



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. Just as reported in the last newsletter, I continue to be very busy and there is much news to report.

It is not long after a convention ends that the planning for the next one begins and that is the case for 2024.

Our committee composed of NC Snyder, NVC Kilbourne, ADJ Faulconer, NFO Carr, Will Mund, Tom Knight and yours truly has already met numerous times in the past three months to hammer out the plans for 2024.

We made substantial progress and the venue will be Hotel 24 South in Staunton, VA on 15-18 August. We contacted one of our favorite people, April Cheek-Messier, President & CEO of the National D-Day Memorial, and she agreed to be our speaker at the Saturday evening dinner.

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THE TWENTY-NINER Vol. 68, No. 1 Spring 2024

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Join us for our 105th Annual Reunion & National Convention 15-18 August 2024



Hotel 24 South in Staunton, Virginia is the site of our annual reunion and convention. The group room rate is \$139 per night plus taxes, single or double occupancy room.

The 29th Division Association Reunion and Convention Committee is very excited to extend an invitation and welcome you to this year's Reunion and Convention events which will be held in Staunton, Virginia from the 15th to the 18th of Augusts 2024.

Immediately after assuming his duties National Commander Dick Snyder outlined that his two-year reunion and convention concept which was to hold one event in Maryland and one in the Shenandoah Valley near Staunton Virginia.

The Valley of Virginia is forever connect-

ed to the 29th Division as it is the home area of the historic 116th Infantry Regiment and the current home of the Headquarters of the 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team of the 29th Division. In addition, The Valley is host to many cultural and historic sites to provide plenty of activities for our annual reunion and convention, not to mention the 29th Division Museum is located in the area as well.

The reunion and convention planning committee turned to the same hotel where the 116th Infantry Regiment holds its annu-

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PMR transformation begins with groundbreaking

Monday, the 22nd of January 2024, was a momentous day for the historic Pikesville Armory, the second oldest in Maryland, built in 1903 to support the expansion of the National Guard program.

The day had dawned sunny and crystal clear and the air crisp and cold with snow from a recent storm blanketing the grounds

of the Pikesville Armory where icicles hung in jagged rows. 200 guests including members of the Pikesville community, veteran groups and state representatives all gathered for the symbolic groundbreaking ceremony. What was just a dream several years ago was now coming to fruition. Thus

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A message from our National Commander:

Richard D. "Dick" Snyder

Hello fellow Twenty-Niners, as I am now in my second year as your Commander, I must say again what an honor it is to be National Commander of this historic and proud Association. Many hard-working Posts in this Association are spreading the word of our history and how we led the way to preserve our freedom. With that, our Posts need everyone to get involved to support these efforts. The bottom line is, please consider volunteering and being active supporting your post activities.

Since we left our very successful Annual Convention and Reunion last year, the Association business has continued to proceed toward another successful year. The Futures Committee has met several times already and you can read their report in another column of this newsletter. The committee has made great progress and I appreciate the work they have done and the suggestions they have made. I attended the Futures meeting in December at American Legion Post 11 in Frederick, Maryland. Special thanks must go to Post 11 for letting us conduct our meeting at their home. They have a beautiful Post and one of the best military museums for all services I have visited. If you are in the area, please stop in to see for yourself.



Last January our longtime editor of our newsletter the *Twenty-Niner* notified us that at end of 2024 he would be giving up this position and the position of Membership Chairman. I don't believe I have to say how important the newsletter is to our organization and how much pride Will Mund has taken in making this newsletter a highly quality publication. If no one steps forward to replace Will, I must recommend to the NEC that we outsource the *Twenty-Niner* to a commercial business. I would hate to see this publication not exist because of the great content and the communication it provides our members.

So, if you have any ideas or know someone that would be willing to take this on, please contact one of the members of NEC. We have been so blessed to have Will Mund as our editor and chief

for so many years. I'm sure you will join me in thanking him for doing an outstanding job.

Our Webmaster Neil Ungerleider has resigned, we appreciate Neil's service to the Association. Until we find a replacement, NVC Jimmy Kilbourne has been doing his duties. Again, please consider taking this on if you have the necessary knowledge and the time to devote to it. I'm sure Jimmy or Neil would be glad to share exactly what is involved if you are interested.

As will be reported on other pages of this newsletter, the next Annual Convention/Reunion will be held at "Hotel 24 South" in Staunton VA, from August 15-18, 2024. We are planning some interesting activities including a visit to Luray Caverns on Friday. The area has many activities that can be explored for your enjoyment, as a group or by yourselves.

On the sad side of things, Frank Armiger and I attended the funeral service of PNC Robert Wisch, National Commander 2016-2017. Services were attended by other members of the Association as well. The Final Salute was conducted by Limestone Post 1-72. I also attended the funeral service of a long-time member of Larkspur Post 110 and friend, Walter L. Cayce.

Finally, I'm getting very excited to be representing this Association at the 80th D-Day Ceremonies in Normandy, France. I've been in touch with PNC Ted Shuey about the details of the trip and It's going to be the highlight of 2024, I'm sure. There will be other opportunities such as visiting the D-Day Memorial and local remembrances that you may want to participate in.

29 Let's Go
Richard D. "Dick" Snyder
National Commander

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William S. Mund, Jr.

Editor/Publisher

443-529-4233

duster197329@gmail.com

Frank Armiger

Assistant Editor/Publisher

410-591-9977

farmiger@gmail.com

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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 1 March 2024 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 (2)

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

Cresap's Rifles, Post 78, Frederick, MD

In memory of Virginia Cook

In memory of Duane Miller

Golding, Gordon, Post 94, Son, Paris, France

In memory of Thomas J. "Junior" Shriver, HQ/2/175

Praski, Ben, Post 94, Pella, IA

In memory of PFC John Hooper, HQ/1/115

Rich, George, Family Foundation, Post 110, Baltimore, MD

Rosen, Efraim, Post 116, Son, North Miami Beach, FL

In honor of Joseph Balkoski, Historian Emeritus

Veteran Corps, Baltimore, MD

In memory of PNC Robert Wisch

TAPS

The following list shows names of known 29ers and their ladies or family members who died and their deaths reported from 11 November 2023 through 1 March 2024. 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

Boudakian, Max M., Post 93, H/116, E. Rochester, NY 6/3/23
 Bowman, Floyd, Post 85, 729 MT, Havre de Grace, MD 12/29/23
 Cayce, Walter, Post 110, SVC/224FA, Stewartstown, PA 12/31/23
 Christians, Russell, Post 94, B/104MED, Worthington, MN 1/13/24
 Cook, Virginia P., Post 78, Widow, Hagerstown, MD 1/13/24
 Crouch, Milton L., Post 2, 121ENGR, Greenville, SC 1/16/24
 Hurley, Jesse B. Jr., Post 88, K/115, Cambridge, MD 11/26/23
 Litten, Allen B., Post 64, C/116, Rockingham, VA 5/5/23
 Lloyd, Robert K., Post 88, Son, Cambridge, MD 11/22/21
 Marvel, Arthur R., Post 88, I/115, Salisbury, MD 1/5/24
 Miller, Duane E., Post 78, B/115, Canova, SD 11/3/23
 Tawes, Robert L., Post 88, L/115, Crisfield, MD 6/15/23
 Wisch, PNC Robert, Post 1-72, C/175, Pasadena, MD 11/15/23

80th Anniversary of D-Day!

Want to go to Normandy in June of 2024 to see some of the 80th Anniversary sites and events but can't find a hotel or transportation anywhere in the area?

Good News! The 29th Division Museum has four rooms with breakfast available in the town of Grandecamp, site of Frank Peregory's Medal of Honor action, liberated by the 116th Infantry and Rangers on 8 June.

If you can get yourselves to CDG Paris Airport to meet our van at 0800 on 5 June, we will take you there and bring you back to the airport on 8 June. **Call the 29th Division Museum at 540-255-7087 for details!**

Help Wanted Editor/Publisher

The 29th Division Association is searching for someone to assume to 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.

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

PO Box 548

Lutherville-Timonium, MD 21094

E-mail: farmiger@gmail.com



From left to right: Delegate Stein, Councilman Patoka, Foundation VP Barry Williams, Governor Moore, Foundation President Shelley Morhaim, Maryland Speaker Jones, County Executive Olszewski, Senator Cardin, State Senator Hettleman, Congressman Ruppertsberger, Delegate Pasteur, Delegate Cardin, PNC Ginsburg.

PMR Groundbreaking

(Continued from page 1)

began the transformation of the 14-acre historic military site into a regional hub for recreation, sports, the arts, veterans' activities and more.

Governor Wes Moore led the delegation of state dignitaries that included County Executive Johnny Olszewski, Senator Ben Cardin, Congressman Dutch Ruppertsberger, Comptroller Brooke

Lierman, State Senator Shelly Hettleman, Delegate Cheryl Pasteur, Delegate Jon Cardin, Delegate Dana Stein, Maryland House of Delegates Speaker Adrienne Jones, Baltimore County Councilman Izzy Patoka and Maryland Adjutant General MG Janeen Birkhead.

As everyone huddled in the unheated armory building sipping hot coffee, Governor Moore, the opening speaker, said, "Gone are the days when we blame the Baltimore region for our deficiencies; now are the days that we talk about the Baltimore region as our source of greatness. And that's what this transformation of the Pikesville Armory is about."

