

# BLUE RIDGE

The Service Magazine  
Volume 88, Number 352

Winter - 2007  
Issue 1

80th Infantry  
Blue Ridge Division




*Only Moves Forward*

<b>A.E.F.</b>	<b>E.T.O.</b>
1917-1919	1942-1946
Artois-Picardy	Northern France
St. Mihiel	Ardennes
Meuse-Argonne	Rhineland
Battle Deaths 1232	Central Europe
Casualties 5000	Battle Deaths 3,480
	Casualties 12,484

In remembrance of our 80th Division comrades  
who died and served in WWI and WWII

Official Publication of the 80th Division Veterans Association, Inc.  
Deadline for the next issue is June 1, 2007



# Eightieth Division Veterans Association

**BLUE RIDGE  
The Service Magazine**

The official quarterly publication by the 80th Division Veterans Association.  
(Incorporated as a not-for-profit organization in the State of Pennsylvania).

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*All communications, including articles, photos, news items for publication, changes of address,  
dues remittances and death notices should be addressed to the Secretary/Editor.*

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Service Officer	<b>Felix J. Cistolo (G-317)</b>
Flag Sergeant	
Color Sergeant	
Sergeant-at-Arms	<b>Don Davis (K-319)</b>
Public Affairs Officer	<b>George V. West (C-318)</b>
Division Photographer	<b>Tom Pappas (F-318)</b>

**TRUSTEES**

1 Year; Robert W. Smith (K-317)  
2 Year; Felix Cistolo (G-317)  
3 Years Walter W. Spangler (A-319)

**2 Year**

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Burt R. Marsh (M-319)  
PNC Russell P. Sick (305 Eng)

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George V. West (G-318)  
Andy Ferens (M-317)  
Robert J. McDonald (C-319)

**3 Year**

Gerald V. Myers (G-317)  
Laverne J. Schock (F-317)  
Tom Pappas (F-318)



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## COMMANDER'S REPORT

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Just returned from the Florida post meeting. The weather cooperated and the camaraderie was better than ever!

We have been working with Gene O'Neil attempting to gain congressional approval to place a monument to our war dead at Arlington. This is proving to be a task of mon-

umental proportion! I now understand why our representatives get nothing done. They do not do anything!

If any of you are acquainted with a Senator of your State, please contact them on our behalf. Eric Reilinger (an example) worked for Jim Webb of Virginia a number of years ago. He will be contacting the Senator.

Elmer has completed his arrangements for our stay in Dayton this August. We are not stretched out like last year, so no excuses for not attending this 88th Reunion! Let us support Elmer! The reunion is to be held Holiday Inn, Dayton/Fairborn, OH 45324 15-18 August 2007, make your plans NOW.

**PNC Robert H. Burrows (Hq-317)**

### **Best Quote of the Year**

In a recent interview, General Norman Schwartzkopf was asked if he thought there was room for forgiveness toward the people who have harbored and abetted the terrorists who perpetrated the 9/11 attacks on America. His answer was a classic Schwartzkopf. The General said, "I believe that forgiving them is God's function. Our job is to arrange the meeting."

**Additional copies of the Memorial Newsletter:**

**Dedication Issue are available. Send \$5 to**

**Robert Murrell, Editor**

**630 Pennsylvania Ave.**

**Oakmont, PA 15139-1574**

## More photos from the Dedication throughout this newsletter.



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## A Tribute to PNC Nathason

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This is a remembrance of a fine soldier and gentleman, namely Robert N. Nathason, who was born March 25, 1910 and passed on to his maker on October 24, 2006. Over the years Bob attended many of our reunions with his wife, Rose, and served as a member of the Division's Trustees. He also helped in submitting our financial report to the IRS on a yearly basis until last year, when he asked to be relieved of that duty because of his health. As a CPA he was helpful in deciding in which banks our CDs were to be deposited. The Trustees and the Executive Committee will miss Bob's timely advice. As a fellow soldier, having served in the 3rd Battalion, 317 Regiment, he will be missed by his many buddies. We extend to his wife, Rose, our sincere sympathy in the loss of a fine husband and friend. Condolences can be sent to Rose at 1739 Faunce Street, Philadelphia, PA 19111-3431. Bob Smith will now be the contact person for the 3rd Battalion Post. Members of the post should forward any news to Bob at 61 Broad Street #108, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405 or call him at 805-545-7815.

