

THE TWENTY-NINER

The *Chin Strap* of World War I



29

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

Published by the

29th Division Association

Vol. 59, No. 1

SPRING 2015

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Spring 2015

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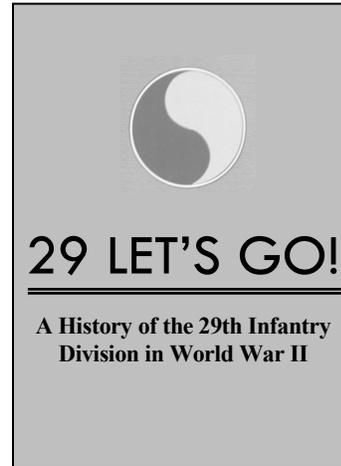
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The reprinting of "29 Let's Go!"

Sometime during the Spring of 2014, the National Property Officer for the 29th Division Association received a request for 15 copies of the 29th Infantry Division history book titled "29, Let's Go!." The Association will normally sell about 10-12 of these books during a normal year, and at that time the stock of this book had declined to a point where we had only about 20-25 on hand.

This in itself would not ordinarily have been a problem, but in this case, we had no definite supplier for this item. The individual who ordered the books had also asked if it would be possible for him to receive some kind of a discount.

His thought was to give a copy to each of his children and grandchildren (about 8 books) and donate the remainder to several libraries located within and around the



New Mexico city where he lived. The National Property Officer felt this was beyond his authority and contacted the National Executive Director to get an answer.

A little research found that the original copies of this book had been printed by Washington Infantry Journal Press and a copyright obtained in 1948. A reprint was done many years later by the Battery Press of Nashville, Tennessee. Since this

seemed to be a good possibility for additional copies, the National Executive Director contacted offices of Battery Press with a request for a reprint.

Unfortunately, we were told that no more books remained in their warehouse and they would not be interested in doing a reprint. A second contact a little later with a more defined plea was again met with the same answer.

Since the copyright had expired many years before, it now appeared as though the Association may have to look for a new source. We were told that we might be able to secure the book through Amazon.com in what is known as "Print on Request." This was checked out and we found that not only could we not get the number of copies we wanted, but the cost per copy would be much more

(Continued on page 18)

97th Annual Reunion to be held in Fredericksburg, VA

The 97th Annual Reunion and Convention of the 29th Division Association will take place in Fredericksburg, Virginia on 15-18 October 2015.

The Fredericksburg Hospitality House, located just off I95 is the site for our annual event. Room rates are \$99.00 plus tax; this includes 2 breakfast tickets per room per day.

Thursday evening, an informal "on your own" tour of

the Blue and Grey Brewery near the hotel is suggested. Friday's trip will be to the Marine Corps museum in Quantico, Virginia.

There are also many Civil War battlefields nearby that could be of interest to some of our attendees.

The contact information for making reservations at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House can be found on page 39 of this issue. Please make

your reservations early. Be sure to tell them you are with the 29th Division Association.

You will notice that this issue does not contain the registration form, or the cost for meals as in past years. These forms will appear in our Summer edition along with the forms for placing ads and patrons in the Souvenir Program Book.

Please join us October 15-18 in Fredericksburg VA.

MESSAGE FROM OUR COMMANDER:**I. John Vaccarino**

My sincere thanks to all that had confidence in me to elect me your National Commander. I hope and pray that your confidence pans out. Since taking command, I have had the pleasure of visiting several of the Posts and have enjoyed each minute of those visits. Shortly, I will have the pleasure of installing our newest Post 58.

To assist me in administering our Association, I have created an ad hoc committee known as the Command Committee. Composed of myself, the Senior and Junior Vice Commanders, the National Adjutant and, of course, our National Executive Director. They are charged with advising the Commander on any and all matter of business. They are already making my life much easier.

As we get into the meat of this term of office, I have a change to make. The Wreath Laying will be held on 31 May, 2015. At 1315 hours (1:15 p.m.) I will be assisted by our Surgeon Emeritus Hal Baumgarten. I know he, as well as I, are honored to present a Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown at Arlington. **All is in readiness except the customary luncheon**, traditionally held at the Spates Community Hall in Fort Meyer. It will be held at the VFW Post 3150 in Arlington, and named for John Lyon, a WWI hero of the 29th Division's 116th Regiment. What a coincidence! Please see the notice on page 13 of this issue. For Maryland Region members, a free bus will be available to and from Arlington.

National Executive Committee (NEC III) will be held 18 June at the NG Armory in Winchester, VA. This will be our tune-up for the Annual Meeting in October. This is one of the few times a NEC

meeting, other than our Annual Meeting, has been held other than at the Weinberg Center at Camp Fretterd in Maryland. Again, more info is noted on page 38 of this issue.

The most important event each year is the annual reunion which will be held 15-18 October at the Fredericksburg Hospitality House. There is a notice placed on page 39 of this issue giving the basics of what I hope will be a banner event. Fredericksburg is at the center of several significant American Civil War battles.

The Hospitality House is a mammoth structure with close to 400 suites, more than ample meeting rooms, and parking for 400 vehicles. It is located in a huge Mall called Central Park and is surrounded by first-rate restaurants. The room rates are reasonable and include daily breakfast tickets. Of course, our annual reunion would be incomplete without a Hospitality Room and this year, Post 64 will be our host. I cannot emphasize more how important it is to register early. You do not want to miss this reunion.

For entertainment, we will have a tour of the Blue & Gray Brewery and a tour of the nearby Marine Corps Museum touted as the best in the country. The ladies will surely appreciate the many shops located in downtown Fredericksburg. It is a shopper's paradise! **SO, MAKE PLANS, NOW, TO BE A PART OF THIS, OUR 97th REUNION AND CONVENTION!**

You wonder how the Association is able to put on its Annual Reunion at such a reasonable price? Our Reunion Committee works hard to keep costs to a minimum. However, in spite of this, it's the Reunion's Souvenir Program Book that keeps the costs low – and we owe thanks to our Adjutant and Editor/Publisher of the *Twenty-Niner*, Will Mund, who spends countless hours putting together the Reunion's Souvenir Program book – that makes the difference. He solicits ads – and these ads pay for the book and help offset some of the other expenses associated with the Reunion.

As National Commander, I am challenging each Post to take a full-page ad – not a quarter or half page ad but a full-page ad. I'm challenging each national officer to take **at least** a quarter-page ad. What a help this would be! I challenge each and every member of the Association to seek and procure at least one ad from a favorite business or social/fraternal organization. Consider what a difference these actions can make!

Unless we take these tasks to push to fill our Reunion Program, **each year**, most of us will soon find it too costly to have an annual reunion. **Let's take this seriously! Let's make these Reunion Programs a product that we can be proud of!**

The Reunion/Convention registration forms, meals & trip selections, along with the forms for ads and patrons will appear in the upcoming Summer 2015 edition.

I. John Vaccarino
National Commander

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Contributions to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund*

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our membership for their generosity in contributing to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund* for this Spring issue. From November 1, 2014, through March 1, 2015, these donations totaled \$4,073.49. **Note our cut-off time. If your contributions did not reach our National Executive Director by March 1, 2015 then it will not be listed until the next issue.** We thank you all and bless you.

Adler, Eric, Post 94, Son, Wappingers Falls, NY
Baldwin, Steven, Post 94, Associate, Rockville, MD
Baumgarten, Dr. Harold, Post 110, A/116, Jacksonville Bch, FL

**In Memory of Joe Joseph, B/116, Glenwood Hankins, H/116,
and Robert Sales, B/116, WWII**

Behrens, Edwin, Post 110, Associate, Great Falls, VA
Berch, Isadore & Virginia, Post 2, B/115, Buena Park, CA

In Memory of Joseph Joseph, B/116, WWII

Borosky, Dr. Bernard, Post 94, Associate, Muscle Shoals, AL
Bourdeau, Mary E., Post 94, Daughter, Glen Falls, NY

In Memory of Oscar F. Donohue, I/115, WWII (Father)

Boyter, Roy J., Post 94, E/115, (WWII), Shreveport, LA
Bricker, Robert M., Post 2, HQ/227FA (WWII), Venice FL

In Memory of Richard "Dick" Quigley, K/115, WWII

Brinkley, George, Post 94, Associate, Cornwall, United Kingdom
Brodkey, David Z., Post 94, Associate, Portland, OR

Brondyke, Russell L., Post 94, Associate, Homosassa, FL
Bullock, Bill, Post 110, C/2-110FA, Marriottsville, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Burke, Edward A., Post 94, A/821TD, (WWII), Cincinnati, OH
Burkert, Perry, Post 94, Son, Sinking Spring, PA
Carpenter, Hugh D., Post 94, Mogadore, OH
Combs, Phyllis, Post 85, F/224AV, Street, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Cooley, Carl G., Post 94, Son, Slagle, LA
Cundy, Donald C., Post 94, Son, Dearborn, MI

In Memory of Harry L. Cundy, HHC/3/175, WWII (Father)

Dabbs, Anthony, Post 94, Associate, Beltsville, MD
Damascus, James A., Post #1, Son, Chappaqua, NY

In Honor of Adam J. Damascus, HHC/1/115, WWII (Father)

Davis, Milton P., Post 72, HHC 629 MI Bn, Lanham, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Deener, Mike & Annette, Post 72, A/1-115, Sharpsburg, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Dees, Robert L., Post 94, Son, Oakdale, CA
DeHays, Antonin, Post 94, Associate, College Park, MD
Dennis, Larry A., Post 94, Associate, Bartlesville, OK

In Memory of Major Robert W. Stewart, 121 Engr Bn, WWII

Dickerson, Joseph, Post 64, E/116, Muffreesboro, NC
DiMattina, Vincent J., Post 94, Son, Springfield, VA
Dooley, PNC Ivan V., Post 72, 121 Engr Bn, Baltimore, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Dow, Connie B., Post 94, Daughter, Cincinnati, OH
Doyle, Frederick, Post 64, 116/INF, Lynchburg, VA
Dreyer, Louis, Post 29, HHC/1-115, Concord, CA
Dugue, Arlette & Andre, Post 94, Associate, France
Duncan, Norman, Post 94, E/116, (WWII), Ashburn, VA

Fernandez, Robert, Post 94, Associate, White Plains, NY
Firebaugh, Larry, Post 64, A/1-116, Troutsville, VA
Florida Post #2, Sarasota, Florida

In Memory of Past Post Cdr. Richard H. Quigley, K/115 WWII

Ford, William G., Post 94, Associate, Silver Spring, MD
Fournier, Normand, Post 94, Son, Millis, MA
Fowler, John, Post 94, B/104 Med, (WWII), Fallon, MO
Garguilo, Neil, Post 94, Son, Lakewood, NJ
Garrison, Cecil L., Post 94, D/104 Med, (WWII), Falls Church, VA
Garrison, Cecil L., Jr., Post 94, Son, Centreville, VA
Gaskin, William P., Post 110, HHB DIVARTY, Montgomery, PA
Gaskin, William P., Post 110, HHB DIVARTY, Montgomery, PA

In Memory of those who gave their all.

Gerhardt, Charles Jr., Post 94, Son, Lebanon, OH
Green, Colleen, Post 94, Daughter, Simms, MT
Green, David, Post 94, Son, Philadelphia, PA
Griffin, Kenneth W., Post 94, G/115, (WWII), Frankfort, NY
Gritton, Ramond A., Post 94, 81 CHMTR, (WWII), Burtonsville, MD
Gutknecht, Kay M., Post 94, Daughter, San Jose, CA
Hall, Harold B., Post 94, G/175 (WWII), Morton, IL
Harper, David B., Post 94, Associate, Bountiful, UT
Hayes, Steven A., Post 94, Associate, Upper Marlboro, MD
Hayslett, Guy, Post 94, Associate, Olney, MD
Heeter, Eugene C., Post 94, K/175, (WWII), Rolling Meadows, IL
Hertzfeld, Michael G., Post 94, Associate, Perrysburg, OH
Huffaker, James, Post 64, M/116, Knoxville, TN
Huffman, David R., Post 78, Son, Harrisburg, PA

In Memory of Albert W. Hoffman, 1-115, WWII & Frances Hoffman

Janssen, Kathleen, Post 94, Daughter, Arnold, MD
Jebson, Sallie Howie, Post 94, Daughter, Culpeper, VA
Jindra, Dr. Lawrence, Post 94, Son, Floral Park, NY
Jindra, Leonard, Post 94, F/115, (WWII), Floral Park, NY
Joiner, Tommie L., Post 94, HHC/1/175, (WWII), Batesville, MS
Joiner, William C., Post 94, Grandson, Brandon, MS
Jones, Alan, Post 72, 121 Engr Bn, Dunkirk, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Jordan, William, Nephew, Hagerstown, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Kelley, J. Edward, Post 94, Associate, Franklin, TN
Kent, Meredith, Daughter, San Diego, CA

In Memory of Hillar "Jim" Britt, L/115, WWII (Father)

Knight, James S. III, Post 94, Son, Mt. Pleasant, SC
Kruhm, Fred N., Post 94, C/121 Engr Bn, (NG), Burtonsville, MD
Kussman, John C., Post 94, L/115, (WWII) Centerville, OH
Lakeman, Cathie, Post 1, Daughter, Wedowee, AL

In Memory of PFC W. A. "Mickey" Williams, E/115, WWII (Father)

Lane, Dale, Post 94, Son, Indianapolis, IN
Larkspur Post #110, Pikesville, MD

In Memory of Post member Joseph Howell, 224 FA, WWII

Larkspur Post #110, Pikesville, MD

In Memory of Post member Arthur Humm, 224 FA, WWII

Larkspur Post #110, Pikesville, MD

In Memory of Post member Donald Morris, HQ/2-110 FA

Larkspur Post #110, Pikesville, MD

In Memory of Post member Harry Shevchuck, L/175, WWII

Leonard, William O., Post 64, Associate, Malvern, PA
Linthicum, George, Post 72, C/175, Linthicum, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

TAPS

The following list shows names of known 29ers and their ladies or family members who died and their deaths reported from November 1, 2014 through March 1, 2015. We are indeed saddened and mourn their passing. We extend our deepest sympathy and love to their families and loved ones. We pray that they and all of our earlier deceased 29ers and ladies may rest in peace. Amen.

LAST ROLL CALL

Barnes, Jerry F, Post 48, Assoc, Hampstead, MD, 11/29/14
 Bowermon, Tommy J, Post 29, 29QM, Ponder, TX, 12/21/13
 Coleman, E. Hampton, Post 64, M/116, Pt. Orange, FL, Dt Unk
 Davey, Raymond O, Post 94, F/115, Indian Head, MD, 11/29/14
 Englar, Donald G, Post 64, 115th Inf, Boise, ID, 10/27/14
 Falkowski, Henry, Post 93, M/175, Enfield, CT, 1/24/15
 Fiore, George M, Post 94, E/175, Long Island Cty, NY, 10/15/14
 Fournier, Jean P, Post 2, B/116, W. Hartford, CT, 10/13/13
 Gambill, Joseph, Post 64, C/116, Harrisonburg, VA, 12/2012
 Gouker, Thomas E, Post 78, A/1-115, Frederick, MD, 10/9/14
 Hatchett, Maurice A, Post 29, E/116, Holly Bluff, MS, 7/23/14
 Hahn, Paul, Post 729, 729MT, Greencastle, PA, 11/15/14
 Hankins, PNC Glenwood, Post 64, H/116, Martinsvl, VA, 2/7/15
 Harris, James R, Post 5, HQ/116, Richmond, VA, 1/9/12
 Howell, Joseph E, Post 110, HQ/224FA, Towson, MD, 11/3/14
 Humm, Arthur W, Post 110, C/224FA, Pasadena, MD, 11/17/14
 Hurd, Cletus L, Post 729, A/729ORD, Waynesboro, PA, 9/10/14
 Jordan, Richard F, Post 729, HQ/115, Hagerstown, MD, 1/29/15
 Koslow, Aaron, Post 5, K/116, Anaheim, CA, 1/3/13
 Lang, Charles T, Post 27, F/1125, Louisville, KY, 9/28/14
 Manahan, Donald M, Post 729, 729ORD, Fort Myers, FL, 1/4/15
 Martin, John M, 175th INF, Catonsville, MD, 1/24/15
 Moore, Curtis, Post 64, D/116, Rockledge, VA, 10/25/14
 Morris, Donald A, Post 110, HQ/110FA, Baltimore, MD, 1/30/15
 Ogle, Norman, Post 110, HQ/110FA, Baltimore, MD, 10/11/14
 Quigley, Richard H, Post 2, K/115, Sarasota, FL, 1/30/15
 Sales, Robert L, Post 64, B/116, Madison Hgts, VA, 2/23/15
 Scattergood, John, Post 48, C/110FA, Melbourne, FL, 10/17/14
 Shevchuck, Harry, Post 110, L/175, Wilmington, DE, 9/10/14
 Vickery, Norman C, Post 729, Smithsburg, MD, 6/2/14
 Wallenfang, Ellis J, Post 72, Div HQ, Greenfield, WI, 9/14/14

LADIES

Grossman, Natalie. Wife, Hingham MA, 11/7/14

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 31 comrades and 1 lady who have died and whose death was reported to us since our last publication. This includes 1 comrade who was not a member of our association but was a member 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

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 1910 Calais Ct., Baltimore MD. 21244-1707
 Telephone 410-944-1639
 E-Mail: Rmoscati@msn.com

Legion of Honor Recipients

In recognition of the French government's noble effort to award the Legion of Honor to 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
 edit-pub29er@hotmail.com

No Greater Sacrifice, No Greater Love

What follows is a greatly condensed version of chapters 4-5 of "No Greater Sacrifice, No Greater Love," National Service Officer Walter Carter's published memoir about his father, Captain Elmer Norval Carter, 1st Bn, 115th Regiment. Chapters 1-3 appeared in the Autumn/Winter 2014 issue of the 29er; the final chapters will appear in the next issue.

For comments or questions, contact Walter at walterfcarter@aol.com or visit www.walterfordcarter.com.

Chapter 4: A Nation of Broken Hearts

Norval was terribly depressed and homesick. He plunged into the work of setting up a military hospital in southwest England, but his nighttime thoughts inevitably drifted westward across the Atlantic. Fernie's frequent letters were a sweet torture. While reveling in every scrap of news about his sons, every bit of gossip about family and friends, his heart ached as he pictured all that he was missing. "I feel at times that I am hallucinating because it seems that you & the boys can be made so readily visible," he wrote to Fernie. "But it is all pantomime—no voices."

To drive away the pain of what he called his "damn gnawing homesickness," Norval drank. He had started drinking during his short stay in Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, as he awaited embarkation to England. "I was afraid to soberly face the thought of leaving you all," he later admitted. "I just couldn't stand up to it emotionally." Now, in his loneliness in England, he was drinking a quart of whiskey a day, sometimes more. Although surprised that he was able to drink that much—"evidently my tolerance increased"—he claimed that he was never drunk. "I was just anesthetized, I suppose."

Even a quart of whiskey could accomplish only so much, however. "I have been feeling very homesick for several days," he wrote on February 26, 1943, not long after receiving pictures of Tom and me in front of our Christmas tree. "The depression was profound & bordered on the pathological. The pictures came, & seeing those kids around the tree just about did me in. I would give anything to see you all & tell you how much I love you."

Part of Norval's problem was that his unit did not have a great deal to do, at least at first. Units such as the 110th Station Hospital had been designed to support the coming invasion. There was no shortage of paperwork or short-term tasks and chores, but the doctors found little use for their professional skills. The idleness made camp life miserable. Everybody, Norval reported, was becoming "quite irritable."

In late January, he traveled to the resort town of Torquay on the Channel coast. The town had been transformed by war refugees from many of the countries Hitler had overrun. He spent hours talking with them and with the locals. He came to understand how much they had suffered while America was watching from afar: "This is a country of broken hearts. Honestly, I could never realize how much of a Hell war can be. It is very cruel. This war has destroyed much more than property and human lives. It is depressing & degrading; it has destroyed ideas and ideals; it has changed spirits & wounded souls. I wonder when the world will recover from it."

Norval had been in England for just over a month, but already he had met some of the men to whom Britain and the world owed so much: the pilots of the Royal Air Force. Their historic defense of Britain's skies in 1940 was the stuff of legend.

These pilots made a strong impression on Norval. They lived for the moment, from mission to mission, knowing that their long-term chances for survival were slim. "These young, vivacious aviators are interesting to study," he noted in a detached, professional tone. "They never know whether they will 'come back' or not. Our Fortresses are good planes, & most of them come back, but the men get badly shot up." He had seen what happened to crew members, even on airplanes that made it home. "Arms off, some completely decapitated, some merely scratched, with the guts of a recent friend of yours."

