

95th Annual National Convention - a Great Success

There are not many military organizations, if any, who can claim to having had 94 annual reunions. But, we are proud to be one of such organizations. Our group was founded in 1919 by a group of 29ers waiting in Europe for transport home from a quick, but fruitful, series of battles that ended WWI. Our Association has continued to function over all of these years. Five years from now will be our centennial event; let's hope that all of you will be keeping this great record alive.

The selection of Virginia Beach, VA (in the greater Norfolk area) was indeed a most worthy one and all of the committees need to be recognized for their great efforts. The choice of the year's Fall time, after the busy summer season had already closed down, had provided us with many visitor treats without the normal crowds.

An advanced party of our National Executive John Wilcox, our National Commander Joe Zang, and PNC Dick Smith made a total of four trips down to the area from

their home state to search out the "best deals" and to get things all lined up for all to spend some enjoyable October days exploring the area. Thus as the 140 attendees arrived everything was "OK to Go!". This all helped to keep our hotel expenses around \$100/day- an excellent rate for this attractive area. There is always concern about the weather :: that will be encountered at these coastal resorts, but except for a little rain and some winds on the way to the place, our stay was never endangered and we never had to curtail our activities.

The Maryland area folks had the benefit of a fine large bus which stayed available as we needed it for the local cruising. Those of us with cars kept them in the hotel's convenient garage whenever walking was not practical. And our age group was really of the type that needed an ocean beach dip. Most of the attendees had started from the Washington-Baltimore area and except for a few construction tie-ups on the highways, the driving distance was about 5 hours. Next year, Ocean City, MD will be

our destination which is about 2 hours by bus or car. Most arrivals this time were on Wednesday and/or Thursday. Friday was our day for the local area (greater Norfolk) exploration on two buses with the highlight being a boat trip through the Norfolk harbor. We boarded our boat right adjacent to the Navy's retired mammoth battleship, the USS Wisconsin, commissioned in 1943. It still sits there in its majesty with its 3, 16 inch guns aimed forward.

Also we passed close to a wide variety of current Navy carriers, cruisers, and destroyers all berthed ready for their next mission- a most impressive sight from our small boat. Back on land a great Norfolk restaurant offered us all lunch before we continued the sight-seeing on the way back to our hotel.

Our hotel hospitality room was open after the trip and all through the evening after our hotel meal so that all could gather to reminisce and to relax. The annual business meeting was held on Saturday starting at 10am & ably conducted by Na-

tional Commander Zang. Reports were given by all of those who have handled various facets of the Association for the last year. These comments are addressed elsewhere in this issue along with the names of the new officers for our upcoming year. One personal note from your old editor- When it came time for McKee to say a few words about the world of the "Twenty Niner" for the year, we noticed that the schedule printed up referred to him as "Dr. Emeritus". Standing up, I said "what was this "Emeritus" stuff?" - someone in the audience shouted out to say it means "McKee, you've had it!!" Well, I'll be ----"Oh, I said!" So as of now, we have a new Editor - a move that I had been quietly promoting ever since I reached "the big 90!"- so as of now, your new editor will be our most capable Assistant Editor, Will Mund. He has been assisting me in my chores for a couple of years now & from now on I am most happy that he can take over. I shall help as needed but I will not have to be facing the deadlines that this

(Continued on page 14)



Photo by William Mund

Editor Emeritus, PNC Don McKee (left), acknowledges the banquet attendees after receiving several awards. National Senior Vice Commander John Vaccarino, (center) and National Commander John F. "Jack" Kutcher, Sr., presenting the certificate to accompany the award of the Maryland Distinguished Service Cross.

Meet our new Commander: John F. "Jack" Kutcher, Sr.

Colonel John F. Kutcher, Sr., aka Jack Kutcher, was born and educated in Baltimore City, and now resides in Churchville in Harford County, Maryland. He is retired and a veteran with 37 years of distinguished service in the U.S. Army and Maryland National Guard.

He enlisted in the 136th Signal Company, MDARNG on 12 September 1962. The unit was reorganized in March, 1963 as Company C, 129th Signal Battalion, part of the famed Blue and Gray 29th Infantry Division. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in August 1965. With the implementation of the Selected Reserve Force (SRF) in 1965, he was reassigned to Headquarters, 2nd Battalion 175th Infantry at Dundalk, Maryland where he held positions of Recon Platoon Leader and Bn Communications Officer. In May 1968 he entered the Full Time Technician program and was reassigned as Assistant Operations Officer and later as Adjutant in the Battalion.

Colonel Kutcher was reassigned to the National Guard Bureau in 1974, and held various military assignments in Infantry, Aviation and Signal units in the National Guard. Concurrently, his



civilian jobs with the National Guard Bureau focused on Joint Military Planning, Operations and Training. From 1978 to 1983 he served as Senior Airlift Manager and Chief of the Air National Guard Operations Center at Andrews Air Force Base. He was next assigned to the Pentagon and the Joint Readiness Center in Arlington, Virginia where he specialized in domestic and international emergency management, and disaster relief planning and operations. When the 29th Infantry Division was reactivated in October 1985, he was appointed Commander, 129th Signal Battalion. He was promoted to Colonel in November 1987.

Colonel Kutcher graduated from the U.S. Army Infantry and Signal Advanced courses, the U.S. Air Force Combat Operations and

Battle Staff Management schools, the U.S. Army Electronic Warfare Officer course, the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, and the National Defense University National Security Course.

He retired as an Army officer and an Air Force civilian in September 1999. He has remained active in the American Legion, Military Officers Association of America, National Guard Bureau Alumni Association, Veteran Corps, 5th Regiment Infantry, and the 175th Infantry Regimental Association. He is Past Secretary-General, Past Maryland Commander, and current National Delegate in the Military Order of Foreign Wars of the United States. He has been an intermittent member of the 29th Division Association for nearly 50 years, and an active participant since 2001. He has served as the Finance Officer at Post and Region level, and was elected Vice Commander in 2011.

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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.

Contributions to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund*

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our membership for their generosity in contributing to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund* for this Autumn/Winter issue. From June 16, 2013 through October 15, 2013 these donations totaled \$1,140.00. **Note our cut-off time. If your contributions did not reach our National Executive Director by October 15, 2013 then it will not be listed until the next issue.** We thank you all and bless you.

Atkinson, Charles M., Post 116 - H-116th Inf. - Saginaw, MI
Barbieri, Jeanne - Peabody, MA

In Memory of Frank Barbieri, HQ-1-175th Inf. KIA

Blucher, James, Post 72 - HQ-175th Inf. - Baltimore, MD
Brummer, Samuel M., Post 29-Can-115th Inf. - North Caldwell, NJ
Butler-Caughie, Fred, Post 3 Toronto, Ontario Canada
Codd, William C., II, Post 72 - E-175th Inf. - Baltimore, MD

In Memory of my Brother Jim Codd, 3-175th Inf.

Combs, Phillis J., Post 85 - F-224th Avn. - Street, MD
Duncan, Norman, Post 94 - E-116th Inf. - Ashburn, VA
Gaskin, William P., Post 110 - HHB-Div Arty - Montgomery, PA

In Memory of Those That Gave Their All

Grossman, David, Philip and Eric, Post 93 - West Barnstable, MA

In Honor of our Father Norman on his 89th Birthday

Hoy, Darrin J., Post 3 - Toronto, Ontario Canada
Huddleston, Luanna - Valrico, FL

In Honor of Calvin C. Huddleston - Post 2, M-175th Inf. WW II

Hymer, John, Post 3 - Brampton, Ontario Canada
Janke, Heather, Post 3 - Toronto, Ontario Canada
Janke, Len, Post 3 - Toronto, Ontario Canada
Joiner, Tommie, Post 94 - 175th Inf. - Batesville, MS
Koos, Donald, Post 29 - 1-175th Inf. - Whiting, NJ
Koos, Donald, Post 29 - I-175th Inf. - Whiting, NJ
Lantern Post 729 - Blue Ridge Summit, PA

In Memory of All Deceased Members of Post 729

McCumsey, Sylvester, Post 64 - C-116th Inf. (L) - Keswick, VA
Mehleisen, William, Post 29 - Grandson - Latham, NY
Miller, Norvell, Post 72 - HQ-2-175th Inf. - Baltimore, MD
Mills, Glenn - Post 3 - Queensville, Ontario Canada
Moon, Raymond, Post 27 - Can-115th Inf. - Winter Park, FL
Schimmel, Robert L., Post 29 - 29th MP - Dayton, OH
Paquis, Joseph, Post 3 - Toronto, Ontario Canada
Piper, Samuel M., Post 94 - HQ-1-115th Inf. (L) - Falls Church, VA
Piper, Samuel M., Post 94 - HQ-1-115th Inf. (L) - Falls Church, VA
Piper, Samuel M., Post 94 - HQ-1-115th Inf. (L) - Falls Church, VA
Ponton, Henry E., Jr., Post 78 - A-1-115th Inf. - Frederick, MD
Simmons, Welford C., Post 64 - C & M-116th Inf. - Harrisonburg, VA
Ungerleider, Mrs. Ruth, Post 94 - Widow - Burke, VA

In Memory of BG Alvin Ungerleider

Vernillo, Michael T., Post 29 - HQ-227th FA - Pittsburgh, PA,
Veterans Corps, 5th Regiment of Infantry - Baltimore, MD

In Memory of all Deceased Members of the Veterans Corps.

Wilcox, PNC John E., Post 78 - A-1-115th Inf. - Frederick, MD
Witecki, Andy, Post 3 - Newmarket, Ontario Canada
Witecki, Donna, Post 3 - Newmarket, Ontario Canada
Zang, PNC Joseph, Post 110 - HQ-110th FA - Eldersburg, MD

In Memory of Col. Ernest M. Richter

Zang, PNC Joseph, Post 110 - HQ-110th FA - Eldersburg, MD

In Memory of T/Sgt John J. Popp

French Legion of Honor Recipients

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

Agee, Ivy C. Jr.

B Battery, 111th Field Artillery
Gordonsville, Tennessee
Post #5

Brummer, Samuel M.

Cannon Company, 115th Infantry
North Caldwell, New Jersey
Post #29

Hankins, Glenwood

H Company, 116th Infantry
Martinsville, Virginia
Post #64

Melnikoff, Steve

C Company, 175th Infantry
Cockeysville, Maryland
Post #72

Mohr, Raymond T.

HQ Battery, 110th Field Artillery
Macungie, Pennsylvania
Post #29

Robinson, James F.

M Company, 115th Infantry
Ridgeland, Mississippi
Post #110

Sauer, John J. Sr.

F Company, 116th Infantry
Berlin, Maryland
Post #110

Serra, Ralph

C Company, 115th Infantry
Medford, Massachusetts
Post #93

Spooner, Robert M.

F Company, 116th Infantry
Atlanta, Georgia
Post #1

Tweed, Earl E.

L Company, 115th Infantry
Dallas, Texas
Post #110

TAPS

The following list shows names of known 29ers and their ladies or family members who died and their deaths reported from June 16, 2013 through October 15, 2013. 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

Abschutz, Samuel, Post 29, F/175, Edison NJ, 6/27/13
 Broeckling, Theodore N, Post 94, B/116, Marthasville Mo, 4/19/13
 Brown, Dale M, Post 78, HQ/29ID, Killiard Oh, 10/14/12
 Clayton, Walter A, Post 2, H/115, Sarasota Fl, 5/12/13
 Cuthbert, John G, Post 72, HQ/1-175, Baltimore Md, 7/5/13
 Diblin, Robert, Post 88, C/115, Jonesburg NJ, 9/18/13
 Di Nocco, Donato, Post 93, G/115, Danvers Ma, 9/23/13
 Hamilton, W. Craig Sr, Post 64, M/116, Roanoke Va, 5/30/13
 Heath, Walter C, Post 85, E/115, Charlestown Md, 7/13/13
 Hett, Reuben D, Post 94, AT/115, Sandy Spring Md, 1/27/13
 Knight, Charles C, Post 1, A/175, Lancaster Pa, 4/3/13
 Laymon, Russell, Post 72, C/175, Evansville In, 6/29/13
 Morgan, Harvey, 29th Div, Frederick Md, 5/7/13
 Neal, Kenneth B, A/1-115, Frederick Md, 6/15/13
 Reinhard, Paul, Post 2, B/116, Eden NY, 5/17/13
 Showers, Norman A, Post 78, Associate, Frederick Md, 10/8/13
 Smith, Richard, A/1-115, Frederick Md, 4/29/13
 Swank, John, Post 72, HQ/1-115, Baltimore Md, 9/21/13
 Warren, W. E, Post 94, HQ/3-116, Victoria Tx, Dt Unk

LADIES

Abbe, Doris C, Widow, Santa Rosa Bch Fl, Dt Unk
 Beacham, Carolyn, Widow, Timonium Md, 6/8/13
 Deater, Mary F, Wife, Frederick Md, 6/12/13
 Fuller, Mary, Wife, Frederick, Md, 3/20/13
 Malski, Bernice, Widow, Lincoln Park Mi, 5/22/13
 Mersinger, Joan, Widow, Westminster Md, 7/14/13
 Zavadil, Doris, Widow, Timonium Md, 6/3/13

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 7 ladies who have died and whose death was reported to us since our last publication. This includes 3 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 Regional Officers to forward information, as complete as possible, on the deceased to the National Executive Director so that we can include them in the next issue of "The Twenty-Niner" and in the National Reunion Memorial Service. This will only be possible with your help.

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

John E. Wilcox Jr., National Executive Director
 7045 Basswood Road, Frederick Md. 21703-7137
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 Telephone 410-944-1639

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:

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

Please submit this information to the address listed below:

William S. Mund, Jr.
 441 Chalfonte Drive
 Baltimore, MD 21228
wmundjr@yahoo.com

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

Some Reminiscences of World War II

By Frank D. Bergstein, 115th Infantry Regiment

In early July 1941, Dan Levine, who lived on North Crescent Avenue in Avondale, Cincinnati, Ohio—about two blocks from our home on South Crescent—and I, were inducted into the service, along with 11 other men from Avondale.

In this group of 13 there was a barber, a bookie, and other assorted occupations. Dan and I were the only two college men.

After two days of physical and mental tests, there was a notice posted on our barracks wall listing our names with a bunch of other men in the barracks. Behind each name was a number.

Not knowing what this number meant, we asked the barracks corporal what it was. "That is your Army Spec Number," he replied. "That is what your background, skills and education qualify you for in the army's opinion."

He got a book out which explained the various spec numbers. The barber was listed under the barber spec. The bookie had qualifications to be a clerk, etc. Dan and I, the only two college men and both with backgrounds in manufacturing, shared a common number, which turned out to be: "Basic Infantry—No Special Skills." And that's what we both remained for the entire war—four and one half years for me and around the same for Dan.

Incidentally, we were sent together to Camp Wheeler, south of Macon, Georgia, a basic infantry-training center, where we went through the 13 weeks of basic training in the same battalion. After that, we were given a 71-hour pass and we flew home to Cincinnati together. However, after one day at home, we both received telegrams to come back to camp right away. We couldn't imagine what they wanted us for—both buck privates—so urgently.

When we got to camp, we were told that we had been assigned to a newly set-up Non-Com School, along with around 60 men selected from the 20,000 men in the whole camp.

What we didn't know until later was that this was a screening operation to pick men to go to Infantry Officer's Candidate School (OCS) at Ft. Benning, Georgia. After six weeks, they picked 19 of us out of the 60 and, again, Dan and I were among the selectees.

We both graduated in OCS 6 and were commissioned around the end of March 1942. Thereafter, we were both sent to Ft. McClellan, Alabama, as shave-tails, new second lieutenants, or as we were called then, "90-Day Wonders."

In June, I was assigned to the 29th Infantry Division, then stationed at A. P. Hill Military Reservation. I'm not quite sure where

or when Dan went at first; I ended up in England, France, and Germany, while Dan fought with distinction in the Italian Campaign—both a long way from Avondale.

I have to put in a word here about what an outstanding experience going to OCS at Ft. Benning was. That was the best educational experience I've ever been through. We were early in the wartime program of the Infantry OCS and all the regular army majors and colonels who, in many cases, had designed and written some of the programs, were still teaching their courses. And,

they were uniformly excellent soldiers and teachers. We understand that later classes—there were 200 or 300 subsequent classes as the war effort rapidly expanded—had lieutenants reading the notes of the original teachers which, of course, wasn't nearly as effective.

The class we were in consisted of three groups: (1) the enlisted men who had been picked from training camps, like Dan and me; (2) picked noncommissioned officers, mostly regular army men who had outstanding records; and (3) men who had reserve officer training in college, but had not received commissions.

It was the finest group of men with whom I have ever been associated—all patriotic and highly motivated excellent soldiers. This was only a few weeks after Pearl Harbor and

declaration of war against Japan and Germany. Even though we were in a real sense competing against each other to receive commissions, there was a real mood of camaraderie and of helping each other. The teachers and staff were masters of the art of making us aware that we were competing, but still we helped each other. One example of the competition: Every month you had to rate each man on your floor in your barracks as to who you thought was the best officer material and on down the line. If you rated your friends at the top of your list, but your ratings were not similar to the general opinion of the men on your floor that counted against you.

Every so often, a man would disappear. So we knew there was some weeding out going on. Dan, who was in the barracks next to mine, was very funny about this. He would say, "Frank, I'm on my way out." I'd ask why, and he would reply something like, "Everybody's laundry came back this morning except mine." Or later, the very last week, he said he was sure he was out because he was the only one who hadn't received word from the tailor who had measured us for our officer's uniforms. I had to keep telling him that he was doing very well.



CAMP WHEELER WIT

Camp Wheeler, Georgia, in July, August and September 1941, was plenty hot—especially for us northerners. The sergeants were always telling us what a fine bunch of men the trainees were who had immediately preceded us. Accordingly to our noncoms, they had learned close-order drill very quickly, had performed extremely well on the rifle range, had learned canteen discipline (to march in that heat without drinking much, or any, water), and in all respects had been a fine bunch of men (always bunch)—by implication much better than the current bunch—us.

The railroad siding where new troops were brought in and unloaded was over a mile from our battalion street. One day a trainload of new recruits pulled in and started unloading. At that mile or more distance, the men looked very small—like ants. One of our company humorists said, "Fine-looking bunch of men. Much better than the last bunch."

FT. MCCLELLAN - A COUPLE OF SALUTING INCIDENTS

Shortly after I arrived at Ft. McClellan, near Anniston, Alabama, a brand new "90-Day Wonder," I was walking down a street and a staff sergeant threw me a snappy salute. As I returned the salute, I realized it was Staff Sergeant Perry.

At Camp Wheeler, each battalion had one or more staff sergeant instructors who were in addition to the regular cadre of noncom officers. These were mostly early in the war, regular army veterans who were very knowledgeable about everything military. Sergeant Perry, who was the Staff Sergeant Instructor assigned to our company, had been an infantry captain in World War I. The story was that when he returned from France, his wife had deserted him; he was so disgusted that he reenlisted in the U.S. Army but insisted on remaining a noncom. He told us that he had soldiered for the army on five continents. One time, when we were cleaning weapons, he gave us an off-the-cuff history of the bolt-action rifle, which was very enlightening.

After I returned his salute, I greeted him and told him that I felt funny having him salute me since he knew more about the army than I ever would. He replied, "Firstly, I am saluting the officer's uniform you are wearing. But more than that, yours is the generation that's going to fight this war." I felt very moved.

Regarding the salute, many rules and stories exist about the awkwardness and appropriateness of the courtesy. As an example, I'll relate an experience I had at Ft. McClellan while with a BIRTC training unit—in translation meaning a Branch Immaterial Replacement Training Center. What that amounted to was all the trainees in this unit received a maximum of eight weeks of basic infantry training, however, they would subsequently be assigned to some other branch, such as truck drivers in the transportation corps or port troops or whatever—all the officers and noncoms were infantry.