He lauded the work of the Pikesville Armory Foundation and cited in particular the Executive Director, our own PNC David Ginsburg, whose tireless work helped to make the dream a reality. The 29th Division Association is especially proud of PNC Ginsburg who represented the veterans' group on the Foundation's Board with such fervor that he became their obvious choice for Executive Director.

"We're going to be launching a \$30 million capital campaign," said PNC Ginsburg, "Right now, we're on schedule and we're very confident the NCO Club will open up in '25 and the entire facility will open up in '28 and be debt-free at the point that we open up."

The 29th Division Association was very well represented at the

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29th Division Association members, from left to right: Charles Foreman, Donald Graf, Bill Rosier, PNC Pete Hinz, Russ Myers and Richard Stem.

Normandy Diary

Part 6

By Colin H. McLaurin, CO, I/115

We had walked perhaps three hundred or more yards down this trail when I heard the sergeant immediately behind me give a low sound which attracted my attention. I turned to see what was the matter, and he motioned to our right front. I looked closely in the indicated direction, and in a few seconds I saw a couple of German helmets projecting over a hedgerow less than a hundred yards away. A clash with the Germans was something which I definitely wanted to avoid at the moment, for it could only attract more Germans to the scene as well as hold up our little group.

Then, there was also the distinct possibility that some of us might get killed or wounded. A couple of wounded men in our party would materially reduce our chances of contacting our unit or some other American force. We were engaged in an evading operation rather than a combat operation; so I gave the signal to turn around and go back. This we did and as far as I knew the Germans did not spot us.

Two or three minutes later, we stepped off the trail and began moving along a convenient hedgerow which ran toward a stream (Elle River) which we would have to cross. Before we had moved fifty yard, the sergeant touched my arm leaned over and whispered, "I think I saw a couple of Krauts," and nodded to our left. A moment or two later he said, "And I think they saw us." I motioned the men down behind the hedgerow while I peered around a point where there was a break in the embankment where a gate had once been placed. Almost immediately, a lone German popped into view. He was a young fellow and I noticed that he had a Schmeiser machine pistol cradled in his left arm. He commenced walking slowly toward us keeping close again a hedgerow running out at right angles from the one which we were hiding behind. He acted as if he were looking for something, but if he was looking for us, he was looking in the wrong direction, especially when his glance was to his left and not even in the direction in which he was walking.

As I saw that he was going to walk right into us, I became more excited and apprehensive than I had been. A crisis had arisen, a crisis that would not be resolved until the German soldier had been eliminated. Feeling that I was the one to do the eliminating, I turned to the sergeant at my side and whispered, "Sergeant, I'm going to have to shoot that German." I did this because the other members of the party were crouched down behind the hedgerow and could not see what was going on. I wanted to let them know what I was shooting at. When the German approached to a point where I figured it would be hard to miss, I raised my carbine, sighted on a point in the middle of the German's chest and pulled the trigger. I was filled with a deep dread that the enemy soldier would see me before I could shoot or that I would miss my shot and then be subjected to return fire. Such was not the case however. The sound of the shot rang out, and I saw the German stagger. He kept on his feet,

however, and seemed to attempt to swing his weapon around in my direction. I pulled the trigger again. This time the bullet did the trick, for his knees began to give way beneath his weight. For good measure, I pulled the trigger again. The impact of the third bullet knocked him squarely on his back. After hitting the ground, he did not move. The machine pistol lay across his stomach, but its menace was gone.

With this distasteful job accomplished, I gave the signal to move out again. We retraced our steps back to the trail. My purpose now was to try to find a gap in the German outpost line or whatever kind of line it was that they had strung up. We had been extremely lucky so far, but I was doubtful whether our luck would hold out. The law of averages would eventually catch up with us.

We were hurrying so as to get out of the immediate area of our most recent experiences, when we rounded a curve and arrived at the point of juncture of the two trails which I have mentioned previously. This time it sounded as if we had company, far from the adjacent field the sound of many shovels and picks digging into the ground drifted to our ears. The nearest digger sounded only a few feet away. Snatches of conversation were mixed with the other sounds, and to my startled ears, it sounded like German. I was so startled that for a moment I just stood frozen to the spot expecting anywhere from one to a dozen Germans to pop into view from any direction. I had "fumbled the ball" again, or so I thought.

I reasoned that it would be absolutely foolhardy to clamber up to the top of the hedgerow and stick my head over; so I was forced to conclude that the sounds were made by the enemy purely from the sounds that had drifted to my ears. It is hard to try to express my actual feelings at that time. I can only say that I was frightened, dismayed, and a trifle exasperated.

I had to make another decision and be quick about it. Right or wrong, I acted. Taking advantage of a small break in the hedgerow on the other side of the trail, I lead my group through it and crouched down behind it and waited. I wanted a little time to see whether our presence had been discovered by any chance, and also, I wanted to think.

My plan to find a gap in the German's position did not appear to be working out. I looked at my watch. It was eight o'clock. I had had no sleep to amount to anything in about sixty hours and we had been on the move since before daylight. Putting it mildly, I was tired. Had it not been for the physical stimulus of danger, I would have been exhausted. In France at that time of year it would not be completely dark until at least eleven o'clock; so we still had about three hours of daylight left.

I think that I persuaded myself that we would have a much better chance of evading the Germans after dark than now, especially now. Once having let the thought escape into my conscious mind, it stuck. I therefore decided to hide somewhere nearby and make a new effort after dark. I remembered a cot-

tage which we had passed and was only a short distance away. There was a small grain field located back of it. I decided that this spot would as suitable as any.

Having formulated a plan, I motioned for the rest of the group to follow me. We moved slowly and silently away from the German position. I gave the signal to halt after sufficient distance had been put between us and the Germans to prevent them from overhearing or discovering us. I then announced my plan to the men and asked if it was agreeable. No one objected or offered a better plan; so we headed for our hiding place which was only a few hundred yards away.

In order to get to the area which, I had picked, we had to cross a narrow, dirt road which ran back toward the German position. I was afraid that we would be detected when we crossed. I was much relieved when we all had safely crossed apparently without being detected. The patch of grain was located in a field bordered by comparatively small hedgerows on three sides with the road on the other. The small cottage faced the road and, although fully furnished and in good order, was deserted. Several trees and a fair amount of shrubbery gave the yard a homey touch. The homey atmosphere was neutralized I fear when I spotted an abandoned and unmanned German machine gun set up under one of the trees by the road.

After satisfying myself that there were no Germans in sight, I lead the way to where the grain was waving in the breeze. It appeared to be wheat or rye and was about two and a half feet high. I reasoned that by lying prone, a person would be perfectly concealed unless someone walked within a few feet of him. I picked out a spot approximately in the center of the field said, OK, this is. I'll be right here. Everybody pick his own spot and when it is dark, I'll give the signal to assemble."

I realized that my instructions were inadequate, for they did not cover action if we were discovered. I also did not provide for our security, but relied on our concealment completely. I was so tired from physical exertion and mental strain that I wanted a little rest before attempting to think or act further.

I flopped down on the ground and stretched out with a soft sigh of satisfaction. Only the weary and harassed can fully appreciate the qualities of rest and peace. In my case, these qualities were fully appreciated. For the moment, my only desire was to lie there on the ground in peace.

Fate did not intend for me to rest at this time, however, less than five minutes after I had settled myself in my hideaway, I heard a sound that sent my blood racing through my veins and set my heart hammering at my throat. It was the sound of slow, measured, footsteps cracking in the grain scarcely fifteen or twenty feet away. Since there seemed to be so many Germans in the vicinity, I immediately jumped to the conclusion that there were one or more Germans in the field. My mind was filled with questions. Were the sounds by the enemy? Had we been spotted? Should I raise up and look around or just sit tight? Without moving a muscle, I argued the question with myself. I finally decided to stay as I was, for remaining as I was I had at least a fifty/fifty chance of not being seen. I happened to have been lying on my stomach face down; so I could not even look up

without turning over. If I turned over on my back, I was afraid that the noise would attract attention; so I just lay there completely at the mercy of the enemy—if I were discovered.

My choice of action proved to have been correct, for we were not molested, in fact, hours later when we assembled to start out again, I observed an unconcerned milk cow peacefully standing not far away and strictly minding its business.

The devil must have been conspiring against me that day, for no sooner had my nerves quieted down from the cow scare than another nerve racking annoyance presented itself—an annoyance which would require another decision. This time we had to contend with an artillery bombardment. Whether the guns were American or German or what the target was I never found out.

All I know is that shells started whizzing in and began exploding dangerously close to where we were hiding, so close that I could hear shrapnel cutting through tree tops. The guns were evidently several miles away and I could distinctly hear the sound of the exploding powder charge as there were fired, the whistle of the shells plowing through the air, and the thundering roar as the missiles exploded.

The decision which I was required to make this time was whether I should move or not. If I stayed where I was, I would run the risk of being blown up by an artillery shell. If I moved, I ran the risk of colliding with the Germans. Either way was risky. After giving the matter due deliberation. I decided again to stay where I was, for to my mind, the danger of detection was just as great as the danger of being hit by a piece of shrapnel. A bullet can kill a person just as easily as a piece of shrapnel and is usually more accurately aimed.

Having made up my mind not to budge, I just lay where I was hoping and praying that none of that steady stream of shells which seemed to have been fired just to torment me would land too near. Although the air was getting chilly, by the time the shelling stopped, my heavy, wool lined combat jacket was damp with perspiration which had soaked through my wool shirt.