Even as air raids became a part of his daily routine—"I know how to duck when I see eggs dropping & jump for a ditch from machine-gun fire"—Norval refused to surrender his dreams of tomorrow. He told Mom: "Nothing is going to happen to me to prevent our being together again—keep that in mind. I just know everything is going to be all right."

In mid-March, Norval's commanding officer charged him with overseeing construction of a new hospital in Stockton Heath, Cheshire, a few miles from Liverpool. He welcomed the assignment and the increased responsibility. Conditions at the construction site were primitive at best. For several days, as construction began in earnest, Norval lived in a "mud hole." One Sunday morning he tried to relax by walking to a nearby farm and riding a frisky racehorse. But even this exercise inspired thoughts of home. Noticing "the well-rounded rump" of the horse, he wrote, "it suddenly occurred to me how nice it would be to set Tom & W.F. on there."

When his work in Cheshire was finished, Norval was ordered to Oxford University for thirty days of study at the Neuropsychiatric School of the European Theater of Operations. He left for Oxford on April 6, 1943, and was quartered in a private home about a mile from the university. His temporary hosts, an English family named Evans, delighted him by serving tea, crumpets, and scones at four o'clock every afternoon. Not long after spending nights in the "mud hole" in Cheshire, he now had his own room, a comfortable bed, a bathtub, and a bureau. He also had use of a radio and a record player belonging to his hosts' son, who was with the British army in North Africa. One night he tuned in to the Armed Forces Radio Network and heard a program featuring Bob Hope, Jerry Colonna, and other American comedians. He laughed the night away, his first good laugh in weeks. Some evenings, after he returned from

work, piano music drifted into his room. His hosts' daughter played the instrument, but not, he observed, as well as Fernie. "The sound of some of those songs makes me homesick. I can be here and visualize you playing with your specs halfway down your nose & me sitting in a near-by chair."

Busy in Cheshire, Norval no longer reached for the bottle when his thoughts drifted to home. His Oxford schedule brought the welcome order of routine. He had to be at the hospital, a mile away, at seven o'clock every morning, and he rose early enough to walk. There were lectures from ten until noon, a board meeting to discuss patients' cases at one o'clock, ward work until four, supper at four-thirty and, every other day, a drill at six. He was in bed by seven.

It was exhausting and heartbreaking work. At Oxford were the wounded of North Africa, where a combined British-American force was battling German forces, including elements of Erwin Rommel's feared Afrika Korps.

Many Allied soldiers brought to Oxford from North Africa for treatment were wounded psychologically. During World War I, doctors had been overwhelmed with cases of men whose psyches had been brutalized by that conflict's large-scale carnage—"shell shock," they called it. During World War II such patients were said to be suffering from "exhaustion." Generally they were treated behind the lines, in aid stations, or in field hospitals, and most recovered there and soon were back on the front lines. Others were not cured so quickly and had to be evacuated to hospitals in Britain. Some never recovered from the trauma and were sent home, often never to emerge from the grounds of a veterans hospital. As a psychiatric physician, Norval sympathized with these men whose bodies bore none of the scars or disfigurements of war.

As he worked with these traumatized soldiers, Norval became angry with Americans back home who, he felt, did not appreciate the suffering he saw every day. "If the people back in the states knew what these young men are doing for freedom and liberty they would no longer think these two words sounded trite or corny," he wrote. "These fighting men really go through hell. Some get killed. Many get wounded and they all get the hell scared out of them at times. It is very pitiful and depressing."

The terrible sights and perhaps the incoherent rambling of his patients led him to write an emotional letter to my brother and me. He knew we could not fully understand what he was saying, but he wanted us to know that the images we saw in the news did not capture the horror and tragedy of war:

"I am now treating men whose minds have been damaged by this war. It is another bad thing that war does. You know that some soldiers get killed in battle and some get crippled by bullets, but there are also a great number whose minds become deranged by the frightfulness of combat. They see so many unpleasant sights and experience so much danger to themselves that they are unable to use their minds as you and I do. Some of them are pretty sad and depressed and nothing is bright and cheerful for them. They are unable to look at the pretty flowers and enjoy them like you do. I remember how you boys used to run about the flowers and squat and look at them and then bend over and stick your nose in them. It's very nice to be able to do that, and I hope you always will be able to do it."

Like his descriptions of the gloomy realities of camp life, my father's gentle and humane messages to us were very different from the popular images at home. The idea that our enemies hated the war, just as we did, was almost subversive. Newspapers, magazines, and radio programs depicted them as ruthless and evil—and, of course, their cause surely was. But the letters asked Tom and me to think of the enemy not as a faceless entity but as a collection of people not so different from us.

"There are soldiers of many nationalities over here and they have pretty colored uniforms. However, I am sure we shall all be happy when the pretty uniforms are replaced with civilian peacetime clothes. The soldiers are handsome in peacetime but it is an ugly thing they have to do in war. Remember that most human beings really don't want to kill each other. The Germans, Italians, and Japanese soldiers have the same feelings about war that you & I have and will probably be glad when it is over."

Although it is clear how my father felt about war in general, he believed not only that this one was necessary but also that people at home, particularly politicians, could do more to support the GIs. He was particularly angry that some political leaders were resisting the military's plan to build an army of millions to defeat the combined Axis powers.

As the buildup in England continued in the late spring of 1943, Norval vented his frustration: "I saw that some members of Congress were against the War Department's demand for such a large army. Those men should be enlightened or shot. We shall need a much larger force than we have now. We are up against some tough armies. The successes (costly) in North Africa shouldn't deceive people. We are up against only a very small enemy force there. On the continent there are many divisions of well-equipped men. We shall need an enormous gun-power to flatten it. One can't have a great gun-power without having a great number of men. People in the states better wake up & get to work. It makes us very much shamed when such news gets over here & we have to listen to it at the same time we see the great output of effort & materials and the great fighting spirit of the British."

Norval began to feel that when this mass of men and materiel was ferried from England to France he wanted to be on the front lines. In late May 1943 he was detached from the 110th Station Hospital for several weeks to serve alongside men of the Twenty-ninth Infantry Division in southwest England, an assignment that he believed could lead to front-line duty as the leader of a neuropsychiatric team. This possibility, which Norval mentioned casually in a letter, frightened Fernie. No doubt she had taken comfort in knowing that her husband was in a relatively safe army hospital in England, and perhaps she had assumed that he would remain there for the war's duration. His growing expertise in neuropsychiatry seemed like work that would be performed far from the battlefield itself. Why, she wanted to know, would the army post psychiatric teams on the front lines? Dad explained that "it was the most advantageous place. Acute psychoneuroses can be cured within 48 hours at the front. But if they are allowed to get back to the rear echelons most don't recover for months and sometimes retain their troubles for keeps."

Realizing that Fernie was now even more anxious about him, Norval tried to reassure her: "I don't know whether I'll be assigned to the front lines or not. One never knows what will hap-

pen. I can't kick and I will do my best wherever I go. And the future doesn't worry me at all. I know everything will be all right. I have never lost my self-confidence either in regards to the present situation or to the post-war period. You & I will enjoy life again, in a more livable world, & Tom and Walter Ford will have many advantages, & we shall be proud of them."

His letter may have reassured Fernie slightly, but Norval found himself becoming fascinated with combat training and exercises and drawn to the men of the Twenty-ninth, who were preparing for the great battle to come. "They are fine looking fellows, lean, hard, alert & quick in movement and very, very serious," he wrote. "There are occasional pranks & jokes in the Army but I often think how serious everyone seems to be—all military. But then one can't expect men to remain fun-seeking & light-hearted and still be able to coldly shoot and knife other men to death." Some of the officers he observed carried "wicked-looking knives," which they hurled with great precision into target dummies.

Norval openly admired the men of the Twenty-ninth Division and the work they were doing. "An army of fighting men is a tremendous spectacle and quite awe-inspiring," he wrote to his parents. The contrast to his descriptions of his hospital routine, filled with complaints about idleness and red tape, is striking. Although he did not transfer to the Twenty-ninth for another ten months, it may have been this assignment that convinced him that this was the work he ought to be doing. Decades later, another doctor at the 110th Station Hospital told me that my father stood out from his colleagues because he seemed so eager to do something other than file paperwork and see the occasional patient. "Usually, most of us were perfectly happy to be in a safe unit like the 110th," the doctor wrote in 1997. "No one was shooting at us and bombing by the Germans was remote and infrequent. I, for one, was not going looking for trouble. The war was a temporary affair, noble, heroic, unique, but after all, temporary, and when it was over, I intended to go home and practice my medical specialty. Norval wanted more."

He went out with the troops into the field, observing how they lived and worked together and studying the hardships they suffered during their intensive and dangerous training exercises. This allowed him, he said, to "study neuropsychiatric problems now and anticipate what to expect in the future."

The division's location was not unknown to the Luftwaffe. "Some Jerry planes came over & strafed a certain place the other day," he wrote on May 26. "Killed 6 of our men. However, this is all very tame compared to what will come off in the future."

At night, even in such an active camp with serious business under way, the loneliness returned. When the day's work was done, with few other distractions in the English countryside, Norval's thoughts wandered home. He continued to long for the day when he would take off his uniform and resume the life he loved in Huntington. Sometimes those dreams seemed heartbreakingly real. As he lay dozing in a chair one night, he heard Fernie's voice, repeatedly calling him to the dinner table. It was one of the games they played with each other: She would call him, he would remain in his chair in the living room, and then she would have to use more persuasive tactics. The vision was fleeting, and he snapped back to consciousness, but the sensation was so real:

"I could smell steak & fried potatoes just as plainly, & that odor

& mental picture still lingered for several minutes afterward. I was terribly homesick the rest of the evening. ... Damn! Those were happy days, weren't they, Sugar? Tell the boys I love them a lot. I think of you & them constantly."

Returning to his regular duties with the 110th Hospital Station in Devon, Norval was promoted to captain in late June 1943. Under the new regime, Norval assumed additional responsibilities. He was placed in charge of admitting and discharge, named the hospital's registrar, and given the title of commander of the detachment of patients. These tasks meant lots of desk work—just the kind of assignment for which he had little patience. He was a doctor, and he wanted to work with patients. But now he had to deal with paperwork—army paperwork.

Norval's new duties at the hospital were considerably less exciting than his weeks of observing combat training, and they took a toll on his psyche. He told Fernie that he was depressed again, that he was avoiding his colleagues; he was even negligent in writing home. He tried going to church but found no comfort there. "I am just plain miserable," he wrote. "Work doesn't take you off my mind, although it is a help. If I had a chance to get back, I'd go AWOL & stand court martial. I want to see the boys so badly."

The coastline of southwest England was being transformed into a stage for rehearsing the Allied landing. Several thousand British civilians were forced to evacuate their homes and farms as troops and equipment arrived in vast numbers. Soldiers, tanks, and camps replaced townspeople, villages, and farms. Engineers recreated the defenses Hitler had built in France, and soon pillboxes, mined obstacles, and other defensive works dotted the once-peaceful beaches along the coast. In mid-August 1943 Norval and the staff of the 110th Station Hospital were re-deployed to the southwest—to Fremington, near Barnstaple in north Devon. The men of the Twenty-ninth Division, whom he had observed during combat training earlier in the summer, were already in the area, having moved from Tidworth to Devon and Cornwall in May.

The training was intense and sometimes deadly. In late September Norval watched the Twenty-ninth Division practice landings at Woolacombe on the Bristol Channel coastline. "It was very interesting but blood chilling," he wrote. "They came in from the sea & assaulted concrete pill boxes." Veterans of the North African and Sicilian campaigns supervised the landings—"they really know their stuff." After the exercises were finished for the day, he found some shell splinters, empty cartridges, and other evidence that these rehearsals spared no detail. Collecting a few souvenirs from the beach, he mailed them home to us. A few days later he found a stray bayonet belonging to a soldier who had drowned during a practice landing; my father sent that home, too.

The routine at the 110th Station Hospital had intensified as well. Rarely did Norval complain of idleness now. His quarters were rudimentary at best—"we live practically out of doors," he said—and uncomfortable. The staff rose before dawn, ran naked to the latrines about 10 yards away from their sleeping quarters, washed, dressed, and then rode their bicycles to the mess hall. "It takes us about 10-15 minutes to get up & get to breakfast," he wrote. "We really move fast & furiously, cussing each other,

shoving, pushing, yelling & throwing water, etc.” He was becoming lean and tough: his clothes were fitting looser, and “my body is pretty hard.”

As Norval’s thirty-second birthday approached and fall arrived in the English countryside, there was reason to celebrate. The Allies had cleared North Africa and Sicily of Axis forces, Mussolini had been overthrown, and Italy had surrendered. The Nazis denounced the Italians as traitors to the Axis cause, and German troops marched into Rome and other Italian cities to await the next stage of the Allied advance—an invasion of Italy. These victories led Norval, and no doubt many other soldiers, to hope that the end was near. He told Fernie that he believed they would be together again in 1944.

On October 17, his birthday, he wrote another touching letter to Fernie, saying that his only wish was a kiss from her:

“Sweetheart, I miss you so damned much: your voice, your hair, your eyes, your touch, you. If we could only see each other for a little while, how wonderful it would be! I want to kiss you and hug you and tell you how much you mean to me. What shall we do when we get together again? Where shall we go? How will we make up for lost conversation & exchange of ideas? ... How much will each of us have changed when we are once more together? I realize that I have a “harder” and “sterner” attitude than formerly. I realize that military life has & will continue to change me. You will be changing too but not along the same lines. You will have to help me overcome a lot when I get back, because my changes are probably not for the best. I try & not let myself become as too many officers are becoming, but it is hard to walk through a dust storm & not become dusty. I hope it can someday be brushed off. You brush the part of me that I can’t reach. Will you, Sugar?”

As 1943 drew to a close, it was clear that the Allied invasion would not take place that year but also equally clear that it was only months away. Training continued to intensify, and Norval saw the results firsthand. In late October four critically wounded men—“booby-trap cases,” he called them—were admitted “one after another.” They “are in shreds but I believe they will live. Their eyes and hands caught hell.” The hospital also saw an increase in combat neuroses. “Some are very severe & pathetic,” he reported.

It certainly did not help that my father had grown to dislike his new commanding officer. “I have had about all I can stand,” he wrote on November 11. “I hope they do transfer me to a field unit. I have seen a lot of Army hospitals and am plenty disgusted. The happiest soldiers & officers we see are from the field.”

When Norval was away from the hospital, he felt useful and happy. He was sent to the coast again to observe rehearsals of beach assaults, observations conducted not from afar but in the landing craft with the troops. “It’s a thrilling thing to come in on an assault craft and pour out in a hurry,” he wrote. “The water is cold as hell but it is invigorating. When I finished up over there I could taste powder, smoke & grit sand in my teeth.”

The possibility of a more permanent change, to a field unit preparing for duty on the front lines, was very much on his mind. His descriptions of his time with the Twenty-ninth Division are filled with admiration and excitement, while his letters about hospital duty reflect his impatience and boredom. His admiration for the soldiers of the Twenty-ninth was not one-sided; the men he treated

respected his professionalism and his devotion to their care. A sergeant assigned to the Twenty-ninth and one of my father’s patients had written him a thank-you note in October: “Well, Captain, I pray and hope we meet again. To me you’re just like a Dad. I wish there were more of you all. Maybe things would be different.”

On returning to hospital duty, Norval was confronted with yet more tedious work. “We are running over our bed capacity,” he wrote. “I haven’t caught up & I have worked to mid-nite to do so. Then there was training schedules to arrange and a lot of other red-tape to be worked on.” He hinted that a change might occur, although he phrased it in a way that suggested he was not actively seeking a transfer. “I think I may be placed with a combat unit,” he said. “I would welcome the change to get with Army Ground Forces because this CO of ours is typical of the whole hospital service over here—stinko.” I know I would be happier there than where I am now, even if it is more muddy.”

Norval, of course, knew the truth. Field duty was dangerous work, even in training. In mid-December he once again joined the soldiers of the Twenty-ninth Division in practice beach landings. He and a colleague were in a landing craft in rough seas when another vessel capsized, throwing the crew with their weapons and heavy equipment into the sea. Norval and his friend tried to rescue a soldier hanging onto a life preserver, but the sea swept him away. Seven soldiers died in training accidents in thirty-six hours. Yet the training area was where he wanted to be.

On Christmas Eve, Norval wrote a bittersweet letter home, describing how he and some other GIs spent the day. His thoughts, of course, drifted home on that magical night of memories: “I can see you fixing trees & wrapping presents & trailing things all about, & then winding up with a beautiful arrangement. My—I would give anything to be sitting there on the floor with you & occasionally reaching over & blowing in your ear. I hope the boys will be happy in the a.m. I know you won’t be entirely so. I opened your package tonight & got into the Hershey bars. They are wonderful. But Goddammit, it is sad, isn’t it?”

Chapter 5: Fighting for a Way of Living

Norval was dropping hints to Fernie. He had made up his mind that he could no longer tolerate life in the Station Hospital. The more he saw of the Twenty-ninth Division, the more he longed to be part of something greater and, in his eyes, more noble than the relatively humdrum life of an army hospital. He needed a change. That much was clear from his letters from late 1943. Now, however, the day of the great invasion was nearing, and he wanted to be part of it.

He could not bring himself to tell Fernie what he was planning to do—request a transfer to a medical field unit with the Twenty-ninth Division. By the end of 1943, the division knew it was going to play a critical role in the D-Day assault. Just how important that role would be remained unknown, at least to the rank-and-file soldier, but there was little doubt that somebody had big plans for the Twenty-ninth.

In late December, Norval was given six hours’ notice to pack his bags and report again to the Twenty-ninth Division, which was taking part in a huge training exercise at Slapton Sands on the Channel coast. Although the troops did not know it, the unfolding invasion plan, Operation Overlord, called for the Twenty-ninth to storm the beach with the First Division on D-Day.



Tom and Walter Ford sending greetings to their dad, Christmas 1943, and prompting Norval's query: "Why did they salute with their left hands?"

Norval was getting a taste of life on the battlefield—not just the ever-present danger of death or injury but also the dreary, filthy details. “Last night I had my first bath, using my helmet for a tub and only using one filling of water,” he wrote after several days in the field. “I shave in the helmet when not wearing it. We brush our teeth using our canteen water sparingly. Mud, rock, sand & salt water are everywhere.” It rained often during the exercises, making life generally miserable and basic hygiene difficult.

The troops also had to cope with the ever-present threat of German air raids. Although the training site was protected by barrage balloons, Norval dug a foxhole outside his tent in case he had to take cover on a moment's notice. Not far from the foxhole was another pit, one carved out not for protection but by an unexploded bomb that still lay buried within it. “It is well marked,” he commented dryly.

The exercises were grueling and realistic, designed to simulate the chaos and danger the troops would face on D-Day, so that the noise, confusion, and shock of battle would not be completely unfamiliar. Norval worked with two other doctors and a staff of twelve enlisted men trained in first aid. They spent their nights together talking about medicine and sharing observations on the training. He told Fernie that he was “much happier away from the 110th. Kind of hate to go back.” He even had nice things to say about army meals. “We carry K rations, which contain damned good food,” he reported. Some soldiers might have disagreed.

Fernie must have grown even more anxious about her husband's safety as the buildup of Allied forces in England reached a climax. Why would he not want to go back to a safe unit behind the lines? Why would he be happier in the mud of combat training, observing not just rehearsals but also live shelling and real combat conditions on the beaches? Norval believed that he could be more useful in the field than in the hospital, in danger rather than in safety. He later wrote, “There is more ‘medicine’ & psychiatry to do here. One feels very close to these men and I want to do my best for them.”

In late January, he returned to the Station Hospital, which was relocated to the Royal Victoria Hospital near Southampton. He

continued to warn Fernie that he might be appointed division psychiatrist in a unit he could not name because of war censorship. The appointment would “mean a lot to me professionally and required a higher rank than I now possess.” Anticipating his wife's understandable anxiety, he tried to reassure her: “You needn't worry because there is no danger to it. My job will be to formulate plans and instruct medical officers in the Division as to the proper diagnosis, treatment & disposition of neuropsychiatric combat casualties.”

On March 14, 1944, Norval got the news for which he had been waiting, for which he had been preparing his wife: he was to be transferred to the Twenty-ninth Division. He did not get the post he wanted, however. A superior had delayed Norval's paperwork, so the job of division psychiatrist went to someone else. Instead, he was assigned the position of battalion surgeon, the chief medical officer of a fighting unit of about nine hundred men. In this position he would supervise a second doctor and about forty medics and litter bearers in a station about half a mile behind the front lines. Once the aid station was set up, he would supervise recovery and rescue operations, emergency treatment of the wounded, and evacuation of the most severe cases to field hospitals or to England.

