



## 29th ID deployment in 2016-2017 leads to Army Meritorious Unit Commendation

FORT BELVOIR, VA. — Headquarters Battalion, 29th Infantry Division received the Army Meritorious Unit Commendation for its 2016-2017 deployment in support of Operation Spartan Shield and Operation Inherent Resolve, Maj. Gen. Blake C. Ortner, the 29th ID commander, announced to a formation of 29th ID Soldiers Jan. 14, 2018, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

"The accolades that the division received, I've never seen it before," Ortner said. "I think that's a testament to the great job you did during this deployment. It continues to resonate throughout the Army. Senior leaders within the Army recognize the 29th and recognize the outstanding job you did."

According to Army Regulation 600-8-22, the Army Meritorious Unit Commendation is awarded to units for ex-

(Continued on page 10)

## 5-year financial projection reveals serious concerns for our association

By Robert "Bob" Jones  
National Finance Officer

It is an honor to serve the Association as the new National Finance Officer and follow Brian Becker who was NFO for thirteen years. Large shoes to fill. I thank Brian for the time and patience in getting me up to speed to fill the position.

At the NEC II meeting in January, 2018, I presented a Financial Report to the Executive Committee which is a part of the agenda for each Executive Meeting.

As most know the Association, at first glance, is in very good financial condition which is due to the PNC George Cook estate bequest which the Association received last year. But the bequest is masking some underlying finance concerns.

For this NEC II Finance Report (my first) new National Commander Grant Hayden requested that we look at a five-year projection of the Association's revenues and expenses. This analysis and a closer look at the last 5 years revealed some concerns.

When separating out the PNC Cook bequest a look backwards shows that our revenues have been reducing due to shrinking membership and less *Twenty-Niner* contributions.

Expenses at the same time have increased primarily from several on-going donations the Association has made to organizations who help further the cause of our preamble.

The result is that for the last three years the Association has had to take almost \$15,000 each year from our investment account to cover expenses.

The PNC Cook bequest allowed the Association to generously support several organizations last year and has ensured our sol-

veny for the near term but the underlying pattern of the last few years of expenses higher than revenues needs to be addressed.

Even with the PNC Cook bequest if the revenue/spending pattern continues the Association could become insolvent in 5 years.

Several ideas were discussed at the NEC II meeting on how to increase revenues. The two main revenue sources have been membership and contributions to the *Twenty-Niner*.

The Association only receives \$5.00 per member from each Post. It has been \$5.00 for over 20 years. It may be time to consider an increase in dues?

The *Twenty-Niner* still receives donations (thank you to all who continue to support the *Twenty-Niner* fund, especially Post 94 whose members have consistently contributed) but in general these donations have been reducing. The Association needs these continuing donations to assist with the *Twenty-Niner* publication.

For expenses going forward, all agreed that the Association needs to certainly continue to support those organizations close to the Association but needs to be more prudent and conservative as to the amount of support we can really afford to provide.

It was agreed to discuss the financial aspects of the Association again at the NEC III meeting in June and make some decisions that will ensure the long term financial stability of the Association.

In addition, Editor/Executive Director William Mund requested that I write this summary of the financial report and discussions, so that all members are kept informed.

### THE TWENTY-NINER

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# Grant L. Hayden, National Commander

**I**t has been a very interesting and busy time since you selected me to be your National Commander.

I have been focused on some initiatives that will posture the Association for greater visibility with both military, civilian organizations, and all people in general.

I am very excited with the changes Neil Ungerleider, and PNC David Ginsburg are making to our website.

They are making it extremely user friendly, easy to navigate, updating the merchandise section with photographs, simplifying the membership application process, and direct access to our Facebook page.

The futures committee with PNC David Ginsburg at the helm is looking at ways for wider dissemination of our literature and recruiting material.

They are developing an Association Membership poster to be placed in all the armories in Maryland and Virginia.

We will be mailing a copy of the *Chin Strap* every month to all the armories,



and the *Twenty-Niner* newsletter 3 times a year.

Our Historian, Joe Balkoski is researching all the Maryland and Virginia units to obtain their current address and their lineage and possible linkage to the 29th Division.

Once this is compiled, I will send a letter to all the commanders about our Association and the opportunity for them and their unit personnel to become members.

The Awards/Grants committee headed up by Brian Becker has coordinated with both the Virginia and Maryland Military Academies to present 29th Division Association Leadership Plaques at their NCO, OCS, WOC and MOS School graduations.

The association has invited the 29th Division NCO and Soldier of the Year to assist with the wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on 16 June 2018.

They have been invited to be our guests with their families at the

luncheon afterwards at the Spates Community Center.

We have also extended an invitation to them to be our guests at the convention in Roanoke, Virginia 11-14 October 2018.

A team consisting of PNC Bob Recker, Dick Snyder, and Bill Bullock will assist our property officer, Franklin Shilow in conducting a full inventory of our merchandise, analyzing what is selling, developing a plan to market the unpopular items, soliciting ideas for new items, and taking photographs of the merchandise for the website.

This year's 100th convention is going to be very special with its location in Roanoke Virginia 11-14 October 2018.

There will be a wreath laying and luncheon at the D-Day Memorial in Bedford Virginia. Visits are also planned for the Marshal Museum, and General Robert E. Lee Memorial.

In addition, several trips and excursions are planned for the spouses. We are also honored to have Bernard L. Marie, who was a young boy during the Nazi occupation of France, and the liberation after the D-Day Invasion, as our keynote speaker.

Bill and Juanita King along with Post 64 have been instrumental in the organization of this year's convention.

Finally, your ideas are very important to your National Headquarters. Please do not hesitate to contact me or any member of the Executive Committee with any suggestions.

*29, Let's Go*

Grant L. Hayden  
National Commander  
29th Division Association

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**Be sure to check out our  
new and improved website at:  
[www.29thdivisionassociation.com](http://www.29thdivisionassociation.com)**

## Donations to the *Twenty-Niner*

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our membership for their generosity in contributing to the *Twenty-Niner* for this Spring issue. From November 1, 2017 through March 1, 2018, through these donations totaled \$2,235.00. Note our cut-off time. If your contributions did not reach our National Executive Director by March 1, 2018 then it will not be listed until the next issue. **Donation checks must be made payable to the 29th Division Association.**

Abschutz, Adrienne, Post 94, Daughter, Sparta, NJ  
 Adler, Eric, Post 94, Son, Wappingers Falls, NY  
 Baldwin, Steven M., Post 94, Associate, Rockville, MD  
 Baumbach, Jeffrey V., Post 94, Son, Brick, NJ  
 Beam, Patrick, Post 94, B/1/175, New Oxford, PA  
 Bourdeau, Mary Ellen, Post 94, Daughter, Glen Falls, NY

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 Brondyke, Russell, Post 94, Associate, Homosassa, FL  
 Cooley, Carl, Post 94, Son, Slagle, LA  
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### ***In memory of his wife, Penelope Damascus***

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 Garguilo, Neil, Post 94, Son, Lakewood, NJ  
 Garrison, Cecil L. "Jay", Post 94, Son, Centreville, VA

### ***In memory of his father Cecil L. Garrison, D/104 Med Bn (WWII)***

Gorum, Clyde, Post 64, I/116, Shreveport, LA  
 Green, Colleen, Post 94, Daughter, Simms, MT

### ***In memory of John O'Neil A/116, KIA, 6 June 1944***

Gutknecht, Kay, Post 94, Daughter, San Jose, CA  
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 Harper, David, Post 94, Associate, Bountiful, UT  
 Hayes, Steven A., Post 94, Associate, Upper Marlboro, MD  
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 Heeter, Eugene, Post 94, K/175, Rolling Meadows, IL  
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 Jindra, Leonard, Post 94, F/115, Floral Park, NY

Joiner, William C., Post 94, Grandson, Brandon, MS

### ***In honor of his grandfather Tommie L. Joiner, Batesville, MS***

Knight, James S., Post 94, Son, Mount Pleasant, SC  
 Kruhm, Fred N., Post 94, C/121ENG, Burtonsville, MD  
 Lane, Dale, Post 94, Son, Indianapolis, IN  
 Langille, Richard, Post 94, C/116, Springfield, VA  
 Linthicum, George, Post 1-72, C/175, Lutherville, MD

### ***In memory of E. Donald Bangs***

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

### ***In memory of her father Albert J. Lucas***

Masters, Kathryn, Post 94, HHC/29th, Cheyenne, WY  
 Maupin, Charles, Post 94, HQ/3/175, Columbus, GA  
 Moon, Diane C., Widow, Winter Park, FL

### ***In memory of her husband Ray E. Moon, F/115***

Neuwirth, Francis, Post 94, A/821TD, Sleepy Hollow, NY  
 O'Rourke, Hugh, Post 94, Grandson, Fort Salonga, NY  
 Parnell, George L., Sr., Post 29, HQ/2/175, Springfield, IL  
 Phillips, J. Michael, Post 94, Associate, Mardela Springs, MD

### ***In memory of SGT John Dolan, C/116***

Piper, Samuel M., Post 94, HHC/1/115, Longwood, FL  
 Post 78 Cresap's Rifle, Frederick, MD

### ***In memory of Claude L. Clemson***

### ***In memory of Howard J. Smith, Jr.***

Rush, J. Warner, Post 94, Associate, Waretown, NJ  
 Schaefer, Gary B., Post 94, Associate, Fairport, NY  
 Serazio, Bradley, Post 94, Son, Montrose, CA  
 Shaw, Richard, Post 94, C/224FA, Clarksville, MD  
 Sherburne, Douglas, Post 94, Associate, Fairfax, VA  
 Smith, Marsha, Post 94, Associate, Walworth, NY  
 Smith, Rufus, Post 94, Son, Gulfport, MS  
 Smolar, R. Blair, Post 94, HQ/3/116, McLean, VA  
 Stapleton, Rebecca, Post 94, Daughter, Lexington, KY

### ***In memory of COL James S. Morris, HQ/115 & HQ/116***

### ***In memory of PFC John C. Coulter, Jr. 29/DIVARTY***

Stapleton, Gregory J., Post 94, Grandson, Lexington, KY

### ***In memory of COL James S. Morris & PFC John C. Coulter, Jr.***

Sternberg, Abe, Post 94, HHC/1/115, Coral Springs, FL  
 Strizak, Charles, Post 94, Associate, Mt. Pleasant, OH  
 Talaber, David, Post 94, Associate, Woodbridge, VA  
 Taranto, Kevin, Post 94, Associate, Manhasset, NY  
 Thompson, Ralph, Post 94, Associate, Fairfax, VA  
 Turner, Colleen, Post 94, Daughter, Columbia, TN  
 Underwood, Joyce D., Knoxville, TN

### ***In memory of James R. Huffaker, Sr.***

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

### ***In memory of her husband BG Al Ungerleider***

Ungerleider-Martin, Annette, Post 94, Associate, Israel

### ***In memory of her brother BG Al Ungerleider***

Walhovd, Gary, Post 94, Associate, Janesville, WI  
 Welk, Angela, Post 2, Associate, Port Charlotte, FL  
 Zimmerman, Charles D., Post 94, HHC/3/BDE, New Windsor, MD

## TAPS

The following list shows names of known 29ers and their ladies or family members who died and their deaths reported from November 1, 2017 through February 28, 2018. 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

Barton, Jon, Post 2, SVC/175, Englewood, FL 10/21/17  
 Boyter, Roy J., Post 94, E/115, Shreveport, LA 1/17/18  
 Brown, William R., Post 110, HHB/2/110FA, Towson, MD 11/9/17  
 Clemson, Claude L., Post 78, A/115, Frederick, MD 11/19/17  
 Coffin, William E., Post 88, I/115, Salisbury, MD 4/8/17  
 Doombos, Donald, Post 2, Associate, Beaufort, SC 8/11/17  
 Glaser, John L., Post 5, HHB/111FA, Williamsburg, VA 9/23/17  
 Greenwood, Kenneth O., Post 78, A/115, Frederick, MD 2/2/18  
 Harbaugh, Lawrence W., Post 729, 729MT, Waynesboro, PA 1/24/17  
 Huffaker, James R., Post 64, M/115, Knoxville, TN 12/27/17  
 Irwin, Charles W., Post 85, E/115, Lancaster, PA 11/23/17  
 Johnson, Roger J., Post 1-72, E/175, Timonium, MD 9/4/17  
 Jolly, W. Wayne, Post 110, DIVARTY, Randallstown, MD 1/20/18  
 Keeling, John M., Post 64, Associate, Roanoke, VA 1/12/18  
 Klausmeyer, Milton J., Post 1-72, B/175, Parkville, MD 2/9/18  
 Mangels, Roger N., Post 110, Chestertown, MD 2/12/18  
 Manford, James W., Sr., Post 729, A/115, Hagerstown, MD 10/30/17  
 McAllister, Francis A., Post 1-72, D/115, Bel Air, MD 4/12/17  
 Mummert, Paul L., Post 729, A/729ORD, Waynesboro, PA 10/27/17  
 Newman, Edwin J., Post 64, M/116, Harrisonburg, VA 12/14/17  
 Riesett, Robert E., Post 1-72, HHC/1/175, Baltimore, MD 10/14/17  
 Ross, John K., Post 94, Associate, Washington, D.C. 9/17/17  
 Simmons, Welford, C., Post 64, C&M/116, Rockingham, VA 8/21/17  
 Smith, Howard J. Jr., Post 78, A/115, New Bern, NC 12/3/17  
 Young, James, C/175, Ocean Pines, MD 2/18/18

## LADIES

Bullock, Betty Jo, Widow, Westminster, MD 10/27/17  
 Damascus, Penelope, Wife, Ardsley, NY 9/26/17  
 Foxwell, Martha, Widow, Lansdale, PA 10/3/16  
 Hunt, Lillian R., West Chester, PA 1/31/17  
 Shawkey, Helen, Widow, Sarasota, FL 6/21/17  
 Slaughter, Margaret, Widow, Roanoke, VA 1/25/18

## 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 25 comrades and 6 ladies who have died and whose deaths were reported to us since our last publication.

We ask survivors, friends, Post and Region Officers to forward information, as complete as possible, on the deceased to the National Executive Director, so that we can include them in the next issue of "The Twenty-Niner" and in the National Reunion Memorial Service. This will only be possible with your help.

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

William S. Mund, Jr.  
 National Executive Director  
 441 Chalfonte Drive,  
 Baltimore, MD, 21228-4017  
 Telephone 443-529-4233  
 E-mail: duster197329@gmail.com

## Attention!

### Post Adjutants & Finance Officers

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

This results in the new member not receiving the latest issues of the *Chin Strap* and *Twenty-Niner* to which they are entitled. Email this information to Will Mund at **duster197329@gmail.com** or by telephone to 443-529-4233. To delay their addition to the mailing lists is a disservice to our new member.