## **Congratulation to PNC Clarence Brockman**

PNC Brockman was recently awarded with a Proclamation and Medal from the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania. Honoring his Service to his Country in WW II.

### **A little touch of humor...**

How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are?

When you are dissatisfied and would like to go back to youth, think about Algebra.

You know you are getting old when everything either dries up or leaks.

I don't know how I got over the hill without getting to the top.

One of the many things no one tells you about aging is that it is such a nice change from being young.

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## **MEMORIAL FUND**

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If you have sent in money and I have omitted your name please let me know so I may give you credit. Last date I have entered a name 1 March 2007.

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## **McBRIDE SCHOLARSHIP FUND**

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If you have sent in money and I have omitted your name please let me know so I may give you credit. Last date I have entered a name 1 March 2007.

Dottery, Harold C. 80th Rcn Troop

In memory of Eleanor "Sticky" Schoenly

Ehemann, Carole; Niece,

In Memory of Paul and Eleanor Schoney

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## **WELCOME NEW MEMBERS**

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DONALD CARSON

13320 BIRRELL STREET  
SOUTHGATE, MI 48185

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## **LIFE PLUS CLUB 2006-2007**

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If you have sent in money and I omitted your name, let me know so I may give you credit. Last date I have entered a name 1 March 2007.

Acree, Jim C-319

Hanright, Robert A. K-319

Laing, William G-319

Rehling, Art 80th Rcn

# To all Members of the Executive Council

29/12/2006: The Executive Council 80th Division Veterans Association  
The following is published for membership perusal.

## Re: 80th Division IT

The United States Military is a different animal than the one we knew. Today the 80th Division IT is made up of National Guard, Reserves, and Regular Army, all volunteers They are and have been engaged in the War of Terrorism against the United States of America, in various Countries around the World since 2005. Some individual 80th soldiers have fought in other Actions with other unrelated units. The 80th Division IT, men and women have been awarded the following

### Combat Badges:

62 Combat Infantry Badges                      166 Combat Action Badges  
6 Combat Medical Badges                      2 80th men, KIA  
19 Purple Hearts have been awarded. (More to be awarded is in process)

The 80th Division IT will be presented with a Battle Streamer for action in Iraq (In process). We know the qualifications to receive the Combat Infantry Badge and the Combat Medical Badge. Specific eligibility requirements for the Combat Action Badge as follows: The Combat Action Badge (CAB) may be awarded by any Commander delegated authority by the Secretary of the Army during war-time or the Commanding General, U S Army Resources Command and will be announced in permanent orders. May be awarded to any soldier.

Soldier must be performing assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay or in area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized.

Soldier must be personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy, and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement.

Soldier must not be assigned/attached to a unit that would qualify the soldier for the CIB/CMB.

Soldier must be personally present and actively engaged or being engaged by the enemy and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement.

Soldier must not be assigned/attached to a unit that would qualify the soldier for the CIB/CMB.

This Badge is not intended to be awarded to all soldiers who serve in a combat zone or imminent danger area they must meet the above criteria. It may be awarded to members from the other U S Armed. Forces and Foreign soldiers assigned to a U S Army Unit, provided they meet the above criteria.

Award of the CAB is authorized from 18 September 2001 to a date to be determined. Award for qualifying service in any previous conflict is not authorized.

Approval date for the CAB is 2 May 2005.