Despite Norval's assurances to Fernie, work as a battalion surgeon was more dangerous than serving as a division psychiatrist and infinitely more dangerous than serving in a station hospital far from the front. Although a battalion surgeon was not supposed to be in the vanguard, there was always the risk of artillery fire, snipers, or an enemy counterattack that might push through the front lines.

As Norval soon learned, the procedures and protocol for battlefield medicine were very specific. The medics were there to respond to wounded men, not to fight. Nevertheless, they endured the same punishing training as rank-and-file soldiers, except for weapons instruction; often there were no braver men on the battlefield. Steven Ambrose, in his book *Citizen Soldiers* quotes a soldier of the Ninety-ninth Division: “There are worse things than being a rifleman in the infantry, not many, but being a medic is one of them. When the shelling and shooting gets heavy it is never long until there is a call for ‘medic!’ That's when your regular GIs can press themselves to the bottom of their hole and don't need to go out on a mission of mercy.”

Medics provided what first aid they could and administered morphine if the wounded soldier was conscious and in severe pain. They then helped or carried the wounded soldiers back to the aid station—often under enemy fire, despite their Red Cross armbands and internationally recognized status as noncombatants. The wounded were then handed over to doctors such as Norval to administer dressings, plasma, antibiotics, and narcotics. If additional treatment was needed, the wounded were taken farther back to a clearing station and then transported by ambulance to a field or station hospital. The end of the line was the general hospital, located either in the United Kingdom or in the United States, where a higher level of treatment was available. When fighting was particularly intense, the aid stations functioned more as evacuation centers than as sites for anything more than the most rudimentary medical treatment.

Norval must have been delighted with his new work, although

he tempered his enthusiasm when writing to Fernie. "Most of the personnel of the 110th are in the dumps & quite brow beaten. It is a pleasure to get out of the hospital service into Army Ground Forces and thence into a field infantry unit. I believe I can do more for soldiers there than where I am now. Out of 15 months stay here in ETO, I have done professional work for about only 6 or 7 of them."

Even though he did not get the job of division psychiatrist, his expertise in the field was becoming recognized within army medical circles. On March 10, just before his transfer became official, he gave a speech at a local meeting of British psychiatrists. The night before his speech, he and more than a dozen of his colleagues—"some of whom are well-known British brains," he told Fernie—settled into a bull session at a local inn. It was, he reported, "the best evening I have spent in England." The following day Norval gave a talk on psychiatry in the army. He confessed that he was nervous—understandably, as he was not a formally trained psychiatrist and held only the junior officer rank of captain—but he was well received.

The coming of spring found Norval in the muck of Bodmin Moor. Although he and other staff officers were quartered in a manor house, he spent little time in those relatively luxurious surroundings. Mostly he was out in the moors, carrying heavy packs through the mud, sleeping outdoors, and otherwise preparing for the rigors to come. The troops were wet, dirty, and cold. "I have a wool-lined combat suit that is a big help but it is impossible to keep warm at night," he wrote. "No fires or lights allowed. No blankets. Just get under a bush, if there is one, & there usually isn't, and sleep fully clothed. I can't give you the location of the camp, but we are near the god-awful moors. Peat bogs are located on the top, sides, and bottoms of the mountains. Wild ponies run at the sight of a man." As daunting as this training might seem, he wrote his parents that he was "happier than at any other time in the army."

As busy as he was, my father allowed himself a certain amount of pathos as he learned of news from home. Norval's parents were selling their house to move into an apartment. "It seems that most of my boyhood was spent there," he told his wife. "It was a base from which to maneuver & make flank attacks on a bastion some 30 yards away, which was inhabited by a green-eyed, freckled-nose girl. Yes, it has meant a lot to me. . . . I hope too many things aren't changed when I get home. One cherishes a mental picture that resists change. A person hates to have his memories violated, because memories are one of our most prized possessions."

In a letter to his parents, Norval described the old house as a haven. "There I had & lost my first dog. It was the first place I brought my bride to. Everything centers there. Yes, I miss it all. The flowers, fruit, workshop, mint juleps, wine, sunbaths, learning photography, conversations, sickness, sunlight coming through the vines, the sweet nocturnal odor of petunias, all create in me a nostalgia that is overpowering. I could cry over it all. But that is life. Things must change."

After a little more than a month with the Twenty-ninth Division, Norval was able to scale rope landing nets, run 100 yards with a man on his back, march 4 miles in thirty-five minutes, chart and follow a compass course, and do thirty-four pushups. "I no longer



Norval digging a foxhole during a training exercise on Bodmin Moor, May 1944. This is one of the last known photographs of him.

have a pot-belly, and I can hike 25 miles without too much discomfort," he reported on April 23.

Norval was popular with the men, particularly because he had volunteered for a combat unit. He got to know many of them when he was given the job of reading and censoring outgoing mail. Decades later, several veterans of the Twenty-ninth Division shared their memories with me. One of them, who had heard my father give a lecture at headquarters about the psychological problems of combat soldiers, told me that my father compared soldiers in combat to metal under stress; if the metal is bent continuously, eventually it will break. Even well-trained soldiers have their breaking points, he told his audience. This was very helpful to the soldier, who fought to the end of the war and returned home.

A medic who served under my father recalled that my father spent a lot of time with the men who lined up daily at sick call, some of whom may not have been physically ill. As the invasion date approached, veterans told me, some soldiers were suddenly bothered by old football injuries and other conditions. Norval did not dismiss these men or their complaints. "They have something on their minds, and I want to talk to them."

A sure sign that he would soon be in combat came when he was told to pack up his personal effects and ship them home to his wife. If, for all his bravado and assurances, he did not make it home, somebody should know his wishes, he wrote to his parents in a letter dated May 4:

"It looks like we have a very dangerous job ahead of us, and the men & officers are exceptionally well trained. I am proud to be able to help them out & ease things for them. But I'll have to admit that I am a bit afraid of the future. Hell is apt to break loose. Shellfire & bombing will be terrific. I pray that even though we are afraid, we can carry on bravely & courageously. I am very concerned about Fernie. I love her & the boys more than I can ever tell & I hate to think & really can't believe that I may not get back. Be sure that she gets along all right & treat her as you always have in the past. She is the best thing in the world. Thank heavens my insurance is paid up and that will always take care of her & the boys. Another thing: If I don't come back, Fernie may want to marry again someday. It will be best if she does, and Mom, and Dad, please don't ever criticize her for it. It would be the best thing for her & my sons. And I would be happy to know

that. I'll never mention this again in future letters because it hurts me inside to do so, but please remember what I have said."

In mid-May Norval moved from the moors to one of the Twenty-ninth Division's staging encampments near Plymouth. Throughout southern England, training and rehearsals came to an end as the assault troops moved to camps closer to the ports. Troops marched through towns, and long convoys of tanks and trucks snaked through the countryside.

Once the troops were in the assembly camps, supplies were handed out, food was plentiful—and anxiety was overwhelming. During the preceding weeks and months, the troops at least had training to take their minds off the future. Now, as they assembled in camps to await embarkation, they were idle.

On May 13, 1944—my fourth birthday—he took a final look at the letters from his wife and parents and friends. What comfort they had given him during his desolate nights; he often remarked, as so many other soldiers have, that letters from home drove away the loneliness, at least for a while, and brought a smile to his face. He could not keep them any longer. "Tonight I am doing something I hate to do," he told her. "It is necessary to destroy all my letters from you & my friends. It hurts, but, Fernie, hell, I love you so much."

The isolation of the staging areas was not yet complete, so he could still write home. On May 15, he wrote to a friend and shared his secret:

"I have been transferred to a battalion which is part of a Combat Team and I am its surgeon. It is interesting work but rough as hell and I'll admit I fear for the future. However, I am happier here than anywhere else in the Army. A swell bunch of officers & men who are exceptionally well trained. I don't suppose I have ever had a chance to be brave in life & to act with courage but it looks as though the opportunity will present itself. I don't fear death per se, but it really depresses me to think I may never see Fernie, Tom, & W.F. again. I'll never tell Fernie, but I requested the transfer. It is impossible to say why, my feelings & motions are all mixed up about it, but I was unhappy in the Station Hospital & I am happy here—or as much so as one could be away from home."

To keep his men in shape and relieve the monotony, he had them play touch football and volleyball. He conducted long drills with his outfit's litter bearers to keep their hands tough and well callused. He reported that he was "better physically than ever in my life."

In late May, the staging areas were locked tighter and the men were banned from entering or leaving; visitors had already been banned. Barbed wire separated the assault troops from the armed guards on the outside. Before camp was sealed and mail discontinued, Norval sent Fernie what he knew would be his last letter for weeks. In it he shared the memories he held close as he prepared for battle, memories of his wife when they were sweethearts and of the music they loved. Leaving her with that image of a soldier's life, he said that letters would be few in the coming weeks. In fact, the invasion was just days away.

In their enclosed camps the men of the Twenty-ninth and the other assault divisions were learning what General Eisenhower and his aides had in mind for them beginning June 5. The Twenty-ninth learned that it would team with the First Division to

attack a Normandy beach code-named Omaha. The 116th Regiment would hit the beach at H-Hour, 6:30 a.m. Norval's outfit, part of the 115th Regiment, would follow in the afternoon, unless the 116th ran into trouble and the 115th was needed earlier. On D-Day the two regiments would technically be under the command of the First Division. The following day, when the Twenty-ninth's commander landed, the division would return to its familiar command structure.

The officers had models of the invasion beaches with fairly precise locations of enemy defenses, right down to machine-gun emplacements. Omaha Beach promised to be the most difficult of the five invasion points: above the crescent-shaped beach rose high bluffs and cliff that made for a perfect defensive position. It also was the most critical: If the assault was pushed into the sea, the American Fourth Infantry Division, which was to land on Utah Beach, to the west of Omaha, would be cut off from the British and Canadian beaches—code-named Gold, Sword, and Juno—to the east. The invasion of France could be won or lost on Omaha Beach.

At seven o'clock in the morning on May 31, Norval boarded an LCVP. He had risen at four to eat breakfast and observe several soldiers who had developed what he called "mild panic states." The LCVP took them along the River Tamar to another vessel, a LCIL, which took them to Plymouth Harbor. In the harbor, hundreds of vessels assembled and waited for orders to begin the hundred-mile crossing to Normandy. The weather was fine that day, sunny and a bit cool, he noted. It would not stay that way for long.

The next day, as the landing craft sailed out of Plymouth Harbor and headed eastward for the Portland harbor in Dorset, Norval handed out antinausea medication. Sitting out on the gun deck, he wrote: "You seem so near, Fernie. The day is perfect for dreaming. Sun is brite, clouds are billowy, and the water has 5-foot swells of blue, green, and purple. Some white caps present. The ship rolls and pitches lazily. We spotted a shark off starboard but it hastily left."

As land disappeared, he looked out toward the vast expanse of sea on the starboard side. Over the horizon was France. Under the seas might be German E boats; in the skies might be the German air force. He noted that he was wearing a helmet and an inflated life belt—just in case. Later that night, after sailing into Portland Harbor, he puzzled, "I just can't understand why Jerry doesn't come over!" It was amazing, indeed: an assault force of 5,000 ships and 150,000 men on the move and not an enemy airplane or vessel to be found. Later that night he made a quart of homemade "gin" out of juniper oil, glycerin, and alcohol mixed with some lemon crystals and water, and he and a few other officers had a Tom Collins. The men agreed it was nice to have a doctor on board. "Each of us had only a short drink We all wanted to feel tops for D Day."

The unit continued to proceed along the coast, heading for their point of embarkation. On June 2, another fine day, their landing craft sailed into Weymouth Harbor, west of the Isle of Wight, where they waited for the order to cross the Channel.

The mood in the landing craft turned somber. Norval attended briefings where everybody was "dead serious. Faces immobile and deeply lined. Young men look old. No fear shown, no nerv-

ous finger-tapping, just quiet, deeply thoughtful immobility. To bed with minds too heavy for thinking. Everyone sleeps, but restlessly."

The assistant commander of the Twenty-ninth Division, Brig. Gen. Norman Cota, brought together some of the unit's top commanders for a final briefing and pep talk. A veteran of the North African invasion, he did not spare his men any of the realities he had experienced. Cota predicted that there would be mass confusion on the beaches. "The landing craft aren't going in on schedule, and people are going to be landed in the wrong place," he said. "Some won't be landed at all. The enemy will try, and have some success, in preventing our gaining 'lodgement.' But we must improvise, carry on, not lose our head."

On Sunday June 4 the men in Norval's landing craft practiced loading their rubber life rafts. Religious services on board were packed. He wrote his last journal entry before hitting the beach:

"Most of us have a strong spiritual feeling about this affair. We realize we are up against a well trained, well equipped and a well disciplined enemy who will resist and counter-attack with great zeal. But we realize we are fighting for a way of living that is fundamentally right in the eyes of God and man, and the ideals of the enemy are wrong. We are not fighting for our own hides but for you folks back home and for people everywhere. I look about the deck at the men. It is a terrible thing to know that in 24 hours some are not going to even be able to enjoy what we intend to win. All of us think of home, our wives, children, and parents, and hope that we can see them again. Fernie, my sweetheart, I feel that I shall see you again. You and the boys. But if I don't, I want you to remember that my love for you cannot be said or put on paper. It can only be felt. You have meant everything to me that is good and happy. Since tomorrow is D-Day (and we weigh anchor tonight), I won't be able to write for a few days. May God help us in our mission. I hope to return to you all. God bless you Fernie, you Tom, and you Walter Ford."

On the night of June 5, after a day's postponement because of bad weather, the greatest invasion force ever assembled in the history of the world sailed from southern England.

To be continued in the Summer 2015 Edition

Auxiliary President's Message

The months following the National Reunion were active for the Auxiliary. The following are some of the highlights of the activities..

Members, Nancy Dillon, Shirley Earl, and Juanita King participated in the 116th Regimental Muster. The activities included attending the excellent theater production of "Tuesday Morning" which portrayed some of the "Bedford Boys" during training and the invasion. The same trio rode in prominent positions in the Staunton, Virginia, Veteran's parade and attended the Muster banquet. Other members of the Auxiliary participated in the Roanoke, Virginia, Veteran parade.

National Auxiliary President, Juanita King, accompanied by members of Post 64 attended a service which rededicated a Roanoke, Virginia, Memorial to the Veterans of World War I. The 29th Division was honored by those attending. Other auxiliary members with Post 64 members attended the memorial services at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia.

The Ladies of Post 64 collected a large donation of staples and toys for the Military Family Support Center in Salem, Virginia. This effort was a continuing commitment to the support of the troops and their families..

Several Auxiliary and Post 64 members traveled to Blacksburg, Virginia, to attend the ceremony which honored 2LT Frances C (Rusty) Rice Brennan. The French Legion of Honor was bestowed on LT Brennan for her service as an Army Nurse during World War II. She served in France and in the Battle of the Bulge.

In addition to representing the Auxiliary at various functions, the members held two successful fund raisers. Currently, plans are for spring events and fund raisers, therefore enabling the Auxiliary to continue to give aide and support to our veterans, troops and their families.

The Auxiliary extends Best Wishes to All.

Juanita King
National Auxiliary President

Fitness Center Renamed In Honor of Fallen Warrior

REISTERSTOWN, MD. – The Maryland National Guard dedicated the Fitness Center on Camp Fretterd Military Reservation to Maj. Robert J. Marchanti II on Sept. 6, 2014. Marchanti was killed in action in Kabul, Afghanistan while supporting Operation Enduring Freedom on Feb. 25, 2012.

The Maryland Board of Public Works approved the naming of the facility on May 14, 2014.

"The [fitness center] was most appropriate since he was a gym teacher at one point in time, he loved education," said Brig. Gen. Linda Singh, commander Maryland Army National Guard. "More importantly the guy liked to work out."

The newly dedicated fitness center is located across from the building where Marchanti started his career as an officer.

Marchanti, who was 48 at the time, died of wounds received during an attack on the Afghan Interior Ministry. He was married

and had four children and one grandson. He was a Baltimore native and worked full-time in the Construction and Facilities Management Office at the 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore.

He joined the active duty Army in 1984 before joining the Maryland National Guard in 1986. He has also served as a physical education teacher in the Baltimore County School System.

Marchanti is the twelfth Maryland Guard Service member to pay the ultimate sacrifice in the Global War on Terror.

"It feels wonderful that something is going to be here for my children, grandchildren, and maybe my great grandchildren to help keep his memory alive," said Peggy Marchanti, surviving spouse.

*By Staff Sgt. Nancy Spicer,
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment, MDARNG*

New Adjutant General in Maryland — Linda Singh

BALTIMORE (28 February 2015) -- The Maryland National Guard held a historic change of command ceremony at the 5th Regiment Armory in Baltimore on 28 February 2015. Maj. Gen. (MD) Linda L. Singh assumed command of the Maryland Military Department from Maj. Gen. James A. Adkins. She is the first African American and the first female to attain this position.

The ceremony also marked a change of responsibilities for the state's senior enlisted leaders: U.S. Army Command Sgt. Maj. Thomas B. Beyard replaced U.S. Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Glenn D. Hart.

Singh grew up in Frederick County and enlisted in the Army National Guard in 1981. She was commissioned as an officer after 10 years of service as an enlisted Soldier. Her career has spanned more than 30 years.

The change of command ceremony uses the passing of the unit's colors (flag) to represent passing on the command of the Maryland Military Department. The outgoing commander passes the flag to the state governor, which represents relinquishing the

command. Then the governor passes the flag to the incoming commander to represent entrusting the responsibility of the role.

"When I think about the journey that we have ahead of us, it is going to be tough, and it is going to be challenging," Singh said.

"I think you can expect me to be tough and to be challenging, but I will always smile."

The change of responsibility ceremony is very similar to the change of command ceremony, but a sabre (sword) is passed between the enlisted leaders instead of the colors.

After the ceremonies, Maryland Governor Lawrence Hogan commented on the retiring Adkins and the future command of Singh.

"Now she has some pretty big shoes to fill, but I am confident that we found the right leader to fill those shoes," Hogan said. "I could not be more proud of our appointment of Maj. Gen. Linda Singh as our new adjutant general."

*Article by Brianna Kearney,
29th Mobile Public Affairs Detachment*



Maryland Governor Larry Hogan passing the flag to the new Adjutant General of Maryland, Maj. Gen. (MD) Linda Singh.

29th Division Association

Wreath Laying Ceremony

Arlington National Cemetery

Tomb of The Unknowns

Sunday, 31 May 2015, 1315 EDT (1:15 PM)

On 31 May 2015, the 29th Division Association will be honored by having its National Commander, lay a Wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown at Arlington National Cemetery. The ceremony will be held at 1315 hours. The Maryland Region will have a bus available leaving Exit 8B of the Baltimore Beltway (I-695) at approximately 1145 hours. **There will be no charge for the bus; however it will be available only for those planning on attending a luncheon following the ceremony.** Car pooling is recommended – to follow the bus to Arlington. Following the ceremony, there will be a group photo.

At approx. 1430, those interested will dine at the John Lyon VFW Post 3150 hall, located at 2116 North 19th Street, Arlington, VA. The cost of this luncheon will be **\$15.00** payable, in advance to the National Executive Director, on a first come, first served basis only – the hall can only seat 72 persons. The meal will be buffet. Note the reduced cost per person. While the menu will not be as expansive as that provided in the past, it will be appealing and worth the cost. Checks must be made payable to the 29th Division Association Inc. and mailed to NED/PNC Bob Moscati, P.O. Box 47634, Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634.

The *Twenty-Niner* Needs Your Help!

The *Twenty-Niner* newsletter, one of the bulwarks of the 29th Division Association, needs your financial support. Traditionally, the *Twenty-Niner* is funded through a combination of per capita dues, donations, and money earned in the Association investment accounts.

The *Twenty-Niner* alone costs over \$9,300 per year to print and mail. That number would be much higher if not for the hard work of our Editor, William Mund, who took on additional responsibilities and eliminated over \$5,000 in costs per year.

In 2014, The Association took in \$9,000 from per capita dues, \$5,000 in donations to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund*, and \$10,700 in property sales, for a total revenue of \$24,700. The investment account earns a small percentage of what it used to and brought in less than \$1,000 in revenue.