Email addresses are an important tool in lowering the cost of sending the *Chin Strap*. We will now be mailing over 900 of them. With the increasing prices of printing, envelopes and postage, the costs will continue to rise. We are now emailing the *Chin Strap* to around 800 members. We feel we can increase that number and ask all posts to canvas their members for email addresses.

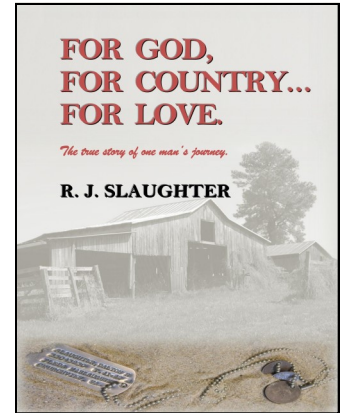
If any member gets a printed copy and would like to get it electronically, email Executive Director Will Mund at **duster197329@gmail.com** and you will get it quicker and help us reduce costs.

**Remember: Do not delay sending in new member information.**

Thank you for your cooperation.



*This is the last extract relating to Sergeant Dalton Slaughter's WWII experience of D-Day and the Battle for Normandy. However it must be said that the book is more than a military history – it is also a social history, a romance and above all, a personal story spanning the years 1929 to 1950. 'A real tear jerker', enjoyed as much by women as men, the book is sold at the Bedford D-Day Memorial and all the major museums and shops in Normandy. It is also available from the 29th Division at \$20 with all profits to the Association.*



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

### Chapter 44 The Dresden Shell

2nd July 1944.

Dalton pulled himself together and searched for Clayton in the vain hope he might still be alive. But there was nothing but soil where Clayton's foxhole had once been. He looked around expecting to see him walking towards him with a hot coffee, mysteriously prepared somewhere as he had done so often. But there was no sign of his buddy. Again he stared down at the crater expecting any minute to see smoke rising from a crevice in the earth. And as the minutes passed so he started to question whether Clayton's foxhole had been there at all. Perhaps concussion had confused him and he had been situated further down the hedgerow. But eventually denial was replaced by acceptance, acceptance that another close friend was gone.

The remaining soldiers could be excused for thinking that the only American tactic was to replace men as quickly as they were lost. The June casualty list for the 116th alone ran to over seventeen hundred men (killed, missing, wounded and injured). General Bradley might have been convinced that through attrition, the enemy would be defeated, but the mud covered GIs with the blood of friends spattered around them thought differently.

Despite retreating into Poland, with the loss of half a million troops and the reinforcing of their last defensive line in Italy, the German defence in Normandy had stalled the US advance. Superior field tactics, equipment and years of battle experience gave the Germans a huge advantage over the young American Army. As important, Germany was not burdened by politics or allegiances to big business and readily copied and continually adapted weapons according to need rather than economics. Thus young men continued to be drawn from the cities and countryside of the US and poured into the fields of France, to be cut

down and replaced, cut down and replaced, step by step, hedgerow by hedgerow.

As Dalton again looked out at the Martinville Ridge on the morning of the 2nd July, he was thinner than he could ever remember himself in manhood. Eating came a low second priority to avoiding death and mutilation. Cold rations, mixed with rain, sodden clothes, mud and carnage didn't give a soldier the best of appetites. With his uniform filthy, his face carrying the stubble of several days' growth and his skin unwashed for almost as long, Dalton presented the appearance of a renegade in defeat. The US front line was a mere twenty miles from Omaha and it had taken twenty-nine days to get there. They had now been in the same position since the 17th June, fourteen days of hell in the field of Monsieur Vasselin. To B Company's left flank they could see the few houses making up the hamlet of Bretel, in theory still in German hands, but really it was no man's land. Beyond B Company's right flank and over the ridge lay the town of Saint Lo which had been scheduled for capture nine days after D-Day.

Bradley was under enormous pressure to break the deadlock and planned another thrust against the ridge for the 7th July. Thus



Dalton Slaughter at age 23

as Dalton pulled his men together after the terrible bombardment, he was told to make his squad ready for a push past Bretel towards the Rau de la Dollée. They were to test the strength and resolve of the German defence in the fields below them.

Before the off, Dalton drank a welcome coffee that for once hadn't been prepared by Clayton and tried to focus on the latest orders. But his thoughts kept meandering back to better days, to Ivy Bridge and their hut by the side of the Exeter Road, to his five buddies sitting together in the warmth of the coke stove and to the optimism and the dreams they had once shared. Clayton would not be teaching history, nor would he be returning to England with his daddy and as Dalton recollected the aspirations of his dead friends so emotional and physical exhaustion overcame him. Colonel Canham's prediction at Ivy Bridge had seemed in-

comprehensible, but now 29 days into the conflict, almost two in every three men were, in fact, dead. Of Dalton's five good friends Paul Kennedy, Ted and Clayton were gone. Austen had been wounded on the beach and only Allbritton and Dalton remained unscathed. So who would make it back and who would be killed to make it four out of six not to go home?

Dalton knew that the NCO had been right when he described him as too impulsive and now he was too exhausted to even recognise it. Dalton was sure he would be next, for the 'optimistic Yank' was as dead as his best buddies; as dead as Staff Sergeant John Holmes, Smiler and all the others along the way. Snipers had picked men so close, bullets had passed within inches and shells had fallen barely far enough away not to harm him. How much longer would he last?

Some men prayed for the perfect wounding, one just serious enough to end the conflict for them but not too serious as to cause lifelong difficulties. A few had taken it upon themselves to self-inflict one, it was a court martial offence, but not a soul in the ranks would now condemn such an action, for it was driven by despair and a certain amount of insanity. Dalton's friend Richard Hatton shot himself in the foot - a cast iron approach to survival Dalton thought, but it didn't sit comfortably with him.

3rd Platoon left their battered dug in positions and crossed the first field before entering the second to edge their way towards the Rau de la Dollée. Richmond Bell, with his sharp hearing, followed Dalton and Sergeant Sorrow brought up the rear of the squad. Another guy who Dalton barely knew led Clayton's men. The second field was not unlike any other they had crept through or fought over, except that down in its right hand corner stood a water pump. The men had seen it many times as they peered by day and night into the region which had become no man's land. A hedge ran down to the corner where the pump stood and the southern edge of the field was bordered by a sunken track perhaps six feet wide. The GIs had patrolled the track and so too had the Germans. Its high sides with mounted trees and hedges had become an unofficial dividing line between the opposing armies; and together with the two or so fields on either side of it, formed no man's land. Leading a patrol along it one late evening, Dalton was convinced there were Germans on the other side of the hedgerow, just feet away from him, yet no one made a move on the other, as if content with the status quo.

The field with the water pump initially sloped gently downward, then steeper as it approached the track. An unusually small bank of earth topped with broken hawthorn lay at its edge and finally the men slid down into the sunken thoroughfare, which was muddy and overshadowed by vegetation. Spreading out along it and under the cover of a short lived bombardment of the Martinville Ridge, each man dug into the high embankment which formed the southern side of what in better days was a link between Bretel and other hamlets and allowed carts to carry produce from the fields. By cutting into the earthen bank the men would have a more protective firing position and on their push into the fields beyond, could always retreat to it should they encounter strong resistance. With the habits of farming days long past, Dalton drew upon reserves yet unrecognised to excavate a deep hollow, such that no one would mistake its owner. Just a few feet behind him standing on the raised field was the water pump, as if scrutinising

his work. The cast iron mechanism with its long pumping handle had for generations provided water for the farm animals, passers-by on the track and workers in the field. But now it stood waiting for those peaceful days to return, leaving the clear fresh water in a safer, unscarred world somewhere below.

With their positions dug into the bank it was time to move forward beyond the track to the third field. Pulling themselves up and over the bank they pushed through its dense hedgerow into the other half of no man's land. The platoon split up with each group moving down either side of the field. Dalton brought up the rear of the single line of men on the right side, religiously stopping, checking their right flank, checking behind and leaving several feet between him and the next man. They crept forward for what seemed like an hour, wary of mines, ambush and booby traps before finally reaching the hedgerow at the far side, crouching there and trying to quieten their breathing in order to listen for any movement on the other side. Short of dropping grenades over and broadcasting their position, the only way to check was for someone to take a look. Whilst others considered the infantryman to be expendable, good lieutenants and NCOs tried, in their small way, to prolong their stay of execution and it was the valiant platoon sergeant who took it upon himself to check. Slowly and with the skill of an old craftsman he placed himself so that he could see along the length of the other side. It was a brave and noble action and many held their breath until the sergeant withdrew his head. A few men however had simply sat on the earth, as if sick with war, ignoring the platoon sergeant's endeavours.

Not wishing to use their men as scouts, the platoon sergeant and lieutenant decided, against all guidelines, that this time they alone would move to the next hedgerow on the far side of the fourth field. "To take a quick look," the sergeant said.

The rest of the men were to provide cover as they moved out into the open. If the Germans 'let loose' then Dalton was told to consider moving the platoon back to the 'dug in' positions in the sunken track, for their current position would be too exposed.

Keeping again to the right side, the two most senior ranking men of the platoon moved slowly out into the fourth field. Their men watched, concern rising with the respect they felt and their questioning of authority diminishing somewhat. Three quarters of the way across the field they stopped for perhaps a third time, again nothing, no movement or even a hint of enemy presence. Dalton felt himself holding his breath and listening with the intensity he might have done had he been with the lieutenant himself. A butterfly skirted the hedge, passed over the head of the lieutenant and fluttered into the open field, struggling there against the early summer breeze, a breeze which brought the smell of a changing season. When the breeze died and the hawthorn leaves stopped rustling, the ringing in Dalton's ears from the long bombardment was the loudest sound he could hear.

The lieutenant and platoon sergeant moved on again, quicker now, as though they had been stalking a stray farm animal and were now making a last dash to grab it. Crouching down behind the soil bank on the far side of the field, the two men slowly raised themselves to peer through the roots of the hedgerow plants.

The German soldier must have watched the GI's progress, for he was now adjacent to the lieutenant and just a few feet of soil

separated them. With his trusty pistole at the ready, the German infantryman waited for the lieutenant's head to come into view, pointed the barrel at the face beneath the helmet and pulled the trigger. The single shot split through the preceding peace, the lieutenant's head jarred backward and he fell to the ground. The platoon sergeant fired off a couple of rounds through the hedgerow. Fire was returned. More rounds from the platoon sergeant, then nothing. Seconds passed, though they seemed like minutes. The rigid stance of the platoon sergeant softened, then bending down he grabbed the lieutenant by the back of his jacket and pulled him to his feet. The bullet had entered the lieutenant's mouth and gone straight out through his cheek. Holding his face and half staggering with shock, the lieutenant was guided by the platoon sergeant and retreated back across the field. The covering fire damaged no more than a few hawthorns and left bullets in the soil bank for French lads to discover in the peaceful years to come, but it did its job. Passing Dalton, the platoon sergeant shouted, "Country, pull the men back to the sunken track."

With the lieutenant and platoon sergeant striding away from him, Dalton was left to manage an orderly withdrawal, instructing some to provide cover and others to make their way back. He knew without question that he would leave himself to last. On being told to go, most ran and never looked back, leaving Dalton and a guy called Max the last at the hedgerow. Max was all of nineteen years old and one of the most recent replacement men. He had attached himself to Dalton and in so doing had likely increased his chances. Dalton finally told Max to go and then stepped up onto a dip in the soil bank and pushed himself through a thin section of hawthorn to view along the other side of the hedge. It was an impulsive action which left him exposed, an action driven by tiredness and a fear of being shot in the back. Max was running now and probably half way across the field, a few more seconds and Dalton would likely be alone. Slaughter the Sergeant, Acting Staff Sergeant and now temporary Platoon Sergeant looked to the right and saw nothing. Then turning to the left he froze, for hunched over and moving slowly away with his back towards him was a German soldier. The man's head was tilted downward and sideways to look through the roots. He hadn't seen Dalton, why should he have? No one would surely raise themselves above the cover of the bank for to do so would present a compelling target.

Dalton hadn't weighed up the risk. Instinctively and some might say foolishly, he had wanted to quickly be sure that no one was waiting to pick him off as he retreated. To end up face down in the soil with a bullet in his spine was not the end Dalton wanted.

The German soldier slowed down, perhaps he had seen Max. Above him Dalton watched and yet did nothing for he had never killed a man so close.

Shoot him, someone whispered in Dalton's head, or he will shoot Max.

What, me, shoot a man in the back? Dalton questioned.

You have to shoot him, you have no option, came the reasoning from his seemingly empty skull.

When the German stopped and took aim at Dalton's retreating young squad member, Dalton's finger finally pulled the trigger. But the finger did not belong to Dalton for he was no more than a

link in the chain of war, of that monster who rode defiantly on the actions of simple, well intentioned men.

Dropping back off the soil bank, Dalton stood for a moment disorientated. He felt sick, his body stiff as if it had momentarily been turned to stone. The fingers that once worked a hoe and caressed Hetty were still taut and curved around the trigger of his rifle. But the sight of Max darting out through the gate stimulated Dalton into action and he started running for his life. Sickness left and dread replaced it as he sprinted over the patchy grass and red clay soil, a dread that made the field seem twice as big, twice as deadly and the opposite soil bank an unachievable goal as in a bad dream, never to be reached. Then ten yards from the gate a thud shook him to the core. Not the expected rifle bullet to shatter his spine but a mortar that might tear a man apart. The first explosion was soon followed by others as mortars fell on either side of the sunken track. The Germans had good measure of the trajectory.

Dalton slid down onto the track and made for his own dug in firing position. He didn't trust the others and his own was just a few feet further. But occupy it he couldn't for Max was there. Yet Max was motionless, slumped against the bank. He had chosen Dalton's position in preference to his own. It had been the wrong choice - concussion had killed him. In the absence of higher ranking men, Dalton commanded the platoon to fire towards the enemy. He was convinced more German soldiers would be assembling beyond the far hedgerow.

The shelling continued in its accuracy and if anything became more severe. Exploding mortars issued shrapnel at over 100 feet per second, metal as different in size and shape as the faces of agony they caused. It tore through flesh like a knife and snapped bone like breaking a match.

The platoon sergeant returned to assume command but he didn't stay long. He was positioned several feet from Dalton when suddenly he spun round clutching his elbow, blood pouring down from where the shrapnel had hit him.

"You're in charge now Slaughter!" he shouted and without a pause, ran back to the medics across the field with the water pump.

Taking his responsibility predictably seriously, Dalton moved along the platoon shouting at the men to fire. Bullets and shrapnel splintered through the vegetation surrounding them, metal thudded into the earth and into the soil bank and sometimes into flesh. 'Shorty' was standing and firing as commanded but as he stood down to reload, a small piece of shrapnel imbedded itself in his neck. Blood started to pulse out from the damaged blood vessel to drench his chest as Dalton moved over to help the stricken private. Taking a rag he placed it against the wound and positioned Shorty's hand over it.

