

# THE TWENTY-NINER

The *Chin Strap* of World War I



# 29

The *29 Let's Go*  
of World War II

Published by the

29th Division Association

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AUTUMN/WINTER 2016

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Commander's Message</i>	2
<i>Contributions</i>	3
<i>Taps</i>	4
<i>Reunion &amp; Convention</i>	19
<i>Memorial Service</i>	23
<i>Drawing D-Day</i>	27

## THE TWENTY-NINER

Vol. 60, No. 3

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## Important Notice

Donation checks for the *Twenty-Niner* must be made payable to the

### 29th Division Association

Our bank is no longer accepting checks made payable to the *Twenty-Niner*

*Sustaining Fund*. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

## Eleven World War II 29th Veterans & Brigadier General Lapthe Flora highlight 98th Convention

The 98th Annual Convention and Reunion on October 20th through 23rd was held at the Harrisburg, PA Radisson Hotel and Convention Center. There were 135 attendees at the Convention.

It was highlighted by our largest attendance of World War II 29ers in years and a very inspirational speech by BG Lapthe Flora, the Assistant Adjutant General of Virginia.

On Friday, the group visited the Army Heritage and Education Center in Carlisle – part of the Army War College. There were 60 visitors on the trip, up slightly from 2015.

The museum has a number of interactive displays, which both guide a visitor from enlistment through service and includes displays on all the wars the Army has fought in, with extensive material dedicated to both the Second World War and the Vietnam War.

A key part of the Museum is the Heritage Trail. It is a mile-long loop behind the museum with outdoor displays including a simulate redoubt from the Siege of Yorktown in the Revolutionary War, an artillery fire base from Vietnam and a series of trenches and bunkers from the First World War. Between golf carts and dedicated pedestrians, all of the World War II vets completed the entire 1-mile trail.

Friday afternoon was dedicated to the Annual Symposium by National Historian Joseph Balkoski and an exhibit by the



Brig. Gen. Lapthe Flora

29th Division Living History Group.

This year's symposium will not be forgotten. While Joe has talked about the famous picture of the fallen 29er on the bridge in Julich in *Life Magazine* before, never has it been done with so many of the people in the room actually having been part of the story.

For the first time ever, there were 3 attendees at the Symposium that were actually in that battle, each with a personal account of Pvt. Henry Harrell and how that day affected them.

Steven Melnikoff, a long-time attendee of the conventions from C Company of the 175th, remembered the battle vividly and had memories of Pvt. Harrell.

Mr. Balkoski talked about how pieces of the puzzle were put together to finally identify the soldier on the bridge after decades had passed since that famous picture in 1945.

Bill Pinson, another former C

Company Lieutenant and attending his very first convention, remembered joining C Company as a replacement at the same time as Pvt. Harrell and the bond from being replacements to the same seasoned and famous unit.

Bill later became General Gerhardt's last Aide de Camp during the Occupation of the Bremen Enclave.

Paul Kramer, of the 2nd Battalion 175th HQ, was also attending his first convention.

Paul remembers one of his runner's having to cross that same bridge where Harrell was killed, and having to step over his fallen body himself that evening as the HQ moved up into Julich itself.

There was not a dry eye in the room as the veteran's each told their view of what happened that fateful day.

Later that afternoon, the 29th Living History Group, the reenactment group dedicated to the 29th Division, set up 5 tables of equipment including machine guns and mortars and talked about what their group does to carry on the history of the 29th.

It was a great return to the Convention for the Living History Group, who had a presence at the Convention for many years in a row before the decade-long break.

There was a buffet dinner Friday evening, of which the highlight was watching all of the

(Continued on page 21)

**MESSAGE FROM OUR NEW COMMANDER:****Robert E. Wisch**

Dear Comrades of the 29th Division Association,

I never thought when I joined the 29th Division Association, that one day I would be elected to be its national commander. To have your vote and your confidence in my ability to be your commander is truly an honor and privilege that I am both proud and thankful.

2017 is a historical year for the 29th Division. We will celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Division which was called into existence by Headquarters, Eastern Department of the U.S. Army on July 26, 1917.

The divisional organization was actually started on August 25, 1917 when Major General Charles G. Morton assumed command at Fort McClellan, Alabama.

On October 30th, NSVC Rauschenberg and JNVC Hayden joined me at Fort Belvoir, VA for the deployment ceremony of the 29th Infantry Division HHC.

Our first command meeting was held on November 7th at the Fifth Regiment Armory to discuss plans for the upcoming year.

Two scheduled events I would like you to circle on your 2017 calendar are the wreath laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Saturday, June 10th and the 99th Reunion/Convention of the 29th Division Association on October 12-15 at the Hunt Valley Inn in Hunt Valley, MD which is about eleven miles north of Baltimore.

This coming year will be important and exciting for the division and the association. Plans for the 100th anniversary of the 29th Division are already underway. If you have a suggestion you would like the association to consider please e-mail it to me at [wisch5vc@gmail.com](mailto:wisch5vc@gmail.com).

Again, thank you for the privilege to be the commander of the 29th Division Association for the 100th Anniversary of the 29th Division.

Twenty-Nine Let's Go and God Bless America.

Robert E. Wisch  
National Commander  
29th Division Association

The 29th Division Association's new National Commander was born in 1937 in a row house on Smallwood St. in Southwest Baltimore at the corner of McHenry St. Both street names are significant with the history of the 175th Regiment (5th Maryland).

In the late fifties, he enlisted in the Maryland Army National Guard at the Fifth Regiment Armory and was assigned to A Company of the 175th Regiment.

SP4 Wisch was a member of the Maryland Army National Guard's OCS Class # 3 and was graduated and commissioned a second lieutenant in 1962. His first assignment in the 175th Regiment was that of platoon leader, Anti-Tank/Heavy Mortar Platoon in Headquarters Company of the First Battalion.

His other assignments included executive officer of C Company and Headquarters Company. He was also the Regiment's recruiting officer, public relations officer, color guard commander and the 29th Division color guard commander.

After working for the Baltimore Gas and Electric Company for twelve years, Commander Wisch became a manufacturers' representative of lighting and electrical products. Unfortunately, his new profession required him to do much traveling covering four states and the District of Columbia which forced him to leave the Maryland Army National Guard after his service of nearly ten years in the 175th Regiment (5th Maryland).

His strong affection for the 175th Regiment (5th Maryland) and the 29th Division did not end when he resigned from the Guard. National Commander Wisch is a Past Commander of Limestone Post # 72 and Past Commander of the Maryland Region.

In addition, he is also Commander of the Veteran Corps Fifth Regiment Infantry, a member of the 175th Regiment (Fifth Maryland) Association, a member of the Board of Directors of the Maryland Military Historical Society and a member of the Governor of Maryland's World War I Centennial Commission.

National Commander Wisch graduated from the Baltimore Polytechnic Institute in 1955 and attended McCoy College, the Johns Hopkins University's evening school. He has been a member of the Masonic fraternity as well as being a Shriner for over fifty years.

National Commander Wisch presently lives with his wife, Linda, on the Magothy River in Anne Arundel County, MD in a very old log and stone house which was purchased as a log cabin by Linda's uncle, Dr. Clyde Karns, who was the Regimental Surgeon of the 5th Maryland in the 1930's. Bob and Linda were married in 1968 and their wedding reception was held in the present Reckord Lounge of the Fifth Regiment Armory.

Commander Wisch is also a member of the German Society. His daughter, Susan, is a 1997 graduate of the United States Naval Academy and his son-in-law, Commander Patrick Murphy, is the executive officer of the destroyer, U.S.S. Bainbridge. Bob and Linda have two grandchildren, Molly and Fionn.



## Donations to the Twenty-Niner

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our membership for their generosity in donating to the *Twenty-Niner* for this Autumn/Winter issue. From July 2, 2016, through October 31, 2016, these donations totaled \$195.00. Note our cut-off date. If your donations did not reach our National Executive Director by October 31, 2016, then it will not be listed until the next issue. We thank you all and bless you. Donation checks must be made payable to the 29th Division Association.

Berch, Virginia, Widow, Buena Park, CA

*In memory of her husband, Isadore Berch, B/115*

Cogan, Eugene, Post 2, B/115, Avilla, IN

Dreyer, Louis, A., Post 29, HHC/115, Concord, CA

Joiner, Tommie L., Post 94, HQ/1/175, Batesville, MS

Kline, Joanne M., Daughter, Baltimore, MD

*In memory of her father James S. Kline, C/115*

McNamara, Margaret C., Post 94, Widow, Missoula, MT

*In memory of Francis "Frank" Thomas, B/175*

Phillips, J. Michael, Post 94, Associate, Mardela Springs, MD

## Attention

### Veterans who served in France 1944

Veterans who helped liberate France could receive medal — U.S. veterans who helped in the liberation of France during World War II could be eligible to receive the French Legion of Honor Medal in the future.

This medal was previously only issued to WWI vets. Those applying must have written documentation, which is normally a copy of his/her military separation order, DD-214, and other official orders, which verifies their military history during combat.

Members of the Army, Army Air Corps, Navy and Coast Guard who participated in one of the four major campaigns in the liberation of France (Normandy, Southern France, Northern France and the Ardennes) are eligible for this French award.

Any previous military awards such as the Congressional Medal of Honor, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, etc., would indicate meritorious actions during combat operations.

Copies of these documents should be forwarded with the request for consideration for the French Legion of Honor to the Defense Attaché, Embassy of France, 4101 Reservoir Road NW, Washington, DC 20007.

These French medals must be approved by the Legion of Honor Committee in Paris, France, after appropriate review. Approximately 100 French Legion of Honor Medals will be awarded each year in the U.S. at the home of each veteran or at public ceremony during a patriotic holiday. These arrangements will be made after the awardees have been notified.

To find out more, contact the French Defense Attaché at 202-944-6502 or by fax at 202-944-6538.

## Attention! All Post Adjutants and Finance Officers

As you may have read, PNC Bob Moscati suffered a stroke in August and is recovering and undergoing rehabilitation. In the interim, the undersigned has assumed the duties of PNC Moscati.

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 National Executive Director William Mund at [edit-pub29er@hotmail.com](mailto:edit-pub29er@hotmail.com) or by telephone to 443-529-4233. To delay the new member's addition to the mailing lists is a disservice to our new member.

If any member gets a printed copy of the *Chin Strap* and would like to get it electronically, email us at [chinstrap115@gmail.com](mailto:chinstrap115@gmail.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.

WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.

Editor/Publisher

National Executive Director

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## TAPS

The following list shows names of known 29ers and their ladies or family members who died and their deaths reported from July 1, 2016 through October 31, 2016. 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

Alberti, Louis A., Post 78, HQ/1/115, Frederick, MD, 9/1/16  
 Antonio, Nicholas J., C/224FA, Cleveland, OH, 7/15/16  
 Boyer, Thomas B., Post 64, Associate, Roanoke, VA, 9/10/16  
 Burton, John H., Post 64, B/175, Englewood, OH, 8/25/15  
 Cook, PNC George, Post 2, F/104QM, Jacksonville, FL, 7/9/16  
 DeLuca, Russell S., Post 94, K/116, Columbia, MD, 9/16/16  
 Dickens, Walter L., Post 64, MED/116, Monroe, NC, 8/5/16  
 Dillon, JRVC L. Frank, Post 64, HQ/116, Boones Mill, VA, 10/2/16  
 Faupel, Murray, HQ/175, Wilmington, DE, 7/3/16  
 Freshwater, Edward, Post 88, HQ/115, Salisbury, MD, 12/27/14  
 Garrison, Cecil, L., Post 94, D/104MED, Falls Church, VA 10/4/16  
 Kuntz, John L. Post 1-72, HHC/175, Summerville, SC, 11/21/15  
 McWilliams, Robert H., Post 88, Son, Easton, MD, 9/22/16  
 Redding, Daniel H., B/115, Ellicott City, MD, 9/3/16  
 Robinson, James F., Post 110, M/115, Aberdeen, MS, 10/23/14  
 Spooner, Robert M., Post 1 -72, F/116, Doraville, GA, 11/1/15  
 Poliseno, Carmen, Post 93, D/116, Brockton, MA, 6/17/16  
 Toms, Charles S., Post 78, US Navy, Frederick MD, 8/13/16  
 Wright, Frank M., Post 88, Associate, Cambridge, MD, 9/12/16

## LADIES

Cadwalader, Phyllis, Widow, Baltimore, MD, 8/11/16

## French Legion of Honor Recipient

The Editorial Staff of the *Twenty-Niner* and the entire membership of the 29th Division Association congratulates the following veteran who has been awarded the French Legion of Honor. We commend the government of the Republic of France for their noble effort to honor these United States veterans for the courage and sacrifice that they displayed during these most perilous years in the history of mankind.

### **Boyer, Thomas B.**

102nd FA Bn, 26th Division  
 Roanoke, Virginia  
 Post 64

## 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 19 comrades and 1 lady who have died and whose death was reported to us since our last publication. This includes 2 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 Assistant 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.

Reverend John Schildt,  
 National Chaplain  
 P.O. Box 145,  
 Sharpsburg, MD 21782-0145  
 Telephone 301-432-0087  
 Email: lyricww41@aol.com

PNC Robert W. Moscati  
 Assistant to the National Executive Director  
 1910 Calais Court  
 Baltimore, MD 21244-1707  
 Telephone 410-608-1782  
 E-Mail: Rmoscati77@gmail.com

## Legion of Honor Recipients

In recognition of the French government's noble effort to award the Legion of Honor to veterans 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 Division veterans who have received this award must submit the following information to the address listed below:

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

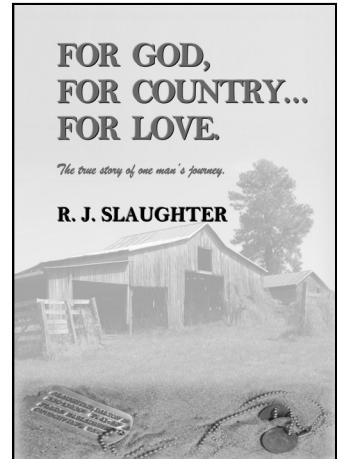
William S. Mund, Jr.  
 441 Chalfonte Drive  
 Baltimore, MD 21228  
[edit-pub29er@hotmail.com](mailto:edit-pub29er@hotmail.com)

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

**I**n this and further editions of the Twenty-Niner we are pleased to enclose extracts from Robbie Slaughter's book – *For God, For Country ... For Love* - a biographical novel about his father, Dalton Roy Slaughter. Born into a large farming family in Middlesex County, Virginia, Dalton was drafted into B Company, 116th Regiment in May 1941; pulled away from the work he loved and the dream of one day owning his own farm.

We start in this first extract with his approach to Omaha Beach on D-Day, recounted by Dalton and his buddies. The book however begins in 1929 and gives us a flavour of life in rural Virginia pre World War II and then life in London, England as his future wife grows into a beautiful young woman. The stark contrast of growing up in London, being at war 22 miles from the enemy, the blitz and the loss of neighbours bombed out of their homes is clearly portrayed - weaving social history into the fabric of military history about which this book is centred. It is also a romance of an era when young people faced challenges most of us will thankfully, never have to experience.

Although the book has been read by thousands of people in countries right across the world, this is the first time we have had the pleasure to feature it in the "Twenty-Niner".



## For God, For Country ... For Love

### Chapter 31

#### First step onto French soil

Just the sand banks to negotiate and Dalton would be in the fray. Two sand banks some 500 yards apart lay four or five feet beneath the water. Positioned 250 yards from the beach they caused the waves to partially break; the white water pushing across them, before returning to the roll of a wave and finally breaking fully onto Omaha.

The wake of Pingenot's boat bisected the unbroken water between the banks as the heavily defended sector of Dog Green loomed up ahead of them. From this distance the stretch of yellow from the beach obstacles to the sea wall seemed but a short walk, just a few more steps through life. But not a single man from A Company had yet made it there; they were still pinned down amongst the beach obstacles and suffering heavy casualties.

B Company would not be able to land in shallow water unless their craft were taken well into the mined obstacles. And unlike with A Company, the machine guns would hit the B Company boys from the moment they stepped out from their LCAs.

A signal was given by the lead British naval officer for the LCAs to move into line abreast from line astern - this was it. "Heading into the beach!" the naval officer on Pingenot's boat declared, and Clayton rolled his eyes as if to say, really, what a surprise.

Training replaced the natural instinct to cower down and hide

as each man prepared for the landing. The din was heart stopping, numbing the flesh with anticipation. The sights, sounds and smell of battle transfixed Dalton's thoughts. He could hear the machine gun and rifle fire in the all too brief lulls between artillery shells and see the smoke drifting and concealing, then revealing again, before rising upward to finally depart the scene. Disbelief filled him, for how could such awesome aerial and naval bombardments have failed?

The crews of the USAF Liberators flying at a speed of 250 miles per hour were now climbing down from their planes on the airfields of East Anglia. The three, twelve year old boys of Holton Saint Peter, adopted members of 489th Bomber Group, would likely already have been invited into the Officer's Mess for breakfast. And no doubt bright eyed Eric Bacon would be the first to ask where they had been this morning. He like the other boys had heard them take off and had rushed to his bedroom window to watch them rise into the dark, early morning sky. 'To France and back' the airmen would reply. And 'to bomb the hell out of Jerry' they would add.

But their bombs had missed their target, not most, but all. For flying above the heavy cloud cover they had been unable to get a visual sighting of the shoreline. They therefore had to rely on the twenty pathfinder B24s which had led groups of aircraft into the drop zone. Equipped with the new H2X Mickey radar, the operators in the pathfinder craft picked up sharp returns from the coastal bluffs of Omaha Beach. However, the air crews were acutely



Dalton Slaughter at age 23

aware of the proximity to the beach of their own landing forces and so often had they been sternly warned to avoid accidental short bombing, that the bombardiers had delayed release. When the Pathfinder craft dropped their payloads, the other B 24s in their group followed suit. The delayed release together with the inaccuracies in the system meant that the bombs landed between 300 yards and 2 miles in land.