At times, when my company was assigned to guard duty, and I was Officer of the Guard, I would stress very emphatically to my men how important guard duty was—that it was, as we had always been told—the most important duty short of combat. Also, it was very important to comport oneself in a very military manner and to salute all officers or, if you were carrying a rifle, to "present arms." The men were very conscientious about heeding my instructions.

On this particular day, I had to answer the "call of nature." We had a separate officer's latrine, and later that day I was at the urinal. One of my men walked by, saw me through the screened window and "presented arms" to me. All I could do was stop what I was doing and throw him a snappy salute through the latrine window. (I don't think army regulations covered that one!)

THE BAGGAGE OFFICER STORY

Shortly after I had joined the 29th Division at A. P. Hill Military Reservation south of Fredericksburg, Virginia, the division moved down to the Piney Woods country of North and South Carolina for the large-scale army maneuvers of 1942.

One day, after about six weeks of maneuvers, a Jeep came to Company C (my company) and I was advised that I had been appointed Assistant Division Baggage Officer, and was to proceed in the Jeep to the railhead. I had no idea what the duties of that officer were to be, where the railhead was, or where the division was going.

The railhead turned out to be a tiny old station with one bench inside and no personnel. My job was explained to me, which consisted basically of making records of the freight car numbers and contents as each company came down to the little railhead and put their baggage into freight cars.

The companies started coming right away, and I was busy all that day and into the night. I had not been told to bring my equipment or bedroll. So I couldn't wash or shave, and I finally slept the balance of the night in my uniform on the bench in the station.

The next morning early, the 29th Division troops started coming again when suddenly word came down that the 2nd Armored Division was going to be loaded as a priority and our loading was to be interrupted. The 1st and 2nd Armored Divisions were enormous and had trainloads of equipment, tanks, half-tracks, weapons carriers, ammo trucks, etc. The 1st and 2nd Armored had four regiments of tanks, whereas all subsequent American Armored Divisions were triangular, i.e., three regiments. So their loading interrupted our work by about 36 hours; but I didn't leave the railhead as I didn't know when they would be finished and ours would start again; besides, I didn't have a Jeep or driver. Again the second night—no washing, and sleeping on the station bench.

It took about 24 hours and another night on the bench, after the 2nd Armored had finished, to complete our loading. When the last train was loaded, Major Alfred Warfield, Commander of the 2nd Battalion, 115th Infantry Regiment (my regiment) showed up right before the last train. He told me I had better get on board or I would be left at the station, so I got on the caboose with him. It was then that I learned he was also the Division's Baggage Officer. The next thing he said to me was, "Lieutenant, you look terrible. You need a shave and your uniform is all wrinkled." After I explained my situation, he became very sympathetic and lent me his own razor to shave myself.

Incidentally, he subsequently asked if I would like to join his staff as S-4, Supply Officer. I turned him down, as I didn't want that job. On D-Day, plus around four or five days, Colonel Warfield and his entire battalion staff were killed in a German ambush—trapped in a field surrounded by hedgerows—an infa-

mous incident in our division history. It was one more case of a lucky decision on my part. He apparently died very heroically, fighting on foot against a German armored unit. In fact, the night of the ambush, a number of the 2nd Battalion troops, who were retreating in almost panic, came upon my company area where I attempted to calm them and had them spend the night in our company area.

I found out from Colonel Warfield that we were headed for Camp Blanding, Florida, about 35 miles west of Jacksonville.

We arrived there about 4:00 AM, after around 36 hours en route. It was pitch black, and we didn't know where the camp lay in relation to the railroad siding or, in fact, anything. Major Warfield and his staff left and I was alone beside the train.

Suddenly a loudspeaker announced that all baggage officers had to have all the baggage cars unloaded at once because the rail siding we were on was needed the next morning. Not only did I not know where our division was, where any trucks or drivers were, etc., or, in fact anything. At this point, I said to myself: "Screw it. If they want to court-martial me, they can." So I wandered off, trying to find C Company 115th Infantry, which took me almost an hour.

I sacked out in our company barracks. The next morning nothing was said about the incident, and I still have no idea by whom or what or how our trains were unloaded. I didn't ever hear another word about the whole thing.

BROWN WILLIE TOR EPISODE

During the year that the 29th was stationed in Devonshire and Cornwall, our regiment, the 115th, was stationed in Bodmin, Cornwall, at the edge of the Bodmin Moor. There are several moors in Great Britain. Dartmoor in Devonshire comes to mind. They are unusual areas in that they are very boggy. If someone jumps on the ground six or eight feet from you, you can feel the earth crust vibrate. Once the crust is penetrated, objects sink down and down like in quagmires. One time a British Engineering Corps Team came back to our area, where they had formerly been stationed, to probe for a vehicle they had lost to the moor. They probed for it and found that it had sunk 15 or 20 feet below the surface, much deeper than it had been when they had abandoned it.

The other outstanding terrain feature of the moors are "Tors"—very large, rocky outcrops rising up from the moors like big rocky hills. Interestingly enough, I believe that the population in Cornwall is supposed to have originally come from Brittany in France; and when we passed through Brittany and fought there in September 1944, we found that they called their hills "Tors." The largest Tor in the Bodmin Moor—a real brute of a rock hill—was called "Brown Willie Tor." I've forgotten how high it was, but it must have been around 300 feet.

About six months after we arrived in Bodmin, the division held a war game in which all 20,000 men were involved, being divided into two elements. At this time, I commanded the 115th Intelligence & Reconnaissance (I&R) Platoon with around 40 men and 7 Jeeps. This exercise was to be at night and under combat conditions—no lights and a minimum of noise. Our mission was I&R; plus, we were to act as enemy and do harassment.

It was quite a thing, scooting over the boggy moors with no



Left to right: First Lieutenants Johnny Parkins, Lee Schofield, and Frank Bergstein, in England, before D-Day, 1944.

Photo courtesy of the Bergstein Family.

lights—and not very good maps. We were not sure, in the dark, when or if we might not run into a fence or a ditch, or whatever. In any event, around midnight we found ourselves backed up against Brown Willie Tor by "enemy troops." We sure as heck didn't want to be captured. So we started up this rocky Tor pushing, pulling, and carrying our seven Jeeps. We just kept going up and up until we reached the top—and then we started down the other side.

Somehow we got those seven Jeeps up, over, and down that rough rocky hill in about two hours in the pitch dark! And then, we calmly drove off. I'm not sure we could have done it even in the daylight if we hadn't been pinned there and were determined not to be captured. It was a good lesson in, "You can do just about anything if you have to."

EVENTS LEADING UP TO D-DAY

The 29th Division, after a year of conventional training in England, was sent to Cornwall and Devonshire for special training in making an invasion on a hostile shore—France—and in assaulting fortified positions. Those two counties have extensive shorelines, and we practiced landings again and again. In fact, we were reorganized from standard companies and platoons into boat teams.

After even larger exercises, where we would be all loaded on landing crafts and ready to go—only to be told it was just a trial run, we thought that maybe we wouldn't even know when the real invasion took place.

The last such exercise before the actual invasion—although we didn't know it at the time—was on a large beach south of Exeter, Devonshire, called Slapton Sands. It turned out that this exercise involved exactly the same American divisions that would make the assault on D-Day, except in this exercise the American 1st Division was on the right and we, the 29th, were on the left—the opposite positioning taking place on D-Day.

This was a very large and realistic exercise called "Fox," which later became famous or infamous because of the large number of American casualties. The landing was to be totally under real

war conditions: aerial bombing in the target area, naval bombardment, firing from all craft involved, etc.

Somehow, the Germans got wind of this operation and U-boats torpedoed a number of the troop-carrying boats and ships, with many casualties.

I was still in charge of the 115th Regimental I&R Platoon, with seven Jeeps and about 40 men. Our mission was to set our two squads outside of the impact area (where the shells and bombs were to land) and observe the landing to give us practice in observing and reporting. Our second mission was to "go underground" and let the landing troops pass over us, and thereafter to act as enemy. I had placed myself and a few men close to the rear of the impact area with radio contact to the two squads.

Not more than one minute after the naval and landing craft bombardment started, I received a message from the right squad that shells were landing in their position and there were a number of killed and wounded. I went right over there and it was real bad. Shells had hit in the branches over that squad's heads—called tree bursts—and there were two men killed and three or four wounded out of my small platoon. Among those killed were my own radio operator and my driver.

That evening, I was called to division headquarters and the general asked me if I was the officer who had had casualties. I replied, "Yes, Sir!" He then asked me where it had happened. It so happened that the general's tent was not more than 20 yards or so from where my squad had been positioned. So I told him, "Sir, if you would step out of this tent, you could see the exact spot not more than a few yards away." He said, "But this is out of the impact area." I told him that we were. So he said, "This must be very hard on your platoon and yourself, so I will excuse you from the rest of the operation." When I got my platoon assembled and told them, I added that I would excuse anyone, but I felt we should carry on as we would very shortly be in real action. I was very proud of the fact that no one asked to be excused, even though we were a small and close group and everyone felt awful.

Some other troops were shelled as they landed on the beach, and a later investigation determined that shells from tank-destroyers lashed to the decks of landing craft had been firing wildly and had caused the damage to my platoon and the landing troops as well.

It was all too good an introduction to real combat, which came shortly afterward.

When preparations for the actual invasion were made, we were moved from our regular camps out into open fields behind barbed wire. We were totally isolated. Cooks from other divisions came and prepared our food, and then they left after putting the food out. This was to insure that there would be no conversation between our men and men from other divisions. So we knew this was the "Real McCoy."

Furthermore, we line officers were taken into a large British Navy installation called H.M.S. Raleigh (we learned that all of the British Navy land installations were named like ships). This place was located in Plymouth right at the mouth of the Plym River and the English Channel. There, the joint command had set up a complete sand-box model—as large as a good-sized room—of the Normandy Beachhead, and even including the Cherbourg

Peninsula. This was the first time we junior officers had been told exactly where the invasion was to take place. We were not only told the details of our mission but even the overall subsequent plan—for a breakout once St. Lo was captured and, after that, a spearhead to cut off the Cherbourg Peninsula and the capture of Cherbourg for a port.

We were also told that one of the most important considerations in a large-scale landing was to either develop the beach-head into an efficient port or to capture a large port promptly because of the staggering amount of men and material that had to be landed quickly to support such a huge invasion. We, thus, had all the information about the invasion except the exact date, which was a super closely-held secret.

We then were to bring our troops in groups to the camp and brief them on all we had been told. We wondered if we weren't giving our men too much information—as some could be captured. However, General Eisenhower had ordered specifically that every man in the invasion should understand the plan. It was his feeling that well-informed troops would fight well.

General Montgomery, the British general, was to be in direct command of our army group under General Eisenhower. So, "Monty" came to our camp, had us all line up and remove our helmets. Then he walked through the ranks, stopping to look each man in the eye and ask, "Are you ready?" He had very penetrating blue eyes and it was a very effective performance. After we had all individually said that we were ready, he stood in front of our ranks and said, "I really believe you are ready for the invasion and combat with the Nazis."

The orientation and explanation to our men took about two weeks. After that, we were trucked into H.M.S. Raleigh, which was surrounded by a high chain-link fence. There was even American entertainment inside the camp at night, but we were told that the entertainers were also confined inside the wire since everyone in the area had been briefed as to the exact details of the invasion—except for the date.

The third morning I was awakened about 5:30 AM by Major Paxton, who had formerly commanded C Company, the original company I had been with in the 29th, but had been detached and assigned to the regimental staff. He asked, "Frank, how would you like to take a boat trip?"

It was when we drove along the Plym River first by Jeep and then by boat that I first realized the enormity of the invasion. There were ships and landing craft bow to stern for mile after mile in the river and Plymouth Harbour.

I was put aboard an LCI (Landing Craft Infantry) which holds about 200 troops and which was to hold the bulk of our company. By this time I was Company Commander of Headquarters Company, of which the I&R Platoon was a part, along with elements of the regimental command group.

Sometime after the LCI was fully loaded, the Regimental S-2 Intelligence Officer told me that the Allied High Command was very concerned about a new German weapon. It turned out to be the V-2, the world's first long-range missile, which had caused so much damage to London. They knew that a buildup of ships, material, and troops (such as were present in Plymouth Harbour and other ports in England) would make terribly inviting targets. It

turned out that the V-2s did hit London and other parts of England shortly after D-Day, but as far as I knew, none hit any of the harbors containing invasion troops.

We were all set to embark when everything was postponed for one day due to storms off the French coast and in the English Channel. This was bad news for us since we were all crowded onto a small landing craft and were eating field rations—no hot food. It would have been nice to get one good meal before we went into combat.

D-DAY / OMAHA BEACH

When we sailed out of Plymouth Harbour, the weather was still bad. So we went into Portland Harbour, about 100 miles east of Plymouth, a famous old British naval base, for the night. Early the next morning we sailed for France.

The sight of this huge armada was one I'll never forget. Our little LCI was, by chance, somewhere near the center. Someone pointed out an American cruiser not too far from us, which was headquarters for the whole landing operation. In any event, there were warships, troop carriers, tank carriers, landing craft, etc., from horizon to horizon in all directions—a staggering spectacle! We understood that the entire armada sailed across the English Channel toward the channel ports of Le Harve, Calais, etc., to confuse the Germans, and then sailed along the French coast till we arrived opposite the coast of Normandy, very early on the morning of June 6.

Unfortunately, the sea was very rough. The landing craft—some of them LCVs holding around 30 men each, had been lowered into the sea, and others like our LCI—were all circling into prearranged groups. Unfortunately, a lot of the troops got seasick, circling like we were about five miles offshore. For the men of the 29th, this was to be their first actual combat experience—and being sick was not the best way to go into your first fight.

The British sector was to the left on Omaha Beach. In the American sector, the 1st Division (a veteran combat unit that had fought in Africa and Sicily) was next to the British, with us on the right of them. Navy Seals and engineers had landed first to clear paths through the underwater mines and obstacles for the landing craft, and to mark with colored tape the cleared lanes.

The two arrangements on the craft as far as command was concerned were that: (1) the Navy was in charge until a craft touched shore, thereafter, the army officer in charge of the troops was in charge; and (2) the senior line officer on the ship—not necessarily the senior officer, was army boat commander. Since I was then company commander of headquarters company, and the troops in our LCI were mostly my company, I was army boat commander. This was so, even though the forward regimental command post (CP), including Colonel Slappey—Regimental Commander—and most of his staff, were on the ship.

As we came in, we were under heavy artillery fire from shore batteries, and shells were landing all around us. Our navy skipper picked out a line of tapes to make his landing, but at the end of the tapes lay an abandoned LCI like ours, which had been knocked out by enemy fire. He pulled as close to it as he could get and then told me that this was it, and we should jump across from our boat to the stranded LCI. We were all carrying around 70 pounds of food, ammo, weapons, etc., and he wanted us to



First Lieutenant Frank Bergstein stands at the far right of this grouping before D-Day, 1944. His 29th Division comrades are unknown.

Photo courtesy of the Bergstein Family

jump around 10 feet. I said "No Way!" I requested that he circle around and come as close to the shore as he could, next to the wrecked boat. This was risky because that would take us out of the cleared lane and because the shelling was intense. But he did it.

As we circled around, the shelling intensified and we also came under fire from machine guns and mortars. I didn't think we were going to make it, and I thought to myself, "My first combat decision and I'm afraid it's going to be a disaster." Miraculously, we came pretty close to the shore without receiving serious hits. I ordered one man ashore with a rope and I went next. We were still in about five feet of water, but everyone in the boat managed to get safely ashore.

By one of those strange quirks of fate, I found myself lying on the sand, trying to make myself as small as possible, right next to Colonel Slappey, our Regimental Commander, who was doing the same thing. He had been my Regimental Commander at Ft. McClellan, Alabama, and he had called me into his office after I was there around three months. He told me he was being transferred to the 29th Division and could take a couple of officers with him and wanted to know if I wanted to go with him. I said "Yes" at once for two reasons: (1) you never said "No" to a request like that in the army, and (2) I was getting tired of training camps by then and anxious to get into a combat outfit. So here we were, side-by-side, on Omaha Beach.

Colonel Slappey remarked, "This isn't at all like the plan. Someone is going to catch 'Hell'." We had been told that the pre-landing naval bombardment and rocket firing would probably knock out most of the shore batteries and would make lots of natural foxholes in the beach, but the part of the beach where we were was as smooth as glass. When I oriented myself, and as my company came ashore, my second odd thought as I stood up and realized I was not only under shell fire but also small arms fire (rifle fire) was, "Now I know just how George Washington and his men felt."

My mission was to assemble my company near a German pillbox and prepare it to move forward and establish a regimental command post. We soon discovered that we had landed around 2,000 yards west of where we're supposed to be. In fact, we were very much in the 1st Division zone and not too far from the British.

So I started moving my company along the beach toward our objective. There was a little gravel "shingle" running along the beach about 20 feet in from the water's edge. This stuck up about 10 inches above the sand and was the only protection there was. The beach was a mess; lots of dead American soldiers, disabled vehicles, etc., and a steady falling of shells. (There were so many shells flying through the air that I thought I could actually see some of them.) Also, I found out right there how terribly affected one was by the sight of a dead American soldier. This feeling never left me all through the rest of the war. And here, water lapping on the shore was red with American blood.

We had moved about a thousand yards along the beach when we passed an abandoned U.S. Army weapons carrier. Just after we passed it, a German shell came screaming in and struck the truck, which erupted in a terrific explosion. It was apparently full of all kinds of ammo. All the rest of us had our heads down when that shell came in, but for some unexplained reason, Sergeant McPherson had raised his head. A fragment struck him directly in the face, either from the German shell, or more likely by something from the exploding truck. I crawled over to him and took him in my arms; his face was a mess. Fortunately, a medic came ashore just then and I turned Sergeant McPherson over to him. The sergeant was a very popular guy, and later we all tried to find out what happened to him. It's possible that he was a fatality or he might have been blinded. He was alive when I turned him over to the medic.

When we were about 500 yards from the German pillbox, we realized that it still had Krauts in it, and they were firing at us—enfilade fire—that is, along our direction of movement. This, plus constant shelling, was slowing our progress. Just about then an American destroyer separated itself from the rest of the naval ships offshore and came full steam ahead right toward the shore and right towards that pillbox. It was firing one shell after the other from its forward (I think five inch) gun into the pillbox. It looked just like an angry terrier. If I could have bought that destroyer's captain a drink right then, I would have loved to. In any event, while he certainly didn't destroy the target—those German shore installations had about 4-foot-thick concrete walls—it either stunned the defenders or scared them. They took off. We didn't understand at the time where they had gone, but we found out later, that tunnels connected nearly all their defensive positions.

Their departure allowed us to move the rest of the way to the pillbox and assemble, which had been our original goal. Johnny Parkins, our Communications Officer and my roommate for the whole two years in England, and also my best friend, asked me then if I would help him. He was carrying two Signal Corps radios, plus all his equipment just as I was carrying the company maps in addition to all my equipment supplies. Just in from the beach was this big hill—almost a cliff—and there was no way he

could get up that hill (which incidentally was heavily mined) with that equipment. So, he and I dug a small pit, lined it with a plastic gas cape, and buried one radio. We said we'd return and get it later; however, events overtook us and we never returned.

As a matter of fact, when Mary and I visited Omaha Beach in 1957, 13 years later, a Belgium engineering firm, which had won the salvage right, was still scouring Omaha Beach for salvage. I wonder if they found our radio?

OMAHA BEACH / ST. LO

The original plan apparently called for St. Lo to be captured about 8-10 days after the landing on Omaha Beach, to be followed at once by the breakout across the Cherbourg Peninsula and the capture of Cherbourg. But the timetable was badly delayed by several things, two of which I know about. One was that there was a whole division right at Omaha that intelligence had not expected. It seems that this was a German Division on an anti-invasion exercise, which had just been moved into position very shortly before D-Day, so that every position was manned. Accordingly, the defense was stiffer than had been anticipated and the casualties correspondingly higher. Secondly, the hedgerows surrounding nearly every field in Normandy proved to be a tremendous obstacle to maneuvering. It was particularly restricting to tanks.