"Press hard and get the hell out of here!" Dalton shouted and Shorty didn't have to be told twice.

A shell closely followed by another landed near the water pump and the pressure waves caused the arm to rock and a trickle of water ran out from the ground below, from peace into chaos. It was as though an invisible farm worker, oblivious of the blood-letting, was summoning water from the depths.

Dalton again shouted at the men to fire, moving down the line as he did so. A shell hit a tree and pieces of shrapnel blasted

down and almost tore both arms off a man. Another shell exploded behind Dalton and a large piece of shrapnel whizzed past his legs and embedded itself deep in the hedgerow soil bank. Should they retreat, Dalton asked himself, frantically considering the options? But his men would be so exposed in the open. More mortars fell, another close to the water pump. With no trough the droplets fell to moisten the soil, running but a short distance to soak away and be gone, back into safety.

The shell with Dalton's name on it started its final journey, pushing through the still air of this Normandy summer's day. It may well have been manufactured in Dresden with steel from the Ruhr, hauled by train across Northern Germany, perhaps through Paris and offloaded at St. Lo. It had been carried to the field by truck, man-handled to the mortar emplacement and fed into the tube by fair hands to be fired into the bright, afternoon sky of the 2nd July 1944.

The farm boy's luck was finally about to run out. Dalton had just moved back to within 20 feet of the water pump when the Dresden shell landed.

A large piece of shrapnel tore through the inside of his right thigh, half way between the knee and the groin. It scraped past the femur and left a gaping large wound. His leg lurched forward from the impact and he stared in disbelief at his torn uniform and the mess he could see through the shreds of material. Instinctively he pressed his left hand against the warm and bloodied flesh and limped away from the platoon's position. Struggling up the low soil bank which separated the track from the field with the water pump, he made his way up what now seemed a very steep incline. He was in shock and for the first few yards could feel no pain. Crouched over with blood streaming over his hand to run down his leg and fill his boot, Dalton's pace was slow and the open ground made him feel even more vulnerable. Should he have stayed at the hedge or moved as he was doing? Chance! Was it a good choice or an impulsive one? But to go back was as dangerous if not more so than to continue. He had made his decision, a decision partly guided by the fear of bleeding to death.

Dalton maintained the path he had chosen, its end likely no different to any other. Another shell landed in the field to his left just as he was passing a gate and a large piece of shrapnel drove into Dalton's left leg just below the knee, smashing the tibia and fibula bones. The momentum of the impact drove the lower leg unnaturally around so that it swung up and grotesquely touched his right thigh, tearing ligaments and completely breaking the knee joint. Dalton fell to the ground. He was half way across the field on the more gently sloping section, but now he could only crawl.

He was frantic and confused. Why couldn't he stand? Heart stopping pain filled him to capacity. He was in agony yet still he tried to pull himself up. But despite the strength in his arms, he merely thrashed around like a confused old man cast down by a stroke. "CRAWL, CRAWL," he berated and thus reaching out and digging his fingers into the soil, he hauled himself across the earth leaving a trail of his own blood. He crawled on what was left of his joint, the torn flesh and exposed bone pressing into the mud as he tried to shift his weight forward. Looking back, he saw his torn frame, his left leg two thirds blown off, the mess that war

had made, his lower leg dragging along by the tendons which attempted to keep it a part of him, to keep the once wholesome young man whole. Inch by inch his pace slowed and each inch felt like a yard.

"God help me," he pleaded through the pain.

He thought of Hetty and wrenched himself on, he thought of his family and the land he wanted to farm and he reached another rut in the red clay field. He wanted these precious gifts so much that his tiring arms dragged his broken body ever closer to the other side of the field.

Dalton hardly noticed when the second finger of his outstretched left hand was sliced off. Though it hung down into his palm and impeded his attempt to crawl, he was more aware of another new pain that emanated from his back. A piece of shrapnel had entered him just below the shoulder blade and it was consuming his attention. He could see the other injuries but not this one. The unknown threatened him; how deep, what had it hit, how much blood was escaping inside?

The country boy was in a mess, he was done for and he knew it; the end of the field and the medics were too far, the next rut insurmountable. The shells continued to fall while Dalton's blood flowed from him, until eventually he was too weak to even hold his head off the ground. As he slumped down to fully embrace God's earth, his dog tag pressed into his chest and Hetty's lucky coins slid silently down its chain. Leaves in their prime, ripped from trees, fell down around him and blades of grass moved across his face, nudged now only by the wind.

## Chapter 45 The Aftermath

July 1944.

In the days following the 2nd July, the war moved away and left the field with the water pump at peace once more; alone with the hawthorns and maples, the ruts and the blood stained soil. The scars on the landscape eventually healed; the hedgerow grew back, the farmers levelled the sunken track and fixed their broken gates. In the woods, vegetation grew over the shell craters and the plough removed all trace of them in the cultivated fields. Perhaps in time and as the decades passed, the young Norman farmers would not be aware of the blood that was spilt on their land or appreciate the fear and suffering experienced behind the hedgerows. For the wounded men however and the families of the dead, such healing and return to normality might never take place, for humans and their bodies are far more complicated.

As Dalton's body lay unnoticed, the shelling gradually petered out to be followed by a transient, uncanny silence. Within seconds men responded to the lull, with orders and requests, running and shouting, jumping into vehicles and tearing off in different directions. Dalton's consciousness wavered and sensing movement about him, somehow managed to raise his head and stare again at what to him seemed like a great expanse of field. He could see GIs moving around and prayed to God that one would soon spot him. The pain tormented him, so much so in his back and strange how his finger hanging by a thread seemed more painful than both his legs half blown off. His torso felt like



lead, no way could he raise it, he was frightened, death felt so near. With no one coming even close to him, he weakly dropped his head and lay still once more, pleading to God.

"Hold on Country," a voice said close by. "I'll get the medics to you," the voice added in muffled tones struggling through Dalton's dampened senses. The voice was gruff, familiar even, it sounded like the staff sergeant from 4th Platoon, 'Toad' Padgett, but he was in no state to be sure.

Then, at some indeterminable time later, Dalton felt someone kneeling beside him, his skin punctured, his limbs manipulated and then being turned over to face the sky.

"What the hell you been doing sergeant?" joked the man from God as he attached the syringe to Dalton's collar to show that an injection of morphine had been administered.

The sky turned black, back to light, then dark again and out of the shadow, a face finally formed.

"You've made a fine mess of this field," said the man with the heavenly face and caring hands.

Dalton tried to speak but no sound came and anyway, the medic was too busy to listen. He applied tourniquets in an attempt to stem the already excessive loss of blood, poured antibacterial sulfa powder over the wounds and then dressed them to offer some form of protection before strapping the torn limbs together. Hoisted onto a stretcher, Dalton was carried across the remaining few yards of the field in seconds; then on into the fields above Bretel which he had known so well and finally placed onto a jeep. With both positions on the hood already occupied by wounded men on stretchers, Dalton's stretcher had to straddle the front passenger seat and a rear seat.

"We don't do this for everyone," his saviour said, hanging on to Dalton to ensure he remained secure.

He was barely conscious as the jeep bumped its way along the track through Bois De Bretel, passed farm buildings and crossed a narrow road to reach the battalion aid station. As soon as the captain at the station saw the extent of Dalton's wounds he transferred him to the divisional field hospital; a longer but more comfortable journey in one of the medical battalion's ambulances.

Dalton couldn't remember arriving but arrived he had for next to his bed, beneath the canvas hospital tent stood a doctor whose face he recognised; they had sat together and talked for a while when they were first drafted at the 5th Regiment Armory, Baltimore in 1941. Noticing Dalton's regained consciousness, the doctor said, "You'll be ok Slaughter."

The blood transfusions were doing their job but the morphine was still strong in his veins and Dalton felt deadily tired. He wanted to check to see if he still had legs but the effort was too great.

"Don't go anywhere, we'll operate as soon as we can," the Doctor joked, leaving to check the next man in the row of cots.

The humour suppressed some of Dalton's fear and he slipped away to a field of corn. The shoots were several inches proud of the soil and two strong legs supported him as he hoed all day with the warm sun on his bare, unblemished, sun tanned back.

"Hey Slaughter, you saved my life," Shorty called out sometime after Dalton returned from theatre.

"Shame!" said the platoon sergeant from a distant bed and Dalton knew then that he was back in good company.

The field hospital was busy and the men lying there had every



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

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

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

conceivable wound war can inflict on the fragile human frame; but whatever their physical state, mentally they had all changed. For some it would be possible to build a new life or even return to their old, but could a young man without limbs or eyes realise his dream? Could a woman marry a man who was sickened by the sight of himself and would wives still love them?

*This concludes our presentation of excerpts from  
"For God, For Country ... For Love."*

*We thank Mr. R. D. Slaughter for  
allowing us to publish his work.*

*William S. Mund, Jr., Editor*

## Notice to our Readers

Current copyright laws prevent the Editorial Staff of the *Twenty-Niner* from reprinting any articles and/or photographs that have already been published in other publications such as newspapers or magazines. Please do not submit these articles for publication in the *Twenty-Niner*.

## Army Meritorious Unit Commendation

(Continued from page 1)

exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services for at least six continuous months during the period of military operations against an armed enemy. The unit must display such outstanding devotion and superior performance of exceptionally difficult tasks as to set it apart and above other units with similar missions.

"The thing that is most incredible about it is that we were notified less than four months after the deployment," Ortnier added. "That is the fastest I've ever seen a MUC awarded. What that tells me is that when our write up went to the board to get approved, it took no time at all. They approved it on the spot. That says something about the great job you did and the fact it's still recognized in the Army at the highest levels what you all accomplished on this deployment."

The citation was signed Aug. 3, 2017, by Acting Secretary of the Army Ryan McCarthy and reads, *"During the period of 4 December 2016 to 13 July 2017, Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 29th Infantry Division served with distinction and unmatched professionalism in support of Operations Spartan Shield and Inherent Resolve. The unit distinguished itself in the execution of mission command operations over 5 brigades and over 10,000 Soldiers comprising Task Force Spartan in Kuwait and Jordan. They played a pivotal role in the performance of the Operation Spartan Shield mission by promoting regional stability and building partner capacity amongst coalition forces, resulting in increased security across the area of responsibility. Headquarters and Headquarters Battalion, 29th Infantry Division's outstanding performance of duty is in keeping with the finest tradition of military service and reflects distinct credit upon themselves, the Army National Guard and the United States Army."*

*From 29th ID Staff Reports*

### Donation Notice

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

### 29th Division Association

Our bank is no longer accepting checks made payable to the *Twenty-Niner Sustaining Fund*. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

## French Legion of Honor Recipients

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

**Mattison, Wallace T.**

I/115th Infantry  
Pownal, Vermont  
Post 93

### Legion of Honor Recipients

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

29th Division veterans who have received this award must submit the following information to the address listed below:

Name:

Unit served in:

Current address (City and State):

Post number:

Date award was received:

William S. Mund, Jr.  
441 Chalfonte Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21228  
[duster197329@gmail.com](mailto:duster197329@gmail.com)

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

**Be sure to check out our  
new and improved website at:  
[www.29thdivisionassociation.com](http://www.29thdivisionassociation.com)**



## Endangered artifact preserved by the National D-Day Memorial

It's a unique document, signed by a number of 29th Division soldiers on the eve of D-Day; a true glimpse back in history. Now it's been recognized as one of Virginia's Top Ten Endangered Artifacts by the Virginia Association of Museums. The document, Bob Slaughter's Order of the Day, is in the collection of the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA.

On June 6, 1944, hours before embarking on the invasion of Normandy, the greatest amphibious assault of WWII, American soldiers, sailors and airmen received a special message from their commander, Gen. Dwight Eisenhower. The printed "pep talk" informed the men that they were "about to embark upon the great crusade" and enjoined them that "we will accept nothing less than full victory." Known as the Order of the Day, the D-Day message was one of the most important military documents in US history.

Few of the men that day, facing the biggest fight of their lives, thought to save their copies of the Order of the Day. But John Robert "Bob" Slaughter, of Co. D, 116th Infantry Regiment, realized the historic nature of the document and of the battle they were about to fight. He circulated

through his company and had his buddies sign their names to his copy; then he folded it into a plastic bag and tucked it into his wallet. He carried his Order of the Day through the rest of his time in service, and afterwards described it as his "most treasured souvenir of the war."

Of the 75 men who signed Slaughter's Order that night, eleven would be dead within hours on Omaha Beach. Eleven others would give their lives as the 29th fought through France and into Germany.

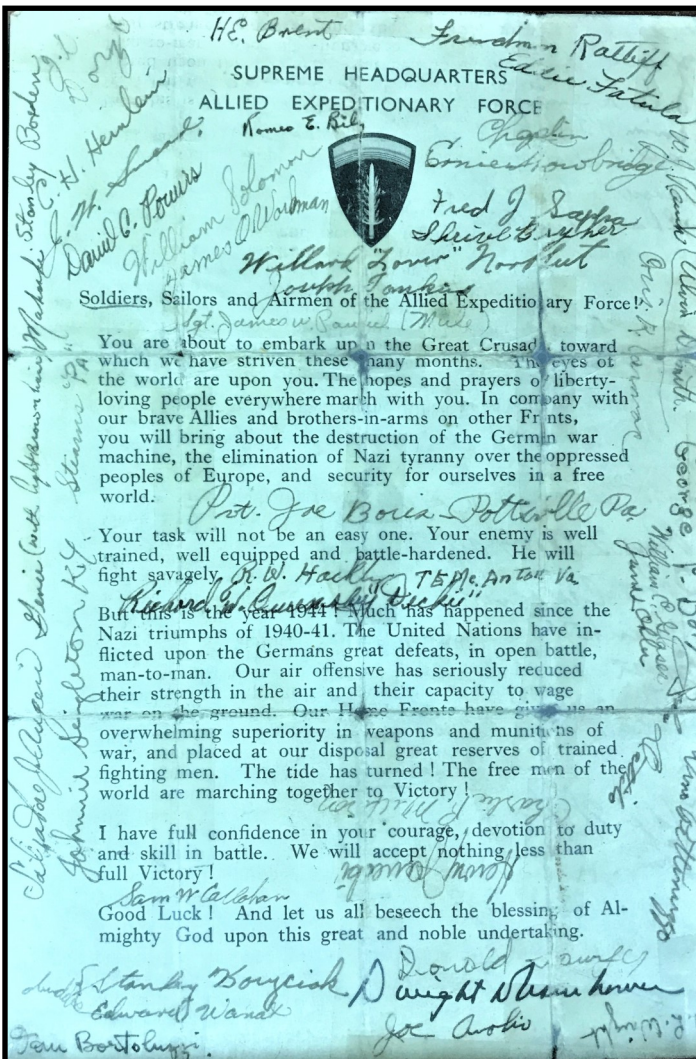
Slaughter went on to become the founder of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation, and perhaps the best-known D-Day Veteran in the nation. He died in 2012. "This little scrap of paper is one of the most significant items in our collection," said John Long, Education Director for the National D-Day Memorial. "Few original copies of Ike's Order survive, and fewer with the signatures of D-Day participants."