However, our costs and outgoing donations far outweighed the revenue: The *Twenty-Niner* cost \$9,300 to publish and mail, headquarters expenses were \$8,500, and \$16,000 was spent on purchasing merchandise to be sold.

National has worked very hard to carry on the mission of the Association as stated in the Preamble, "to keep alive the spirit that never knew defeat; to glorify our dead, and further keep before our country, the record of the 29th Division in all the wars;"

To further that purpose, the Association donated \$2,000 to the National D-Day Memorial, \$2,000 to the Maryland Military Historical Society for its museum, \$5,000 to the 116th Monument at Vierville, \$2,600 to Normandy Allies to sponsor teachers and students grants, \$1,000 to the St. Lo American Hospital and \$1,000 to the Post 88 efforts towards the World War I Monument on the Eastern Shore. Those donations totaled \$13,600 and comes to a total expenditure of \$38,900 – a deficit of over \$13,000. This results in over \$11,000 being taken out of the investment funds to cover the deficit.

Nothing is more important to the Association than carrying on the mission as documented in the Preamble. This is done through the publishing of our *Twenty-Niner*, the ceremonies we perform, and our donations to the types of organizations that help keep the 29th Division and its history alive.

We don't want to have to reduce donations to those organizations or reduce the size of the *Twenty-Niner* and we need your help for this.

Many members of the 29th Division Association have given generously to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund* for years, especially the membership of *Silver Spring Post 94*. What we are asking for is for a few more people to help.

If you could make a donation in any amount you can afford to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund* with a check, credit or debit card, it will allow the Association to continue our mission. Please send a check made out to the 29th Division Association Inc., P.O. Box 47634, Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634. Please note on your check that it's for the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund*. To pay by debit or credit card, go to our National site at www.29thdivisionassociation.com and then click on Post Locations and Descriptions and then Post 94. Any payments to Post 94 goes directly toward the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund*.

Thank you for your time and your generosity.

"29, Let's Go!"

PNC Robert W. "Bob" Moscati
National Executive Director

The Futures Committee:

General Cota and the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade

EDGEWOOD, MD.— It has been proven many times that our mission, “to keep before our country, the record of the 29th in all the wars” can only be accomplished by keeping the Association strong and growing – so there is always a group to teach the contemporary soldiers what has come before them.

A great example of what happened was with the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade (CAB) on Friday, March 6th, 2015.

LTC Hastings, the CAB XO, was in charge of executing leadership seminars on behalf of the 29th CAB Commander, Colonel Dull. LTC Hastings reached out to the 29th Division Association to provide a speaker and some World War II veterans to talk about leadership to their cadre of officers, warrant officers and NCOs – some 120 soldiers in total.

The Association had both an obligation and an opportunity. It is our duty to keep the record of the 29th in all the wars – from World War I to the current accomplishments

of the 29th in the Global War on Terror – something the 29th CAB has done repeatedly to great acclaim. It was an opportunity to have an important post – Post 85 in North East, to be able to interact with contemporary serving 29ers and grow a post.

The Association has been looking for units to embed with as part of the Futures Committee initiatives and this was a perfect aligning of needs with opportunity.

I was asked to combine army leadership principles with 29th Division history and chose to give a speech on BG Norman Cota and his leadership on D-Day. It combined both his unique leadership principles and those principles put into execution on D-Day and on the 175th operation across the Vire a few days later. Steve Melnikoff and Walter Heline both provided first person accounts of their World War II experience in both group and individual conversations with the leadership of the CAB.

Bob Moscati, the National Executive Director, Harry Gilbert, the Commander of

Post 85, and Valerie Hawkins, the Post 85 Adjutant, attended the session to help figure out how Post 85 and the CAB would work together and possibly hold joint Association meetings. Valerie has agreed to become our 4th embedded contact (joining Bob Moscati, Frank Dillon and NC John Vaccarino), and recruited a dozen members of the CAB into the Association. Harry Gilbert worked out how Post 85 could hold some of their meetings at the Edgewood Airfield to accommodate the soldiers of the CAB.

None of this could have happened without the hard work of the CAB and the incredible reception and opportunity they gave to the Association.

The most important thing is that today's soldiers are very interested in the history of the 29th and it is our duty to keep the Association strong so we can tell the story of the GWOT generation of 29ers 20 years from now.

*NSVC David Ginsburg
Futures Committee Chairman*

Virginia Aviators train with U.S. Special Forces at Fort A.P. Hill

FORT A.P. HILL, VA. – With snow on the ground and temperatures holding just barely into the double digits, four Virginia National Guard UH-60 Black Hawk helicopters, along with their crews and support personnel, trained with Soldiers from the Fort Bragg-based Company A, 1st Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group (Airborne) Jan. 22-28, 2014, at Fort A.P. Hill, VA.

The Virginia Guard Soldiers came from the Sandston-based 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment and the Chesterfield-based Detachment 2, Company G, 2nd Battalion, 135th Aviation Regiment, and were on hand to provide aviation support to the training conducted by the special forces troops who are preparing for an upcoming deployment to Afghanistan in support of Operation Enduring Freedom.

“We were excited to get aviation assets because they're sometimes very hard to get,” said Maj. A. Christian Sessoms, commander of the special forces troops from Company A. “I can't say enough how easy it's been to make coordinations and facilitate our training with the aviators.”

More than 30 Virginia Guard Soldiers made the trek to Fort A.P. Hill working not only as crew on the Black Hawk helicopters,

but also providing support to keep those helicopters flying. Soldiers from Company E, 2nd Battalion, 224th Aviation Regiment set up and operated a forward arming and refueling point, or FARP, at Fort A.P. Hill to aid in the efficient and tactical refueling of aircraft. Additional Soldiers from the 224th also provided maintenance support for the aircraft as well as flight and mission tracking.

“There's a lot more the SF or any unit can do with aviation assets,” said Sgt. Andrew David Noble, a crew chief with Company B, 2-224th. “Also, this gives us a more working knowledge of what's going to happen in country if we deploy.”

The aviators worked with the special forces troops to conduct several air assault movements as well as hoist training and also worked through a downed aircraft scenario, creating a realistic training environment for the elite troops from the 3rd SFG.

“What they're able to help us with is that real world piece,” explained Sessoms. “Actually and physically being able to load the aircraft, do the hoist training, all these things that we might have to do to complete a real world mission or to save one of our guy's lives, being able to do that here in a controlled environment before going into

theater is the difference between bringing everyone home and maybe not bringing everyone home. So it makes our guys that much more proficient for the mission aspect, and it makes us that much safer.”

The partnership began when the special forces unit contacted Fort A.P. Hill in advance of their training to inquire about aviation assets. Fort A.P. Hill connected them with a representative from the 224th and the two units began working together to develop a plan that effectively met the goals of both units.

“The lessons learned from a training event such as this proves to be invaluable, not only for the crews flying the helicopter, but also for the personnel tracking the flights as the aircraft performs missions, to those Soldiers refueling the aircraft,” said 1st Lt. Andrew Mcmillion, commander of Company A, 2-224th.

During the joint training event, Virginia Guard helicopter crews spent more than 50 hours flying and transported approximately 180 passengers.

“The assets that we provide for these elite units who are deploying helps us to continue to be the premier, read, relevant and responsive force,” said Mcmillion.

Virginia Guard Public Affairs

Contributions to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund (Continued)*

(Continued from page 3)

Local 1605 IAFF, Hagerstown Prof. Firefighters, Hagerstown, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Lucas, Elona K., Post 94, Daughter, Merrimack, NH

Maranto, William & Nancy, Anguilla, MS

In Memory of Maurice "Buddy" Hatchett E/2-116, Holly Bluff, MS

Martin, Annette, Post 94, Associate, Israel

Martin, Tom, Post 94, Son, Mt. Sterling, KY

Maryland Region, 29th Division Association, Baltimore, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Masters, Kathryn, Post 94, HHC/29ID/GWOT, Cheyenne, WY

Mattison, Wallace L., Post 93, I/175, Pownal, VT

Maupin, Charles A., Post 94, HHC/3/175, (WWII), Columbus, GA

McCumsey, Sylvester, Jr., Post 64, C/116, Keswick, VA

McGee, Lawrence, Post 110, HQ/110FA, Annapolis, MD

Melander, William E., Post 94, I/115, (WWII), North Babylon, NY

Moscato, NED/PNC Bob, Post 110, HQ/110FA, Windsor Mill, MD

In Memory of PNC Glenwood Hankins, H/116 WWII

Mozgai, John, Post 94, G/116, (WWII), Edison, NJ

Mund, William S. Jr., Post 94, HHC29ID(L), Baltimore, MD

Neighbor, Christopher, Post 64, Son, Chesterfield, VA

Neuwirth, Francis, Post 94, A/821TD, (WWII) Sleepy Hollow, NY

O'Donnell, H.D., Post 64, 116(L), Harrisonburg, VA

O'Rourke, Hugh E., Post 94, Grandson, Northport, NY

Pennock, David, Post 94, Associate, Edwards, CO

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

Pickett, Russell, Post 64, A/116, Soddy Daisy, TN

Piper, Morley, Post 93, C/115, Essex, MA

Piper, Samuel, Post 94, HHC/1-115, Falls Church, VA

Praski, Ben, Post 94, Associate, Grapevine, TX

Preuss, Kurt & Roberta, Baltimore, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Pulket, A. W., Post 72, HQ/1-175, Baltimore, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Ross, John K., Post 94, Associate, Washington, DC

Rothwell, Donald F., Post 94, Associate, Gainesville, FL

Rush, J. Warner, Post 94, Associate, Scarborough, NY

Schaefer, Gary, Post 94, Associate, Fairport, NY

Scoggins, Jerry & Debbie, Parkville, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Shaw, Richard W., Post 94, C/224FA, (NG), Clarksville, MD

Shriver, Evelyn N., Post 94, Widow, Pittsburgh, PA

Smith, Marsha, Post 94, Associate, Walworth, NY

Smith, Mary, Post 94, Associate, Fairport, NY

Smith, Rufus M., Post 94, Son, Gulfport, MS

Smolar, R. Blair, Post 94, HHC/3-116, (L), Perry Point, MD

Stapleton, Gregory, Post 29, Grandson, Lexington, KY

In Memory of COL James Morris, 29th Div, WWII

Stapleton, Rebecca, Post 29, Daughter, Lexington, KY

In Memory of PFC John C. Coulter, 29th Div, WWII

Sternberg, Abraham, Post 94, HHC/115, (L), Coral Springs, FL

Stewart, William, Post 94, Son, Washington, MO

Stickroth, Raymond & Joan, Post 85, 224AV, Bel Air, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Strizak, Charles J., Post 94, Associate, Mt. Pleasant, OH

Suter, Robert, Post 64, Associate, Keezletown, VA

Talaber, David & Angela, Post 94, Associate, Woodbridge, VA

Taranto, Kevin, Post 94, Associate, Commack, NY

Tennis, William C., Post 94, Son, Hampton, VA

Thompson, Ralph A., Post 94, Associate, Fairfax, VA

Turner, Coleen C., Post 94, Daughter, Columbia, TN

Ungerleider, Daniel S., Post 94, Son, Burke, VA

Ungerleider, Neil M., Post 94, Son, Boxford, MA

Ungerleider, Ruth, Widow, Keswick, VA

In Memory of PNC Alvin Ungerleider, I/115, WWII

Vazquez, Luis R., Post 94, HHC/1/115, (L), Greenbelt, MD

Vernillo, Michael, Post 29, HQ/227FA, WWII, Pittsburg, PA

Welsh, J., (No hometown provided)

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

White, Claire, Post 93, Daughter, Wenham, MA

In Memory of Eugene D. White, Sr., F/175, WWII

Wilcox, PNC John & Christina, Post 78, A/115, Frederick, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Williams, James, Post 94, Associate, Whiting, NJ

Wilroy, Richard, Post 94, E/115, (NG), Pinellas Park, FL

Wisch, Robert, Post 72, C/175, Pasadena, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Zang, Joseph, Post 110, HQ/110FA, Eldersburg, MD

In Memory of CWO Richard F. "Dick" Jordan

Zimmerman, Charles, Post 94, HQ 3rd Bde/29ID(L), New Windsor, MD

Zimmerman, Melvin, Post 94, Associate, New Windsor, MD

Now, for a limited time only!

All merchandise orders \$25 or more will come with a
free 29th Division Association Bolo Tie!!!

Please see merchandise list on page 37!

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

Just go to the new updated website at:

www.29thdivisionassociation.com

and click on "Merchandise".

National D-Day Memorial to Commemorate the 71st Anniversary of D-Day

The National D-Day Memorial Foundation will commemorate the 71st anniversary of D-Day with a full day of activities including special music, wreath layings, a veteran's reunion tent, an oral history station, living history, and a twilight remembrance in the evening. The ceremony begins at 11am on Saturday, June 6. Highlights of the event include a special thank you to Normandy veterans by veterans of other eras as well as guest dignitaries. A moving addition will be the music provided by the 29th Division band which will feature the legendary COL Arnald D. Gabriel as guest conductor.

COL Gabriel was a combat machine gunner with the 29th Infantry Division in Europe during World War II. He received two Bronze Star Medals, the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the French Croix de Guerre.

COL Gabriel served as Commander/Conductor of the internationally renowned U.S. Air Force Band, Symphony Orchestra, and Singing Sergeants from 1964 to 1985. His 21 year tenure was the longest in that organization's history. COL Gabriel retired from the United States Air Force in 1985 following a distinguished 36 year military career, at which time he was awarded his third Legion of Merit for his service to the United States Air Force and to music education throughout the country. In 1990, he was named the first Conductor Emeritus of the USAF Band at a special concert held at DAR Constitution Hall in Washington, DC.

Gabriel's professional honors include the very first Citation of Excellence awarded by the National Band Association; the Mid-West National Band and Orchestra Clinic's Gold Medal of Honor and its Distinguished Service to Music Award; Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia's New Millennium Lifetime Achievement Award and its rarely presented National Citation for "significant contributions to music in America"; Kappa Kappa Psi's Distinguished Service to Music Award; Phi Beta Mu's Outstanding Contribution to Bands Award; and the St. Cecilia Award from the University of Notre Dame.

In 2008, the US Air Force Band dedicated the Arnald D. Gabriel Hall in his honor, and Bands of America inducted COL Gabriel into its Hall of Fame. COL Gabriel has performed in all 50 of the United States and in 50 countries around the world.

In addition to the *Mormon Tabernacle Choir*, among the hundreds of major orchestras and bands he has conducted are the Minneapolis, Pittsburgh, San Antonio, Memphis, Florida, Glendale (California),

Green Bay (Wisconsin), York and Williamsport (Pennsylvania), Fairfax (Virginia), Puerto Rico, and Tatui Sao Paulo (Brazil) symphony orchestras; the Carabinieri Band and the Air Force Band (Italy); the Band of the Royal Netherlands Marines; the Royal Hellenic Band (Greece); the Staff Music Corps (Bonn, Germany); the National Band of the Canadian Forces (Ottawa); The Dallas Wind Symphony; and the Gamagori Band and the Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra (Japan).

After the Memorial's ceremony which will conclude at noon, the band will conduct a full performance with COL Gabriel from 1:30pm to 2:30pm in the Memorial's main plaza. Food will be available on site throughout the day providing guests an opportunity to meet World War II veterans under the veteran reunion tent. D-Day veterans or their families are asked to call and register for the event in advance so they can receive special parking passes.

Admission is free throughout the day and the Memorial will remain open until 9pm. For the evening, the Memorial is hosting a Twilight Remembrance with a portion of the 29th Division Band playing from 7:30 to closing. The band will end the evening with the sounding of Taps.

Foundation officials hope to see a large contingent of 29th veterans at the event. Last year's program featured keynote speaker Bob Sales of the 29th Division. Sales was the only survivor on his landing craft on June 6, 1944. Sales passed away on February 23, 2015, however in his remarks last year, he noted this:

....It is in our hands, as veterans and as citizens, to preserve the legacy of those who were there. Long after the last of us has rejoined their ranks, we have to make sure that there might never come a day when June 6th means no more than any other day. That there might never be a generation of Americans for whom the name Normandy means nothing at all. Time....has thinned our ranks...since June 6th, but on this day of all days, we are always together - in spirit if not in body.

Please join the National D-Day Memorial for the 71st anniversary of D-Day on June 6, 2015. For more information or updates, visit www.dday.org or call 540-586-3329.



Colonel Arnald D. Gabriel

*Article by April Cheek-Messier
President, National D-Day Memorial Foundation*

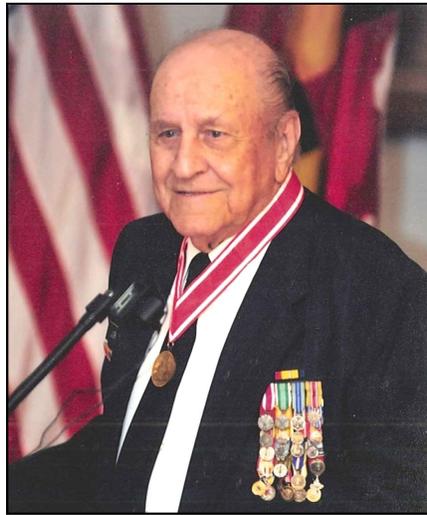
National Welfare Officer Richard F. "Dick" Jordan, 90

National Welfare Officer Richard F. "Dick" Jordan Sr. passed away on 29 January, 2015 at Meritus Medical Center in Hagerstown, MD

Born 19 January 1925 in Hagerstown, MD, he was the son of the late Ernest and Irene Goetz Jordan.

Dick began his military career in 1942 when he enlisted in the United States Navy and ended his Navy career on 17 March 1951. On 18 March 1951, he entered the Maryland Army National Guard and served until his retirement in January 1985.

From 1985 to September of 2012 he was employed with the Maryland Military Department as Reservation Manager of the Maryland Army National Guard Gunpowder Military Reservation. His overall years of service



within the military was 70 years, 4 months, 12 days.

Dick was very active in the 29th Division Association and previously served

as Commander of the Maryland Department 1998-99. At the time of his death he was the National Welfare Officer.

Dick is survived by one daughter, Sherry Kirby of Williamsport, MD; one son, Richard F. Jordan, Jr. and his wife Patricia of Hagerstown, MD; Sister, Jeanine Crawford of Hagerstown, MD; four grandchildren and 1 great granddaughter.

In addition to his parents he was preceded in death by his wife of 60 years, Hazel Mae Jordan; one daughter, Linda Vance.

Services were held on 4 February, 2015 at Minnich Funeral Home, 415 E. Wilson Blvd, Hagerstown, MD. Full military honors were conducted in Rose Hill Cemetery by the Maryland National Guard.

Joseph H. Ewing's book *29 Let's Go!* now available in soft cover

(Continued from page 1)

expensive then what we had paid before.

Through searching the internet and inquiries with various friends, the National Executive Director found a number of potential publishing houses and printers that might be able to do a re-sprint for us.

There was however, a major overwhelming point that seemed to create a problem. This was the fact that no digital records from the original printing remained.

This meant that a computer disk would first have to be made before further copies could be printed. In order to do this chore, the book would have to be scanned page by page onto a disc for further use.

Conversation ensued with several publishing firms. Some either did not do this type work, or did not want the undertaking. Others agreed that they could do it, but again, the cost became quite prohibitive to us.

Needless to say, that after nearly two months following this course of action

with no good prospects in mind, the Executive Director was becoming very frustrated.

After consulting with other members of the National Executive Committee, a decision was made that if we wanted to carry the book in our inventory, we would just have to obtain the best price we could to have the work done. Then, we could adjust our selling price to our members. However, the Executive Director felt he needed one more chance to see if a better deal could be acquired.

He then turned to a local printer who has been printing the *Twenty-Niner* and doing much of the letterhead, envelopes and other smaller jobs for the Association for many years. Donald Quinn of Advance Printing in Parkville, Maryland, agreed to take on the job for a price far below what others had offered.

The price he quoted was inexpensive enough that the book could continue to be offered to our members at the same price we had been charging, and still make a small profit. An agreement was reached and Quinn began the task.

After several weeks, Quinn was contacted to determine the status of the job. He stated he had run into a problem because of the hard cover on the book. He did not have the capability to produce those, but said he would contact some other printers who might be able to fabricate a similar cover.

Several more weeks went by and Quinn contacted the Executive Director and made him aware that to complete the book with the hard cover, would unfortunately raise the price he had quoted considerably. He also indicated that if we would agree, he could provide a soft cover for the book that would look very much the same as the hard cover.

The Executive Director agreed that if a sample copy could be provided, a final decision could be made. This was done and an agreement was reached.