Earlier, British Naval Officer Jimmy Green had watched as another softening of the beach defences ended in complete failure. The A Company landing craft had just passed the nine rocket armed LCT (R)s when they began to unleash their weapons. The display predicted by General Bradley to be the 'Greatest Show on Earth' culminated with the rockets falling short of their target, displacing only seawater some 400 yards from the shore.

The Navy had promised to dig the foxholes for the infantry boys, but all they had achieved with their shelling was to set the dune grasses on fire. Equally devastating for morale, most of the tanks had not arrived. Many had been inexplicably launched from LCTs thousands of yards out in the strong swell and were now settling into their watery home, the silt so disturbed already precipitating back onto their surfaces. It was now down to the troops with minimal support from hardware to make the invasion of Omaha a success.

As the beach got real close, feelings of sea sickness, tiredness and fatigue rapidly left Dalton's mind. The lurching craft with its sea water and vomit now seemed the epitome of comfort. Mortars and anti-tank pieces were hitting the water around the boat, someone nearby was shouting but who it was and what was said Dalton could not make out. Beyond Paul Kennedy on the right hand side of the LCA, there were no other craft; and it was almost as if battle lines had been drawn and agreed that Paul would demarcate chaos from calm. Ahead and to their left it was mayhem at the Vierville Draw.

Staff Sergeant Holmes twisted round to look at Dalton sitting behind him, to look into the face of a friend, a face that was now stone grey and said, "Good luck Slaughter."

"Good luck Sarge," Dalton replied.

Dalton's buddy Bob Sales, the youngest member of B Company, had been selected by the B Company Captain to train as radio operator. Zappacosta was not an officer to negotiate with and Sales went obediently to radio school. "Stay with me at all times," Zappacosta told Sales as they neared the beach.

Huge by comparison, Sales stood by his captain in the Headquarters LCA, one of the three LCAs that had been on the port side of the Empire Javelin. Furthest to the left was First Lieutenant Williams' boat with part of the heavy weapons platoon to protect the left flank of the company. With him were ten riflemen from 1st Platoon. Next was Lieutenant Taylor with the rest of 1st Platoon, then Zappacosta's Headquarters unit with ten riflemen from 2nd Platoon. The captain would thus be left of centre of the six craft as they beached and be able to communicate with his company and possibly the next adjacent one. The rest of 2nd Platoon under Lieutenant Donaldson was to the right of Zap-

pacosta, then 3rd Platoon and finally Dalton's LCA, the furthest right of all. In total, 8 officers and 185 enlisted men of B Company were now rushing into the carnage at Dog Green.

Like Williams on the far left, Pingnot's half of the heavy weapons platoon was to protect the right flank of the company. Somehow or other, Dalton and the other nine riflemen from 3rd Platoon were to protect and assist the 4th Platoon guys in setting up; only a few seconds now before those carefully laid plans would be thrown into chaos.

Dalton knew that Allbritton and Austen were just yards away in the next LCA. That they were likely sitting close to each other and providing the same mutual and unspoken comfort as Ted and Paul were doing for him. But once that ramp dropped, every man would be on his own, with his own destiny. As the beach neared, isolation and dread closed in further, then adrenaline started to close down even those emotions.

Zappacosta and Donaldson's boat teams, the middle two of the six, were the first to beach, right in front of the Vierville Draw. When their LCAs were 50 yards from the obstacles, bullets started to ricochet off the sides and front ramp, whilst shells continued to explode on the sand and among the obstacles, shaking the men cowering there to senselessness. Metal shards and

bigger clumps with ragged edges were racing across the surface in all directions from the impact, triggering mines and throwing out heavy pieces of wood at horrendous speeds. The ramp of the Headquarters' boat dropped into water rising to neck height in the swell. Leading his men from the front, Captain Zappacosta was the first to step out.

Sales followed as fourth man, but instead of walking forward he fell off to the side, driven not by some explosion but by his foot catching in the ramp. Twisted sideways, he plummeted to the sea bed and was held there by the turbulent water and the 95lb combined weight of his radio and pack. To save himself from drowning he had no option but to discard the precious equipment. As he surfaced he saw Zappacosta standing no more than ten feet away with his back towards the beach, blood pouring from his mutilated frame. "I'm hit, I'm hit bad!" Zappacosta shouted, the pain mixing with disbelief in his voice.

Sales moved towards him but within seconds the company commander had slipped beneath the waves and was gone. Men from Zappacosta's boat continued to step off the LCA into the maelstrom; to do their job, for honour and for their country. Selfless acts of self-destruction. What final thoughts flashed through the minds of these men? For the machine gun bullets ripped into them and some took not one step down the ramp. Sales watched them die, powerless to help the men he had known so long.

Buffeted and pushed by the surf, Sales discarded the rest of his equipment. A stake dislodged by an explosion offered his only protection and he inched forward behind it, still struggling in the chest deep water.

The LCA to Zappacosta's right, 1st Lieutenant Donaldson's boat team with Charlie Conner on board, landed virtually at the same time. Donaldson and his Staff Sergeant Ralph Jennings led



Dalton Slaughter at age 9

the men from the craft, with Charlie Connor following as seventh man. Bullets and shrapnel hit flesh, shingle, metal and wood to create their own spectrum of pulses. Shingle thrown up by the explosions carried so much momentum that they smashed bone. Disorientated and confused, wading and firing Connor became aware of bodies and bits of bodies impacting onto the sand ahead of him.

Donaldson was down, hit by machine gun fire. Turning to look back at the LCA, to what now seemed a refuge, Connor saw a shell land in its midst, blowing the few remaining men inside to pieces.

In addition to the weather, absence of tanks and the failure of the bombardments, another dreadful development had taken place to conspire against the men. Unbeknown until the 4th June, the 352nd German Infantry Division had been moved forward to reinforce the 716th Static Division defending Omaha. The 716th had a low standing, numbered little over 600 men and were mainly drawn from the occupied countries. It was predicted that they would fight less than enthusiastically against an army intent on liberating their homelands. But the 352nd were of the highest combat category, better equipped and battle hardened. When they moved to Omaha in March 1944 they completely transformed the beach defence capability.

The third LCA to come in, the one carrying the rest of Dalton's platoon including Austen and Albritton snagged on an underwater obstacle in front of the draw. Despite being in deep water there was no option but to drop the ramp. On cue the men ran forward and off the craft. Several soldiers were hit by machine gun bullets, some of those who lived to touch the water, sank into its depths. Discarding much of their weighty equipment, surviving men struggled in the waves whilst others left their packs in the craft and went in over the side to try and swim for it.

With ten feet of water beneath Dalton's boat it suddenly veered sharply to the right almost throwing Ted onto him. At first he thought they had hit something or something had hit them but the new course was maintained unabated. Perhaps a minute or so later, Dalton's LCA again turned, this time to the left and headed straight for the beach. The three steel runners on the hull could be heard scraping against the sand and then the thud as the craft embedded itself at full throttle into the beach, jolting the men forward with the weight of their equipment. With this they were familiar from the exercises at Braunton and Slapton, but what surprised them, was the absence of obstacles. Pingonot's men were in Charlie Sector, earmarked for the Rangers, some 300 yards to the right of the Vierville Draw.

The beach as far as they could see to their right was quite simply empty, just a sandy beach, devoid not just of obstacles but of any craft, soldier or item of war. If this had been a film and

the scene frozen, the sound of battle extinguished, then the view would have been the epitome of tranquillity. Yellow sand sprinkled with pebbles and boulders that stretched eastward for 500 yards and then a wave cut platform pushing out towards the sea. Beyond that, more rock jutting out still further and over which the surf was now pushing, the salt water running in the clefts, basins

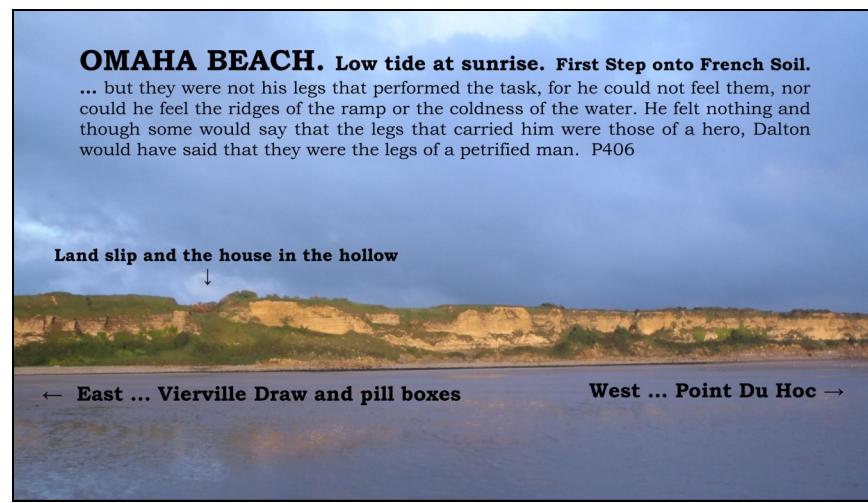
and channels of the eroded limestone. Salt water carrying food to and maintaining the life there; to the mussels and limpets, to the grass kelp and moss clinging to the rock, surviving in the environment of the foreshore. Yet panning round to the left, the camera would have presented the brutality of battle, the sand stained with human fluids, dead and

wounded men, bits of men and landing craft, helmets and all the other debris being washed around by the surf. Yet amongst it all there were living men, still clinging to life.

In front of Pingonot's craft rose 130 foot high cliffs which stretched in both directions. To the left they continued for some 300 yards before quickly sloping down to the Vierville Draw, whilst to the right they seemed to stretch forever, a natural and impassable defensive wall.

The enemy's attention soon started to focus on the isolated craft, moving the battle westward, catching up with them like a summer squall racing across the beach. Quickly came the sound of mortars, bullets hitting the sand, zipping into the water, pinging off the scattered boulders and making a hollow ring as they hit the sides and front ramp of the LCA. The rounds were coming from the last of the beach level pill boxes. But situated 200 yards away from them and being just the one, the fire was less intense than in front of the Vierville Draw. Above Pingonot's boat team, German soldiers were rallying from the trenches and emplacements which stretched right along the cliff top from Vierville to Pointe et Raz de la Percée. Surprised at the arrival of the craft at this westward section, they began to fire down on Pingonot's men.

When the bowman dropped the ramp into the two foot six inches of water, few of the men could have recalled which way they had run. In theory the soldiers to the left side of the craft, Dalton's side, should have peeled off to the left and the men on Paul's, should have peeled off to the right. When Dalton's turn came to leave the craft, his equipment became very light, his mind disengaging from his actions. The overbearing noise of battle, the shouting and screaming of men and the explosions of armaments became muffled; like the screams and shouts of friends when under the surface of the cooling waters of the Dragon Run. Colours and shapes became difficult to distinguish; there was just the band of yellow, the cliff face and grey above. Dalton's legs carried him forward. Ted and Paul Kennedy had



already left. Holmes was just starting down the ramp. Dalton was next to exit, to step forth, onto the ramp to then take his first step onto French soil.

But they were not his legs that performed the task, for he could not feel them, nor could he feel the ridges of the ramp or the coldness of the water. He felt nothing and though some would say that the legs that carried him were those of a hero, Dalton would have said that they were the legs of a petrified man. With his mind bombarded by a confusion of terrifying noise, he raised his rifle above his head and waded through the ever changing depth of water as the waves rolled in. Clearing the deeper surf and lowering his rifle, Dalton's finger pulled the trigger. Whether his rifle fired or jammed he could not have said. He just aimed at the line where the buff colour of the cliffs turned to grey.

Seconds had passed since he stepped off the ramp and Dalton was still on his feet despite all the incoming, but the cliff was too far, he was going to be hit. Strangely the water deepened, a runnel threw him, it ran parallel to the beach and water washed along it as the tide raced in and swept sideways; Dalton staggered in, water again at his waist and dug deep to drive himself up the slope to again reach shallower water.

A few more steps and a form, a shape, a blur in his vision, curled up and fell right in front of him. Dalton stepped round the crumpled body stepping to the right or was it to the left and struggled on. Bullets from the cliff top and from the machine gun cut across him; bullets that indiscriminately struck sand, boulders and bone, entered eye sockets, stomachs and groins. More soldiers to his right and in front of him fell out of view, their cry of pain and their screams inaudible. It was a mile or ten miles not 300 yards, and like a nightmare the cliff would never be reached. He would be struck down long before the eight bullets in his rifle were spent. His legs pumped, pumped harder than they had ever done in his life, his arms so tense they could have ripped ligament from bone. He was running despite the sand and the weight he carried, body wet with exertion but more from fear. He now passed shingle and boulders more densely strewn, shouting and swearing without consciousness, eyes blazoned with horror. Then, like a wall appearing out of a dense fog, Dalton came up against the hard rough surface of the cliff face. In the few seconds it had taken him to reach there, the lives of so many families back home had been changed forever.

## Chapter 32 Different Paths

Dalton didn't know how he'd got there; everything had been automatic, sub-conscious almost. He threw off the heavy assault jacket in disgust and the pathetic buoyancy aid, his breathing coming in short gasps as if a bullet had pierced his lung. Men were still arriving at the cliff face, like Dalton, sweating profusely, disbelief on their faces; disbelief at the strength of the beach defences, the lack of bomb craters and the vulnerability of their position. Crazy, God damn crazy men were saying as they arrived and more choice words besides.

Dalton was directly in line with the LCA, which having dropped its cargo was pulling away from the beach, the rising tide assisting it. The departing LCA left the B Company boys isolated for no

more craft seemed to be arriving at this far western end of Omaha. Both Dog Green and Charlie sectors of Omaha had been closed by patrol craft 567.

Dalton and the other men took shelter beneath an overhang of the cliff, in some places no deeper than the thickness of a man's torso, but it was all that was needed. It was life saving and a blessing; an inconsistency in the rock that in peacetime would have been inconsequential. Formed by the work of pebbles that in a previous age had been blasted off the cliff face by a tempest, to then be thrown back against the rock countless times, shaping, sculpturing, particle by minuscule particle ready for this day. The Preacher at Wares Church would say, if ever told of the story, that the pebbles were guided by the hand of God. And if Dalton lived to have the opportunity to listen to such a message, he would be the first to shout 'yes sir'. It protected him against the incoming fire, prolonging his life beyond the moment, which was all he cared about, for what might happen beyond that was too far away for him to worry about.

Dalton frantically checked himself for wounds that adrenaline may have prevented him from feeling; disbelief and relief mixing, for there were none. No blood, no gradual realisation of pain or that his body was not as it should be. Under the temporary protection of the overhang, Dalton could pull himself together and start to interpret detail in the confusion which had previously engulfed him.

Towards the Vierville Draw and beyond, dead and wounded men littered the shore line. There were beached landing craft with fuel tanks burning, heavy equipment smouldering near the water's edge and all manner of infantry equipment, helmets and rifles strewn around, surplus now to requirements. Bodies were being rolled around in the surf like rag dolls; the turbulent water removing clothing, washing away personal items and pushing sand into every crevice. Smoke drifted across the beach which was still being pounded by German artillery as well as machine gun fire and to Dalton there didn't seem to be any chance of Austen, Allbritton or anyone else surviving in front of the draw. The invasion had surely failed.

After landing under just artillery fire, A Company had first taken up a defensive line on a shingle bank 50 yards below the obstacles. But the tide had quickly pushed them closer to the machine guns and the German defenders opened up to wreak havoc upon Captain Fellow's men, of whom many came from Bedford, Virginia. A few minutes after A Company, two C Company Ranger boats had landed to A Company's right about 100 yards into Charlie Sector. Many were lost in the beach crossing, but those who survived had worked their way along the foot of the cliff away from the draw and towards where Pingot's men were now gathered.

When the patrol craft 567 had drawn near the beach and realised the butchery there, it had attempted to redirect all of B Company LCAs away from the carnage, but it had been too late for the three which went straight in. However, Williams and Taylor's boats had swung left and east, whilst Pingot's had swung right and west; the most westerly of any landing.

Dalton could see LCAs and LCVPs and the bigger LCTs attempting to reinforce the first and second waves further down the

beach, but none in Dog Green and Charlie. Looking around and seaward he became aware of the casualties closer to hand - the quiet, almost peaceful corpses on the sand, if that can be said of dead men with mayhem surrounding them, lying as though resting after a difficult walk. Some of the wounded were screaming, with pain contorted faces, bloodied unrecognisable faces, emitting sounds to haunt even the hardest soldier for a lifetime. Smiler had been washed in, he had virtually been decapitated and one of his arms had been cut off. At the water's edge, right behind Dalton, Staff Sergeant John Holmes was still moving. He had fallen right in front of Dalton a few seconds after they had left the boat and not far from dry sand. A bullet to the stomach had doubled him up and he had gone down, probably the first to take a hit as Holmes himself had predicted. Dalton knew that he'd stepped past him on his way to the cliff face and he now felt very guilty. He started to weigh up his chances of running back and pulling Holmes from the rising tide, dragging him to the safety of the cliff. Persuading himself that he would again be lucky, compassion developing an overwhelming urge to make a run for it and save the man for whom he had so much respect.

Dalton's lieutenant had recommended him for promotion to Sergeant but a senior NCO had disagreed, saying that Dalton didn't always think through the consequences of his actions. Loyal, hard working, a strong sense of duty and obeying superiors without question were all characteristics in Dalton's favour. But his impulsiveness might 'endanger the men in his command' the NCO said and so he remained as private first class.

Dalton considered that the bullets were less intense now, with definite lulls; lulls during which he might sprint 20 yards or more. But distracted by shouting as C Company Rangers came in amongst the B Company boys, Dalton was momentarily released from his dilemma. When he next looked seaward, Holmes's body had been engulfed by the sea and he made no further movement, other than that caused by the natural rhythm of the waves.

### Chapter 33 Cliff Edge

To B Company's left, the rising tide appeared to race past the soldiers as they inched their way towards the Vierville Draw and by 8a.m. all the beach obstacles were under water. The three teams of 146th Engineers destined to clear 50 yard gaps through the obstacles at Dog Green, had all been carried eastward by the driving wind and currents. Thus not only was Dog Green still being subjected to the most intense fire but it was also extremely hazardous to approach, simply because of what still lay under the surface. The later landing craft including the larger equipment carriers were therefore still being directed eastward, well into the morning.