In 1942 the “old” 80th Division (WWI) Veterans Association. invited, “The “new” 80th Division” to become Associate members. The 8, 9th August 1945, the “old” 80th Division Veterans Association, (consisting of WWI members only), held their annual reunion in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. A resolution was passed to accept “The new 80th Division” (“that was us!”) as voting members, we had met their combat qualifications. (I do not see any record that we approached them, to join the Association. Most of us were still in Germany)

Today we (The “New 80th Division”) are in the same situation as the WWI Vets in relation to the 80th Division IT. Two years ago many of its members met and made physical contact (some gave their lives) with enemies of the United States of America! The 80th Division IT has met the same requirements (combat) we did over 60 years ago. Combat is Combat!

Today, “That was us. Is them”!

Those 80th Division IT members who served State-side should be admitted as associate members. Those who served in combat zones should be allowed voting membership. If we are as proud of the 80th Infantry Division, Battle records and its Battle Honors as we say we are, and want to perpetuate its history, we have no other alternative but to have our illustrious legacy. Actively carried on by the men and women of the 80th Division.

They have been and are in combat against our enemies on foreign soil since the war on terrorism began in 2001.

No other requirements are needed; therefore I submit that we 80th Division Veterans Association at our next Executive Council meeting in Dayton, Ohio put to vote: That, 80th Division Veterans Association admits the present day 80th Division IT. As Associate and I or voting members as noted above. Any person after payment of such sum as provided in the by-laws may become an active voting/associate member per the Constitution and by-laws.

**Our Constitution specifies: Article II  
Membership**

2. Add to line four after, 8th day of May 1945, “and 9th day of September 2001”, is eligible, etc.

**Article VI Amendments**

Amendments 1, 2 and 3 state a three-fourths vote of the active membership present at the annual meeting. A written notice must be submitted to the Executive Council at least forty-five days before an annual meeting and at least ninety days before a special meeting.

**Respectfully submitted**

**Robert H. Burrows, National Commander**

1942 Reunion issue Blue Ridge Service Magazine To the “New 80th”

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# TAPS

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Becker, Gilbert M.  
319th  
303 Shepherdstown Road  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17055  
Rptd by J. Phillips News Obit  
- 2/10/07

Bowcutt, Vern  
AT-319  
546 N 700 E  
Orem, UT 84097-4237  
Rptd by Jerry Norry - 1/21/07

Ford, Howard, Capt.  
L-317  
Dayton Florida.  
Rptd by Angelo Barone

Godby, Carl  
F-317  
Rptd by Gaylord Smith - 8/9/06

Hawes, Louis W.  
K-317  
223 Abbie Ave  
Owensboro, KY 42303  
Rptd by Grandson - 1/23/07

Hawn, Welkos "Dutch"  
Unknown CO.  
2445 S. Cody Ct.  
Lakewood, CO 80227  
Rptd by Wife Jeanne

Hedrick, Jacob C.  
D-317  
3939 Sunnyside Drive Unit 48  
Harrisonburg, VA 22801  
Rptd by Daughter Joan -  
10/12/06

Homa, Joseph  
L-317  
Pottsville, PA  
Rptd by Angelo Barone

Hurst, Ralph  
1st Ban HQ 319  
4700 Manchester Road  
Middletown, OH 45042  
Rptd by Frank Garone -  
12/10/06

Lishko, Robert  
M-319  
2655 N. Prince RD Appt 112  
Chandler, AZ 85224-168  
Rptd by Daughter - 2/10/07

Lyman, Hank  
L-317  
San Jose, CA  
Rptd by Angelo Barone

Mahoney, Michael E.  
A-318  
18327 N. Avalon Lane  
Surprise, AZ 85374-8517  
Rptd by Wife Marion - 1/26/07

Mitchell, Gilbert M.  
?  
303 Shepherdstown Road  
Mechanicsville, PA 17055  
Rptd by J. Phillips News Obit

Mizzen, Harold B.  
DV HQ  
967 Betty Zane Road  
Wheeling, WV 26003-1703  
Riptide by his daughter Sue -  
1/6/07



Patton, Albert  
3rd Bn 319 Med  
100 Roughway # 4  
Lebonen, OH  
Rptd By Duffy Brown - 12/10/06