It was really tough on infantry too, as every field was practically a fort. The hedgerows were very thick, sometimes 8-10 feet with vines and hedges holding them together. One machine gun at a corner of a field surrounded by hedgerows could really control the whole field. What I still don't understand was why we didn't use the hedgerows in Cornwall and Devonshire to train on and develop tactics. We had to develop those in combat.

As a result of the above two things, plus maybe others I don't know about, instead of capturing St. Lo in 10 days, it took 44 days of steady and very bloody fighting. France is further north than most Americans realize, so it didn't get dark in June until around 10 o'clock at night. Accordingly, the fighting usually lasted from 6:00 AM until 10:00 PM for 44 straight days. While it did throw off the timetable for the battle for France, it apparently worked out for the Allies since the Germans had to keep throwing in divisions piecemeal and use up their reserves. Thus, when St. Lo finally fell and the breakout came, they didn't have ready reserves.

In any event, we had been told that our landing on Omaha was the largest and most difficult assault on a fortified beach in history and if it was as difficult as expected (and it turned out to be worse), we might well be relieved and returned to England in 72 hours. Instead, even though it was so bad and the casualties so high, we fought for 44 days straight after the landing. Subsequent to that, we had a three-day relief and then we fought 48 more days until Vire fell. In the whole year from D-Day to VE-Day, the 29th Division was in combat something like 90% of the time.

And, this brings me to some reflections on the Infantry. I don't think anyone who wasn't in it has any idea of the hardships involved, physically, mentally, and psychologically. At first, you hope that you won't be wounded or killed. Then, when you see how it goes on day after day, you hope that when you're hit, it won't be too bad. Then you reach the third stage, when you're totally exhausted both physically and mentally, when you don't

give a damn what happens. Of course, you instinctively take cover when a shell comes in, but you've practically stopped caring.

At least the Air Corps get to return to their bases after a mission and the paratroopers are usually relieved after they have secured their areas, but the infantry just go on fighting. When I was in the 52nd General Hospital during the war, all of the 29th men that I talked to tried to transfer to the paratroopers.

Two things that do keep you going are a fierce pride in that you are doing the toughest job in the war and fierce loyalty to your platoon or company.

Now that the above is off my chest, I'll relate a few of the incidents (some humorous) that stick out in my mind from the 44 days.

About D-Day, plus two days, we came upon a German strong point overlooking the beach. Among other things, it had a wooden set of planks making a long table about 20 feet long and three feet wide up a tree. This had been painted with an exact copy of the beach, and had distances marked on it to all areas of the beach. It was clearly designed for directing artillery and mortar fire; and it was easy to see why their shelling had been so accurate. It also had a barracks that had housed about 40 Italian workers. They had apparently been improving the beach and surrounding defenses.

As Commanding Officer of Regimental Headquarters Company, I was in charge of setting up headquarters. Lt. Col. Smith, Regimental Executive Commander, said to me, "Get hold of the engineers and have them check that barracks for booby traps. We might want to use that as a temporary headquarters." I had no idea where our division engineers were or any other engineers, or how to contact any of them. And, even though we had only been in combat a couple of days and nights, I hadn't had any sleep or rest at all and had almost reached that third stage of not caring. So, I entered the barracks and did everything you're not supposed to do. I opened and closed every window, slammed every door, etc.

Then I went back to Lt. Col. Smith, and told him how I'd checked out the building, and it was clean. He replied, "We've had a change of orders and we're moving right out."

A few days later we were in position by a hedgerow and a little path when two short, stout monks came riding up the path on bicycles. They were headed toward the German lines. We stopped them and they were—or pretended to be—deaf and dumb. One of them had some maps in his bicycle basket. It was very difficult to communicate with them but they gathered that we were suspicious of them. One of them thereupon drew a Nazi swastika in the dirt and spit on it. We did the time-honored thing. We assigned a couple of men to guard them and sent them back to division headquarters.

Shortly after that, we were in position in a farmyard. All women and children apparently had been evacuated from Normandy. It was just a battleground. But two unusual events took place at that farm. One battery of the 110th Field Artillery (our division artillery unit) was in position behind us. As usual, they had dug a big pit in which to store their shells. Somehow the pit caught fire which made everyone nervous. Suddenly, one of the shells shot out of the pit and landed on the apron in front of the

barn and very close to us. The shell just lay there and smoked. We all called back to the artillerymen to do something about it. Immediately an artillery sergeant walked through our position and up to the shell. He examined it, then put his hand on it and switched something off. Then he picked the shell up and walked off with it.

We all broke out into a spontaneous cheer for his bravery and for his getting rid of that smoking shell. If there is one thing infantry are scared of, it's artillery shells.

Shortly after that, a real girl about 16 emerged from the farmhouse and started walking toward the barn. She had a pail of slops in her hand. All of the soldiers started yelling at her and kidding her, and she called back to us something in French, of course. We couldn't understand exactly what she was saying but we all grasped exactly what she meant, "You soldiers are worse than the pigs I'm going to feed." We all cheered her, too, for her spunk and for being there in a combat area.

The Germans usually dug two-man foxholes, whereas we dug individual ones. However, when we captured a field, we would normally use their foxholes. They knew we were doing this, and knew just where to aim their artillery and mortars.

One time, John Parkins and I were sharing a German fox-hole when a heavy artillery barrage suddenly started landing on us. One shell landed right near us and a shell fragment passed right over me and into his thigh. It was a nasty wound. I helped get him over the hedgerow and called for an aid man. It was the last time I saw John until after the war, because I had been transferred to the 2nd Battalion by the time he came back, and our paths didn't cross again.

When St. Lo fell, I happened to be beside the road leading out of the town back toward the American lines. I'll never forget the look in all our men's eyes as they marched past. They had all landed on Omaha, fought 44 days of terrible combat, and then participated in the capture of this key objective. Their eyes told it all.

INCIDENT WITH THE 28TH DIVISION

By about D-Day, plus three days, the 28th Division—the Pennsylvania National Guard Division, whose emblem was a keystone in honor of their "Keystone State" motto—had landed and had deployed behind our position on the front line.

I was sent back from our regimental headquarters to locate the headquarters of the Pennsylvania regiment and to brief them on our tactical disposition and our intentions. I walked back and found their regimental headquarters pretty easily. They had dug a big hole in the middle of a field, surrounded as usual by a hedgerow, and their commanding officer and his staff were in the hole when I approached them.

Just about the time I introduced myself, a firefight started, at first slowly, then a heck of a lot of rifle and BAR fire. I jumped into the pit with them. Then I told the colonel that the 29th Division was directly ahead, and we had just passed through this particular field, and I was quite positive that there were no "Krauts" about. Almost all "green" troops are trigger-happy, and these spurious firefights happened frequently.

The colonel questioned me carefully and then, apparently convinced, he jumped to his feet, pulled a whistle out of his pocket and started blowing it. The firing slowed down a little.

Then as he kept blowing the whistle, the firing tapered down quickly and suddenly stopped completely.

This was the first and only time I ever saw a firefight stopped by a whistle—sort of like a scrimmage in a football game.

Subsequently, we had lots of contact with the 28th Division. In fact, we were frequently in the same corps with them, the 28th Infantry, the 29th Infantry, and an armored division (the 2nd Armored for a while) making up a corps. And, they became a real good outfit.

PHYSICAL HARDSHIPS OF INFANTRY COMBAT

One of the important parts of infantry training is to condition the men for hardships. We were told we should be able to march 20-25 miles with all our equipment, i.e., rifle, ammo, helmet, canteen, gas mask, full pack, etc.—around 70 pounds worth—and still be in shape to go right into combat at the end of the march.

Early on, in our two-year stay in England, our Division Commander, General Gerhardt, was sent to Africa during the North African Campaign to be an observer on General Patton's staff. He came back totally "gung-ho" on fitness and toughness. He immediately ordered all of the 29th Division to take two 25-mile marches every week, carrying the full 70 pounds of equipment. It became routine and, in fact, became one of the easier days in the week for us officers. Just lay out the route and submit it to the Regimental S-3 (Plans & Training), and lead your men for the seven or eight hours it took—no lectures or other teaching or being around the camp for other duties. In fact, while we were stationed at Cowley Barracks—about five miles outside of Oxford—we used to come back from a 25-mile march, clean up, have a little chow, and then walk down to Oxford for drinks and whatever at one of the hotel bars; then we walked back out to Cowley.

But actual combat was something else! Going with little or no sleep for days and nights on end, no hot food sometimes for weeks, sleeping at night in a foxhole where—if it rained—you just sat in your uniform and sweated out the rain. Add to this the constant tension of danger from artillery and mortar shells, small arms fire, airplanes and later rockets from above, and mines and booby-traps from below, you start to get the picture. I don't recall having the chance to brush my teeth from D-Day for 44 days until St. Lo fell.

The soldier's backpack has two parts. One is the blanket roll, which is rolled up inside the shelter half. Two shelter halves make up one pup tent. Because these blanket rolls are cumbersome and heavy and you wouldn't have time or opportunity to put up a tent, we kept the blanket rolls on our kitchen truck. We fought with only the light pack on our backs. These held our rations, cigarettes, and a few toilet articles. So, when it rained or snowed, your blanket and tent were on the kitchen truck. I think I slept under a tent around four times in a whole year of combat.

On top of all this was the loss of friends and comrades, killed and wounded, many of whom you had been living so close to for weeks, months, and years. For good measure, add in the horrible smell of death, dead horses and cattle, and worst of all, human beings.

And all of the above went on week after week, month after

month. It is easy to see why the infantrymen envied the pilots and even the paratroopers who at least got back to civilization after their missions were over.

The final irony was that most of the best physical specimens went to the Marines, Air Force, and the Navy. Our picture of the typical infantryman was a little guy, loaded down with equipment, often wearing glasses, but with a great big heart.

About eight weeks before D-Day, we received our last batch of replacements to bring us up to full strength; they were as I described above. In addition, they were all kids around 18 years old. We thought to ourselves, "My God, these little kids are what we are getting to go into combat." I'll say this, though, most of those kids turned into pretty good soldiers.

THE ARMORED DIVISION FIASCO

Around D-Day, plus 25 days, we were all pretty discouraged by the slow progress we were making toward St. Lo and the heavy casualties we were taking. There were a lot of remarks about the Russians advancing 10-20 miles a day, and the Americans in Italy making a mile or more a day, and we (on good days) advancing maybe two or three hedgerows.

About this time, an armored division pulled up alongside of us—I can't remember whether it was the 3rd or 4th Armored Division. They were very cocky and said they would capture St. Lo in a day or so. St. Lo was still about 8-10 miles ahead. They kidded us unmercifully about our slow progress.

On top of this, they weren't following proper combat procedures at all, particularly night discipline. They were shouting and making a lot of noise around their command posts and lighting lights and smoking after dark. The front lines were normally only about 200 yards apart.

I was sent over to their nearest regimental CP with a message. They were so noisy. I really got nervous. On top of that, they said they were receiving quite a bit of small arms fire from the Germans and wondered if we could send over a rifle company to protect their headquarters.

It wasn't much of a surprise to me then to learn that when they made their attack the next day, it turned out to be a fiasco. From what I heard, their jump-off was okay. But, when they hit the Germans' main line of defense and received a lot of anti-tank and artillery fire, they really panicked, abandoned their tanks and all their equipment, then turned tail and ran.

In retreat, they left their equipment on the battlefield that was valued in the millions of dollars. It was one of the really bad moments in the war. Later, after they had been pulled back and many officers replaced and retrained, they apparently became a respectable outfit.

Many times, the battle-tested 2nd Armored Division made up the armored division of the corps we were in, and they were super. They were so tough that the Germans were really afraid of them—called them "barbarians" and names like that.

To be continued in the Spring 2014 edition

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Toward Reconstruction

"On July 12, 1973, a disastrous fire at the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) destroyed approximately 16-18 million Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF). No duplicate copies of these records were ever maintained, nor were microfilm copies produced. Neither were any indexes created prior to the fire." Reading those words it is hard to believe that this facility in St. Louis was part of the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), the guardians of our federal government's recorded military heritage. They don't know how the fire started or who was responsible. Without any apology or excuse, all that is stated is that "In terms of loss to the cultural heritage of our nation, the 1973 NPRC Fire was an unparalleled disaster." My father, S/Sgt Leo Helbig, of Company L, 116th Infantry, made it from D-Day through V-E Day and then some. His 201 file didn't make it.

Forty years hence the disaster, the watchword at NPRC is still "Reconstruction." The term implies that thousands of workers, an army if you will, are busy at work in the back rooms gathering data from hither and yon in a massive effort to build complete facsimile copies of all of the forms that constituted a soldier's 201 file. If that is really what has been taking place, the job ought to be done about now. It isn't.

Your request begins by completion of a "Request Pertaining to Military Records" (SF-180) which requires at least basic identity information: full name, birth date, branch of service and Army Serial Number (ASN) if known. The average wait time in my experience is about one month for the initial, acknowledging response. The result can be a positive one, such as a separation document you lost, probably the VA copy that agency received when distribution was made from the separation center. That's if you're lucky. The fee is now \$25 for that piece of nostalgia. Or, the result could be a counter-request for more information. That takes the form of a "Questionnaire About Military Service" (NA Form 13075). The requestor is now asked to complete as many of the blanks as possible, basically asking for all of the information one hoped to glean from the OMPF, if only it was forthcoming. This seems like nonsense. But then NPRC is trying to help. The form instructions state that the information "may help locate the record, if it is available" or "it may enable the Center to make use of various alternate sources to reconstruct some of the basic service record data." The problem I have with that process is that it is not "reconstruction".

There is "sort of" an index, but not to what is available necessarily. There was an effort made to reconstruct the "Army Serial Number File, 1938-1946" from microfilm of so-called "Enlistment Cards" (WD AGO Form 317) that were created by the army at the time of induction/enlistment. The effort, however heroic, was only semi-successful. It took from 1973 to 2002—almost 30 years—before that valuable information was put in useable form and made available to the public. That "Electronic ASN Merged

File, 1938-1946" is available on the NARA website along with other interesting information. It is as close to an index by name and ASN that we're ever likely to see. But even with a positive hit on that, you are still looking at a probable miss with NPRC.

Since about 13% of the microfilmed cards could not be processed, about 1.5 million army veterans of the WWII era are not represented in the file. My father's card is among those. But for the majority whose card data were resurrected (I cannot bring myself to write "reconstructed") there are possible errors. And these can range from relatively innocuous to completely confounding, making the output misleading, erroneous, uninterpretable or just plain useless. How would you like to read that you were inducted at Buffalo, when you know it was Binghamton? But this is just the starting point to your record request.

Another possible response from NPRC is one in which the veteran is correctly identified and that the OMPF was "recovered" although badly damaged, resulting in poor document quality. That just means it was pulled out of the ashes, thrown in a high-tech dryer, and now separately kept in the "B" (for Burn) Registry. There are 6.5 million such, so there's a chance. For that the fee is \$70, sight unseen, unless you want to take a vacation to St. Louis to see for yourself. But be advised the reconstruction program requires special treatment of the OMPF before you arrive, so you'll need an appointment. Then there is the "R" (for Reconstruction) Registry and no number is put on that, presumably because the army of workers is constantly converting the Burned files into the fully restored and just-like-new 201 file you last saw at the separation center in 1945.

But, alas, unless you're in "pursuit of an entitlement" your 201 file is not eligible for such treatment. No attempt will be made to reconstruct those OMPFs. So for most 29-ers the real process is one of alternative and substitute documents handed over from other agencies to NPRC, and there may or may not be any of those in your case forthcoming. It is hit or miss.

My recent experience with NPRC is that there is always a surprise. You could get the separation document you wanted; you could get a transcript of extracts thoughtfully typed-out by an energetic archives technician; you could get a couple of lines about service time and discharge on a form letter; you could get a request for the \$70 fee I mentioned when you just wanted the separation document for \$25. And if you're seeking historical information on veterans not related to you, it could be that you will get a request for an authorization from the next of kin, even though the deceased—who no longer enjoys the benefit of the Privacy Act—separated over 62 years ago and the OMPF is by definition "Archival" and open to the public interest. Expect to wait, as usual, and forget about that silly word "Reconstruction."

*Submitted by Michael Helbig
Mr. Helbig is a retired Marine Corps Reserve officer.*

**Remember To Visit us
At Our National Website
www.29thdivisionassociation.com**

Singh appointed Assistant Adjutant General, MDARNG

BALTIMORE - Martin O'Malley, the Governor of Maryland, on 8 August 2013 announced the appointment of Brig. Gen. Linda Singh as the next Assistant Adjutant General for the Maryland Army National Guard. Singh will replace Brig. Gen. Peter Hinz, who retired from state service on 30 September 2013.

"I am honored to appoint Brig. Gen. Singh as the assistant adjutant general-Army," said Governor O'Malley. "She is an extremely effective leader with the drive to take the Maryland Army National Guard to new heights and keep the organization among the best in the nation."

This is an historic appointment as General Singh becomes the first female and the first African American to command the Maryland Army National Guard.

Singh currently serves as director, Maryland National Guard joint staff. She recently returned from a deployment to Afghanistan as chief, current operations, Afghan National Security Forces with the 29th Infantry Division Headquarters.

"I want to thank Gen. Hinz for his years of dedicated service to the Maryland National Guard," said Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins, adjutant general of Maryland. "He will be passing the torch to another superb commander in Gen. Singh."

Singh was an enlisted Soldier for 11 years and earned her commission through the Maryland Army National Guard Officer Candidate School in 1991. She has served in every level of command from the company through regimental levels. In addition to her deployment to Afghanistan from September 2011-July 2012, Singh also served as assistant chief of staff for logistics for the

29th Infantry Division in Kosovo from July 2006-October 2007.

In her civilian career, Singh is a managing director with Accenture Federal Services, a major consulting corporation, working in the public safety portfolio. She has more than 20 years of experience in implementing large systems, but she also works on developing new client relationships and business opportunities.

Her military decorations include the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal with two bronze oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Reserve Component Achievement Medal with one silver and two bronze oak leaf clusters, National Defense Service Medal with one bronze service star, Kosovo Campaign Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal with silver hourglass Device and M Device, and the NATO Medal (second award).

The Maryland Military Department is comprised of the Maryland Army and Air National Guard, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency and the Maryland Defense Force. Since 9/11 more than 10,600 citizen-Soldiers and Airmen have been called to serve on



active duty in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation New Dawn, Operation Enduring Freedom and the relief efforts for many natural disasters across the country. The Military Department consists of more than 7,000 National Guard members, Defense Force volunteers and civilian employees, contributing more than \$380 million annually to Maryland's economy.

Courtesy of Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office

95th Annual National Convention - a Great Success

(Continued from page 1)

old WWII 29er had become to dread. So, there you go! Everything is in excellent hands. All of our readers must remember that we vitally need material from you to stay as one of the outstanding publications in the military fields.

The evening banquet was a super fine event, hosted by Commander Zang and everyone had a fine time. Our main speaker was Major General Charles W. Whittington, Commanding General of the current 29th Infantry Division out of Ft. Belvoir and he congratulated all on keep-

ing this old outfit alive and still running. His awards and decorations are many and include the Legion of Merit and the Bronze Star, each with an Oak Leaf Cluster. During his career he has seen service in Germany, Kuwait, and Iraq at every level of command.

Sunday morning was our last get-together, the national memorial service as conducted by our long serving National Chaplain John Schildt. All of our deceased names were read off that had occurred since our last meeting. The Ladies Auxiliary names were read off with an appropriate ceremony by President Juanita King,

and Chaplain Edith Paul - they totaled 11 names. The men's names, totaling 87 were read by PNC Robert Moscati, and National Senior Vice Commander John Vaccarino. It was a very moving ceremony that ended our activities by 11:30am.

