

Executive Director's Message:

Greetings to all of my comrades both here in the United States and abroad who are members and supporters of the 29th Division Association. I have been very busy over the past several months and there is news to report.

Throughout the summer the convention planning committee met on a regular basis to iron out the details for the reunion and to work with the folks at the Delta Hotel. I think that the fruits of our labors were realized as we had a very memorable convention that everyone enjoyed.

We were very concerned when we heard that the Delta Hotel was closing the following weekend. However, they assured us that there would be no effect on their services and they came through in style. I hope you will join us next year for a great time when we meet in Virginia.

Neil Ungerleider informed me that he has decided to step down in his role as webmaster and also as a member of the Futures Committee.

(Continued on page 6)

A Day of Remembrance & Renewal at Bodmin Keep, Cornwall, UK



Standing near the newly installed plaque on the wall of the old Victoria Barracks, now Bodmin Keep Museum, Tom and Jenny French of the Royal Cornwall Parachute Regimental Association proudly display an historic 29er flag donated by the Americans.

In 1988, a plaque was erected on the outside wall of what today is known as Bodmin Keep. This plaque, honoring the service of the men of the 29th Division who were billeted in Bodmin from May 1943 until the D-Day Invasion in June 1944, was all that marked the year the Americans "invaded" the town and intermingled with the lives of local Cornish villagers. By 2022, this plaque had eroded, was barely readable, and had cracked.

My name is Susan Kearney; I am the eldest daughter of Frank J. Kearney and Edith Doreen Govier. This is the story behind my involvement with Bodmin Keep and the rededication of a new plaque erected this year. This is a story that would never have happened had it not been for two chance meetings 78 years apart.

One early summer afternoon in 1943, two American GIs from the 29th Division left their camp known as Walker Lines to walk up Fore Street in Bodmin. Charlie Citro was a New Yorker from a Greek family in the restaurant business. His buddy, Frank Kearney, hailed from Philadelphia where the war called him away from his job laying tiled floors while harboring dreams of life as a baseball player. Charlie was dating an English girl named June Bailey who worked at the Emergency Medical Hospital, a wing formed from St. Lawrence's Psychiatric Hospital at the top of Fore Street on the opposite end of Bodmin.

On the way up to the hospital, Charlie and Frank ran into another nurse and friend of June's named Doreen Govier. The three spoke briefly and then the men

(Continued on page 4)

THE TWENTY-NINER

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A message from our National Commander:

Richard D. "Dick" Snyder

Hello fellow Twenty-Niners! As I begin my second term as your Commander, I would like to start by telling you how wonderful our recent Convention/Reunion was in October at the Delta Hotel in Hunt Valley, Maryland. I want to take this opportunity to thank the Convention Planning Committee for their hard work and effort to make the event a complete success. The field trips to revisit the Battle of 1812 and tour the B&O Museum in Baltimore were wonderful.

Friday evening, we had a great presentation by Col (Ret) Drew Sullins on Tech SGT Joseph A. Farinholt who earned four Silver Stars for his braveness in combat in WW II and was a member of the 29th Division.

We were honored to have BG Joseph Di-Nonno, Commanding General of the 29th Division, as our keynote speaker at the Saturday Night Dinner. Steve Melnikoff, our 103-year-old WW II veteran was there for the Honorary Toast. He was extremely popular with many members who wanted their pictures taken with him to commemorate the event.

On Sunday our National Chaplain, Joel



Jenkins, presided over the Memorial Service as we paid our respects to those we lost during the past year. Thanks to everyone who made the Convention possible. It was great to see we had members attending from different Posts and members from across the country. Thanks to everyone who attended.

As I reported in the last issue of the *Twenty-Niner*, our long serving National Judge Advocate, Houston Matney, resigned his position. The NEC was able to fill his position with Michael Comeau from Post 1-72. We are pleased to have Mike aboard as our NJA.

As operations are getting back to normal, or as close as we are likely to get, the Association must start thinking about Fund Raising Opportunities to keep us solvent. The Association has no real means to raise money. I can remember PNC Grant Hayden raising this same issue when he was National Commander, 2017-2018. The past few years have not been what you would call a great opportunity to raise money, however, our expenses continue and may well expand. Consequently, this issue needs to be addressed.

Prior to the January 2023 NEC II our long-time friend and resident expert, Will Mund, submitted a letter stating that he intended to step back from his duties as Editor of the *Twenty-Niner* and as Chairman of the Membership Committee, effective, Fall 2024. I'm unable to express in words what Will Mund has meant to this organization and the many duties he has performed to keep us going. We have advertised his position in our publications since his announcement but, thus far, no one has stepped forward to fill these positions. Hopefully, we can find a person or

persons to take on these responsibilities.

As editor of the *Twenty-Niner*, Will did much of the work pro-bono, including his work on our Convention Souvenir Program. These projects will be very expensive if we need to have them done by a for-profit company. Please, if anyone is interested in either position, contact one of the members of the National Executive Committee.

I would like to thank all the Past National Commanders of the Association for the advice and guidance they provided me this past year. When I ask for their opinions, they have always been helpful and given good advice. I also noticed that they always have that smile on their face that indicates: been there, done that.

The backbone of this Association is, as always, our membership and Post activities. I encourage each and every member to attend your Post meetings and find out what is happening in both your Post and the Association as a whole. In fact, bring a friend to a Post meeting. I made it one of my priorities this year to attend more Post meetings to meet and greet Post members.

One event that is of great importance this coming year will be 80th Commemoration of the Normandy Invasion in France. This will be a highly visible event in France along with the hosting of the Olympics and the French Tennis Open that will occur in the same timeframe.

It is also an election year here so it's a prime opportunity for politicians to attend and show their respect. I would suggest a great alternative would be to attend the D-Day Ceremonies at the D-Day Memorial in Bedford, Virginia.

As this publication will be out after Veterans Day, I hope you took the opportunity to attend or participate in ceremonies to honor our many Veterans on this day. Also, on December 16 many local cemeteries will be conducting "Wreaths Across America Ceremonies". I have participated locally, and these are a very respectful way to honor our Veterans.

I hope everyone will have a wonderful and safe Holiday Season with their families and friends. Please keep in mind our service men and women who are unable to be with their families and friends for the holiday.

29, Let's Go!!

Richard D. Snyder
National Commander
29th Division Association, Inc.

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Donations to the *Twenty-Niner*

We extend our heartfelt thanks to our membership for their generosity in contributing to the *Twenty-Niner* for this issue. Note our cut-off date. If your contribution did not reach our National Executive Director by 10 November 2023 then it will not be listed until the next issue. Donation checks must be made payable to the **29th Division Association** and mailed to: **PO Box 548, Lutherville Timonium, MD 21094 -0548.**

American Alloy Steel, Houston, TX

In honor of Arthur J. Moore, F/115, Houston, TX

Cooley, Carl G., Post 94, Son, Slagle, LA

In memory of his father, Carl Cooley, A/115

Post 78 "Cresap's Rifles", Frederick, MD

In memory of Franklin R. Joy, Son, Frederick, MD

In memory of Thomas Shriver, HQ/1/175, Walkersville, MD

Simar, John, Post 116, Grandson, Forest, VA

Veteran Corps, 5th Regiment Infantry, Baltimore, MD

In memory of CSM Robert Bryant, F/175, Gambrills, MD

In memory of MSG Ed Koehler, MED/175, Baltimore, MD

The Preamble

*To perpetuate the friendships
we cherish; to keep alive
the spirit that never knew
defeat; to honor our dead;
and to further keep
before our country
the record of the
29th Division
in all the wars;
we associate ourselves
in an organization
known as the
29th Division Association.*

**Past editions of *The Twenty-Niner*
from 2013 - present are now
available on our website,
29thDivisionAssociation.com,
in the "For Members" section.**

TAPS

The following list shows names of known 29ers and their ladies or family members who died and their deaths reported from 16 July 2023 through 10 November 2023. 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

Booz, Thomas J., Post 1-72, 104MED, Baltimore, MD 3/27/20
Bryant, Robert L., Post 1-72, F/175, Gambrills, MD 8/30/23
Daughton, Royston E., Post 85, A/729, Port Orange, FL 9/23/22
Howard, Keith, Post 88, K/115, Cambridge, MD 7/4/23
Joy, Franklin R., Post 78, Son, Frederick, MD 12/7/22
Koehler, Edmund, Post 1-72, MED/175, Baltimore, MD 10/13/22
Lankford, E. Bruce, Post 64, Associate, Roanoke, VA 10/13/23
Litzenberg, Robert, Post 85, Associate, Elkton, MD 10/13/23
Osborne, Lawson W., Post 1-72, F/116, Alton, VA 5/15/05
Pete, Albert A. Jr., Post 88, B/2/115, Cambridge, MD 7/19/23
Sanders, Raymond E., Post 729, B/729, Sabillasville, MD 5/16/23
Shriver, Thomas J., Post 78, HQ/1/175, Walkersville, MD 9/12/23
Taylor, Ron L., Post 85, 29ID(L), North East, MD 7/7/23
Windler, Ralph P., Post 1-72, G/115, South Milwaukee, WI 7/13/23

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 our comrades 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.

Frank Armiger
National Executive Director
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(Continued from page 1)

proceeded to the hospital while Doreen continued down the hill to have a cup of tea and some socializing at the YMCA. A short time later, Frank was returning to camp alone and Doreen was walking back to the hospital. They met again and Frank asked if she wanted to go for a drink. That drink at a nearby pub led to an engagement in May 1944, a marriage in England in June 1945, three children, and fifty years of marriage in Philadelphia until Frank's death in 1995.

In 2021, the Imperial War Museum in London established a project focused on World War II. As part of this study, a British archivist named Charlotte Marchant was granted an internship at Bodmin Keep. The Keep is a 160-year-old building that is the historic home of the Army in Cornwall and the former headquarters of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry. Today, the Keep houses hundreds of years of British military history, but during World War II this building was known as Victoria Barracks. Beginning in May 1944, the Barracks were occupied by the US forces with an extensive camp behind the Barracks called Walker Lines.

The focus of Ms. Marchant's internship was



Susan Kearney in front of the Bodmin Keep Plaque honoring the 29th Division soldiers who trained there.



The outside of the Keep during the ceremony. The Rev Roger May delivers the Service of Remembrance. The standard bearers hold flags representing the 29th Division, the Union Jack for England, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, and the Riflers Association. Far left is Peter Champness, the Chair of Trustees for Bodmin Keep. To the far right near the flag bearer for the Riflers association is Helen Bishop-Stephens, Director of Bodmin Keep.

Bodmin during the time when the Americans were stationed there together with an extensive study of the Walker Lines Camp. Through a Facebook group, Ms. Marchant found me, Frank Kearney's daughter. In an attempt to personalize history, she wanted to hear my parents' story and explore any photographs I had. By the summer's end, there were several significant end products from Ms. Marchant's work: two Zoom presentations and the opening of a new exhibition at the Keep showcasing the history of Walker Lines including a room-sized model and a video. This video and the two Zoom talks can be viewed today on YouTube (see "The History of Walker Lines;" "Talk: A US Soldier in Bodmin during World War II;" and my presentation: "Talk: Young Love in Wartime Bodmin").