Whatever force of Fate which was testing my nerves and judgement that day, at least presented the tests in an orderly manner—one by one. Soon after the sound of the last round of artillery faded away, I began to hear the uneven rattle of small arms fire. It seemed to originate from the opposite side of the village, a distance of some five or six hundred yards from us. From the sounds, it seemed as if one force was attacking the Germans or the Germans attacking the Americans, I did not know at the moment. Presently the sound of the firing came closer until I heard faint shouts. A first the shouting was too indistinct for me to tell whether it was in English or German.

I listened very carefully and finally I began to understand a word now and then. The words that were being shouted were in English, a fact that cheered me somewhat. I thought if only they would come close enough, then we would be able to join them and that would be much better than being isolated like we were at the moment.

If the American unit did not get much closer, what should I do then? Should we try to make our way over to them or should we just stand fast? There were two objections to the plan of

trying to join the others and they were (1) I did not know whether Germans were between us and the other Americans. If there were, it would be foolhardy to try to get through while they were alert and aroused. (2) In the early darkness, I was afraid that our group would be mistaken for Germans with disastrous results for us before the situation could be corrected.

I was sorely tempted to try to join then however, in spite of my reasoning, there was a possibility that we would be able to join the other unit without any trouble at all. There was only one way to solve the problem and that was to make the attempt. After giving the matter considerable thought, I finally decided to stay where I was. The shooting and shouting presently grew fainter and finally died away altogether.

It was dark now and the night promised to be clear and quiet, but moonless. I looked at my watch. The luminous dial showed that it was after eleven o'clock and time to start again. I stood up and stretched to loosen my stiff muscles and looked around. There was no living object in sight except the cow which had frightened me out of a year of growth earlier in the evening. The appearance of the grain field gave no indication that six other tired American soldiers lay concealed among its green stalks. In fact, I began to be a trifle suspicious that they had ducked out on me; so I took a few steps and called softly. After a bit, I heard a rustle and one of the others popped into view. I felt a little better now that we were together again.

We held a whispered conference before setting out during which we agreed on a formation which I would lead. The luminous dial on my compass would enable me to check on direction and keep an appropriate course. As during the afternoon we would not try to follow a straight course but would utilize the terrain to the best advantage. Now however, we would try to keep to the open fields instead of trying to keep under cover.

Nothing could be accomplished by dilly-dallying; so we set out. The air was quiet and the night dark; so we were forced to proceed with caution—slowly and soundlessly. I crossed the dirt road and out into an open pasture. Visibility was limited to a few yards except for silhouettes of trees against the sky and occasional blobs of deeper darkness denoting objects of greater density than the air. Thanks to my intensive training in operations at night, I felt capable of taking care of myself.

Through a gap in a hedgerow we crossed further into another pasture. I was about to conclude that our luck had changed for the better when suddenly the sound of regular heavy breathing was heard. I froze in my tracks and raised my hand automatically indicating the signal for the others to halt. Yes, I distinctly heard the sound of a man's or animal's breathing as if in a deep sleep or an exact reproduction. I stood there for a couple of minutes listening very intently and tried to ascertain the cause and location of the sound. I remembered a night problem in England where I had heard noises identical with these and they had turned out to be sheep and quite a distance away at that. Remembering this, I repressed the vision of a field full of sleeping Germans and started out again.

Five or ten minutes later we were stopped by other alarming sounds. This time we heard the tramping of marching feet on gravel, the creaking of harness and rolling wheels. The commotion seemed to come from the left edge of the field which we were crossing. The sounds which drifted over to my ears could only be interpreted as marching feet, and it was not my imagination for the others heard it too. There was no way of telling whether the sounds were made by friends or an enemy except by visual inspection. It sounded as if horses and wagons were contributing to the racket. If so, then the noise makers were Germans, for we did not use horses in Normandy and the Germans did. We did not relish the idea of sneaking up close enough to verify my conclusion; my first thought was to keep out of the way.

We started moving again and I might be more accurate if I stated that we prowled around. We would make a little progress, hit some obstacle, and then backtrack and start over again. About 12:30 a.m. we came upon an area—actually we were only a short distance from the scene of our last scare—where a dark blob of a building could be seen outlined to our front. More suspicious sounds were heard. After a short whispered debate, we decided that we might be walking up to a German headquarters or command post. If such was the case, it would be to our advantage to seek some other route. Therefore, we turned around and proceeded all the way back to the dirt road from whence we had started. To the reader, it might seem that we were being overly cautious and were letting our imagination get the best of us. I do not know, but we were not panicky. Also, we were seasoned and experienced in night work.

I am sure that the sounds were not imagined, but it is in the realm of possibility that the sounds were misinterpreted. My estimate of the situation which I later arrived at was that the units which we had encountered digging in earlier in the evening had "hit the road" about the same time that we started out, and the noises which we heard were made by its personnel as they passed by.

As we started out this time, we grew bolder and started following a narrow dirt road which seemed to run generally in the direction in which we desired to go. We made good time without incident until we hit a muddy spot which indicated a stream nearby. I think that the water reminded us that we were extremely thirsty, for someone suggested that we get some water. A few minutes later we walked up alongside a typical group of buildings composing some farmer's residence, barns, and sheds. After a cautious investigation, we found an old pump out in the barnyard. We took out our canteens, and one of the men took hold of the handle and started to pump. We tried to be noiseless, but before one canteen had been filled, the noise of the rusty pump squeaking and the clinking caused by the canteens striking hard objects would have roused the dead. Nothing happened though in spite of the racket.

According to my judgment, we were close to the stream beyond which lay some American unit and comparative safety. After another little pow-wow, we decided to "hole up" until dawn and make the crossing when visibility was better. There were no objections to this plan for we were all practically exhausted.

Our only food during the day had been one unit of K ration which does not go far toward satisfying a hungry man. We climbed a steep slope to get out of the boggy ground, picked out a spot which offered some concealment, dispersed a little, lay down on the hard ground, and slept.

I awoke sometime later shivering from the cold and looked at my watch. It was about five o'clock—just before dawn. It was time to get up; so I climbed stiffly to my feet and after stumbling around a bit, I found and roused the others.

By the gray light of dawn, we descended the slope which we had clambered up a few hours before. Now that we enjoyed some degree of visibility, I saw that our calculations had been correct. Down at the bottom of another steep slope was a little stream that had become to our minds the boundary between danger and safety. After observing the area carefully for any sign of Germans of which there seemed to be none, we eased down the second slope, crossed the stream and breathed sighs of relief. Two or three hundred yards away we observed a couple of American soldiers on outpost duty. At last, I was confident that we would reach the comparative safety of some American unit.

As we approached the outpost our bearing and conversation completely changed. Instead of moving with tense muscles and grim faces, alert and silent, we relaxed and started laughing and chattering like a bunch of school kids as we congratulated ourselves on getting to our objective. Under the circumstances, I think that we were extremely lucky to get back without losing a man.

Since the men with me were not in my company, I felt that my responsibility for them would cease when we reported into this unit's C.P. I planned on proceeding to the unit's battalion command post, reporting in, getting something to eat, and then enjoying what I thought was a little well-earned rest and sleep. After doing this, I would worry about finding my unit. The well laid plans of mice and men often go awry however.

When we drew abreast of the men on outpost duty, they did not appear especially surprised to see us. After chatting for a couple of minutes, we started back toward the main position which these guards were outposting. A couple of fields behind the outpost we approached a road which was hidden from our view by a high hedgerow. The sound of marching feet clumping on the cement road resounded through the air, and as we came out on the road, I stopped, looked, and then I looked again. Our own battalion was marching by.

Naturally, I was happy to rejoin my battalion and company, but this happiness was tinged a little with regret. By rejoining the outfit so quickly, I had thereby deprived myself of that food, rest, and temporary freedom from responsibility which I had visualized and anticipated. I would have to just keep going.

My fellow officers and men did not seem too surprised to see me. LT Cochran said, "I figured that you could take care of yourself." A sergeant gave me a small can of ham and eggs from a K ration when he discovered that I had not eaten. I slipped into my accustomed position in the company column with the company headquarters personnel. My adventure was a thing of the past, and I must now deal with the present.

To be continued.

80th Anniversary of D-Day!

Want to go to Normandy in June of 2024 to see some of the 80th Anniversary sites and events but can't find a hotel or transportation anywhere in the area?

Good News! The 29th Division Museum has four rooms with breakfast available in the town of Grandecamp, site of Frank Peregory's Medal of Honor action, liberated by the 116th Infantry and Rangers on 8 June.

If you can get yourselves to CDG Paris Airport to meet our van at 0800 on 5 June, we will take you there and bring you back to the airport on 8 June. Call the 29th Division Museum at 540-255-7087 for details!

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

Now online at 29div.com
115th Regiment Journals: June to July 1944

**Includes D-Day Landing
and After-Action Reports.**

**In Morning Reports section
for dues-paying members.**

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**.

My Father and I

By Robert J. Harding, Jr., July 31, 2012, New York City

My father's death in Normandy August 6, 1944 changed my life forever and not a day passes that I do not think about him and his life and legacy. He went to war in November 1942. He did not have to go then. He was a patriot who volunteered and left his wife, then pregnant, and myself and my sister at home on East 123rd Street in East Harlem, Manhattan, New York. I was four at the time, my sister was two. My mother was thirty years old and pregnant with my brother and my father was thirty one. She had to sign a release for him with the draft board.