All in all a tremendous four days was enjoyed by all. Please try to make it out next year again in October. Hopefully we can arrange to pick up folks arriving by air from the Baltimore airport for the 140 mile trip to Ocean City, MD. Please try to come - you will always remember this fine event.

By Editor Emeritus/PNC Don McKee

Ortner promoted to Brigadier General, VAARNG

Colonel Blake C. Ortner was promoted to brigadier general in a ceremony hosted by Maj. Gen. Daniel E. Long, Jr, the Adjutant General of Virginia, June 16, at Fort Pickett. With the promotion, Ortner assumes the duties as the Virginia National Guard Land Component Commander and succeeds Brig. Gen. William R. Phillips, II, as the commander of the Virginia Army National Guard. Phillips is now assigned as deputy commanding general of the Fort Belvoir-based 29th Infantry Division.

Long commended Ortner for his extensive credentials for the position, which include four deployments with one as a battalion commander and one as a brigade commander.

"I can't think of a better person to meet this challenge, and we have a lot of talented senior officers in the Virginia National Guard," Long said. "He has a huge portfolio of the things he has done, and I know he will succeed in meeting the challenge."

Ortner most recently served as the operations officer for the Virginia Army National Guard. He thanked the members of the audience he served with as leaders, mentors, friends, colleagues and subordinates.

"Being here today, and the successes I have had, have really been due to the officers and (noncommissioned officers) I served with," Ortner said. "My success really belongs to you, and I wouldn't be here without you."

Ortner is a 1983 graduate of the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis, Minn. where he received a Bachelor of Arts in International Relations. He also holds a Masters Degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College Class of 2010. He resides in Stafford and is employed by Paralyzed Veterans of America in Washington, D.C. as the Senior Associate Legislation Director working with Congress to support veterans' benefits and healthcare services.

He received a Regular Army commission through the Reserve Officer Training Corps as an infantry officer and served on active duty until 1987. In 1989, Ortner joined the Virginia Army National Guard, serving in numerous assignments during over 20 years in the 116th Infantry Regiment and 29th Infantry Division to include rifle company commander, battalion operations officer, battalion commander, brigade operations officer, brigade executive officer, brigade deputy commander, brigade commander and division operations officer. In 2001, Ortner served as the Division Chief of Operations, Multi-National Division – North as part of the 29th Infantry Division support of Operation Joint Forge in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Ortner commanded 3rd Battalion, 116th Infantry Battalion and deployed the battalion in 2004 to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom as the first Virginia National Guard infantry battalion to deploy to combat since World War II. In 2007, Ortner was assigned as the deputy commander of the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and deployed to Baghdad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom where he served as a member of the Multi-National Forces – Iraq Area Support Group and later as the chief of operations for MNF-I. He assumed command of the 116th IBCT in June 2009 and in May 2011 the brigade headquarters was mobilized for combat operations in Af-

ghanistan supporting Operation Enduring Freedom where he commanded Combined Team Zabul which included active duty and NATO Romanian infantry battalions.

Ortner's military education includes the Airborne School, Infantry Officers Basic Course, Ranger School, Airborne Jumpmaster Course, Military Freefall School, Infantry Officers Advanced Course, Combined Arms Service Staff School, Army Command and General Staff College, U.S. Army War College and the Joint and Combined Warfighting School.

By Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs

National Auxiliary President's Message

The members of the National Auxiliary re-elected me as President, which I accepted with honor. I look forward working with an enthusiastic and dedicated membership.

The Auxiliary continues to carry out our mission to honor our veterans and give aid and comfort to them and families. Also, we work to promote patriotism and to record the history of the 29th Division.

Great societal changes have occurred in the last few decades, in communications, transportation, technology, family life and the workplace. They have had a strong effect on both active military and veterans' organizations. The ending of the cold war and rise of global terrorism have made necessary many calls to active duty of reserve forces, both overseas and at home, resulting in a need for increased services. As a result of these great changes, we actively seek and employ new and varied methods to meet these needs.

Thus, we promote the Association and our Auxiliary. With the benefits of membership, we offer opportunities, to advertise and share good times with our soldiers and their families, giving our troops a cheerful send off to their hazardous missions, and a warm and loving welcome upon their return. For those who must remain at home, perhaps trying to cope with family problems, there is good counsel, helping hands, and access to service organizations. In sudden emergencies, we can often be the difference between despair and hope. For many of us have faced such challenges in the past, and with the help of wise and timely assistance have overcome them.

For these reasons, the Auxiliary has joined the age of technology granting us better communication and, greater access to ideas and activities within our membership. One is now able to find the Auxiliary on **FACEBOOK** and an [Auxiliary link](#) on www.29thpost64.org. Visit the sites and learn about the continuing activities of the Auxiliary. Information is also available on how one can become a supporter or a member, thus enabling the Auxiliary to broaden our mission.

*Juanita King
President, National Auxiliary*

Initial report of the Futures Committee

On the 7th of May 2013, National Commander Joseph Zang reformed the Futures Committee as a Permanent Standing Committee of the National Executive Committee and appointed David Ginsburg as the Chairman. The purpose of the Committee is to:

1. Increase membership in the Association
2. Increase the amount of active members (i.e. members that actually attend Post meetings or events)
3. Strengthen Posts with NEC resources and assets

For those that don't know the Chairman, David Ginsburg is the Commander of Post 110 in Pikesville, MD. He is in his 3rd year as Commander and previously served the Post as Vice Commander and Sergeant at Arms. David was a forward observer in the 110th FA, and worked with all 4 battalions of the 175th INF and 115 INF at various points of time as a Fire Support Sergeant.

The Committee was formed with the following members: National Commander Joe Zang, NED John Wilcox, PNC Bob Moscatti, PNC Ivan Dooley, National Senior Vice Commander Jack Kutcher, National Adjutant Will Mund, and PNC Dick Smith.

The main purpose of the Committee is to combat the following challenges: 1) declining membership 2) aging membership 3) lack of direct contact with existing National Guard units; and 4) determining and educating people on unit lineage and their ties to the 29th Division.

The main way we will combat these trends is to make it integrate better with existing units and to make it easier for people to join the Association.

With an original idea by Colonel Shettle of Post 72, we have created and launched an Embedded Program. We have Association members regularly visiting units and armories throughout Maryland and the program is unveiling in Virginia as we speak. We have contacts regularly visiting the following armories: Annapolis, 5th Regiment Armory, Cade/Winchester, Catonsville, Cascade, Dundalk, Easton, Edgewood, Elkton, Ellicott City, Frederick, Glen Burnie, Hagerstown, Havre De Grace, Parkville, Pikesville, Reisterstown, Ruhl Armory, Salisbury, Towson, and Westminster. In Virginia, it is unveiled in Winchester and Norfolk.

We still have openings in Maryland for Embedded Contacts at Greenbelt, Laurel, and La Plata

We will be unveiling the program in late 2013 in Virginia at the Staunton and Christiansburg/Blacksburg armories.

The primary purpose of the program is to recruit new full members. In addition, we are arming our Contacts with a new status called "Complimentary Members". If a person is interested but on the fence, we will ship them electronic copies of the 29er for up to a year and then leverage the termination of their free subscription into them joining as a full member.

In the first 45 days of the Program, we have recruited 22 new Complimentary Members and 1 full member.

The 2nd mission of the Committee is to make it easier to join the Association. One of the ways we are looking at is to make it possible to join through electronic payment – either credit card or debit card. Posts 110 and 64 are already allowing members to join or pay their dues electronically and Post 3 in Canada is about to launch it.

In the future, Posts will be able to opt in to having a PayPal button on the National Site so that people can join their posts directly and pay electronically. We believe it will be much easier to recruit younger members if they are able to pay this way and the Association does not have to rely on them actually going home and mailing out a check – something the younger generation is loath to do.

The last mission is to come up with specific solutions for unique Post problems. An example is Post 3, based in Canada. The membership was having a problem paying their dues in US dollars, and National was having a nightmare receiving Canadian dollars and converting it to US currency. We have now successfully launched the ability for the Canada Post 3 Commander to pay per capita dues directly to National by paying the newly established National PayPal account. Not only is this convenient to Post 3, but it makes it possible for them to pay in US dollars from the get go.

Going forward, every issue of the 29er will have an update on what has happened with the Futures Committee since the previous issue was published.

Here is a list of other initiatives the Committee is working on:

1. The ability for people to donate electronically directly to the 29er Fund on the National Site.
2. The ability of Posts to opt in to receiving membership and dues payments electronically and have it hosted on the National Site – so posts will not have to pay to host their own websites.
3. The ability to order property from the National Site and pay for it with credit or debit cards.
4. The ability to buy property at Region Meetings and the Convention using credit or debit cards.

In summary, the purpose of the Futures Committee is to grow the Association and bring in a whole new generation of members in and make them active members of our Posts. If you have any suggestions or ideas, please do not hesitate to approach a member of the Committee.

Submitted by Committee Chairman David Ginsburg

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

They are greatly appreciated and help keep the magazine coming.

Please continue to support our upcoming issues. Donations can be sent to:

PNC NED John E. Wilcox, Jr., P.O. Box 1546, Frederick, MD 21702-0546

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

IMPORTANT NOTICE

We, Editor William Mund, and Editor Emeritus Donald McKee, have enjoyed our many, many years of service to the association and its members. It is not an easy job but we do treasure our brief respites between issues. As age takes its toll, we hope to continue in our quest to put out a quality piece.

One of the items that we have chosen to highlight are the wartime stories of our WWII veterans and now, similar accounts of those 29ers who have served overseas since then. These, we feel make our 29er recognized as one of the best of all military magazines. However, we must stress again that when you send these in, we are not able to handle multiple pages of typed text. Even though the industry likes to play up their computer scanning abilities, they really are not effective in going from typed versions to the format we need for our page composition and printing. We have had to resort to retyping it in WORD for the shorter pieces. We no longer have this inclination.

So, we ask that in your submission of veteran's stories that you need to find someone who can type it in WORD, or it cannot be used. Once it's in WORD it can be sent to us via the internet and our processing can go forward with dispatch.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. For now, computer users, this means finding a family member or a friend to assist. We need your stories. Let's hope that we can move forward in the continuation of our 25 year old publication record.

Also, current copyright laws prevent the Editorial Staff of the *Twenty-Niner* from reprinting any article and/or photograph that has already appeared in other publications such as newspapers or magazines. Please do not submit these articles or photos for publication in the *Twenty-Niner*.

Mund appointed Editor/Publisher of *The Twenty-Niner*



Photo by Colleen Green, Post 94

William Mund (left), takes over for PNC Don McKee as Editor/Publisher of the *Twenty-Niner*. PNC McKee (right), was named *Editor Emeritus*.

The 29th Division Association Inc. is pleased to announce the appointment of William S. Mund, Jr., as Editor/Publisher of the association's publication *The Twenty-Niner*.

Will, as he prefers to be called, was appointed by National Commander John F. "Jack" Kutcher at the National Executive Committee meeting on 13 October 2013. He takes over for PNC Donald McKee who did not seek reappointment.

Mund has been working as assistant editor for the past 4 years. He brings 33 years of experience as a newspaper publication printer to our association. He also serves as Adjutant at the National and Region level.

After graduation from high school, he began working in the composing room of the *Baltimore Sun* in 1968 at the age of 17. As the printing technology evolved, so too did his knowledge and expertise. "When I

started there, they still used linotype machines, (hot metal printing), when I retired in 2001, computer pagination of the pages had become a reality", he said.

In January of 1969, Mund enlisted in B Company, 115th Infantry, Maryland Army National Guard (MDARNG). He trained as a "Light Weapons Infantryman" at Fort Polk, Louisiana. He was honorably discharged in 1975.

After a break in service of 8 years, Mund enlisted again in 1983. In 1984, he transferred to the Virginia Army National Guard and the newly reactivated 29th Infantry Division (Light) Headquarters, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. His duty there was as an Executive Administrative Assistant to the Chief of Staff and Commanding General.

In 1987, Mund transferred back to the MDARNG headquarters at the Fifth Regiment Armory and finished his military career in 1994 retiring as a Staff Sergeant.

Doc's Corner:

In the upcoming Spring issue there will be a biography of COL Wm. Bernhard, a true old soldier who never faded away. **Don't forget to get your Flu shot!**

**By the
National Surgeon
Dr. Frank T. Barranco, Sr. MD
Post #110**



1-116th Infantry recognized as top Army Guard battalion in the country

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Lt. Col. Allan Carter and Command Sgt. Maj. Ricky Kiser represented the Soldiers of the Lynchburg-based 1st Battalion, 116th Infantry Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team and received the Walter T. Kerwin, Jr., Readiness Award recognizing them as the most combat-ready Army National Guard battalion in the country Oct. 21, 2013, at the Association of the United States Army Guard and Reserve Breakfast in Washington, D.C. General Daniel B. Allyn, commander of United States Army Forces Command, and retired Lt. Gen. Roger C. Schultz presented the award. Carter commanded the battalion during the training year recognized by the award, and Kiser currently serves as the battalion's command sergeant major.

AUSA, along with the National Guard Association of the United States and Reserve Officers Association, presents the award each year to the most outstanding Army National Guard and Army Reserve units. The Chief of National Guard Bureau selects the Army National Guard winner. The 99th Regional Support Command received the award for the Army Reserve.

"Congratulations to this year's Walter T. Kerwin, Jr., Readiness Awards recipients recognizing these two extraordinary Guard and Reserve units that have led the way in training readiness over the past year," Allyn said. "The plaques are appropriately engraved 'These Citizen Soldiers have been chosen as the nation's best.'"

Evaluation criteria for the Kerwin include the areas of assigned personnel strength, percentage of personnel qualified in their duty position, attendance at monthly drill weekends and annual training, individual weapons qualification scores and physical fitness test scores. Battalions also must have an effective maintenance program for all units and must achieve readiness objectives as outlined by U.S. Forces Command.

For the 2012 training year, the battalion maintained above 100 percent strength and 95 percent trained in duty military occupational speciality as well as 99 percent individual weapons qualification and 100 percent crew served weapons qualification.

"I continue to be very impressed by the hard work that goes into the high state of readiness maintained by the Virginia National Guard," said Virginia Secretary of Public Safety Marla Graff Decker after the award was announced in April. "The national-level recognition is just another example of how the Virginia Guard ranks among the best in the country, and it should inspire further confidence in the Guard's already well-earned reputation that we can count on them to rapidly respond and to assist citizens of the Commonwealth when called to duty by the Governor. Our Guard continues to demonstrate its tremendous capabilities to support domestic operations as well as its federal mission of military operations around the world."

Several of the battalion's companies were also recognized earlier in the year for training excellence. The Lynchburg-based Headquarters Company and the Christiansburg-based Company C earned the Excellence in Training Award, and the Headquarters Company, Company C and the Pulaski-based Company D earned the Superior Unit Award.

To earn the Excellence in Training Award, a unit must have 90 percent of all personnel qualified in their military occupational speciality, have 95 percent of all personnel present for annual

training or receive constructive credit for AT attendance, maintain monthly drill attendance of 90 percent, have 95 percent of all assigned personnel qualify with their assigned weapon, have 95 percent of all crews qualify on their assigned crew-served weapons, have 90 percent of all assigned personnel pass the Army Physical Fitness Test and pass the Organizational Inspection Program in all training categories.

To earn the Superior Unit Award, a unit must maintain an assigned strength of 95 percent of authorized each month of the training year for which being nominated, maintain monthly drill attendance of 95 percent, attain annual training attendance of 95 percent, have 95 percent of all assigned personnel qualify with their assigned weapon and have 90 percent of all assigned personnel pass the Army Physical Fitness Test.

The Kerwin award was named for retired Gen. Walter T. Kerwin, Jr., who served as the first commander of United States Forces Command and also as Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army from 1974 to 1978. Kerwin was a strong advocate of the "One Army," or "Total Army," concept that recognized the important role of the National Guard and U. S. Army Reserve. The plans and programs he set in motion resulted in a significant improvement in the readiness of reserve components.

By Cotton Puryear, Virginia National Guard Public Affairs

Dr. Baumgarten recognized by Masons for 60 years service



Dr. Harold Baumgarten (left), was recognized for 60 years of long and faithful service to Freemasonry by the Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of Florida. The presentation was made at Ribault Lodge #272 F&AM located at Jacksonville Beach, FL on Tuesday, 13 August 2013. With him in the photo above is Most Worshipful Danny R. Griffith.

Dr. Baumgarten retold the story of his first hours on Omaha Beach and clearly recalling the names and home towns of those KIA in and near his arms. His pride in service to his country, the 29th Division and Freemasonry are the cornerstones of his life.

What else do you do as National Executive Director??

This has been an extremely busy couple of months for me. It seems as though there's always something going on that I need to be involved in, or at least want knowledge of. The problem with this philosophy, is that there's a lot going on within the Association and only so many hours in the day.

I suppose much of the concern was generated by the fact that I served as the Chairman of the National Convention Committee this year. While I have served in some capacity on many convention committees in the past, this has been one of the few times when I had the responsibility of chairing the program and taking on a lot more responsibility. The second and perhaps the most challenging problem is that I am a worrier. I can find the least little thing that doesn't really make a lot of difference and lose hours of sleep because of it. I'm sure a good psychiatrist could find something in that story.

While I have just accepted a new appointment to this position for another year, I am trying desperately to back away from some other tasks in which I play a large part. I am now in my 13th year as Editor of the Maryland Region newsletter, "The Chin Strap." A couple months ago I requested the newly elected Region Commander to try and find someone who might be interested in replacing me in the position. A global email message was also sent to those folks who receive the Chin Strap electronically to let them know about the position opening. To date, no response has been received from either source.

The newsletter is published once a month and normally contains 3 back-to-back pages for a total of 6. A good percentage of this space is filled with a standard format that can be followed every month. This involves items such as the "Spiritual Corner" which is prepared each month by our National Chaplain, Rev. John Schildt. Another partial page is taken up by the monthly meeting schedules of each of the Maryland Region posts. These are furnished by the Post Adjutants and Commanders. I have for many years prepared a page titled, "The Lighter Side" that contains jokes and/or funny stories, taken mainly from the internet or from some of my email buddies. The Region Commander always provides a report as well as information from some of the posts. One of the main things is the collection and acknowledgement of donations from the many generous donors who read the newsletter. These funds are then turned over to the Maryland Region Finance Officer once a month.

So that's pretty much it in a nutshell. It's not a tough job, just a little time consuming. If anyone feels they might be interested, please contact Region Commander Robert Wisch at 410-255-1565 or by email at lrswisch@comcast.net.

One of the other most pressing jobs in addition to my position as National Executive Director, is that of Post 78 Adjutant. This is a position I have held for 19 years, simply because no one else wants to do it. As Post Adjutant, I spend a lot of time initiating and answering correspondence. I also try to the best of my ability, to participate in most of the post projects. My wife Chris and I took upon ourselves many years ago, the job of coordinating the three social events the post conducts each year.



Photo by William Mund

PNC/NED Wilcox presenting PNC Joe Zang with his Past National Commander's" pin at the business meeting on 12 October 2013 in Virginia Beach, VA.

To help alleviate much of the work, Chris has maintained the roster for the post, as well as preparing and mailing membership cards for many years. I also prepare a quarterly Post 78 newsletter.

Chris used to photocopy the 6 page newsletter four times each year. However, since Post 78 has grown to be one of the largest posts in the Association, we now have the photocopying done by a professional print shop. However, she and I still fold and stuff the roughly 230 copies and take them to the Post Office for mailing. In addition, Chris maintains and prepares a documented financial report that goes to our CPA at the end of each year.

In 1996, Post 78 initiated a Life Membership strictly for Post members. The one-time fee was \$125.00 and all money collected was placed into Certificates of Deposit. At that time, the interest rate on CDs was about 5 to 5 1/2 percent and the member's per capita dues were paid by the interest gained from the CDs. Unfortunately, as we gained more and more Life Members and interest rates began to decline, we were forced to discontinue selling this type membership. While we still honor those who paid for this membership, we stopped selling them about 2 years ago.