As a result of my work with Charlotte Marchant and Mary Godwin, the Director of the Keep in 2021, I vowed to visit Bodmin on my next trip to England. Finally in March 2022, I had the opportunity to walk the street where my parents had met, visit the pub where they had their first date, go to the jeweler's where dad bought an engagement ring, visit the Keep and explore some of the Walker Line structures where the 29th were billeted. When I saw the 1988 plaque, I was saddened to see its deteriorated condition. I returned to the US, contacted the 29th Division, and we began fundraising to repair or replace it.

As a volunteer archivist at the Pennsylvania Historical Society with a passion for preserving history, I began to envision something inside the Keep that would augment the new plaque, honor the men, and bring the story of the 29th Division to life. I had enough interesting artifacts from my father and two of his wartime friends, Franklin George and Frank Oberly, to

start the project. A casual search of eBay one day yielded a World War II 29er uniform which my sister Christine and I purchased to donate to the Keep.

My goal was a small display case next to a life-sized mannequin dressed as a 29er dish- ing out candy to the visiting children. Thankfully, Helen Bishop-Stephens, appointed as the new Director at the Keep after my work with Charlotte Marchant and Mary Godwin, was willing to work with me. Helen is excited and enthusiastic about developing a permanent display as part of the Walker Lines exhibition. It is her wish to strengthen the bonds now renewed between Bodmin Keep and the 29th Division Association.

On October 12, 2023, the new plaque was officially unveiled at a ceremony outside the Keep. The program began with a Welcome from Peter Champness, the Chair of Trustees for Bodmin Keep followed by a Service of Remembrance by the Reverend Roger May from St. Petroc's Church, Bodmin. Another trustee, Anthony Scott-Hopkins read the famous stanza from Laurence Binyon's poem, "For the Fallen."

*They shall not grow old, as we that are
left grow old;
Age shall not weary them, nor the years
condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the
morning
We will remember them.*

This was followed by the buglers sounding the "Last Post" while the standard bearers representing the 29th Division, the Union Jack, the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, and The Riflers Association dipped and raised their respective flags. The Deputy Mayor Mike Barbary, representing the Bodmin Town Coun-



**Charlotte Marchant, Susan Kearney, and Mary Godwin
with donated 29er Eisenhower jacket.**

cil, reminded everyone that "the memory of what was achieved in June 1944 still has the power to stir our hearts and the bond formed in the stress of war has endured across the generations. So today, we welcome the 29th Division family back to Bodmin to rededicate the plaque in commemoration of the men who strove to free the world from the threat of total war. We, the people of Cornwall, will be forever grateful for the sacrifice and struggle that was made by them. And now we mark the day with this solemn pledge: We shall never forget."

Typical of British weather, the skies were threatening. Everyone moved inside for the recitation of a poem I had written titled "Crossing: Major Howie's Musings, June 5-6, 1944." This was followed by refreshments and the opportunity to view displays by several reenactment groups and collectors of 29th Infantry memorabilia. The Museum was open, including the room housing the exhibition on the Walker Lines where a new display case stands next to a temporary half mannequin garbed in a 29er's Eisenhower jacket. This mannequin will soon be replaced with a full body display.

If anyone has photographs or articles of interest regarding the 29th Division's time in Bodmin and would like to contact me, my email address is: sekearney@comcast.net.

Submitted by Susan Kearney, Post 93

Crossing

Major Howie's Musings: June 5-6, 1944

*Only pounding waves and restless thoughts
Pierce the dark, deafening silence.
Surrounded by thousands – yet utterly alone—
On this long-anticipated night.
Where is the safety of my classroom now?
What great truths can calm nerves and unclench fists?
Surely no sleep will silence the poets' words,
Words of truth made shallow
By the solemnity of this night.*

*"It avails not, time nor place—distance avails not. . .
What is it then between us?" Isn't that what Whitman said?
I've never crossed Brooklyn ferry, or have I?
Surely Whitman is not Normandy bound, or is he?*

*If only all past were present and all present, the future:
Then the thunder of drums and bugles would give
Way to the pensive peace of scholars and books.*

*The General said the eyes of the World are upon us.
How can they see in this darkness?
What will they see with the dawning light?
Will the World believe – or just move on?
And, what about the vigils strange that lie ahead?
Will I be the watcher or the dropt comrade?
At day's end, quite simply - will I be?*

*I wonder what the Bard's brave King would think of
this Army of shady silhouettes.
Which of these shadows would gladly slither home,
unworthy to die beside "the happy few"?
Which of these "brothers" will bravely shed their blood?
And who shall live to see another St. Crispin's Day?*

*Today we wear both the Blue and the Gray.
One war ended - for now at least.
Today, we stand under one banner fighting another enemy
in Mankind's endless tale of war.
Will the World ever know the beauty of "Reconciliation"?
A word, "beautiful as the sky,"
A painting whose image erases all "deeds of carnage,"
A vision showing the "hands of the sisters Death and Night"
as they wash again and again, "this soil'd world"?*

*Maybe a future poet one day will note
That we found light amidst this "neverending shade,"
That we "braved the belly of the beast" in a moment
when quiet was not peace.
That "We lift[ed] our gazes not to what [stood] between us,
but what [stood] before us."
If the past is present and the present, the future,
Then, my children's children with me watch this dawning day.
With me, they are awakened by the poet's voice.
Before my eyes, a rugged beach surrounded by steep cliffs.
As guns break the silence, I listen instead to the Poet's call:
"Being American is more than a pride we inherit,
It's the past we step into and how we repair it . . .
While Democracy can periodically be delayed, . . .
It can never be permanently defeated."*

*From hills, waterways, and farms, we came.
From Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania, we came.
From the city streets of Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Richmond, we came.
Urban, Suburban, Rural, Coastal – Lives interrupted – we came!
A Band of Brothers under a yin-yang patch of Blue and Gray,
On this day of destiny, we emerge from the darkness as One –
To repair, to defend --- to face the Light.*

Major Thomas D. Howie (April 12, 1908-July 17, 1944) was a member of the 116th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division. He served as an officer and commander of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions. In civilian life, he taught high school English for four years at Staunton Military Academy in Virginia. He was killed while leading his men into St. Lo (Normandy, France) on July 17, 1944. Buried at the American Cemetery in Normandy, he was nicknamed "The Major of St. Lo."

Thanks to Walt Whitman, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, William Shakespeare, and Amanda Gorman for their inspirational works and words that made this poem possible.

Written for the unveiling of a replacement plaque honoring the 29th Division at Bodmin Keep, Bodmin, UK — October 12, 2023

Susan Kearney, July 17-19, 2023

Executive Director's Message:

(Continued from page 1)

He will continue as Post 93 Finance Officer. On behalf of the Association, I send our heartfelt thanks to you for everything you have done to further our cause. It was invaluable. NVC Jimmy Kilbourne will handle the webmaster duties on a temporary basis and Val Simmers will take Neil's place on Futures.

I welcome our new Judge Advocate, Michael Comeau, who is taking Houston Matney's place as an elected officer. Michael has practiced law since 1981, including 17 years of service as JAG for the Maryland Army National Guard and the 29th Division (L), retiring as a brevet Colonel.

The 115th Regimental flag has now been restored and remounted and will soon be delivered to the Fifth Regiment Armory. We are planning to hold a reception for the mounting of the encased flag in the World War II Room in the spring. Stay tuned for further details.

A special shout out to Susan Kearney, Post 93, and Sean Malloy, Post 2 Commander, for their recent efforts to perpetuate the memory of the 29th Division. Both Susan and Sean have articles in this newsletter about their projects at Bodmin Keep in Cornwall, UK and Sarasota, FL.

Finally, you may have noticed several emails about the convention events and reminders to register. The Association recently purchased a license for the Mailchimp tool that allows us to send out "blast" emails to over 1,000 recipients at a time. The tool is rich in functionality and we are planning to use it as part of our initiatives to increase membership, participation, for fundraising and especially communication.

Highlights of the Business Meeting on 21 October

National Commander Dick Snyder called the business meeting at the annual convention to order at 0900 hours. VNC Jimmy Kilbourne followed, leading the Pledge of Allegiance before Chaplain Joel Jenkins provided the invocation.

Adjutant Buddy Faulconer provided the minutes for NEC III and they were duly approved.

NFO Richard Carr provided the financial report that basically indicated that our Association needs to improve income to offset our expenses.

NC Snyder recounted his activities including laying a wreath at the National D-Day Memorial on 6 June and participating in the annual Memorial Day parade in Sharpsburg, MD. In the latter case he saw how patriotic small town America can be. He thanked the Convention Planning Committee for all of their efforts over the past year that led to this very successful event and cited the fact that Zoom played a vital role in the process.

NVC Jimmy Kilbourne is looking forward to running for NC in 2024 and will have a two year program in place to address his initiatives during his term. In the meantime, he is participating on many of our committees to help formulate our plans for moving forward.

NC Snyder continued to utilize the Governance Committee, formed under PNC Shuey, to act as a "think tank" to review and prepare topics so that the NEC can make informed decisions.

Futures Committee Chair, David Ginsburg, is stepping down and NVC Kilbourne will take his place on an interim basis. PNC

Ginsburg will continue to sit on the committee that met earlier in the week to begin a planning process concentrating on key areas for growth: membership, participation, finance and communication. The committee will continue to meet in person over the coming year to develop a proposal for programs to address these key areas.

NFO Carr presented a grant request from Fran Sherr-Davino of Post 93 requesting funds to pay for wreaths that will be placed in many of the towns in Normandy during the 80th Anniversary Celebration. The request was approved with a number of stipulations that will assure that the Association sponsorship is linked to all of the wreath laying events.

We are planning to have our 2024 Convention in SW Virginia at a time and specific location to be determined. This year Post 78 sponsored a member's attendance at the Convention, an initiative that we believe other Posts should consider in 2024.

Former JA Houston Matney finished part of the Procedures Manual and turned his documents over to new JA Michael Comeau who will lead the effort to complete the manual in the coming year.

The Association will financially support NC Snyder's attendance at the 80th Anniversary of D-Day on 6 June 2024. From the perspective of the organization it is of utmost importance that our National Commander represent the Association at this historic event where the exploits of our Division have become legendary.

PNC Shuey is working on the creation of a monument to honor WWI 29ers. The Division played a significant role in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in November 1918. As PNC Shuey described, the 29th charged across open ground and uphill under heavy machinegun fire suffering major casualties in their baptism of fire. He is working with a world class sculptor and the town of Consenvoye, where the monument will be placed near the bridge on the Meuse that the 29th crossed on their way to the front. He is hoping to have the unveiling in 2024.

The attendees unanimously elected the new slate of officer who were then formally installed.

Bruce Kahl and Gene Pulket of the Maryland Military Relief Fund donated a beautiful bell that we will use during our Memorial Service to mark those who have passed.

Chaplain Jenkins closed the meeting with a heartfelt prayer.

Frank Armiger, National Executive Director

Help Wanted Editor/Publisher

The 29th Division Association is searching for someone to assume the duties of Editor/Publisher of the *Twenty-Niner* newsletter beginning 1 January 2025.