The war enveloped our lives and ultimately swallowed him like many others in the carnage and changed everything. He came home three times after November 1942, once after basic training and just before going to Infantry OCS at Fort Benning. He came home after OCS graduation as an Infantry Lieutenant in the summer of 1943, and then for the last time in January of 1944 before he shipped out to England to join the 115th Infantry of the 29th Division in Cornwall preparing for the D-Day Invasion. Each visit was no longer than a few days and the last was just an overnight.

He landed on D-Day June 6th at 10:30 in the morning from LCI 554 on Omaha Beach with Headquarters Company as Communications Officer and then later on June 14th he went over to D Company to take over the machine-gun platoon. Fighting in the hedgerows was bloody and merciless and the foe was determined. He was with the 1st Battalion 115th Infantry spearhead into Saint-Lô. By then he was Executive officer of D Company and he had been awarded a Bronze Star for valor for his work as machine-gun platoon leader. Then on August 5th while in the attack on St. Martin de Tallevende near Vire he was hit by an artillery round and mortally wounded. He died the next day, August 6. He was thirty three; he left three children including one who never knew him.

Now late in my life I have come to speak with the soldier who was also hit by the same shell that killed my father. His name is Everett Rockwood from Walpole Mass. I also talk with and have met E.J. Hamill who was also with my father when he was mortally wounded. In 1988 I visited France to

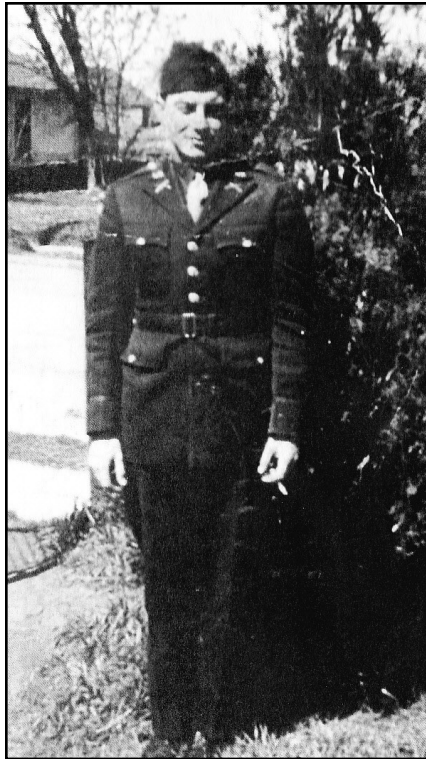
see Saint-Lô, Omaha Beach and also St. Martin de Tallevende. In 2000, I went over to Saint-Lô and installed, with the help of Jean Mignon, one of my sculptures as a memorial for my Father and his comrades at the Madeleine Memorial in Saint-Lô.

My father was born in Brooklyn on May 28th, 1911. His ancestors were Irish immigrants. He worked in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York before the war and was a

young rising banker. I never really knew him but heard stories about him and had a few personal memories. I cannot describe his inner thoughts or motivations. I know that he loved his children and his wife and was a loyal American and an anti-fascist. I also knew that by all reports he was a good officer and he was good to his men. He was against tyranny and he was willing to sacrifice his life so that, he believed, his war would be the last and his sons would not have to go into the Army or war.

In the world as we know it since then, peace has not happened. I spent two years as a draftee private in the artillery over in Germany at the beginning of the sixties. I got out before they sent line units to Vietnam. Each day I see my father's photo on my desk and I offer up a prayer for him and I also speak with him in my heart much as I did when I

was a boy and I felt alone. His bravery in the face of daily horror has given me strength to face many things. He was not a man of war. He was a man who loved life. He did what he felt was his duty. Americans now and then and always ought to be grateful for the sacrifice that he and others gave in the name of the preservation of human dignity and freedom and spirituality. I love my father for who he was and who he is for me now as I am also a man of my own time with my family and my children. My father's story is not about glory or armies or ideology or war making. It is about one human being and his son and family and about love that never dies and that in the end is the only real and lasting spiritual reality, God-given in each of our hearts.



*Originally published in "Amitié", Fall 2012,
the newsletter of Normandy Allies.*

Executive Director's Message

(Continued from page 1)

To get more details on what I expect to be a memorable convention, please check out NVC Kilbourne's article beginning on page 1.

And speaking of April, my mind like many of yours is on the 80th Anniversary of D-Day which is rapidly approaching. Based on a recommendation from my good friend and Historian Emeritus Joe Balkoski, I'm reading "Other Clay" by Charles Cawthon, a battalion commander in the 116th Infantry who landed in the second wave on Omaha Beach. If you have not read the book, I highly recommend it. Cawthon is an elegant writer, who spent his civilian career as a journalist, candidly describing the fear, courage and loyalty of his men who under dire circumstances got the job done.

I'll be at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA on 6 June to remember the sacrifices of 29ers like Cawthon who survived and those who never returned. I hope to see many of you there. There would be no better way to recognize the significance of this day than to have an outstanding turnout of Association members. NFO Carr assures me that we will again have a pavilion that will make our attendees comfortable at the ceremony.

In our last issue of the *Twenty-Niner Newsletter*, PNC Ted Shuey wrote an article about his undertaking to erect a monument in France to honor the 29th Division in WWI. Not long after the veterans returned, the recently formed 29th Division Association felt it would be appropriate to erect a monument to recognize the town of Consenvoye's role in supporting the American advance to the Heights of the Meuse. On November 23, 1931, National Commander Fairfield H. Hodges announced plans to "erect a memorial in the town on the east bank of the Meuse in France to honor fallen members of the Twenty-Ninth division, A.E.F." Unfortunately, the Great Depression set in and the monument did not happen.

But now almost 100 years later we are on the verge of realizing that dream. Well known Verdun sculptor Jean Victor Stein has asked for the honor of creating it after he completes his work on the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris early in 2024. The current Mayor of Consenvoye, M. Andre Dormois, and the town are excited that we may now finally live up to our end of the bargain to provide a monument to honor our Twenty-Niners that made the ultimate sacrifice in

WWI. It will be carved from a 3-ton block of local stone, depicting a 29er advancing toward the Molleville Farm.

I am pleased to let you know that at NEC II the Association approved supporting the project through a fund raising campaign that will kick off in the first quarter of 2024.

I have also been busy with the Futures Committee that is under the leadership of NVC Kilbourne who has held several in person meetings since the initial meeting at the 2023 Convention. This is a vital effort for the Association as we move forward in the 21st century and NVC Kilbourne has aptly named it "Transform or Die." We are evaluating the following areas: membership, participation, communications and finance. The result of the committee's effort will be a plan that has initiatives to address each of these areas to revitalize our beloved Association.

I was extremely pleased to attend the groundbreaking ceremony at the Pikesville Armory on 22 January. It was the crowning moment in the recent history of the armory that was recently closed with a very uncertain future. But due to the efforts of PNC Ginsburg and many members of the Pikesville community, the future is now very bright. Check out my article beginning on page 1.

Finally, the flag of the 115th Infantry Regiment that was taken ashore on D-Day has now returned to the Baltimore area at the Dundalk Armory. Due to a burst pipe and resulting asbestos contamination, the Fifth Regiment Armory has been closed for cleanup over the past several months. Once complete and reopened the flag will be transported to the FRA. We are planning a special ceremony for the remounting in the WWII Room at the Museum under the leadership of PNC Hinz. Stay tuned for more details.

Highlights of the NEC II Meeting at the Pikesville NCO Club on 24 January, 2024

NED Frank Armiger opened the Zoom hybrid meeting at 1100 followed by NC Dick Snyder welcoming all who were in person and those online. VNC Jimmy Kilbourne led all in the Pledge of Allegiance and the Preamble followed by Chaplain Joel Jenkins who provided the opening prayer.

Adjutant Buddy Faulconer read a note from the National Commander to the 29th Division Commander, MG Joe DiNonno, congratulating him on his recent promotion recognition.

NC Snyder submitted his report and highlighted his attendance at the Futures Committee meeting and commented on their progress. He noted the announced resignation at the

end of 2024 of Will Mund, as the Editor of the *Twenty-Niner Newsletter* and Membership Chairman and the need to find a replacement for both positions. He also noted that Neil Ungerleider has resigned as the Website manager, and VC Kilbourne will take over the duties temporarily until a replacement is found. NC Snyder announced that he would be representing the Association at the 80th D-Day Ceremonies in Normandy France.

National Finance Officer Richard Carr provided a written report of the Association finances that basically indicated expenditures are greater than income.

NED Armiger reported the restored 115th flag was due to be returned to the 5th Regiment Armory, however the armory is without heat (and will be for at least the next 6 weeks) delaying the return of the newly restored flag to an unheated armory. Once returned, PNC Hinz is planning an event to mark the remounting of the flag.

NJA Michael Comeau reported he was still working to produce a final Procedures Manual.

It was agreed it should be broad in scope without minute detail. He anticipates a final draft will be presented to the Governance Committee and then to the NEC at the June Meeting.

Membership Chairman Mund reported the Association had an increase of 15 Post members.

We now have 2,583 total members.

NVC Kilbourne discussed his Futures Committee report. The Title is "Transform or Die." The committee met three times since the convention and will meet again two more times.