The new arrivals found themselves on an ever narrowing strip of sand and anything operational soon attracted attention from the German artillery. But the half tracks, tanks and jeeps rendered useless at least provided some protection for the otherwise exposed soldiers.

With no reinforcement and nothing to distract the enemy, Lieutenant Pingot's men were in a precarious situation and soon came under fire if they ventured from the base of the cliff. Paul Kennedy somehow found himself next to Dalton and good he

had, for the overhang was more protective there. A landslip to their left also gave some protection from fire laterally along the beach. Moving out from the safety that the rock face provided, those that were able, fired up towards the cliff edge. Darting out and falling back, triggers were pulled with tensioned bodies, the choice of timing and direction proving well judged or otherwise. The 3rd Platoon riflemen were powerless in offering the protection 4th Platoon needed to set up their mortars and machine guns. Pingot could do little more than encourage his men to take evasive action; the protection of B Company's right flank meant nothing now. In the planning B Company was supposed to be mopping up targets and although trained in the use of a wide range of equipment, most of the soldiers were only carrying the equipment of riflemen. No soldier could lob a grenade up a 130 foot cliff and no rifle bullet could pierce the concrete and sandbagged emplacements. The Garand rifle was not easy to wield in tight situations and without telescopic sights, was powerless to infiltrate enemy positions.

It was C Company, the 2nd Rangers on Charlie Sector which changed the course of Dalton's morning. Forty or so of the sixty-five Rangers made it to the base of the cliff and they immediately reorganised to initiate one of the first break outs from Omaha. The Rangers had been assigned to eliminate the Widerstands-nests, between the Vierville Draw and the headland promontory of Pointe et Raz de la Percée. These strong points with their variety of concrete emplacements had a commanding view over Omaha and were still dictating events there. The Rangers' preferred route to them lay via the Vierville Draw but since that was still heavily defended, plan B, scaling the cliffs, had to be adopted; for which they had brought knotted ropes.

The Rangers wanted to replace their losses in order to ensure the cliff top trenches could be cleared as well as the emplacements and as 'fortune' would have it, Pingot's boat team were right there on Charlie sector to lend a hand. The B Company men were placed into Ranger squads and given a rushed and soon interrupted briefing, for the Rangers were quickly on the move. Dalton and his buddies were told to discard their assault jackets and take only their rifles, ammunition and grenades.

"The rest can stay on the beach," a ranger said, "you won't be needing anything else for a good while!" But Clayton shoved a few cigarettes into his pocket just in case and Ted would have done the same with some rations but wasn't given enough time.

The long cliff face stretching from the Vierville Draw had just one chink in its defensive armour; a blemish that had been carved out long before this day, possibly several hundred years earlier. A plane of weakness in the coastal strata together with the under cutting wave action had caused tons of rock face to subside and slide onto the beach. Over the centuries much of the fallen rock had been washed away by the sea, but the subsidence had left a V shaped indentation in the cliff. The gradient here was less and about 90 feet up, the slope levelled off into a hollow before rising again to the cliff top. The subsidence must have been stable for generations because a well-heeled family had built a house on the flat area of the hollow. The Germans hadn't fortified it but a direct hit from a naval shell had caused severe damage. Without grapnel hooks fired from mortar like devices as pro-

vided to the Rangers at Point Du Hoc, this route to the cliff top was the only alternative to the Vierville Draw.

Following the Rangers lead, Dalton and the other 'volunteers' started to drag themselves up the steep slope towards the house. Small arms fire whistled past them, a man was hit to Dalton's right and fell back. The knotted ropes seemed to have dissolved into thin air and Dalton resorted to using the barbed wire which dressed the slope; hauling himself up the steeper, more slippery sections with one arm and then firing his rifle as best he could. A stick grenade flew past him and exploded somewhere below. Haphazard sub-machine gun fire emanated from left of the house and rifle fire from the surrounding trenches. The cacophony of small arms and shouting mixed with the boom of German artillery pieces, whilst inside Dalton, fear mixed with gut determination and the drive to survive. Several bullets hit the rocks and clipped the barbed wire as he reached the lip of the hollow. Someone else was hit and dropped like a lead weight, but the predicament of others for the moment mattered little to him.

The beige to brown rocks over which Dalton passed were deposited 200 million years before, during the Lower Bathonian period in Jurassic times. A period commencing with limestone, formed in a calm, clear, warm sea and made up entirely of the shells and bones of once living creatures. But then over thousands of years the waters were muddied, the depths darker, even the shallows less hospitable as fine silt from ancient rivers clouded them. Life struggled, yet the mudstones that were formed contained still many shells and bones; so much so that the mudstone could not be called mudstone, but marls. Thus the B Company boys moved from the limestone into the marl, from firm to crumbly footholds, up through the millions of years to younger rocks above. And as they were wounded, grazed and cut so their blood gave colour to the pale ancient life forms. It was as such that Dalton passed where the marls became limestone again in the higher regions of the cliff. And just like the waters had cleared to form it, so Dalton's way became clearer, for there were trenches leading off from and around the hollow into the cliff top terrain.

On reaching the shattered, empty house, Dalton followed the Rangers another thirty feet up, to pass a concrete bunker to the left - its defenders ripped open, dead and dying. Seconds later he stepped into the trench beyond it and came beside Clayton. A dead German infantryman lay facing down some steps and beyond him lay the bodies of several GIs; bits of uniform and human flesh clung to the edges of the access ways. Clayton and Dalton had moved onward but a few steps when suddenly, puffing and panting Ted scrambled off the slope into the trench behind them. He was the last man to leave the exposed slopes. Clayton looked at Dalton and they knew instinctively what the other was thinking; predictable that Ted was last to make it up, and what a damned good feeling that he had.

The trenches on the cliff top threaded their way along the edge of the cliff in both directions. Subsidiary trenches peeled off joining the different units within the strong points as well as joining one strong point with another. Dalton and some of the other B Company men accompanied by Rangers made their way eastward along the trenches into WN 73. After the oppression of the

beach landings, of being pinned down for so long and of losing so many men, the foreboding seemed to release its hold. Without his assault jacket and on firm ground, Dalton felt that he was moving faster than he had ever moved in his life. Chasing an enemy in retreat, glimpsing grey uniform, firing at grey blurs, the slosh of feet, the shouts to advance, to fire, throw a grenade. A success, then another, then a man down and then another. This was a new sensation of combat, his training at last seeming relevant. Dalton's feet nimbly picked their own way around discarded equipment and bodies; the same feet that on entering a hallway at home might have tripped on the first discarded pair of boots. They came across concrete pods with artillery pieces, ammunition bunkers and some emplacements with both artillery sites and machine gun slits. All perched on slopes facing along the beach and from which the GIs could now view the mayhem those very guns had caused. Bunkers were set deep into the back of slopes and appeared so black inside that light seemed to be incapable of penetrating them and equally incapable of escaping.

Turning back westward now and passing the house in the hollow again, the trench curved round the far side of it to follow the line of the cliff. There was just the lead Ranger and another B Company man ahead of Dalton now. Amongst the terrible noise and intense adrenaline, Dalton caught sight of something that made him slow up and interrupt the chase. Around the curve in the trench, a grey uniformed arm had flexed and released a stick grenade; its trajectory calculated and direction well judged. It descended in front of the B Company man ahead of Dalton and as the grenade fell to chest level it exploded, tearing the man apart and throwing him backward. When Dalton reached the spot he slowed imperceptibly, stepped round the lifeless form and ran on.

With just the one Ranger still in front and firing sporadically, the GIs flushed out the remaining defenders. A few hundred yards beyond and west of the house they came to what seemed like the end of the main trench system. Open ground to the left, agricultural land in its day, stretched out before them. Here the Rangers left the B Company men and headed forward. Dalton was soon joined by Paul Kennedy and later by Clayton and Ted. They scrambled through some vegetation beyond the trench and lacking orders, took up a defensive position lying prone on the ground just yards from the cliff edge. Conscious of the mine fields which littered the areas behind the strong points they had no intention of venturing too far; but the field in front of them seemed empty, abandoned almost. Looking across at the hedges on the other side of the field and the slight rises of earth in between, Dalton suddenly felt uneasy with the thought that eyes might now be watching him. Paul's pale complexion, his mellow brown hair and calm, retiring character contrasted so much with Dalton's almost auburn curls and lively disposition. Two handsome young faces, grimacing faces, splattered with sea salt, dust, mud and grime artistically interwoven by beads of sweat. How must they have looked to the watching eyes?

As Paul lay there regaining his breath, he told the others that he had given up hope of ever getting off the beach alive and the rest confided in having thought the same. Ted lay on his back with the grass pushing up into his helmet and panted hard, his huge muscular chest rising and falling as though an eruption was

about to take place in its depths. With one hand on his rifle, Ted moved the other to search out and press against his left breast pocket, checking that the pictures were still safely inside. He hadn't yet had the opportunity to look at them, but then he had promised himself to look once he was safe and he didn't yet feel safe. Lying on his front, Clayton manoeuvred down into his pockets, extracted a poor bent up excuse for a cigarette and would have tried to light up had his matches not been wet.

To their left as they lay facing inland, the air of battle on Omaha had slightly diminished in intensity, whilst here on the cliff edge there seemed to be a different atmosphere. A different battle loomed here, similar to that of a waiting predator watching his prey and deciding when to strike. Lying prostrate on the French earth, the GIs could smell the soil and feel its moisture, just a few yards separating them, buddies with bonds so strong from the three hard years they had spent together.

On the other side of the uneven field, the green hedge was thriving from the wet weather; the hawthorn, dog wood and blackthorn thickly intertwined with the occasional maple growing higher than the rest. The GIs scanned the lower stems and places where the foliage was thinner but could see nothing of note. To their far right and some 150 yards across the field was a farm gate, providing a way through the hedge to the next field and a view which again provided the impression that no one was around.

Visibility had improved through the morning and as much as they could make out the detail in front of them, so too could anyone concealing themselves behind the hedgerow. The B Company men were not members of the Special Forces or the Rangers they had been designated to support. They analysed the threat but did not fully appreciate it. The B Company Boys were leaderless and not veterans of previous battles, unaware of the ways in which the enemy could ensnare them and from what distance. Lying and looking, their heads were sometimes slightly above the mound behind which they lay. They exchanged comments and felt more secure than since leaving the ship, they were off the beach, only just, but they were off and their spirits were raised.

The four B Company men watched and waited, waited for orders that wouldn't come, close to God's earth, its proximity a comfort, yet they were so near to being absorbed by it.

Looking through his Ziefernrohr telescopic sight, the German sniper had a clear view of the GIs. His Mauser bolt action rifle was likely made in Oberndorf, though it could easily have derived from earlier times; for the Treaty of Versailles did little to stem rifle manufacture. The Germans simply licensed other countries such as Russia, Czechoslovakia or Poland to do the work for them.

The sniper watched and waited, the wooden butt pressed firmly into his right shoulder, his left hand under the telescopic sight supported the weight of the rifle and the first finger of his right hand cupped itself around the trigger. Who would be easier to hit, the soldier to the right or the one to the left, or another. The magazine was full, five rounds, but just one of the 3.5 cm long bullets would be needed to obliterate the skull of the man he selected. Which soldier bobbed his head up higher, more often or was more exposed. He had a choice of four targets and with the

improving light he was unlikely to miss. With the choice made his finger tensioned, pulled the trigger and unleashed the 7.92 mm bullet at 2,500 feet per second. The shot was just one sound among many; just another sound in the surrounding cacophony. The bullet skimmed across the surface of the field in less than 0.25s and struck the soldier in the middle of the forehead, just beneath the rim of his helmet. Paul Kennedy's skull bulged on the impact; the entry hole clean, round and red. But on hitting the hard bone the tip of the steel cartridge flattened compressing its lead core. Thus on reaching the other side of Paul's skull the bullet caused the back half of his head to explode.

Dalton looked round at Paul and saw only the clean bullet hole and the trickle of blood with Paul's head resting as though asleep on his arms. Dalton crawled over to hold his best buddy, heavy in his grasp. Blood poured down Paul's bent neck, over Dalton's hands, to soak into the soil of the French field. There was no life in the face of his friend, or thankfully pain and he knew that Paul was gone. The bullet had wiped out youth, middle age and old age; it took everything that was Paul except in the memories of the few remaining soldiers who knew him.

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*The author, Robbie Slaughter was born and raised in London. After studying Physics and Computer Science at Aston University, he taught physics at schools in the Midlands, becoming Assistant Head Teacher and gaining a Masters Degree in Education along the way.*

*In 2000, he left teaching to run his own business and later began research for his book—a journey which has taken him across England, into the Normandy countryside of France and over to the eastern states of the USA.*

*Robbie is married to Lorna and they have three sons. Their eldest son is in the British Army.*

## NEC II

### Thursday, 26 January 2017

### Weinberg Center, Camp Fretterd

### Reisterstown, MD

*The meeting will start promptly at 0930 hours.*

*Get there early to enjoy coffee, donuts & bagels with your esteemed comrades.*

*A noon meal (Lunch) will be provided.*

**Cost is \$15**

*Checks made payable to*

**29th Division Association**

*for \$15 and mailed no later than*

**17 January 2017 to:**

**William Mund**  
**441 Chalfonte Drive**  
**Baltimore, MD 21228-4017**

## Cresap's Rifles Post 78 enjoys Annual Picnic inside on very hot day

On Saturday, August 13, 2016, members of Post 78 in Frederick, MD held their annual Family Picnic. Adjutant Wilcox stated that this had been the best attendance he has seen in several years with 90 + members and families there to enjoy the food and fellowship. Post Commander John Sexton unfortunately had another commitment and could not be there.

As in past years, the picnic was again held at the AMVETS Post # 9 in Middletown, MD. While scheduled to be held in the outside picnic pavilion, the Post # 9 officials offered the use of the inside dining room because of the oppressive heat. With temperatures predicted to go into the mid 90s, the offer was graciously accepted.

Wilcox and Post 78 Vice Commander Roger Haynes welcomed several special guests including PNC Joseph Zang and wife Shirley, National Senior Vice Commander Robert Wisch and wife Linda, National Executive Director William Mund, and National Vice Commander At Large Region, Edward Tolzman. Maryland Region Commander Houston Matney had also been invited but unfortunately had to decline.

For many years, Post 78 has also taken this opportunity to conduct a Memorial Service when a deceased fellow 29er is memorialized. A plaque and certificate of appreciation is awarded to the nearest living relative, while a duplicate plaque is prepared to hang on the "Wall of Memory" in the Post 78 meeting room at the William Talley Recreation Center in Frederick. Joining us this year to receive the plaque and certificate were Post 78 member Sherry Kemp and her brother Alan Kemp. Their father Joseph Lee Kemp, a World War II veteran of Headquarters Company 115th Infantry Regiment was honored and remembered.

Wilcox also announced that he had just learned about 10:00 that morning of the death of another Post 78 WW II veteran. Charles S.



*Photo by William Mund*

**Left to right: Adjutant John Wilcox; Sherry Kemp; Alan Kemp and Vice Commander Roger Haynes.**

Toms was an Associate Member of Post 78 but was well respected and appreciated for his service in the US Navy during WW II. Charles had served as Post 78 Commander in the past and currently served on the Post Executive Committee.

*Submitted by PNC John E. Wilcox, Jr.*

## The Blue and Gray Field and the 29th Division Monument

To those who do not reside or work at Fort Detrick, it is probably a little known fact that the flag of the 29th Infantry Division flies 24 hours - a-day at the U.S. Army Post in Frederick, Maryland. The majestic banner of the proud Blue and Gray at one time greeted all who entered Fort Detrick, before local transportation and security concerns demanded the relocation and creation of Veterans Drive and the current entrance. That greeting originally came about at the efforts of Company "A" Association (a forerunner of Post 78 of the 29th Division Association), a former Garrison Commander and the continuing courtesy of the Fort Detrick Command.

In way of a small bit of history, the 29th Division was first established in 1917 at Camp McClellan located at Anniston, Alabama. The initial cadre of the Division was made up of National Guard soldiers from Maryland, Virginia, New Jersey and the District of Columbia, although later replacements from all over the country were included. The Korean symbol of Life, chosen as its insignia, was the first to be recorded in the War Department. Because the men of the Division

were from the North and South with histories dating back to the Civil War and beyond, the colors of Blue and Gray were officially adopted.

Company "A" Association was a chartered organization made up of current and former members of Company A 1st Battalion, 115th Regiment, 29th Infantry Division. In 1991, they surrendered their charter and were re-chartered as Cresap's Rifles Post 78 of the 29th Division Association. The 29th Division Association consists of current and former

members of the 29th Infantry Division. The Association is still an active unit today, with Post 78 having just over 200 members and still residing in Frederick.

Early in 1984, Colonel Mark Hoke, a native of Frederick County, Maryland, and then Garrison Commander at Fort Detrick, out of respect for those from the county who served in the Division, took the initiative of naming the post's parade field "Blue and Gray Field." Later, Colonel Hoke had the existing flag pole moved to a more prominent location on the field near the intersection of Doughton and Porter Streets, and also provided for the installation



**Dedication Ceremony June 6, 1984. Left: Harold Hengst and Richard Fox, and right: Robert Bell and W. Ray Spurrier.**

*(Continued on page 16)*

## Fort Belvoir-based 29th Division mobilizes for active duty

FORT BELVOIR, VA. — Virginia and Maryland government officials and national and state military leaders joined family, friends and fellow Soldiers in sending off the 29th Infantry Division as they departed for federal active duty Oct. 30, 2016, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

More than 450 Virginia and Maryland Army National Guard Soldiers assigned to the 29th are mobilizing for duty in the Middle East in support of Operation Spartan Shield, and this will be the largest number of troops they have led since World War II.

"Thank you to the Soldiers who are before us today," said Brig. Gen. Blake Ortner, commander of the 29th. "You have stepped up on short notice to take on a critical national requirement. This is a tough day with some fears and concerns, but know that we are well trained, we are ready and we can do what is needed and do it well."

Ortner credited the quality of the Soldiers of the 29th and their willingness to accept the most challenging tasks for their selection for the mission, and he expressed thanks to the Army leadership for having confidence in the 29th ID.

Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe, Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, Chief of National Guard Bureau Gen. Joseph Lengyel and Director of the Army National Guard Lt. Gen. Timothy J. Kadavy joined military leaders and state elected officials from Maryland and Virginia in sending off the Soldiers of the 29th and extended special thanks to their families and employers for their critical support of the mission.

"Every time you answer the nation's call, you leave behind your families, your job, your daily lives," Lengyel said. "I have to thank the families. They simply can't do it, they can't help keep America safe without the love and support and sacrifices that you make." He also thanked the employers for the contribution they make to the security of the country by supporting the members of our National guard.

"Our business model in the reserve component simply does not work without the support of our employers," Lengyel said. "I know you will get back a motivated employee, a leader in your organization, someone who makes your business work better."

Lengyel acknowledged the rich history of the 29th and the importance of the mission the Soldiers are about to begin.

"It is no small task to walk in the footsteps of the 29th Infantry Division," Lengyel said. "You are going to write another great chapter in the deployment of this organization that is going to contribute to the warfight and the security of the nation abroad. The 29th will oversee the presence in the middle east at a critical juncture at a time in the region, and we face these challenges knowing that the National Guard is the best it has ever been."

The Soldiers conducted training at Fort Pickett for about two weeks prior to the departure ceremony, then they will train for approximately 30-45 days in Texas before they head overseas.

While based at Fort Belvoir, Soldiers assigned to the 29th Infantry Division live all throughout Virginia and Maryland.

Operation Spartan Shield is a CENTCOM operation focused on maintaining U.S. forces within theater in order to execute any number of contingency plans. It further enhances relationships and interoperability with regional partners through the conduct of bilateral and multilateral security cooperation exercises.

U. S. Central Command directs and enables military operations and activities with allies and partners to increase regional security

and stability in support of enduring U.S. interests and is responsible for U.S. security interests in 20 nations, stretching through the Arabian Gulf region into Central Asia.

U. S. Army Central conducts shaping operations in the U. S. Central Command area of responsibility to deter adversaries in order to reassure and enable partners, while sustaining ongoing U.S. operations in established Combined Joint Operating Areas. Read more about ARCENT at <http://www.usarcent.army.mil/About-USARCENT/>.

Mission command is the term the U.S. Army uses to describe the headquarters that provides direction and intent to subordinate units in order for them to carry out their mission. That headquarters also provides guidance and coordination for personnel, intelligence, sustainment and communications support. USARCENT shapes the CENTCOM area of responsibility in order to support operations against extremists, assure access, build partner capacity, develop relationships, and deter adversaries while providing a mission command capability that can set the theater and execute unified land operations in support of Combatant Commander requirements.

Theater security cooperation is focused on maintaining or improving relationships with countries within the CENTCOM area of responsibility through partnering in exercises that promote military to military engagements. Each year USARCENT conducts approximately 400 events in 20 partner nations. These events build trust and interoperability, and that gives the U.S. not only military access, but also business and cultural access.

Approximately 80 Virginia and Maryland Guard Soldiers assigned to the 29th Infantry Division began federal active duty Aug. 1, and are providing mission command in the Middle East in support of Operation Inherent Resolve. The group of Soldiers, also known as Task Force 29, are expected to serve on federal active duty for up to 12 months.

The mobilization is another example of the importance of the Guard and Reserve in the U. S. Army's ability to meet force requirements across the globe. According to an article in the Defense News, Gen. Robert Abrams, commander of Forces Command, stressed that the Army can't meet those requirements alone.

"It takes all 980,000 of us," Abrams said during the Association of the United States Army annual meeting. "Now, possibly more than ever, the readiness of the Guard and Reserve is crucial."

Last year, there were zero Army National Guard division headquarters deployed, he said. In addition to the 29th ID preparing for its deployment, the Texas National Guard's 36th Infantry Division is preparing for a deployment to Afghanistan.

"Both the 36th and 29th Infantry Divisions are filling critical roles in support of our combatant commanders," Abrams said.

*Virginia National Guard Public Affairs*

*A group of 29th Division Association members, led by National Commander Robert Wisch, attended the departure ceremonies. Among the association members who attended was MG (Ret) Grant L. Hayden, a former 29th Division Commanding General.*

*Former CG's and members also in attendance were MG Daniel Long, MG Carroll Childers & MG Charles Whittington.*

## Important Announcement from Juanita King, President of the National Auxiliary

The following communication was received by National Commander David Ginsburg on Friday, 21 October 2016, and was read by him at the business meeting on 22 October 2016.

Dear Commander Ginsburg,

*This has been a difficult letter to write, inasmuch as it may ultimately involve the dissolution of the Ladies' Auxiliary. This step is not being taken without a great deal of prayerful thought and consideration among the ladies of the Virginia branch. Nevertheless, we urge you to take it as our firm resolve not to continue in the manner that seems to have become the norm for both the association and the ladies of the Maryland branch.*

*Thus we, the elected National officers of the Ladies' Auxiliary, tender herewith our resignations; and sincerely hope that this will be accepted in good spirit, with our assurance that as individuals and as a separate group, we intend to continue our support of the soldiers of the 29th Division and members of the association, for as long as may be. Henceforth, our group shall be known as "Ladies of Post 64".*

*During the forthcoming Reunion it ought to be possible to elect a new slate of officers, better able to meet the current goals and practices of the National organization. If not, we shall reluctantly surrender our Charter.*

*Please be assured that this does not reflect any lack of respect or affection for any person or persons presently serving in the Association.*

Sincerely yours,

The Officers of the Ladies' Auxiliary

JUANITA KING

National President

DIANNE A. RAYMOND

National Vice-President

MARY HOBBS

National Secretary

KAROLYN SINK

National Treasurer



Photo by Bob Wisch

29th Division troops at the Departure ceremony held on 30 October 2016 at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

## Message in a Fruitcake

Every year as Christmas draws near, I am reminded of one of my family's unique stories involving a traditional ingredient of the season, the eternal holiday fruitcake. Each year I have full intentions of sitting down and recording this memory, but somehow the whirlwind of activities leading up to December 25th consume the time and energy needed to bring this task to fruition.

This year is no different, as the demands of holiday preparation are certainly no less than in years past, but I somehow find the desire to share this story and bring new meaning to an old tradition more important than being able to cross off every item on my "need to do" list.

You see, like many people, I too have wonderful family memories of my mom or grandmother in a kitchen filled with the warmth and love of the season and the heavenly aromas of holiday baking. The traditional fruitcake always took center stage as the leading star in an impressive production, which assembled an extensive cast of holiday treats.

Hours were spent preparing the many ingredients needed to go into the batter long before the cake was ever placed into the oven. I personally don't know how the fruitcake became the culprit for so many fruitcake jokes. Sometimes just the mention of the word "fruitcake" brings down the house with a multitude of humorous stories, which personifies the cake into taking on a life of its own. Defying supernatural laws, this amazing cake has been known to outlast any other baked goods life expectancy. I imagine that it is probably for the best that some phenomena are not to be understood. Certainly, this would be one of those instances.

This fruitcake story has a different twist. Its ingredients do not bring to mind memories of warm family gatherings, abundance of food and drink or any other pleasure one normally associates with the holiday season. In fact, it's about just the opposite. This story is about a young soldier, far from home, far from the family who loves him, perpetually hungry and cold, sometimes feeling frightened and alone, fighting for his country on foreign battlefields in Europe during World War II.

This soldier was my father, Staff Sergeant Cary L. Jarvis, who served as a forward observer in the 29th Division, 111th Field Artillery Battalion, and who was among the first soldiers, on the first wave, to go ashore and land on D-Day at Omaha Beach. He was one of the fortunate ones who lived through this massive invasion, which was critical in changing the course of the war. He holds the distinct privilege, unlike many good men who lost their lives that day, of being able to share and help document through his stories, this most important time in our country's history.

His stories are filled with tragedies of war, incomprehensible loss and sadness on every level one could imagine, struggles of survival, but most of all pride in triumph and victory for the country he loved and served well. I have come to appreciate these stories, and the courage of the man who tells them, more and more as I grow older. I realize how significant and life changing this period was in my father's life and how it affected everything, for everyone involved, forever.

Not all of my father's war stories though are sad. Some are actually very humorous, as my father is quite the storyteller and possesses a strong sense of wit. They are about comical situations, lasting friendships, mischief, lighthearted happenings, romance, colorful characters and just good stuff, which somehow finds itself ironically woven into the overall tapestry of war. I would say that the fruitcake story falls into this latter category, and with this being said, will properly try to set the stage for this holiday story.

In 1939, at the age of seventeen, my father was approached by a couple of his buddies who had recently joined the Virginia National Guard. They were full of exciting tales of fun and games had by all on their weekend training retreats. Camping out in real tents, plenty of food,

smart looking uniforms, driving big trucks, playing war games and a pay check at the end of the month for having all this fun.

My father's head must have been spinning from the pictures his friends had so enthusiastically painted, and with times being hard for most, it must have sounded particularly grand. My father was bent and determined not to miss out on such a good thing and was ready to go sign up right then and there.

The only thing that stood in his way was the small detail that you had to be eighteen to enlist, and my father missed that requirement by one year. Being large for his age, and with nothing to lose, he went down to the recruiting station and when the Battery Commander asked him his age, he confidently lied, "eighteen sir". With no proof required, he was promptly issued a uniform, given a robust slap on the back, was officially inducted into the Virginia National Guard, and so began his military experience.

His weekends of training were going well enough, and as a youngster he was enjoying the excitement of exposure to new things and new people. In February of 1941, the National Guard was inducted into the Federal Service, which translates into "you're in the real army now son!" At that time, my father had one year left in training and was slated to be released at the end of that year. But alas, during that year, on December 7, 1941, Pearl Harbor was attacked, and soon after that my father found himself aboard the *Queen Mary* in route to England for the duration of the war. His weekends of playing war at National Guard training camps, were quickly transformed into what would be three years of life quite different from anything he could have imagined.

My father spent three years in Europe fighting a war, which transformed his world. In combat, his display of leadership and courage earned him the battlefield commission of Second Lieutenant, which assured his membership in the prestigious National Order of Mustangs.

My grandmother had a small discolored photo which my father sent to her shortly after arriving in England, which shows him down in a freshly dug foxhole, with shovel in hand, wearing a big smile. On the back of the photo he had written "my new home". I cry to think of how my grandmother must have felt having her son so far away from her.

During this time, my father would receive many letters from home. One letter from home would tell him that his only brother, Douglas, two years older than he, had died from complications during an unexpected heart surgery. He received the letter after his brother's funeral. He would also receive a "Dear John" letter from his sweetheart and fiancée, breaking off their engagement and announcing her upcoming marriage to someone else, which I am sure devastated him greatly.

This letter prompted one of the only letters he received from his own father during the war. His father's message to him, though short, was meant to give his son encouragement, through what he knew was a most difficult time. In it he said, "Son, don't worry, there are many pebbles on the beach", and I guess that was about all he had to say about that.

Several Christmases came and went while my father was fighting in Europe. Around each holiday season, he would receive a package from home, which would contain one of his mother's special festive treats, a fruitcake. The cake, adorned with fruits and nuts, was a tangible connection to home, and a treasured memory of holidays spent with the ones he loved. The cake arrived housed in the same pan in which it had been baked, and he would take a slice for himself, and then share the rest with the other men in his unit.

After long months of K-rations, I am sure this must have been quite an event. His mother instructed him not to worry about returning the pan, but he always carefully packed it back up and sent it off for home,

(Continued on page 16)

(Continued from page 15)

not knowing if it would ever actually make it or not from his position out on the battlefield. The pan, which crossed the ocean once, would now cross it again back to its sender.

Letters were sometimes slow to find their way home because of censoring, and often the pan would show up on his parent's front porch first. The unspoken message it would carry to them when it arrived would be "I am still alive" and they would take hope, and have great joy that their son was still alive some short time ago.

That fruitcake pan made its way back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean six times while my dad was fighting in Europe. With each journey, it carried the gift of love to my father, so far away from home, and the gift of hope, back to his parents, who were anxiously awaiting some sign that their son was still alive.

Thirteen years after writing this story of "Message in A Fruitcake", I am sad to say that my father passed away in the spring of 2016, fifteen days after his 94th birthday.

Although the years had slowed him down, his drive and love of life never wavered. He stayed fairly active, even with many health issues. He never turned down a fishing trip! Never!!! He still tinkered with his hobby of restoring Model A cars with the help of my brother Walter, as well as gardening, cooking, baking, canning, preserving the bounty he grew and sharing with family and friends. He baked many fruitcakes between Thanksgiving and Christmas each year using his mother's recipe. Lucky was the person who received them as gifts.

Some years ago, my father presented me with his mother's fruitcake pan, which is now well over 100 years old. If pans could receive a "Purple Heart", from being injured in battle, this one certainly would. It is a little beaten and worn with a crack around the rim, and although it is still able to bake a pretty mean cake, it has earned a most honorable and peaceful resting place in my kitchen hutch. I treasure it greatly as a significant part of my father's time as a soldier, as well as for the mes-

sage of love and gift of hope it sent family members so far apart. This Christmas, if you receive that traditional holiday cake, think more about the message it sends and appreciate your love ones being near. Merry Christmas!

#### Emily Jarvis - Transatlantic Fruitcake

1/2 Lb. Butter

1/2 Lb. Sugar

1/2 Lb. Plain Flour

1/2 Dozen Eggs

#### Fruit & Nuts (whatever you like)

Suggest:

1/2 pk. Pitted dates

1/2 box golden raisins

4 oz. Green candied cherries

4oz. Red candied cherries

Slice of green candied pineapple (cut up)

Slice of red candied pineapple (cut up)

4 oz. Mixed candied fruit

1/2 cup Pecans

1/2 cup English walnuts

1/2 cup Black walnuts

#### Dash of Cinnamon / Dash of Nutmeg

Cream butter in bowl, add sugar, put eggs in one at a time and beat well. Add flour slowly, beating well, add a dash of cinnamon and a dash of nutmeg, place dates, fruits and nuts into a bag with flour, shake to coat. (Keeps items from settling to bottom of pan.)

Grease pan with Crisco and line with brown paper bag cut to fit pan. (Cut a circle with hole in middle for bottom of pan, and strips to line sides of pan.) Grease both sides of bag well. Spoon batter into pan, decorate top with 1/2 pieces of Pecans, English walnuts, whole cherries and pineapple pieces. Bake approx. 2 1/2 hours at 250 degrees. Check with straw to make sure done in center. Enjoy!

Submitted by Thelma Peterson, Post 5

## The Blue and Gray Field and the 29th Division Monument

(Continued from page 12)

of floodlights. Colonel Hoke, along with members of Company "A" Association were also instrumental in calling for the construction of a small monument at the base of the flag pole, placed there to honor the nine 29th Division members from Frederick County who had made the ultimate sacrifice in Normandy, France during World War II.

A small group of local veterans of the 29th who had returned to tour the Normandy beaches and surrounding countryside, returned with a container of soil taken from that locale to be used in the planting of new shrubbery around the area of the monument. On June 6, 1984, the 40th anniversary of the D-Day Invasion, the ground breaking and an appropriate ceremony was attended by several Normandy veterans of the 115th Infantry Regiment along with members of the Company "A" Association and the Fort Detrick command.

In attendance to unveil the monument were Harold Hengst, Richard Fox and Willie "Ray" Spurrier, all veterans of Company A, 115th Infantry Regiment, along with Robert Bell, a veteran of Headquarters Company, 115th Infantry. In addition, Congresswoman Beverly Byron; Brigadier General James Fretterd, the Assistant Adjutant General, State of Maryland; Colonel Mark Hoke, Garrison Commander of Fort Detrick and Colonel Ernest Snyder, Chief of Staff, Maryland Army National Guard, added a welcomed presence.

A rededication ceremony was conducted at the site of the monument on October 6, 1985 to correct some spelling on the plaque. Then on November 12, 1994 a ceremony was conducted at the site of the me-

morial to honor roughly 15 - 20 World War II veterans who had applied for the French Medaille Du Jubile. This medal was provided by the French government and awarded to veterans of all services who had participated in the Normandy Campaign. (6 June to 24 July 1944) This had been the second ceremony conducted to make these awards. The first was held at the American Legion home in Frederick.

It was later learned after thorough research, that the text on the monument was incorrect as it stated that all nine soldier listed had been killed on D-Day. This statement was found to be incorrect and a new plaque with a corrected statement was prepared and mounted through financial support from Post 78 in 2014.

Cresap's Rifles Post 78 of the 29th Division Association provides the all-weather flags that waves day and night over the parade field. Donald P. Wagner, a former First Sergeant of Company A, 1st Battalion, 115th Infantry initially attended to the changing of the flags when needed, while his wife Leoda kept the flags repaired in order to extend their life. Then in 2007, after First Sergeant Wagner succumbed to physical health problems, the honor was taken up by John E. Wilcox, Jr., another retired First Sergeant of the 115th Infantry and his wife Christina. Flags are normally changed about 3 times a year to keep the Blue and Gray in the spotlight at Fort Detrick.

It is the intent of all concerned with this activity that the Blue and Gray banner will fly as long as there is a Fort Detrick, a country that is free, and one person who can appreciate the real meaning of patriotism and self-sacrifice epitomized by those of the 29th.

Submitted by PNC John E. Wilcox, Jr.

# George F. Cook

## 25 November 1923 — 9 July 2016

### Past National Commander — 2005 - 2006

George Frank Cook passed away on July 9, 2016. He was born in Cleveland, Ohio on November 25, 1923 to George F. and Marie Cook. He was predeceased by his wife of 47 years, Jane Elizabeth LeMaster, his parents, and a brother and sister.

At an early age, George and his family moved to Richmond, Virginia. In 1939, he was in a Civilian Conservation Corps camp in Chesterfield, Virginia.

He enlisted in the Virginia National Guard in 1940 when he was 16 years old. The Guard was called into federal service in 1941 and George was sent to Fort Meade, Maryland, where he was in a motorcycle company.

George served in the 29th Division, the 82nd Airborne and two ordinance companies. He participated in the Normandy D-Day Invasion and the Battle of the Bulge.