They are also searching for someone who has the ability to paginate, i.e. process text documents and photos into a 'pdf' page format utilizing software similar to *Microsoft Publisher*. This work is then emailed to the printers for hard copy production.

Anyone interested, please contact current editor, William Mund at duster197329@gmail.com or 443-529-4233.

Normandy Diary

Part 6

By Colin H. McLaurin, CO, I/115

The so-called front in our area must have been what is known as 'fluid;' for imagine our surprise when we saw a German truck towing an anti-tank gun or artillery piece flash by a road intersection about a hundred yards away. They were so close that I could detect a look of surprise on the faces of one of the occupants who happened to have been looking our way. The contact had been so fleeting that neither the Germans nor we had been able to do anything about it.

The responsibility of command, worry over the fate of his surrounded company, and the uncertainty and confusion of our local situation was, in my opinion, becoming too much for Capt. Hankins. His voice, when giving instructions and commands, instead of inciting confidence with a calm, confident, and authoritative tone, induced the opposite reaction. He seemed to be pleading to the other officers for help. He sort of reminded me of a stray dog that is lonely for a friendly hand to pat him on the head and darts from one unfriendly stranger to another. I could not quite understand his behavior, for at the moment we were not in an unduly tight spot. The battalion was getting a little disorganized as a result of its cross country marching, was receiving a small amount of enemy fire, and there was a little uncertainty as to our exact position, but these matters could have been ironed out by taking time out to reorganize and check the terrain. The events of the early morning had probably shocked and worried Capt. Hankins more than the rest of us, for it had been his responsibility to execute the attack.

We continued to advance despite enemy fire of ever increasing intensity. This fire was disconcerting because it seemed to come from all directions and the enemy gunners could not be seen. Our advance had progressed a mile or more when it was abruptly halted when we ran up against a German armored self-propelled gun. As soon as we stopped, we formed a tight perimeter of defense. Every few minutes the German gunners would slam a shell into our area. This was our first experience with fire from self-propelled guns, and it was not pleasant, it was terrifying.

It was not long before I decided that we had marched ourselves into a ticklish situation. It seemed as if the Germans must have spread the word that they had an American unit isolated and were concentrating for the kill. From all appearances it did seem that we were a lone battalion which had penetrated into a very elastic German defense. We had no direct contact with any adjacent units and as far as I knew, there none within miles.

Rifle and machine gun bullets began crackling like popcorn over our heads. We were scared, anxious, and nervous, and the example set by Capt. Hankins' nearly hysterical leadership was far from reassuring. Someone would see the self-propelled gun and Capt. Hankins would call for bazookas. Bazooka men would rush around the area getting more confused by the minute. In another spot someone would yell that they saw some Germans about to assault our position. Capt. Hankins, or perhaps some other officer would yell an order down the line for automatic riflemen. The BAR

men would rush helter skelter from their assigned positions to the new threatened area.

Such hasty, irrational, and unsound orders as these soon had the men of the battalion bewildered and confused. I was thoroughly ashamed when I heard a certain Captain from battalion headquarters say in a tone that was almost a whine, "Let's get out of here; I don't want to be a hero. They can have these bars" (implying that he would rather give up his commission than stay in his present position.) It seemed as if the minds of the officers in authority were paralyzed with fear or anxiety. They seemed incapable of sizing up the situation, formulating, and issuing orders based on their previous tactical training. I will admit that our position had me frightened, but I kept my fear under control. Perhaps though, given the same responsibility under identical conditions, I would have behaved in the same manner.

I do not wish to give the impression that everyone was shirking their duty-far from it. Most of the men and officers were ready and willing-a few even eager-to do their utmost. We did have one ace in the hole. Assigned to the battalion was an artillery liaison officer named Captain McMillan. Captain McMillan was a good artillery officer, but I think that he would have made a better Infantry officer. He had the courage and enthusiasm for combat which is not commonly observed. These qualities, coupled with an organized system of artillery support which enabled him to place the fire of all the batteries within range of a target on the target in a matter of minutes helped us out of a tight spot on many occasions.

On this particular occasion our only contact with higher headquarters and our artillery support was relayed through a little artillery "grasshopper" plane circling overhead. By this method of communication relay, we secured enough artillery to drive off the self-propelled gun.

In spite of our mistakes, we were not completely passive. We returned the German fire in the direction from whence it came. Our 81mm mortars had been set up and the gunners would lay down concentrations on areas where the Germans were suspected to be hiding.

While we were thus occupied, we were occasionally in radio contact with our beleaguered company. Learning of our approximate position and condition, the company commander must have decided to take matters into his own hands. He gathered the remnants of his company and my company's missing platoon, which was with him, and fought his way to us.

Our situation was odd. It seemed that we could advance, but as soon as the battalion stopped, the enemy would close in on us. By now it was afternoon and our tactical situation was growing worse instead of better. Captain Hankins finally arrived at a decision. He reasoned that the battalion would be cut off from our food, water, and ammunition if we advanced further or even if it remained in its present location. He therefore decided to pull the battalion back to where its route of supply and communication could be secured.

Retreat

Orders were issued and we were relieved at the prospect of having our difficulties solved and hastened to comply. We deployed into a formation suitable for marching and moved out. I was surprised to see some of our wounded hobbling along unassisted despite their wounds. Along with us were several POW's which we had picked up during the day. They were herded along under guard.

The countryside must have been swarming with Germans, for we were constantly harassed by their fire. They did not seem to be organized as a unit to defend a definite position, but seemed to be scattered over the entire area. A few who did not get out of our line of march in time were killed, wounded, or captured. I recall very vividly one incident.

While acting in my capacity of executive officer of the company, I controlled the company headquarters and, on the march, our position was usually behind the two front rifle platoons. The riflemen had shot two Germans who had been blocking our path, and as I approached them, I noticed that one of them was only wounded. He was lying on the ground and I saw him stretch out his arms in a sort of pleading gesture toward an NCO who was marching at the rear of his platoon. The gesture instead of bringing him help brought him death, for as the sergeant drew abreast, he swung his bayoneted rifle down and pulled the trigger as he passed without even slowing down. The German's arms and body stiffened as the fatal bullet plowed its swift way through his body, quivered a few moments, and then slowly relaxed again—forever stilled. A moment later I passed his still form without pausing or slowing my pace.

This scene showed war in its most tragic and horrible aspect. A soldier kills as casually as he would toss aside a cigarette butt, and the sight of death hardly rated a passing glance.

A few minutes later we paused at the edge of an open area several hundred yards in length and breadth. The ground was level and practically devoid of cover. It was decided that the battalion would push straight on and would not try to make a detour. Before the leading elements had advanced a hundred yards, a German machine gun opened up with a clatter from somewhere on our left front.

As a result of this indication of real opposition, we were ordered to move into a big field a little to the right which was better suited for defense or as a position from which to initiate offensive action. It was a wise move, for enemy fire increased to such an intensity that it ceased to be merely harassing. It was formidable.

I cannot say for sure but I think that it has been Captain Hankin's intention to halt our withdrawal somewhere close by, for we were now instructed to dig in. No orders for an attack or continued movement were forthcoming either.

We really began to put our hearts into our digging when the enemy began to drop mortar shells on the position. In my imagination I could picture the Germans zeroing in on our hedgerow and then traversing down its length. Such thoughts make the perspiration pop out on foreheads. An officer who had started a hole next to mine grabbed one of the German prisoners and directed him to dig his hole for him. It was amusing though to watch both of them crouch in the half-finished trench side by side when they heard a mortar shell whirring down nearby.

Excitement within the battalion began to mount as it began to appear that the Germans were going to attack us. Most of us had to climb up the side of the six-foot dirt bank of the hedgerow in order to return the fire. For the life of me I could not see a single German as I gazed out over the hedgerow even though rifle, machine gun, and mortar fire was being directed at us. I knew that they were out there somewhere; so I fired a few rounds now and then, but I fear that the powder and shot were wasted. The terrain in front of one side of our position offered ample cover for the Germans to sneak up very close. From time to time they did take advantage of this avenue of approach; so that area had to be guarded very closely.

A German armed with a machine pistol was thought to be hiding in a tree and as he had wounded one or two of our men, one of our noncoms, Tech. Sgt. Morgoch, got mad and decided to go out, locate him, and shoot him out. Sgt. Morgoch was a seasoned soldier and a platoon sergeant as well; so he was allowed to go. In spite of his great courage and personal sense of duty, the German saw the sergeant before the sergeant saw him with the sad result that Sgt. Morgoch was fatally wounded before he had even sighted his quarry.

I think that we received a rather peculiar impression concerning enemy capabilities and activities during this and subsequent encounters. We felt as if the Germans had our position under constant and complete observation thereby enabling them to place accurate fire on us. On the other hand, we rarely saw the Germans and when we did, our observation was limited. We felt as if our fire possibly was not being placed where it would do the most good.

We remained in this position for about two hours exchanging fire with the Germans, laboriously digging away in the clay that seemed only a little less hard than rock, and ducking as infrequent mortar shell exploded in the area. I even paused to eat my first meal of the day—a K ration. In my opinion the battalion was in an unenviable position. The strength of the enemy was unknown, and it seemed to be increasing as time went on. We were apparently still isolated and as time went on our strength was diminishing through expenditure of temporarily unreplenishable ammunition and through loss of use of temporarily irreplaceable men who were being killed and wounded. We were all worried and that is putting it mildly. To use an expression that was given wide publicity at the war's outset: The issue was in doubt.

During the course of a conversation with Captain Spry after a particularly heavy concentration of fire, I happened to casually make the remark, "Maybe we should pull out of here. What do you think?" He said, "Yeah, maybe you are right." Shortly after this exchange of remarks, he went trotting off toward the spot where Captain Hankins was located. Assuming that in case the battalion commander decided to carry out another retrograde movement I would be notified, I went about my business of digging, shooting, and observing.

Sometime later I happened to glance around our position and I was amazed to discover that at least one half of our perimeter had been vacated. This gave me a fearful jolt, for this meant that fifty percent of our area was entirely undefended. I immediately dropped what I was doing and began searching for

Captain Spry. He seemed to have vanished into thin air along with Captain Hankins.

At the conclusion of my check I found that all our company except the weapons platoon and company headquarters had disappeared also. I commenced fuming then, for I deduced what had happened. Captain Hankins had no doubt decided to withdraw again. Remembering my statement to Captain Spry, I concluded that he had probably advised Captain Hankins to order the withdrawal. Very indirectly then, I might have been responsible for the movement.

None of the remaining men or officers had been issued any orders at all concerning the withdrawal; so I took it on myself to go look for Captain Hankins or some member of the battalion staff and find out what in the Hades was going on. In all of my four and a half years of army experience, I had never heard of or participated in a withdrawal such as this.

This action took on disgraceful proportions when I observed that some of the men who had already departed had left a lot of their weapons and equipment—81mm mortars, ammunition, machine guns, packs, and entrenching tools.