The intent is to produce a product with initiatives that will sustain the association into the future. There are four basic areas that the committee is evaluating: Membership, Finance, Participation and Communication.

The request from Post 93 Commander Fran Sherr-Davino for \$1,000 for flowers to present at the various 80th D-Day ceremony locations in France that her group plans to visit for the 80th anniversary was previously approved subject to compliance with stipulations set at the National Convention in October. NFO Carr communicated the stipulations to Ms. Sherr-Davino and she agreed to all in writing (Banner with 29th Division Association on each wreath, pictures of each submitted to the NEC, the MC at the event to announce that the flowers are presented by the 29th Division Association, and all receipts provided to the NFO).

NED Armiger reported the Convention Committee has

met twice so far. The convention will be held in Staunton, 15-18 August. The guest speaker will be April Cheek-Messier, President of the National D-Day Memorial. Hotel 24 South will be the site for the business meeting, Saturday banquet, Memorial Service, and hospitality room. The Convention announcement and information will be included in the Spring Edition of the *29er*. We will also include a link to the hotel to make reservations.

PNC Ted Shuey spoke about the development of a Monument in Consenvoye. He has been there multiple times and worked with the town on securing the site in a small park near the area where the 29th Division crossed the Meuse. He has identified a sculptor and has an initial design concept. The proposed work will include the patches of the 33rd and 79th Divisions as well as our 29th Division.

The town of Consenvoye as well as several of our posts have committed to help finance the project that would erect the first monument to the 29th Division in WWI where 3 of our soldiers received the Medal of Honor. After a lengthy discussion, the NEC voted unanimously to support the project and initiate a campaign to raise funds. The monument could potentially be in place for unveiling in late 2024.

Bernie Liswell requested that the Association go on the record to support the Chestertown community resolution to save the John Newman Armory that was closed due to changes in the Maryland National Guard and repositioning of units. Washington College, located in Chestertown purchased the property and plans to demolish the building. The NEC voted to provide a resolution in support of the community resolution.

NEC III will be held on 13 June as a hybrid meeting with Marylanders gathering at the Pikesville VFD and Virginians gathering at the 29th Division Museum in Verona.

After Chaplain Jenkins provided a closing prayer, NC Snyder adjourned the meeting at 1313..

By Frank Armiger, National Executive Director

29th Division Ranger Battalion

Morning Reports are now available on our website, 29div.com, courtesy of member **Julie Belanger of Post 93.**

PMR Groundbreaking

(Continued from page 4)

ceremony. In addition to PNC Ginsburg, NC Dick Snyder, PNC Pete Hinz, Historian Joseph Balkoski, member Jim Bonner and NED Frank Armiger were in attendance. Members of our Post 48 in Westminster, Charles Foreman, Donald Graf, Richard Stem, Russ Myers and Post Commander Bill Rosier also were in attendance.

After various leaders in addition to Governor Moore delivered their remarks in the armory building, everyone moved outside for the groundbreaking ceremony. With 13 shovels deployed, the dignitaries broke ground and the \$100M project was underway. The first phase of the redevelopment process will begin in April 2024 with construction to renovate and restore the Non Commissioned Officers (NCO) Club building, a project that will take about 12 months.

The NCO Club at Pikesville has long been a favorite meeting place for the 29th Division Association in Maryland where we recently held NEC II, as well as the January MD Region Meeting. In the interim, PNC Ginsburg has secured space for the Association, other veterans' groups and the Maryland Military History Round Table at the Pikesville Volunteer Fire Department that is just around the corner.

Pikesville Military Reservation was originally home to a horse artillery regiment and consequently, had stables to house the means of conveyance for the artillery pieces and supplies. At one time the facility hosted polo matches that drew officers from far and wide, including WWII icon, George S. Patton. With advances in technology the stables were converted to garages for the maintenance of the vehicles that now replaced the horses.

The Pikesville Military Reservation was the headquarters of the 110th Field Artillery reformed into a two battalion unit after WWI in the Maryland National Guard. On 3 February 1941 the 110th was inducted into federal service as a part of the



Governor Wes Moore and PNC David Ginsburg share congratulations with Senator Cardin and Congressman Ruppersberger in the background.

29th Infantry Division and served in WWII as the direct support unit for the 115th Infantry Regiment.

In addition to the 110th Field Artillery, Pikesville Military Reservation had also been the brigade headquarters for the 58th Brigade (SEP) and later the Third Brigade of the reactivated 29th Division (Light) of the Maryland Army National Guard in 1985.

Many members of the 110th Field Artillery Battalion landed on D-Day under the command of John P. "Purley" Cooper who would be their commanding officer throughout the entire war. The 110th fired the first artillery shots from the beach using artillery pieces from the 58th Armored Artillery Brigade.

The 110th then played an important role in the defense of St. Lo after it was seized by supporting the 115th holding off multiple German counterattacks. LTC Glover Johns an outstanding officer and battalion commander in the 115th, credited the 110th as the real reason that St. Lo was held. The unit served throughout the rest of the war into the Rhineland where on 29 September 1944, Battery B fired its first round directly into Germany.

After WWII the 110th served in various roles including as a part of the 29th Division (Light) and later at Guantanamo Bay, Afghanistan and Iraq. On 8 August 2009, the 110th was officially deactivated ending its exceptional service to the United States . . . at least for now. It was not long thereafter that the Maryland Military Department shuttered the facility at Pikesville that had been officially added to the National Register of historic places.

The sound of polo mallets hitting balls on Armory grounds is long gone. The gathering of troops and all of the activity involved in drill weekend are now in the past. However, the future is bright with the sounds of pickle ball players, soccer balls bouncing, veterans reminiscing and members of the community gathering for the arts and entertainment. One can't help but think that John "Purley" Cooper and all those others who have passed through the Pikesville Armory are looking down from their heavenly perch and saying, "Job well done."

For more information on the project including artist conceptual drawings check out the Pikesville Armory Foundation website <https://transformpikesvillearmory.org/> and while you're at it, consider donating to this very worthwhile cause.

*Article by Frank Armiger
Asst. Editor/Executive Director*



MG Janeen Birkhead, TAG-MD, and LTG (Ret) H Steven Blum.

105th Annual Reunion & Convention Hotel Information

15-18 August 2024



HOTEL RESERVATIONS

Hotel 24 South - Downtown

24 South Market Street

Staunton, VA 24401

For Reservations Call 540-885-4848, or Email: reservations@hotel24south.com

The group room rate is \$139 per night plus taxes, single or double occupancy room. Parking in the attached parking deck is available and can be added to your room at the current City of Staunton rate. Reservations will be held for one night with a credit card. Guest room check-in time is 4:00pm and check-out time is 12:00pm. Cancellations can be made 48 hours or more before your arrival date.

Our group room rate name to mention when making your reservation is "29th Division Reunion".

Make your hotel reservations early. We only have a limited number of rooms available.

Cut-off date for getting the group rate is 15 July 2024.

Reservations made after this date are subject to availability at the time of booking.



Reunion in the Valley of Virginia means FUN!

(Continued from page 1)

al Muster every Veterans Day weekend. We asked the Hotel 24 South for a weekend in late September to mid-October which have been the time period for our reunions over the last several years.

The Shenandoah Valley is a busy place during those months dues to the many nearby college football games, fall leaf color change and numerous local festivals and events. Only one weekend in mid-August was open that could accommodate our typical format of activities and we grabbed it!

We already have a nearly full schedule of events planned at our host hotel and attractions in the area. Our weekend will begin on Thursday with early registration that afternoon and a fully stocked hospitality suite in the evening to help you relax and get prepared

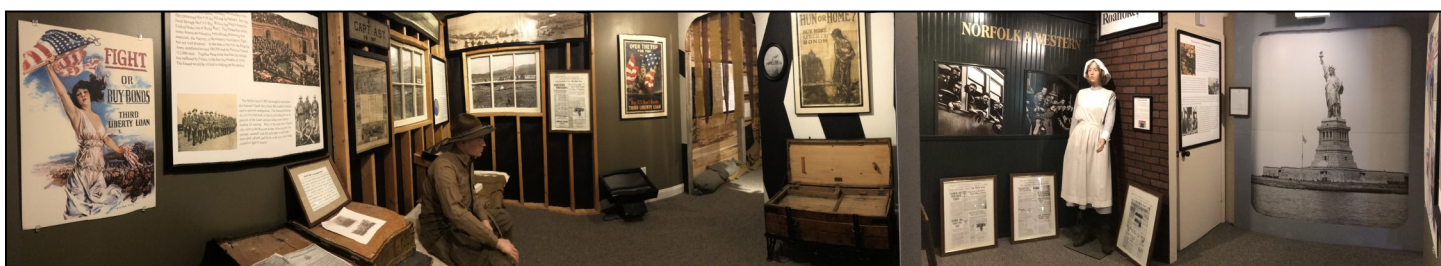
for the coming events. Friday we will travel to Luray Caverns by bus and get private, guided tours of the caverns, visit two museums and have a picnic lunch. That evening we will return in time to get freshened up and attend a wonderful "Night at the Museum" reception with food and drinks, museum guides and special events throughout the evening.

Saturday begins with a breakfast, followed by our business meeting and installation of new Officers, and then some great seminars for the Posts and Members about the future of the Association. We have a great evening banquet and meal with a fantastic guest speaker lined up to follow our afternoon activity, followed up with great fellowship in our hospitality suite after dinner.