This has given you just a capsulated vision of how I spend my time. Although my duties as NED consume the priority of my time, I still manage to uphold some additional responsibilities for other entities in the Association. Believe it or not, I even find time now and then to take my wife to dinner.

PNC John E. Wilcox, Jr.

POST HAPPENINGS

MARYLAND REGION

Baltimore Post #1

Post #1 is considered the Cradle of the 29th Division Association, was chartered on 21 June 1921, making it the oldest Post in the Association. Through the years it has gone from extreme prosperity with well over 100 members to today when it is barely holding its own. It once occupied prime real estate in downtown Baltimore. Today it has as its headquarters the home address of its current leader – NSVC John Vaccarino, in Ellicott City, Maryland. It boasts of a following of loyal members some of whom have paid dues for the next 4 years. Their addresses encompass many States; additionally, three live in Europe.

Tragically, in February 2013 it lost its Commander and Past National Commander Sam Krauss. Sam, considered the Patriarch of Post 1, served as its Commander, Adjutant, and Treasurer for many years and we are most thankful that he was able to single-handedly keep the Post together. In the next stage of existence, plans are underway to build up Post 1's membership. Recruiting, and Retention, are its main goals. Only time will tell if we are successful. Its latest "recruit" is an associate member with prior service in the US Navy.

Submitted by NSVC I. John Vaccarino

Jerome L. Day Post #48

In August, the post held its annual Social Meeting at Parks Landing Seafood Restaurant in Westminster. The event was well attended, including representatives from Maryland Region and the National Association.

Dave Ginsburg, Commander, of Post 110 attended and gave a presentation of the Association's futuristic programs including the embedded program with active Guard units.

In the October edition of the Chin Strap, it was mentioned that the active members of Post 48 were planning to sponsor a special project in remembrance of the now deactivated Alpha Battery, 110th Field Artillery that was based out of the MG Henry C. Evans Armory, Westminster. A bronze plaque is planned to be installed in the armory pending final review and approval by the Military Department. It will be dedicated to the veterans of Alpha Battery who had occupied the armory from 1980 to 2009. Once the renovations to the armory are completed in October 2014, it will be known as MG Henry C. Evans Readiness Center and occupied by the 29th Military Police.

On Sunday, October 20th, a well attended social gathering of veterans from Alpha Battery, representatives from the Maryland Region and National was held at the American Legion in Westminster to promote membership to the 29th Division Association and to discuss the anticipated dedication of the plaque in the Readiness Center.

Colonel Samuel Riley, 291st Army Liaison Team Commander, Dave Ginsberg, Post 110 Commander and 1st Sgt. Bill Rosier

(Retired) spoke at the gathering and encouraged them to join the 29th Division Association. As a result of the social gathering, Post 48 welcomes nine veterans of Alpha Battery who will become members of Post 48 effective January 2014.

Post 48 acknowledges the continued support of the Region and the National Association that contributes to the success of this membership drive.

Active members of Post 48 have embarked on the Association's embedded program, to align with active Guard units and to promote new membership from these units into the 29th Division Association.

Submitted by Commander Frank Rauschenberg

Cresap's Rifles Post #78

The past several months have been busy ones for the Post 78 members. Following our Spring Fling Dinner in April, we began looking forward to the Annual Family Picnic that took place on August 24th. We entertained roughly 80 people this year when we again shared a great menu of fried chicken, baked ham and all the side dishes that go along. This is also the time when we honor our deceased veterans and memorialize one each year by awarding a plaque and certificate to the widow or other nearest living relative. We also hang a duplicate plaque on the "Wall of Remembrance" in our meeting room at the old armory in Frederick. We alternate this memorial each year between a World War II veteran and a younger National Guard member. This year we honored Sgt. Millard "Mick" Mastrino, a former soldier of A-1-115th Infantry, MDARNG.

In October, we held our annual crab feed where a crowd of 107 people consumed 8 gallons of crab soup, nearly 7 bushels of steamed crabs, 200 pieces of fried chicken and various salads and other sundries. The great ladies of Post 78 never fail to come through with a large supply of cakes, cookies and pie for desert.

We are now preparing a project that will have Post 78 members delivering some needed items to all the veterans in 5 Frederick City Nursing homes this year at Christmas. We thank Ken Wheatley and Bob Jones of Eastern Shore Post 88 for their guidance in getting us started with this endeavor.

Submitted by Adjutant PNC John Wilcox

Eastern Shore Post #88

Eastern Shore Post 88 had a successful Family Crab Feast and Picnic on Oct 5, at the Cambridge VFW Post. We had good attendance of 100 for the crab feast including, Senior Vice Commander Jack Kutcher (now National Commander) & his wife Maxine. We also had honored guests & Post 88 members LTG (Ret) James F. Fretterd and LTC (Ret) & WWII veteran Charles Moore. Post 88 member Ann Bloom won the 50/50 raffle and donated her winnings back to the Post Welfare Fund. Everyone enjoyed crabs, burgers, hot dogs, salads and desserts. Post 88

POST HAPPENINGS

thanks members Ken and Janet Wheatley who Chair (and do all the work) the annual Crab Feast event that we enjoy.

The Post is actively working on fundraising and final approvals on a new WWI monument in Cambridge, MD to be dedicated on May 26, 2014. The Monument honors 5 Dorchester Countians (4 of which were 29ers) who received the DSC in WWI. The 29th Division Association will be prominent on the Monument and a big part of the dedication ceremony. Invitations to attend and requests for assistance at the dedication will be forthcoming once we are past the final approvals.

Post 88 supported the Eastern Shore Veterans Recognition Committee for their "Veterans Day" activities at Sailwinds Park in Cambridge on Sept 7, 2013. Post 88 Treasurer Ed Lloyd is an active team member on the Veterans Recognition Committee.

Our next regular meeting focusing on Veterans is on November 13, 2013 at 1:00pm at the Cambridge - Dorchester County Airport in Cambridge. Eastern Shore Post 88 is pleased to report that we have 164 regular and associate members and 30 Ladies of the Post Members actively promoting the 29th Division Association on the Eastern Shore.

Submitted by Commander Bob Jones

Larkspur Post #110

Post 110 hosted an evening event in August to honor our Post members that have deployed during the Global War on Terror. We had members speak on the Gitmo, Afghanistan, and Iraq deployments in addition to domestic deployments immediately following 9/11.

On November 23rd, the Post is having its annual Memorial Service and BBQ to honor those Redlegs who gave their lives in World War II. We will read the names of those that died in WWII, ring a bell following each name and then play taps. We will also read the names of all Post members that have passed in the previous 12 months.

December will be our annual Christmas Luncheon at the NCO Club at our normal 2nd Wednesday of the month meeting.

Lastly, we want to congratulate Post 110 member Joseph Zang on his enormously successful term as National Commander.

Submitted by Commander David Ginsburg

Lantern Post #729

Our annual Picnic was held at the Savoy Rest. On 21 July.

A funeral ceremony was performed in Honor of our departed brother, former 29er, & WW-II Veteran, Ken Wishard.

The participation in a Memorial Service for a Korean War Vet whose recently found remains in Korea, were interred in Rest Haven Cemetery Hagerstown, MD on 27 August 2013.

And lastly, a parade Honoring all Veterans in Williamsport, MD on 12 October 2013.

Coming up. The Alsasha Mummies Halloween Parade on 26 October. The Veterans Day Memorial Service performed at

Hawley Memorial Presbyterian Church in Blue Ridge Summit, PA on 10 November. The Wreath Laying Ceremonies on 11 November at the Hagerstown Court House as well as, The Memorial Park in Smithburg MD. Also Christmas Parades in Waynesboro, PA, and Mercersburg, PA.

Submitted by Commander Randall Beamer

SOUTHERN REGION

Post #64

National D-Day Memorial Celebration

Post 64 gathered at the Annual National D-Day Memorial Celebration held in Bedford, Virginia to observe the D-Day Ceremony of which was held inside due to rain.

Others in attendance were members from the French Embassy in Washington, DC, LTC Helen Bowman, of the British Army, MG Daniel Long Jr., the TAG of Virginia and MG Charles Whittington Jr., the Commander of the 29th Infantry



Photo by Nancy J. Page

Frances "Rusty" Rice, and Bernard Marie at the Annual D-Day Celebration held in Bedford, VA. on 6 June 2013.

Division. We were also pleased to see that Joe Zang, National Commander 29th Division Association, was able to join us this year.

The Grand Finale of the day was the 29th Annual D-Day WWII Dinner, hosted by Bernard Marie, at the Sheraton in which John Kessler, Mills Hubert Hobbs and Chuck Neighbor, all from Roanoke, VA. WWII Veterans of the 29th Division D-Day liberation of St. Lo, Battle of the Bulge, were Knighted and presented with the French Legion of Honor by COL Jacques Aragonés, Military Attaché to the French Embassy in Washington, DC.

Leading up to this memorial event WWII Veterans shared their experiences of war with us:

Don Englar, a pilot of the Higgins boat at Omaha on June 6, 1944. Frances "Rusty" Rice, an army nurse in a field hospital at the Battle of the Bulge. John Furrow, a survivor whom served aboard the USS Franklin when struck by a Japanese Dive Bomber. It was a very wonderful dinner shared by 300 family, friends and comrades.

Fort Pickett — Change of Command

On June 20th 2013, several members of Post 64 traveled to Fort Pickett to witness the Change of Command Ceremony of 1/116.

Post 64 was greeted at the main gate and escorted to the parade field by members of 1/116. Once there Post 64 among other officials, officers, enlisted and family members watched as the Outgoing Commander LTC Alan Carter received the battalion colors from CSM Ricky Kiser. LTC Alan Carter then passed the colors to COL John Epperly whom in turn passed the colors to MAJ Michael Martin, who is the Incoming Commander, whom in turn passed the colors back to CSM Ricky Kiser.

Post #64 BBQ Potluck Picnic

Post 64 hosted a BBQ potluck picnic Saturday September 14th at the Lakeland Masonic Lodge in Roanoke, Virginia.

The fun started Friday, September 13, when Bill and Juanita King along with Frank and Nancy Dillon met at Sam's Club to purchase the ingredients needed for potato salad and Cole slaw. When it came to the selection of potatoes, Bill's vote for russet potatoes was trumped three to one for red potatoes. We did not want to peel a lot of potatoes only wash, chop and boil. Upon bringing our booty back to the lodge, we were joined by Carolyn Sink with the fun of washing, chopping and boiling 30 lbs of red potatoes. The final result was a very delicious potato salad. Saturday morning prep was shared with Jay Kincannon whom brought his WWII era jeep for display at the roadside edge of the parking lot along with the placement of 29th Division Association flags. Kitchen prep was shared with Jennett Dunman in the making of tea, coffee and lemonade along with the final tweaking of the buffet set up. 12 p.m. arrived and the lodge was filled with family and friends of all ages engaged in laughter and reunions.

If you missed this year's BBQ potluck picnic then stay tuned for the date and location of next year's.

Submitted by: Frank and Nancy Dillon

Florida West Post #2

Florida West Post #2 had 15 people attending their meeting held on 10 October at the Red Lobster Restaurant. Several WWII 29th veterans, widows and sons who do not regularly attend meetings were present.

Plans are underway concerning the 6th Annual Special Luncheon tentatively scheduled for 13 or 20 February 2014.

Upcoming meetings for Post 2 are: 14 November, 12 December 2013 and 9 January 2014. at the Red Lobster Restaurant, in Sarasota, Florida.

Submitted by Commander Taylor Thomas

Post #5



Photo by William Mund

While at the recent convention, on 11 October 2013, several National officers traveled to the Post #5 Headquarters at the 1-111th FA armory in Virginia Beach, VA. The purpose of the visit was the "Installation of Officers" by Commander Joe Zang. Pictured above, left to right: Commander Zang; NSVC Kutcher; Post #5 Commander John Lane, Vice Commander Bob Eldredge; Secretary Janice Hess and Randy Hess.

Celebrate

the 70th Anniversary of D-Day at The National D-Day Memorial Bedford, Virginia

June 6-8, 2014 - A Weekend of D-Day

On Friday, June 6, 2014, join us for a commemoration ceremony at 11AM. Other activities include veterans oral history stations, a USO show at 2PM, a reunion tent, and displays by living historians. At dusk, join us for a Canteen and an outdoor showing of *Casablanca*.

On Saturday, June 7 at 10AM, the community of Bedford will host a 1940s parade. Later that evening is a performance by the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra at the Memorial.

On Sunday, June 8 at 11AM conclude the weekend of the 70th anniversary events with an authentic WWII field chapel ecumenical service. A unique and moving experience.

**GPS Address: 3 Overlord Circle
Bedford, Virginia
P.O. Box 77, Bedford, Virginia 24523**

800-351-DDAY ★ www.dday.org

It Won't Be Long

Post 72 member Joe Balkoski is now writing his fifth and final volume in the history of the 29th Infantry Division during World War II. What follows is Joe's Chapter Three from that book, entitled "They Who Have Borne the Battle: The 29th Infantry Division Victorious."

Joe's previous book (Volume IV in the series), "Our Tortured Souls: The 29th Infantry Division in the Rhineland," has just been published. It covers the period from November 16, 1944 to December 31, 1944, when the 29th participated in a major Ninth Army offensive to the Roer. If you wish to obtain a copy of "Our Tortured Souls" direct from Joe or provide comments, suggestions, or corrections for his newest effort, please contact him at 6509 Old Orchard Rd., Baltimore MD 21239, or 29division@gmail.com (e-mail) or 443-564-4279. Thanks, and... 29, Let's Go!

When the peculiar message, "No soap on the party," was received by a mystified clerk at the 29th Division war room at 4:50 PM on February 9, 1945, General Gerhardt promptly ordered the word passed down the chain of command to every 29er: Operation *Grenade*, the momentous offensive that would carry the 29th Division to the Rhine River, was postponed. Fretful infantrymen, who wondered whether they would survive the top brass's latest idea, would in all likelihood see a few more sunrises. Saturday, February 10, the day Gerhardt had imagined would long be remembered in World War II history books, was abruptly transformed into just another humdrum day on the Roer, little different than any of the others over the past two months except for the vital detail that the raging river separating the GIs from the enemy was two feet deeper and noticeably wider than it had been the night before. Crossing the river in either direction would be impossible for the foreseeable future, a point the relieved 29ers in the first assault waves could not fail to notice.

The 29th Division was about to play an entirely familiar role, one it had performed several times since D-Day, smack in the middle of an army-level offensive involving hundreds of thousands of GIs whose actions over the next few days would be detailed on countless front-page stories in stateside newspapers. This one, Operation *Grenade*, was different because if the brass's confidence was credible it could be the 29th Division's last act of World War II. According to *Grenade's* exhaustive plan book, the 29th, along with three other Ninth Army infantry divisions and two others from First Army shielding the Ninth's right flank, would spearhead the assault across the Roer, assisted by more than 2,000 artillery pieces of 76-millimeter size or higher—described by a staff officer as "the greatest barrage that the Army has yet put over a small area." On the 29th Division front, riflemen with modest skill in mathematics calculated gleefully that for every ten yards of front, they would be backed up by a single gun or howitzer, totaling more than 350 in support of the 29th alone. That would be a prop the 29ers had never experienced at that level: even the pre-assault naval bombardment on D-Day would look small in comparison.

After smashing through the Germans' Roer defenses, *Grenade* plans called for the 29th Division and most of the rest of Ninth Army, including three highly mobile armored divisions, to swing nearly 90-degrees to their left and advance in a northeasterly direction toward the Rhine near Düsseldorf with the ultimate

goal of joining Monty's Twenty-First Army Group as it attacked southward in Operation *Veritable*. The First Army divisions supporting Simpson's right flank would simultaneously drive relentlessly eastward, striving to seize the historic Rhine city of Cologne. If both armies pressed forward rapidly, and the Germans failed to organize a coherent defense short of the Rhine, the Americans might get lucky and seize intact one or more of the ten Rhine bridges in Ninth Army's sector. In that event the end of the war could be even closer than Ike's greatest optimists dared to dream.

The plan was undeniably bold; should it succeed, the Americans would achieve a breakthrough, shortly followed by a breakout, on a more impressive scale than last summer's Operation *Cobra* in Normandy. Even better, the flat Rhineland landscape with its notable network of modern roadways, would be a much more suitable place than the constrictive Norman *bocage* for the Americans' highly mechanized army to practice an even more refined version of blitzkrieg than its inventors.

To enhance its chance of success, the 29th Division and all other outfits involved in *Grenade's* initial assault, must practice that cardinal principle of military science, concentration of force. On February 4, Simpson had reassigned the 29th from Gillem's XIII Corps back to the organization to which the division had belonged in all of the major battles it had fought in Germany since September, McLain's XIX Corps. (Gerhardt must not have viewed that development favorably, as he and McLain maintained a much more frosty relationship than the warm rapport he had maintained with Gillem.) On February 10, Gillem's and McLain's two corps, consisting of nearly 200,000 men, were packed into a frontage of only fifteen miles, just six more miles than the 29th Division alone had covered for most of December and all of January. By that same date, Gerhardt's sector had been narrowed to under four miles, with the equally compressed 102nd Division on his left and his longtime battle partner dating back to Normandy, the 30th Division, on his right.

Simpson studied military history keenly and modeled his generalship not only on the notable warrior he had learned of in his West Point history classes, Robert E. Lee, but also on Edmund Allenby, the dynamic British cavalryman who had carried out a highly successful campaign in the Middle East against the Turks in the closing months of World War I. According to Simpson, Allenby "didn't devil his staff to death. He laid down the general

policy he wanted to follow and gave them all the instructions they needed, and then let them go ahead and do it without sitting on top of them and trying to do it all himself like a lot of commanders do or have done. Lee also did that... He only intervened when it was necessary. I suppose there are lots of times when some commanders look over a fellow's shoulder too damn much."

Simpson rarely deviated from that policy in Ninth Army, and in *Grenade* he never interfered with his two corps and eleven division commanders, including Gerhardt, in the planning process for the Roer crossing and the subsequent exploitation to the Rhine. Although pep talks were not a strong component of Simpson's repertoire, he visited the 115th Infantry's command post in Aldenhoven on February 8 to meet with Gerhardt and his regimental commanders and emphasize the significance of the upcoming offensive. Gerhardt's minions, a Simpson aide related, "showed themselves thoroughly prepared for the operation, confident and sure of success... Captured prisoners seemed to confirm the fact that only light opposition might be expected at the initial crossings. The extensive entrenchments overlooking the east river bank were still an unknown factor. Heavy fighting was to be expected when [German] counterattacking reserves were thrown in." Simpson emerged from this meeting the beneficial recipient of a reverse pep talk courtesy of Charlie Gerhardt. "I was impressed with his cheerful and confident manner and attitude, so much so that later on, whenever I myself felt blue or downcast or doubtful, I made it a point to visit General Gerhardt knowing that his cheerful, confident air and determined outlook would cheer me up tremendously, with the result that I always left him refreshed."

One of those highly competent subordinates whom Simpson knew would carry out his orders faithfully was Col. Richard Nicholas, Ninth Army's chief engineer. The fifty-four-year-old Nicholas, who graduated fourth in the West Point class of 1913, was the first member of Simpson's staff to discern that the enemy would rely on manipulation of the Roer dams' discharge valves rather than outright demolition of the dams to impede the Americans' inevitable assault across the river. In the aftermath of the 78th Division's capture of Schwammenauel dam on February 9, Simpson and Nicholas conferred to review the data on the depth, width, and current of the Roer, and although the general harbored some hope that he could initiate *Grenade* within the week, Nicholas calculated that the river status would change little until the upstream dams emptied nearly all the vast amounts of water stored in their reservoirs. If Nicholas's estimate was correct, the river would return to its normal placid status no earlier than February 24, and the saturated ground on either side of the Roer would not dry out until long after that. Later events proved, as Simpson asserted, "He hit it right on the nail."