I thought that Captain Hankins may possibly have been reassembling the battalion a few fields away, an area that was fairly well suited for such an operation; so I started trotting out in that direction. Little did I know what was in store for me, for as I double timed around the corner of a hedgerow and out on a narrow dirt road, I received one of the shocks of my life. Standing around in a compact group, not over fifty feet away, was what I at first believed to be a whole company of German soldiers.

Later I realized that the shock had probably caused an exaggerated message to be telegraphed to my brain and for that reason later stated that there was a platoon of them there. However, a platoon was more than I cared to contend with alone.

I stopped abruptly and stared for a moment in horrified surprise. A sickening feeling flashed into my mind that all was lost. The Germans, dressed in their gray uniforms, stared at me. For an instant, while no one moved we gazed at each other. Here was a situation where time could not be taken out to stop and think. If I was to be saved, then action must supersede thinking. I acted.

I made a lightning like one hundred and eighty degree turn and started running with every ounce of drive which I could put into my two feet. If I had stopped to think, I think that the logical thing to have done would have been to give myself up and hope that the Germans would abide by the Geneva Convention and evacuate me as a prisoner of war. As I set myself into motion, I felt that every step would be my last. I did not turn my head to look but in my mind I could see every German soldier in the group raising his rifle or machine pistol and blasting away. Fortunately for me, I think that I must have surprised the Germans just as much as they had surprised me, for only a few scattered shots came my way before I ducked behind a convenient hedgerow.

While I had been running, I think that I had been frightened out of a year's growth and now when the realization sunk into my mind that I had not been caught or killed, a relief flooded over me like a cold shower. I stopped to catch my breath and I noticed that I was trembling. I think that I must have prayed my thanks aloud in my thanksgiving over my escape, and if I did not, I guess

that I should have, for it really seemed a miracle that I was not stretched out on the ground with several German bullets in my back. I believe that had a German run into a formation of American soldiers under such circumstances, he would not have escaped.

I became my own boss

My knowledge of the close proximity of the enemy sort of put me in a spot. I was afraid that if I tried to make my way back to our position, the Germans would see me and mow me down. If I did not go back, I would be alone and would have to fend for myself. I decided to follow the latter course of action, but before I could get fully under way I stumbled upon six or seven men from one of the other rifle companies of the battalion.

I was glad to see the men and thought at first that they were a security group from the force which had been pulled out. I turned to a sergeant in the group and asked, "Are you all part of the group that was pulled out?" He said, "I don't know Lieutenant. All I know is that the Captain passed the word down for us to drop everything and come over here. We did and here we are. I don't know where the rest are or what we are supposed to do."

I told them about the Germans which I had just run into and that I figured it would be safer if we just struck out for the lines that we had left that morning. I told them that they could come with me if they wanted to and that I would do my best to get them back safely. I told them that they did not have to, for they were not under my command. They decided to stick with me, for they did not even know how to get back.

Upon reaching an understanding, I made my preparations to get back to an area where our lines were secure. First, I posted men to act as security while I planned our route. We had started out on our ill-fated advance on an azimuth of one hundred and eighty degrees; so after borrowing a compass from one of the non-coms, - I had loaned mine to Captain Hankins earlier in the day - I took a heading of zero degrees magnetic north. With myself in the lead, we set out in a single file. I felt that such a formation would be the least conspicuous. We did not march in a straight line but took advantage of the terrain features which offered the most concealment. I planned to skirt open fields, duck behind hedgerows, and move through orchards.

Hardly had we gotten underway when I heard firing ahead of us. From the sound, I deduced that only one weapon was involved and that weapon was one of our BARS. If that was so, then it would be quite probable that American troops would be located in the area from which the firing originated. As the firing sounded close at hand, I figured it was some of our battalion; so I decided that it would be best to join them.

In three or four minutes we came to the edge of a rather large grain field. Almost simultaneously with our arrival the automatic weapon opened up again from a position just on the other side of the field. It was not directed at us, but I detected the muzzle blast. Feeling sure that the fire was friendly, I decided to walk over. I told the rest of the group to wait and I would go over and contact the other group. For some unexplainable reason, I reversed the muzzle of my carbine (probably a gesture to insure that my approach would not be interpreted as hostile by the gunner), stepped out boldly, gave our standard hand signal for "cease

fire", and started toward the spot where the gun had been firing. From force of habit, I walked around the edge of the field. Just as I was about to round a corner of the field, I saw a sight which filled me with consternation and probably caused my hair to stand on end. Not ten yards away from where I stood, sitting in a little ditch by the side of the field, I saw two German soldiers. I was practically in the same predicament which I had gotten into less than half an hour previously. It seems that my first experience would have taught me more caution, but here I was, standing before two German soldiers with my carbine pointing behind me. I was again a victim of my own carelessness.

I do not see how it could have been possible for them to have failed to see or hear me approach, but either they did not or they were as startled and scared as I was. Again, I acted without thinking. This time, instead of running, I simply dropped to the ground where I was hidden from their sight by the two-and-a-half-foot high grain. I was hidden from their view but so were they from mine. I was in a very embarrassing and dangerous spot.

After seeing the Germans, I concluded that I had made an error in my judgment. The automatic weapon must have been German operated and that indicated there were more Germans about than these two who seemed to be sitting so stoically. I felt that I was in a dilemma. If I raised up, I feared that I would be looking down the wrong end of a rifle barrel leveled in my direction. Even if I could have succeeded in dispatching these two silent sentinels, the noise would probably attract others, and I would probably be liquidated myself before I could get away.

Unable to decide upon a course of action, I just lay there sweating. I wondered if the other members of my party had noticed my predicament. By craning my neck to one side, I was barely able to see a segment of one of the Germans. I looked a couple of times and the one whom I was able to see apparently had not moved.

I do not know how long I would have stayed there if the solution had not been forced on me. On hearing a noise behind me, I turned and saw one of the sergeants of my party, crouched low,

and walking toward me. I frenziedly motioned him down and at the same time pointed in the direction of the Germans. He went down and crawled up to me. I explained the situation to him in sign language. A minute or so later, I heard further noise behind me and turning again I beheld the remaining members of my party walking almost unconcernedly in my direction.

With this group clustered around me, I knew that concealment was a thing of the past. Wondering what the Germans were doing while all this was going on, I looked through the little gap in the grain stalks. I was amazed to discover that the Germans were not there. They had silently vanished.

I was slightly embarrassed over the discovery, for I could picture the men thinking that my jumpy nerves had provoked me to imagine that I had seen the Germans. The case of the vanishing Germans was never solved, but I concluded that the Germans had seen our group and had been just as scared as I had been and pulled out.

Again, I was thankful. I realized that Lady Luck had been on my side on two occasions. Taking the philosophy that some soldiers take, I might have said that my number just had not come up, and in spite of the fact that I had been at the mercy the Germans, nothing had happened to me. I also felt that this time, that if I and the men with me were going to ever contact our own forces, Lady Luck would still have to be with us.

We could not dwell on luck though; we had to get on with the show. With senses alert and weapons ready, we again set out on our course. We walked through several fields, crossed a couple of dirt roads, and through an orchard which lead up to the edge of the small and apparently deserted village of St. Jean de Savigny, the same one which we had bypassed early that morning. I decided to bypass it a second time, but this time I would go around the other side. A short while later we came to a spot where hedgerows six or seven feet high were built up on both sides of a well-worn path that appeared to follow our intended route. I had to decide whether to follow this convenient, concealed route or to keep going cross country. There was danger of meeting Germans coming from the other direction and if they spotted us first, they would be in a position to ambush us in a most efficient manner. I decided to follow the path however, for there seemed to be just about as much danger of being detected by going cross country.

As I slowly and cautiously walked down that quiet little lane, I thought that it would make a much better lover's lane than a route of escape. How much better it would have been to be enjoying a walk down this pathway with my girl as my companion instead of a grim, invisible, fear instilling death.

Our advance was suddenly halted at this time when we came to a point where our trail formed a junction with another similar one which seemed to be just as suitable for us to follow as the one we were on. I would now have to make another decision. I would have to choose which one to take. True, it would be a minor decision, but on an occasion such as this, minor decisions can be important. Since both seemed about the same, I arbitrarily picked the left fork, and we resume our movement.

Help Wanted Editor/Publisher

The 29th Division Association is searching for someone to assume the duties of Editor/Publisher of the *Twenty-Niner* newsletter beginning 1 January 2025.

They are also searching for someone who has the ability to paginate, i.e. process text documents and photos into a 'pdf' page format utilizing software similar to *Microsoft Publisher*. This work is then emailed to the printers for hard copy production.

Anyone interested, please contact current editor, William Mund at duster197329@gmail.com or 443-529-4233.

To be continued.

The 104th 29th Division Association Reunion & Convention



Group photo of the attendees of the Battle of Baltimore Staff Ride on Friday, 20 October 2023.

Fall was breaking out all over from the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia to the Hunt Valley in Maryland. As the fall colors of amber, gold, crimson and green adorned the trees, the 29ers gathered at the Delta Hotel on Thursday, 19 October. The welcome began at the comfortable, relaxing and well stocked hospitality suite where members met and reunited with old comrades.

As the attendees gathered to share old war stories, the Futures Committee met to develop the Associations plans for the upcoming year. Led by Jimmy Kilbourne, the productive session identified four key areas of concentration for 2024: communication, participation, membership and fund raising. The committee will hold a follow up meeting on 11 December in Frederick, MD.

On Friday, those who elected to go, boarded a motorcoach for the Battle of Baltimore staff ride. Unfortunately, our staff ride leader, Joe Balkoski, came down with a severe cold the day before and missed the entire weekend. However, we always assure that there is an able back-up plan and this was no exception. COL (Ret) Randy Everett who was planning to assist was now in the "driver's seat." Having served in the 175th Infantry that traces its lineage to the "Dandy" Fifth Regiment of Maryland, Randy was well prepared.



COL (Ret) Randy Everett

Our first stop was at Fort Howard located on the North Point Peninsula where the British troops and marines under MG Robert Ross landed on 12 September 1814. We received special permission to enter the grounds of the fort that is now in the redevelopment process. In 1940, the War Department turned over the installation to the Veterans Administration that housed a veterans' hospital there.

Randy took us to the exact point where historians believe the British set foot on solid ground. It was not far from the house (Building #8) that Douglas MacArthur would call home when he served at the fort, training troops of the 3rd Corps from 1925 – 1928. As Randy de-

scribed, Ross formed his men to proceed up the old North Point Road to combine with a sea assault up the Chesapeake Bay to capture the port city of Baltimore.

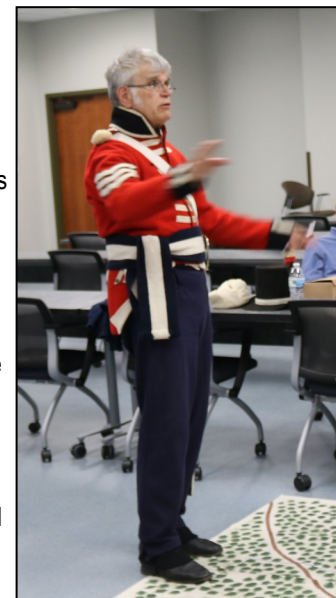
From there we moved to Battle Acre Park a site dedicated in 1839 to commemorate those who fought in the Battle of North Point. It was here that BG John Stricker leading the Maryland militia in the form of the Fifth Regiment would meet Ross's column. Using a narrow neck of land Stricker fought a successful delaying action before retreating in good order to Baltimore. But of even more significance, BG Ross was mortally wounded eliminating an outstanding British officer from the campaign.