"It's chilling to hold Bob's document and think about what it took to get it across that beach, and that for eleven of the men it was probably the last time they wrote their name."

The Order is, however, in very fragile shape. Printed on inferior wartime paper, it literally endured months of battlefield conditions. Creased, torn, faded and unfortunately repaired with scotch tape, this highly significant artifact stands in great need of conservation. "The rarity and historical significance of Bob's Order of the Day make it imperative to preserve this endangered artifact," noted Long. "It's a testament to one of the most important battles of the 20th Century and to the men who fought it."

The Slaughter Order of the Day finished in a respectable fourth place statewide in online voting for nominated artifacts in January. That qualified it for a \$500 preservation grant from the Virginia Association of Museums, thanks to support of the program from the Blanford-Rees Foundation. The National D-Day Memorial continues to solicit funds to cover the rest of the costs of conserving this priceless document. Contact [www.dday.org](http://www.dday.org) to contribute and to learn more about the upcoming commemoration for D-Day on June 6. The guest speaker will be Pat Waters, the grandson of General George S. Patton Jr.

Article by John Long, Director of Education, D-Day Memorial



# The Long Fight for Membership

For many years, the Association has struggled to recruit new members to offset the slow and steady loss of our WWII members of the “Greatest Generation”.

Much of this was brought into focus during the National Executive Director meeting in January, as the new National Financial Officer, Bob Jones, talked about the slow and steady decline in per capita dues due to the loss of membership from year to year.

There are different ways the Association can slow the decline in per capita dues – more donations to National (such as the very generous one by the estate of PNC Cook), a raising in per capita dues, and the slowing down of the donations made by the Association toward other 501c(3)s.

While all of these will be considered, the best way to fix the problem and make the Association very strong for years to come is to grow the membership.

## Nucleus of the Association

The Association has 3 main sources from which to recruit and grow – and all should be cultivated for members – soldiers who served in the 29th or their lineage units, the family members of those that have served in the 29th Division, and those that love the 29th and its history, without ever having served in the Division itself. There is no great example of the third category as our distinguished National Historian, Joseph Balkoski.

The Association must continue to aggressively try to recruit from all three of those sources. The Posts have been very good at trying to recruit existing units within the 29th family, with notable successes with Post 64 and Post 116 toward the 116th BCT, Post 85 and the 29th Combat Aviation Brigade, Post 48 and the 29th MPs, and Post 88 with a number of units across Maryland’s Eastern Shore. Post 58 was developed specifically to honor and recruit the former members of the 175th Infantry that didn’t drill at the 5th (especially Dundalk) and the current members of the 175th Infantry. There are many other examples and these are but a few.

We discovered 2 things discouraged people from joining – their perception of whether they were eligible for membership, and the inability of a person to attend a post meeting made them think they were not wanted.

## What We have Done

The Association has stepped up its game in recent years to give the posts more tools to recruit. It is much easier for

members to join and the younger folks can now join using credit or debit cards since checks are rarely used by anyone under 50 anymore.

The traveling display is being used at major events such as the 175th Infantry Pass and Review and the 116th BCT Annual Muster. Post 48 just ran a big event using the traveling display in honor of National History Day in Carroll County, Maryland and Post 78 is planning something similar for Frederick County.

The creation of the documentary, 29th Let’s Go – A Video History of the 29th Division, has enabled us to tell the story on the internet (through *YouTube* and being hosted on our website) to several thousands of people that didn’t know it existed, and perhaps didn’t even know the 29th Division existed. It has been shown to the Maryland National Guard Retired Leader’s Conference, the 116th Muster’s World War I Symposium, and the entire command staff of the 29th Division shortly after their return from the Middle East.

We have tried to streamline recruiting through the website even more, with a lot of changes in the last month. It is a lot more user friendly toward those visiting the site, with subtle changes such as “Membership” becoming “Joining the Association” and welcoming people that are interested in the 29th, regardless of whether they served in the blue and gray, to join the Association and help us tell the history.

The photos have been updated, the role of the Association in keeping the history alive, and the importance of joining to allow us to tell that history has all been rewritten. The website also clarifies that only a small portion of our membership can or attend actual meetings, so that that perception does not discourage someone from joining. It also emphasizes how important each potential group of members is important – currently serving, people who served in the 29th, and all those that just love the 29th and want to keep it history alive.

## What’s Next

We have started to actually advertise on *Facebook* and make it easier for people using *Google* to find the Association and hear our story.

The NEC approved \$1,600 to allow us to run some of these campaigns. They will take time and like all campaigns, some will succeed and some will not but no one will be able to accuse us of sitting pat while the membership slowly declines.

The first campaign took several weeks and reached a number of groups on *Facebook* having to do with the National Guard, the Mid-Atlantic States and several groups associated with the military. It reached 15,000 people very quickly and nearly 200 more people started following the Association page on *Facebook* – allowing us to reach them every week with new posts and updated news on what the Association is doing.

The homepage was rewritten so that people searching for things such as Omaha Beach, D-Day, or Meuse-Argonne will find the Association page much easier.

In conjunction with our excellent webmaster, Neil Ungerleider, we will be launching additional phases of the campaign in the next few weeks, reinforcing those things that seem to be working and adjusting the areas that didn't seem to have traction.

We are optimistic that there will be enough tools out there for the posts and National to recruit – the traveling display, the documentary, an updated membership form that is in the *Chin Strap* and the *Twenty-Niner* and ads



**A quick snapshot of the effects of the campaign after only one week.**

on the internet that will draw people to us (and get them to join) that might not of known we existed, or that they were eligible to join.

### What You Can Do

There are a number of ways you can help grow the Association.

1. You can direct people to our *Facebook* page, you can direct people to the video on the internet – just search for *29th Let's Go – A Video History* and you will find it. The more people who belong to the page, the more people who like the documentary, make it easier for everyone else to find the page even if they don't know we exist.

2. Spread the word – let your family know the Association exists. Get a copy of the documentary to your local schools and libraries – we will supply them for free to libraries, schools, universities and military units. Just contact me if you want us to send them a copy.

3. Recruit – this sounds simple but it is the best thing you can do. Talk to someone you served with in the 29th and get them to join. Talk to a family member of one of the World War II veterans and ask them to join. If you live and breathe the blue and gray, get one of your kids into the Association. Everyone needs to think about who will make up the 29th 10 and 20 years from now – it needs to be our family members and the descendants of those that served. If everyone recruited one single person into the Association – we will be larger than we have been in many years.

*PNC David Ginsburg, Chairman, Futures Committee*

Performance for Your Post		
18,060 People Reached		
1,002 Reactions, Comments & Shares <i>i</i>		
839 Like	765 On Post	74 On Shares
50 Love	47 On Post	3 On Shares
3 Wow	3 On Post	0 On Shares
1 Sad	1 On Post	0 On Shares
29 Comments	25 On Post	4 On Shares
80 Shares	79 On Post	1 On Shares

**The first run of the Facebook ad – reaching 18,000 people in only one week**



## 429th BSB trains at Iowa's Sustainment Training Center for A.T.

CAMP DODGE, Iowa — Approximately 200 Soldiers assigned to the Virginia National Guard's 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team spent two weeks in January training at the Sustainment Training Center at Camp Dodge, Iowa.

Soldiers from Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Companies made the trek to icy Iowa, along with a few Soldiers and leaders from the Headquarters Company.

"We are here focusing on squad-level training proficiencies," explained Lt. Col. Christopher Guillory, battalion commander for the 429th BSB. He said taking the battalion to Iowa aimed to get Soldiers out of their normal training routine.

"It gets old and redundant," Guillory said. "This takes them out of their comfort zone and allows them to train on their individual proficiencies, build together as a squad and as a team in an environment that they're not used to."

In addition to providing Soldiers a new place to train, Guillory also praised the training environment at STC.

"One of the things I love about this opportunity to come out here, is that we fall in on a pre-existing set-up," he said, explaining that the Soldiers were able to fall in on equipment and training environments and get to work almost immediately. For maintainers, that meant jumping right into fixing vehicles and equipment, sometimes picking up where previous units had left off, while Alpha Company, the unit's distribution

company, immediately took possession of a warehouse and began working live transactions

"I want them to be proficient in setting up a command post, but this allows them to focus on the individual tasks

that they need to focus on at the company and Soldier level," Guillory explained. "This lets them focus on the training tasks, as opposed to setting up to do those tasks."

Within the battalion, Alpha Company serves as a distribution company, and includes a transportation platoon capable of moving and delivering logistics packages, or LOGPACS, a water and fuel platoon, and a platoon capable of manning supply support activities, as well as a headquarters element.

"STC allows us to operate across all spectrums that the company can fulfill," said Sgt. 1st Class Chris Harris, a truck master and readiness noncommissioned officer with Alpha Company, 429th BSB. "They're able to basically fall in on a warehouse, for instance, and the transportation platoon falls in on an actual vehicle set and it allows them to operate almost in a deployment mode."

STC is the only training site in the country where visiting units can work a live SSA facility. Upon arrival, Alpha Company Soldiers signed for the facility and all of its equipment and then got to work receiving, issuing and shipping inventory as well as managing the inventory.

Harris explained that only part of the training that wasn't live, was the LOGPACS hauled by the transportation platoon. Otherwise, all Alpha Company operations were real-life.

"It's been very busy, but I think overall the unit is

getting its hands around what we have to do, what the standards are in the eyes of STC, and we're getting better every day," Harris said.

Bravo Company, 429th BSB is a maintenance company and includes an automotive section with Soldiers who conduct basic maintenance on vehicles, a base support section with Soldiers who specialize in working on weapons systems, ground support equipment like generators, allied trade specialists, and a communications and electronics section.

"They have everything you can imagine here, as far as what the Soldiers need, and resource-wise they have excellent instruction from the cadre," said 1st Lt. Jeremiah Fowler, executive officer for Bravo Company. "It's a great training environment because you have



**Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to Bravo Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conduct maintenance Jan. 17-18, 2018, during their two-week annual training at the Sustainment Training Center at Camp Dodge, Iowa. (U.S. Army National Guard Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Terra C. Gatti)**

each of the companies doing their own tasks, but we're all integrated at the same time, and it's good to get that external evaluation as well from an outside source."

Input from external cadre was an additional benefit of conducting the training at Camp Dodge, according to Guillory. "It's very focused training and it's different when you have an external observer/controller monitoring training, rather than the NCO you're comfortable working with."

Fowler emphasized the training value of STC and said the feedback from Soldiers had been excellent. He said training at STC allowed many of the Soldiers assigned to Bravo Company to train on equipment they might not get to see at home station during a typical drill weekend or annual training period.

"All the feedback we've gotten from our Soldiers is that they're getting to perform all the duties and tasks that otherwise they might not get to do on a daily basis, so that's been great," Fowler said.

The 429th BSB's Charlie Company, called Charlie Med, is made up of medical support personnel. During their time in Iowa, Soldiers assigned to Charlie Med trained at the Medical Sustainment Training Center, or MSTC, and also supported civilian



**Virginia National Guard Soldiers assigned to Alpha Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team prepare to haul logistics packages Jan. 17-18, 2018 at the Sustainment Training Center at Camp Dodge, Iowa.**

providers at Broadlawns Medical Center in Des Moines, Iowa.

For the company's combat medics, the training focus was on recertifying their skills.

"Every two years we have to recertify," explained Sgt. Alexandra Hawes, a combat medic and administrative NCO in Charlie Med. "It goes over our basic skills and then the final day or days, we validate and go through a scenario to ensure we know our skills."

Skills covered by the medics included treating a casualty for all manner of injuries, including burns, gunshot wounds, chest wounds, broken bones and missing limbs, as well as administering an IV.

Hawes explained that the training they get in Virginia is good, but that the MSTC site provided an additional element of realism to their training, one they can't get at home, with state-of-the-art interactive dummies the medics are required to treat.

"It's like a real person," she said.

"They talk, they have a pulse, their eyes move, so it's just more realistic."

The training received by Charlie Med Soldiers was exactly what the battalion commander was looking for in taking his troops to Iowa.

"I think the Soldiers enjoyed it, and it was different from what they were used to," he said. "They're getting the training value that we're looking for out of this and it has allowed them to do things that they don't normally get to do, especially the medics."

In addition to Alpha, Bravo and Charlie Companies and the unit's leadership, food service specialists from the battalion headquarters also attended the training in Iowa and served up two hot meals for the battalion every day.

"The food has been really good," Hawes said.

In addition to cooking a new environment, the cooks also had to contend with different food vendors who challenged the food service team with different food supply methods.

"Ultimately, for some of these guys, this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to come out here and train," Guillory said of the battalion's time in Iowa, explaining that many Soldiers within the battalion had never left the state for training. "This is great for retention and for the organization overall."

*Article and all photos by  
By SFC Terra Gatti*



**Medics assigned to Charlie Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team conduct recertification training on their medic skills during the unit's annual training Jan. 17-18, 2018, at the Sustainment Training Center at Camp Dodge, Iowa.**



**Food service specialists assigned to Headquarters Company, 429th Brigade Support Battalion, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team prepare dinner for more than 200 of the unit's Soldiers Jan. 17, 2018, at Camp Dodge, Iowa.**



## Male Health - The Prostate

The prostate gland is an organ of the male genital tract that is located below the bladder with the urethra passing through it.

There are few problems related to prostate disease prior to age fifty. Before this age, the main illness involving the gland is infection. In the past, the gland's location and blood supply made it difficult to treat such infections and they required weeks of therapy. Now more efficient antibiotics treat these infections in days.

Prior to screening for prostate disease, the patient should receive information on the risks of screening; cancer progression and treatment, as well as potential complications and outcomes of treatment.

Risk of prostate disease is determined by family history, race, prior personal history and symptoms. Passage of the urethra through the gland produces one of the major symptoms of prostate disease. That is obstructive disruption in urine flow.

Screening may begin as early as 40 years for men at high risk. Most guidelines suggest screening at age 50 for those of average risk.

Prior to age fifty, the two major diseases of the prostate, cancers and Benign Prostatic Hypertrophy (BPH), are rare but do occur. Thus, at fifty the major screening for these illnesses is recommended to begin. The gland can be examined digitally by the health care provider. This is the digital rectal exam or DRE. Laboratory tests such as the prostatic specific antigen (PSA) level are completed as well.