The men of the 29th Division must stand down, in all probability for more than two weeks. "Morale was at a high peak," a member of the 115th Infantry commented, "and the officers and men, thoroughly briefed as to their job, were ready to go ahead and complete it... The men felt that they could accomplish almost anything. The postponement caused a lowering of that spirit, and any coming attack was an anticlimax." Nevertheless, if practice makes perfect, the postponement provided the 29th Division the opportunity to come as close to perfection as a U.S. Army com-

bat outfit possibly could. Gerhardt's infantrymen got even more used to lugging their 410-pound flat-bottomed assault boats across the sodden terrain, clambering in—one 12-man rifle squad and three engineers per boat—and paddling furiously across a diminutive waterway or pond somewhere behind the front before clambering out again. Gerhardt even trucked as many of his infantry battalions as he could over thirty miles of rutted roads back to Visé, Belgium, where the nearby Meuse River's width and swift current much more closely matched the existing conditions of the Roer than a mere stream or pond.

Once more, 29th Division artillerymen pored over fire plans, the most comprehensive they had compiled so far in the war. To stockpile ammunition for the big push, Brig. Gen. William Sands, Gerhardt's top artilleryman, ordered his gunners "to shoot only necessary registrations." The 110th Field Artillery's historian observed, "For the first time in the war, the batteries had practically no firing assignments, and each was maintained only by a small stand-by crew at the guns. One by one the cannoneers took the howitzers out of action for a complete overhaul and repainting." Uncle Charlie always insisted that his men and vehicles must look their best, even in battle, a practice that the 110th adhered to during the postponement: "To insure spic and span condition for all vehicles making the historic river crossing, Sgt. Leroy A. Morris set up his high-pressure washing service at the bridge over the tiny Merz River in front of Merzenhausen." Holbrook Bradley noted in a *Baltimore Sun* article that the artillerymen "have taken advantage of everything available to make living conditions the best possible under the circumstances. Most of the crews by now have dugouts that are fairly comfortable. Sunk shoulder-deep or more in the ground, they are either straw- or wood-lined, roofed over with heavy timbers, boards, and thick layers of dirt or sod... Some of the more industrious members of the sections have taken furniture from the nearby houses and now boast innerspring mattresses, lighting, and even radios. Coal from the cellars of the surrounding villages insures adequate heat and keeps the dugouts dry... [Howitzers] poke their barrels skyward from tightly stretched camouflage nets scattered through the muddy battle-littered fields. There is little sound of combat other than the constant roar of Allied fighter-bombers overhead and the distant roll of cannonading to the north."

No 29th Division unit had more diverse and complex responsibilities for the upcoming offensive than the 121st Engineer Combat Battalion, and the unexpected two-week delay proved a blessing for those overworked sappers on whom the infantrymen wholly depended once Simpson uttered the word "go." The 121st, the proud holder of a prestigious U.S. Army Distinguished Unit Citation for its valorous D-Day deeds, had on January 25 undergone a change of command, but its veteran sappers wondered how the new man, Lt. Col. Raleigh Powell, could possibly fill the shoes of the greatly respected Lt. Col. Robert Ploger, who had taken over the battalion in fall 1943 and quickly transformed it into one of Gerhardt's most efficient outfits. Now Ploger was on his way to the Pentagon to serve at a desk job under General Marshall, and Powell—who just three years in the past had entered active service as a lowly lieutenant—would be tested by a situation just as challenging as Omaha Beach and poles apart from conventional schoolbook solutions at the U.S. Army engi-

neer course at Ft. Belvoir. Described by a reporter with the seemingly contradictory traits, "aggressive and genial," Powell would meet those challenges with the consummate skill of a veteran. His career in the 29th Division, however, would not last long.

In addition to enhancing the infantrymen's skill with assault boats, the engineers' principal challenge, as the 121st's February action report noted, was "maintenance of roads in the division area necessitated by the early heavy thaw. Where formerly had been hard dirt roads there now existed mucky morasses, which required the full employment of all companies of this unit... Company B furnished a detail to demolish buildings and brick walls in the partially destroyed town of Aldenhoven. The purpose was the supply of rubble for road maintenance."

Powell also had to gather vast amounts of equipment near preselected bridge sites, where his men must hastily begin to erect foot bridges and much more complex pontoon bridges over the Roer within minutes of *Grenade's* jump-off. That preparation involved the hazardous job of clearing hundreds of enemy mines still lingering unseen on the American side of the Roer, as well as the thoroughly depressing task of removing newly discovered American and German corpses still scattered in the fields after the heavy fighting in December. "All of this clearance had to be done during darkness because of the close proximity of the enemy," the 121st's report observed. "Discontinuance of work at times was caused by enemy harassing fire."

The danger of that sort of work was proved just after dark on February 18 when twenty-three-year-old Sgt. Salvatore Pisani, a New Yorker, was helping to remove a body near the bridge site at Hasenfeld *Gut* when he set off a mine. "We lost [Pisani] on a *Schu* mine at the *Gut*," a sapper reported to the war room. "The mine went off in his face. It looked as though the Germans had put more mines around the bodies after they were hit." Pisani survived but never returned to the outfit. (The *Schu* mine reference was probably in error: the enemy's much more devious *Schrapnellmine*, known to the 29ers as a "Bouncing Betty," was the more likely culprit, as it popped out of the ground several feet before detonating.) Two days later, the 29th Division lost another GI when 1st Lt. Roy Parkinson, who in August had joined the 175th Infantry's 3rd Battalion Headquarters Company in Normandy, wandered into an uncleared patch of ground near the Roer and was killed by stepping on a mine—the first battle casualty in the company in fifty-four days. When Gerhardt learned of Parkinson's death, he phoned the 175th's command post and pronounced, "Let's get some accurate daylight reconnaissance and get that [area] taped off."

Throughout the 29th Division's late autumn offensive, which had brought the division to its current stance on the Roer, the 29ers' customary search for high ground on the battlefield had been stymied for the obvious reason that the Rhineland terrain over which the battle was fought was as flat as a pool table. Accordingly, both sides' artillery observers struggled mightily to gain dominant observation of their opponents; on the rare occasions when they succeeded in doing so, they gained it not by seizing elevated terrain but by utilizing battered church steeples and scattered giant coal-slag piles. That situation, however, changed when the 29th reached the Roer, and this time the advantage



**2LT Paul F. Musick,
Company C, 175th Infantry**

was entirely with the enemy. In the zone where the 29th intended to cross the river, between Jülich and Broich, the German-held terrain on the far side of the Roer rose dramatically, forming a two-mile long ridge 800 yards east of the river. In daylight and good weather, enemy troops atop that ridge, 120 feet higher than their opponents, could observe American movements with clarity on the Roer's west side. Indeed, a road junction near Koslar through which processions of American GIs and vehicles regularly traveled on their way to or from the riverfront was such a tempting target for German mortars and artillery that 29ers came to dread passing through that intersection anytime between dawn and dusk.

Powell came up with a remarkably innovative solution to the problem. He suggested that during the hours of darkness his sappers could construct a massive canopy of camouflage netting over the vulnerable junction and all its adjoining roads, thereby depriving enemy observers of their formerly clear sightline and greatly alleviating the lethality of German mortar and artillery fire. Gerhardt enthusiastically supported the scheme, and in four consecutive nights of strenuous work, Company A sappers completed it. According to the 121st's February 1945 action report, "A total of 750 yards of screening was erected, and proved its worth by reducing enemy observed fire to simple interdictory fire."

On February 12—Abraham Lincoln's birthday—Montgomery, Simpson, and McLain traveled in a long caravan of U.S. Army jeeps from Ninth Army headquarters in Maastricht to the 29th Division's command post at Siersdorf castle. A "drenching down-pour" forced the drivers to raise the jeeps' olive-drab canvas rain hoods—a practice strictly forbidden in the 29th Division—and caused the road to turn into "a quagmire." In a courtyard just outside Gerhardt's command post, a group of about one hundred

stalwart 29ers, impeccably dressed in their below-the-knee GI woolen overcoats and deployed in a neat three-sided formation, greeted the brass as the jeep caravan roared up shortly before noon. All eyes were on Monty as the diminutive field marshal, "attired in his familiar jaunty black beret [and] a camouflaged parachutist's jacket," leaped nimbly out of the jeep to accept and return Gerhardt's salute.

Gerhardt had timed a 175th Infantry awards ceremony for the VIPs' arrival, and presently eyes shifted from Monty to a solitary 29er standing at attention in the center of the square, a 20-year-old Georgian named 2nd Lt. Paul Musick, from Company C. Musick, described as "a Georgia cracker if you ever saw one," had recently gained a battlefield commission and was about to be recognized for his November 26 heroics at Bourheim, Germany, by receiving only the thirtieth Distinguished Service Cross awarded within the 29th Division since its initiation to combat on D-Day. (In contrast, the veteran 1st Infantry Division, presumably much more motivated to grant high-level combat decorations, had on D-Day alone gained fifty-three DSCs, second in precedence within the Army to the Medal of Honor.) Simpson pinned the medal on Musick as Gerhardt beamed.

Monty had only recently launched Operation *Veritable*, but four days of hard fighting in the Reichswald forest and the flooded lowlands adjacent to the Rhine and Waal Rivers had failed to crack the enemy defenses and had resulted in what Ike would label "a bitter slugging match." Even worse, Montgomery had envisioned *Veritable* and *Grenade* as a devastating one-two knockout punch, but *Grenade's* postponement had changed everything, allowing the enemy to concentrate mobile reserves against the narrow zone in which the British and Canadian troops were attacking. If those events troubled Monty, however, he did not show it. After the medal ceremony, the legendary field marshal conversed with the young second lieutenant for a minute or two despite the pouring rain. Monty, along with his flock of American general officers, soon repaired to the basement of Siersdorf castle for an elaborate meal courtesy of the 29th Division, served, as a Ninth Army officer noted, "in the luxury of white linen table cloths, sparkling silver service, and fine china. In an excellent mood and talkative, the field marshal apparently enjoyed the fine luncheon greatly."

For the tense 29ers at the front, however, the overriding question remained: when would Simpson initiate *Grenade*? At 6:11 PM on February 17, McLain informed Gerhardt, "It won't be long." But it was indeed long. Ninth Army's chief of staff, Brig. Gen. James Moore, noted that Colonel Nicholas "was the key," adding, "I used to have him in the office about five times a day. He had observers all along the river checking the flow of the water, to determine when we could make a crossing." Everyday harried Ninth Army staff officers pored over Nicholas's latest reports from the riverfront so they could advise the army commander on the optimal day to launch the attack.

Not until a staff conference at 2 PM on February 21 did Ninth Army's journal report: "Predictions look very promising." Thirty minutes later Montgomery arrived at the command post by air and conferred alone with Simpson. The two agreed that *Grenade* would commence "at 0330 on the twenty-third of February." That was one day prior to Nicholas's prophecy that the Roer would

finally subside, but as Moore related, "We deliberately decided we'd take a few losses on the crossing if we could get surprise—which we did. I think we saved quite a lot of lives by doing it that way... [The Germans] knew we were going to come, but thought the following day [February 24]. We did get across and surprise them." As Ninth Army's diary noted, however, "The river banks themselves, where the approaches to the bridges must be constructed, appear to be the worst problem still confronting the army, as they are soft and wet after being weeks under water, and they will require a great amount of engineer work to make them useable."

No 29er would ever think of his long wait for Operation *Grenade* as uneventful. That the Germans still had much life left in them became evident on the morning of February 15, when a stream of enemy V-1 rockets—"six or seven," by Gerhardt's count—passed low over the 29th Division's lines to unknown targets behind the Allies' front, emitting the distinctive reverberation—a sound like intense radio static—to which the 29ers had grown accustomed since autumn. The GIs, however, had never before seen the buzz bombs come over the lines at such a rapid-fire clip; it was not a cheery thought to contemplate that in a matter of minutes, a lot of people would be killed or injured by the V-1s' 2,000-pound warheads. That morning Gerhardt somewhat insensitively remarked to the 116th Infantry's commander, Lt. Col. Sidney Bingham, "Just as long as they keep on going, it will be all right." Where they were going in all likelihood was Antwerp, one hundred miles to the northwest, that Belgian port city on which the Allies' massive logistical effort on the Western Front depended, so thoroughly in fact that Hitler's primary goal in the recent Ardennes offensive had been to capture it. Antwerp, a place *Time* magazine would soon label "The City of Sudden Death," was currently undergoing its worst pounding of the war: more than one-third of the 628 V-1s that impacted in the city fell during the month of February 1945.

When calamity struck the 175th Infantry on February 19, Gerhardt surely speculated on the validity of that old adage that no one in a military outfit should be irreplaceable. Colonel Bill Purnell had been a member of the regiment since 1924 and had commanded it proficiently for the last six months; the general recognized that despite Purnell's field-grade rank and pre-war career as a Harvard-trained lawyer, he was anything but a desk soldier. Indeed, no one in the 29th Division had gained more medals than the 41-year-old Purnell: two Silver Stars and six Bronze Stars in eight months. On the afternoon of the nineteenth, Purnell traveled down to the outpost line on the Roer with his driver, T/4 Paul Powell, to adjust mortar fire against some pesky German targets on the river's far side. Army policy did not recommend that colonels in command of 3,100-man regiments carry out that sort of work, but 175th soldiers had become accustomed to seeing Purnell at the front, chatting amicably with the enlisted men—particularly the old-timers of the pre-war Maryland National Guard—and peering intently with binoculars at the enemy lines. Purnell's luck, however, ran out that day. "Just one [German] round came in and killed his driver and wounded him in the ankle, buttocks, and cheek," Gerhardt reported to McLain. "Nothing serious, but they estimate at the clearing station that he will be out for about two months." The 25-year-old Powell was a dyed-in

-the-wool Baltimorean, who in March 1939 had walked just a few blocks from his home in a working-class neighborhood to the majestic Fifth Regiment Armory, signing up with the proud Maryland National Guard outfit in which he would serve for six years until his death in a dismal corner of Germany, loyally serving his commander to the last.

Purnell was about as close to irreplaceable as any man in the 29th Division. In a conversation with McLain on the nineteenth, Gerhardt recommended a West Point comrade and fellow cavalryman, Lt. Col. Alexander George, for the job. George was currently in the replacement pipeline and had just recuperated from a serious eye wound he had suffered on June 17, 1944, during his two-day spell as the 175th's commander in the regiment's epic struggle on Hill 108—Purple Heart Hill—in Normandy. George had also led a battalion of the 132nd Infantry on Guadalcanal, but according to a credible story known to only a few members of the U.S. Army's top brass, George had been relieved on February 7, 1943, due to a self-inflicted wound. George would clearly not do; for the moment, Lt. Col. Arthur Sheppe, the 175th's executive, filled Purnell's slot. Replacing the irreplaceable would be a challenge, but Simpson had to try; the next day he decided on an outsider, 42-year-old Col. Harry McHugh, who had recently recovered from a September 1944 wound suffered in Lorraine when commanding the 318th Infantry, a component of the 80th Infantry Division of Patton's Third Army. Gerhardt ordinarily would have frowned upon a replacement drawn from outside the 29th Division family, but in this instance the pinch-hitter was a fellow West Pointer, class of 1924, with plenty of combat experience.

Powell's death and Purnell's wound from a seemingly random German shell highlighted the fatalistic attitude currently shared by many 29ers. That impalpable attribute known as luck determined your fate, they said; there was no way to tell who had it and who didn't, so why worry about it? How many times had jinxed GIs died from a direct hit on an ostensibly safe foxhole, while others standing in the open during enemy bombardments were untouched? A tragedy suffered by the 29th Division after dark on February 21 did not help to dispel that irrational notion. A platoon of the 115th Infantry's Antitank Company, bivouacked well over a mile behind the front, was resting and eating its rations amid the relatively luxurious comfort of a decrepit Koslar row house cellar when a Luftwaffe bomber came over and dropped two 500-pound bombs on the village. One scored a direct hit on the edifice occupied by the platoon, instantly killing four members and wounding eleven more—more than 10 percent of the company. The four dead were T/5 Glenn Bridges; PFC Robert Arrington; PFC Dayton Davis; and PFC Irving De Shong.

Their numbers had come up, and they would be sorely missed—but as every 29er well understood, the Army would hold no wakes for those poor unfortunate souls.

The 29ers continued to carefully monitor the Roer like a doctor gauging the recovery of a patient. Front-line troops crept down to the riverbank hourly to check the water level on upright measuring sticks, while comrades heaved empty ration cans into the gushing stream to judge its current. One detail was certain, as Bradley noted to his *Baltimore Sun* readers: "There is a touch of

spring in the air." Bradley went on to observe on a visit to the front that 29ers "took a moment out for the first time to relax in the warm sunlight and air their bedding or dry their clothing in the mild breezes. A couple of the more hearty GIs even tried sunbathing in a protected lea... The ground has begun to dry up again, and the mud is disappearing from the streets." Bradley, never one to flinch from visiting the front, made it as far as the forwardmost observation post east of Barmen occupied by the 29th's Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, and wrote: "From the sandbagged CP, where Pvt. Raye Almond of Chicago stood guard, we could survey the ground to the river and see the water spreading back more than a quarter of a mile at a spot normally yards, or slightly more, in width. There was no visible sign of the enemy."



COL William Purnell

Indeed, in the imminent offensive Gerhardt feared the Roer River more than he did the German Army. Two months' worth of patrol reports clearly indicated that enemy troops and defenses on the far side of the Roer did not amount to much. The most challenging part of the operation would be getting large bodies of GIs, their heavy equipment, and vehicles over the swollen river, and given Simpson's decision to attack on February 23—one day before the Roer's supposed subsidence to near-normal levels—the 29th Division must choreograph its movements as meticulously as Red Blaik's renowned West Point football team. Too, Gerhardt could display no subtlety in his attack; planners understood that the coming offensive was a frontal assault, pure and simple, a major part of which would be made directly against the historic city of Jülich, heavily fortified since Roman and Frankish times.

Overwhelming firepower, concentration of force, and swift maneuver, Gerhardt correctly surmised, would be the keys to victory. On February 23 the 29th Division would attack on an extraordinarily constricted front of only 2,100 yards—little more than a mile—which in the not-too-distant past had been covered by only a single 800-man infantry battalion. The 175th Infantry, on the right, would carry the division's main effort by assaulting across the Roer on slender footbridges directly into Jülich. The 115th Infantry, on the left, would cross the Roer in diminutive twelve-man plywood assault boats, aiming to capture the village of Broich and seize the dominating ridge beyond. The 116th Infantry would be held in reserve, but would commit a single battalion to follow the 175th into Jülich and capture the ancient Citadel in the heart of the devastated city. The offensive would be preceded by a barrage only forty-five minutes in duration, but one the divisional history would later define as "the most intense of the entire war" in 29th Division annals, provided by hundreds of artillery pieces, tank and tank destroyer cannon, mortars, and even .50-caliber machine guns, all tightly packed into the 29th's narrow zone.

Gerhardt would not repeat the grievous miscalculation he had

made on November 16, 1944, when he initiated the 29th Division's role in Ninth Army's massive late-fall Rhineland offensive by committing only two infantry battalions to the assault while holding seven in reserve. That blunder had triggered McLain's wrath, and much worse, failed utterly to crack the German defenses. In sharp contrast Gerhardt intended to reverse the ratio in the February 23 attack by committing seven battalions to the initial push over the Roer and holding only two in reserve. Gerhardt certainly would find other ways to be thrown into Ninth Army's doghouse, but never again would he be accused of underutilizing his division's massive combat power.