The book was finally completed and is now again back in our inventory. By the way, the gentleman from New Mexico called and wanted to purchase a few more copies.

Submitted by John E. Wilcox, Jr.
Past National Commander
Past National Executive Director

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR:**Publication policies and notices!**

This edition marks the beginning of my second year as the editor of the *Twenty-Niner*. As I get further into my tenure, there are some editorial policies and notices that I would like to make known to those reading this publication.

The policy on Legion of Honor (LOH) recipients is that their names; unit served in; hometown and Post number will be published in the *Twenty-Niner*. I have received many articles and photos from some of these same recipients being awarded the LOH at special ceremonies in various locations. These articles will not be published in the *Twenty-Niner*. I do not want to offend anyone or be accused of "favoritism" in my selection process. Therefore, only their names and the information listed above will be published in the *Twenty-Niner*.

Another policy that needs to be addressed is the policy on death notices and obituaries. As you know, we publish the names of all deceased members on page 4, under "Taps", every edition. Death notices and obituaries/write-ups, are reserved only for Past or Present National Officers, or sitting Post Commanders.

I receive many articles and photos from our readers that have already appeared in other publications such as newspapers and magazines. Current "copyright" regulations prevent me from publishing these articles and photos in the *Twenty-Niner* without the written permission of the "copyright" holder(s).

Anyone who desires that I publish a "copyrighted" work will have to petition the newspaper or magazine etc. and provide me with a written statement granting the 29th Division Association Inc., permission to reprint the article or photo. A word of caution here, sometimes the "copyright holder" will charge a fee for this permission. This fee will be the responsibility of the individual requesting the written permission, not the *Twenty-Niner* nor the 29th Division Association, Inc.

I encourage all readers to submit

editorial content and photos for publication in the *Twenty-Niner*. Please do not "promise" anyone that an article or photo will appear in the *Twenty-Niner*. As editor, I am the one who has the final say on what is published. Also, I reserve the right to edit any and all content that is submitted for publication.

In his inaugural message to our members, Commander Vaccarino (see page 2 of the *Autumn/Winter 2014 edition of the Twenty-Niner*), suggested we initiate a "Locator Forum", in this publication. This forum will enable our readers and members to reconnect with or locate friends/soldiers/personnel of years gone by. As Commander Vaccarino stated, "it can only work if you, our members, submit this information to the editor." This "Locator Forum" will commence with the Summer 2015 edition.

Anyone who wishes to participate in the "Locator Forum", is encouraged to contact me. My contact information is listed on page 2 of this publication every edition.

A myth that I would like to dispel is one concerning the "PayPal" option that we have been pushing. You do not have to set up a "PayPal" account to use "PayPal". All you need to do is follow the instructions on our website and use your credit or debit card. There is no need for you to register or to create another password. We hope that one day, all our posts will offer this option to their members for submitting their annual dues.

Elsewhere in this edition you will find notices about how to donate to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund* by credit or debit card. Please do not send donations for the *Chin Strap* to Post 94 or to the National Headquarters. The *Chin Strap* is a publication of the Maryland Region. The *Chin Strap* has its own fund and is administered and maintained by the Maryland Region and should not be confused with the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund*.

Chin Strap donations must be sent to

the editor of the *Chin Strap*. His contact information appears in every *Chin Strap*. All donations received by Post 94 will be treated as donations to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund*, and so noted on page 3 of every edition of the *Twenty-Niner*.

In continuing with the story of the "Reactivation Era" of the 29th Infantry Division, (see page 35, *Autumn/Winter 2014 edition*) we have presented another account that appears on page 33 of this edition. I encourage all 29th soldiers who were there at that time, to be a part of this and to submit their accounts to me for publication in future editions.

An effort is underway to try and document the history and involvement of the Auxiliary in our association. The first step will be to try and identify all the Past Presidents of the Auxiliary. Anyone with any documents or information about the Auxiliary are urged to contact President Juanita King. Please see the "Special Notice" at the bottom of page 24 for Juanita's contact information.

On another subject: A DVD of the 1985 Reactivation Ceremony of the 29th Infantry Division (Light) is now available for purchase. It is available from our National Property Officer, and is listed on page 37 of this publication.

This DVD is a copy of a video tape that was made on 5 October 1985 on the parade field at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. As this video tape has been stored for almost 30 years, there are some irregularities in the quality of the video. But, generally speaking, it is a good documentary of the events of that day.

Included on this video are remarks made by the guest speakers who attended this ceremony. They include: John O. Marsh, Jr., Secretary of the Army; Charles Robb, Governor of Virginia; Harry Hughes, Governor of Maryland; Senator (VA) John Warner, and General John A. Wickham, Jr., Army Chief of Staff.

William S. Mund, Jr.
Editor/Publisher

POST HAPPENINGS

MD Post #1

Let's start out with great news. As the chief operative of the post, with duties as Commander, Adjutant and Treasurer, the Post Commander has had his hands full. To complicate this, he was honored to be elected National Commander of the Association.

This, along with a full load of volunteer positions within other veteran and civic organizations, the Commander's time has been limited. So, in looking around for help, he was able to use his Sicilian influence to make an offer that could not be refused.

Grant Hayden, former commander of the 29th Infantry Division, accepted the offer. Grant has a dearth of ideas on how we may be able to put Post #1 back on the map. He is already working on plans for recruiting and retention. He is actively making contacts with members living in and around the Maryland area encouraging them to become "social members" of Post #72.

In this way, we can get to meet these members face to face, socially. And in this way, we will work towards building a cadre that can branch out to meet separately. Who knows what can come of this?

The new Immediate Past Post Commander can devote more time to his duties of "adjuting" and "treasuring". Getting used to the PayPal concept of dues payments is paying off. Just as soon as he can figure out how to download dues payments, he will be in a better position to concentrate on those members who are delinquent in dues payments.

Submitted by Past Post Commander I. John Vaccarino

Florida West Post #2

On 19 February 2015, Florida West Post #2 held their annual "Special Luncheon" at the Red Lobster Restaurant in Sarasota, Florida. There were 37 attendees present for the luncheon.

Among those in attendance were 6 veterans of World War II who served in Europe. They were: Bob Bricker; Joe Steimel; Mike Crouch; Ernie Rutherford; Cosmo Uttero and Anne Welk.



Left to right: Anne Welk; Mike Crouch; Cosmo Uttero; Bob Bricker; Ernie Rutherford and Joe Steimel.

We were also joined by several national officers of the 29th Division Association. National Executive Director and Past National Commander Bob Moscati, along with William Mund, editor of the *Twenty-Niner*, drove down from Baltimore, MD. Past National Commander Joe Zang and his wife Shirley also attended.

Chaplain/Pastor Phil Bliss opened the meeting with a prayer. Marie Rutherford then sang "God Bless America." It was noted that Post #2 had lost 8 members since the last "Special Luncheon", most recently, our dear friend Dick Quigley. A moment of silence was observed in honor of those members who have passed on.

After lunch we had our annual door prize drawing. The first 8 winners were all women. Marie Rutherford then sang "Let There Be Peace on Earth". The event concluded with a prayer by Chaplain/Pastor Bliss.

We are ever hopeful that we will be able to have this event again next year. Thanks to everyone for participating.

Submitted by Post Commander Taylor Thomas

Rudolph M. Price, Jr., Post #5

Post #5, The Norfolk Light Artillery Blues, in cooperation with the 1-111th Field Artillery Officers Association hosted a ceremony and reception for the presentation of the French Legion of Honor to LT Cary Jarvis, one of only two surviving 111th Soldiers from the D-Day invasion force at Normandy.

LT Jarvis is a long-time 29th Association Member, and is featured in a Virginia Pilot article series featuring four men, known as "The Lucky Few" (which can be read at <http://dday.pilotonline.com/>).

The French National Liaison Representative to Supreme Allied Commander Transition, Colonel Denys Colomb and Retired French Consulate Nicole Yancey were on hand to present the award to LT Jarvis.

The Adjutant General of Virginia, BG Timothy Williams attended, as well as the state Senior Enlisted Advisor, CSM Ferris, the 116th IBC T Commander COL Coffin and Brigade CSM Yancey, 1-111th FA Commander, LTC Jared Lake, and the current members of Bravo Battery 1-111th and G Co 429th Support Battalion, in addition to family, friends, and other 29th Division Soldiers.

In preparation for the ceremony and public viewing, several Soldiers worked for three days straight to unpack, organize, and reassemble the Post 5 "museum room" and artifacts which had been stored for construction occurring at the Norfolk Armory. Post #5 Commander John Lane presented a motion to show appreciation for these Soldiers by presenting them with membership; the motion passed, with funds for their first-year dues paid by current post members. Post #5 is dedicated to recruiting young Soldiers to ensure the continued work of Post #5 and the 29th Division Association.

Submitted by MSG Christopher Robbins, Adjutant

Jerome L. Day Post #48

Post #48 welcomes two new members to the post, Mel Brundick and Walter Davis. Both of their Fathers served in the 29th Division during WWII. A special thanks goes to the Membership Chairman, Junior Fisher for his recruiting efforts.

In concert with the Recruitment Embedded Futuristic program, I had the pleasure of meeting with Captain Marcus Miller, Company Commander for the 29th Military Police, Westminster Readiness Center on Sunday, January 25, 2015.

For the past year the 29th MP's were assigned to the MG Boyd M. Cook Armory in Cascade, MD, while the Westminster Readiness Center was in the renovation process. However, during their stay at Cascade the MP's remained a part of the Westminster community.

The 29th MP's have been gracious to the Jerome L. Day Post 48, by offering our active members to align themselves with the Military Police in the Westminster Memorial Day parade, including displaying signage of the 29th Division Association.

Captain Miller continues to offer allegiance to Post #48 by inviting us to their Company's social functions, including the planned dedication of the Westminster Readiness Center. I look forward to meeting with the command staff of the 29th Military Police during their home station training.

On Thursday, February 26, 2015, Post #48 had their nominations of the 2015/2016 Officers. I want to thank all who have accepted their nominations, particularly Comrades Robert Alexandra and Tom Devore, who recently joined Post #48 for acceptance of their nominations as elected officers. Installation of Officers will be held on April 30, 2015 at the American Legion, Westminster, Maryland.

Recently in the Maryland Region publication, the Chin Strap, I mentioned a local comrade who compiled his memories as a gunner on a B-24 during WWII in a book called "Achtung! Noon Balloon". Numerous readers of the Chin Strap have asked for a copy of the book. There remains a few copies left for a donation of \$10.00. If interested please contact me by E-mail or phone.

A special thanks to those who have donated to Post #48 and those who continue to support the sustainability of the 29th Division Association preamble. Post #48 is fortunate to have those who continue to actively serve and those who financially support the post.

The Jerome L. Day Post #48 meets on the last Thursday of the month. Next meeting will be March 26, 2015, at the American Legion in Westminster. Agenda: Election of 2015 Officers. Dinner @ 6pm and meeting @ 6:30pm. All comrades and their guests are invited to attend.

As always, I can be contacted by calling 240-367-6110 or E-mail, fm32@erols.com.

Submitted by Post Commander Frank Rauschenberg

Harry M. Richardson Post #64

The 1-116th Regimental Muster — Friday, November 7th started with a lot of two stepping for the Southern Region Vice Commander Frank Dillon and his wife Nancy. Upon arrival, at the 116th Regimental Museum in Verona, VA., they were in-

formed that the local transportation for Post #64 members was canceled some how. After hearing that information Southern Region Vice Commander Frank Dillon went to the Staunton Armory and met with 1SG Philips about the issue and the need for transportation that night for the Tuesday Mourning play in which 3 of Post #64 WWII Vets were invited to be honorary guests. A BIG THANK YOU to 1SG Philips and the two drivers called on the spur of the moment, arrangements and help for the whole weekend.

That evening our 3 Vets, John Kessler, Chuck Neighbor and Arden Earl were treated to front row seats. After the play, all cast members portraying the Bedford Boys gathered around the Vets for photos and conversation. Everyone had a really fun time.

Saturday, November 8th Post members with the assistance of Staunton Military Vehicle Club participated in Staunton's annual Veterans Day parade. The day time festivities are never complete until lunch is had at Rowe's Restaurant and a visit to the 116th Regimental Museum.

The highlight of the evening Muster festivities was the presentation of six quilts to 5 Vets in attendance and Juanita and Bill King for their services performed in helping Vets from the Quilts of Valor Group and the presentation of a 29th Division Association belt buckle to Gen. Grass by Southern Region Vice Commander Frank Dillon and the presentation of a 29th Division Association sun catcher to Mrs. Grass by National Auxiliary Communications Officer Nancy Dillon. We would like to thank 29th Division Association National Commander John Vaccarino and wife Betty for joining us this year.

Sunday, November 9th as always starts with all post members and guests gathering at the room of National Auxiliary President Juanita King and Post #64 Commander Bill King for a Harry Richardson Breakfast. After an edible breakfast several post members attended a Veterans ceremony at the Vinton, VA. War Memorial and later met with post member Bertha Rosan in Salem, VA. for a memorial service in honor of the late Gen. Rosan.

Saturday, December 6th Post #64's annual Christmas lunch had a very nice turn out of 46 members and guests. Southern Region Vice Commander Frank Dillon played host to our honorary guest, Assistant Adjutant General Mercer of whom we would like to thank for attending during his busy schedule.

The highlight of the day was a raffle presented by the Ladies Auxiliary. The grand prize was dinner for two at Hotel Roanoke and the second prize was admission and tour for two at the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA. Congratulations to all whom won. A BIG THANK YOU to Keith and April for the D-Day Memorial tickets and an equally BIG THANK YOU to all whom brought toys and canned goods for the Military Family Support Center.

Saturday, December 13th several post and family members joined Chuck Neighbor in celebration of his 90th birthday with music, pie and conversation.

Saturday, December 27th Southern Region Vice Commander Frank Dillon transported post members and WWII Vets Tom Boyer and James Warren to 2nd LT. Frances C. (Rusty) Rice Brennan's Legion of Honor Ceremony held in Blacksburg, VA.

Submitted by Southern Region Commander Frank Dillon and National Auxiliary Communications Officer Nancy Dillon

Limestone Post #72

On 19 January 2015, most of the major streets near the Fifth Regiment Armory were blocked due to a parade celebrating Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday making access to the armory difficult. Therefore, Post #72's first meeting of the year was held at the Pikesville Military Reservation's NCO Club. A few minor adjustments had to be made, but overall the meeting was a success.

PayPal is up and running and Ivan Dooley was the first one to pay his 2015 dues using PayPal. In addition, as of this writing, four others have also used PayPal to pay their 2015 dues. We encourage all our post members to use this option for submitting their dues.

An exciting event occurred back on 31 October 2014. Our still active Post member Bill Doyle celebrated his 100th Birthday. And, thanks to Bob Wisch we celebrated his birthday at the Sunset Restaurant in Glen Burnie, MD. All in attendance had a great time and Bill said it was the best birthday party he had.

Bill received numerous gifts including a US Army combat uniform shirt (ACU) from BG Timothy E. Gowen assistant commander of the 29th Division with Bill's name and 29th Division patch on it.

Post #72 has decided to have a picnic this summer. The picnic will be held on 27 June at Fort Howard. The Committee Chairman for this event is Gil Crosby.

Post #72 was well represented at the viewing, services and funeral for Comrade Richard F. "Dick" Jordan in February.

Submitted by Post Commander Thomas Insley

Cresap's Rifles Post #78

The past couple of months have been relatively slow for members of Post #78 in Frederick. With no meeting in December, our early 2015 meetings consisted primarily of planning for the year.

The "Christmas for the Vets" program in December went well for us again this year with approximately 150 gifts supplied to veterans residing in nursing homes in Frederick city.

This year the Post gave a baseball cap and two pairs of white socks to each veteran. We had the baseball caps embroidered with a U.S. flag and the text "Proud to be a Veteran" on the front. They were very well received. If we can secure more help for next year, we hope to also add a few of the smaller nursing facilities.

Unfortunately, Post #78 had to sacrifice 12 members at the end of the year for non-payment of dues. However, we were able to recruit six new members and one transfer in November and December who will start off the 2015 year. We have since that time recruited one more new member and hope to continue adding to this number.

We hope everyone can enjoy a very Happy, Healthful and Prosperous New Year.

Submitted by Post Commander David Houck

Eder George Post #85

Commander Harry D. Gilbert was elected in January and sworn in on February 4. Valerie Hawkins was elected and sworn in on February 4 as Adjutant.

National Executive Director, Bob Moscati, National SRVC David Ginsburg, Commander Gilbert, and Adjutant Hawkins, attended the the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade's Professional Development Session on 6 March. Their purpose was to help figure out how Post 85 and the 29th CAB could work together and possibly hold joint Association meetings. The event went well and Post 85 was able to sign up 12 new members.

Submitted by Post Commander Harry D. Gilbert

Eastern Shore Post #88

Our Holiday activities began on December 7th when several Post Officers and members attended the Det 1, 729th Brigade Support Company Holiday Meal. Det 1 drills in the Easton Armory. Their Holiday meal was hosted by and held at the Cambridge American Legion Post 91. As thanks for the unit member's service, Post #88 gave 24 unit members a poinsettia plant and fruit basket.

On December 9, Wayne and Mary Ellen Simmons and Jeanne Webster kicked off our annual Socks Drive by visiting 32 Veterans at Chesapeake Woods and Mallard Bay nursing homes in Cambridge. Wayne also visited 9 shut-in Veterans at their homes in Cambridge.

Next on December 11, the Post held the 10th Annual Holiday luncheon in Crisfield at the Crisfield American Legion for our members in the lower shore. We had a good attendance of 30 who enjoyed friendship and excellent food served by the American Legion. Each attendee went home with a poinsettia plant and fruit basket as thanks for their service.

On December 17 the Post held the 3rd Annual Salisbury Holiday luncheon for Veterans and members from the mid shore at the Salisbury VFW. We had record attendance of 45 for this event and everyone enjoyed the friendships and food and went home with a poinsettia plant and fruit basket for their service. The Post wrapped up the Socks Drive on December 18 with several events.

Bob Jones and Bernie Liswell visited 16 Veterans at Caroline and The Heritage nursing homes in Denton and LTC (Ret) Charlie Moore at his home.

Ed Lloyd, Betty Hurley, and Raymond "Nick" Willey visited 21 Veterans at the Pines Nursing home in Easton.

Ken Wheatley finished the Socks Drive for this year Dec 18 thru Dec 20 by visiting the 5 full time employees at the Easton Armory and 24 shut-in Veterans in their homes in the Cambridge area.

In total this year the Post reached over 202 Veterans on the Eastern Shore for the 22nd Socks Drive.

A sincere thanks to all who participated in these events and especially Ken and Janet Wheatley who manage the events, gather all the poinsettias, socks, and fruit baskets, lap blankets and make the luncheon arrangements!

The World War I monument dedication in Cambridge, MD has now been tentatively scheduled for May 9, 2015.

Submitted by Post Commander Robert Jones

Silver Spring Post #94

Post #94 reports that at this time 120 members have paid their dues for 2015. Seventeen of our members paid their dues by credit card, "PayPal". We are hoping that more of our members will utilize this option as it eliminates checks, stamps and envelopes. Most of these members have also contributed substantially to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund*. Please see their names beginning on page 3 of this publication.

Additionally, Post #94 has also donated funds to *Normandy Allies* for their student travel grants. We encourage all other posts to do this as well.

Vice Commander Jay Garrison is busy evaluating the results of a survey that was sent out with our dues solicitation correspondence in early January. One purpose of this survey is to determine if Post #94 should try to hold meetings sometime in the future.

Jay has also been busy along with Post Commander Donald McKee in coordinating the Arlington Wreath laying event that is held every year. This year's event will occur on 31 May 2015. (See notice on page 13 this edition).

We are hoping that our members who have not yet paid their dues will do so soon. Our goal is to get as close to 100% as possible. Last year, 90.9% of our members paid their dues.

Submitted by Adjutant/Finance Officer William S. Mund, Jr.

Larkspur Post #110

The year 2015 is going well for Larkspur Post #110. The winter meetings have gone well and we are getting ready for our first big event of 2015 -The Field Artillery Old Timers/110th Reunion.

That is a deliberate name change to the event. In the past, the Old Timer's was primarily a gathering of the older generation of those that served in the 110th and 224th FA, but was seldom attended by those still in uniform. With the folding of the colors, it is the one time per year that all former members of the 110th FA Regiment can get together over a catered dinner and open bar.

The event will be Sunday, April 19th from 2pm to 6pm at the Pikesville NCO Club. There will be no meeting in April because of the Old Timer's event.