Because prostatic cancer is generally slow growing, screening with a PSA blood level or DRE are usually recommend for patients who have a life expectancy of ten years or more. There is even controversy on the need for screening. The frequency of follow-up screening depends on the patient's age and the level of



*By the National Surgeon  
Dr. Howard H. Bond MD, FS  
Post #85*

the PSA. Guidelines change as more research is completed but currently suggests screening from every one or two years for men under seventy. Your family physician or internist is the best one to determine the screening frequency as part of a yearly physical examinations or cancer screening program. Many recommend that both DRE and PSA examinations be done.

Prostatic specific antigen produced by the prostate may be elevated above normal levels for the patient's age due to infections of the gland, BPH, or cancer.

The DRE provides information not only on the prostate but screens for the presence of colon polyps, fissures, hemorrhoids and blood in the colon. When examining the prostate, the health care provider evaluates the gland for size, hardness, and nodules in the organ. These tests give clues about the prostate's health.

After reviewing the PSA and DRE findings, the physician makes recommendations for further screening or referral to an urologist. This specialist will review records and make further recommendations for next steps (e.g. biopsy, CAT scan).

There have been significant advances made in the last twenty years in the treatment of prostate disease. Prior to the advent of drugs that are effective for the obstructive symptomatic treatment of BPH (enlargement), surgery on the prostate was a common procedure.

Now with proper counselling, the patient can make an informed decision on the treatment of either BPH or prostatic cancer.



### OPERATION SPARTAN SHIELD COMMEMORATIVE PRINT



### The Operation Spartan Shield Commemorative Print by Michael Solovey

For more information on this print,  
please contact CPT Scott Campbell  
[scott.edwin.campbell@gmail.com](mailto:scott.edwin.campbell@gmail.com)

# Past National Commanders

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## 29th Infantry Division Soldiers honored by Maryland and Virginia leadership for overseas deployment duty

FORT BELVOIR, Virginia – Maryland and Virginia National Guard leadership each honored members of the 29th Infantry Division for their recent overseas deployment during ceremonies Dec. 2-3, 2017, in Maryland and Virginia.

Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran and Maj. Gen. Timothy P. Williams, the Adjutant General of Virginia, as well as Virginia First Lady Dorothy McAuliffe, thanked the Soldiers and families of the 29th ID for their dedication, service and sacrifices over the past year at a holiday reception Dec. 2, 2017, at the Virginia Governor's Mansion in Richmond, Virginia.

On Dec. 3, Maj. Gen. Blake C. Ortner, the commanding general of the 29th Infantry Division, presented the Virginia Governor's National Service Medal to more than 100 Virginia National Guard Soldiers of Headquarters Battalion, 29th ID at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

Created in 2005 by then-Governor Mark R. Warner, the Governor's National Service Medal recognizes the service of the men and women of the Virginia Army and Air National Guard called to active federal duty since the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001.

Later that day, Ortner and Brig. Gen. Timothy E. Gowen, the Assistant Adjutant General – Army for the Maryland National Guard, recognized Maryland Army National Guard Soldiers of the 29th for their overseas service during a Freedom Salute ceremony in Cheltenham, Maryland.

The Freedom Salute recognized Soldiers, their families, employers and organizations that contributed significantly to supporting the unit during its deployment. The Freedom Salute Campaign is one of the largest Army National Guard recognition endeavors in history, designed to publicly acknowledge Army Guard Soldiers and those who supported them during their call to duty.

"These were great opportunities to recognize our outstanding Soldiers and the tremendous job they did," Ortner said. "The ability to demonstrate the attention and focus that our senior leaders at the governor



**Recently deployed Soldiers of the 29th Infantry Division receiving the Virginia Governor's National Service Medal from MG Blake Ortner, Commanding General, 29th Infantry Division for their service on federal active duty in support of worldwide contingency operations during an awards ceremony Dec 3, 2017, at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Marc Heaton)**

and Adjutant General level have for our Soldiers is not only great for the Soldiers but shows their families as well how important they are to our states and this nation. We couldn't be prouder of them."

In July 2017 two groups of more than 500 29th Infantry Division Soldiers from Maryland and Virginia returned home after serving overseas for more than seven months.

One group, Task Force 29, mobilized in August 2016 and served in Jordan where they conducted joint training and engagements with personnel from the Jordan Armed Forces-Arab Army, as well as other allied countries. While in Jordan the Soldiers of TF 29 coordinated and executed more than 150 security cooperation engagements and coordinated multiple exercises and subject matter expert exchanges, such as medical evacuation exercises designed to demonstrate the capability of Jordanian air assets. They also planned and coordinated multiple engagements with JAF female soldiers and participated in 13 exchanges focused on NCO duties and responsibilities in battalion and brigade command post operations.

In October 2016 another 450 members of the 29th ID headquarters entered federal active service and mobilized to the Middle East in support of Operation Spartan Shield. During the deployment, the 29th ID Soldiers provided mission command for joint training exercises and military-to-military engagements with partner nations to promote regional stability and theater security cooperation. Task Force Spartan conducted more than 1,300 military-to-military engagements, planned, and executed 15 bilateral and multilateral exercises in 10 countries, coordinated and executed 17 minor military construction projects, and completed more than 30 project assessments.

"It was wonderful to see Soldiers in the 29th ID with their families being recognized by the leadership in Maryland and Virginia," said Command Sgt. Maj. Ronald Smith, the 29th ID command sergeant major. "Our Soldiers did an outstanding job in both Jordan and Kuwait and stand ready for the next mission."

*By Master Sergeant A. J. Coyne  
Virginia National Guard Public Affairs*



# Memoirs of Paul Kramer's World War II Experiences

Before I entered the U.S. Army in 1943, I was living in Flint, Michigan with my mother and two sisters. I was working at GMC/Buick on the 2nd shift. I would usually get out of bed around 11:00 A.M. I had not really paid much attention to the news about the war, since it was happening in Europe and did not affect me. I was just working and enjoying driving my 1936 Chevrolet.

When I had turned 18 years old I registered with the selective service like all men when they become 18 years old. Over a couple of months, I had received a couple of letters which were signed by President Franklin Roosevelt which said, "I need you". I did not really read the letters and since I did not particularly like Roosevelt. I just threw the letters away. My dad had said Roosevelt was not a good man and had not really helped the country for the last eight or so years.

One morning after getting up around 11:30 A.M., I went downstairs and got the mail. There was another letter from Roosevelt and I just put it on the table and did not open the envelope. About this time, I answered the telephone and a man asked if I was Paul Kramer. I said yes and he asked if I had just received another letter from the government. I said yes, but that I had not opened the letter. The man then said he was from the FBI and the letter was my final draft notice and I had until 1:30 P.M. to report to my draft board in Flint. If I did not report, the FBI would be coming to pick me up.

I went to the draft board and was given a bus ticket to go to Detroit to the military induction center. A couple of days later I went to Detroit and was given a medical exam and filled out some forms. I went back to Flint and about two weeks later was sworn into the U.S. Army and given a date to report to the train station to catch a train at 11:00 P.M. The train went from Flint to Lansing where a lot of other men got onto the train. The train then went to Camp Custer, Michigan and arrived at about 3:00 A.M. The passenger train cars were unhooked from the engine and we had to sit in the cars for a long time and it was below freezing. Finally, a sergeant came onto the train cars and called out



names from a roster. We then had to get out of the train cars and stand outside for about one hour.

We were loaded onto another train and the trip to Camp McCain in Grenada, Miss took about 24 hours. We got off the train and were loaded onto Trucks for the ride to the army base. A new army base had been built to train the 87th Division and everything was new and the barracks were made out of tar paper. It was freezing at night and 100 degrees in the shade during the day.

I was assigned to the Signal Company with in the 87th Div. for basic infantry Training. I was given instruction on the radio, Morse Code, and switchboard operations from February 1943 to April 1943. The 87th Division was comprised of four Regiments: Artillery, Tank Units, and special needs companies, such as our Signal Company. In all, about 12,000 personnel were in the Division. Camp McCain covered a large area, that was mostly developed out of the swamp land with lots of mosquitoes, bugs, and snakes with mud everywhere. It rained almost every day with the heat during the day and cold at night it was miserable.

At 5:00 A.M. the sergeant would come into the barracks and walk through shouting, "Drop your jocks and grab your socks

on your feet." We were told to report to the chow hall for breakfast. We would then stand in line outside the chow hall waiting for the mess sergeant to open the door for breakfast. Breakfast was comprised of powdered eggs, creamed beef on toast ("shit on a shingle") and coffee that would make your hair fall out.

By 6:45 a.m. we had to be in formation on the drill field. Our Company Commander, a Captain, who wore his shining Paratrooper's boots, but had been rejected from the paratroopers and mad as hell about it all the time, would chew our asses out about everything we did wrong the day before.

He would order us to gear up with full back packs and be back on the drill field in fifteen minutes ready for an eight hour forced march. Some of the guys would pass out during the march and fall onto the road. We could not help them, but just step over them and keep on going.

Sometimes I would try to help a passed out soldier, but the sergeant would yell, "Kramer get back into formation." We would double time for five minutes, slow walk for five minutes, and fast walk for five minutes. Then repeat this sequence over and over again. Only about 60% of the company would walk back onto the drill field at 4:00 P.M. Sometimes we were only allowed one canteen of water and two salt pills for the day.

I remember a guy whose name was Charlie, who went on sick call every morning. He told me he wanted the Army to kick him out so he could go home, and that is why he complained about everything and said he was sick or injured. Eventually they did discharge him from the Army.

Sometimes we would sleep overnight in the swamp and we had to dig foxholes to sleep in. Several guys got killed when they dug their foxholes out in open areas and were run over by halftracks during the night. One time a soldier dug his foxhole near a road and was sleeping in his fart sack (sleeping bag), when sometime during the night a half track armored vehicle ran over his hole. He was crushed and did not survive. One night I was sleeping in my fart sack and felt something crawl

over me. I thought it was some other soldier, but in the morning I realized it has a big snake. I would always keep my sack zipped up except for a small hole to allow air in and out.

During my communications training I got into an argument with a lieutenant and he took me before the company commander. Things did not go well and I ended up telling the company commander to put in my record that I wanted to stay a private for the rest of my days in the Army. He said Ok. I think after being in combat in Europe for twelve months that that was what probably saved my life - just being a private. After six months of infantry and communications training I got leave to go home to Flint, Michigan. After this home leave I returned to the 87th Division.

There were German Prisoners of War, being held in confinement at Camp McCain. They were put to work on drainage ditches, roads, and repairing buildings. We would sometimes go past them on our field marches and they would holler at us in good English, "Enjoy life, you don't have long to live, our soldiers are waiting to kill you." For the most part they had the appearance of being very sharp, alert, and young. I was told they were captured during the tank wars in Africa.

We were given weekend passes to go into Grenada or if you had the money take a train to Memphis. If I didn't have enough money, I would borrow the money in order to be able to go into Memphis. You could take the Memphis Belle Show Boat on Saturday night for a four-hour cruise on the Mississippi River.

Oh boy, what a drunken orgy those cruises were. By 11:00 P.M. the band on board was too drunk to play. When the boat got back to the dock, I would stagger over to the Peabody Hotel and sneak up to the mezzanine and sleep on a sofa. I met a young woman who ran a woman's apparel shop and she invited me to her apartment to sleep whenever I would come into town.

I met a soldier whose name was Hirsh and we became friends. He was about six feet tall and had grown up in Germany and had received training in the Nazi Youth Movement for years. When he was about 15 or 16 years old his wealthy uncle who lived in Chicago arranged to have him

smuggled out of Germany through Switzerland in 1939 or 1940 and come to the U.S.A. and live with his uncle. Hirsh was eventually drafted into the U.S. Army.

One night, Hirsh and I went into Grenada looking for some moonshine. We did get the moonshine and Hirsh was taking it into the bus station to store it in a locker when he was stopped and arrested by the MPs in the station.

The man we bought the moonshine from had given the MPs a description of Hirsh and me. I did not go into the station, but sneaked onto one of the Camp McCain buses and hid under a rear seat. The MPs came onto the bus looking for me, but did not find me.

When the bus arrived at the entrance to the base, I exited by the rear door and walked down the highway for approximately ½ mile. I entered the camp via a large drainage viaduct which went under the railroad tracks.

I climbed a 10 foot-high fence that had barbed wire on it and then walked to my company area. When bed check was held early in the morning, I was all accounted for. Hirsh received 30 days in the base brig.

The 87th Division went on winter maneuvers to Kentucky and Tennessee in 1944, during the months of January and February. One night while on field maneuvers, we had the communication jeep dug into a spot up in the mountains..

We were supposed to handle communications between battalion and regimental HQs. We were getting no response on our radio because of our location. Hirsh and I decided to take the jeep and drive around the mountain and look for some moonshine and girls. We drove around for several hours, but all the cabins we passed that had girls or booze also had an old man sitting on the front porch with a shotgun across his knees.

So we batted zero on that trip. We got back to where our radio was dug in on the mountain side. Headquarters called us and wanted to know why we did not get their messages for the past three hours. We replied to them that because of a bad location we apparently were unable to receive and had just moved to a better location.

In March the division drove over the Smokey Mountains to Fort Jackson in Co-

lumbia, South Carolina. It was nice to be at a permanent army base where we had nice things like a movie theatre, PX, sport facilities, and U.S.O. with dances and food. In approximately three weeks Hirsh and I received orders to report to Fort Meade in Maryland, for deployment overseas.

Hirsh and I were the only ones selected out of the entire company to receive such orders. We assumed that we would be going to the Pacific Theatre. Needless to say, we were unhappy to receive such orders. We had to be at Fort Meade in two weeks. Therefore, approximately around the end of April, 1944, we left by train from Fort Jackson to Fort Meade. We arrived at Fort Meade and we were assigned to our barracks. We were told by our barrack's sergeant we would be deployed to the Pacific Theater and we retired for the night.

Sometime during the night the other soldiers in the barracks left and we were not awakened. Upon awakening in the morning and finding the barracks empty we went to the next barracks to inquire where everyone had gone. A sergeant said, oh you're the men slated to go to the European Theater Operation (E.T.O.). That was a shock and also a relief.

We were restricted to the base because of our order for overseas deployment. Hirsh said, "Let's go into New York City and have one last fling." I said, "Okay, sounds good to me." I do not remember how we got off the base.

In New York City we ended up at the bar and a night room at the Mayflower Hotel. It was Saturday night, so the place was jumping. We got quickly acquainted with two dollies (women) from Brooklyn.

We were all having a ball dancing and the women were buying the drinks. The MP's showed up at the entrance to the room and started checking military passes. Hirsh told the women to meet us in five minutes at the subway station two blocks from the hotel. He told me to follow him, since he knew how to exit without a problem in a hurry.

We went down a hallway at the back of the club and out a back door into an alley. We met the women at the corner and then went down to the subway station and caught a train to Brooklyn.