It was here that Randy recounted the controversial story about the death of Ross. Two teenage members of the Maryland militia, Daniel Wells and Henry G. McComas were credited with firing "simultaneously" hitting Ross who they recognized based on the horse he was riding. Unfortunately, for Wells and McComas, who were killed during the skirmish, neither would be available to defend the assertion. The controversy continues to the present day with some calling for the exhumation of Ross's body buried in a Halifax, Nova Scotia cemetery to determine what type bullet killed him.

Our next stop was at the nearby Dundalk Armory, where the 175th Infantry is now headquartered, for a Mission BBQ box lunch. 1SG Jordan Laubach greeted us and now serves as the honorary Colonel of the 175th Association succeeding Randy Everett.

In addition to lunch we had a real treat when a War of 1812 reenactor, Ed Seufert, joined us in the full uniform of a British Royal Marine. Ed spread out a huge map of the Battle of North Point in one of the training rooms and gave us a bird's eye view of the battlefield further explaining how Stricker and the Maryland militia succeeded to delay the British land forces.

Our next stop was Patterson Park where Baltimoreans on short notice



Ed Seufert,
War of 1812 reenactor.

(Continued on page 14)

Attendees at our 104th Annual Reunion & Convention

Armiger, Frank & Susan
 Becker, J. Brian
 Bilo, William
 Black, Jon
 Buchanan, Ray & Susan
 Carr, Richard & Denise
 Clark, Kimberly
 Cole, Brandon
 Cole, Cliff & Monica
 Comeau, Michael & Penny
 Coover, Rosemary & Tom
 Davis, Milton
 DeHaven, Bill
 DiNonno, Joseph & Nichole
 Faulconer, Buddy
 Folkes, Jeffrey & Kathy
 Foreman, Charles
 Garrison, Jay & Blonnie
 Ginsburg, PNC David & Amy
 Held, William
 Hinz, PNC Pete & Lynda
 Jenkins, Joel
 Kahl, Bruce & Bonnie

Kilbourne, Jimmy & Sheila
 Knight, Tom & Donna
 Krauss, Michael
 Linthicum, George & Dorothy
 Liswell, Bernie
 Malloy, Sean
 Matney, Houston
 McCabe, Robert
 Melnikoff, Steve & Amy Carrick
 Mund, William
 Murray, Wesley Dale
 Nathan, Robert
 Nattans, Arthur "Joe"
 Pitts, Ron, & Elaine
 Polaski, James
 Pulket, Gene
 Shilow, Franklin & Lisa Norris
 Shuey, Ted & Elizabeth
 Simmers, Valerie & Ken
 Snyder, NC Dick and Lois
 Strem, Richard
 White, William
 Zang, PNC Joe & Shirley

National Officers – 2023-2024

National Officers

Elected and Installed for 2023 – 2024

National Commander: Richard Snyder
 National Senior Vice Commander: Jimmy Kilbourne
 National Finance Officer: Richard Carr
 National Chaplain: Joel Jenkins
 National Surgeon: Dr. Howard Bond
 National Historian: Edmund D. "Rick" Potter
 National Judge Advocate: Michael Comeau

Appointed Officers

National Executive Director: Frank Armiger
 Assistant to the National Executive Director: William S. Mund, Jr.
 National Adjutant: Charles "Buddy" Faulconer
 Editor/Publisher *The Twenty-Niner*: William S. Mund, Jr.
 Assistant Editor/Publisher *The Twenty-Niner*: Frank Armiger
 National Futures Committee Chair: Jimmy Kilbourne (Temporary)
 Chaplain *Emeritus*: Reverend John Schildt
 Historian *Emeritus*: Joseph Balkoski

Sunday Memorial Service



*This year at our Memorial Service on Sunday morning,
we honored those who departed since
our last Annual Reunion and Convention in 2022.*

*Listed below are their names.
We pray that they may rest in peace.*



Berch, Virginia	Hobbs, Mary	Pulket, Arthur W. Sr.
Booz, Thomas J.	Howard, Keith S.	Rutherford, Edward
Briscoe, Robert J.	Joy, Franklin R.	Sanders, Raymond E.
Brown, Blaine	Koehler, Edmund "Ed"	Schelhouse, William B.
Bryant, Robert L.	Laughland, James F.	Serra, Ralph
Cook, David	Malotte, Kenneth	Shank, Harold, L.
Daughton, Royston E.	Mastrangelo, Charles V.	Shriver, Thomas J.
Endler, Anton, S., "Bud"	Matthews, Alfred T.	Stemple, Virgil
Federman, Stanley	May, Charles K.	Strine, Robert L.
Fuller, J.W. "Butch"	Mureda, Joseph	Taylor, Ron L.
Geisbert, Wayne E.	Nesmith, Marion J.	Tyler, Terry J.
Gilbert, Harry D.	Newman, Kathleen	Windler, Ralph P.
Haney, Leon C.	Osborne, Lawson W.	Wright, Norman
Healy, Cornelius	Panno, Joseph C.	Zecher, H. Richard
Helbert, John T.	Pete, Albert A. Jr.	

104th Annual Reunion & Convention

(Continued from page 11)

prepared a tremendous defensive position along Hampstead Hill now located within the park. Although development throughout the area hampers some of the sight lines, Randy pointed out where the British approached using some of the modern landmarks. He told the group that General Sam Smith had gathered 15,000 militia from Maryland and the surrounding states to occupy the extensive trenches and place artillery at strategic locations. There are several original cannons still on display at there.

Once the British, now under the command of COL Arthur Brooke, assessed the American position they had no choice but to cancel the attack. As Randy opined, this was the seminal point in the campaign after the delaying action at North Point saving the valuable port of Baltimore.

But we were not done yet. Of course the most iconic location of the campaign was next for us as we set off for Fort McHenry. As we traveled there, many of us were looking at the sky and weather maps on our phones because a storm was fast approaching. After arriving at the visitor center the group was given free entry because of our veterans.

As Randy pointed out, Baltimoreans had scuttled a number of ships in the channel entry to the harbor effectively eliminating the ability for the British ships to go further up the Bay. Also, because of the shallow waters at this point in the Bay, ships of the line were unable to get close enough to the fort to participate in the bombardment, significantly reducing its strength. Only the bomb and rocket ships were able to get close enough to form a circular attack pattern.

For 25 hours the attack continued, starting on September 13 raining bombs and Congreve rockets on the fort. As Randy noted, the rockets were highly inaccurate and primarily designed to set buildings on fire and frighten the defenders. Fortunately, they did neither and when dawn broke on September 14, Francis Scott Key who was being held on a British ship saw the gigantic US flag, sewn in Baltimore by Mary Pickersgill and her nieces, inspiring his writing of our National Anthem.

We ended the day with a group picture outside the fort near the water battery. And as we mounted the motorcoach the rain began. Good fortune followed us that day as it did America in 1814.

Many thanks to COL (Ret) Randy Everett for an outstanding staff ride!

When we arrived back at the hotel, everyone freshened up before we gathered in the spacious ballroom for a cocktail reception. We were very fortunate to have COL (Ret) Drew Sullins as our speaker. Drew served in the Maryland National Guard and has a passion for the history of the 29th Division. This evening he talked about Joe Farinholt who is thought to be the only US soldier awarded four silver stars, the highest decoration for valor in combat.

T/SGT Farinholt, who served in the anti-tank platoon of the 3rd Battalion, 175th Infantry, received his first Silver Star at the Battle of St Lo in mid - July, barely one month after he landed on D+1. As Drew related, he exposed himself to extreme danger as he took a German mortar and anti-tank weapon out saving the lives of many of his fellow soldiers.

Farinholt earned his fourth Silver Star at Bourheim, Germany in November 1944. It would be his last as Drew explained because he was grievously wounded there. After the crew of one of his anti-tank guns was wiped out by a Tiger tank, Joe took over the weapon himself and neutralized the powerful German panzer blocking the column and slowing the advance. But the tank's machine gunner returned fire and Joe suffered 26 bullet and shrapnel wounds in his body and a completely shattered tibia in his leg.

He would spend the next two years in hospitals. It was the only in that way that his heroic deeds could end. Drew and others believe that he should have been awarded the Medal of Honor. Perhaps that will happen one day.



B&O Railroad Museum tour on Saturday, 21 October 2023.

Sergeant Farinholt was born in Catonsville, MD and spent most of his adult life in Carroll County, MD. Thus, it was only fitting that a bridge over the aptly named Liberty Reservoir should be dedicated to him in 2022. The bridge dedication was a Post 48 project to remember T/SGT Farinholt whose members worked to prepare the application and petition to secure the Maryland Department of Transportation's approval to name that section of the state road.

Many thanks to COL (Ret) Drew Sullins for his powerful and insightful presentation about a man who we should never forget.

As Saturday, 21 October dawned we noted that fortunately the rain was over. In the morning NC Snyder chaired the annual business meeting that is summarized elsewhere in this newsletter.

In the afternoon, we once again boarded the motorcoach for a trip to the B&O Railroad Museum located in downtown Baltimore. The Museum is world class having one of the most significant collection of railroad artifacts including the largest collection of 19th century locomotives in the US.

When we arrived, we were greeted by our tour guide, docent Steve Shulder, who led us on the "Civil War Came by Train" tour. As Steve related, the US Civil War saw the first effective use of the railroad in supporting a war effort. He took us on a tour of the freight cars, locomotives and tenders that served on both sides of the conflict. Of special interest, Steve described the B&O No. 25 "William Mason" that in 1861 transported Abraham Lincoln, who arrived secretly in Baltimore, to Washington, DC out of the Camden Station.

After the tour we had plenty of time on our own to visit the many displays as well as the locomotives and freight cars from the 20th Century. One highlight was the model railroad inside of a hollowed out passenger car that was running on an elaborate platform stretching almost the entire length of car. It was a model railroader's dream!

Upon our return to the hotel everyone freshened up for the traditional Saturday evening banquet. Beginning with a cocktail hour in the lobby, we then moved into the ballroom where we enjoyed an outstanding buffet dinner. From the London Broil and rotisserie chicken to the cheesecake dessert we had a delicious culinary experience.

After dinner NC Snyder shared some remarks with the attendees, especially thanking those who helped plan and set up the event. He introduced guest of honor, BG Joseph DiNonno the new commanding general of the 29th Division. BG DiNonno previously served as the deputy commanding general for operations as well as command and staff positions at all levels in the Virginia National Guard.

As one listened to his remarks, it was apparent that the division remained in very good hands after the departure of MG Rhodes. BG DiNonno outlined his priorities for the 29th as it evolves over the coming

(Continued on page 19)

Division WWI Statue

Background: One of the oversights by planners of the First Army Meuse-Argonne Offensive was the unrestricted observation the Germans had on the heights east of the Meuse River. The area was the responsibility of the French XVII Corps on the American right along the Meuse River at Verdun. They had been part of the French Second Army that had defended Verdun since 1916, but now were transferred west to join the other French Armies preparing for the Grand Allied Offensive to end the war. The Corps and its French 18th Division held the right of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive but done little to this point to advance against the German positions east of the Meuse River.