In July, there will be a Global War on Terror event on Saturday, July 18th in the evening. We will have speakers from a number of deployments as well as something centered on our Vietnam Veterans. Pizza will be served and free beer – there will be no cost for this event.

Our thoughts are with Doc Barranco as he fights a number of ailments – we are all thinking of you Doc and get better soon!

Submitted by Post Commander David Ginsburg

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 veterans displayed during these most perilous years in the history of mankind.

Rice, Frances "Rusty" Brennan

59th Evac Hospital, 236th General Hospital
Blacksburg, Virginia
Post 64

Fournier, Jean Paul

B Company, 116th Infantry
West Hartford, Connecticut
Post 2

Kent, Edward P.

4th Infantry Division
Englewood, Florida
Post 2

Lombino, Angelo A.

K Company, 175th Infantry
New Port Ritchie, Florida
Post 27

Rutherford, Ernest C.

USN PC567
Englewood, Florida
Post 2

Trzaskos, John J.

E Company, 115th Infantry
Amsterdam, New York
Post 29

Uttero, Cosmo R.

H Company, 175th Infantry
Bradenton, Florida
Post 2

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

Doc's Corner: Issues with the Veterans Administration

As I write my first "Doc's Corner" article I hope you will remember Frank T. Barranco, Sr., MD (Post #110) for his many contributions and his dedication to the 29th Division Association. As he undergoes treatment for his medical conditions that caused him to give up his post of National Surgeon he needs our best wishes, prayers and support.

I will use my experiences to illustrate this article on "Issues with the VA" rather than other veterans VA issues. I will conclude with suggestions to help deal with the VA.

At the last NEC meeting I stated that the administrative side of the VA continues to fail veterans, although getting medical appointments at Perry Point VA Medical Center (PPVAMC) seems to have improved. However from a personal point of view an ECG/EKG done at PPVAMC on 11 November 2014 still was not interpreted as of 01 February 2015. It should have been sent to the Baltimore VA for their cardiologist to read. This is unacceptable medical care!

In June of 2013 when the Baltimore VA, 3 years after my C and P medical exam, decided my disability percentage, the VA awarded me a large settlement. I have not received their check as of February 2015. Allegedly, there is only one person in the VA's Baltimore office that handles combined retirement and disability (CRDP) payments.

I contacted Senator Andy Harris's office on Kent Island and they spoke to the VA. It seems they are 2.5 years behind in reviewing the DFAS audit before they will issue a check. I will be 86 in 2 years and probably unable to use the money to travel if I am still alive. This also is an unacceptable administrative delay! However, I do have some suggestions and pointers to speed the VA up and to get appropriate disability ratings.

- Gather all supporting documents to support your claim. DO NOT SEND THEM TO THE BALTIMORE VA OFFICE! Mail or FAX them to: FAX 844-531-7818 KEEP COPIES!
Dept of Veterans Affairs
Evidence Intake Center
Newnan, Georgia, 30271-0020
- 4 weeks after faxing my packet I received a call from the Baltimore VA to schedule an apt for my C and P medical exam. This is GREAT service!!!
- You may need help from a DAV or VFW claims officer to put the packet together.
- If you are lucky your claim will be sent to VA Claims office in Maine as they are much faster than the Baltimore VA claims office. The Maine phone number is 207-623-8411.
- For your Compensation and Pension (C and P) medical exam in Maryland I recommend you go to the clinic on Ft Meade. It is very efficient, has easy parking and user friendly.
- Contact your senator early on. Do not wait on the VA, as I did for 2 years, to finalize your claim. Daniel Melnykevich is the constituent liason for Maryland's Congressman Andy Harris, M.D. Dan has been a great help and he keeps after the VA in Baltimore. His phone # on Kent Island is: 410-643-5425; FAX 410-643-5429. Dan will ask you to sign the constituent



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

authorization form so he can help you. His email is: dan.melnykevich@mail.house.gov.

- If you are paying for medicines ordered by your primary care physician (PCP) and you are a vet, have your PCP write your VA physician stating why you need the medicine. The VA doctor or PA can write a VA Rx so you can receive the medicine free from the VA. If a VA pharmacist denies the specific medicine you should speak to a pharmacist in person and present your case. Do not take the VA's first NO. Persist!!!!
- Get the phone # of the VA nurse at the VA clinic or hospital you go to. Call her directly for help if you need it. Most times they are really helpful.
- If you are considering entering a VA nursing facility in Maryland, try for Calvert Hall in southern Maryland. A friend's mother received great care there.
- Remember, if you are a veteran and wish to use a VA medical facility and or get medicines from the VA you must go to a VA PCP at least once a year for VA care.

In conclusion, the VA system needs to continue to improve relationships with the clients for whom their very existence was created, the VETERAN. Strides have been made recently with some improvement but more is needed especially here in Maryland. I sincerely hope these suggestions and contacts make your journey thru the VA system less frustrating.

SPECIAL NOTICE!

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

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

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Please forward to:

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

Fredericksburg readiness center dedicated in honor of Virginia Guard Soldiers killed in 2004 Iraq bomb attack

FREDERICKSBURG, VA. — Nearly a decade after a 2004 Iraq suicide bomb attack took the lives of Sgt. Nicholas C. Mason and Sgt. David A. Ruhren, their families, friends and fellow Virginia National Guard Soldiers joined together Dec. 6, 2014, in Fredericksburg, Va., in a ceremony held to remember their sacrifice and dedicate the Fredericksburg readiness center in their honor.

Mason and Ruhren were killed in action Dec. 21, 2004, on Forward Operating Base Marez, in Mosul, Iraq, when a suicide bomber detonated his explosive-laden vest in a mess tent, killing 22 people, including 14 U.S. troops, and injuring 70 more. Both Soldiers were assigned to Company A, 229th Engineer Battalion and were mobilized with the 276th Engineer Battalion.

"We have gathered here today to recognize the loss of two warriors," said Col. James Zollar, the keynote speaker for the event who served as the executive officer the 276th Engineer Battalion at the time of the attack. "In conducting this act we ensure that the sacrifices made in war will not be forgotten with the passage of time."

Following remarks by Lt. Col. Charles Martin, the 116th Brigade Special Troops Battalion commander, Maj. Colin Noyes, the current commander of the 276th Engineer Battalion, Zollar and Brig. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, Maj. Beau Mason, the master of ceremony for the event, surprised the Mason and Ruhren families, along with several other attendees, by announcing that the wreath laying listed in the event program would not be happening and that instead the readiness center would be dedicated in their name, as the Mason-Ruhren Readiness Center.

"I can't even put it into words. It's amazing," said Sonja Ruhren, Sgt. Ruhren's mother, on the dedication. She said she had no idea the armory was going to be named for her son, and that he, always humble, would have been shocked as well.

"It's absolutely impressive that 10 years later Nick and David still mean this much to the community and to the Guard," said Christine Mason, Sgt. Mason's mother.

Vic Mason, Sgt. Mason's father, said, "The Guard is a family because the Soldiers are from the community and they stay in the community and they do so much for the community."

The parents of both Mason and Ruhren spoke about the love the men had for the fellow Soldiers and for the incredible support they've received from their communities, to include the Virginia National Guard community, over the past 10 years.

"If we talk about the National Guard as a whole, they were his family," Ruhren's mother said. She says when he came home on leave from Iraq before the attack, he didn't seem like he wanted to be home. She said she was frus-

trated with him and couldn't understand why he wasn't glad to be home, why he didn't seem interested in spending time with her or his friends. Finally, he told her, "While I'm here, something could happen to them, and I'm not there to protect them."

Ruhren's mother says that's when she realized how important his fellow Soldiers were to him. "He always, always loved them," she said. "They were his brothers and sisters."

Following the unveiling of a replica of the sign dedicating the readiness center, Soldiers conducted a final roll call for Mason and Ruhren. The roll call is a final tribute paid by Soldiers to their fallen comrades. It has its origin in the accountability roll call conducted by the first sergeant following combat and is called with the conviction that all unit members will be accounted for and none will ever be forgotten, according to U.S. Army doctrine.

For young Soldiers who come to the newly-named readiness center, Mason's parents said they want them to know what good Soldiers Mason and Ruhren were, that they embodied all that it means to be a Soldier.

"They never stopped," said Mason's mother, Christine.

Both Mason and Ruhren joined the Virginia Army National Guard after the terror attacks of September 11, 2001, at the age of 17. They completed their initial military training in 2003 at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., and were then assigned to Company A, 229th Engineer Battalion.

Mason, a native of King George, was 20 at the time of his death. He is survived by his father Vic Mason, mother Christine Mason and sister Carly Mason. He was a 2002 honor graduate of King George High School where he was a star wrestler, cross-country runner and track athlete. He completed his freshman year at Virginia Tech and was preparing for his sophomore year before being called to active duty with the Virginia Guard.

Ruhren, a native of Stafford, was 20 at the time of his death. He is survived by his mother Sonja Ruhren. He graduated from Garfield Senior High School in 2002 where he was active in many extracurricular activities including wrestling and football. He was one of the first members of the Garfield Senior High School Marine Corps Junior ROTC Program when it was established, and was promoted to the rank of cadet lieutenant by the first semester. While serving in the Guard, he took classes to become an EMT at the Rock Hill Fire Dept in Stafford.

The ceremony closed with the playing of "Taps" by Sgt. 1st Class Richard Carr of the 29th Division Band.

"We owe Sgt. Nick Mason and David Ruhren a debt of gratitude for their service and sacrifice that cannot be repaid," said Martin. "They'll never be forgotten."

*Article by Staff Sergeant. Terra Gatti
Virginia Guard Public Affairs*

Interview: D-Day Veteran John "Buddy" Thaxton of South Boston

South Boston native John "Buddy" Thaxton participated in one of the most pivotal - and dangerous - events of the 20th Century: the D-Day invasion of Normandy on Omaha Beach. As a 21-year-old sergeant in a weapons platoon, Thaxton and nearly 180 other young men from Southside Virginia were members of F Company, 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division. They were among the first wave of Allied forces storming Adolph Hitler's *Atlantic Wall*.

Many close friends of Thaxton's, including fellow mortar man, Melvin "Coco" Granger of Scottsburg, did not survive that eventful day. Thaxton's memory of the landing is as sharp and crisp as if it happened last week. He is widely considered the unofficial historian of F Company. Recently, we sat down with Thaxton for a first-hand report on what he went through on June 6, 1944.

The Breeze: Can you describe loading up to head out across the channel to Normandy?

Thaxton: Sometime around the fourth of June, we were loaded onto a troop transport ship named the *Thomas Jefferson* at the port of Weymouth. We put out to sea later that day and we were supposed to land on the morning of the fifth, but the water was so rough, Eisenhower called it off.

The Breeze: How much equipment did you carry and what were the conditions like on the ship?

Thaxton: It was right uncomfortable in a way because it was hot down in the area we slept in. We had all of our equipment that we were going to land on the beach with, including our rifles and ammunition. We didn't have mattresses. We slept on a piece of canvas that was strapped between two pieces of metal tubing. We did have a pillow and blanket. It wasn't too bad, except for being hot down in that area.

The Breeze: Since the landing was postponed for another day, when did the boats head out again for the landing on the sixth?

Thaxton: We left sometime early in the evening of the fourth and we were out to sea when Eisenhower called it off. We stayed on the boat that night and into the fifth when the landing got the okay. Now, the *Thomas Jefferson* wasn't the size of the *Queen Mary* and the waves had it rocking back and forth. It was really rough. We couldn't come up for any fresh air either. We stayed down in our assigned areas and a lot of guys were seasick.

The eating arrangements on that ship were strange for us. They had these steel tables that were maybe about ten feet long and wide enough for like six people to sit on each side, twelve people to the table. We had trays, going through the chow line to get our food. While we were sitting there eating, the ship was rocking back and forth and you had to hold onto your plate. The worst part about that was that some of the guys were seasick and upchucking in their plate. I mean, you're trying to eat and two men over someone's upchucking in their plate! You really had to have a strong stomach to handle that.

The Breeze: Did you get any sleep the night of the fifth and early morning hours of the sixth?

Thaxton: No, just a few winks. It was difficult to sleep. They told us sometime on the evening of the fifth that we were going in the next morning, so with that and the conditions, it was difficult to get much sleep at all.

I did spend some of that time writing a last letter to my mother because I was concerned about whether I would make it or not. We

were not allowed to send any mail from that ship, but I got one of the sailors to mail it out after the invasion. He was from Virginia and he told me that he would mail it for me.

The Breeze: What did you say in the letter?

Thaxton: I told her just in case that I didn't make it, to be sure to use the insurance policy money for whatever she wanted to use it for, you know. I told her I loved her and that was really about all I wrote.

The Breeze: Any anecdotes about your fellow soldiers while you were all down in the ship waiting for the trip across the channel?

Thaxton: There was this one guy down in our sleeping quarters named Melvin C. Estes. His nickname was "Slim." He came from the same neighborhood I came from here in South Boston. He told me that when I got home to tell everyone that he went down swinging. I told Slim that not to worry about it, that he'd make it back all right. He said, "Naw" and he was real insistent about it.

He wanted to make sure that I passed that message along. I didn't see him get killed, but one of the guys who did, said that a machine gun almost cut him in two. Slim was a platoon sergeant of the Third Platoon and he got killed in the landing craft when the ramp came down and he was coming out of it. So, I've tried to get that message of his out as many times as I could to all of Slim's friends.

Then there was this guy named John Dean who also had a premonition about death. This was about ten days later (after D-Day). I overheard a conversation between John and Louis Milam (who passed away last year and was a resident of Ringgold). John pulled his wallet out, took his high school class ring off and handed them over to Louis, telling him that he knew he was going to get killed. John was insistent just like Slim had been. John told Louis to tell his mother that he loved her. Louis told him like we had told Slim, that he didn't need to worry. That he would make it out okay. This was just about dusk when this took place.

The next morning, we started in an attack, about 65 of us, and a German tank fired on us. Several men were wounded and only one man was killed and that was John Dean. It was less than 12 hours after he had given Louis Milam the wallet and class ring. I have always wondered and wished that I could have asked them that if they could see themselves dying, could they have seen us surviving?

The Breeze: What was the transition like from the *Thomas Jefferson* to the actual landing craft?

Thaxton: Sometime during the night, like about three or four o'clock, we climbed down the side of the ship into the craft. Believe me, it was a very interesting trip from the top of the ship down into the landing craft. The rope nets were swinging out when the ship moved back and forth and it was really dangerous because we were loaded down with gear and if we went over the side, well, we were gone! I was a 60mm mortar man, carrying six mortar rounds, so I had all of that extra weight, too.

But we were young fellas, in good shape, had trained on that a lot, and it was kind of easy for us. But, I was really surprised that none of us broke our legs getting into the landing craft.

The Breeze: What was it like during the time that the landing craft left the ship and began to head to shore?

Thaxton: Well, the sea was real rough and those flat-bottomed boats were bouncing around like a cork. We could gradually see an outline of the shore, though it was still pretty much dark. The bombardment began from the ship at about six o'clock and we were

scheduled to land around six-thirty. While out in that boat from the ship to the shore, it convinced me that I would never make a good sailor!

The landing craft I was on came in close...I only remember stepping in water about twice or so. The sailor who was piloting our landing craft hit a sand bar a good ways out and instead of lowering the ramp and telling us, you know, "this is as far as we're going," he backed that thing up and got around that sand bar somehow or another. I just remember stepping in the water two or three times, that's how close he got us in to the beach.

That sailor was sitting up there totally exposed to enemy fire, machine gun fire, rifle fire, whatever. I understand that many of the boats struck sand bars or whatever and the men were told to get off and several of them drowned and several were missing in action. But I believe that sailor, whoever he was, who guided our boat in, did a great job. If he had stopped at the sand bar and let us out without giving it another try to get to shore, many of us on that boat would have been killed out there in the water.

The Breeze: What happened when the ramp of your landing craft first went down?

Thaxton: I was surprised that prior to when the ramp went down we hadn't received any machine gun fire inside the landing craft. I know bullets would have gone through it, it wasn't that thick. Nobody was hit inside our landing craft before that ramp went down. The first guy to get killed was a fellow named Kidd...he was from North Carolina. He was shot when he started out of it. But I didn't know until a few days later that he was killed.

When I got out of the landing craft, I must have gone about fifty feet before I stopped. The reason I stopped was the lieutenant, who was head of our platoon in the boat, yelled at me to fire the mortar at the German positions. I thought that was a stupid idea, but he was a lieutenant and I was a sergeant, so I was taking orders. I told them we'd (fellow mortar team members) set up the mortar and start firing. Well, I couldn't see any targets which is another reason why I thought it was a stupid idea. I didn't want the lieutenant to know what I said about him...I mean he was a nice guy and all, but I had made up my mind that I wasn't going to fire it but about twice. They fired two rounds and then I told them to stop and let's move on.

Then, we were pinned there in the sand and two guys came right by me and were hit by machine gun or rifle fire, I don't know for sure which. They both fell and landed across on each other right in front of me. As I was laying there in the sand, all of a sudden I noticed sand kicking up nearby. Then a round hit right next to my head, so I knew it was a sniper who had a bead on me. I played a little game of possum on him, dropping my head down in the sand, pretending he had hit me. Then he fired again right to the left of my face. He went around me.

Now, this is dirty, I guess when you think about it, but I remember thinking that with all these men around here, if I played dead, then he'd bound to get his mind off me. I waited maybe a minute laying there, then I hollered at the men to "Lets go!" Then I took off running and all five of us (the mortar team) made it across the beach.

What we did was not run straight up the beach, but at an angle because there was a fortress-type house on that beach...a gun position that kind of looked like a house head-on from where we got off the landing craft. We made our way up to the base of the bluff. Later when we had a roll call, our team was one of the few that made it to the beach that day without any of us getting hurt.

The Breeze: Noise-wise, what was this point of D-Day like?

Thaxton: There was a tremendous amount of explosions and I remember this rocket-type shell the Germans used which we called "screaming meenies." That thing made a terrific screaming noise before it landed. You could hear it coming through the air and they would hit with a tremendous explosion. Those shells didn't bury down and explode. They'd hit that sand and explode real quick. It was just so loud, but in some ways, there was so much going on and you were trying to make it across the beach, that you probably didn't really realize the amount of noise that was actually going on around you.

The Breeze: What was it like when you made your way up the bluff?

Thaxton: It took a while for us to get organized to do that. We had made our way into a trench where the Germans had been. I had gotten into a German machine gun position and the barrel of it was still hot from where they had been shooting at us. I hollered back to the other guys that there's a German machine gun in there. I didn't bother to tell them that it was no Germans in there. They had run away. I just popped my head up.

Well, right at the rim of this hole was a half of a leg, cut off about midway between the knee and the ankle. It was just sitting there, jagged looking and that didn't really catch my eye. I got just a glance of that. But the main thing I saw at that point and what got my attention was one of our guys who pulled a pin on a hand grenade and was about to throw it in at where I was. He must have heard someone say it was a German machine gun nest. Well, I guess I can't say exactly what I said, but basically I just told him not to throw that thing at me! He and I laughed about that after everything was all over.

The Breeze: As you made your way up the bluff, what were the obstacles like?

Thaxton: There was barbed wire everywhere, but somebody had cut it and had already cleared a path. We were all lined up and down the bluff, not going over the top, but just trying to get organized for the assaults over the bluff. Finally, somebody said, "Let's go!" and to be honest with you I have no idea who it was. It was F Company, G Company, E Company...

When I went up the bluff I was following about ten or fifteen men in front of me. I looked at a diagram of the first penetration on Omaha Beach and that was the group I was with. As we started along the top of the bluff, I saw a guy, laying there dead. His name was Lencher and he had been my company commander for a while when I was in the 29th Division Ranger Battalion. But I am sure Lencher had led that assault that made it across the top first.

The Breeze: How did the division wipe out the concrete bunkers?

Thaxton: We got behind them, and we had weapons like grenades and flame throwers, and we had been training for this for a long time, too. I never went into one of those pillboxes. The people who did that were in front of me, but they did a great job.

The Breeze: How did you end this historic day?

Thaxton: We spent that night by a church. I slept on what turned out to be a sunken grave that was in the bushes outside of the church's little cemetery. It was sunken kind of like a hammock. Whoever's grave it was, he must have been an outcast, because the rest of the cemetery was very well-kept. And he was lying out there by himself. I bet that was the first company that guy had in a long, long time!

*Bruce Wilkins conducted this interview.
It is printed with the permission of the "Carolina Breeze".*

Book Review:

“Fields of War” directs visitors to Second World War battlefield locations

On D-Day – 6 June 1944 – 156,000 American, British, and Canadian servicemen fought ashore on beaches along the Normandy coast or landed from the air to begin wresting back Nazi occupied Europe.