Pilkinton, William H.  
L-317  
6408 Forrest Commons Blvd  
Indianapolis, IN 46227-7104  
Rptd by Dan Kendall - 7/28/05

Popolis, Stephen E.  
M-318  
7 Egret Circle  
Denver, PA 17517-9623

Smith, Archie  
SV 317  
902 French Broad Street  
Ashland, KY 41101-7114  
Rptd by Daughter

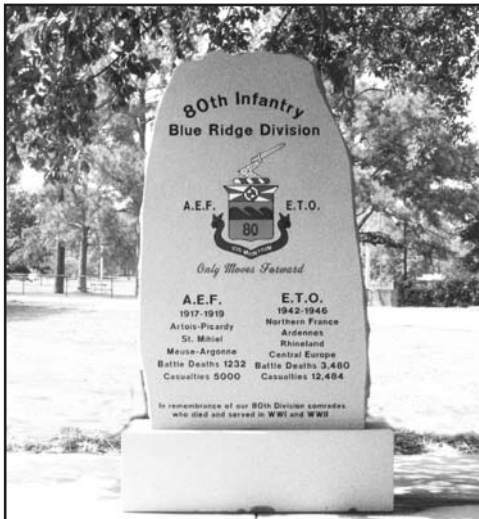
Smith, Gaylord L.  
F-317  
4560 Jefferson Ave. SE  
Kentwood, MI 49548-4363 -  
2/6/07

Spites, Raymond  
L-317  
Idaisa Springs, CO  
Rptd by Angelo Barone

Sulitis, Albert  
B-313 FA Bn  
270 Butternut Lane  
Northfield, OH 44067-1979  
Rptd by Lou Shirey - 12/28/03

White, Clement  
Cn-319  
Non Member - 5/06  
Rptd By Harry Cady

Correction from last issue:  
Simpson, William G.  
C-317  
817 Elden Drive  
Cary, IL 60013-2147  
Rptd by Son, Scott - 9/11/06



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# POST NEWS

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## Company L 319th Infantry

Try as I might, I have been unable to gather any information from my fellow members of Company L. Consequently news will be scarce for this report.

Old reliable's, Lou and Rich Blatz sent me a card for my 85th Birthday, which was on February 4th.

I received a letter from Bill Siebert and he described how he and other members of the VFW in Kansas provided Honor Guard at the burial site of General Eisenhower. This ceremonial is done every year on General Eisenhower's birthday. Ask Bill to tell you about it at the Reunion.

If you happen to be in or near Hancock, Md. make it a point to visit the local park and view the Monument honoring the men and women of Hancock who served in WWII. Inscribed on the monument is the name George W. Sciece, a Company L member. Incidentally George's wife Lorraine still lives in the house where George was born. When I am in the area, I stop in to see her and let her know what a good soldier he was.

Pattie Garron e-mailed me that her dad Frank Soloninka is not doing so well and is doing a lot of sleeping.

For my birthday, my son Dennis treated me to a fishing trip in Mexico. We went to Lago Vista which is near Lake Guerrero about 150 miles south west of the Rio Grande. The fishing was good, the accommodations and food were excellent. Mexican law does not allow you to keep fish taken out of Lake Guerrero so all we caught had to be released.

On another personal note, my Grandson Aaron who was a Master Sergeant in the Jr. ROTC is now in college and pursuing a career in Nursing. He made the Deans List and will be honored along with others at a banquet provided by the college.

I hope all of you are doing as well as can be expected or better and that you are making plans to attend the Reunion in Dayton. Maria and I are looking forward to seeing all of you again.

Hank Einolf

PS: Company L congratulates Bob Murrell for the excellent Post Reunion edition of the Blue Ridge. Well done Bob.