George earned five Bronze Battle Stars, along with other decorations. After the war, he graduated from Memphis State College in Memphis, Tennessee, where he was a member of the Kappa Alpha fraternity.

He later joined General Electric Company as a trainee and held various positions including Florida Zone Manager. He retired from GE in 1986, after 33 years of service.

George was a charter member of the St. Augustine Chapter

of the Harley Owners Group. He served two terms as chapter director, and enjoyed long distance motorcycle trips, traveling many times from Florida to Canada.

He was also a long time member of Hendricks Avenue Baptist Church, where he served three terms as Deacon and on various committees. He was an usher and a cook in the church kitchen for over 20 years.

George was a volunteer and life member at St. Luke's Hospital for 19 years. He was the St. Luke's "Santa Claus" for all those years. He was also an honorary life member of Baptist Hospital Auxiliary. For over 30 years, George was a member of the University Club.

He was past president of the General Electric Marketing Council, a member of the General Electric Elfun Society (a volunteer group of GE leaders), a 40 year member of the Florida Sheriff's Association, a

Kentucky Colonel, a life member of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, a life member of the American Motorcyclist Association and past National Commander of the 29th Division Association.

In the latter position, George had the honor of placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in May 2005.



## Important Notice

Donation checks for the

*Twenty-Niner*

must be made payable to the  
**29th Division Association.**

Our bank is no longer accepting  
checks made payable to the  
*Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund.*

We apologize for any  
inconvenience this may cause.

## **Wanted**

### National Finance Officer

The 29th Division Association is seeking candidates to be elected as National Finance Officer (NFO) of the 29th Division Association at the Annual Convention & Reunion, next October.

The candidate elected is required to attend 3 meetings a year, i.e. the NEC meetings in January and June, and the business meeting at the Annual Convention & Reunion, which is usually held in October.

For more information, please contact NFO J. Brian Becker at [jbrianbecker@verizon.net](mailto:jbrianbecker@verizon.net) or National Executive Director, William Mund at [duster197329@gmail.com](mailto:duster197329@gmail.com).

# Important Notice

To all members of  
**Post 116**  
Staunton, Virginia

Over the last several years the 29th Division Association Headquarters has had difficulty in collecting Per-capita dues from the members of Post 116. This difficulty was not brought on by the members themselves, but as a result of the many deployments of the Virginia Army National Guardsmen who are members of that post.

National Headquarters has been unable to collect Per-capita dues from Post 116 because there is no one involved in the administration of the post. After almost a year now, most of the members of Post 116 have not submitted their dues because no one at the post level has requested them to do so.

The way it's supposed to work is that the Post sets the amount of the dues (\$12 average +/-) and collects it. The post then sends \$5 of the amount collected from each member to National Headquarters. The post retains the \$7 to be used for administrative expenses, events, etc.

Posts in the Maryland Region are required to submit \$7 for each member to the Maryland Region. The Region then keeps \$2 for expenses etc., and sends the remaining \$5 on to National Headquarters.

Currently, this is not happening with Post 116 and National Headquarters is forced to appeal directly to the members of Post 116 to submit their dues for 2016.

Therefore, we are asking that members of Post 116 who have not paid their dues for 2016 submit **\$5** to National Headquarters. If you send **\$10**, you will be credited with paying your dues for 2017. Checks must be made payable to the **29th Division Association** and mailed to:

**29th Division Association**  
**P.O. Box 47634**  
**Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634**

Please indicate **Post 116 Dues** on your check.

It is hoped that sometime in the near future, Post 116 can return to the proper process of collecting dues and submitting them to National Headquarters. Until that time we have to request that you send your dues directly to National Headquarters. We regret that we have to interfere with the post in the dues collection process, however when the post administration is non-existent, we have to take action.

To avoid being dropped from the membership rolls, please submit your dues by 31 December 2016. Point of contact for this action is the undersigned.

WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.  
National Executive Director  
29th Division Association

edit-pub29er@hotmail.com  
duster197329@gmail.com  
443-529-4233

## 98th Annual Reunion & Convention 20-23 October 2016



Museum tour attendees gather outside the Army Heritage Museum for a group photo on Friday, 21 October 2016.



Bill Swilling, standing and  
Donald "Ducky" Robertson  
at the Army Heritage Museum.

Photos on  
this page by  
Jay Garrison  
and Bob  
Wisch.



Orientation at the Army Heritage Museum.



Left to right: Jay Garrison; Jeff Banik; Mike Krauss;  
PNC Bill King and Lee Hofmann standing inside the  
WWII barracks at the Army Heritage Museum.

# National Officers - Elected and Appointed for 2016 - 2017



Elected officers being installed by National Executive Director, William Mund.

## Elected Officers

National Commander: Robert E. Wisch

Senior Vice Commander: Frank Rauschenberg

Junior Vice Commander: Grant Hayden

Finance Officer: J. Brian Becker

Chaplain: Reverend John Schildt

Welfare Officer: Frank Rauschenberg

Service Officer: Walter Carter

Historian: Joseph Balkoski

Judge Advocate: Houston Matney

Sergeant-at-Arms: Randall Beamer

Southern Region Vice Commander: David Leighton

Maryland Region Vice Commander: Houston Matney

At-Large Region Vice Commander: Edward Tolzman



## Appointed Officers

National Adjutant: Valerie Hawkins

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

National Surgeon *Emeritus*: Dr. Hal Baumgarten

Editor *Emeritus The Twenty-Niner*: Donald M. McKee

## Post Commander's Workshop

The 3rd Annual Post Commander's Workshop was held during the Harrisburg Convention on Saturday afternoon and was chaired by NC David Ginsburg in his capacity as Future's Committee Chairman.

The purpose of the Workshop is twofold – to give the Posts a chance to exchange ideas and brainstorm solutions to their biggest challenges, and to give an additional reason for the Posts to want to attend the Convention as the NEC meetings are not really tailored for Post-level issues.

This year's Workshop was attended by the following posts – 2 (Florida), 5 (Norfolk, VA), 48 (Westminster, MD), 58 (Dundalk, MD), 64 (Roanoke, VA), 1-72 (Baltimore, MD), 78 (Frederick, MD) 85 (North East, MD) 88 (Eastern Shore, MD) 93 (New England), 94 (Silver Spring, MD), 110 (Pikesville, MD), 175 (Texas), and 729 (Waynesboro, PA)

That represents 14 of the 15 active posts in the Association – a new high.

A few of the items discussed:

National is considering helping with central dues collections for those posts that may be unable to successfully perform that function – mostly the smaller posts and the far-flung posts.

Posts have 2 key functions that need to be done in conjunction with National – keeping their rosters up to date and collecting

dues and forwarding the funds to National or through Region if in the Maryland Region. Posts should try to find people to do those key functions rather than just center on who will fill what positions – the work that needs to be done is more important than filling of all titles within a post.

Post 93 just made a few key membership changes to fill some of the gaps in their leadership – Jonathan Levin-Turner took over as Chaplain, to help connect the Post with its World War II families; and Neil Ungerleider (our National Webmaster) took over the role of Finance Officer.

The role of Life Membership was reviewed with a number of posts stating their difficulties that resulted from that status and why all posts should avoid it going forward.

There was explanation given to the Region organization, as posts outside of Maryland face a difference structure than the posts in the Maryland Region

The thought of E-cards was brought up to facilitate getting members cards instead of mailing out the paper ones

The role of the *Chin Strap* was emphasized for keeping the members informed for those posts that are spread out across large geographical areas.

The Post Commander's Workshop will continue at the 2017 National Convention in Baltimore.

## BG Lapthe Flora and WWII Veterans highlight Harrisburg Convention

(Continued from page 1)

World War II vets talk to each other for hours after the dinner had ended.

Saturday is always the day of the Business Meeting and the Banquet and this year was no exception.

The Business Meeting is one of the 3 main meetings the Association has each year, the other 2 being specific National Executive Committee (NEC) meetings in January and June. This one is always special, as it has its largest attendance of the year, and has many attendees that do not attend NEC meetings – it is always a good barometer of finding out what our members think about key initiatives.

A key topic at the meeting was the large bequest made to the Association due to the generosity of the recently passed PNC George Cook. George was a great soldier and National Commander and an even better human being. The attendees at the meeting unanimously approved the recommendation of the Command Committee that 1/3 of the donation be reserved for grants to the various museums that are dedicated to the 29th Division including the 29th Division Museum in Baltimore and the 116th Museum in Staunton, VA – for displays and exhibits having to do with the 29th Division in particular.

National Senior Vice Commander Bob Wisch was elected National Commander at the meeting, with Frank Rauschenberg as Senior Vice Commander and Grant Hayden as the Junior Vice Commander.

Saturday evening was the National Commander's Banquet and

will be long remembered for the speech given by BG Flora and the long-awaited return by Bob Moscati, following his major stroke a few months ago.

Lapthe Flora was born in South Vietnam and fled to the United States after the fall of Saigon in 1975. He is the 2nd US General of Vietnamese descent and the first that was a Boat Person.

General Flora spoke of his ordeal in escaping to the jungles of Vietnam for 3 years and then coming from a refugee camp in Malaysia to Roanoke. While some knew of his inspiring story, none of us knew that his adopted father had never told him of his service in the 116th Infantry and landing on D-Day until, General Flora told his adopted parents that he had joined the Virginia National Guard and the 116th Infantry – a unit he later commanded.

Eight of the attendees at the Convention were veterans of the Vietnam War and they came up to have a toast with General Flora. At this point the National Commander was ready to go on with the program when General Flora asked for a few more minutes.

With zero notes and straight from the heart, he spoke for another 15 minutes about the inspiration he got from the American veterans, the debt he felt to the soldiers of the US Military and his love for the United States – at this point there were virtually no dry eyes in the room. With all the negative press and feelings during this trying election, General Flora reminded everyone why this country is great and it is people like General Flora that truly inspire us.

The banquet ended on 2 fitting notes – a toast with Calvados with the National Commander and the 11 World War II veterans, and the installation of Bob Wisch as the new National Commander.

# Attendees at our 98th Annual Reunion & Convention

Baker, Roy & JoAnn Elliott  
Balkoski, Joe  
Banik, Jeff & Christine Nichols  
Beamer, Randy  
Becker, J. Brian  
Bennett, Mark  
Bernhard, William  
Bowers, Kim & Michele  
Brown, Robert  
Buchanan, Charles & Susan  
Bullock, J.W. "Bill"  
Carter, Walter & Bonnie  
Coover, Rosemary & Thomas  
Crosby, Gil & Carolyn  
Daihl, Anita  
DeBaecke, Frank & Adam  
DeHaven, William  
Dooley, PNC Ivan V.  
Duncan, Norm & Tina Barden  
Elwood, John & Vivian  
Faries, George B. Jr.  
Faulconer, Buddy  
Finn, PNC Robert  
Flora, Lapthe & Thuy  
Garrison, "Jay" Cecil, Jr.  
Giannini, Maxine & Mark  
Gibson, Paules  
Ginsburg, PNC David & Amy Colton  
Ginsburg, Melvin & Bev  
Ginsburg, Rebeka & Daniel  
Griffin, Paul & Kathy  
Happel, Richard  
Hawkins, Valerie & Margaret Edmundson  
Hayden, Grant  
Hess, Randy & Janice  
Hoffman, David  
Hofmann, Lee  
Houck, David  
Insley, Tom & Jean  
Jones, Bob & Helena  
King, PNC Bill & Juanita  
Kramer, Paul & Virginia  
Krantz, Dylan & Jared  
Krauss, Michael  
Kutcher, PNC Jack and Maxine  
Lane, John & Shirley  
Leather, Donald E.  
Leighton, David & Ann Jackson  
Levin-Turner, Jonathan & Rafeena  
Lewis, Kent  
Linthicum, George & Dorothy  
Liswell, Bernie  
Lockard, PNC Buck & Betty  
Malloy, Sean  
Matney, Houston  
McCabe, Robert  
McCarthy, PNC Donald & Don Jr.  
Melnikoff, Steve & Steven  
Moscati, PNC Robert  
Moscati, Robert Jr.  
Moscati, Vince  
Mund, William  
Neighbor, Chuck  
Parker, Ginny & Thomas  
Patella, Albert & Anita  
Pinson, William & Robert  
Piper, Morley  
Plana, Florent & Oranne Davoust  
Rauschenberg, Frank & Peggy  
Raymond, Richard & Diane  
Reighter, John  
Robert, Patricia & Laura  
Robertson, Donald "Ducky"  
Schaefer, Gary  
Schildt, John  
Sherr- Davino, Fran  
Shilow, Frank & Alice  
Shuey, Ted  
Smith, Eric  
Snyder, Richard  
Swilling, Bill  
Tanczyn, Michael  
Tolzman, Edward  
Ungerleider, Neil  
Vaccarino, PNC John & Mary  
Ward, Bob & Bettye  
Winters, PNC Paul C.  
Wisch, Bob & Linda  
Yusna, Carl  
Zang, PNC Joe & Shirley

# 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 2015.*

*We pray that they may rest in peace.*

Alberti, Louis A.	Gitelman, Aaron S.	Pulket, Kenneth S.
Aldridge, Charles W.	Gray, Marion C.	Rauzer, Melvin B.
Antonio, Nicholas J.	Gundrum, William B.	Reubush, Ward H.
Autry, John S.	Haines, Wilbur E.	Robinson, James F.
Barrett, Cooper	Haney, Edward T.	Rowland, Oscar
Benfer, Donald L.	Harper, I. Liam	Russell, Norman F.
Berch, Isadore	Hatchett, Maurice A.	Sack, George
Borleis, Daniel	Heffner, Robert W.	Scalesse, Raymond V.
Boyer, Thomas B.	Hentz, Charles A.	Scheuerer, Raymond
Brinkley, George	Hewitt, F. Thomas	Schlentz, Warren
Broderick, William J.	Hickman, Robert L.	Schuylar, Willard W.
Broeckling, Theodore	Hicks, George G.	Shanks, William G.
Brown, John H.	Hopp, Henry J.	Sknerski, Edward
Brummer, Samuel M.	Hoppes, Jack E.	Smith, Downye
Burton, John H.	Horak, Phillip W.	Smith, PNC Richard
Capek, James J.	Hornberger, John E.	Snell, Christopher
Clay Reuben E.	Huddleston, Allen M.	Spooner, Robert M.
Collins, Gurvin W.	Huff, Lewis C.	Szetela, Edward R.
Cook, PNC George	Hulett, Victor S.	Tamburello, Salvatore
Creighton, Eugene F.	Hurley, Ralph E.	Tana, Vincent J.
Cundiff, Lester B.	Jarvis, Cary L.	Tetro, Michael R.
Cuseo, Michael	Jines, Raymond L.	Theis, John F.
Dagenais, Henry F.	Jones, Ernest L.	Thomas, Francis E.
Danna, Sam	Jordan, Richard Jr.	Thomas, Taylor W.
Daveler, Harry E.	Laborde, Lucian P.	Thomas, Trevor P.
DeJong, Donald	Lockwood, Phillip	Tice, Harold C.
DeLuca, Russell S.	Lores, Antonio	Toms, Charles S.
Depoy, James R.	Lowrey Robert D.	Trant, Joseph K.
DeSpain, Charles F.	May, Harrison L.	Turkington, William D.
Dickens, Walter L.	McKenzie, Milnor C.	Turner, Henry P.
Dillon, L. Frank	Meylor, Thomas E.	Weske, John
Dobbins, Gerald O.	Miller, George F.	Whitmore, Raymond
Doyle, William C.	Miller, Russell P.	Wilroy, Richard
Dunne, Richard E.	Mitchell, Warren	Wilson, Charles
Dyar, Edward J.	Moore, Charles V.	Zendraft, Buck
Eastridge, Benjamin	Morrison, Stanley P.	Zenk, Herman A.
Ebersole, Kenneth E.	Mosca, Evagrio	Zimmerman, Melvin
Faupel, Murray	Murray, Ned	
Finnerty, Michael J.	Nabb, Alfree E.	<b>Ladies</b>
Flanagan, George L.	Norris, Robert C.	DiNocco, Anna Maria
Flaten, Milo G.	Norvelle, Don A.	Dugue, Arlette
Frado, David A.	Null, Donald E.	Gibson, Fay
Freshwater, Edward	Parsons, Edgar A.	Jungers, Dee
Freyman, C. Dale	Pisko, Francis J.	Lockhart, Florence
Funai, Arthur C.	Poliseno, Carmen	Rice, Frances C.
Gary, John	Prevost, Theodore L.	Walker, Evelyn
Gerhardt, Charles Jr.	Price, Edward C.	Wawrynovic, Stella

# Saturday Night Banquet



*Photo by Houston Matney*

**Calvados toast — World War II Veterans with Commander Ginsburg.**



*Photo by William Mund*

**PNC Bob Moscati, right, with his son Vince and daughter Anita.**



Vietnam veterans with Brigadier General Lapthe Flora.



Brigadier General Lapthe Flora recounting his experiences fleeing Vietnam in the 1970's and later becoming a citizen of the United States.

Commander David Ginsburg and Amy Colton.



**MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR:****Surprises and challenges — the past year in retrospect**

Last year, at the 97th National Reunion and Convention, I was honored to be appointed National Executive Director (NED) by then Commander David Ginsburg. As I also hold the offices of Editor of the *Twenty-Niner* and National Adjutant, I now feel it is time to cut back and allow someone else to step up and be a part of the National Executive Committee.

I am happy to report that Valerie Hawkins of Post 85 has agreed to become the National Adjutant. CW3 (Ret) Hawkins graduated from Perryville High School in 1984 and enlisted in the Marine Corps. Shortly after her discharge from the Marine Corps she joined the Maryland Army National Guard.

She served with Co F, 224th Avn. In Active Guard Reserve (AGR) status and went to WOCS, in January 1999. As a Military Personnel Technician she served with 3rd Brigade, 29th ID; Joint Force Headquarters, MDARNG; and 29th CAB. She retired on 1 April 2011 as a CW3.

Valerie has also earned a BA in History at University of Baltimore in 2007. We are very fortunate to have Valerie interested and involved in our association.