Sunday we will close out our events with the traditional Memorial Service to departed comrades. We will continue our a la carte pricing that proved to be popular and effective last year. You will be able to register to attend either Friday or Saturday events, or come for the whole weekend. More registration details will be published soon! See You There!

Submitted by Jimmy Kilbourne, National Vice Commander

Panoramic views of the Museum!



Omaha Beach Bible helps D-Day Memorial prepare for 80th Anniversary

A recent donation to the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA highlights the grievous loss of the 29th Division on D-Day and the pain it caused at home, especially for Co. A of the 116th Regiment and the famous Bedford Boys. The poignant donation is particularly well-timed, as the Memorial prepares for the 80th Anniversary of D-Day this June.

As is well known, the community of Bedford (recently designated Virginia's "WWII Heritage City" by the National Park Service) was devastated by the events of D-Day, June 6, 1944. Nineteen local men of A/116 were killed on Omaha Beach, all likely in the first hour of the invasion of Normandy. Among those nineteen were two brothers: Bedford and Raymond Hoback.

Nearly six weeks later, on Sunday July 16, the parents and siblings of the Hoback boys were preparing for church when they heard a knock at the door. The local sheriff had personally come to deliver a telegram to John and Macie Hoback informing them that their son Bedford had been killed in action. The next day the devastated family received a second telegram: Raymond was missing in action. Later he would be confirmed dead, although his body was never recovered and identified. Lucille Hoback, then a teenager and the sister of Bedford and Raymond, would later say that after these devastating telegrams "my parents were never the same."

Then in early August, the family received a mysterious package in the mail from a West Virginia soldier they did not know. Inside was a black leatherbound Bible that Mrs. Hoback had given Raymond in 1938. The soldier, Harold Crayton of the 453rd Amphibian Truck Company, explained that he had found the Bible on Omaha Beach and picked it up to keep it from being destroyed. The name Raymond Hoback was inside, his hometown, and the names of his parents. Crayton returned the Bible to them "knowing you no doubt would want the book returned... I am sending it knowing that most Bibles are a book to be cherished." His letter expressed sympathy and hopefulness: "You have by now received a letter from your son saying he is well. I sincerely hope so."

Crayton was unaware of the fate of Raymond; still less could he have known that there were two brothers of the Hoback family to fall that day.



Lucille Hoback Boggess presents her brother's Bible, recovered from Omaha Beach, to April Cheek Messier of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation.

For the grieving family, the Bible became a cherished heirloom, a reminder of the costs of war and the value of faith. The story of Raymond Hoback and his rescued Bible became known internationally, personalizing the losses in battle on D-Day and the pain of the families left to grieve. The story is told in Alex Kershaw's bestselling history "The Bedford Boys," and inspired "Death on Shore," one of the evocative sculptures at the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford. The piece features an unnamed soldier at the water's edge, a lost Bible beside him as he breathes his last. Tens of thousands of visitors see the sculpture and hear the story of the Hobacks each year.

Last fall, Lucille Hoback Boggess donated the original Bible and the letter from Harold Crayton to the National D-Day Memorial, to honor both brothers, the rest of the Bedford Boys, and the more than 2500 American brothers-in-arms who gave their lives to secure victory on D-Day.

"We are so honored that the Hoback and Boggess family have decided to entrust us with this precious gift," said April Cheek-Messier, president of the National D-Day Memorial. "I've known Lucille all my life, and the story of Raymond's Bible still brings tears to my eyes. We will also continue to cherish the Bible and use it to teach the lessons and preserve the legacy of D-Day."

The Bible is now on display in the Memorial's education building, and will remain so for the various 80th Anniversary events from June 6-9. June 6 will see the Memorial's annual commemoration of the Normandy landings take on extra poignancy as international representatives, families of Normandy veterans, and patriotic history buffs gather to witness living historians, moving music, a flyover of WWII aircraft, and other special features. On the evenings of June 7 and 8 the Memorial will debut "When We Went In," a once-in-a-lifetime immersive light show told with moving narration, brilliant images, and rousing music. The weekend will conclude with a reenactment of a WWII chapel service on Sunday.

Go to www.dday.org/80th/ to learn more and to register your intentions to attend.



Hoback Bible with photo of Raymond Hoback and telegram listing him as MIA.

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

Chaplain's Comments:**CH (COL) Joel Jenkins
US Army (RET)**

Recently, as I was responding to my wife's insistence that I "straighten up" some of my various piles of memories, I ran across two very important books. Both are rather small, and their covers are not that impressive. However, as I picked them up, dusted them off, and read their titles, I knew I had in my hand two books that could only be described as "priceless."

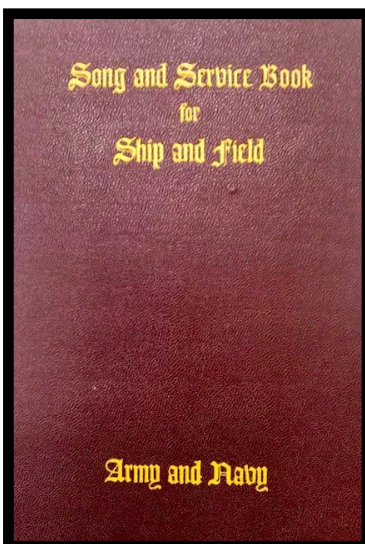
One was copyrighted in 1917, and the other was copyrighted in 1941. The 1917 book was simply titled: Army and Navy Service Book. As I read from it, I realized that numerous copies of this



book had been used by Navy and Army chaplains as they accompanied our sailors, soldiers and Marines into harm's way in WW I. There were chapters that provided words, readings, and music that could be used, by those of faith, to acknowledge one's dependence upon God and to seek His shelter and refuge. The last section in this small book of services was simply written, "Order for Burial." Sadly, the use of this WW I Service Book, for burial services, was employed multiple thousands of times during the period 1917-1918. The 29th ID incurred almost 6,000 of

these casualties, as they, along with their fellow service members, fought in "the war to end all wars."

The 1941 book was entitled: Song and Service Book for Ship and Field, and below those words were simply, Army and Navy. Even though only 4" by 5," it was somewhat larger than its predecessor. This Service Book was produced by the U S Government printing office and contained over 100 pages of readings, scriptures, prayers, and regulations for use by military chaplains. Included is the preface page from the 1941 version.



Obviously, one purpose of both of these Service Books was to foster an environment, even during a time of war, where the religious faith of America's military personnel could be encouraged and strengthened. The WW II

version included an even more expansive section on the proper conduct of military funeral honors and burials. It is truly sobering to read such guidance, particularly in the context of America incurring over 407,000 deaths of service members. The 29th ID suffered almost 4,000 of this number, not counting the over 15,000 wounded. These Service Books remind us that America, from her beginning, has always recognized the "faith foundations," and "faith needs" of her sons and daughters who have gone into harm's way to preserve our way of life.

In my 27 years as an Army chaplain, including 12 years of wearing the 29th ID patch, I have served alongside some of America's finest. It was my privilege to honor the chaplain's motto of "bringing God to soldiers and soldiers to God." Whether at the Pentagon during 9/11, a year in Iraq, three years at Fort Bragg or even in various training periods, I witnessed the military environment as one of risks. It is a profession where life and death decisions are made every day. I personally have officiated funerals and Memorial Services for almost 300 soldiers, including a number at Arlington.

In conclusion, producing books and manuals that include descriptions for proper funeral and burial honors truly puts into perspective the heroic service of America's military. Many of these heroes wore, and still wear, "the blue and the gray" on their sleeves. It is vital that proper military honors be rendered at the time of a soldier's death. But, as I see it, it is equally important to never forget those fallen. The important work of our Association is committed to that goal. Truly, we do "the Lord's work," as we seek to perpetuate the memories of all who made that ultimate sacrifice for liberty!

On the first page of the 1941 Service Book is George Washington's prayer and I include it below.

CH (COL) Joel Jenkins

Washington's Prayer for the Nation

Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in thy holy protection, that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to government, and entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow citizens of the United States at large.

And finally that Thou wilt most graciously be pleased to dispose us all to do justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that charity, humility, and pacific temper of mind which were the characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy nation.

Grant our supplications, we beseech Thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (Written at Newburg, June 8, 1783, and sent to the Governors of all the States.)

“Who will command this operation?”

Ike takes on Overlord

The name of Dwight Eisenhower will forever be intertwined with the history of D-Day. But for most of 1943, virtually no one, including President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill, considered Ike the leading candidate to command that momentous operation. Instead, insiders judged the British Army's Chief of the Imperial General Staff, Sir Alan Brooke, or the U.S. Army Chief of Staff, George C. Marshall, the best men for the job. Sooner or later Churchill and Roosevelt would have to pick one of those two astute soldiers for the post that was considered so vital that it already had been assigned the lofty title of “supreme commander.”

Even when the Combined Chiefs of Staff accepted Lt. Gen. Frederick Morgan's OVERLORD plan at the August 1943 Quebec conference as the Allies' foremost military operation of 1944, the supreme commander for whom Morgan was supposed to be working had not been named. By that summer, however, Churchill remarked that the man to whom he had thrice promised the slot, Brooke, would no longer be acceptable to the Americans because of “the very great preponderance of American troops that would be employed after the original landing.” It would have to be an American, avowed the prime minister. Churchill recalled that Brooke “bore the great disappointment with soldierly dignity”; Brooke, however, noted that “the blow...took me several months to recover from.”