I thought I was going to the moon as we rode for a long time then had to transfer to another train and rode some more until we arrived at the women's station. Since the women lived in separate apartments in the same building, Hirsh said to meet him at 3:00 a.m. at a certain corner.

Later, after saying goodbye to my friend Sylvia Newberg who lived in Brooklyn, I met up with Hirsh. We walked towards the subway station, however, Hirsh saw a cab driver asleep in his cab at the curb. Hirsh opened the door on the front seat side, telling me to get in the back.

Hirsh got in the front seat and slid over and put his huge arm around the driver's neck and told him we needed to get to Time Square where military buses were located to take us back to Ft. Meade. The driver said "I am out of gas", Hirsh said, "You better hope you have enough gas to get us to where we want to go. The driver wanted to keep his good health and promptly started the cab and off we went to Time Square. We got back on base and in bed just before wake-up time and bed check in the morning.

Within several days I received my orders to proceed to Camp Shanks, NY, for deployment to England. Hirsh did not receive his orders and remained behind at Ft. Meade. I never heard from or saw Hirsh again.

### Shipped Out

I shipped out on an old English freighter converted to hold about 200 to 300 soldiers. Some Canadian Air Force Pilots and Canadian Air Force women were also on the ship. I was lucky and was assigned to be an M.P. on board the ship. There were about twelve soldiers assigned to be M.P.s and we were quartered in a spacious paneled lounge next to the top deck.

The rest of the soldiers, except officers, were located below deck in the hold. I was on duty from 11:00 pm to 7:00 am each night and was told to keep everyone from going to the top deck, except the ship's crew.

I also had to watch for German subs or their periscopes which was hard to do because of rough seas. It was raining hard and the ship was going up and down with fifteen foot waves with white caps crashing over the bow. This made it hard to see anything out on the water.

MPs were also to make sure no light showed from the portholes or door hatches. One night while on duty, I was standing under an open stairwell that lead to the upper deck when out of the dark came two people who started up the stairs. I quickly shoved my night stick through the open stairs and rapped them on their ankles and ordered them back down to the deck.

It turned out to be a Canadian Officer with his Canadian girlfriend. I informed them that they could not go up to the top deck. The officer became abusive, so I called for the Officer of the Guard, who promptly arrested them both. The Canadian Officer was put in the ship's brig for the rest of the trip and his girlfriend was confined to her quarters. Needless to say, I was not popular with the Canadian personnel on board the ship. It took ten days to cross the Atlantic to Liverpool, England, and the weather was stormy and rainy for most of the trip. The convoy had one sub attack, but the destroyers drove off the sub.

### England

After I arrived in Liverpool, I went by train to a replacement depot near South Hampton, England. We were confined to the camp except there was a place on base called Blueberry Hill, where Limey girls would sneak on base and meet guys at this location. I did not receive any real training for the next three weeks, just physical drills, and parade marches for visiting dignitaries.

One day near June 6, 1944, all replacements were told to fall-in to a formation. While standing at attention a colonel mounted the viewing platform. We expected this Colonel might provide us with something more about our fate than the camp scuttlebutt, which had been running amok over the past few days. Everyone knew that the invasion of France was imminent.

Approximately 500 men were in the formation and we were informed that we had lost our spec numbers and were no longer cooks, clerks, etc. and were now classified as riflemen for infantry line companies. We were dismissed and we went back to our pyramid tents (12 man tents) and everyone was very dejected and apprehensive.

After a short time, a runner from my company headquarters came to my tent

and I was told to report to the Company Captain's tent. I thought maybe they had caught up with me and my army sins. Upon arriving at Captain's tent, I found several officers including my Captain and the Colonel who had addressed the formation.

The Colonel asked me my age and how come I was in the Army, as he did not believe I was 20 years old. I was 20 years old, but looked 16. The Colonel laughed and joked that he was sure I was 20. After about 15 minutes of discussion about my age the Colonel told the Captain that I was to retain my spec number as a radio and switchboard operator when going onto the beach as a replacement.

I often wondered what prompted the colonel to choose me. I thought it was a very odd set of circumstances to be singled out of that many men to retain my spec number. The only thing I can figure, is it was because I looked so young and he knew what making everybody riflemen meant for their prospects of survival in the battles that lay ahead. This decision would later put me into the nerve center with the famous 29th Division Commander who would become a notable figure in D-Day lore.

Before the invasion we were always confined to the base, so had no real contact with the English people. On June 6, 1944, around 3:00 AM I heard the planes flying low over our camp for about one half hour. The planes were on their way to Normandy and the start of the invasion. A few days later we were told to get ready to move to seaport to board ships. We went to South Hampton by truck and boarded the ships for the channel crossing. None of the news of the invasion of Omaha Beach was good.

### Omaha Beach to St. Lo

The English Channel crossing was very rough with lots of rain and wind. When our ship arrived off Omaha Beach in the early morning of June 10th, we were told to go over the rail of the ship and crawl down rope nets/ladders to the landing crafts in the water at the ship's sides. We had not received any training in how to get into the landing crafts.

With the rough seas causing large waves the landing crafts would slam against the side of the ship then move six or eight feet away from the ship, then slam

back against the side. We would have to jump off the ladders into the landing crafts.

We were carrying close to 100 lbs. of equipment on our backs when we had to make this jump. If you missed the landing craft you would surely drown. In fact, one soldier did miss the landing craft and he was never seen again. They did not even try to look for him.

A small steel dock had been installed from the beach out into the water approximately 50 feet. We disembarked onto the small dock and walked to the beach. We were told to drop all of our equipment except our rifle, ammo, shovel, poncho, and personal hygiene kit. A quartermaster would pick up the other equipment. We walked single file up to the crest of a hill overlooking the beach, past a knocked out German pillbox and into a hedgerow field.

It was here, as I stepped over a young blond German soldier who had been dead several days that I realized what we were all heading into. I thought to myself at that time, this is what I've been trained for, but it was still a shock to me. It dawned on me this was for keeps and not to be taken lightly. I had only seen one dead person before this in 1935 at my grandfather's funeral.

We only went a short distance inland and were told to dig foxholes for our first night in France. There was a young Jewish soldier digging his foxhole next to mine. He started to cry and told me he had no infantry training in the states and had been trained at Fort Knox, Tenn., as a radio operator in tank warfare. He had a feeling he would be killed in a few days as a lineman in a rifle platoon. I told him to do what the guys who had experience were doing.

I learned about three weeks later that he was killed his first night up online. He did not follow the order to stay out of old German foxholes or gun emplacements since the Germans had these emplacements zeroed in by their mortars which they would shell as they retreated.

As soon as we were finished digging the foxholes, a sergeant came along and started handing out various assignments for machine gun squads and rifle companies.

I was told I was going to 29th Division HQ. We stayed in our foxholes that night and the Germans fired 88 artillery rounds into our field and shrapnel was flying all

around us. Also, German aircraft came over and made strafing runs on the beach behind us. The next day runners from the different line companies came and took their replacement soldiers to their new companies.

I was told to go several fields over and report to General Cota and Colonel Witte at the 29th Division Headquarters. These two officers were direct aides to Major General Charles Gerhardt, the commander of the 29th Infantry Division.

Upon arriving in the HQ's area, I was introduced to General Cota and Colonel Witte. Colonel Witte told me I was to dig a foxhole for him and one for myself close to where the division war room was located.

Each time we moved to a new location I had to dig two foxholes. The engineers had bulldozed out a pit the size of a small room. They had thrown heavy logs over it, covered the logs with a large tarp, and then pushed the dirt back over it with the bulldozer.

Branches from trees were used to camouflage the division war room. The engineers had made some steps down into the room. An 8' X 10' area in the corner of the room had been set up for the switchboard. Communication wires coming in from the three infantry regiments, tank, artillery, engineers, and anti-tank battalions were attached to the switchboard.

The large maps of the immediate Normandy front were on easels with lights over them in front of the general's chair. There were different colored pins and lines on the overlay for the locations of our regiments, battalions, and support units. Also, German positions, bunkers, pillboxes, etc. were indicated on the maps.

I was shown the switchboard and much of my time was spent operating the switchboard. I would do an eight to twelve hour shift on the switchboard. I mainly received calls from regimental commanders and occasionally from battalion commanders.

For special units like recon, artillery, and tank support, I had a list of who the colonels and majors were in charge of those units. If they called, I was authorized to put them through to General Gerhardt. In the divisional war room there was a strict screening of who got through to General Gerhardt.

When the general received a telephone call, he would not reach up and take the

handset off the telephone. I had to get up from my switchboard and go over to the telephone hanging on the pole alongside of where he was sitting. He did not want me to address him; I would hand the handset to him and announce who was calling.

General Gerhardt would either take the phone from me or just wave his hand. If he did not wish to speak to the caller, then either Captain Porter or Colonel Witte would take the call if they were available. Many times I would listen to what was being said by leaving the phone line (drop) open even though I was not supposed to listen to the calls.

Needless to say, I was upset about the dead people, the shelling, and strafing from German airplanes and now I had to meet and work for the Commanding General of the division and his G-3, Colonel Witte. I don't know who I was more afraid of, the general or the Germans.

When I first reported to the HQ's war room, I received a simple handshake from General Gerhardt and then was provided strict operating guidelines and routines as to how the general conducted business in the war room.

General Gerhardt was a very astute man and he reminded me of my grandfather. He was a very cold man and did not seem to have much feeling for anybody. He was a tough combat commander who had little tolerance. He had people under his command that he sometimes didn't have confidence in.

At times they got chewed out pretty good. He was not interested in hearing about casualties. He was interested in getting the job done and he decided how he wanted to get it done. He would tell Colonel Witte and Captain Porter and expected it to be done and did not want to hear any excuses.

On June 12th, around 4:00 A.M. one of our battalions had jumped off on an attack across a small creek and about an hour later, I received a call into my switchboard that Capt. John Whitehead wanted to speak with Colonel Witte or Capt. Porter. I listed in on the call as the Captain talked with Colonel Witte.

I could hear shells exploding around him and he was crying and screamed, "We're pinned down. I'm losing my battalion, my line companies are being ripped apart, I've got heavy tanks out in front of me. I want

to withdraw". Colonel Witte handed General Gerhardt the telephone. General Gerhardt took the phone and said, "Get up off your ass and move!" He then slammed the phone down. That gives you an indication of General Gerhardt's attitude in getting the job done. Captain Whitehead was killed that morning along with many of his men.

When we moved our division headquarters to a new location, I was busy digging a foxhole for Colonel Witte. Our area started to receive intense fire from German artillery. The hole was half finished, so I landed down in it, and here came Colonel Witte on the run.

He jumped in on top of me and with the shrapnel flying over us, he started to laugh. He said, "Kramer, you're going to have to dig faster or I am going to have to run faster." I liked Colonel Witte, he was a great officer and was General Gerhardt's right hand man all during the war.

Everyone, including officers, in Division HQ slept in foxholes except General Gerhardt. His sleeping quarters were in an armored dark gray horse trailer. Later in the war HQs officers and enlisted men would be able to sleep in the basements of farm houses or building in the towns we captured.

Since I worked in the Division War Room, I was present during many of the meetings General Gerhardt had with his regimental and battalion commanders.

The General's staff officers seemed to be very knowledgeable about the terrain, German troop strength, and deployment, when they had meetings with Regiment and Battalion Commanders to plan attack strategies.

I know they had a lot of respect for the German soldiers, officers, and their equipment. The German firepower was superior to ours from burp guns, 88's artillery, and fast moving Tiger Tanks. I was too young at the time to fully appreciate that our officers, many who would not survive the war, were so critically important to the outcome of the campaign in France.

One of my favorite commanders was Major Thomas Howie, 116 Regiment, 3rd Battalion, who was the decorated hero of St. Lo. He was a very friendly Southern gentleman. Major Howie would come into the meeting and always speak to me. He would always pat me on the shoulder com-

ing or going from the war room and ask, "How you doing, son?" Very few higher echelon officers ever did that.

Major Howie became famous during the attack and capture of St. Lo. The 29th Division knew that once they took St. Lo they would finally be pulled out of the line for their first rest since leading the assault on bloody Omaha Beach almost six weeks earlier.

In the early morning hours of July 17, 1944, as the final push into St. Lo was being planned, Major Howie said to his fellow officers, "See you in St. Lo." Major Howie was killed by shrapnel that day before entering the city, but his men saw to it that he arrived as its conqueror. As an armored task force swept into St. Lo, Howie's body was brought into the town.

His body, with an American flag draped over it, was placed on the rubble of the Church of Notre Dame in the city's town square for all 29th GIs to see as they finally reached their objective. The incident was reported in the New York Times and later on in Life Magazine.

By the first week of July 1944, the 29th Division had fought desperately through the hedgerows of Normandy, France, and was a bloodied and depleted fighting unit. There was a saying around the division that General Gerhardt actually had three divisions: one in the field, one in the hospital and one in the cemetery.

The 29th Division had a historian officer who collected data every day and recorded who came and went into the division command bunker (war room). That officer also kept track of casualty figures. He had to run these casualty figures by General Gerhardt before they were put down in the record.

Quite often these figures were changed because General Gerhardt felt the people stateside were not ready to learn how many casualties we really had. The 29th Division ended up with one of the highest casualty figures in the European Theater of Operations during World War II, but the division pushed on with its motto "29, Let's Go!"

After my shift on the switchboard was done I would many times have to do guard duty around the Division HQ's area. One night while on guard duty, another soldier and I were walking back and forth in a roadway that was about 50 feet away from

the Division Command post. We walked down the road in opposite directions and turned around and walked back and met in the middle. Around midnight when we met and were going to turn around, I heard voices not speaking English. It was very dark and you could only see a few feet away. I put my finger to my mouth to signal to the other soldier to be quiet. I went to one side of the road and the other soldier went to the other side and we hid in the hedgerow.

A German patrol of about ten men was walking down the road. As they passed my location I could see that a lot of the men were armed with burp guns. We did not fire on the German patrol because we were out gunned and German artillery would have zeroed in on our location and the Division HQ's would have been hit by the artillery fire.

The German patrol apparently was unaware that they were passing by the Division HQ's. We did not report to the officer of the guard that a German Patrol had passed near our HQ's locations.

I was on duty in the Division war room during a famous visit by the commander of the 9th Army Air Force, Maj. General Pete Quesada. General Quesada arrived in his jeep and came into the war room to see General Gerhardt.

He was wearing his polished paratrooper boots, dress pink trousers, and an Ike jacket with General stars on his helmet. He had quite a heated discussion with General Gerhardt and Colonel Witte.

They went over the maps and General Quesada could not understand why the air force had been called in for so much support of the ground troops. The Army Air Force had lost a lot of planes. After some discussion, General Gerhardt suggested that he go to the front line and take a look for himself. General Quesada took him up on it and left in his jeep.

Several hours later, General Quesada was back in a different jeep and his uniform was dirty and covered in mud. He was disheveled and not quite sure where he was and he did not even come in the war room to see General Gerhardt.