That power, according to Gerhardt's intelligence officers, should greatly overmatch the enemy. "At Jülich, the Germans had an outpost line along the river edge, a main line of resistance along the ridge line north of the city, and a secondary defense line of trenches behind the town extending in depth to the east," wrote Maj. Bob Minor of the 29th's G-2 section in his February 1945 monthly report. "The line at Jülich was held by the 5th Company of the 1036th Grenadier Regiment, 59th Infantry Division, north of Broich; and by the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 959th Regiment, 363rd *Volksgrenadier* Division—one battalion in Broich and along the riverbank to the northern outskirts of Jülich; the other in Jülich proper." The enemy units were known to be shells of their former selves; still, the 29ers had learned in the past that even under-strength German infantry outfits could hold up the Americans for days. However, the 363rd *Volksgrenadier* Division's commander, *Generalleutnant* August Dettling, expressed his opinion that his grenadiers could not be expected to hold for long. "The division was occupying a sector that was still too broad compared to its fighting strength for it to be able to repel a large-scale attack with certainty," Dettling wrote. "The troops, particularly the infantry, were now in a state of strain after being steadily engaged for weeks in bad weather, in an inadequately built position, disappointed as they were by the failure of the Ardennes offensive. The ammunition supply of the artillery in no way corresponded with the requirements of a large-scale engagement."

Last-minute changes to plans as ambitious as Operation *Grenade's* could be expected to throw a proverbial monkey wrench in the 29th Division's well-oiled machine. But less than thirty-six hours before the division was to launch its assault, Gerhardt initiated two significant modifications that all 29ers welcomed wholeheartedly. First, the general attached to the 175th Infantry a platoon of Sherman flamethrower tanks drawn from the 739th Tank Battalion, a special outfit equipped not only with flamethrowers, but also innovative mine-clearing tanks and tank dozers, all considered so valuable in the upcoming operation that Simpson had split the battalion and attached its companies to each of Ninth Army's three component corps. The 29ers had witnessed the high value of flamethrowing tanks at the siege of Brest, when British Crocodiles had spurted their deadly flame-jets against the walls of Fort Montbary, held by obstinate enemy paratroopers. Gerhardt suspected that Jülich's Citadel would be defended equally obstinately, and when the 29ers approached that formidable stronghold after crossing the Roer, the flamethrowers would surely be useful.

Even more important additions to the 29th Division's repertoire

were seven LVT (Landing Vehicle, Tracked) "Alligators"—also known as "Buffalos"—belonging to the 234th Engineer Combat Battalion, which Gerhardt had snatched the moment McLain noted their availability. Although in use in the Pacific since Guadalcanal, the 29ers had never before seen these impressive amphibious landing vehicles in action. A nearly nine-ton LVT made twenty-five miles per hour on land, seven on water, and carried up to forty troops under the protection of steel armor. An Alligator could cross the Roer loaded with its occupants much more efficiently than a twelve-man plywood boat, powered by oars, and in the coming operation the 115th Infantry intended to employ those cutting-edge contraptions to the greatest extent possible.

So it had come at last. For the first time in seventy-seven days, the 29th Division would attack—not an ordinary attack, like countless ones the 29th had carried out since Normandy, but a supreme effort by the entire Ninth Army, dwarfing anything in the division's past except for the Omaha Beach invasion and carried out by a well-rested outfit whose efficiency and morale had climbed immeasurably since the dark days of November.

On the eve of battle, an aide noted that General Simpson "was too restless to remain long in his office and took off for the front to escape his own thoughts by talking to the corps commanders." When Simpson returned to his command post at Maastricht, the aide observed, "[He] seemed greatly quieted, admittedly by the confidence radiated by the corps and division commanders who will actually make the assault operation." That night Simpson and his aides relaxed, watching Hollywood's biggest 1944 blockbuster, *Going My Way* with Bing Crosby, a film that three weeks later would gain an Academy Award for best motion picture. The headquarters diary concluded: "A nightcap, toasting luck on the next day, and the general was off to bed."

But no man in the 29th Division would get a good sleep that night. Assault infantrymen, freshly satiated by the hot meal the Army habitually served prior to a big push, donned their cumbersome woolen overcoats and, as a participant remarked, "carried combat packs, one-day K-rations, three D-bars [a dense emergency chocolate ration], four extra pairs of socks, full ammunition belts, and primacord for blowing paths in minefields and barbed wire." Then they plodded down to assembly points, as close as fifty yards from the Roer, and took refuge in cellars or the subterranean tunnels—known as "The Catacombs" to the 29ers—of the old Napoleonic-era fort on the river's west bank opposite Jülich. "The soft tread and shuffle of this slow approach were silent. The night was still—a rifle shot, a flare, a burp gun, or a BAR firing at sounds or shadows on the outpost line," a 175th soldier remembered. "That was all. No artillery. No mortars. No killing machine gun fire. Nothing. The Germans were apparently deaf to the approach and showed no reaction at all until men began stumbling over garbage cans and tripping over chicken wire in the wet backyards of houses on the west riverbank." Then the 29ers waited: "In their nervous excitement, they talked volubly at first, but then dozed and fell asleep in a tangle of arms and legs, rifles and ammunition boxes. Flickering candlelight shook shadows across these sleeping forms—a weird scene of soldiers waiting for battle."

Next time: The big push begins. Stay tuned!

PNC Donald McKee honored by 29th Div. Assoc. and Normandy Allies

Editor's Note: PNC Donald McKee has recently stepped down as Editor/Publisher of the Twenty-Niner. We are grateful for his over 25 years of service to the publication and our association. At our 95th Annual Reunion and Convention Banquet in Virginia Beach, Don was decorated with the Maryland Distinguished Service Cross. He also received the Meritorious Service Medal from the Military Order of Foreign Wars. He was presented with a brick paver, a duplicate of which will be displayed at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia.

The 29th Division Association is very fortunate to have had someone of Don's caliber guiding the Twenty-Niner for all these years. We wish him the best, and I am forever grateful for his patience and understanding in bringing me along as his eventual successor.

William S. Mund, Jr.
Editor

On July 18, 2013, 69 years after his arrival in Saint-Lô, a memorial plaque honoring Donald M. McKee was inaugurated on the Wall of Remembrance in Saint Jean de Savigny. The unveiling ceremony took place during the annual Normandy Allies ceremony at the Wall. The plaque was donated by an anonymous donor to honor Don for his many good works.

McKee, a native of Kalamazoo MI, originally intended to become an engineer and enrolled in the University of Michigan. In 1943 he set these plans aside to serve his country, relinquishing his college deferment, in order to be drafted. McKee landed on Omaha Beach on June 7, 1944 attached to the 29th Division, 175th/E Company. He was 20 years old, an army medic, who vividly remembers his service. In an interview with Chris Gosier published in *U.S. Legacies*, Don commented: "I saw not only just wounded, some of these cases where guys would come in as replacements and in 2, 3 days time they'd be out of there. I mean they'd be hit, killed, wounded. You never really got to know them."

During his three months in Normandy, McKee received two Purple Hearts. The first came in the bocage area where he was injured by a mortar blast as the 29th Division headed towards Saint-Lô. As the division continued on to Brest, McKee was again hit by a mortar blast. This time he was evacuated to a hospital in Cardiff, Wales for several months of recuperation. In mid-December 1944, he was returned to limited service and sent to an Army post office unit near Paris. As the war in Europe drew to a close, McKee was redeployed to the Pacific Theater arriving in the Philippines just as the war was ending. He returned to the US in December 1945 and took up his studies at the University of Michigan, earning a degree in chemical engineering and working as an environmental engineer for 38 years.

After his retirement, McKee became active with the 29th Division Association and served as National Commander dur-

ing the 50th Anniversary commemorations in Normandy—a major event for the Association calling forth all of his organizational skills and introducing him to the Normans who are very grateful for his service both in 1944 and in 1994.

In 1996, Marsha Smith contacted Don McKee and asked for his support in launching a study program for students. McKee, with Alvin Ungerleider and Don McCarthy, spearheaded the Association's support of what became Normandy Allies. Today, Don McKee serves as a Board member on the Normandy Allies Board of Directors.

Jean Mignon, who was vice-mayor of Saint-Lô during the 1994 commemorations, shared these thoughts as he and SGM Charles Frick unveiled the plaque honoring Don McKee:

"Donald is a straightforward and friendly person, but apart from these personal characteristics, I found he was a great organizer very conscious of doing his utmost for his comrades -in-arms' well-being during their stay, as well as ensuring the correct performance of the ceremonies...His wife's long illness prevented them from returning to Normandy as perhaps they might have wished, so I was doubly happy to welcome him to the Chapel of La Madeleine in 2007 with Marsha's group.

*We also know the amount of energy he has imparted, and continues to impart to the 29th Division's veterans and its friends. In a way he is a lynch-pin of a team that, in the *Twenty-Niner*, produces a magazine outstanding in content as well as presentation. Thus the plaque which now honors our friend Donald here is no doubt the best way to say "THANK YOU" –'thank you' for what he did for us French in 1944. And 'thank you' for what he continues doing to keep alive the flame of remembrance and the spirit of the 29th Division."*

Normandy Allies was honored and delighted to partake in this ceremony—a fitting tribute to our friend and colleague, Donald McKee.



Left to right: Malvin Walker, George Waple III, Russell DeLuca and Don at the Wall during the Normandy Allies trip in 2007.

95th Annual National Reunion & Convention



Photo by William Mund

WW II Veterans "Calvados" toast. Standing left to right: Norman Duncan; Chuck Neighbor; Dr. Hal Baumgarten PNC Don McKee; Steve Melnikoff; Arden Earll. Sitting: Don Robertson and Bill Doyle.



Photo by William Mund

Ladies Auxiliary, from left to right: President, Juanita King; Chaplain Edie Paul; Vice President, Dianne Raymond; and Communications Officer, Nancy Dillon.



Photo by William Mund

Members on boat tour. Left to right: Bob Proud; Bill DeHaven; Ed Tolzman; David Ginsburg and Joe Balkoski.



Photo by Bob Wisch, Post 72

Commanding General of the 29th Infantry Division, Major General Charles Whittington speaking to us at the banquet.



Photo by Bob Wisch, Post 72

Editor Emeritus, PNC Donald McKee (left), and NSVC John Vaccarino moments after Don was presented with several awards.



Photo by William Mund

PNC Bob Moscati (left), presenting Joe Zang with his Past National Commander's plaque at the business meeting on 12 October 2013.

Holiday Inn, North Beach, Virginia Beach, VA



PNC Robert Recker (left) installing the 2013-2014 National Commander, John F. "Jack" Kutcher at the banquet on Saturday evening.

Photo by Randall Beamer, Post 729

Left to right: National Chaplain, John Schildt; Rita Baumgarten; Hal Baumgarten and Maxine Kutcher.

*Photo by Randall Beamer
Post 729*



Ralph Peeters, (right) presenting MG Whittington with artwork honoring the 29th Infantry Division. Mr. Peeters is an associate member from the Netherlands.

Photo by Tom Byrne, Post 94

Attendees at our 95th Annual Reunion & Convention

115th Infantry

Daveler, Harry
Finn, PNC Robert & Belinda
Houck, David
Jordan, Dick & Dick Jr.
Lockard, PNC Buck & Betty
Mund, William S.
Schildt, John
Wilcox, John & Chris

116th Infantry

Baumgarten, Hal & Rita
Dillon, Frank & Nancy
Duncan, Norman & Elsie
Earll, Arden & Shirley
Hankins, PNC Glenwood & Bernice
King, PNC Bill & NAP Juanita
Neighbor, Chuck

175th Infantry

Becker, J. Brian & Gail
Bryant, Bob & Barbie
Crosby, Gilbert & Carolyn
DeHaven, Bill
Doyle, Bill & Kathy Brumberger
Kutcher, Jack & Maxine
Linthicum, George & Dorothy
Lombino, Angelo
McKee, PNC Don
Melnikoff, Steve & Steven
Proud, Bob
Recker, PNC Bob & Pat
Robertson, Don
Shilow, Franklin & Alice
Steimel, Joe & Judy
Vaccarino, John & Mary
Wisch, Bob & Linda

110th Field Artillery

Barranco, Frank
Connolly, Harry & Janice
Ginsburg, David
Moscati, PNC Robert
Smith, PNC Dick & Mary
Tolzman, Ed
Zang, NC Joe & Shirley

111th Field Artillery

Wright, Norman

Other Units

Beamer, Randy & Shirley – 729th Maint. Bn.
Bernhard, William – 29th Aviation Brigade
Dooley, PNC Ivan – 121st Engineers
Foreman, Charles – 729 Maint. Bn.
Friedel, Donald – HHC 3rd Brigade
Insley, Tom & Jean – 104th Medical Bn.
Noyes, Colin & Courtney – HHC 29ID
Roush, Bruce & Carolyn – 29th Aviation Brigade
Raymond, Richard & Dianne – HHC 2nd Brigade
Whittington, Charles – HHC 29ID

Widows

Giannini, Maxine & Laura
McNamara, Margaret
Paul, Edie
Vecchioni, Joan

Daughters

Barden, James & Patricia
Coulson, Donna & Johnny
Dent, Jane, Greg, Chase & Gavin
Green, Colleen & Joan Markey
Sherr-Davino, Fran

Sons

Faries, George & Mary Lynn
Garrison, Jay & Blonnie
Higgs, Edward
Krauss, Michael
Lane, Dale & Margi
Radich, Felix
Swilling, Bill

Associates

Aldous, Travis
Balkoski, Joe
Bennett, Mark
Brubaker, David & Carol
Byrne, Tom
Conway, Joe & Amber
Hofmann, Lee
Lefebvre, Laurent & T Fardeau
Peeters, Ralph

Guests

Campbell, Keith & Sandra Angel
Dehayes, Antonin
Forget, Dominique
Lombino, Anthony
Scanlon, Sam & Katie

National Officers Elected and Installed for 2013 - 2014

National Commander: John F. "Jack" Kutcher, Sr.

Senior Vice Commander: I. John Vaccarino

Junior Vice Commander: David H. Ginsburg

Finance Officer: J. Brian Becker

Chaplain: Reverend John Schildt

Welfare Officer: Richard Jordan

Service Officer: Walter Carter

Surgeon: Dr. Frank Barranco

Historian: Joseph Balkoski

Judge Advocate: Frank Rauschenberg

Sergeant-at-Arms: Randall Beamer

Southern Region Vice Commander: PNC William "Bill" King

Maryland Region Vice Commander: Robert E. "Bob" Wisch

At-Large Region Vice Commander: Richard "Dick" Smith



Appointed Officers

National Executive Director: PNC John E. Wilcox, Jr.

Asst. to the National Executive Director: PNC Robert Moscatti

National Property Officer: Franklin Shilow

Editor/Publisher *The Twenty-Niner*: William S. Mund, Jr.

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

National Parliamentarian: Thomas Insley

Adjutant: William S. Mund, Jr.

National Surgeon *Emeritus*: Dr. Hal Baumgarten

Ladies Auxiliary

President: Juanita King

Vice President: Dianne Raymond

Chaplain: Edith Paul

Communications Officer: Nancy Dillon

Guard: Joan Vecchioni



Naval Station Norfolk



The “Supercarrier” *George H.W. Bush*, (CVN 77) rides at anchor on 11 October 2013, the day of our tour of *Naval Station Norfolk* during our 95th Annual National Reunion & Convention in Virginia Beach, VA.



Left: One of the ships we viewed at *Naval Station Norfolk* was the USS Cole, (DDG 67). The Cole was the target of a suicide attack against the United States Navy on 12 October 2000, while it was harbored and being refueled in the Yemen port of Aden. Seventeen American sailors were killed, and 39 were injured. The terrorist organization *al-Qaeda* claimed responsibility for the attack. A U.S. judge has held Sudan liable for the attack.

Bottom: The USS Wisconsin, (BB 64) riding at anchor at *Naval Station Norfolk*.

All photos on this page by William Mund



A Summary of the Normandy Allies International Experience of July 2013

Normandy Allies had a new look as it took its largest group ever (32 travelers) on its 15th annual trip to visit the sites of the 1944 Normandy landings and battles of World War II. During July 14-27, 19 students, three teachers, and six other adult travelers toured with a team of four Normandy Allies' Board members: Marsha Smith (President), Peter Combee (Lt. Col., Ret.), Charles Frick (Sgt. Major, Ret.), and Walter Carter (author).

Part of the new look was the presence of 11 students from James Madison University (JMU, Harrisonburg, VA) and the chairman of its history department, Professor Michael Galgano. Dr. Galgano instituted a new summer study-abroad course for the university, and made the Normandy Allies program its curriculum for the 11 days that they traveled with us. Dr. Galgano was so pleased with the experience that he plans to repeat it each year for the indefinite future.

The other eight students were from high schools in Pittsford (4) and Farmington (2), New York, as well as the Blair Academy in Blairstown New Jersey (2). All eight, plus four of the JMU students, enjoyed staying for five nights in the homes of French residents of Grandcamp-Maisy. These students' travel costs were partially funded by grants from the 29th Division Association, from Post 94 and Post 78 Cresap's Rifles of the Maryland Region in honor of PNC Major General Boyd Cook, and from veteran Archer Martin. The overall costs of the trip were also partially covered by donations by many individual members of the Association.

Professor Joshua Fulton of Moraine Valley Community College in Palos Hill, Illinois was the recipient of the 29th Division Association's Teacher Travel Grant. Professor Fulton said his experience on the tour "allows me ... to begin considering a wide range of opportunities for how to introduce the landings and subsequent engagements into my courses." Another part of Normandy Allies' new look was that his travel costs were also partially funded by the First Division Museum at Cantigny, Wheaton, Illinois. This relationship between Normandy Allies and the Museum appears likely to continue in the future.

The travel of Dr. Reggie Terry, principal of the Blaney School in Hollywood, SC, was partially funded by Diane and David Pennock in honor of Mr. Pennock's uncle, 1st Lt. John Garvik, a 29th Division soldier who was killed in action in Normandy. She plans to develop programs for primary through high schools, as well as Veterans Day observations, from ideas and photographs she collected during this summer's tour.

Among the other travelers were Bonnie Carter (Newton Centre MA), Jim Cogar (Auburn NY), John Cogar (Saranac Lake NY), Virginia Galgano (Harrisonburg VA), Vesta Gordon (Charlottesville VA), and Pat Stark (Walworth NY, returning for his 5th tour).

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

Donald McKee, who has traveled with Normandy Allies previously but was not on this 2013 tour, was honored by the unveiling of a plaque mounted on the Wall of Remembrance at St. Jean de Savigny. This Wall was built in 1997 by residents of this town in memory of the 29th Division, which liberated the area in 1944. Since then, more than

40 plaques honoring individual soldiers and units of the Division have been placed on this wall by friends and family members. An anonymous donor has now done this for Don, a veteran combat medic in the 175th Regiment, former National Commander of the 29th Division Association, and board member of Normandy Allies.

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

"This trip has increased my knowledge to heights that I never would have expected about the mental and emotional aspects of the Normandy Landings. ... The most significant and meaningful part of this trip was the experience I got on the beaches". ... *Alec DeCarlo, student, Farmington NY*

"The most significant and meaningful part of the trip was being able to visit all the cemeteries, the beaches, and being able to speak with the residents of Normandy. It made the Landings and the Battle of Normandy more personal unlike a text book". ... *Veronica Kelly, student, Belvidere NJ*

"The team from Normandy Allies made things clear, easy, and meaningful. Your knowledge and passion were obvious. And our travel companions made it great". ... *Dr. Jim Cogar, Auburn NY*

"...the best part of the afternoon was having the honor and opportunity to hear, first-hand, from two French women who shared detailed accounts of their personal experiences in 1944". ... These stories I will not only hold with me, but I will share them with friends and family back home as a part of the continuous effort to never forget". ... *Ally Dirksen, student, Pittsford NY*

Submitted by Walter Carter

Dear 29th Division Association,

This letter is to express my thanks for your support in being able to participate in the recent Normandy Allies trip in July, 2013. Led principally by Marsha Smith, the trip provided a wonderful overview of the Normandy landings and subsequent campaigns. As a history teacher at a community college, it provided a way for me to link content that I directly address in classes with personal experience. Additionally, it has furthered my understanding of the sacrifices made by the men of the 29th Division, as well as all of the Allies during 1944.

