challenge the Rangers faced. **J.D., teacher, Illinois**

My knowledge was very limited. I feel I have a much better appreciation of everything that happened. So interesting hearing the French talk of their appreciation. Hard to imagine the destruction that took place. Hearing the stories from the locals. Being on Omaha Beach. Experiencing the ceremonies. The Ranger Museum and Pointe du Hoc – so interesting and sad. Sainte Mère Eglise Airborne Museum was incredible. **J.A., Georgia**

This was an unbelievable learning experience. There is not enough space here to record everything I learned. Visiting each individual

beach and gaining a true understanding of the actions at each beach and how different they were. I also found the logistics, ingenuity and training behind the invasion amazing. Specifically the Mulberry, the glider program and the Rangers. I know my students will enjoy learning about the deception campaign and French resistance. The stained glass windows that commemorate D-Day at both cathedrals were also very interesting. I truly enjoyed getting to know all of the participants. It was a great group of people to share this experience with. The most significant moments for me were the opportunity to meet with French survivors and their descendants. I will never forget their stories and will share them with my students. The most moving moment for me was visiting the site where Walter's father was killed. Another moving moment was putting the flag at the gravesite of my assigned soldier. Thank you for this unbelievable experience. I will be encouraging my fellow teachers and future students to take part in this experience. **N.B., teacher, New York**

This trip has greatly expanded my knowledge of the Normandy Landings. I have learned loads about the tactics, thanks to Pete Combee, the soldiers' lives, thanks to Marsha Smith, and the general history thanks to Walter Carter. I will try my hardest to spread this newly found knowledge to everyone. This trip has taught me a lot, but above all, it has taught me that this story must be told. This is a memory that I will never forget. **J.A., student, New York**

Article by Walter Carter

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