Marshall's selection as supreme commander seemed so inevitable that the general's military secretary, Col. Frank McCarthy—future producer of the film *Patton*—dispatched an executive desk across the Atlantic for use by Marshall once he assumed command. Secretary of War Henry Stimson urged Roosevelt to anoint Marshall, describing the general as “a towering eminence... [He] is the man that most surely can now by his character and skill furnish the military leadership which is necessary to bring our two nations together in confident joint action in this great operation.” Marshall, however, steadfastly refrained from influencing FDR on his own behalf, despite Stimson's assertion that the general, in a moment of candor, had admitted: “Any soldier would prefer a field command.”

By the time Churchill, Roosevelt, and their retinues arrived in Tehran on November 27, 1943, to join Joseph Stalin in the first of the war's three-power summits, a supreme commander had still not been named despite OVERLORD's scheduled commencement in five months. For years Stalin had clamored for the Allies

to open a second front in Western Europe to draw German units away from the east. But at their second plenary meeting on November 29, Stalin inquired: “Who will be the commander in this Operation OVERLORD?” According to the transcript, “The president and prime minister interpolated this was not yet decided.” An incredulous Stalin retorted: “Then nothing will come of these operations.”

Roosevelt had once affirmed, “I want George [Marshall] to be the Pershing of the Second World War.” But according to Stimson, to whom FDR related the account, “[Roosevelt] tried to get Marshall to tell him whether he preferred to hold the command of OVERLORD...or whether he preferred to remain as chief of staff... He said that Marshall stubbornly refused, saying that was for the president to decide and that he, Marshall, would do with equal cheerfulness whatever one he was selected for.”

On the way home from Tehran, the Anglo-American delegations stopped in Cairo for more talks. On the evening of December 6, in FDR's beautifully furnished villa, featuring an exquisite garden in full view of the Pyramids, the president called Marshall into his suite. No stenographers were present, just the two great men, who would presently emerge with stunning news. Roosevelt asked Marshall to grab paper and pencil and jot down a few words as he dictated a letter to Sta-



lin. Cast in the role of an ordinary secretary, the four-star general scribbled earnestly as FDR pronounced: “The immediate appointment of General Eisenhower to the command of OVERLORD has been decided upon.”

Finally, OVERLORD had its supreme commander. An unknown Regular Army colonel three years in the past, Eisenhower had soared into the most important American field command of World War II. Marshall—still Ike's boss—ordered Eisenhower to return to the States for a few weeks of rest, and Ike did exactly that, dropping in on his son at West Point, flying out to Kansas to visit his mother and brothers, relaxing for a few days at the grand Greenbriar Hotel in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia.

At a January 1944 meeting with Roosevelt at the White House, FDR asked, “Ike, do you like the title of Supreme Commander?” Eisenhower replied: “I like the title, Mr. President. It has the ring of importance—something like ‘Sultan.’”

By Joe Balkoski

"I could cheerfully shoot the offender"

Overlord Security Measures

In April 1944 the restaurant in Claridge's, the renowned Mayfair hotel just blocks away from Ike's London headquarters at 20 Grosvenor Square, was not a good spot for an American general to gossip about D-Day.

At an April 18 party thrown for Red Cross nurses by the U.S. Army's chief intelligence officer in Britain, Brigadier General Edwin Sibert, a *Time* reporter noted: "Cocktails were sipped"—perhaps in sufficient quantities to loosen the tongue of Major General Henry Miller, the head of Ninth Air Force's Service Command.

The 53-year-old Miller, nicknamed "Izzy" at West Point, was described by 1915 classmate Ike Eisenhower as an "old and warm friend," but that friendship was about to disintegrate.

Miller later swore to Ike he had done nothing wrong, but three witnesses—one of whom was Sibert—noted they had heard Miller in discussion with some nurses pronounce loudly and authoritatively: "Upon my honor, the invasion will come before June 15."

Sent home at reduced rank for that one-sentence breach of security, Miller was no longer in uniform by November. "I get so angry," Ike cabled Marshall about this and other security lapses, "that I could cheerfully shoot the offender myself."

Ike's proclivity to chain smoke surely worsened when he contemplated the impact of security slip-ups on *Overlord*. If the Germans could crack the Allies' wall of secrecy—even just a day or two before D-Day—their ability to turn back the invasion would expand by a significant factor, and as Ike well understood, a defeat in Normandy would cast the Anglo-American war effort into chaos. Inevitably, Eisenhower would have to let hundreds of thousands of men in on the secret: how could ruinous security blunders possibly be averted?

They would be averted by means of a new and highly restrictive security classification known as *Bigot*. Only those issued *Bigot* ID cards would be informed of the *Overlord* secret and granted access to the locations—under 24-hour guard—where invasion plans were secured.

The minuscule number of *Bigots* in early 1944 swelled as SHAEF disseminated *Overlord* documents to the units tasked to carry out the mission; ultimately, when 150,000 assault troops were briefed in the fortnight preceding the invasion on their hour-by-hour D-Day roles, the top brass restricted them to marshalling

areas, known as "sausages" due to their appearance on maps. Formidable coils of concertina wire sealed the GIs and Tommies inside, where stern Counter-Intelligence Corps men censored letters—which would not be mailed until after D-Day in any case—and ensured no conversations would take place with inquisitive locals approaching the wire.

Presently escape from this miserable cooped-up existence would come: troops would depart the sausages, march like humpbacks overloaded with equipment through the verdant English countryside, fragrant with fox-glove and Queen Anne's lace, and proceed to the ships or airplanes that would carry them across the Channel to meet their fates in Normandy.

Enforcing secrecy among military personnel was straightforward; to address the much more thorny issue of civilian security, Churchill created a committee headed by a 65-year-old former Indian civil servant named Sir Findlater Stewart.

Among the recommendations made by Stewart's committee and later adopted by the British war cabinet were restrictions that made travel between Britain and neutral countries, particularly Ireland, difficult if not impossible; prohibitions on neutral diplomats' movements and correspondence; and a travel ban starting on April 1, 1944, by British civilians to England's 500-mile southern and southeastern coastline from Land's End to East

Anglia, an injunction that Stewart estimated would impact 600,000 people per month.

When some civilian ministers, including Churchill, protested against the sweeping zone that would be prohibited to British citizens—"We must beware of handing out irksome for irksome's sake," the prime minister avowed—the committee churned out a one-page list for Churchill of the top secret D-Day equipment that would in all likelihood no longer be secret if the travel ban was not imposed, including *Mulberry* artificial harbors, Duplex Drive amphibious tanks, and the underwater pipeline code-named *Pluto*.

True, the rules would inconvenience everyone, civilians, soldiers, diplomats, and politicians alike. But General Frederick Morgan, *Overlord*'s progenitor, provided a cogent defense for such stringent security: "If we fail, there won't be any more politics," he said.



MG Henry "Izzy" Miller

By Joe Balkoski

Field artillery NCO reflects on quick-paced military journey

HANOVER, VA – For Sgt. Christopher Brown, the best part about serving in the field artillery is the camaraderie he's found there. He serves in the Virginia Army National Guard's Alpha Battery, 1st Battalion, 111th Field Artillery Regiment, 116th Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Hanover, Virginia, as a 13B Cannon Crewmember. He's been in the military for about half a decade, but has already experienced a handful of schools and both an overseas and stateside deployment.

"I've really enjoyed my time in the field artillery and I've definitely had my share of adventures," Brown said. As he's gained experience and joined the ranks of the noncommissioned officer corps, Brown found himself a strong and needed member of a team, one that the field artillery can't function without.

"Being a part of a team is very important," Brown said. "When you're in the field, the cannons can't be operated just by one man. You need a team, and you need to be able to work as a team to get rounds out of the tube as fast as possible."

Brown's military career started when he was still in high school. He met a recruiter and, in his junior year, enlisted into the Virginia Army National Guard, earning a \$20,000 sign-on bonus along the way.

"When I joined, I wanted something exciting and adventurous," Brown said. "I thought the field artillery would be a good place to be, and I don't regret it."

He went to Basic Combat Training, or BCT, right after his junior year of high school, and said the experience took him out of his comfort zone and gave him a sense of purpose. He said he felt like he was part of something bigger and, by the end of BCT, he felt accomplished.

After completing BCT, he returned home to Thomas Dale High School in Chesterfield, Virginia, for his senior year, and was set to graduate in the spring of 2020. The pandemic altered the final months of his high school experience, but, in June, he shipped to Fort Sill, Oklahoma, for Advanced Individual Training, or AIT. He was there for a little bit longer than usual due to COVID protocols, but by August he was back home, newly qualified as a 13B.

Less than six months later, just a few weeks before his 19th birthday, Brown was mobilized to assist civilian law enforcement with security operations at the U.S. Capitol following the events of Jan. 6, 2021.

"It was one of the craziest experiences fresh out of high school," Brown said. "I was, in all honesty, barely an adult at that point."

Brown said his time in the nation's capital was a unique experience. It included long days and nights and "cold, 12-hour shifts in 30- and 40-degree temperatures." But, Brown said, he hadn't spent much time in D.C. before that and he was able to



SGT Christopher Brown

meet a lot of "interesting figures," including Maj. Gen. John Rhodes, 29th Infantry Division Commander, who presented Brown with a division coin.