The mission of the community college is to be open to all. Students will enter a classroom from a variety of backgrounds—recent high school graduates, recent immigrants, returning adults, young veterans. Some have a fairly strong grasp of the importance of World War II, or our nation's servicemen and women, but others do not. They approach history with a variety of learning styles, and in some cases they need to see and experience a part of history to truly have it sink in.

It is in that mission of "experiential history," that Normandy Allies and your association provided a wonderful trip. One can read accounts of the engagements, but one must walk the ground. One can read of civilians impacted by war, but one must talk with those who were there. The passion for engaging all in the remembrance of the 29th Division's actions in Normandy, as well as the wider campaigns—was a constant from Marsha and the other team leaders. That passion will now be a part of my classroom instruction, and hopefully inspire others to reflect on the sacrifices made in their name.

Sincerely,
Josh Fulton

Minutes

of the 95th Annual Convention & Reunion Business Meeting held on 12 October 2013 at the Holiday Inn, North Beach, Virginia Beach, VA

The 95th National Reunion and Convention Business Meeting was called to order by National Adjutant William Mund at 1000 hours. National Commander Joe Zang asked everyone to stand and pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States and recite the 29th Division Association preamble. National Chaplain John W. Schildt offered a special prayer asking our Heavenly Father to bestow His guidance on the members of the 29th Division Association and especially on the families of our recently departed comrades. Commander Zang welcomed everyone to the convention and briefly reviewed various administrative details.

Adjutant Mund called the "Roll of Officers" and reported that a quorum was present and a regular meeting could be conducted. The minutes of the 94th National Reunion had been published previously in the Spring 2013 edition of the *Twenty-Niner*. A motion was made by PNC John Wilcox and seconded by J. Brian Becker to approve these minutes as published. Motion was passed.

Officer's Report

National Commander – Joseph Zang reported on the activities that he has participated in during the past few months. He mentioned the annual wreath laying at the *Tomb of the Unknowns*; several visits to the *Medal of Honor Grove*, at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania and many ceremonies and observances such as the annual D-Day ceremony in Bedford, Virginia. During the winter months Commander Zang regularly attends meetings of Post #2 in Florida.

Senior Vice Commander – John F. "Jack" Kutcher, Sr. has been heavily involved with maintaining a budget for the 29th Division Association. He also has participated in many observances and activities during the past several months. He, along with Adjutant Mund, attended the Army Divisions Association (ADA) Convention and FAM tour in DuPage County, Illinois.

National Junior Vice Commander – I. John Vaccarino participated in many observances and activities during the past year. He organized the funeral service for PNC Sam Krauss. As Past Maryland Region Commander he installed several groups of officers for various posts in the Maryland Region. He is participating in the "embedded" program that has been mandated by the "Futures" Committee by soliciting new members.

Southern Region Vice Commander – PNC King has attended many ceremonies and observances in Virginia. He also attended many of the same ceremonies and observances as several of the other national officers. He reported on the possible creation of new posts in Blacksburg, Christiansburg, Bedford, and Lynchburg, VA.

Maryland Region Vice Commander – Robert Wisch reported on the activities and events that many of the Maryland Region posts have been participating in. He traveled to the Medal of Honor Grove in Pennsylvania with the National Commander to apprise himself of the situation there.

At-Large Region Vice Commander – PNC Dick Smith has attended many of the ceremonies and observances noted above. He is a member of the "Futures" committee and was on the "Convention" committee for this year's reunion. He is also the Adjutant of HQ Post 29.

Finance Officer – J. Brian Becker thanked everyone for their kind words and wishes during his recent incapacitation.

Membership – PNC Bob Moscati explained his report that was distributed to the members present.

Welfare – National Welfare Officer Jordan said that we will honor the 81 members of the association that have passed on since last year at the Memorial Ceremony tomorrow 13 October 2013.

Chaplain – Reverend John Schildt spoke about the events, ceremonies

and observances that he has been involved in over the last several months.

Historian – Joe Balkoski reminded everyone that the 100th anniversary of the 29th Division is approaching in 2017.

Service – National Service Officer Walter Carter was excused.

Judge Advocate – Frank Rauschenberg was excused but had filed his report with the Adjutant. The Adjutant read the report which informed everyone that in accordance with Article XIV- Amendments, the Judge Advocate had received a copy of the proposed amendment to eliminate the position of Junior Vice Commander of the 29th Division Association. He found the proposed amendment to be consistent with the motion cited on 20 June 2013, at the National Executive Committee meeting. This amendment will be voted on under "Old Business".

Surgeon – Dr. Frank Barranco informed everyone that he is continuing his column in the *Twenty-Niner*.

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

Property Officer – Frank Shilow said he enjoys his job and thanked NED/PNC Wilcox for his help and support.

Editor Emeritus of the *Twenty-Niner* – PNC McKee praised the abilities of the new Editor/Publisher of the *Twenty-Niner* and pledged his full support. He spoke about his 25 years of involvement with the *Twenty-Niner*.

Editor/Publisher the *Twenty-Niner* – William Mund made some brief comments about his experience and abilities. He praised the efforts of PNC McKee, PNC Ungerleider, Comrade Oberle and the other editors who came before but are unknownst to us at this time. Editor Mund said he will continue to provide the members/readers with a quality publication.

Adjutant, HQ Post 29 – PNC Dick Smith had no additional report.

National President, Ladies Auxiliary – Juanita King gave a brief overview of the Ladies Auxiliary. She spoke about the qualifications for membership in the Ladies Auxiliary. Education of young people/students in the history of the United States and the 29th Division is one of the goals of this organization. Other objectives are to support the soldiers and their families in this unprecedented time of drastic and lengthy deployments. She made several suggestions that could be supported by the inclusion of information on the association's website. She asked everyone to support the Ladies Auxiliary.

National Executive Director – PNC/NED John Wilcox attended many events and ceremonies as noted above. He has traveled to the D-Day Memorial in Bedford several times this year and has established a rapport with the memorial's new president Ms April C. Cheeks-Messier. He said planning is underway there for the 70th anniversary of D-Day. He reported on a meeting that he attended with other national officers at Fort Belvoir back in March. The purpose of this meeting was to educate current day 29th Division soldiers on the history of the 29th during WWII. He along with the National Commander traveled to *Medal of Honor Grove*, at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania for a fact finding mission. He spoke about the new Post #3 in Ontario, Canada. PNC/NED Wilcox was the committee chairman for this year's convention. He is responsible for the daily functioning of the National Headquarters working in close cooperation with the National Finance Officer.

Special Reports

Futures Committee Chairman – Post 110 Commander David Ginsburg introduced himself to the members present. He gave a brief update on the origins of the Futures Committee and named its members. His *Power Point Presentation* listed the goals and objectives of this committee. He also presented the new efforts/initiatives undertaken to sup-

port those goals/objectives. Among them is the (1) "embedded" program to recruit new members; (2) facilitating the use of *PayPal*; (3) dealing with Post specific issues/solutions; and (4) dealing with non-US funds for our international members. This committee has met on 3 occasions since the NEC in June 2013. Further meetings of the Futures Committee will be forthcoming. Chairman Ginsburg will provide updates to be published in the upcoming editions of the *Twenty-Niner*.

National D-Day Memorial – Keith Campbell of the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA announced that a special ceremony dedicating a bust of John Robert Slaughter will be held on Memorial Day 2014. He said donations would be greatly appreciated.

2014 Convention Planning – NSVC Kutcher gave an update on the activities scheduled for the 2014 convention that will occur in Ocean City, MD on 16-19 October 2014.

Army Divisions Association – NSVC Kutcher reported that during the period 25-27 April 2013, the Army Divisions Association (ADA), of which the 29th Division Association is a member, conducted its Annual Meeting and Familiarization (FAM) Tour in DuPage County, IL, a suburban area about 25 miles west of Chicago. NSVC Jack Kutcher and Adjutant William Mund attended these events. The ADA reimburses each association \$250 for travel expenses. Any additional travel expenses are borne by the individual attendees. Funds should be allocated by our association to make up the difference for any travel expenses incurred by the attendees over and beyond the \$250 stipend provided by the ADA.

Normandy Allies – Adjutant Mund read a report that was submitted to him by Walter Carter who was excused from this meeting. This report covered the July 2013 trip to France. The 2013 group included 32 people, the largest ever. The increase was due largely to the addition of a group from the history department of James Madison University at Harrisonburg VA. Normandy Allies thanks the 29th Division Association and its members for their important support.

Status of Medal of Honor Grove – Commander Zang has made two trips to the memorial this year. The problems developed from the lack of attention to the maintenance of the memorial have been identified and corrective actions have been initiated. Funding set aside for the memorial maintenance has been identified and is being used to bring the memorial into an acceptable state of repair. Our next part of the project is to establish a committee to have the obelisk erected that recognizes the MOH Awardees from Maryland. Comrade Norman Duncan made some comments concerning honoring our soldiers who are buried overseas. He was asked to provide a written proposal to be submitted to the NEC for further study.

Convention Committee Reports

Finance and Audit – Finance Officer Becker presented his report and provided copies for those interested. NSVC Kutcher, in his capacity as Budget Chairman, presented a *Power Point Presentation* to the members present concerning the proposed 2014 budget. The problems caused by the association's fiscal year were discussed.

Nominating Committee – PNC King proposed the following individuals to be elected for 2013-2014. They are: Commander – John F. "Jack" Kutcher, Sr.; Senior Vice Commander – I. John Vaccarino; Junior Vice Commander – David H. Ginsburg; Finance Officer – J. Brian Becker; Chaplain – Rev. John Schilt; Welfare Officer – Richard Jordan; Service Officer – Walter Carter; Surgeon – Dr. Frank Barranco; Historian – Joseph Balkoski; Judge Advocate – Frank Rauschenberg; Sergeant-at-Arms – Randall Beamer; Southern Region Vice Commander – PNC Bill King; Maryland Region Vice Commander – Robert Wisch; and At-Large Region Vice Commander – PNC Richard Smith.

Legislative – PNC Smith advised members to monitor the deliberations of Congress concerning Veterans benefits such as Tri-Care.

Historical – Joe Balkoski reported that the Maryland Museum of Military History, Inc. (MDMHS) has acquired the Morning Reports for all units of the 29th Division. He also mentioned that the MDMHS is seeking donations to upgrade existing 29th displays to computer generated displays. A motion was made by Linthicum/PNC R. Moscati and sec-

onded by Shilow to donate \$2,000 to the MDMHS for the purpose of upgrading existing displays to a computer generated presentation display. These funds would be sourced out of our investment accounts. Motion was passed.

Old Business

Proposal to eliminate the Junior Vice Commander's position – This proposal was discussed with many negative comments. A motion was made by Vaccarino and seconded by Linthicum to not eliminate this position. Motion was passed.

Trip to France – Fran Sherr-Davino in her capacity as Trip Coordinator for the 70th Anniversary of D-Day updated everyone on the latest events and activities scheduled for the trip in 2014. She reported that one more day has been added to the trip. The prices for the trip have increased slightly. 29th Division Commanding General MG Whittington will be in attendance at this event. She reported that the association *Deep Respect* and *Carole Duvall* have removed the 29th Monument on the beach and placed it in a museum. This issue will be looked into and appropriate correspondence prepared to find out under whose authority this movement of the monument occurred. Fran requested all posts to donate the cost of a 29th Division 4x6 flag (\$85 apiece) to be given to and flown by certain towns in France. NSVC Kutcher will prepare correspondence requesting funds for this purpose.

Comments on the HMS Curacao – George Linthicum gave a final report of the marker that has been placed in the National Memorial Aboretum in England.

New Business

2014 Date of Wreath Laying Ceremony – will occur on 18 May 2014 at 3:15pm at Arlington National Cemetery.

Proposed Donation to National D-Day Memorial – a motion was made by PNC Wilcox and seconded by PNC King to donate \$1,000 to the National D-Day Memorial. Motion was passed. Keith Campbell of the D-Day Memorial thanked the members present for their support.

Election of Officers 2013-2014 – Commander Zang asked if there were any other nominations from the floor for any of the positions. After Commander Zang repeated this request three times for any other nominations from the floor, a motion to close the nominations was then offered by PNC McKee and seconded by PNC King. Motion was passed. A further motion was made by PNC Wilcox and seconded by PNC R. Moscati 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. The installation is to occur after the evening banquet.

Awards Presentation – PNC/NED Wilcox presented Past National Commander Zang with his special pin. PNC R. Moscati presented a plaque to PNC Zang. Adjutant Mund presented PNC Zang with a personalized page 1 of the *Twenty-Niner*.

Proposal to increase the NED's contracted service – PNC Dooley made a motion to increase the National Executive Director's contracted services compensation to a certain amount, as of 1 January 2014. This motion was seconded by NC Kutcher. Motion was passed.

Good of the Organization – Catholic services at the Star of the Sea at 5pm this afternoon. Memorial service tomorrow at 9:30am. A Calvados toast will take place for all WWII veterans tonight in the Hospitality Room at 10pm.

Adjournment – the meeting was adjourned at 1510 hours.

Respectfully submitted,
WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.
Adjutant
National Executive Committee

NEC Members please note:

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

Minutes

*of the NEC I Meeting
held on 13 October 2013 at the
Holiday Inn, North Beach, Virginia Beach, VA*

The NEC I meeting was called to order at 1030 hours at the Holiday Inn, North Beach, Virginia beach, Virginia following the National Memorial Service by Commander John F. "Jack" Kutcher.

Commander Kutcher appointed the following officers for the year: National Executive Director; PNC John Wilcox; Assistant to the National Executive Director, PNC R. Moscati; National Property Officer, Franklin Shilow; Editor/Publisher "The 29er", William Mund; Editor Emeritus "The 29er", Donald McKee; National Parliamentarian, Thomas Insley; and National Adjutant, William Mund. A motion for the NEC to approve these appointments was offered by PNC Wilcox and seconded by Thomas Insley. Motion was passed and all appointees were approved.

Commander Kutcher asked if there was any old or new business to come before the committee at this time. A motion was made by PNC Wilcox and seconded by PNC McKee to accept the 2014 budget offered by the Finance and Audit Committee. Motion was passed. Com-

mander Kutcher then stated that NEC II would be held at the Weinberg Center at Camp Fretterd on Thursday, 16 January 2014 beginning at 0830 hours.

With no further business, Commander Kutcher asked for a motion to close. A motion was offered by PNC Dooley with a second by NSVC Vaccarino. The motion carried. The meeting closed at 1045 hours.

Respectfully submitted,
WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.
Adjutant
National Executive Committee

NEC Members please note:

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

Book Review

D-DAY SURVIVOR

AN AUTOBIOGRAPHY
HAROLD BAUMGARTEN

D-DAY SURVIVOR

On the morning of 6 June, 1944, Dr. Harold Baumgarten landed in front of the Vierville draw at the Dog Green sector of Omaha Beach along with the 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division. During one of the most famous battles ever fought by the United States armed forces, Baumgarten was wounded five times in a thirty-two hour period and barely survived. Any one of the pieces of shrapnel or bullets could have killed him; however, fierce tenacity to keep pushing ahead finally got him off the beach.

Baumgarten believes that his life was spared, so that he could give a face to the brave young Americans who lost their lives that day. Determined to make his autobiography a testament to those men who gave this nation the ultimate sacrifice, Baumgarten ensures that the buddies he left lying face down on the bloody sands of Omaha Beach will never be forgotten.

D-DAY SURVIVOR

An Autobiography

By Harold Baumgarten

256 pp. 6 x 9

56 b/w photos Bibliography

**This book is available at
Barnes & Noble and Amazon.com**

29th Division Association Supplies Available

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>POSTAGE & HANDLING</u>	<u>MAILED</u>
Book—Ever Forward 116th Inf. History (soft cover)	\$17.90	\$5.60	\$23.50
Book—Ever Forward 116th Inf. History (hard cover)	\$25.00	\$5.60	\$30.60
Book—29th, Let's Go—29th Division History	\$29.00	\$5.60	\$34.60
Book—Beyond the Beachhead	\$19.90	\$5.60	\$25.50
Book—115th Infantry in WWII	\$25.00	\$5.60	\$30.60
Book—Omaha Beach and Beyond (The Long March of Sgt. Slaughter)	\$25.00	\$5.60	\$30.60
Book—From Beachhead to Brittany (Joseph Balkoski)	\$28.00	\$5.60	\$33.60
Book—From Brittany to the Reich (Joseph Balkoski)	\$27.00	\$5.60	\$32.60
Book—Our Tortured Souls (Joseph Balkoski)	\$27.00	\$5.60	\$32.60
29th Division Association Note Pads (5 1/2 x 8 1/2)	\$1.75	\$1.25	\$3.00
29th Division Association Note Pads (4 1/4 x 5 1/2)	\$1.35	\$0.65	\$2.00
Crest—115th Infantry Regiment	\$5.50	\$1.05	\$6.55
Crest—116th Infantry Regiment	\$5.50	\$1.05	\$6.55
Crest—175th Infantry Regiment	\$5.50	\$1.05	\$6.55
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
Golf balls w/29th logo (sleeve of three)	\$5.00	\$2.50	\$7.50
Key chain w/29th logo	\$1.00	\$1.50	\$2.50
Lapel pin	\$3.95	\$1.05	\$5.00
Lapel pin, past post commander	\$5.00	\$1.05	\$6.05
Ladies pendant	\$6.00	\$1.05	\$7.05
Medallion (for plaques)	\$6.00	\$1.05	\$7.05
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
Pocket purse—squeeze	\$2.00	\$0.75	\$2.75
29th Division Association pocket patch	\$6.00	\$1.05	\$7.05
Pocket patch holder	\$3.00	\$1.05	\$4.05
Shoulder patch, 29th ID	\$3.50	\$0.50	\$4.00
Jacket, coach, navy with logo in S, M, L, XL, 2XL	\$27.00	\$5.60	\$32.60
Golf Shirt, embroidered 100% cotton pullover (royal blue, white, gray—L, XL, 2XL)	\$23.00	\$5.60	\$28.60
29th Division Official Association Necktie	\$20.00	\$1.95	\$21.95
29th Division Association Bolo Tie	\$6.00	\$1.25	\$7.25
29th Association Dress Hat (state size)	\$31.00	\$5.60	\$36.60
Hat, Baseball w/29th logo (embroidered)	\$15.00	\$2.50	\$17.50
Hat, Baseball w/29th logo (embroidered/Summer mesh)	\$12.00	\$2.50	\$14.50

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**

Special Note

DUE TO A POSTAL RATE INCREASE, SOME PRICES HAVE CHANGED.

29th Division Association
P.O. Box 1546
Frederick, MD 21702-0546

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

Address Service Requested

Association Membership

All applications of prospective members should be mailed to our National Headquarters address. Assignment to a respective Post is normally made on information taken from the application regarding current or former military unit and/or your current home address. Membership dues vary slightly from Post to Post, but if you send a check for \$12.00 made payable to the 29th Division Association, that will normally suffice. Send your check and application addressed to:

National Headquarters
29th Division Association
P.O. Box 1546
Frederick, MD 21702-0546

MD Post 1	Catonsville, MD
FL Post 2	Sarasota, FL
CN Post 3	Toronto, Canada
VA Post 5	Virginia Beach, VA
FL Post 27	New Port Richie, FL
HQ Post 29	At Large
MD Post 48	Westminster, MD
VA Post 64	Roanoke, VA
MD Post 72	Baltimore, MD
MD Post 78	Frederick, MD
VA Post 84	Fort Belvoir, VA
MD Post 85	Harford & Cecil County, MD
MD Post 88	Eastern Shore, DE & MD
NE Post 93	New England
MD Post 94	Silver Spring, MD
MD Post 110	Pikesville, MD
VA Post 116	Staunton, VA
PA Post 175	Pennsylvania
MD Post 224	Edgewood, Md
MD Post 229	Parkville, MD
MD Post 729	Blue Ridge Summit, 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 _____