He returned to his Army Air Force HQs. We learned later that his jeep was destroyed by a German Tiger Tank. I cannot remember if the driver of the jeep was killed, but General Quesada crawled into a



ditch on his hands and knees. We were told that what had happened was that he was stopped at a checkpoint and told not to make a turn up a certain roadway, but he disregarded the advice. There was the Tiger Tank up the road and it blew his jeep off the road.

Replacement soldiers from England were not coming fast enough to replace the high number of killed and wounded that our division was suffering. I was assigned sometimes to go up and fill in for soldiers in one of the line companies.

One time I went forward to a French farm house that had been used to smoke meat. I was sitting in a room with some other soldiers and there was a large fireplace made out of field stones. One of the stones looked like it was new so I started digging around this stone with a bayonet. I was able to dig the stone out of the fireplace and when I reached inside the hole I found twelve bottles of wine. We all drank the wine and ended up feeling pretty good.

Several nights before we were able to take St. Lo, everybody in the division HQ, including some officers were put on trucks and taken several miles down the road and dropped off.

We took up positions in a trench line on a hill on the outskirts of St. Lo. We had now all become riflemen, put in the line to repel an expected German counterattack that night.

The German artillery was coming in quite heavy around our positions. Some of our tanks came down the same road and they drew a lot of artillery fire. Three or four of the tanks were hit and set on fire. General Gerhardt refused to allow the word counterattack to be used in his division. He felt it was bad for morale and replaced it with the term "enemy enthusiasm".

There was a burning farmhouse on the hill with a low stone wall around the farmhouse. Some German soldiers were by the stone wall. I saw one of the German soldiers get up and start running along the stone wall. Apparently he did not know he made a perfect silhouette. I aimed my rifle at this running soldier and fired and he dropped and did not move again.

This was the first time I had killed a German soldier. This was my second realiza-

tion that made me think that everyone played for keeps. You had no second chances here.

An officer appeared in my trench and asked me if I would go out through an opening in a hedgerow and find Charlie Company, which was supposed to have taken a position on top of the hill.

I went out, but could not find Charlie Company, but I did find one of our tanks burning up on top of the hill. I came back to my trench, reported the burning tank, and that I was unable to find Charlie Company.

I stayed in the trench all night and we did get German artillery fire, but no counterattack. However, someone kept shouting throughout the night, "Charlie Company over here". The soldiers in the trench line assumed it was a German ploy and the next morning that was confirmed. We were aghast when we reconnoitered up on the top of the hill to find most of Charlie Company had been burned up in their foxholes by German flame throwers.

I had seen the German emplacements and foxholes when I scouted the area before Charlie Company had arrived in the area. It did not matter how dark the night was, if you used one of the German dugouts, machine gun emplacements, or foxholes they could attack those positions because they knew their exact locations.

The Germans caught Charlie Company, who had apparently just got into those positions with flame throwers. Soldiers from the Division HQ were pulled out of the line and returned to their duties at HQ. I returned to working the switchboard and radio.

There had been weeks of heavy fighting as the 29th Division moved toward St. Lo. You could hear artillery and gunfire going on day and night. One morning, I walked down the two lane road that went to St. Lo. This road went down into a valley and up the other side of the valley. Over the hill was St. Lo and I could not believe how quiet it was and there was no one else on the road. There was no evidence that a war was being fought in the area.

One day someone came into the Division HQ's area and was looking for soldiers who were trained to operate radios to go on a special mission to St. Lo.

A special task force of three armored

recon vehicles, each with a 50 caliber machinegun was going to go into St. Lo. They needed a radio operator for each vehicle and were looking for volunteers. I was told that the volunteers would all be promoted to sergeants when they returned from the mission. I decided not to volunteer and as it turned out no one returned from that mission.

A couple of days before we attacked St. Lo, General Gerhardt held a party for regimental commanders and other high ranking officers.

A large tent was put up for the party. He arranged for some nurses to be brought up from the beach area. I am pretty sure this party had not been approved by the V Corp's HQ since we were still involved in heavy fighting.

There was a lot of drinking going on at the party and several officers got drunk. One Medical Corp. major who was drunk and was going to smoke a cigarette in a restricted area was told by a sergeant not to smoke.

The major was not going to follow the sergeant's suggestion, so the sergeant took hold of the major's arm and escorted him back to his quarters. I assisted the sergeant and we ended up pushing the major into his quarters. None of the officers from the 29th Division HQs staff ever talked to me about the incident with the major.

The 8th Army Air Force bombing was absolutely devastating to the German forces in and around St. Lo. As the bombing commenced we could feel the vibrations in the ground beneath our feet at Division HQ and a huge ball of dust and fire glow arose over St. Lo.

The first line companies to attack St. Lo following the bombing, found the German defenses incoherent and completely disoriented and for the most part unable to keep our forces from entering the city.

The Germans had for the most part vacated the defense of St. Lo and retreated a number of miles away to Vire and Percy. This necessitated our units loading up in trucks to follow. There was only one street open through St. Lo with nothing but complete rubble of buildings on either side.

The engineers had cleared a very narrow road with just enough room for a truck to drive down the road. As our truck went by the devastated Cathedral to my right, I

noticed the body of Major Howie with an American Flag draped over it lying on what was left of the steps of the Cathedral.

As we drove on the narrow two lane Macadam Road, heading to Vire, three German fighter planes began to strafe the trucks. They came in low and very fast, firing their machine guns.

The convoy stopped and all personnel jumped out and over the hedgerows on either side of the roadway. As I went over the side of my truck, I was struck by the rifle butt of my buddy on my right elbow.

This paralyzed my right arm and I dropped my rifle on the road as I dove over the top of the hedgerow as the bullets were hitting all around me. After the strafing stopped, we loaded back up in our trucks. Some trucks had been hit and were on fire.

Sgt. Labyoda had to pull our truck off the road to allow the other trucks to get by us.

Our colored driver (black soldier) had disappeared and the sergeant went looking for him.

About twenty minutes later the sergeant returned and he got into the driver's seat and we took off. The soldier sitting next to the sergeant in the cab asked what had happened to the driver. The sergeant replied that he had found the driver who would not return to his truck. The sergeant ordered him several times to return, but he refused, he was so upset over the attack. So the sergeant just left him there.

We drove into the small square in Vire and then out the other side of Vire, but all the other vehicles in the convoy had stopped in Vire. About one half mile farther down the road, we came around a curve and what a surprise! Crossing the roadway 50 feet in front of us was a German Patrol.

They did not fire on us and the sergeant

made the fastest U-turn of a truck I have ever seen and hollered for us to hold our fire. I do not know why the Germans did not fire at us since we were in a bad position and it would have been hard for us to fight back. We headed back into town.

I wanted to know where Division HQ was located and Sergeant Labyoda said, welcome to the 2nd Battalion, HQ Co., 175th Regiment you are our new switchboard operator. This was a complete surprise to me. I could only guess that my little truffle with the drunken Medical Major at Division HQ had caught up with me and that I had been quietly transferred out.

A lot of men in the 29th Division had been killed and wounded from Omaha Beach to Percy. Finally, the division was pulled out of the battle line for the first time since D-Day and given a five-day rest.

*To be continued in the next edition*

## Important notice to all members of the 29th Division Association

Over the past 6 months it has become quite obvious that many members do not know where to send their membership dues.

The following information is published so that members can send their membership dues to the correct persons/location.

### Post 1-72

William DeHaven  
139 Chestnut Hill Lane  
Reisterstown, MD 21136-3206

### Post 2

Sean Malloy  
22302 Vick Street Apt 212  
Punta Gorda, FL 33980-2063

### Post 5

John Lane  
340 Aragona Blvd.  
Virginia Beach, VA 23462-2702

### Post 29

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

### Post 48

Richard Stem  
12 Westmoreland Avenue  
Westminster, MD 21157-4420

### Post 58,

Dennis Pulket  
1181 Zook Road  
Atglen, PA 19310-1751

### Post 64

Jeff Banik  
184 Tanglewood Drive  
Blue Ridge, VA 24064-1417

### Post 78

Cresap's Rifles  
P.O. Box 1882  
Frederick, MD 21703-0882

### Post 85

Valerie Simmers  
5 Shore Drive  
North East, MD 21901-3327

### Post 88

Kenneth Wheatley  
102 Richardson Drive  
Cambridge, MD 21613-1130

### Post 93

Neil Ungerleider  
34 Maple Avenue  
Boxford, MA, 01921-1424

### Post 94

William Mund  
441 Chalfonte Drive  
Baltimore, MD 21228-4017

### Post 110

Ed Rodier  
13344 Cove Landing Road  
Bishopville, MD 21813-1102

### Post 116

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

### Post 175

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

### Post 729

Lantern Post 729  
P.O. Box 831  
Waynesboro, PA 17268-0831

# *In the Little Woods Behind My House*

By J. P. Hausermann

Date: June 7 1944

Place: At the top of Vierville-Sur-Mer draw, south of Omaha Beach.

Units in the area: 29th Infantry Division, US Army; 2nd Ranger Battalion, US Army; 5th Ranger Battalion, US Army; and 352nd Infantry Division, German Army.

*In the little wood behind my house.*

On June 7th, 1944, early morning,  
Hardly 300 yards from OMAHA BEACH,  
Nicknamed "the bloody one", because 3000 American soldiers  
Had been killed there whilst trying to land the previous evening.  
7 German soldiers were waiting:  
They had been given the order to defend...

*This little wood behind my house.*

That same day, in the morning,  
8 soldiers of the American army, who had hardly disembarked,  
Were given the order to seize...

*This little wood behind my house.*

The first attack was brief:

None of the German soldiers was killed, nor wounded,  
But of the American soldiers only one was not killed.  
It is this one who told me the story of...

*This little wood behind my house.*

In the early afternoon the American soldiers came back, many more of them.

The fight was fierce, atrocious, horrifying, without mercy, first with grenades, guns, then with bayonets, and in the end one-to-one.

Each one equaled his opponent in courage and self-sacrifice.  
9 further American soldiers were killed and there were casualties.

The 7 German soldiers were all killed. None would surrender.  
This is how 23 soldiers gave their lives in the execution of their duty...

*For this little wood behind my house.*

Most of these 23 young men, whether German or American, were hardly 17 or 18 years old. For a few moments of their short lives they faced each other in an act of anonymous heroism for eternity...

*In the little wood behind my house.*

Since then, sometimes in the spring, when daffodils are in bloom as bright and yellow as the sun in a blue sky or like the serene soul of a soldier in the paradise of the brave,

Some of these wildflowers have little red specks, like blood, and one cannot tell whether this is German or American blood because the blood of all soldiers is the same colour, and it is mixed in the soil...

*Of the little wood behind my house.*



J. P. Hausermann

Whenever I walk through it, I think of these 23 boys, but also of the 23 mothers who did not see the return of their child and of the future fiancées from whom Lady War took their beloved...

*For a little wood behind my house.*

My brothers and sisters, I am asking you to pray with me for all of them, for these 23 families united by mourning and grief but also in a justified pride in their son's honourable fulfillment of duty...

*In this little wood behind my house.*

I invite you here,  
Say that you come from the USA, from Germany, and we will go together,

United as the members of the same Christian family in peace to thank and pray to God...

*In the little wood behind my house.*

J. P. Hausermann  
Vierville-sur-mer  
F. 14710  
September, 1988

Translated by:  
Mrs. Francine Chedal-Anglay





The Little Woods Behind My House

## Excerpts in letter to Colonel Howard Bond from Mr. J. P. Hausermann

January 2018

Colonel,

I will never forget that 3,000 American soldiers gave their lives for our "LIBERTY" on our beach of OMAHA, about 300 yards from that little wood, because they believed in that ideal of "LIBERTY". Please, note as well, that, as a former Private soldier myself, I admired the courage...of these soldiers, whatever American, German. They accomplished their duty as soldiers, all of it, and nothing else in a little wood of a country that was not even theirs.

Quite often, when I walk across the little wood I start thinking of the last German soldier that had not been killed yet. And I wonder, had I been this German soldier, noticing that I was the only survivor, that my enemies were plenty, that my chances to survive were very few, if none, then, was it worth keeping up fighting? Wouldn't be better to surrender, drop my weapon and "hands up"?

He did not do it: he did not surrender.

What about me? In that situation, would I have done the same?

I often asked that same question to these men and women,

they are in the military: career men and women of all citizenships, whenever they answer my invitation to come and visit this little wood: typically, the place for a skirmish, compared to another much greater battle. And you? What would you have done? I never get an answer, but a great silence.

I keep thinking. I ask myself, if I had been an American soldier, watching this last German soldier come towards me, disarmed, with his hands up, that, mad and full of hate at this guy who had just killed several of my comrades, I would have shot him down immediately? Vengeance, hatred. It is so easy to aim and pull a trigger! Whenever I ask this question to those same visitors, whose job is to prepare and eventually go to war, I must say once more that, I get a great silence.

In both cases, each of the belligerents find himself alone... achieving his duty, all of it, but only his soldier's duty.

That is what war is all about.

J. P. Hausermann

I was Private soldier during 3 years in the 24th Bataillon de Chasseurs. Unite d'elite (like the 116th Battalion of the U.S. Army) heir of the Traditions of the Napoleon Guard's Battalion.

# Minutes

of the NEC II meeting  
held on 25 January 2018 at the  
Pikesville Military Reservation, Pikesville, Maryland

National Commander Grant Hayden called the National Executive Committee (NEC II) Meeting to order at 0930 hours. Commander Hayden led the attendees in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by the opening prayer that was offered by Chaplain Schildt. The group then recited the 29th Division Association Preamble.

Commander Hayden began by welcoming all to the NEC. Commander Hayden then asked for the roll call by Adjutant Valerie Hawkins. It was noted that a quorum was present.

The Minutes of the previous meetings (Business Meeting, 14 October 2017 and NEC I, on 15 October 2017) had been published and were distributed in the Autumn/Winter 2017 edition of the *Twenty-Niner*. As there were no corrections or amendments, these minutes were approved as published.

## Officer's Report

National Commander – Grant Hayden noted the list of initiatives that was distributed to the members present. He feels that membership could be improved by focusing on Associate members. He hopes to liaison with the Kentucky unit that is now a part of the 29th Division's 116th IBCT. Current soldiers of the 29th are to be recognized along with graduates of the various National Guard academies throughout Maryland and Virginia. He made some suggestions concerning our 29th merchandise that is available to our members. He said he would discuss more of his initiatives later on in the meeting under "New Business."

National Senior Vice Commander & Southern Region National Vice Commander – David Leighton reported on the activities and events that he has attended over the past several months. He said he plans to attend the Army Divisions Association FAM scheduled for May 2018 in Virginia Beach, VA with Executive Director Mund.

National Junior Vice Commander – Pete Hinz had no report.