After Brown and the rest of his unit returned home from D.C., they started preparing for their overseas mobilization in support of Operation Inherent Resolve to provide short-range air defense against unmanned aerial systems, rocket artillery and motor attacks throughout the U.S. Central Command area of operations in the Middle East. On that mission, Brown used the Counter-Rocket, Artillery and Mortar System, or C-RAM.

"The training interested me a lot," Brown said. "It was an incredible system to work on and, so long as you knew what you were doing, you could rest easy."

Brown turned 19 during his mobilization to D.C., then turned 20 while deployed overseas, and then, on his 21st birthday, just a few months after returning home from the Middle East, he traveled to Fort Moore, Georgia, and reported to Air Assault School. A few months later, after successful completion of Air Assault School, Brown traveled to Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania, for the Basic Leader Course.

"For me, a career highlight was definitely either Air Assault or BLC," Brown said, explaining that both courses helped motivate him following the deployment.

One thing Brown wants people to know if they're considering joining the military, especially the field artillery, is that it's not always easy.

"The military has its ups and downs, but, much like in any area of life, if you can look past the bad times, the good times are that much sweeter," Brown said. "I've done a lot of stuff, I've gone to Air Assault, BLC, deployed, both with the state and federally, and it's been a lot of fun. I'm not leaving anytime soon."

*By SFC Terra C. Gatti
Virginia National Guard Public Affairs Office*

PNC Robert E. Wisch

Past National Commander, 2016-2017

Past National Commander Robert E. Wisch, 86, of Pasadena, MD, passed away in the presence of his wife and daughter on Wednesday, November 15, 2023, after a brief hospitalization. He had just returned home and begun hospice care the day before his passing. Bob was predeceased by brother Howard of Malvern, PA, and numerous cousins including Henry & Eileen Behringer and Greg Kelch. He is survived by wife Linda, daughter Susan and her husband Patrick Murphy (Captain, US Navy) and his grandchildren, Molly and Fionn Murphy. He is also survived by sister-in-law Linda Wisch, nephew Howard (Lindsey) Wisch, and their children Caroline, Ellie, and Henry, and niece Allison (James) Hayes and their children, Alex, Tommy, and Hadley, and even more cousins.

Bob was born on Smallwood Street in Baltimore City on April 24, 1937, the second son of the late Henry and Viola (nee Ulrich) Wisch. After graduating from Baltimore Polytechnic Institute in 1955, he attended McCoy College, the Johns Hopkins University evening college. He worked for Baltimore Gas & Electric Company for 12 years, and then switched careers to become a manufacturers' representative of lighting and electrical products. His sales and management territory covered four states and the District of Columbia. He retired in 2007.

Following a period as co-workers at BG&E and a brief courtship, Bob and Linda Louise Oster, also of Baltimore, were united in the bonds of holy matrimony on June 29, 1968. The couple moved to Catonsville and then West Friendship to an eight-acre farm. In 1995, they moved into their current home on the Magothy River. They added their only child, Susan, to their family in 1975.

In the late 1950s, Bob enlisted in the 175th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division of the Maryland Army National Guard, and served as an officer in the regiment for 10 years. He received an Honorable Discharge in 1969, and was then active in several veterans groups as an officer and member. He proudly served as a

National Commander of the 29th Division Association, Commander of Limestone Post 1-72 of the 29th Division Association, Commander of the Veterans Corps of the Fifth Regiment Infantry, and member of the Centennial Legion of Historic Military Commands over the course of his retirement. He was promoted to his ultimate rank of Colonel (VC), Veterans Corps of the Fifth Regiment Infantry of the Maryland National Guard, in April, 2014.



Bob was a member of the Masonic fraternity (Pickering Lodge) and Boumi Shriners for over 50 years. He was a founding member of the iconic Boumi Shriner Clowns, enjoying a long career of entertaining and encouraging people through his clown persona.

Bob was a devoted and caring husband and father, quick with a quip or joke and always the life of the party. His storytelling and entertaining nature made him a welcome guest at any military function, family get-together, and celebration. His thoughtfulness and skill at personal relationships

allowed his personality to shine in both joyful and somber events. His respect for our nation and the ideals upon which it was founded were boundless; he was an ambassador for respectful and deeply-rooted patriotism.

Bob's amateur interest in photography extended to a lifelong love of capturing moments and telling stories through film and digital media. In addition to his 55-year marriage to Linda, his great joys in life were being the best cheerleader and supporter of his daughter Susan's time at and graduation from the US Naval Academy (Class of 1997) and seven plus year service as a Surface Warfare Officer (SWO), his son-in-law Patrick's 24 plus years (and counting) of active duty Naval service, also as a SWO, and his active role in the lives of his grandchildren.

Visitation was held on Monday, November 20, 2023 at Barranco Funeral Home in Severna Park. Additional visitation was offered on Tuesday, November 21 with a funeral service also at Barranco. Military honors and burial followed at Meadowridge Memorial Park in Elkridge.

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

Now online at 29div.com

115th Regiment Journals: June to July 1944

Includes D-Day Landing and After-Action Reports.

In Morning Reports section for dues-paying members.

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 effort has been focused on the volunteers finishing the first M7B2 Priest and starting the second one that we received in 2023. They are also restoring an M151A2 jeep that needs a new gas tank so if anybody knows where we can get one cheap, please let us know. We also received a 2nd RCAT drone to be restored. And the beat goes on...



Despite the cold weather, the VANG Historical Foundation's volunteers begin the hard work of removing years of rust and several layers of paint to restore the second M7B2 Priest.



LTC(ret) Forrest Malcomb patiently works on the left front final drive of the Priest.



Another kind donation was a number of 1940s and 1950s five-gallon Jerry cans. After being restored these cans will be added to the M-41 Bulldog in front of the HQ and to the M84 Mortar track and M42 Duster on the parade deck on the south side of the JFHQ.

Reviving an M7B2 PRIEST

By CW4(ret) Alexander F. Barnes



When work began on the second M7B2, the story of the refurbishing of the first Priest made it into the pages of the December-January 2024 issue of History in Motion, the official magazine of the Military Vehicle Preservation Association. (MVPA).

Just before the Christmas holidays, the VANG received the generous donation of a 1944-dated U.S. Army Immersion Heater; an item remembered fondly by many soldiers and Marines for its ability to clean their mess kits as well as launch its stovepipes like a mortar if improperly lighted. This heater is being refurbished and will be put on display.



Other work included construction of display panels for historical artifacts in the JFHQ—here the crew pose for a team photo after putting the 75mm cannon and Maintenance caisson explanation panel in place. From the left: Steve Bourgeois, Doug Weiser, James Ebertowski, Tom Michels, John Bleattler, Craig Jewell, Forrest Malcomb, Brian Wood and Jim McClure. The panel highlights the use of the 75mm cannon by Hampton's Battery D, 111th Field Artillery in the 1930s and 40s.



29TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
 PO Box 548
 Lutherville Timonium, MD 21094-0548



**NATIONAL
COMMANDER**
 DICK SNYDER
 rdsnyder21@comcast.net

**NATIONAL
VICE COMMANDER**
 JIMMY KILBOURNE
 116thdirector@gmail.com

**NATIONAL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**
 FRANK ARMIGER
 farmiger@gmail.com

**NATIONAL
FINANCE OFFICER**
 RICHARD CARR
 rcarr7102@yahoo.com

1 March 2024

Dear Member/Friend of the 29th Division Association,

The time is fast approaching for the 105th Annual Reunion and Conference, **15-18 August 2024**, being held this year in beautiful Southwest Virginia, in the city of Staunton. We are planning some interesting activities including a visit to Luray Caverns on Friday. The area has many activities that can be explored for your enjoyment, as a group or by yourselves.

The Hotel 24 South in historic Staunton, Virginia will host this year's gathering of our Veterans, families, and friends. The Convention Committee has been working very hard to ensure that a good time will be had by all. Details will follow as they are confirmed.

Your support for the official Reunion/Conference **Souvenir Program Book** is vital for us to be able to conduct this Convention. While we hope you will be able to attend the Convention, you can still help to make it a success by placing an ad/entry in the book. Please consider using the Souvenir book to help us honor today's 29ers, friends and loved ones who have served in the Division, our historic units, and Division Posts. Checks should be made payable to the **29th Division Association** and mailed to Mr. Mund's address listed below to reach us NLT **1 July 2024** to ensure they make this year's book.

Thank you for your consideration and support in this effort. Hope to see you there!

Full Page (Color)	\$200.00	Quarter Page (B&W)	\$40.00
Full Page (B&W)	\$100.00	Eighth Page (B&W)	\$25.00
Half Page (B&W)	\$70.00		

Sincerely,

RICHARD D. SNYDER
 National Commander
 29th Division Association Inc.

WILLIAM S. MUND, JR.
 441 Chalfonte Drive
 Baltimore, MD 21228-4017
 duster197329@gmail.com
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IMPORTANT: The deadline for ads and boosters is **July 1, 2024**. Make up your ad copy, attach to this form with your check payable to the **29th Division Association** & mail to

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IMPORTANT: "Camera Ready" copy is needed. Please make sure your ads are complete and legible. Any questions concerning ads etc., please contact William Mund at the above listed address. Thank You.

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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.