That would change following the American First Army's capture of Vaquios Hill and Montfaucon in the early days of the offensive. Planners now recognized the Germans could still observe and bring effective indirect fire on their Divisions trying to advance north from the Meuse to the Argonne Forrest. The heights of the Meuse and the numerous observation points and guns there were slowing their advance north, creating numerous casualties, and had to be eliminated. The issue would be addressed in the new phase of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive set to begin October 8.

This phase would require the French XVII Corps of General Claudel to attack the Heights of the Meuse and eliminate the German artillery positioned there. The initial attack would be the responsibility of the French XVIII Division with the American 29th Division in the middle and the Veteran 33rd Division on the left. As the Americans moved forward, French General Andelauer, commanding the 18th Division, met with General Charles G. Morton the 29th Division commander, in Verdun to plan the attack. This was the famous French city that, practically surrounded, had refused to surrender during the German offensive of 1916. The legend of "*Le Morte Homme*," or Dead Man's Hill, and the French motto, "They Shall Not Pass," came from the city's heroic defense. The leaders gathered in the city's underground fortress known as the Citadel.

The "Twenty-Niners," responsible for the critical advance in the Corps center spent the night of 6 October 1918 near the ruins of the city. The continuous indirect fire from the German batteries to the north had turned the city to rubble, leaving the surrounding area a muddy mess full of debris and shell holes. It was a shocking sight to the Americans who had previously only served in the trench defenses of the Alsace Region around Belfort but were now about to begin their first offensive action.

The XVIII Corps attack was to begin on 8 October, with the French 18th Division north of the Meuse River on the right, the 29th Division in the center, and the American 33rd Division on the left crossing at Consenvoye. The initial line of advance would be

so small that the 29th Division would have to operate with only one Brigade forward, attached to the French 18th Division. General Morton chose the 58th Brigade, commanded by Colonel Vernon A. Caldwell, to step off first with its 115th Regiment on the left south of Brabant and the 116th moving from Samogneux. The evening of October 7, with French guides, they would begin marching out first, following the Meuse River and crossing at Vacherauville to reach their attack positions. It was a miserable march of fifteen miles, made more difficult by the pouring

rain as they trudged through muddy fields pitted with artillery craters, battle debris, ravines, and patches of woods. A number of villages in the area had been completely destroyed by the artillery duels north of the river, including Samogneux. As they began spreading out to their attack positions, the Americans could see the faint images of the devastated village. Remembering Verdun and its motto, the 58th created their own as they prepared to attack the German defenses, "*They Shall go Back.*"

The objective of the 58th Brigade, 115th and 116th Regi-

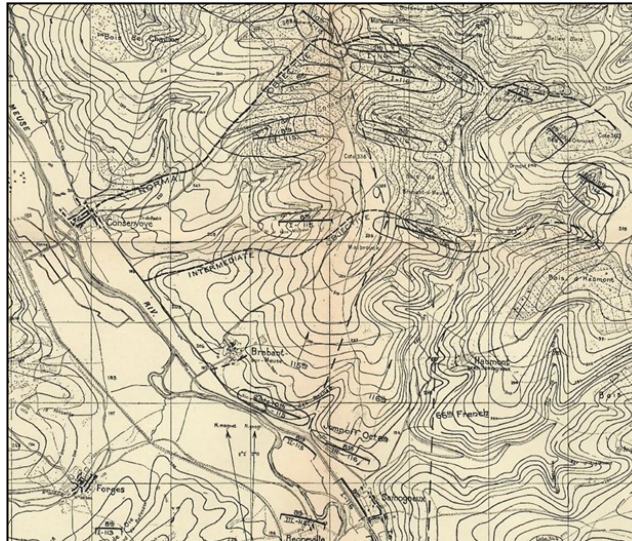
ments, was to reach the Intermediate Objective over four miles away by midday. They would be advancing up a steep grade rising 1,200 feet and protected by German defenses that has been in place since 1914 and steadily improved. Almost immediately, they ran into obstacles and wire defenses of the Austrian-Hungarian, (KuK) - Kaiserlich und Koniglich), Division just across the road from Samogneux across the road from Samogneux.

From here the Brigade steadily advanced to the heights overlooking the Meuse River and the American First Army struggling to advance north on the other side. After difficult fighting against the well positioned German Intermediate Line defended by dense forests, the 116th reached the clearing surrounding the Molleville Farm. Struggling against constant shelling to include gas and multiple well placed machinegun emplacements, the Brigade would eventually take the high ground and eliminate the German ability to observe the American attack beyond the Meuse River.

After the initial advance, the 29th Division was resupplied by bridging assets connecting them to the main effort of the Meuse-Argonne Offensive across the river. It is in this town, the 29th Division Association has received approval by the French Architectural Department to construct a monument honoring the sacrifice of the 29th Division and two other Division serving east of the Meuse River until the Armistice.

Proposal: Place a permanent monument in Consenvoye in the town park adjacent to the main road leading to the Meuse River, seventy-five yards from the original WWI bridge site.

Submitted by PNC Ted Shuey



Map Showing 116th Advance Objectives

29th Infantry Division Memorial at Sarasota National Cemetery

"...and some there are who have no memorial; who are perished as though they had never been..."

Ecclesiasticus 44:7-9

On 4 November, 2023 the Florida West Post 2- 29th Division Association Memorial was delivered to Sarasota National Cemetery in Sarasota, Florida to honor those who served in the 29th Infantry Division.

The thought of building a monument to honor the heroes of the 29th, was borne out of my involvement with the 29th Division Association. I listened to the stories of my father and his friends while attending long dinners in New Jersey. They spoke about the war, but not much. Usually, it was about their time overseas during "down time", funny stories of mishaps at Slapton Sands or at Tidworth Barracks. I witnessed the camaraderie and still noticed that their eyes filled with water when speaking about "absent friends". My father kept in touch with a lot of his friends from the 29th during the holidays, but then those holiday calls didn't come so frequently anymore. We both had made plans to attend a Convention together so that he could catch up with friends and I could educate myself on the history of the 29th.... straight from the heroes themselves!

Back at home he made sure that my brother and I knew all about the sacrifices made in WWII. Every Sunday night we would both be sitting at attention to watch "World at War". The serious tone of the narration and the graphic scenes left us with an indelible mark on what my father had endured on the beaches of Normandy on the 6th of June in 1944. While my father could not articulate what he had seen and felt on that day, my brother and I had fully understood and absorbed it all every Sunday night after dinner.

On Halloween weekend in 1994, my father had passed. I was determined to carry his legacy forward by joining the 29th Division Association at Philadelphia Post 92, then later on, after a move to Florida, joining Florida West Post 2. I met Post Commander Taylor Thomas who was a very enthusiastic person who ran the Post well, we became good friends quickly. I had mentioned that I was joining to honor my father and the friends he had served with in WWII. He stated seriously, "Yes, exactly, this is what we want, to carry it forward". This is what I wanted also.

Being one of the younger members of the group, I was somewhat intimidated to sit in a room full of Army officers as they spoke "strategy" over deep fried shrimp and steins of beer! We were the "Vacation Post" as Commander Thomas put it after all, although proper meeting decorum was observed. The sad day in October of 2015, when the unexpected passing of Taylor Thomas occurred left our members in shock, not knowing whether the Post could carry on without a leader. During a meeting with then National Commander, Robert Moscatti, it was recognized that myself and another



er Post 2 member, Eric Smith, would help carry the activities of Post 2 forward.

While it was difficult to fill the shoes of our past Post Commander, we tried to honor his credo of always carrying the legacy forward. Finally, the group decided to add a permanent marker that signified that the legacy of the 29th Infantry Division would endure. Discussion began on erecting a monument to be placed at the Sarasota National Cemetery. The funds were low, but our vision was high in hopes that one day this would happen. After inquiry letters to the Veterans Administration were written and meetings with the Executive Leadership of the 29th Division Association were satisfied, the announcement to the Post was made that the legacy memorial of 29th Infantry Division will stand at the Sarasota National Cemetery.

After many months of planning and waiting, we are proud of this accomplishment, but without the financial and moral support of the 29th Division Association and other key benefactors, this could never have happened. We must never forget the sacrifices that were made for the freedoms that we enjoy today, here and now. We must also now look toward the future and help a new generation understand what this message in granite means and how they too can honor these heroes, carrying this incredible legacy forward for generations to come.

*Submitted by Sean Malloy,
Commander, Florida West Post 2*

**Past editions of *The Twenty-Niner* from 2013 - present, are now available on our website,
29thDivisionAssociation.com,
in the "For Members" section.**

The Vanished Army

Note: The following article is an excerpt from the final chapter of Joe Balkoski's book "The Last Roll Call: The 29th Infantry Division Victorious." It describes the voyage of the Liberty ship Joseph V. Connolly from Europe to New York City in October 1947, carrying more than 6,000 American servicemen—including many from the 29th Division—who had been killed in action from D-Day to V-E Day in northwest Europe. The repatriation of American war dead from foreign battlefields for ultimate reburial in the United States in the immediate post-war years was a massive effort that took more than two years to initiate. Connolly was the first vessel to arrive in the United States with deceased soldiers, sailors, and airmen from the European theater, and no New Yorker who was present in Manhattan on the day of its arrival would ever forget it.

THE VANISHED ARMY

And so the men who fought the war came home, both the living and the dead, to a country that had little inclination to learn what they had endured. Those long-service 29th Division soldiers fortunate enough to return to the United States as living, breathing men desperately needed to release the jaded memories stored in their jumbled psyches, but found receptive audiences only among those men who had lived through similar experiences. When 1st Lt. Bob Easton of the 116th Infantry came home to California in November 1945 and held a joyful reunion with his parents, he noted with amazement: "They speak as if nothing has happened, as if everything will go on as before. Deep down inside I want to shout, 'No, no, it can't!'—to try and tell them all that has happened to me, to the world; but know that I cannot, that it is impossible and probably always will be. And deep down I know they're right. Nothing has changed. Life is made up of banalities and trivia... Where are the words to express the horror, the glory, the destruction, the heroism, the suffering, the despair and hope, the miracle of survival and the new world we should be talking about?"

In October 1947, the first two ships transporting dead American servicemen home from their overseas burial sites arrived in the United States: first, the Army transport *Honda Knot*, with 3,027 dead from the Pacific theater, docked in San Francisco on the tenth; little more than two weeks later, on the twenty-sixth, *Joseph V. Connolly*, with 6,248 dead aboard from Europe, berthed in New York. If anything could jolt Americans into sympathy for the scarred survivors who had experienced prolonged combat in World War II, it would be the unloading of the dead from those two vessels and the movement of the bodies to cemeteries throughout the United States for burial.