In his new book, *Fields of War: Battle of Normandy*, veteran battlefield historian, **Robert Mueller**, brings us to the actual locations and describes the events of the largest amphibious landing in history. The narrative revolves around the stories of the privates, NCOs, and officers who faced overwhelming odds with courage – ordinary men from ordinary backgrounds, who did extraordinary things.

Written as a tour guide, *Fields of War* includes 94 maps and 32 pages of photographs of battle action, ruins, monuments, and cemeteries. Visitors are guided to major landmarks and artifacts and through the Normandy’s scenic countryside and historic villages.

The first nine chapters follow the actions of specific infantry or airborne divisions until the invasion bridgehead was secure. The concluding seven chapters describe the large scale battles which resulted in the annihilation of the German Seventh Army in the Falaise Pocket and the subsequent Liberation of Paris.

Each chapter begins with a summary of the military situation and the commander’s objectives and troop movements. Extensive detailed maps illustrate the flow of the battle across the landscape and the units that participated.

Detailed driving instructions and GPS coordinates direct visitors to each battlefield site. Descriptions of museums, memorials, cemeteries, and surviving artifacts are given along with their hours of operation. Mailing, email, and web addresses are also provided.

Book review by Frederick C. Rockwell

FIELDS OF WAR: BATTLE OF NORMANDY

SOFT COVER, PERFECT BOUND

ISBN 978-0-9823677-3-5

471 PAGES INCLUDING

32 PAGES OF B&W PHOTOGRAPHS AND 94 MAPS

6" X 9" (15.2CM X 22.8CM)

More information about *Fields of War: Battle of Normandy* and the author’s battlefield lecture series is available at <http://www.frenchbattlefields.com>.

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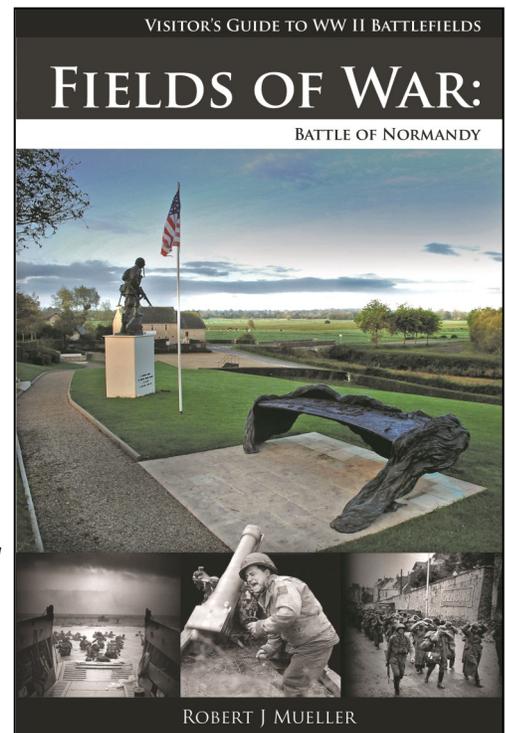
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Past National Commander Glenwood E. Hankins, 92

Past National Commander Glenwood Elmo Hankins, 92, of Martinsville, VA passed away on 7 February 2015. He was born in Pittsylvania County, VA, the son of Claude Henry and Omie Austin Hankins.

PNC Hankins graduated from Martinsville High School in 1940. Following graduation from high school, He responded to the call of duty and enlisted in the Virginia National Guard at the age of 18. He was assigned to Company H, 116th Infantry Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division, otherwise known as the "Stonewall Brigade".

As World War II escalated, Glenwood was sent to England on 27 September 1942. He trained in England attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant in charge of two 81mm mortar squads. On the "Longest Day" of 6 June 1944, he landed in the first wave at the Dog White sector of Omaha Beach in Normandy, France.

PNC Hankins was awarded the Purple Heart for wounds sustained in Brest, France and later near Aachen, Germany. He was also the recipient of the Bronze Star and was later awarded France's Ordre Royale de la Legion D'Honneur. He never forgot those with whom he served, nor those who were lost in the World War II campaigns. He remained active in the

29th Division Association throughout his lifetime and served as National Commander of the 29th Division Association during the 2004 Normandy remembrance ceremonies.



Following the war he returned to Martinsville, VA where he was employed by the United States Postal Service. He married Bernice Elizabeth Reynolds of Martinsville on 16 October 1949. Glenwood and Bernice resided in Martinsville where they raised their three children.

Mr. Hankins was preceded in death by his parents and a brother, L. Bernard Hankins. He is survived by his wife Bernice; daughters Susan Henderson and husband Ronnie of Martinsville, VA; Jane Bradshaw and husband John of Reston, VA; and a son Alan and wife Lori of Glen Allen, VA.

Additionally he is survived by a sister, Nancy Tate of Danville, VA; and five grandchildren, Karl and Jeffrey Sharp of Martinsville, VA; Michael Hankins, Renee Hankins and Kelsey Madsen of Glen Allen, VA; and one great-granddaughter Natalia Sharp of Martinsville, VA

The funeral was held at Broad Street Christian Church in Martinsville, VA on Wednesday 11 February 2015 and followed by burial in Oakwood Cemetery.

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Stories and photos from previous trips are available online: www.normandyallies.org and on Facebook/ Normandy Allies

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Call/email: Marsha Smith 585-748-2357 normandyallies@verizon.net**

MDARNG signal company gets first dibs on communications upgrade

PIKESVILLE, MD – The Maryland Army National Guard's Company C (Signal) of the 29th Infantry Division was the first unit in the Army to field and train on the latest tactical network at the Military Reservation in Pikesville MD., Jan. 14, 2015.

Known as the Warfighter Information Network-Tactical Increment 1 (WIN-T Inc 1) it provides Soldiers at the battalion level and above with a high-capacity voice, data and video communications.

This networking system has been a major support for over 94 percent of the Army and National Guard's tactical network and a full range of military operations since 2004.

"It's about getting better communication to the Guard," said

Maj. Gen. Daniel P. Hughes, program executive officer for command, control, communications-tactical. "This really will increase the ability of this unit to support the nation in the fight or even support the governor."

Hughes said the new upgrades on the WIN-T Inc 1 would allow faster responses when there are natural disasters and the Maryland National Guard is needed to support its citizens.

"Look what happened to Hurricane Sandy on the coast of New Jersey, there are places right now that don't have basic services. The Guard's critical mission in the state is now enhanced greatly. It's great to have the Guard getting [this] first," Hughes said.

The four modernizations to the WIN-T Inc 1 networks are: End Of Life Technical Refresh (EOL Tech Refresh), the WIN-T Inc 1b Upgrade, Network operations (NetOps) Convergence Upgrade, and the High Capacity Line Of Sight (HCLOS) Radio upgrade.

The EOL upgrades include new commercial hardware and software components such as routers, switches, servers and firewalls. The new products reduce size, weight and power (SWaP) by combining capabilities that once required their own hardware on virtualized servers.

The EOL also enables the Army to reduce the number of

required Increment 1 transit cases by one third, shedding 1,000 cases over the next three years, and reduces the weight of the remaining cases.

The WIN-T Inc 1b upgrade adds the Network Centric Waveform (NCW) modem that takes advantage of NCW, a dynamic

waveform that optimizes bandwidth and satellite utilization. Another key attribute of the NCW is that it enables Soldiers to send all information across the battlefield securely.

"The 1b allows us to do a number of different things," said Lt. Col Joel Babbitt, product manager for WIN-T Increment 1. "It makes the Increment 1 a Swiss Army knife of communications. We could put

Top Secret traffic through it; we could put commercial traffic through it like we're doing right now for Operations United Systems in West Africa for Ebola response.

The NetOps Convergence Upgrade simplifies and reduces the number of network management tools that communications officers use to manage the tactical communications network.

And finally, the HCLOS radio upgrade provides more than a fourfold increase in throughput, enabling higher-data applications such as full-motion video, high definition video conferencing, and network convergence.

Twelve National Guardsmen within this Maryland-based signal company have the privilege to learn, utilize and to train their fellow Soldiers on the new the WIN-T upgrades.

"Some of the other Soldiers couldn't make the training today, so moving forward we're going to have to get them up to speed, just in case one of us is out," said Sgt. Dewayne Carruth, a nodal network systems operator-maintainer, with the 29th Inf. Div.

An aggressive fielding schedule is planned to rapidly bring this new equipment capability to all Army WIN-T 1 units by the end of 2017.

*By Staff Sgt. Michael Davis Jr.,
Maryland National Guard Public Affairs Office*



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

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

29th Division Normandy Veterans Honored at Museum Dedication

On Saturday evening, 15 November 2014, the National Guard Memorial Museum re-opened its World War II gallery after closing it for several weeks to undergo a renovation. The new-look "The Citizen Soldier in World War II" Gallery was formally opened to the public that evening. The Ceremony was hosted by the National Guard Educational Foundation (NGEF) and the National Guard Association of the United States (NGAUS) at their headquarters in Washington, D.C.

Guests included staff and board members, donors, exhibit designers, several retired General officers, and special guests for the ribbon-cutting. The new Gallery showcases all of the Army National Guard Divisions that were mobilized for World War II. The centerpiece of the new space is an interactive map that illustrates when and where Guard troops were committed throughout World War II, including some of the exploits of the famed Blue and Gray 29th Infantry Division.

Several weeks prior to the Dedication, Anne Armstrong, the Deputy Director of the NGEF, invited Past National Commander Jack Kutcher of the 29th Division Association to attend and asked if he could arrange for a few of our WWII veterans to attend and participate as well. Because of the location and time of the event, it was difficult to get some of our aging veterans to commit. In the end, two of our cherished World War II veterans, Steven Melnikoff, 94, and Walter Heline, 93, accepted. These two Maryland residents served with the 29th Infantry Division and landed in Normandy, France, one day after D-Day. Steven Melnikoff went ashore with Co C, 175th Infantry Regiment, and Walter Heline with Btry A, 224th Field Artillery. They were indeed special guests, and were both very popular celebrities at the ceremony - granting many requests to pose for pictures and shaking hands with grateful well-wishers during the reception that followed the ceremony. They were accompanied by family members, and retired Colonel Jack Kutcher, the past national commander of the 29th Division Association

Melnikoff and Heline joined Maj. Gen. Deborah A. Ashenhurst, the NGAUS chairwoman, and retired Maj. Gen. Gus Hargett, the NGAUS president, for the ribbon-cutting ceremony. After the

formal program, they accompanied NGAUS officials into the museum to view the exhibit dedicated to their generation's service. The 29th Infantry Division is one of many featured on the interactive map that anchors the new exhibit. Soldiers from the 29th ID were part of the first wave to hit the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944. The division suffered extensive casualties on that

day, losing 321 soldiers. By the end of the war, 3,720 members of the 29th ID had been killed in action.

"I think it's really outdone," Heline said with a smile on his face and service medals on his blazer. Melnikoff also liked what he saw in the new space. "It's a great exhibit and I was happy to come," he said.

In her remarks prior to the official opening, Anne Armstrong said that the gallery is a

testament to the service of Melnikoff, Heline and others from what is known as the "greatest generation." This Gallery represents the respect we hold for National Guardsmen who served so gallantly in the Second World War," she said.

Maj. Gen. Deborah A. Ashenhurst, the NGAUS chairwoman, urged everyone to take their time going through the exhibit. Every picture, she said, has been "specifically handpicked" and every quote "is there for a reason." "We had a fine World War II exhibit before this," she said. "But this one is so much more vivid, so much more alive. It's striking in the way it's done." Ashenhurst said the name of the exhibit is appropriate. The space honors the policemen, teachers, assembly-line workers and more who "left it all behind to save the world from a tyranny." "We celebrate them, and it's humbling following in their great footsteps," she said.

The exhibit was designed by DesignMinds, Inc. of Fairfax, Va. The company also worked on the museum's 9/11 Era Gallery and is responsible for a facelift of the Cold War Era Gallery. Capital Museum Services of Manassas, Va., was responsible for the labor, installation and fabrication of the designs, and Redmon Group Inc. of Alexandria, Va., put together the interactive map.

The museum is open 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday.



Left to right: Steven Melnikoff; Major General Deborah A. Ashenhurst; Walter Heline and Major General Gus Hargett cutting the ribbon.

Article by Rebecca Autrey and used with the permission of the NGAUS.

What do you do with letters Dad sent home from the war?

By David Hoffman

A friend asked me the other day, "What should I do with the letters my older brother sent back from Europe during World War II?" The brother, drafted young, never married and left no descendants; no one else in the family wanted them, although they had been carefully saved all these years.

There are many answers to his question, as there are many institutions which gladly accept such collections, and there is no one best answer.

Once you are ready to give away the letters, etc., keep in mind that one reason for saving documents of the past is so that those who are studying the period may be able to increase their knowledge from these records. Two factors, preservation and access, should be guides to your decision.

The writer was your relative, and so long as there are family members who care for the letters, a family home is one choice, with some drawbacks: keeping them at home probably means no one else knows about them, and the information in them, although potentially valuable in research, is not available to anyone outside the family. (Caution: hot attics dry out paper, and damp basements may result in mold. Either can eventually render the paper unusable.)

Your local historical society is an option, perhaps a good one if it has collections which complement your World War II documents (e.g., letters from other men who served at the same time, or good collections about the community itself during the period of the war). Someone studying the effect of the war on your home town could profit from collections of letters, newspapers, and photographs.

One county museum I visited has a collection of scrapbooks which have every article from the local paper mentioning a local man who was in uniform during the war; letters would obviously complement them, but the museum collection is spread in a series of buildings which are over-warm during most of the year and its hours open are dependent on availability of volunteers.

State historical societies and state archives are also options. They may be able to put your documents alongside those of others from the state who also served in the war. They are more likely to have good climate controls for their collections, and to have good user guides for their collections. I found it very helpful to check websites and request printed guides to make sure that a visit was likely to prove productive. A trip to a distant site only to find you have gone through all relevant parts of their collection in half an hour can be a disappointment.

Universities similarly may be good repositories. My sister and I selected the Briscoe Center for American History at the University of Texas in Austin for our Dad's letters for several reasons. The Center already had letters and manuscripts from both sides of Dad's family, as well as from Mother's family and

we were keeping the family together. The center has one of the great collections in American History.

The LBJ Presidential Library is a short walk down the hill. The Texas State Archives, a mile or so away, had materials related to the 36th Division Association (Dad was in the Texas National Guard for 26 years in addition to his five years' active duty service during the war, less than two of those five actually served in the 29th.) Together these three institutions provide a superb place to study Texas and Texans.

There are important specialized repositories to consider. The first to come to mind is obviously the Maryland Museum of Military History in Baltimore. I made a number of visits there when I was editing my Dad's letters. 29th Division records preserved there are as good as one can find and historian Joe Balkoski is a most helpful guide in their use. Adding to the resources already in this collection makes it even more valuable.

I've worked with published as well as unpublished records at the Army Military History Institute, part of the Army War College at Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. The Military History Institute has a strong collection of published materials as well as letters, photographs and manuscripts and an excellent staff to guide in its use.

While working on Dad's letters I also made several visits to the National Archives branch at College Park, Maryland. The immense collection there contains organization records for the World War II period, on a detailed level. Because Dad was wounded in action and treated in several hospitals in France and England, I wanted to trace his movements, and could do so from reports of the hospitals which detailed their various moves as the front line moved and as Dad's condition improved. I did not have occasion to ask for individual collections of letters, and do not know to what extent the National Archives collects these.

National-level collections, such as those at the Archives and at the Library of Congress, aim to be comprehensive, but are handicapped by inadequate staffing levels and may be unable to process and integrate donations at the speed with which smaller institutions can. When you are exploring your choices of repositories, it is wise to make a visit and talk with staff, or if not that, write to the institution, describe your potential donation and ask about their policy regarding gifts.

You need to know whether the institutional policy is to keep all, or only a part of a donation if there are parts which do not fit the local collection policy. And, if you want to take a tax donation for your gift, be aware that getting an appraisal is your responsibility (and cost) and not that of the receiving institution.

David Hoffman edited his father's letters for the book "I'LL BE HOME FOR THE CHRISTMAS RUSH". He retired in 1994 after a thirty-nine year career as a librarian, the last twelve as Director of the State Library of Pennsylvania.

The Williams Hall Story – No Pain, No Gain

Much has been written about the 29th Infantry Division. Since the Great War, this outfit has, as all Army units have, endured numerous reorganizations, deactivations, and reactivations. In 1984, the division began another reactivation. On this occasion it would organize itself into a light infantry division.

The “Washington brass” had earlier decided that the division headquarters (HQS) would be located on Fort Belvoir, Virginia, since it was to be comprised of National Guardsmen from Virginia and Maryland.

Prior to the actual reactivation ceremony and during the winter of 1985, the division HQS was nestled in the middle Fort Belvoir’s Reserve Component Area. As the name implies, mostly Army Guard and other Reserve Component units used the facilities.

The entire area received little attention by the post engineer and its appearance made it clear that the area was a low priority in the Fort Belvoir scheme of work. Division HQS set up shop in an old WWII barracks – a typical two story wooden frame building. Three other barracks identical to the HQS building augmented the small compound.

The HQS building was slightly modified to accommodate several general officers, a chief of staff, a secretary of the general staff, an Army advisor or two, and several administrative assistants. The other barracks buildings housed the general staff.

The Headquarters Company would be activated at some future date but for now the four buildings would house the general staff. From the outset, these facilities were woefully inadequate, but after all, the 29th Infantry Division (Light) was a unit of the Reserve Component – the only Reserve Component division of its kind in the entire US Army force.

During the winter months of 1985, as the staff began to grow in numbers of personnel, the facilities began to fail on a regular basis. Often the electricity was off. Water pressure fluctuated from high to no pressure at all. The interruptions were frequent but we worked through the issues without much complaining. We always wore layers of clothing to work as the loss of electricity was unpredictable, and no one wanted to suffer from the consequences of no heat. The post engineers were usually slow to respond to our requests for support (work orders) and repairs to the infrastructure of this Reserve Component area. Routine maintenance in this area of the post did not exist so far as we knew.

The Secretary of the Army during this period of light division development in both Active and Reserve Components was a Virginian, and former member of the Virginia Army National Guard. The Active Component’s Forces Command (a four star HQS) had responsibility for the light division’s development and replied upon the First US Army (a three star HQS) to provide training oversight. The Fort Belvoir installation was under First US Army’s operational control. The division commander, like all US divisions, was led by a major general. And, the Fort Belvoir post commander was the same grade as the 29th Infantry Division (Light) commanding general.

One day we were told that the First US Army Commander would be visiting the division’s HQS for an update on the pro-

gress of converting units of both states (Virginia and Maryland) into a light division. The staff made its plans to receive the commander. The night before his arrival the weather was severe with temperatures plunging well below freezing resulting in a broken water line near the compound. Unfortunately, the situation was not discovered until several men had finished their morning constitutional. The HQS latrine had instantly become an ugly scene not to mention that it stunk. To top off an already messy situation, a power line dropped under the weight of ice resulting in the loss of electricity about mid-morning. It was about that time (mid-morning); the chief of staff met the First US Army Commander at a nearby airfield.

Meanwhile back at division HQS, the staff were now all dressed out in field jackets and gloves to beat the cold temperatures. Work orders were called in but no one expected a quick fix from the post engineers. Only the sun illuminated the interior of the HQS and that was not adequate lighting to use the manual typewriters that had replaced the electric ones. The site and situation was at that moment an amazing one when the First US Army Commander stepped into the HQS. The chief of staff shouted out the command of, “Attention.” Everyone responded and the general told us, “At Ease.”

The chief and general disappeared into a cold and dark office while the rest of us prepared to brief both men on our preparations to form the division. Soon they reappeared from their private conversation. The chief told his staff that the briefing was cancelled and would be rescheduled. He then turned to me and said, “Get the staff car ready for the general and me.”

I made the car ready and figured that we would return to the airstrip but that was the wrong assumption. Instead, I drove the car to the post commander’s HQS. The chief opened the car door for the general and the general told the chief, “You stay here chief, you do not want to hear what I have to say to general so-n-so.” The chief and I did not have to wait long.

Upon the general’s return, we took him to the airfield but on the way he told the chief to immediately schedule a Division Council meeting at the division’s HQS. The purpose of the Council meeting on Fort Belvoir was to select another building for a new division HQS. The only facility or building off limits for this selection process was the post HQS.

[The Division Council consisted of the adjutants general from Virginia and Maryland, and the general officers of the 29th Infantry Division (Light) – 5 members.]