My first year as NED was full of surprises and challenges. First, we had the annual wreath laying that did not occur as it had in the past. Due to security concerns we were no longer able to take POV's up to the Tomb of the Unknowns. We had to jam everyone on the bus and get them up there that way. Not to mention that the entire highway system around Arlington was in a state of gridlock because it was Memorial Day and the Rolling Thunder motorcycle group was in town.

Secondly, in our advance planning, we had difficulty finding a facility to host our dinner after the wreath laying. I must recognize Post 94 Commander Jay Garrison for his dedication in trying to find us a suitable location. In the end, we settled for the Golf Club at Fort Belvoir. However, this presented another challenge.

Most of the gates at Fort Belvoir are closed on Sundays. We received permission to use the gate near the Golf Club; however we had to "pre-vet" all our attendees on the bus. This meant that I had to get the driver's license numbers of all the people on the bus and submit them to the security officials at Fort Belvoir a few days before the event. This was a real "pain in the neck" as many people are reluctant to give out their personal information.

We were able to surmount the challenges that were cast in our way and the wreath laying and dinner afterwards occurred uneventfully.

The days of spring and summer then began to pass away peacefully and uneventfully until 13 August. It was a very hot summer Saturday and I was attending the Annual Picnic thrown by Post 78 and Adjutant PNC John Wilcox in Frederick, MD. I received a call from National Commander David Ginsburg who informed me that PNC Robert Moscati had suffered a severe stroke on 12 August and was hospitalized in Berlin, MD.

Over the years, since I have become involved in the association, I have grown rather close to Bob Moscati. In 2014, Bob and I traveled out west and visited many locations such as the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone, and Glacier National Park. We had also traveled to the Post 2 Annual Luncheon in Sarasota, FL in 2015

and 2016. I have also spent some time with Bob at his trailer park in Delaware near Bethany Beach in the summer.

To say that I was distressed was an understatement. Then, after the initial shock wore off, I started to think, "Who is going to do all the stuff that Bob does? Who's going to do membership? Who was going to finish up the registration for the convention that Bob had started?"

Bob is one of those individuals who never complains or boasts about what he does for the association; therefore, most people do not know of all the stuff that he does. He just smiles and goes about his business in a kindly manner. Fortunately, for me and the association, I kind of had an idea of what he does because we hung around with each other and he would tell me some of the stuff that he did. Maybe he was "unknowingly" preparing me for this emergency?

With the complete support of Bob's children and grandchildren, I was able to secure his computer and began the process of trying to "keep things going." Fortunately, I live only 4 miles from Bob and I was able to get over there quite frequently to pick up the registration forms for the convention that were being mailed to his house. Without the help provided to me by his family, I don't think the convention would have come off as uneventfully as it did.

Bob remains in a rehab facility but he was able to attend the banquet dinner at the convention. Many of you were able to greet him and wish him well. I know he was honored by everyone's kindness and well wishes.

Then, a few weeks before the convention, National Commander David Ginsburg, again the bearer of bad news, called to tell me that National Junior Vice Commander L. Frank Dillon had suffered a heart attack and had passed away.

I had come to know Frank and his wife Nancy well over the past several years. Frank knew many of the people that I had known when I was a member of the Virginia Army National Guard in the mid 80's. Working with Frank in his capacity as Finance Officer of Post 64 was truly enjoyable as he always kept me updated with new members, new addresses etc.

Commander Ginsburg and I traveled to Roanoke, VA to attend the viewing for Frank. We were very warmly welcomed and received by the members of Post 64. The 29th Division Association has suffered a severe loss with the death of JRVC L. Frank Dillon.

Some of you reading all this will, no doubt, interpret it as me complaining. Actually, I'm just covering my first year as NED. All these negative things that occurred didn't just happen to me. National Commander Ginsburg had the responsibility of trying to work these negative things out with the help of the Command Group. I think that he and they did a good job.

As this was my first convention as NED and registrar, I would like to recognize the outstanding work of our Finance Officer, J. Brian Becker. It was he, who meticulously prepared us for the financial intricacies that are concomitant with the planning and execution of an event such as this, our 98th Annual Reunion and Convention.

**WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.**  
Editor/Publisher  
National Executive Director

# DRAWING D-DAY

## *An Artist's Journey Through War — Part Two*

*By Ugo Giannini*

*with Maxine Giannini*

### Chapter Two

#### July 1944: Requiem St. Lo

In July the 29th Division was engaged in fierce fighting; the objective St-Lo. There was a stalemate, and the American forces were unable to push forward. The Generals,

Omar Bradley and Eisenhower, were frustrated and devised a plan called Operation Cobra. The 29th Division was scheduled to head the attack; they were opposed by crack German troops. The strongest of the German ground forces were the Paratroops. General Eisenhower stated: "With an authorized force of 16,000 men and a larger allotment of machine guns than the normal infantry divisions, the parachute troops were the best of the Germans for stout resistance on an extended open front." The 29th had been in continuous battle since the June landing, and were by then battle hardened troops. St-Lo occupied a critically important position and had to be taken at all costs. The costs ended up being extreme; the Germans lost 97,000 men in three weeks, averaging 2,000 to 3,000 daily. (The Long Line of Splendor, 1742–1992).

The portrait entitled Memories of St. Lo catches the psychological impact of war. The young American civilian has been transformed into a battle-weary "Old Man." Men coming into the 29th as replacements, who had not experienced battle, recognized the veterans with their vacant stare, their lack of enthusiasm, and their quietness. How long did it take to become an "Old Man"? From June 6, 1944, to July 18, 1944, or from D-Day until the fall of St. Lo, the men of the 29th served continuously. In June, 4,686 of their men were killed, wounded, or missing in action—another 4,448 in July. Was that enough? More than half of a division? Ugo stated in a letter of July 9, 1944: "To those at home the war is a gradually deepening form on the surface of a map, but to those of us here—there is no miracle but the price is paid."

"On the 18th of July, 1944, The Commanding Officer, Capt. Vern E Johnson, and 15 enlisted men, attached to special Task Force Charlie, took part in the capture of, and occupation of St. Lo. This detachment remained in St. Lo for a period of three days, leaving on July 20, when Division moved into rest area." Vern E. Johnson was the C.O. of the Military Police platoon. He survived the war and in the 1980s contacted Ugo. Task Force Charlie (1) was a motorized, heavily armored force, which occupied St. Lo after severe house-to-house combat.

July 3, 1944

Dearest,

Just received your long delayed package. It took two



months in arriving—but at a most opportune time—  
everything in it I need except of course the cigarettes.

—Say that chicken was it! I made a hot soup and added  
a bit of pepper: You can never quite imagine how good it  
was. I confess, I barely realize the primitive tenor of this  
existence.

In fact, comforts are a strange, thing, which one can do  
very nicely without. I could expand a bit on how we live  
here but I'm sure you would accuse me of deserving sym-  
pathy—ha! ha!

However foot powder is a fine thing to have, especially

when one doesn't have the benefits of a bath or one hasn't removed socks or shoes for almost a month.

Say—How about dropping a few more letters in the box this week? It gets very lonely here you know:

Until later

Goodnight

As ever yours

July 5, 1944

Dearest,

Thinking as I am, and toying with so diversified a selection of subjects I feel prompted to give order and shape, despite time and fate's skeptical attitude towards fulfillment.

You and I both, are living and have lived since our separation on the hope, that is almost knowledge, that we shall once more and for time to come, meet and prolong that reunion for, in fact, to the ends of our destinies.

I feel positive that the scheme of things for us is only an embryo and the tomorrow is designed to outweigh with its bright hopes all the sadness and horror of the past....

There is another phase I meant to speak of—namely that, for more than two years I have struggled to keep from floundering in the cesspool of this mob-existence or mobile concentration camp. It has not been easy—devoid of intellectual pursuits—devoid of culture and the things—to me which were life, to keep from sinking below the level of decency and to avoid the vast vacuum which would absorb all individual thought.

The best of me then, or at least, what you knew of me can be found only in these notes to you. This may account for that peculiar "reserve"—I guard with increasing vigil the scattered leaves of yesteryear, and patiently day and night I gather them close—I have then the collector's priceless jewels.

Do I sound detached from the idea of war? But why should I burden you with the fury of its sound and sight? I shudder at the impulse that would plant in your mind a vivid portrayal of it.

July 7, 1944

Dearest,

I admit my patience is turning sour on me. I receive far too little correspondence from you. And if it pleases you to make me happy you will look into this sad matter—I'm trying desperately to understand and project myself in your

place—but I fail to reason why you allow days to slip by and with them the word I wait for day by day. It angers me to think that my mail appears always reluctant to come.

Everyone is receiving mail quite regularly again—but me! Am I indeed forgotten? The last I heard from you was May and here it is July 7.

Please overlook this complaint if you know that I shall soon be rewarded with letters that have gone unfortunately astray....



Operation Cobra, St. Lo, July 18, 1944.

Somewhere in France

July 9, 1944

Dear Walt!

Oho! I have not written to you at an earlier date, rarely have I forgotten you. I was content with idea that the recent letters I dispatched home have somehow passed on to you. Letters received from home indicate that no one imagined I was ever to leave England on the business of war. This I observed with a mixture of grati-

tude and surprise. Perhaps it is best you remain ignorant of my circumstances. There can be nothing gained in the telling of them. I'm sure my life here would intrude violently upon your own. The difference is so great! My sole complaint, and I honestly believe it not to be insistent, is that letters for me arrive rarely and far between.

I am deeply concerned for Harold, and yet I hear nothing from him nor do I have his address.

The only consolation is a very strong presentiment that suggests this year as being decisive to the end. And if this is not to be fulfilled, at least I'm happiest in believing that it will.

To those at home the war is a gradually deepening front on the surface of a map—but to those of us here, there is no miracle but that the price is paid. Contemplating the thought that someday this madness will be a thing of the past is a strange thought, for in the memory of some it will never die—and I confess, personally, I view with a feeling of uncertainty that civilian life can ever be a returning. Too much has happened to ignore its influence on the future. And I do not understand the ceremony of drums and flags and parades as indicative of anything but a horrible rejoicing where there should be mourning instead.

—I'm glad you realize the folly of struggling to achieve. It is best to work unconscious of the word success—herein lies achievement. Every hour, every day can be an attainment measured only by the happiness resolved from it. Life is not so long that we can afford to ignore its simple pleasures.

How is Joann? And are you happy in your studio? Please send me a more informative letter, even if it suggests gossip. I'm dying to know about the many little things and the people I used to know.

Just received a most savory package from home and a letter from you—this most encouraging—tho' in all modesty I am feeling quite confident.

"Now then," as old MacMurray used to say: "All for the interest of science!"

As ever,  
Ugo

July 27, 1944

My Dearest,

Have you forgotten me? Then why do you not write? I live in vain for your letters—but they do not come, to bring me either joy or sadness.

Since landing—I have received two letters, one dated as far back as May 23rd and the latest one dated July 1st. This one I am grieved to say I lost, tho' I have the picture of you in my wallet.

I have not been writing of late except to the folks—reason of which I will not discuss.

Perhaps you are ill? I pray not. I am much too tired to stress the urgency with which I need word from you—However if you insist on silence, I am not responsible for my misery of mind and heart, and I can no longer control a despair that has left me to think and feel only the emptiness—the damnable darkness of existence.

All my faith, all my hope I placed in you, and you do not respond. I wish you to know that I will not forget this, and you will remember these fifty days of silence. You are growing away from me—do you know?

Are you happiest in forgetting? Only let me know.

Goodnight and may you have the kindness to write, at least once a month.

### Chapter Three August 1944: Hedgerow Country

In August of 1944, the 29th Division began the pursuit of the German Army through Normandy. The Germans intended to fight a delaying action through the Hedgerow country. The roads were mined; trip wires were placed at field entrances; tanks and self-propelled guns were used in order to slow the Americans. (29 Let's Go) There was no sleep—the 29ers were continually harassed by machine guns.

On August 1, 1944, Tessy-sur-Vire fell. Vire was the city Eisenhower said was the pivotal point on which the American Army would swing. The hedgerows were dense, ancient barriers, hundreds of years old, which made each field a killing ground. The Germans utilized these natural barriers as ideal cover for machine guns, as well as mines and booby traps. Vire had been under continual artillery fire, as well as being bombarded by American bombers on D-Day. Leaflets had been dropped over the city warning the civilians of the bombing, but had landed in a

nearby forest. One leaflet was brought to the French official, who was a collaborator with the Germans. He chose not to inform the citizens of Vire. When the people of Vire saw the American planes they hailed them, even though hundreds were killed by their bombardment. Ugo was astonished at the French villagers who welcomed the Americans with open arms, even though their cities had been leveled to the ground.

Vire is on high ground bounded by the Vire River and with three hills west and south of the river. Hill #219 was captured and cleared by the 116th Regiment, 3rd Battalion, on August 5, 1944. Robert Grande of the 115th described it this way:

*We had met slight opposition but it wasn't anything that would hold up for more than thirty minutes. Our two squad platoon had just finished clearing a farmhouse and was ready to take off for the next hedgerow. When all Hell broke loose. We got two feet beyond our hedgerow, Pvt. J Foley, asst. squad leader was the first one to get it—right between the eyes. I saw his knees buckle under him. Sgt. Potter, leader of the 1st squad, Weaver and Sparks were pinned down before they could get over the hedgerow. The 1st Platoon on the left, was also pinned down, so we twelve men reached the next hedgerow with our left flank exposed to machine-gun fire and sniper fire.*

*We had no sooner reached the next hedgerow when we realized that we were being picked off, one by one. We shifted our fire from the direct front to the left flank. I saw Weaver bring his rifle to his shoulder, but he didn't quite make it, and a Jerry bullet got him. Sgt. Afanasewicz, 1st Squad leader, was fifteen yards down the hedgerow with a BAR. (Browning Automatic Rifle.) American infantrymen cherished the BAR. It was a hybrid designed to have the portability of a rifle, but the firepower of a machine gun. Every twelve-man rifle squad had a single BAR.' (Beyond the Beachhead, J. Balkoski. p. 84). He was on his last magazine so he called to Young for some more ammo. Before Young could reach him he saw, and so did I, the smoke from the bullet that got Afanasewicz directly between the eyes. Young then began crawling back to me. He was pretty excited, and said that everyone had gotten killed except the two of us, which was quite true.*

*I was about to tell him to lie down and play dead when a burst of machine-gun fire got him in his gut. He fell by my side, and I pulled him closer to the hedgerow and told him to be still. He called for a medic a couple of times before he realized that it was impossible for a medic or anyone else to reach us. I told him to start praying, which was what I had been doing since I hit the hedgerow. I told him that we'd have to play dead until the darkness came, and that was eight hours to go. I was in such a position that my legs began to get numb, but I was scared to move.*

*Young became conscious again and told me that he was going to die. I made believe I was mad as hell at him, and told him that a good Texan never dies. That brought a weak grin from him and he went back into another state of unconsciousness.*

*Just before dark I saw Private Tregembo, who was five*

yards or so away from me, began to stir. I whispered to him and he turned his head to me. I crawled over to him and he pointed to his legs. I nodded and whispered to him to take off all his equipment. As soon as both of us had done that I started to drag him as best I could. When we had gotten about fourteen yards from the hedgerow I suggested a rest. His legs were paining him too much so I told him to crawl as best he could while I tried to go back for a stretcher.

I was about twelve feet from our hedgerow when a guard halted me. I told him who I was and he told me to advance with my hands over my head. I did so and he let me come through. He took me up to the company CP and there Lieutenant Gentry sent two men to pick up Tregembo. Young was dead. (With permission from J.H.Ewing, 29 Let's Go)



29th Division, St. Lo Sector, prisoners of war, St. Lo 4 km

The 29th battle line had moved 5,000 yards by August 15. The Division's combat came to a quiet conclusion by August 16. Orders were now received to prepare for the move to Brittany.

The war in Normandy was over.

For every new location, for every new battle, the 29th trained, reorganized, and analyzed prior battles. The German Army in France was an experienced, highly trained force, who were the invaders and committed to holding their ground. They were unprepared for the tough, brave, and intelligent American soldiers. They were sure the GIs would have neither the stamina nor the pure courage that they eventually encountered. It was not superiority of arms that won the war. It was the resourcefulness and determination of the individual, and the cohesiveness of the Division that prevailed. Because the Germans had invaded France, the French did not consider the allies invaders; they were liberators and were hailed as such throughout Normandy with gifts, flowers, and kisses. Even for the fiftieth anniversary of the Normandy Invasion, the French welcomed the returning American veterans as liberators.

My Own Dearest,

For the first time in my life I feel as I have never felt before—your letters of July 17, 18, 19 arrived.

Now listen to me, and closely, and remember that I love you with the capacity of this and other worlds. I know the meaning of life and death—believe me! This is why you must abide by what I say. Here it is—There is hope only in

life;—only in life will we, can we be together, after that there is nothing—nothing! Do you understand? Forget what I have said in the past that speaks of other existences. There is only one for us, the thread of which has been temporarily severed, but which every day brings us closer to its repair—that we will continue from there—that we will live again. Look in the mirror. See yourself! And say—"Gogo wishes me to know that I must prepare for his return. (And if he does not return, he begs me to realize that his life is not the beginning nor the end of all things for me.) Tho' I feel it is and I weep and am ill for his safety. He has told me in his own words and his voice was so sure, so clear, almost angry.... I shall be not to death, but to life devoted, for he is the symbol of life."

All these weeks without word from you—but I knew you couldn't write; that you are ill, yes I

am with sick mind conscious of how helpless I am to you.—and you have been ill since I left what can I do? But say that I feel that this year I'll be home....

By every mail I live only for word from you.

August 2, 1944

My Dearest,

Hoping you are receiving plenty of fresh air and sun. And please do not take too seriously my complaint that you are not writing. I know it is quite a task to write when one is ill. I should have known you were not well; perhaps I did, and this I hated to reveal to myself. However, I want you to keep me posted as to your health. Please don't try and conceal from me your welfare—what other interest is there for me? I will take it that you are too ill to write—meanwhile my feelings remain now and forever unchanged for you.

I am anxious to learn that you have rested and will continue to do so. How I long to be there beside you. Yet I am grateful that after these two months I can still send letters. There are others who will not write again....