The solemn process had begun in 1946 with the distribution of the impersonal War Department OQMG (Office of the Quartermaster General) Form 345—"Request for Disposition of Remains"—to the next of kin of every American service member killed overseas in World War II. Form 345 required a widow, parent, or other close relative to choose one of four options by checking the appropriate box: "Having familiarized myself with the options which have been made available to me with respect to the final resting place of the deceased," the form stated, "I now do declare that it is my desire that the remains: 1. Be interred in a permanent American Military cemetery overseas; 2. Be returned to the United States or any possession or territory thereof for interment by next of kin in a private cemetery; 3. Be returned to a foreign country, the homeland of the deceased or next of kin, for



The *Joseph V. Connolly* arriving in New York.

interment by next of kin in a private cemetery; 4. Be returned to the United States for final interment in a national cemetery."

Postponed for months due to delays in the production of seamless steel caskets in the United States and their delivery to Europe, the laborious process of exhuming American World War II dead from temporary graves in Europe for reburial in permanent cemeteries overseas or in the States was initiated by the Office of the Quartermaster General in July 1947 and continued for over four years. "Civilians were largely employed to excavate the dead and work on the remains," wrote Lt. Col. Joseph Shomon of the Quartermaster Corps. "A temporary morgue building was set up to which the bodies were carried. Depending on the length of time a body lay in the temporary grave and the condition of the body at the time of burial, the corpses were either partially or fully decomposed, yet still pretty much intact... Some bodies were still fleshy even after four years in the ground. [Bodies in temporary cemeteries had not been buried in caskets; simple cloth shrouds had been used.] All disinterred remains were taken to the morgue building where all clothing and flesh were removed, then burned, and the existing bones or full skeleton were washed, cleaned, sterilized, and then placed in identified and properly marked hermetically sealed [steel] caskets... Caskets to be returned to America went into one section, those that were to be reburied in the permanent cemetery were carried to another section."

Twenty-Niners whose next of kin had checked Form 345's Box 1—burial in a permanent American Military cemetery overseas—would ultimately be spread among five European cemeteries: Colleville, in Normandy; St. James, in Brittany; Henri-Chapelle, in Belgium; Margraten, in the Netherlands; and Cambridge, in Brit-

ain. Those whose next of kin had checked Boxes 2 or 4—burial in the United States—would be shipped home aboard U.S. Army transports, a process that commenced on July 28, 1947, when Belgian workers began to disinter thousands of bodies from the temporary Henri-Chapelle cemetery in Belgium. With a solemn dignity provided by ever-present U.S. Army escorts, the bodies were eventually floated on barges down the Maas River and various canals to the port of Antwerp. In the last week of September, Antwerp dock workers loaded them aboard the Army transport *Joseph V. Connolly*. Not all the Henri-Chapelle dead could fit into *Connolly*, however, so a second U.S. Army transport, *Robert F. Burns*, took on some 3,100 more in early November after a stop in Cherbourg, France, to embark 1,052 bodies from the temporary St. Laurent cemetery adjacent to Omaha Beach. *Connolly* departed Antwerp for the States on October 4, 1947; *Burns* set out for home on November 7.

A few days prior to *Connolly*'s departure, a somber ceremony was held on the Antwerp dockside, attended, as one historian noted, by "30,000 reverent Belgian citizens." The governor-general of the U.S. occupation zone in Germany, Gen. Lucius Clay, stood next to a flag-draped casket before it was carried onto the ship, and avowed: "We have not yet found the lasting peace for which these men died in their youth. We must determine that free men everywhere should stand together in solid front to ensure a world in which there is a lasting peace, in which the dignity of the individual is recognized and maintained."

Following a three-day stop in Newfoundland to pick up more American dead, *Connolly* sailed into New York harbor on the morning of Sunday, October 26, 1947, escorted by the destroyers *Bristol* and *Beatty* and the Coast Guard cutter *Spencer*. The *New York Times* reporter Meyer Berger, a World War I veteran and writer of the hugely popular "About New York" column, watched *Connolly*'s approach aboard *Bristol* and noted as *Connolly* sailed up the Hudson that the battleship *Missouri*'s 21-gun salute from its massive 16-inch guns was like "echoing thunder...rumbling to the horizon." As the ship passed ferryboats plying the Upper Bay between Staten Island and Manhattan, Berger noted that the "crowds on their decks were bareheaded, and the passengers bowed as in prayer."

Connolly docked at Pier 61 at 21st Street at 11:25 AM as Berger overheard one sailor whisper to another: "They came in too late. The 'Welcome Home' signs and the signs with 'Well Done' are all painted out or have faded. There's something ironic in that." At that time of year, early-morning frosts usually permeated the city, but the day broke cloudless and warm, and that afternoon's 74-degree temperature would break a record. At 12:45 PM, a party of soldiers carried a single flag-draped casket down the gangplank from the port side of *Connolly*'s boat deck and hoisted it on a caisson flanked by eight men drawn from the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and the newly established Air Force—created exactly one month ago. Attached to a U.S. Army M8 Greyhound armored car, the caisson and its escorts moved off the dock on to Eleventh Avenue and took position behind a contingent of New York policemen mounted on horses. After proceeding two blocks north, the cortege swung east on 23rd Street as 6,000 men and women in uniform, veterans, and New York civic groups fell in behind.

New Yorkers thronged the sidewalks, but what struck Berger



Memorial Service in Central Park, October 1947.

the most was their silence. "Nobody spoke, not even the children. Eyes were moist and lips moved in prayer as the flag-draped coffin passed," he wrote. "Far down the line came the music—the slow, soft tones of the dirges—and the slow, measured cadence of slow-marching boots. No other sounds broke in." A mile down 23rd Street the procession halted at Madison Square Park, where Gen. Courtney Hodges, under whom many of *Connolly*'s dead had served, laid a wreath at the base of the Eternal Light flag-staff, dedicated on Armistice Day, 1923, "to commemorate the first homecoming of the victorious Army and Navy of these United States," as its plaque noted, "officially received by the City of New York on this site, Anno Domini MCMXVIII." Then, amid the pealing bells of the Metropolitan Life Tower—once the tallest building in the world—the cortege turned left and headed up Fifth Avenue as a band played *Onward, Christian Soldiers*.

"The marchers were grim," Berger wrote in a front-page *Times* story the next day. "Behind the mounted police came the West Point cadets, then a battalion of middies. The boots of the 82nd Airborne beat out a steady step, and the sun struck lights from their helmets." Onward they marched, past the Empire State Building, past the slumbering lions of the New York Public Library, past Rockefeller Center and St. Patrick's Cathedral, past the Sherman statue and Pulitzer Fountain in Grand Army Plaza. Berger noted simply: "The crowds at the curb were moved." At 60th Street, he observed "a little street sweeper [who] held his broom stiffly with his left hand while his right hand rose in salute as the caisson rolled past him. No one smiled. Men and women stared at the street sweeper with grave understanding, and bowed their heads to their chests in silent salute."

The armored car pulled the casket into Central Park at 72nd Street and proceeded another one-third of a mile to the Sheep Meadow, a place "which in past Sundays," a *Times* reporter wrote, "has been the scene of youthful boisterousness and cavorting." Officials estimated 150,000 people waited in and around the meadow, all standing in reverential silence as the casket

passed down a central path that police had roped off to hold back the multitude. Pallbearers then carried the casket up a ramp to a platform, eleven feet high, and set it upon a bier. After a two-minute silence, at exactly 3:10 PM, a battery of artillery manned by West Point cadets boomed another 21-gun salute, and Berger wrote that the sound “flattened against Central Park West’s towering apartment facades”—the Dakota, the San Remo, the Langham, the Majestic—“and rolled back over the park... Everywhere on the Meadow tears started and women stifled their weeping. In a front-row seat, a woman started up. She stretched out her arms and screamed the name ‘Johnny.’ The dirge lifted and fell. Then in a brief space of silence the woman screamed out again: ‘There’s my boy, there’s my boy,’ and other women, beside her, put comforting arms on her shoulders. She stifled her cries, but her shoulders shook with emotion.”

After short speeches by Mayor William O’Dwyer and Governor Thomas Dewey, a U.S. Navy chaplain spoke a somber benediction: “Almighty God, our Father, before thee is a chosen child of the American people, chosen in death to represent all our children.” Three volleys fired by an honor guard then cracked over the meadow, followed forthwith by a bugler, whose version of “Taps,” according to Berger, yielded a “choking sadness” over the crowd, “suspended in quivering, unseasonal heat.” Returning to their charge, the pallbearers carried the casket back down the ramp to the caisson. “Emotional tension could almost be felt in waves,” Berger reported. “Again the mother down front shrilled, ‘Johnny, my Johnny,’ and accents carried far, and they hurt. Men bit at their lips. The woman cried, ‘Where is my boy?’ but again kind arms enfolded her, and her cries were reduced to sobbing.”

In keeping with the American military tradition that no ceremonial

observance should end on a gloomy note, the caisson and its escorting troops proceeded out of the Sheep Meadow to the march *The Vanished Army*, written in 1918 by the British Army composer Kenneth Alford in honor of Britons who had died in World War I. It was the perfect choice. Designated by Alford as a “Poetic March,” the tune began with a stirring introduction by B-flat trumpets that shattered the solemn silence of the service. The first two-thirds of the march, described by Berger as “sweet melancholy,” traded back and forth between dirgelike passages in a minor key and more upbeat major-key segments. But as the caisson with its casket pulled out of the Sheep Meadow toward one of Central Park’s traverse roads, the tune closed with a triumphant finale that lived up to the march’s uplifting subtitle: *They Never Die*.

Life in the city would go on—must go on. “The camp-chairs were folded and stacked,” a *Times* reporter noted, “and the Sheep Meadow was left to a few young boys and their football.”

The escort returned the casket to *Connolly* at Pier 61 at 4:43 PM. By that time, an observer remarked, “the pier was almost empty.” On October 27 at 8:00 AM, *Connolly* departed for the short trip to the Brooklyn Army Terminal in Bay Ridge to begin the laborious process of offloading all 6,248 caskets and dispatching them on their final journey home. *Connolly* docked at one of three enclosed piers, each one-quarter mile long, shortly before 11:00 AM; more than two thousand people waited inside to witness a short memorial service.

The only speaker, Brooklyn Borough President John Cashmore, concluded the observance with words no one could refute: “No matter what you think about the way things are going today, this would not have been so had the other side won.”

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Annual Reunion & Convention

(Continued from page 14)

years with a renewed emphasis on division level units. He fully understood the history and the tradition of the division and will assure that it continues under his leadership.

Next on the evening’s agenda was one of our very special and poignant traditions: the Calvados toast. This year we only had one WWII



BG Joseph DiNonno

veteran in attendance, our venerable and highly honored member, Steve Melnikoff. As Steve readied his glass for the toast, one had to wonder how many Calvados toasts he’s done in the nearly 80 years since June 1944. And as always, he did not disappoint with his toast, as he raised his glass with NVC Jimmy Kilbourne and everyone there remembering all those who had served honorably in the 29th Division throughout the years.

This year, we brought back the raffle with such items as free

passes to Luray Caverns. In addition, there was a silent auction that featured a basket of 29th Division swag that even included a blanket. Post Commander Jon Black walked away with that one after intensive back and forth bidding.