Maryland Region National Vice Commander – Robert Jones noted the donations to the VA that we made recently. Funds were also donated to Normandy Allies in early January. He also spoke about how the posts are using the *Chin Strap* to keep their members informed.

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

Finance & Budget – Past National Finance Officer J. Brian Becker gave his final report on the 99th Annual Convention that was held in October 2017. He reported that the actual numbers show a net expense in the convention account of just over \$300. However, adjusting that amount for costs that could be considered an Operations account expense, the Convention essentially broke even. With the aid of a Power Point presentation, National Finance Officer Jones gave his report. He noted that NC Hayden had requested a 5 year projected budget to present to the NEC members. NFO Jones reported that our expenses continue to exceed our revenues and that if we continue spending as we are currently we will be insolvent in 5 years. He suggested ways in

which we could reduce our spending, mainly in our donations. A motion was made by PNC Ginsburg and seconded by PNC King to accept the Finance Officer's recommendations with the discretionary budget for charitable contributions of \$10,000 for fiscal year 2018. Motion was passed.

National Executive Director – William Mund said that he is the individual responsible for depositing all our revenues into the bank. He also begins the process to disburse funds to pay for our operating expenses throughout the year.

Membership – Executive Director Mund talked about his "End of Year" report that had been distributed to the members present. He praised Posts 48, 58, and 116 for adding new members which gave all of them over 100% dues paid for 2017. The total for the entire association stands at 97% dues paid for end of year 2017.

Chaplain – No report

Service – Walter Carter was not in attendance, no report rendered.

Surgeon – Dr. Howard Bond had no report.

Welfare – National Welfare Officer J. Brian Becker said he intends to send "Get Well" or "Sympathy" cards to members or their next of kin.

Historian – Joe Balkoski had no report

Sergeant at Arms – Randall Beamer had no report.

Property Officer – Franklin Shilow had no report.

Parliamentarian – Thomas Insley had no report.

Judge Advocate – Houston Matney said he has been in coordination with the Finance Officer concerning insurance issues and corporate organizational matters that needed cleaning up.

## Committee Reports

2018 National Convention – Commander Hayden reported on the planned 2018 convention to be held in Roanoke, Virginia on 11-14 October 2018. Trips are to include the D-Day Memorial in Bedford for a wreath laying and lunch; and possibly the Marshall museum in Lexington, VA. Post 64 will be handling the hospitality room. The current cost for the rooms is \$107 a night.

2019 National Convention – Senior Vice Commander J. David Leighton is looking at several locations for the 2019 Convention. He will be accompanying Executive Director William Mund to the Army Division Association's FAM in Virginia Beach in early May 2018 to research what is available at that location.

Futures Committee – PNC Ginsburg covered the 3 main areas that the Futures Committee has been focused on for the past year. The "Traveling Display" was at the 116th Foundation and museum in Virginia for a full year and has been at the 175th HQs in Dundalk, MD since November. Post 48 will be placing it in various libraries in Carroll County in the upcoming months. The DVD documentary has been distributed to all posts and posted on "You Tube". It has been viewed at the 29th Division Headquarters in Fort Belvoir, VA by 200 senior officers and NCO's of the division headquarters; the Maryland Retired Leaders conference; and the 116th Muster in Staunton, VA. The website is now being cleaned up and the Morning Reports have been added along with



the documentary. PNC Ginsburg entertained a motion to fund \$1,600.00 for membership advertising on Facebook. A motion was made by Bond and seconded by Balkoski to fund this effort. Motion was passed.

Grants Committee – Committee Chairman J. Brian Becker reported that no grant applications have been received at this time.

Nominating Committee – Commander Hayden appointed PNC Ginsburg to be Nominating Committee chairman for this year's election.

### **Special Reports**

Normandy Allies – NED Mund read a report sent to him by Walter Carter of Normandy Allies. In the report, a request was made for two donations totaling \$2,800 to Normandy Allies for a student and a teacher to travel in 2019. If Normandy Allies is unable to use those funds for its 2019 trip, it will keep them for the same purpose in 2020. This request for funds will be referred to the Grants Committee. Commander Hayden indicated he would contact Marsha Smith of Normandy Allies to make her aware of our new procedures for requesting grants.

The Twenty-Niner Newsletter – Editor William Mund said he may have to reduce the number of pages in the *Twenty-Niner* due to the lack of WWII personal editorial content.

### **Old Business**

Wreath Laying Ceremony – at Arlington National Cemetery and the luncheon following at Spates Community Center will occur on Saturday, 16 June 2018 beginning at 12:15pm. Commander Hayden will be inviting the "NCO & Soldier of the Year" of the 29th Division to assist him with the wreath laying. MD Region will provide a bus for this event.

Museum Gift Shop – Historian Balkoski reported that a modest museum gift shop has been set up in the Maryland Museum of Military History at the Fifth Regiment Armory in Baltimore, MD.

NEC III – Commander Hayden announced that the NEC III meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, 28 June 2018, in Building 612, Fort Belvoir, VA, at a time to be determined later. Buffet lunch will be at the Officer's Club for \$11.95.

### **New Business**

29th Division NCO/Soldier of the year recognition – Commander Hayden made a motion to invite and fund the NCO/Soldier of the year to the Arlington Wreath laying/luncheon and also to the convention in October in Roanoke, VA. Motion was seconded by PNC Ginsburg and the motion was passed.

Officers and Directors Liability Insurance – NFO Jones reported that we now have Officers and Directors Liability Insurance in addition to the General Liability insurance that we carry.

Commander's Initiatives – Commander Hayden talked about some of the initiatives that he proposes, to include some changes to the website. He asked Historian Balkoski to research the lineage of units of the 29th. He proposed that a poster be created for display in all readiness centers. He asked for photos to be taken of all our merchandise to be posted on the website, and a current inventory be conducted. Commander Hayden made a motion to change the name of the Grants Committee to the Awards & Grants Committee to handle proposed awards to deserving individuals. Motion was seconded by PNC Ginsburg and the motion was passed. List of new members to be published monthly in the

*Chin Strap*. Welcome letters were discussed. It was suggested by the Executive Director that the Post should follow up with the new member in addition to the welcome greeting that is extended by the Executive Director. The use of membership cards was again brought up and discussed. The decision to provide membership cards to their members is a post issue

Marchanti Scholarship Fund – Historian Balkoski talked about the scholarship fund that has been set up in MAJ Robert Marchanti's honor. MAJ Marchanti, a Maryland guardsman, was KIA in Afghanistan, the most recent 29er to lose his life in the GWOT. COL Charles Kohler of the MD Military Department spoke in support of this scholarship fund. A motion was made to recommend to the Awards & Grants Committee that a donation to this fund of \$500 be made as soon as possible. This motion was made by PNC Ginsburg and seconded by Historian Balkoski. Motion was passed.

### **Deaths, Sick & Distressed**

PNC Ginsburg reported on the death of Post 110 Chaplain Wayne Jolly recently. PNC Robert Moscati is still in rehab at Frederick Villa in Catonsville, MD. PNC Lockard and his wife are unable to drive anymore. Likewise, PNC Vaccarino and his wife are also unable to drive.

### **Good of the Association**

After the Opening Ceremonies, Past National Finance Officer J. Brian Becker was decorated with the "Maryland Distinguished Service Cross for Service" by Colonel Charles Kohler of the Maryland Military Department. This award was bestowed on J. Brian Becker for his many years of dedication and service to the 29th Division Association.

National Surgeon Dr. Howard Bond reported that the 29th CAB has returned. A ceremony is tentatively planned for 10 March. This would be a good opportunity to present the 29th DVD Documentary.

PNC Ginsburg reported that the Governor's Commission for the future of Pikesville Military Reservation will meet in February.

Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home event on 30 March at Martin's West 0900-1200.

Bull & Oyster Roast Family Relief Fund on 11 February 2018.

### **Closing**

With no further business, Commander Hayden began the closing ceremonies. A closing prayer was offered by Chaplain Schildt along with a final salute to the colors. Commander Hayden announced that the **NEC III** meeting is tentatively scheduled for **Thursday, 28 June 2018**, in Building 612, Fort Belvoir, VA, at a time to be determined later.

Meeting was adjourned at 1200 hours.

*Respectfully submitted,*

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

**NEC Members please note:**

**These minutes are not distributed individually.**

**This is your copy.**

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

### **From the Landing Beaches to Saint-Lô: July 14-27, 2019**

*Team Leaders: Marsha Smith, LTC Peter Combee, retired, SGM Charles Frick, retired*

We begin by exploring the World War II British and Canadian sectors. Visits include: Caen Peace Memorial, Juno Beach, Abbaye d'Ardenne, Pegasus Bridge, Arromanches Circular Theater and Mulberry Museum, Longues s/mer Battery, British Cemetery, and more...

We absorb French heritage visiting the Bayeux Tapestry and Cathedral, Mont St. Michel, and more...

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

Throughout our time in Normandy, we lodge in the charming town of Bayeux with our evenings open to enjoy the culture and cuisine.

### ***Information Packages and Pricing will be available by October 1, 2018***

Registration Form available online: [www.normandyallies.org](http://www.normandyallies.org)

*Registrations accepted: October 1, 2018 – March 5, 2019*

#### Contact:

**Normandy Allies, Inc. PO Box 1332 Pittsford NY 14534 USA**

**Call/email: Marsha Smith 585-748-2357 [normandyallies@verizon.net](mailto:normandyallies@verizon.net)**

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### **Annual Wreath Laying**

#### **Arlington National Cemetery**

**Saturday, 16 June 2018, 1215pm**

A bus leaving from Park & Ride Beltway Exit 8 will be provided by the MD Region for \$10 per person.

#### ***Luncheon at Spates Community Center***

**Luncheon is \$30**

**Total cost including bus is \$40**

Checks must be made payable to the  
**29th Division Association**  
and mailed to:

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

Checks must be received no later than  
**9 June 2018**

### **NEC III**

**Thursday, 28 June 2018**

**at 1000 hours (10 AM)**

will be held at Fort Belvoir, VA

**Building #612**

**5975 21st Street**

Lunch will be at the  
Fort Belvoir Officers Club.

**Buffet is \$11.95.**

There is **no charge for you to attend this meeting** however the cost of your lunch is your responsibility. **We need a headcount of members planning to attend.** Please notify Executive Director William Mund of your intention to attend no later than **21 June 2018.**

## 29th Division Association Supplies Available

<u>ITEM</u>	<u>COST</u>	<u>POSTAGE &amp; HANDLING</u>	<u>MAILED</u>
Book—Ever Forward 116th Inf. History (soft cover)	\$17.90	\$5.75	\$23.65
Book—29 Let's Go—29th Division History	\$29.00	FREE	\$29.00
Book—Beyond the Beachhead (Joseph Balkoski)	\$19.90	\$5.75	\$25.65
Book—115th Infantry in WWII	\$25.00	\$5.75	\$30.75
Book—Omaha Beach and Beyond (The Long March of Sgt. Slaughter)	\$25.00	\$5.75	\$30.75
Book—From Beachhead to Brittany (Joseph Balkoski)	\$28.00	\$5.75	\$33.75
Book—From Brittany to the Reich (Joseph Balkoski)	\$27.00	\$5.75	\$32.75
Book—Our Tortured Souls (Joseph Balkoski)	\$27.00	\$5.75	\$32.75
Book—The Last Roll Call (Joseph Balkoski)	\$25.00	\$5.75	\$30.75
Book—Fields of War, Battle of Normandy (Robert Mueller)	\$19.95	\$5.75	\$25.70
Book—Drawing D-Day (Ugo & Maxine Giannini) (soft cover)	\$43.00	\$5.95	\$48.95
Book—For God, For Country ... For Love. (R.J. Slaughter)	\$20.00	\$5.75	\$25.75
29th Division Association Note Pads (5 1/2 x 8 1/2)	\$1.00	\$1.30	\$2.30
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
29th Division Wine Glass	\$5.00	\$1.10	\$6.10
29th Division Coffee Mug	\$10.00	\$3.00	\$13.00
29th Division Association pocket patch	\$6.00	\$1.10	\$7.10
Pocket patch holder	\$3.00	\$1.10	\$4.10
Shoulder patch, 29th ID	\$3.50	\$0.50	\$4.00
Jacket, coach, navy with logo in S, M, L, XL, 2XL	\$28.00	\$5.75	\$33.75
Golf Shirt, embroidered 100% cotton pullover (royal blue, white, gray—L, XL, 2XL)	\$23.00	\$5.75	\$28.75
29th Division Official Association Necktie	\$20.00	\$2.00	\$22.00
29th Association Dress Hat (state size)	\$38.00	\$5.75	\$43.75
Hat, Baseball w/29th logo (embroidered)	\$15.00	\$2.60	\$17.60
Hat, Baseball w/29th logo (embroidered/Summer mesh)	\$12.00	\$2.60	\$14.60
29th Division Cemetery flags on wooden staff 12" X 19"	\$5.00	\$3.00	\$8.00
DVD — 29 Let's Go! - A video history of the 29th Infantry Division	\$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". **Minimum order on credit, debit & "PayPal" is \$15.00.** Just go to the new updated website at [www.29thdivisionassociation.com](http://www.29thdivisionassociation.com) and click on "Merchandise" and it will walk you through how to order merchandise using electronic payment.

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

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Baltimore, MD

Address Service Requested



## JOIN THE 29TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.



The Association is open to anyone who wants to keep the history and spirit of the 29th alive - soldiers who served in the 29th, currently serving soldiers, families of those who served, and anyone who wants to keep the 29th alive.

Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last) (First) (Middle)

Postal Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Number and Street) (City, State, Zip, Country)

E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you Serve? Please indicate what unit you served in: \_\_\_\_\_

Post (optional) – please indicate if you have a preference on what Post you are assigned to: \_\_\_\_\_

I want to join the 29th Division Association and help keep the history of the 29th Division alive. The \$12 dues includes the National Membership, the monthly *Chin Strap* and the *Twenty-Niner* newsletter three times a year.

### 29th Division Association Membership

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

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

<b>MD Post 1-72</b>	Baltimore, MD	<b>VA Post 64</b>	Roanoke, VA	<b>MD Post 94</b>	Silver Spring, MD
<b>FL Post 2</b>	Sarasota, FL	<b>MD Post 78</b>	Frederick, MD	<b>MD Post 110</b>	Pikesville, MD
<b>VA Post 5</b>	Norfolk, VA	<b>MD Post 85</b>	Northeastern, MD	<b>VA Post 116</b>	Staunton, VA
<b>MD Post 48</b>	Westminster, MD	<b>MD Post 88</b>	Eastern Shore, DE & MD	<b>PA Post 175</b>	Pennsylvania
<b>MD Post 58</b>	Dundalk, MD	<b>NE Post 93</b>	New England	<b>MD Post 729</b>	Waynesboro, PA