I have letters I wrote to you—but I'm a hard censor—so they remain unmailed—at least their contents I can well remember and someday—soon—I shall be delighted to tell you personally of all that has occurred since I left you. Let's just take another breath, grit your teeth and hold on tomorrow is on its way!

I must tell you how sweet your last picture was. I have it here in my wallet—but whose hand is that resting on your shoulder? Or who is the character you blocked out? Someone I don't know?) Don't mind, guess I'm jealous! Ha! Ha! as I've always been of any one near you.

Saw my first cinema here in France last week. In an old barn. "Cover Girl," I thought the sight of many lovelies rather breathtaking. I took a fancy to that song throughout—Will you purchase some of the songs I've missed? —records of course....

I pray this letter finds you better in health of mind and body and until—next time

My life I love you.  
Gogo

August 10, 1944

Dear Heart,

Although there are hours designated to sleep—there are rude and violent intrusions. The series of which, over so prolonged a period have left their mark—happily enough invisible to the eye, and in the course of time will heal. I am speaking of wounds that bring pain greater than mere physical ruptures. For when the heart is ill, the body is indeed insignificant. What has long since become unbearable I now endure unconsciously, as tho', and indeed existing in this strange half-world.

The entire horror of all has been, and this I confess without shame, augmented by the knowledge that you have grown seriously ill. I had prepared long ago—even for death—but nothing can still my heart against this fierce tide of consuming grief for you. All my life I converge on your spirit—all of my reason to live—all my hope to happiness, all my dreams, all the beauty, however transient—all my concept of immortality—all revolves about you—and now you are ill—and from your concealing description, for you do not wish me to know, you do not believe in adding to my burdens here, I have drawn my own image—you have been silent—but that silence has spoken to me gravely and with clear voice....

August 1944

Dear,

Your letter of Aug. 17, arrived today—I pored over its content many times and allowed its tones to vibrate through a part of me that has long since died. I wept inwardly, for your message is a tangible proof that those hours we consumed are not mere memory.



A soldier on the front line.

—This I know and only this—two feet in front of me is my mirrored self, a steel helmet that holds sweat and mental pain—a shoulder that says: leather and steel on flesh—a back that bears a brown hump and a waist that is manacled with bits of pointed death. Below is the light khaki—growing dark with sweat: and the two eternal pendulums dragging studded boots over a road that will not end.

August 14, 1944

Last night I shall never forget. I shall remind you with thunder in my eyes and manner that you have failed me. Last night I was ill—as you welled up—and in the fever of my mind I resolved to compose this last letter whose urgency is greater than any I have yet written. It is not I—it is you who have

failed to absorb the sincerity in my previous letters ... but to you they are only letters. Lovelorn, mushy and casual—They remain pasted in your scrapbook—mocking your—own senses.

Here they are, three of the most unlovely letters ever written arriving in order, Aug. 7, 8, and 10. One who loves me and has faith in me does not write such stinging lines. How can I be blunt yet tender? How can your poor little intellect grasp the idea that tho' I love you more than life I still must teach you what a fool you are?

Living with me for so many years I am chagrined that the many times you agreed with my chain of thoughts—now that I have gone—has been in vain. There is no end to my anger and disillusionment—How dare you insult my intelligence? My right to manhood? I resent fiercely your implications that I'm having a "good time with the Mademoiselles." Little fool! At the front there is only death and horror—no Mademoiselles! Christ how faithless you are!

August 29, 1944

I don't believe a word of this however—so it's quite hopeless to make me mad—besides if you didn't care I should never express so glibly my personal thoughts. On this 29th day of Aug.... I celebrate by myself the thought that I am still alive—there are indeed few who can say "I am a veteran of the 29th Div." All who have not been killed but wounded have returned into action indestructible until they die, as indeed only two remain in my old outfit. I must feel indeed queer, like a ghost who does not know.

Since the first hour of D-Day when I dragged myself like a wet rat ashore—ha! I lead a charmed life—but when will that charm be lost?

August 30, 1944

Rene,

Don't get upset! It's the only paper available! Hello there! What's it like in E O? ... I wonder if all the kids will be grown up when I return, and why? As for me I manage to keep that schoolboy complexion—yup! I never want to be a man—They're funny people with funny ideas. I'd be satisfied just taking you to a good movie and holding hands in the dark. Yup! You know ice cream, and some candy (licorice drops) and maybe peanuts with the shell—In fact I've got a lot of surprises for you when I get back—just wait.... Surprises yes but not just things—I mean we're going to make up every day of the war since I left. Is it two years or twenty years? I'm not saying how worried I am for you—but please keep well, that's an order!

Do you still listen to "Just Music"? I haven't forgotten the theme—it's got a funny sound. When I hear it I almost repicture those many nights, a dark sweet scented room, a chair, a candle glow from the radio. That's real to me! This



Fallen Hero.

isn't now. All those pledges, those looks, your sad eyes catching the quiet light. They are not gone are they? They will return?

I'm almost afraid so much happiness isn't meant to be. Well goodnight and don't forget, my life, I love you.

Gogo

To be continued

## The 99th Annual Reunion & Convention will be held in Baltimore, MD at the **Hunt Valley Inn**

This event will commemorate the  
100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the formation of the  
**29<sup>th</sup> Division**

The dates are October 12-15, 2017



**COME VISIT THE NEWEST  
WYNDHAM GRAND HOTEL**



The Hunt Valley Inn is completing a \$15 million renovation. Featuring 392 sophisticated Guest Rooms and two stylish Ballrooms amidst 30,000 sq ft of conference space. Call us today at (410) 785-7000 and schedule an appointment to see the Grand transformation!

## L. Frank Dillon, National Junior Vice Commander

The 29th Division Association National Headquarters regrets to announce the passing of its National Junior Vice Commander, Lewis Frank Dillon on 2 October 2016.

Frank was born (1 April 1950) and raised in Roanoke. He graduated from Jefferson High School and shortly thereafter left home to serve his country in the US Army.

He was extremely dedicated and active in the military. When he retired from the Army National Guard of Virginia in 2002 he had over 32 years of service.

Currently, he served as the National Junior Vice Commander of the 29th Division Association; the Treasurer of Post 64, and was the Command Sergeant Major of the Virginia Defense Force.

Past National Commander of the 29th Division Association David Ginsburg recalled that "Frank was an invaluable



leader in the Association and a very dear friend. He played a crucial role in Post 64, the Southern Region, and the National Headquarters. He was a tire-

less champion of the 29th Division Association and the 116th Infantry. He will be sorely missed."

Frank was the co-owner of Sunnybrook Auto and Tire.

His survivors include his beloved wife, Nancy Louise Dillon; a son Lewis Frank Dillon III; stepchildren, Justina Louise Wright (Chad Michael Richardson), Devan Lee Wright, Sr.; sisters, Donna McClure (Cottie), Linda Martin (Bill), a brother, John Dillon (Diana Hayes).

Also surviving are numerous family members and many friends.

Viewing and visitation took place on Monday, October 10, 2016 from 2-4 PM at Oakey's Vinton Chapel.

Graveside funeral service with full Military Honors was held 1:00 PM Tuesday, 11 October, 2016 at Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery in Dublin. Rev. Morris Bennett officiated.

### **Now, for a limited time only!**

All merchandise orders \$25 or more will come with  
**2 free sheets of 29th Logo gummed labels.**

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](http://www.29thdivisionassociation.com)**

**and click on "Merchandise".**

*Thank you for your donations to the "Twenty-Niner". They are greatly appreciated and help keep the newsletter coming. Please continue to support our upcoming issues. Checks must be made payable to the **29th Division Association** and mailed to:*

**Editor/NED William S. Mund  
P.O. Box 47634  
Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634**

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

# Minutes

of the Business Meeting  
held on 22 October 2016 at the  
Radisson Hotel Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

National Commander David Ginsburg called the meeting to order at 1000 hours. Commander Ginsburg led the attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the opening prayer that was offered by Chaplain John Schildt. The group then recited the 29th Division Association Preamble.

Commander Ginsburg began by welcoming all to the meeting and also welcomed the President of the National Auxiliary, Juanita King, and the other ladies present. NC Ginsburg then asked for the roll call by Adjutant William Mund. It was noted that a quorum was present.

The Minutes of the previous meetings (NEC III, 17 June 2016) had been published and were distributed in the Summer 2016 edition of the *Twenty-Niner*. As there were no corrections or amendments, these minutes were approved as published.

## Officer's Report

National Commander – David Ginsburg reported on the significant events and efforts of the past year. The Traveling Display was completed on time and will be used at upcoming events such as the 116th Muster in Staunton, VA and the Annual Pass & Review of the 175th In Baltimore, MD. The DVD effort, although funded, has not yet been started. His main focus in the next six months will be to get that up and running. He spoke about the recent death of JRVC L. Frank Dillon earlier this month. He lamented the recent stroke that was suffered by PNC Bob Moscati. It is hoped that Bob will recover and return to his duties. The Commander said he has tried to improve the visibility of National officers to the Southern Region. Several National officers were able to attend the 116th Muster in Staunton, VA this past November. The recent distribution of the Maryland Region publication, the *Chin Strap*, to the entire association has enabled the individual posts to keep their members better informed as to their meetings/ events etc.

National Senior Vice Commander – Robert Wisch said his main focus has been on preparing for the 2017 convention which will occur in Hunt Valley, MD on 12-15 October 2017. The annual wreath laying will occur on 10 June 2017 at 1215pm.

National Junior Vice Commander – Vacant

Southern Region National Vice Commander – PNC King advised on several events and initiatives that have occurred in the Southern Region and Virginia.

Maryland Region National Vice Commander – Houston Matney said that the principal focus of the Maryland Region has become streamlining and consolidation because of declining membership and of the people who are capable of performing many of the activities that are required. He spoke about the recent merger of Post 1 with Post 72, now known as Post 1-72. He advised on a new process concerning the mailing of the *Chin Strap*.

At Large Region National Vice Commander – Ed Tolzman had no report.

National Executive Director – William Mund deferred to Finance Officer Becker who announced that he will be resigning as Finance Officer after the tenure of incoming commander Robert Wisch. NED Mund then stated that the biggest challenge that he and the association face is to find a "capable and competent" successor to Finance Officer Becker. Mund then talked about how he has tried to pick up the duties and responsibilities created by the absence of PNC Moscati during his illness. He also spoke about the Souvenir

Program Book and his hope that the ad campaign for next year will be successful.

Membership – NED Mund talked about the membership report that he had distributed along with the agenda. He has not dropped any members yet for non-payment of dues for 2016. He talked about the several posts that have not done that well in collecting dues this year. He stressed the need for the posts to keep addresses updated and to promptly inform national of any deaths of members. This updating of addresses is of paramount importance in maintaining the national data base as it is concomitant with the mailing of the *Chin Strap* and *Twenty-Niner*. Mund stressed that one way to remind post members to pay their dues is for the posts to include a request in the Post Reports section of the *Chin Strap* to the members of that respective post.

Finance – J. Brian Becker reported on the financial status of the association.

He noted that the Souvenir Program Book continues to be an outstanding source of revenue to help fund the annual convention.

(Copies of this report are available by contacting the undersigned).

Chaplain – Reverend John Schildt said he was glad to see some of the attendees at this year's reunion that he hasn't seen in awhile. He updated everyone on his recovery from an auto accident this past November. He thanked everyone for their get well wishes/cards and prayers.

Service – Walter Carter commented on the status of the Veterans Administration. He said there may be some new developments once the election is over and the new administration takes office in January. Comrade Carter said he will continue to monitor the situation.

Surgeon – Dr. William Bernhard had no report.

Welfare – National Welfare Officer Rauschenberg reported that 47 members have passed away in 2016. He mentioned several members (PNC Recker and PNC R. Moscati) who are ill and were not in attendance at this meeting. He welcomed back several members who have returned from various illnesses/hospitalization.

Historian – Joe Balkoski had no report.

Sergeant at Arms – Randall Beamer had no report.

Property Officer – Property Officer Franklin Shilow said that he has sold a lot of property this convention. He said his sales location in the Hospitality Room helped his sales tremendously.

Parliamentarian – Thomas Insley had no report.

Judge Advocate – Houston Matney had no report.

President, National Auxiliary – Commander Ginsburg read a statement by the President of the National Auxiliary, Juanita King, whereby the officers of the Auxiliary have decided to dissolve the Auxiliary. The advanced age of the current officers and the inability of the auxiliary to attract new, younger members have played a significant role in this decision. These auxiliary members can now become full members in the 29th Division Association. Commander Ginsburg thanked the auxiliary members for the support they have provided our association, veterans, and current service members.

## Committee Reports

2017 National Convention – Senior Vice Commander Robert Wisch said that the 2017 convention will be held at the Hunt Valley Inn, in Hunt Valley, MD. The dates are: 12-15 October 2017. The business meeting will occur on Friday rather than Saturday. Saturday night will be the "Blue and Gray Ball" with a 16-piece orchestra.

Budget Committee – Finance Officer Becker presented his proposed 2017 budget. He noted the addition of a "Bequest" to our association

funds. This "Bequest" will be covered under "New Business." A motion was made to accept the Finance Officer's budget by PNC King and seconded by Duncan. Motion was passed.

Futures/Communications Committee/Association Website – Commander Ginsburg said that everything is going well with the website. He asked the posts to keep the website updated as to their activities or new officers. The "Traveling Display" was completed and is on display here in this facility.

Nominating Committee – NED Mund read the names of the individuals who have been nominated for the elected offices. David Leighton, of Post 64, a nominee for Southern Region Vice Commander introduced himself to the members present and said a few words. The election of these individuals occurred later in the meeting.

### Special Reports

Normandy Allies – Walter Carter reported on the two trips that occurred in May/June and July 2016. The trips included 31 student participants and 6 teachers along with 6 other adults, or 43 travelers in all. They came from 7 states and one foreign country (Vietnam), and represented 5 educational institutions. Normandy Allies thanks the Association and its members for their support. A motion was made by Duncan and seconded by PNC King to honor Marsha Smith of Normandy Allies with a plaque. Motion was passed.

The Twenty-Niner Newsletter – Editor/Publisher William Mund said he does the best he can with publishing the editorial content that is available to him. He said he thinks he has enough WWII related editorial content to last around 5 years.

### Old Business

Voucher Program – The Commander discussed the program that has allowed us to fund 7 WWII veterans to attend this convention. He thanked all the members present in helping and supporting this initiative.

Jean Mignon recognition – Historian Balkoski reported on the presenting of a plaque to Jean Mignon for his support of WWII veterans visiting France over the years. Chaplain Schildt was responsible for initiating this recognition back in January. The plaque was presented to Mr. Mignon in France recently by BG (Ret) Ted Shuey.

### New Business

Election of Officers 2016 - 2017 – Commander Ginsburg asked if there were any other nominations from the floor for any of the positions. After PNC Ginsburg repeated this request three times for any other nominations from the floor, a motion to close the nominations was then offered by King and seconded by PNC Dooley. Motion was passed. A further motion was made by PNC King and seconded by PNC Dooley to elect the officers by acclamation. A single vote was offered by the Adjutant to elect all candidates. This motion was also passed and the officers were elected. Those elected were: Commander, Robert Wisch; Senior Vice Commander, Frank Rauschenberg; Junior Vice Commander, Grant Hayden; Maryland Region National Vice Commander, Houston Matney; Southern Region National Vice Commander, J. David Leighton; At-Large Region Vice Commander, Edward Tolzman; Finance Officer, J. Brian Becker; Chaplain, John Schildt; Service Officer, Walter Carter; Welfare Officer, Frank Rauschenberg; Historian, Joe Balkoski; Judge Advocate, Houston Matney; and Sergeant-at-Arms, Randall Beamer. The installation is to occur after the evening banquet.

Chin Strap Support – As the Maryland Region publication the *Chin Strap* is now being distributed to all members of the association nationwide; it is suggested that National share the expense of some of the postage costs. A motion for National to pay the difference in the postage expenses incurred by the Maryland Region for the distribution of the *Chin Strap* was made by Crosby and seconded by PNC King. Motion was passed.

29th HQs Activation – On Sunday, 30 October 2016, there will be an activation event at Fort Belvoir for the soldiers and families of those who will be deploying. It is rumored that the deployment is to Kuwait and Jordan. The Command Committee has agreed and donated \$2,000 to the Division HQs to help sponsor this event. Commander Ginsburg made a motion for the members present to endorse the decision made by the Command Committee to donate \$2,000. This motion was seconded by PNC Kutcher and the motion was passed.

PNC Cook Bequest – PNC George Cook recently passed away. In his "Last Will and Testament" he bequeathed a substantial amount to the 29th Division Association. It was decided by the Command and Budget Committees that 1/3 of the total amount be used to support the few various entities (i.e. the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA; 116th Museum in Staunton, VA and the 29th Division portion of the Maryland Museum of Military History (MDMHS) in Baltimore, MD.) that promote the history and legacy of the 29th Division. The other 2/3 would be invested. A motion to endorse the Command and Budget Committees decision was made by PNC Finn and seconded by Beamer. Motion was passed.

World War I Exhibit Support – Historian Balkoski respectfully made a motion requesting a donation from the association of \$3,000 to support the WWI exhibit and display that is currently underway in the Fifth Regiment Armory (MDMHS) in Baltimore, MD, to honor the 29th's creation and involvement in World War I. This motion was seconded by Crosby. Motion was passed.

### Deaths, Sick & Distressed

A moment of silence was observed for the 47 members who passed away in 2016. Among those were: PNC Richard "Dick" Smith; PNC George Cook and JRVC L. Frank Dillon.

### Good of the Association

PNC Finn suggested that the association should have a presence in Europe for the upcoming commemoration and anniversary of the United States involvement in World War I. A motion was made by Hawkins and seconded by Finn for an exploratory committee to be formed to study this proposal. Motion was passed with one dissenting vote.

Fran Sherr-Davino made some comments on the 75th anniversary of D-Day, 6 June in 2019.

World War II veteran and 29er Chuck Neighbor thanked the association for providing the voucher program that allowed him to attend this year's convention.

Valerie Hawkins advised that the 29th CAB headquartered in Maryland will be deploying in January 2017. She said Post 85 will be assisting them with their deployment activities.

### Closing

With no further business, Commander Ginsburg began the closing ceremonies. A closing prayer was offered by Chaplain Schildt along with a final salute to the colors.