The Division Council met on Fort Belvoir several days later. They spent most of the day surveying and inspecting various buildings on the fort. Finally the Council of generals selected Williams Hall as the site of the new division HQS. This building was one of two identical structures flanking Fort Belvoir’s post HQS. After a quarter of a million dollars renovation to Williams Hall, the building was occupied by the division staff just weeks before the reactivation ceremony.

This account was written by LTC (Ret) Joe E. Harris, a member of the 1985 general staff at Fort Belvoir, VA.

Minutes

of the NEC II Meeting
held on 15 January 2015 at the
Weinberg Center, Camp Fretterd, MD

National Commander I. John Vaccarino called the National Executive Committee (NEC II) Business Meeting to order at 0915 hours. Commander Vaccarino led the attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the opening prayer that was offered by National Chaplain Reverend John Schildt. The group then recited the 29th Division Association Preamble.

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

The minutes of the previous meetings (Business Meeting, 18 October 2014 and NEC I, on 19 October 2014) had been published and distributed in the Autumn/Winter 2014 edition of the *Twenty-Niner*. As there were no corrections or amendments, these minutes were approved as published.

Officer's Report

National Commander – I. John Vaccarino has created an "Ad Hoc" Command Committee. In addition to himself, the committee consists of the Senior and Junior Vice Commanders, National Executive Director, and the Adjutant. This committee has met twice since its inception. NC Vaccarino has attended and visited several posts since assuming office. He attended the 116th Annual Muster in Staunton, Virginia on 8 November; the Post 110 Memorial Ceremony on 16 November; the 175th Annual Review on 6 December; and the Post 72 Christmas party on 14 December.

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

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

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

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

At Large Region National Vice Commander – PNC Richard Smith submitted a written report. (*This report may be obtained by contacting the undersigned*).

National Executive Director – NED/PNC Robert Moscati submitted a written report. (*This report may be obtained by contacting the undersigned*).

Finance & Budget – J. Brian Becker reported on the financial status of the association. He said that the convention produced excess revenues. The net worth of the association as of 31 December 2014 is \$94,006.10. (*This report may be obtained by contacting the undersigned*).

Membership – NED/PNC Robert Moscati explained his report that was distributed. Most posts are doing rather well. Several posts are in jeopardy. Southern Region National Vice Commander Dillon and NED/PNC Robert Moscati recently traveled to Post 84 at Ft. Belvoir for a fact finding mission, as that post has been very delinquent in

the submission of dues. They met with Major McCreight of the Division staff.

Chaplain – Reverend John Schildt spoke about the events, ceremonies and observances that he has been involved in over the last several months. He talked about several upcoming events.

Service – Walter Carter spoke about the recent Veterans Administration Health Services scandal that dominated the news media for awhile. He recently attended an event where an official of the VA spoke and gave an update on the progress being made with this issue.

Surgeon – Dr. William Bernhard spoke about the difficulties that he and others have experienced with the VA Health administrative system in Baltimore, MD. He said he will continue the initiative that Past National Surgeon Frank Barranco began by providing a column to the editor of the *Twenty-Niner* for publication in future editions.

Welfare – National Welfare Officer Dick Jordan is hospitalized. PNC Dooley gave an update on NWO Jordan's status which was not encouraging. PNC Lockard underwent micro-surgery to remove a cancerous lesion from his liver on Tuesday, 13 January. That surgery was successful and he was scheduled to return home in 3-4 days. He will then be in recuperation for 2-3 weeks. PNC Kutcher is undergoing treatments for his illness; however he was in attendance at this meeting. Dr. Barranco is undergoing treatment for an illness. Dr. Baumgarten is doing better. John Kessler from Post 64 is not doing well.

Historian – Joe Balkoski had no report.

Sergeant at Arms – Randall Beamer had no report.

Property – National Property Officer Shilow reported on several new books that are available for purchase. He said that the "PayPal" option for members buying property is working real well.

Parliamentarian – Thomas Insley had no report.

Judge Advocate – Frank Rauschenberg had no report.

President, Ladies Auxiliary – Juanita King recounted the events that the Ladies have been involved in over the past several months. Several of these events were the 116th Annual Muster; the rededication of the World War I monument in Roanoke, Virginia; and a Legion of Honor ceremony in Blacksburg, Virginia. They also collected a large donation of staples and toys for the Military Family Support Center in Salem, Virginia.

Committee Reports

2015 National Convention – Commander Vaccarino gave a report on what has been decided so far concerning the event that will occur on 15-18 October 2015. The Fredericksburg Hospitality House in Fredericksburg, VA., is the site of our event. The trips and dinners will be finalized in the next few weeks and all information will be published in the Spring 2015 *Twenty-Niner*. We hope to have the option for paying for registration/trips/meals by "PayPal" operational for this event.

2016 Reunion and Convention – NSVC David Ginsburg said he will establish a Convention Committee to advise him on this event.

Futures Committee/Association Website – With the aid of a "Power Point Presentation" NSVC David Ginsburg began his report by noting several issues that were accomplished during the past year. Post 1; Post 72; and Post 94 now have the ability to accept dues

and donations through “PayPal”. Post 110 was the first post to implement this “PayPal” option. He said pages on the Unit Histories and Post Announcements have been added to the website recently. He spoke about the “Post Commanders Workshop” that was convened after the business meeting at the National Convention. This workshop had representatives from 15 posts attending and gave the attendees a chance to interact with the officers of other posts. NSVC Ginsburg said there would be a renewed effort to invigorate the “Embedded Program” to focus on a few units/armories to better enhance the prospect of recruiting new members. He distributed a hard copy “case study” on how NED/PNC R. Moscati attained success recruiting about a dozen members from the 29th Signal unit at Pikesville. He said there should be an effort by the posts, possibly driven by National Headquarters, to get the family members of our recently departed comrades to join our association.

Special Reports

Normandy Allies – NSO Walter Carter presented a detailed update on the activities being anticipated for Normandy Allies in 2015. He thanked the 29th Division Association for their donations over the past years. NSO Carter made a motion, seconded by NED/PNC R. Moscati to provide in the budget, for planning purposes, the funding of \$2,600 to Normandy Allies for a student and a teacher to travel in 2016. If Normandy Allies is unable to use those funds for its 2016 trip, it will keep them for the same purpose in 2017. Motion was passed.

The Twenty-Niner Newsletter – Editor/Publisher William Mund advised those in attendance that he will be publishing several new publication policies in the upcoming Spring 2015 edition as part of his “Message from the Editor” column. These policies deal with Legion of Honor recipients and Death Notices/Obituaries.

Old Business

Constitution & By Laws – PNC Smith has agreed to be the chairman of the Constitution & By Laws Committee. The other members are: NED/PNC R. Moscati; Bill Bullock; and Michael Tanczyn. They will make a report at the NEC III meeting in June.

Underwriting costs of WWII veteran members attending the convention – It was suggested that the regions and individual posts be encouraged to support this effort. Several other suggestions were offered.

Trip to France 2019 – PNC Kutcher stressed the need for the association to have a presence in France for the 2019 D-Day Ceremonies and Observances.

Wreath Laying Ceremony – at Arlington National Cemetery will occur on 31 May 2015 at 1:15pm. A buffet lunch is planned afterwards. Bus transportation is being advised and researched. The date and

time of this event had been announced last year at the NEC held in June, and also at the National Convention business meeting in October 2014.

New Business

Post 58 application and vote on charter – An application has been received from Bruce Kahl to form a new post, to be known as Post 58. All the requirements for creating the new post have been met. A motion was made NED/PNC R. Moscati to approve this application and issue a charter. Motion was seconded by Recker and motion was passed.

Appointment of Nominating Committee – PNC Zang has been appointed Chairman of the Nominating Committee. He will make a report at the NEC III meeting in June.

Fundraising Effort – Several suggestions were offered on how to raise funds. PNC Wilcox and NFO Becker were asked by the Commander to provide recommendations on fundraising options.

Good of the Association

The Commander presented PNC John F. “Jack” Kutcher, Sr., with his Past National Commander’s plaque for his service 2013-2014. The Commander presented Southern Region Commander Frank Dillon with a certificate from the Employee Support of Guard and Reserve (ESGR) for Post 84.

During the 2014 “Trip to France”, many mayors of French towns were presented with flags donated by various 29th Division Association posts. PNC Kutcher prepared recognition certificates for these posts and they were distributed. PNC Kutcher inquired as to whether all the posts have received their certificates.

Closing

With no further business, Commander Vaccarino began the closing ceremonies. A closing prayer was offered by Reverend Schildt along with a final salute to the colors. Commander Vaccarino announced that the **NEC III** meeting is scheduled for **Thursday, 18 June 2015** at **1000 hours**, at the VAARNG armory in Winchester, Virginia.

Meeting was adjourned at 1205 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.

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

NED/PNC Robert W. Moscati, P.O. Box 47634, Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634

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

A new way to donate is to use your credit or debit card by going to:

www.29thdivisionassociation.com and clicking on “Post Locations and Descriptions”.

Look for and click on “Maryland Post 94 - Silver Spring, MD”

Locate and click on the “Donate” button and then follow the instructions.

Book Review:

I Can't Tell You Everything

Writing Home From the War Front 1942-1945

a personal account of Captain George B. Nabb, Jr. - 115th Infantry Regiment

A very personal and riveting account of CPT George B. Nabb Jr.'s experiences with the 115th Regiment, 29th Division from departing for England in Oct 1942 until returning home in July 1945.

This 359 page book is a compilation of the letters CPT Nabb sent home to his wife, Georgia, during the 33 months he was in Europe. He wrote home almost daily and in combat every couple of days. The family found the letters after the death of Georgia Nabb. The book of letters was transcribed and compiled as a labor of love by Carlton and Mary Nabb, son and daughter-in-law of CPT Nabb.

CPT George B. Nabb, Jr., born in 1909 and a farmer's son in Cambridge, Maryland joined Co C, 115th Regiment in Cambridge in 1929 and was commissioned 2LT just before the Feb 3, 1941 mobilization of the Maryland National Guard.

George had already been in the Guard 11 years at the time of Federalization. As the units were organized after mobilization George was transferred and assigned as Platoon Leader for Co D, 115th Regiment, becoming the Company Commander for Co D through D-Day.

He was first wounded by machine gun fire on June 17th in the battle for St. Lo, recovered in theater and was reassigned Company Commander back with Co D.

On Aug 7 he was seriously wounded by intense artillery fire and after recovering from his wounds, CPT Nabb remained in Europe as-



Photo of LT George B. Nabb, Jr. taken during training in 1942.

signed to a Division training replacements as they came over fresh from basic training and infantry school. He came home in July 1945. CPT Nabb was wounded twice and received the Purple Heart with Oak Leaf Cluster.

This book is not a detailed account of battle actions or unit actions. Soldiers were not allowed to write about any battlefield information. These letters provide a glimpse of the Army life in Europe that CPT Nabb and his fellow soldiers endured through their long separation from home. More important, these letters portray CPT Nabb's personal fight to stay connected with home and

his family. It appears he used these letters to transport himself back to Cambridge in the daily happenings of his family and friends thus helping him survive the long absence from home.

George B. Nabb, Jr. passed away in 1989.

The book is a very rewarding, interesting, and easy read. Several members of Eastern Shore Post 88 have read the book and highly recommend it. CPT Nabb was an excellent writer and very devoted husband and father. For anyone who had a relative who served overseas in WWII this could be your father, uncle, brother, or grandfather who served through similar experiences in the war and at home.

The book is available from Salt Water Media, LLC in Berlin, MD., phone number 443-513-4422. Or you can call Carlton and Mary Nabb at 410-228-2014 or email at Nabbfamily@aol.com.

Review by Robert Jones, of Post 88

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

29th Division Association Supplies Available

Free Gift - All orders \$25 or more will come with a free 29th Division Association Bolo Tie!!!

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>POSTAGE & HANDLING</u>	<u>MAILED</u>
Book—Ever Forward 116th Inf. History (soft cover)	\$17.90	\$5.75	\$23.65
Book—Ever Forward 116th Inf. History (hard cover)	\$25.00	\$5.75	\$30.75
Book—29th, Let's Go—29th Division History	\$29.00	\$5.75	\$34.75
Book—Beyond the Beachhead (Joseph Balkoski)	\$19.90	\$5.75	\$25.65
Book—115th Infantry in WWII	\$25.00	\$5.75	\$30.75
Book—Omaha Beach and Beyond (The Long March of Sgt. Slaughter)	\$25.00	\$5.75	\$30.75
Book—From Beachhead to Brittany (Joseph Balkoski)	\$28.00	\$5.75	\$33.75
Book—From Brittany to the Reich (Joseph Balkoski)	\$27.00	\$5.75	\$32.75
Book—Our Tortured Souls (Joseph Balkoski)	\$27.00	\$5.75	\$32.75
29th Division Association Note Pads (5 1/2 x 8 1/2)	\$1.75	\$1.30	\$3.05
29th Division Association Note Pads (4 1/4 x 5 1/2)	\$1.35	\$0.70	\$2.05
Crest—115th Infantry Regiment	\$5.50	\$1.10	\$6.60
Crest—116th Infantry Regiment	\$5.50	\$1.10	\$6.60
Crest—175th Infantry Regiment	\$5.50	\$1.10	\$6.60
Decal (specify inside or outside)	\$0.50	\$0.50	\$1.00
Labels, gummed w/29th logo (sheet of 50)	\$1.00	\$0.50	\$1.50
Clear Plastic key ring w/29th Association logo	\$1.50	\$1.00	\$2.50
Lapel pin	\$3.95	\$1.10	\$5.05
Lapel pin, past post commander	\$5.00	\$1.10	\$6.10
Ladies pendant	\$6.00	\$1.10	\$7.10
Medallion (for plaques)	\$6.00	\$1.10	\$7.10
Plaque, wood 29th Division Association Logo	\$10.00	\$1.75	\$11.75
Plaque, wood replica of Omaha Beach Memorial	\$10.00	\$1.75	\$11.75
Pocket purse—squeeze	\$2.00	\$0.75	\$2.75
29th Division Association pocket patch	\$6.00	\$1.10	\$7.10
Pocket patch holder	\$3.00	\$1.10	\$4.10
Shoulder patch, 29th ID	\$3.50	\$0.50	\$4.00
Jacket, coach, navy with logo in S, M, L, XL, 2XL	\$28.00	\$5.75	\$33.75
Golf Shirt, embroidered 100% cotton pullover (royal blue, white, gray—L, XL, 2XL)	\$23.00	\$5.75	\$28.75
29th Division Official Association Necktie	\$20.00	\$2.00	\$22.00
29th Division Association Bolo Tie	\$6.00	\$1.30	\$7.30
29th Association Dress Hat (state size)	\$38.00	\$5.75	\$43.75
Hat, Baseball w/29th logo (embroidered)	\$15.00	\$2.60	\$17.60
Hat, Baseball w/29th logo (embroidered/Summer mesh)	\$12.00	\$2.60	\$14.60
29th Division Cemetery flags on wooden staff 12" X 19"	\$5.00	\$3.00	\$8.00
DVD, 29th Division Reactivation Ceremony at Fort Belvoir on 5 October 1985	\$10.00	\$3.00	\$13.00

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

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

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

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

Just go to the new updated website at www.29thdivisionassociation.com and click on "Merchandise".

Something ventured, and something gained!

This may be hard to believe but it's a true story. When I returned from the library last evening after searching for information on Fort Niagara, there was a large envelope in my mailbox from the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC), St. Louis. The right edge was completely open exposing the contents, though the top flap had been soundly reinforced with extra-strength package sealing tape. This was obviously more than the WWII discharge document I requested 44 days prior for 1st Lt. Denzil E. Dees of the 116th Infantry, 29th Infantry Division.

Normally, when an archives technician finds something, you get an initial response form letter in the mail asking for payment. But I hadn't requested his entire Official Military Personnel File (OMPF as the former "201-file" is now styled) and I received no payment request. As I looked at this thick envelope metered for \$8.75 in postage just two days ago my first reaction was one of dismay. Why can't the government spend some money and add some glue to the folds on these envelopes? But at least there were no tire marks or shredded contents. My jaw dropped as I checked what was inside. Here was what appeared to be my father's complete military/medical records from not only WWII, but the Korean era as well.

I made the request for Leopold Helbig's 201-file and medical records by mail on 5 March 2013. The initial response came some four months later in the form of a message left on my phone. The request was not, in fact, "archival" and I needed to send a death certificate. I called back twice and left messages but no response. Then the letter arrived with a copy of my "Request Pertaining to Military Records" (SF-180) with a note to send the certificate. This I did on 23 July but after hearing nothing over the next three months I sent a complaint letter and a new SF-180 on 26 October. Additional time went by without any response and I reminded myself that this is the federal government and based on past experience why should I be surprised. What I found to be mere neglect in years past had morphed into unresponsive incompetence.

This morning I scanned through the contents and it seems that the army/NPRC may have integrated his enlisted 201-file into his warrant officer file sometime after he was federalized with his national guard unit in 1950 for Korea. I already had his National

Guard records from the Adjutant General of New York but there was considerably more here as federalization meant that these were Army of the United States records, separate and apart from the pre-and post-war periods. Also, there were medical records here as well which helps to explain why he did not receive the Purple Heart at discharge in 1945 (wounded twice July and Sep. '44 "no aid received, France"). The most valuable item here, of course, is his Service Record (WD AGO Form 24) chock full of fountain pen entries with addenda pages added to the booklet.

It has been a full three years since I started on my quest for my father's WWII military history. I have learned much in the process, and these records fill in the blanks with important details such as assignment dates, orders/citations, etc. The 18 months that it took to get them is totally unreasonable in my opinion. Since there is no evidence of fire or water damage to these records they were likely not exposed to the fire in 1973 that destroyed millions of 201-files and dashed efforts of countless people who hope to discover their veterans' experiences of warfare.

This excessive waiting with no response does not speak well for our bureaucracy. There appears to be no index to these army records beyond the inadequate "Electronic Army Serial Number [ASN] Merged File, ca. 1938-46" which is incomplete. I provided my father's enlisted ASN and his dates of service in both the army and the National Guard, from copies of his separation documents he kept. But his is one of the missing files in the database which was created from microfilm of the original key-punched "Enlistment Record" cards. Yet NPRC eventually found these records apart from the so-called "B" Registry and "R" Registry created after the fire of 1973. His warrant officer status saved this history from negligent and needless destruction.

Yes, I am happy to receive these records. There was no explanation for the delay, no apology and no request (this time) for payment, which would normally be \$70 for a complete OMPF. Let's hope NPRC will someday get its act together and create a useable index that will help to locate the extant 201-files.

*Submitted by Michael J. Helbig
Son of CWO-2 Leopold C. Helbig, USAR (Ret.) deceased
(formerly SSgt., L Company 116th Infantry, 29th Infantry Division)*

NEC III

Thursday, 18 June 2015, 1000 hours

Winchester Readiness Center

(formerly known as a Virginia Army National Guard Armory)

181 Pendleton Drive

Winchester, Virginia 22602

Cost is **\$15** with checks made payable to the **29th Division Association** and mailed to **PNC/NED Bob Moscati, P.O. Box 47634, Windsor Mill, MD 21244-0634.**

The lunch will be a catered event similar to the meals we are accustomed to enjoying at the Weinberg Center at Camp Fretterd, MD.

Fredericksburg Hospitality House 29th Division Association 97th Annual Reunion



**15 – 18 October 2015
In Fredericksburg, VA**

- Room Rate \$99.00 plus tax
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The group room rate is \$99 plus tax per night & must be guaranteed with a credit card or one night's deposit by check or cash. Check in time is 3 PM and check out time is 12 PM.

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CUT-OFF DATE FOR GETTING THE DISCOUNTED ROOM RATE IS OCTOBER 1, 2015

Important Notice

Registration form and meal & trip selections will appear in the Summer 2015 edition along with the forms for submitting ads and patrons for the Souvenir Program Book.

29th Division Association
P.O. Box 47634
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Applications and payments can be completed online or mailed to our National Headquarters address below. If you do not choose a post, one will be assigned for you based on your current or former unit or your home address. Dues vary from post to post but a check for \$12.00 made payable to the 29th Division Association will suffice. You may also make application and pay dues at our National web site: www.29thdivisionassociation.com.

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

- | | |
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| FL Post 2 | Sarasota, FL |
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| VA Post 5 | Norfolk, VA |
| HQ Post 29 | At Large |
| MD Post 48 | Westminster, MD |
| MD Post 58 | Dundalk, 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 | Northeastern 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 |
| 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 _____