As we gathered on Sunday for the traditional memorial service, the wind had picked up and the sky was a steely gray with blue streaks breaking through here and there. The color of the sky was most appropriate for the last day of the Convention. Chaplain Joel Jenkins led the service in his inimitable fashion combining sincerity, honor and reverence as we remembered those who died since we last met. It was a somber tolling of the bell as Chaplain Jenkins read each name of the too many that left us too soon.

It was now time to head back to our homes. We enjoyed an eventful and productive convention and left with new memories that we will share with our families and friends. And as one convention ends, the planning for the next one begins. We hope that you can join us in 2024 for a weekend of memories, reunions, war stories, meetings and educational events. You will not be disappointed!



Almost 104 years old, Steve Melnikoff makes the Calvados toast.

rounds of golf at one of the Shenandoah Valley’s exclusive golf clubs, gift cards to Texas Roadhouse, Olive Garden and Cracker Barrel and

Frank Armiger,
Assistant Editor & National Executive Director

Blue and Gray Memorial Bench



Stuart Morrissey sits on his completed "Blue & Gray" bench.



The completed "Blue & Gray" bench at Mount Edgcumbe estate.

"The Blue and Gray" is a new memorial bench created by Stuart Morrissey, a member of Post 93, to commemorate the 29th Infantry Division soldiers who were based at Mount Edgcumbe, U.K., during the second World War.

It will be dedicated during ceremonies in England marking the 80th Anniversary of D-Day in June.

Morrissey, an art student and Royal Air Force veteran, learned that members of the 29th Infantry Division were based within the grounds of the estate as they trained for the invasion.

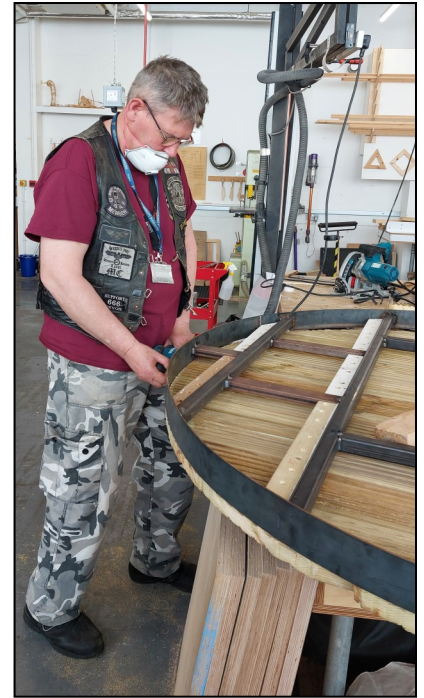
Many of the soldiers that were encamped around the estate died in the Normandy Campaign and other battles as the 29th Division fought across Europe. Morrissey decided to pay tribute to these men by constructing a memorial bench in their honor.

"I had never built something on this scale before, and I decided that the bench would be an unconventional circular base that would house intersected cutouts of standing and kneeling soldiers that formed backrests," Morrissey said.

The design is set out like a compass and is made of steel, wood and concrete.

"It has been an honor to build this memorial bench and I hope through the years to come that many people will visit this site and remember the fallen who gave everything so that we may live in freedom," Morrissey said.

The memorial was installed in the spring and is ready for its formal dedication in June.



Stuart Morrissey works on the bench in his workshop.



The completed "Blue & Gray" bench in Morrissey's workshop.

Photos and text provided by Stuart Morrissey and Neil Ungerleider.

Chaplain's Comments:

CH (COL) Joel Jenkins US Army (RET)

As I write this, I am reflecting upon our very successful and inspiring 29th Association annual meeting. This gathering of the "like minded," reminds us there are still many fellow Americans who do not take our freedoms for granted.

The 29th ID can trace its legacy to pre-Revolutionary War units, including one that was led by George Washington. Of course, our greatest losses came during the "Great War (WW I)," and WW II, where thousands of young men wearing the Blue/Gray Patch who were a bulwark against tyranny, never returned home.

Obviously, since the up-tempo of 9/11, our nation has once again realized the need for, and capabilities of, our Guard and Reserve forces. Our 29th soldiers have served faithfully from the Pentagon, all the way to Iraq, Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, and many places in between.

Our world, and especially the beacons of democracy, seem just as vulnerable as they did in 1776, 1860, 1917, 1941, 2001, and those other dates of similar "infamy."

A cousin of my son-in-law's, Leslie Lautenslager, served as Colin Powell's personal assistant for many years. She wrote a beautiful book about those years, *My Time with General Colin Powell: Stories of Kindness, Diplomacy, and Protocol*.

Hearing her first hand accounts, of his wisdom, courage and patriotism, have added to my great love for this true American hero. On many occasions, he verbalized great truths about our nation's blessings, but always called the country to a willingness to pay any price to preserve our liberties.

As we recount his words that were given on July 4, 2002, in Philadelphia, it seems they are more apropos than ever:

For if in the world today there is a common threat to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, it is terrorism.

And in the years ahead, very few of us sitting here will be called upon to sacrifice our lives or our liberty for the rights that we hold dear. But all of us, the old and the young, the high and the humble, can seek out ways in our own life, in our own community, to serve the cause of freedom. Each of us can devote some of our time and talent and resources to the well-being of our community, to spread happiness throughout our community, to serve others in our community, to show that we are a people united, and none of us can be happy if there is any one of our fellow citizens who is in need, and we could do something about that need."

General Powell called for every citizen to accept his or her role in what he called the need "...to serve others...to show we are a people united..." In his comments, he also referenced, sacrificing one's life for "our liberty." The soldiers of the 29th well define both of those visions! I believe we best honor them, and all of our fallen heroes, as we take up our own mantles of service for the "greater good."

As chaplain of our Association, I pray for all who are part of our 29th family. I close these Chaplain's comments with Irving Berlin's timeless prayer for our country:

*"God bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above
From the mountains,
To the prairies,
To the ocean white with foam
God bless America,
My home sweet home."*

CH (COL) Joel Jenkins,
US Army (RET)

In memory of Ralph P. Windler



Dedicated to Ralph Paul Windler, of South Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Mr. Windler passed away on 13 July 2023 at the age of 97.

Mr. Windler was responsible for compiling 122,722, 29th Infantry Division morning report entries and creating the 29th Infantry Division Morning Report Excel Spreadsheet.

It is for this reason that Mr. Windler is being recognized for his work which encompasses the entire time the division was in combat in Europe during World War II.

Mr. Windler served in G Company, 115th Infantry, during World War II and was a member of Limestone Post 1-72, 29th Division Association in Baltimore, MD.

WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.
Editor & Publisher

Inspiring the Next Generation:

Educational Programs at the National D-Day Memorial

The National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA exists to honor the valor, fidelity and sacrifice of the Allied forces who stormed the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944. We accomplish this mission daily with guided tours, popular lectures, an internationally-followed podcast, ongoing research and a growing collection of artifacts to preserve the legacy of D-Day.

But there's an important aspect of our mission that is often hidden in plain sight: our educational activities to reach a young audience, raising awareness of the crucial events of WWII and sparking interest in learning more. After all, most adults who visit the Memorial are already aware of why they are there and have an appreciation of "The Greatest Generation." Few may be considered history experts, but an admiration of WWII veterans is usually already there.

In contrast, many children, far removed from the events of the war and the veterans who won it, have only scant awareness of what it was all about and why it matters. For them, programs at the Memorial help inspire knowledge and appreciation for heroes who served eight decades ago. In many important ways, kids are our target audience. If today's students do not become tomorrow's World War II buffs, the diligent work of our founders will fade away in another generation.

Perhaps the most obvious means of reaching youngsters are our highly-rated school programs. Priced to be affordable to even the smallest school, our field trips to the National D-Day Memorial are highly in demand for the current school year. The two-hour visit, with a classroom portion and a tour of the site, can be catered to the wishes of the teacher and needs of the school.



Students experience an educational tour of the National D-Day Memorial.

For students who cannot easily visit Bedford, there are virtual options. Recently when the Memorial's Education Staff learned of a school in New York state planning an intensive study of D-Day, innovative "Traveling Trunks" with artifacts and lesson plans were shipped to them, and a special virtual tour of the Memorial was arranged by video. Finally, a Q and A program with NDDM President April Cheek-Messier allowed students to ask questions on what they had learned.

Other schools across the nation (and into Canada) experience the Memorial through an educational outreach program called "Streamable Learning." And it isn't just the students who benefit from our programs; a newly instituted Educator Membership program allows the Memorial to "teach the teachers," assuring we remain an available and beneficial resource for them.

Other educational programs abound at the Memorial. Each summer a highly popular WWII Day Camp takes place, inviting students from kindergarten to 5th grade to immerse themselves in history at the Memorial. This past year, the camps were able to make use of the Memorial's new Walking Trail through woods adjacent to the grounds. Soon that trail will feature interpretive signage explaining the use of Virginia's natural resources in the war—each sign will also feature a special section especially written for kids.

Special programming for area JROTC groups can also be arranged. And it isn't just traditional schools who participate in the educational opportunities at the Memorial. Each fall, the incoming cadets of both Virginia Tech and the Virginia Military Institute visit Bedford. Outside of traditional classrooms, special annual events like Homeschool Day, Scout Day for boys and girls, and other family-friendly programs take place.

The dream of National D-Day Memorial founder Bob Slaughter was for an organization that would preserve the memory of the fallen, and would honor the victorious veterans who came home. But he also wanted these priorities to pass to the next generation—and the ones after that. With the help of our supporters, the National D-Day Memorial is making Bob's vision a reality.

By John D. Long, Director of Education, D-Day Memorial



Children at the National D-Day Memorial's summer day camps.

The FoG — Friends of the Guard

Time for another update on the FoG's support of the Virginia National Guard Historical Foundation: Since our last report most of the volunteers' effort has been focused on restoring the M7B2 Priest we received in late 2022. In the meantime we said goodbye to the 120mm mortar that was a Desert Storm capture. It is now outside the Lynchburg Armory And the beat goes on...



After almost the full summer of work, our M7B2 Korean War-era Priest is nearly finished. The next few pictures give you an idea of the "Before and After" appearances.



Before: the left side of the Priest showing clearly its rust and unusual sun-faded appearance.



After: many hours of scraping and sanding, followed by rust converter and paint, have brought the Priest back to its wartime appearance. Because of the original markings we found underneath the many coats of paint, we were able to re-mark it back to the 77th Field Artillery Battalion/1st Cavalry Division.



Before: Typical of the crew area inside the Priest, these ammo storage boxes show the sad condition it was in after years of neglect.



After: the same ammo boxes now cleaned up and restored. When fully loaded a Priest could carry 69 rounds of 105mm ammunition.

With the Priest almost completed, some of the crew turned working on cleaning up the M3A4E8 Sherman that is also on the parade deck. With fall and winter weather coming just around the corner, the crew wanted to make sure any of the exposed surface areas and the tracks were treated with rust converter and then painted.



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SAVING OUR PATCH!



Our most urgent cause in 2022 was to defend our famous and iconic Blue & Gray shoulder patch from the work of the DOD's Naming Commission to have the patch retired. We were successful in that effort.