Meeting was adjourned at 1420 hours.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.  
Adjutant  
National Executive Director

**NEC Members please note:**

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

## ***Normandy Allies Welcomes You—***

**England & France: May 27-June 9, 2017**

Information Packages available September 2016

**Phase I: England**

London itinerary includes the Cabinet War Rooms, HMS Belfast, Imperial War Museum, Bletchley Park, and the Royal Naval Museum. The group embarks by ferry from Portsmouth for a morning arrival on the Normandy coast.

**Phase II: Normandy**

Lodging in Bayeux and Grandcamp-Maisy, the group will enjoy the rich heritage and wonderful cuisine of Normandy while visiting sites significant to the Normandy Landings and Liberation. The itinerary includes: Omaha, Utah, Gold, Juno, and Sword Beaches; the American Cemeteries at Colleville and Saint James; Pointe du Hoc, Graignes, La Fière, Sainte-Mère-Eglise and the Airborne Museum, Saint-Lô and the bocage, Chateau Colombières-the marshes and the Ritchie Boys, Bayeux Tapestry, Bayeux Cathedral, Mont St. Michel, and more.....

### **From the Landing Beaches to Saint-Lô: The International Experience**

**July 16-29, 2017**

Information Packages available November 2016

Our journey begins in Bayeux, as we explore the World War II British and Canadian sectors. Visits include: Caen Peace Memorial, Juno Beach, Abbaye d'Ardenne, Pegasus Bridge, Arromanches Circular Theater and Mulberry Museum, Longues s/mer Battery, British Cemetery, and more... We absorb French heritage with the Bayeux Tapestry and Cathedral, Mont St. Michel, and more...

We move on to Grandcamp-Maisy and the American sector as our journey takes us from Omaha Beach and Utah Beach through the hedgerow country to Saint-Lô. Historians and Normans who lived through the landings and the liberation share their experiences with us. Visits include: Pointe du Hoc, Omaha Beach, Normandy American Military Cemetery & Brittany American Military Cemetery, Utah Beach, Graignes, La Fière, Sainte-Mère-Eglise & the Airborne Museum, Saint-Lô & bocage areas, LaCambe Cemetery, Chateau Colombières the marshes & the Ritchie Boys, rue Captain Carter, Wall of Remembrance, Trevières... and more....

**Send your request to:**

**Normandy Allies, Inc. PO Box 1332 Pittsford NY 14534 USA  
Call/email: Marsha Smith 585-748-2357 [normandyallies@verizon.net](mailto:normandyallies@verizon.net)**

# **Minutes**

*of the NEC I Meeting  
held on 23 October 2016 at the  
Radisson Hotel Harrisburg, Harrisburg, PA.*

The NEC I meeting was called to order at 1040 hours at the Radisson Hotel Harrisburg, Harrisburg, PA., following the National Memorial Service by Commander Robert Wisch..

Commander Wisch appointed the following officers for the year 2016-2017: 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, Valerie Hawkins.

A motion for the NEC to approve these appointments was offered by SRVC Rauschenberg and seconded by JRVC Hayden. Motion was passed and all appointees were approved.

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

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

*Respectfully submitted,*

**WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.  
National Executive Director**

**NEC Members please note:**

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

## Teacher inspired by journey with Normandy Allies

*"It's important for me to be here to remember my comrades who died for me and with me."* These words belong to Steven Melnikoff, U.S. Army 175th Regiment, 29th Division, who eloquently expressed his thoughts on travelling to Normandy, France, during a Remembrance ceremony in Saint-Lô on the 72nd anniversary of its liberation. Steve is a 97-year-old, twice wounded, Bronze Star decorated soldier who landed at Omaha Beach on June 7, 1944 (D-Day+1).

His presence and positive energy during our two-week tour through Normandy inspired and amazed the 19 students and 10 adults on this summer's Normandy Allies study group trip, which included Caroline Cullinan and Eliza Sherman, Mendon High School seniors. My wife, Beth, and I were privileged to be a part of this experience and to serve as chaperones for Eliza and Caroline with support from study grants. Beth received the 29th Division Association Teacher Grant, and I received a grant from the family of Normandy veteran Donald J. Combee.

As I frequently tell my students, there's nothing like traveling to historical places to better understand the momentous events that occurred there. Standing in the low tide surf at Omaha Beach and looking at the bluff 500 yards across the hard packed sand, we wondered how anyone could make it through the hailstorm of machine gun fire and artillery blasts unharmed. Walking among the crosses, stars of David and grave markers at the American, British, and German cemeteries brought new meaning to the concept of sacrifice and duty. Mostly young, sometimes unknown, brothers, fathers, sons. One very recently written note placed at a headstone in the British Cemetery in Bayeux said, "I have missed you the whole of my life. Your daughter, Denise." The stated mission of Normandy Allies is to keep the sacrifices and memories of the Allied accomplishments of World War II alive, and I think all of us returned as missionaries toward that end.

From the landing beaches to the museums and cemeteries; from the personal oral history of a sharp and spry combat veteran to the tasty mussels and fresh baked baguettes, this trip overwhelmed the senses and compelled us to reflect on the past, present and future.



Left to right: Marsha Smith, Caroline Cullinan, Eliza Sherman, Dave and Beth Larson on the cliff overlooking Arromanches, July 2016.

Wherever we visited, the French welcomed us as honored guests from the nation that helped liberate them from the evils of Nazism 72 years ago, and we in turn mourned with them following the tragic terrorist attack in Nice on July 14, the French National Day.

Traveling can change us and our world. For the students and teachers who travelled to Normandy under the guidance of the knowledgeable leaders of our group and with the frequent recollections from a drafted infantryman in the war, it was truly a once in a lifetime experience. Beth and I thank the 29th Division Association and the Combee family for supporting our teaching and learning.

Article by David Larson, Teacher

### 49th Annual Muster, 116th Infantry Regiment, Staunton, VA-12 November 2016



World War II 29th Division veteran Arden Earll of H/116 and his wife Shirley.



Mrs. Sallie Jebson, daughter of Major Tom Howie "The Major of St. Lo", and the National Commander's wife, Mrs. Linda Wisch.

## Feeling squeezed at Division Headquarters

**P**ersonal integrity is a measure of your character. It defines who you are and in some situations how you will respond. Read on...

In a meeting with the chief of staff, I was briefed that the Secretary of the Army (SOA), requested assistance from the 29th Infantry Division (Light).

A request from the SOA to division headquarters may seem a bit unorthodox, but the SOA – a Virginian – was a good friend of The Adjutant General (AG) of the Virginia National Guard. It was understandable considering their relationship, but not appropriate protocol unless direct coordination had been authorized by the state headquarters. To my knowledge it had not.

The US Army was in the midst of organizing light infantry divisions, and along with it was the restoration of the regimental system. Soon division's comprised of brigades would be composed of regiments again. As the light divisions were to be "elite," every light-fighter would study warrior ethos including their regiment's history. The Maryland and Virginia Army National Guards had always maintained regimental integrity.

Since the history initiative was the secretary's brainchild, he planned to conduct a staff ride through a nearby Civil War battlefield. The use of weather balloons to indicate troop distances and locations could better illustrate his teaching points. To demonstrate this idea, he would require assistance.

The 29th Division Artillery had the balloons in its meteorological section. Soon it was on

the road traveling to one of Fort Belvoir's training sites. Upon reaching the designated spot, a handful of artillerymen began to employ balloons; this was to be a rehearsal prior to the SOA's rehearsal.

Immediately problems surfaced. A defective inflating device had to be replaced causing a delay of several days. Then a storm turned the earth into a muddy bog. Foul weather continued ultimately postponing the SOA's rehearsal. By this time rumors were circulating across the Virginia Army National Guard that something unusual was happening at Fort Belvoir.

From the beginning the guidance was not to divulge information on the mission. Not long afterwards, I received a telephone call from a colonel seeking information on the use of weather balloons. He was a technician for The AG.

Specifically he wanted to know what was going on at division headquarters that involved the use of the division artillery's meteorological section. It was an easy question to answer yet it placed me in a difficult position. Having been instructed not to discuss this mission, I felt squeezed. If I talked I would violate my instructions and perhaps lose my boss's confidence. If I didn't talk I would likely face repercussions.

I told the colonel that I hoped he understood that I was not at liberty to discuss the mission. This did not bode well, and the intimidation continued. As he pressed I had no choice but to refer him to my superior. The conversation ended. I remember going on a long run to relieve some tension.

Soon after, I was enjoying a peaceful weekend at the state military reservation on the southern end of Virginia Beach. Around 0600 hours somebody knocked at the door. The reservation's deputy commander told me to report to the headquarters building immediately – The AG wanted to speak to me.

Approaching headquarters, I could see the general officer's two star flag on display. This was no joke! I couldn't imagine what The AG wanted with me, but I was about to find out.

I saluted him and was given permission to sit. Then a long series of questions ensued. My answers were candid and of course honest. Several hours later I was dismissed. When I returned I took a long run along the beach...to eliminate the tension.

Back at headquarters, the chief asked how my visit with The AG had gone. Again, I felt the squeeze as I hadn't mentioned our meeting to anyone. "It had disrupted my short respite at the beach, chief," was my forthright answer.

The SOA finally conducted his staff ride at Fort Belvoir and the drama ended as quickly as it had begun. A seemly harmless tasking had tested loyalties, but my integrity had prevailed. Honor carried me through, and I passed the litmus test. Nothing was ever said again about the SOA's staff ride.

Mission complete -

*Article by Joe Harris*

*Joe is a former member of the 29th Division general staff, and a Utah resident. As a consultant for nonprofit organizations, Joe is a part-time writer with emphasis on leadership development and ethical behavior.*

## MOH Project Nears Completion

The Maryland Military Historical Society announces the Medal of Honor Monument project, located in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania is nearing completion. On Thursday, November 10th the Obelisk was delivered at the Medal of Honor Grove by the Merkle Monument Company.

After extensive site preparation, and under the watchful eyes of the undersigned and Bill Bullock, the 4,600+ pound monument was lifted from the truck and set in place.

The skillful handling of the monument by the Merkle crew was evident and allowed its exact positioning in preparation for the finishing touches of the pavers over a 25 foot square footing.

The paver portion of the project is scheduled for completion no later than the month's end. Although a formal dedication

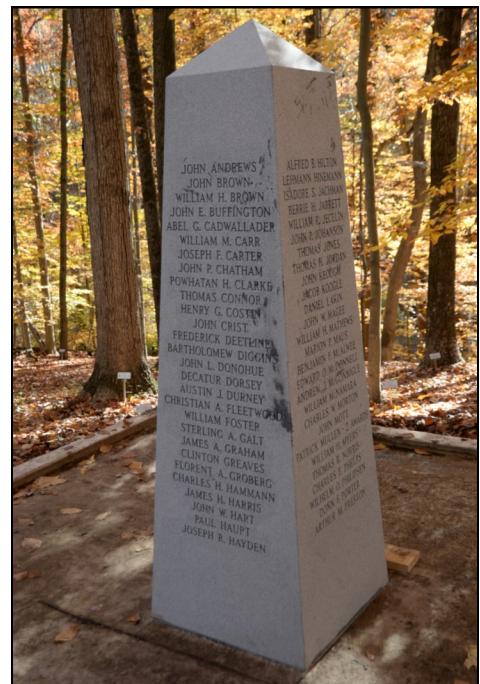
ceremony is not planned at this time, a formal announcement will be published to all concerned.

The cost of the project is just over \$26,000.00 and is funded by the generosity of 21 organizations and 16 individuals.

As a reminder for those planning to visit the Monument, it is located in the Freedoms Foundation area of Valley Forge Park. The official address for GPS systems is "1601 Valley Forge Road, Phoenixville, PA, 19481-0067" It is advised to call ahead of your visit. The volunteer Director, Deb Woolson may assist small groups to maneuver through the hilly terrain of the MOH Grove. Her phone number is 610-299-3923.

Also located in the same area is a 29th Division Memorial built during the 1974 time frame by Post 92, Philadelphia.

*PNC Joe Zang*



## 29th Division Association Supplies Available

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>POSTAGE &amp; HANDLING</u>	<u>MAILED</u>
Book—Ever Forward 116th Inf. History (soft cover)	\$17.90	\$5.75	\$23.65
Book—29 Let's Go—29th Division History	\$29.00	\$5.75	\$34.75
Book—Beyond the Beachhead (Joseph Balkoski)	\$19.90	\$5.75	\$25.65
Book—115th Infantry in WWII	\$25.00	\$5.75	\$30.75
Book—Omaha Beach and Beyond (The Long March of Sgt. Slaughter)	\$25.00	\$5.75	\$30.75
Book—From Beachhead to Brittany (Joseph Balkoski)	\$28.00	\$5.75	\$33.75
Book—From Brittany to the Reich (Joseph Balkoski)	\$27.00	\$5.75	\$32.75
Book—Our Tortured Souls (Joseph Balkoski)	\$27.00	\$5.75	\$32.75
Book—The Last Roll Call (Joseph Balkoski)	\$25.00	\$5.75	\$30.75
Book—Fields of War, Battle of Normandy (Robert Mueller)	\$19.95	\$5.75	\$25.70
Book—Drawing D-Day (Ugo & Maxine Giannini) (soft cover)	\$43.00	\$5.95	\$48.95
Book—For God, For Country ...For Love. (R.J. Slaughter)	\$20.00	\$5.75	\$25.75
29th Division Association Note Pads (5 1/2 x 8 1/2)	\$1.00	\$1.30	\$2.30
29th Division Association Note Pads (4 1/4 x 5 1/2)	\$1.35	\$0.70	\$2.05
Crest—115th Infantry Regiment	\$5.50	\$1.10	\$6.60
Crest—116th Infantry Regiment	\$5.50	\$1.10	\$6.60
Crest—175th Infantry Regiment	\$5.50	\$1.10	\$6.60
Decal (specify inside or outside)	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$1.00
Labels, gummed w/29th logo (sheet of 50)	\$1.00	\$0.50	\$1.50
Clear Plastic key ring w/29th Association logo	\$1.50	\$1.00	\$2.50
Lapel pin	\$3.95	\$1.10	\$5.05
Lapel pin, past post commander	\$5.00	\$1.10	\$6.10
Ladies pendant	\$6.00	\$1.10	\$7.10
Medallion (for plaques)	\$6.00	\$1.10	\$7.10
Plaque, wood 29th Division Association Logo	\$10.00	\$1.75	\$11.75
Plaque, wood replica of Omaha Beach Memorial	\$10.00	\$1.75	\$11.75
29th Division Association pocket patch	\$6.00	\$1.10	\$7.10
Pocket patch holder	\$3.00	\$1.10	\$4.10
Shoulder patch, 29th ID	\$3.50	\$0.50	\$4.00
Jacket, coach, navy with logo in S, M, L, XL, 2XL	\$28.00	\$5.75	\$33.75
Golf Shirt, embroidered 100% cotton pullover (royal blue, white, gray—L, XL, 2XL)	\$23.00	\$5.75	\$28.75
29th Division Official Association Necktie	\$20.00	\$2.00	\$22.00
29th Association Dress Hat (state size)	\$38.00	\$5.75	\$43.75
Hat, Baseball w/29th logo (embroidered)	\$15.00	\$2.60	\$17.60
Hat, Baseball w/29th logo (embroidered/Summer mesh)	\$12.00	\$2.60	\$14.60
29th Division Cemetery flags on wooden staff 12" X 19"	\$5.00	\$3.00	\$8.00

Checks should be made payable to the 29th Division Association & mailed with orders to:

**National Property Officer, 29th Division Association, 403 Caledonia Avenue**

Baltimore, MD 21227-4707, Phone — 410-242-1820

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

Just go to the new updated website at [www.29thdivisionassociation.com](http://www.29thdivisionassociation.com) and click on  
"Merchandise" and it will walk you through how to order merchandise using electronic payment.

**29th Division Association**  
P.O. Box 47634  
Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 1262  
Baltimore, MD

Address Service Requested

### **Association Membership**

Applications and payments can be completed online or mailed to our National Headquarters address below. If you do not choose a post, one will be assigned for you based on your current or former unit or your home address. Dues vary from post to post but a check for \$12.00 made payable to the 29th Division Association will suffice. You may also make application and pay dues at our National web site: [www.29thdivisionassociation.com](http://www.29thdivisionassociation.com).

**National Headquarters**  
**29th Division Association**  
**P.O. Box 47634**  
**Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634**

<b>MD Post 1-72</b>	Baltimore, MD
<b>FL Post 2</b>	Sarasota, FL
<b>VA Post 5</b>	Norfolk, VA
<b>MD Post 48</b>	Westminster, MD
<b>MD Post 58</b>	Dundalk, MD
<b>VA Post 64</b>	Roanoke, VA
<b>MD Post 78</b>	Frederick, MD
<b>MD Post 85</b>	Northeastern MD
<b>MD Post 88</b>	Eastern Shore, DE & MD
<b>NE Post 93</b>	New England
<b>MD Post 94</b>	Silver Spring, MD
<b>MD Post 110</b>	Pikesville, MD
<b>VA Post 116</b>	Staunton, VA
<b>MD Post 729</b>	Waynesboro, PA

### **You Can Help Our Association Grow**

Support your Post and the Association. Be on the alert for prospective new members and tell them about our Association. Give prospects an application and encourage them to enroll.



**"29 Let's Go!"**

***Application for Membership in  
29TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.***

Please Print

Applicant \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address (if available) \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip+4 \_\_\_\_\_

I was a member of \_\_\_\_\_ Company \_\_\_\_\_ Battery \_\_\_\_\_ Regiment

29th Division WWII \_\_\_\_\_ NG \_\_\_\_\_ 29th Inf Div \_\_\_\_\_

\*GWOT \_\_\_\_\_ Children/Grandchildren \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

I hereby apply for membership in the 29th Division Association, Inc. and herewith transmit \$ \_\_\_\_\_ as annual membership dues

In \_\_\_\_\_ Post No. \_\_\_\_\_  
which includes the National dues and one year subscription to the official publication of the 29th Division Association, Inc. "The Twenty-Niner." which is published three times per year.

\*GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_