## **F-317 News**

Gaylord Smith of F-317 just won't give in. Several times he has wrote what he called the last newsletter of F-317, well he says this may be his last newsletter and to save it for our grandchildren. His roll call for 1 January 2007 list's Men accounted for, Female Front and center and not present but accounted for. He even lists all the men who are deceased. He then listed the remnants of over 100 names he once contacted and that over 100 have died since the war and maybe several who wasn't reported to him. Then he listed all the people who contacted him since 1997. You of F-317 are lucky to have a man who was devoted enough to keep tract of all those who once were in the company. Garlord, are you listening, this isn't your last newsletter. You just keep getting better with age. (Editor Note: I wrote this shortly after Gaylord sent it to me, little knowing it was his last Newsletter. He died on 6 February 2007.)

## **Company M 318th Post #44**

Word came to me that our Buddy and Jeep driver Steve Popolis has gone to meet the Greatest Commander of us all and passed away on 20 January 2007. Steve, Ben Rupp and I all lived within twenty miles of each other; Both had paid a visit to my home and enjoyed good conversation. When Ben and his wife held the Wedding Anniversary, (it escapes me the number of years) both Steve and I were there. Both Ben and Steve had made a reunion so that we were together at that time.

Steve passed away from complications of Alzheimer's. Steve and his wife Rose of (63 years) had four sons and six grandchildren and 14 great grandchildren.

He will be sadly missed as all my Buddies are. With the passing of Steve, this leaves only 15 of us, that I have record of.

## **Lane Hall Post #42**

I do hope that everyone had a great holiday, and it was so nice to hear from so many of the 313th members. Thank you all so very much for the cards and well wishes.

The year 2007 should be quite an eventful year, with what is happening in the White House, and the changing, of the people who have direct connection's with the War. I guess the next few months will tell the story, and I hope it is a good one for the entire world.

I received a very nice card from Bob Parks and his wife during Dec. They have moved to 115 Medical Center Blvd. Apt. III, Fayetteville, Tennessee. 37334-2690. It would be nice to drop them a note, or card and let them know they are being missed.

Sophie Ellenberger tells me she dresses up the Blessed Mother for the Church she belongs to, and keeps busy with Bus trips and luncheons. Not bad. Keeping busy, for people our age, is the best thing, that is why I still volunteer at the hospital, and also for CT Hospice when I can. I also keep in touch with Paul Burgio, and his wife Mary, and he always asks for everyone. Misses coming to the reunions, and would like everyone to know he thinks of them often.

I am still receiving donations toward our fund, and the last ones were from Lou Shirey, Dom Abbruzzese and Ed Hargraves, and Jim Phillips we now have over \$600 Lou mentioned to me he is very happy he made the move he did and is very contented with all the arrangements there. And Ed sent me an adorable picture of his grandson.

Received a lovely card at Thanksgiving from Elva, and Manny Gonzalez. They are both doing better. Which I was very happy to hear. They sent me a picture of their old Homesite Old Zapata, which happens to be under water since 1953 due to a lake nearby. The card also shows the picture of the church they were married in, in 1950. And what made me very happy, they are going to try to attend the reunion in Dayton.

In the Stamford, CT. Advocate, dated December 13, I thought you would be interested in parts of this article that was reported:

**WREATHS OF RESPECT: Local veterans provide escort for caravan headed to Arlington**

(I am very proud to tell you all, that my oldest son David is part of the group of Motorcyclist and Veterans that honor our Soldiers by accompanying their remains when one is sent home to be buried.)

*On December 12th 40 motorcyclist, a dozen cars and several police vehicles from Stamford, Darien and Greenwich, CT. provided a first-ever escort of wreaths as they made their way through Fairfield County, CT. on a donated tractor-trailer. The group stopped in Darien, CT. to change and add riders at the VFW before heading South.*

*The escort was arranged by the Patriot Guard Riders a group paying respect at Veterans funerals. The group grew overnight and many of them are veterans. They delivered the wreaths to Arlington Cemetery and will place Memorial Wreaths at about 230 State and National cemeteries and monuments throughout the U.S. at noon on December 14. Their goal is to expand the recognition of those who serve our country, both past, present and future as well as their families who deserve our support.*

Received a very nice Card from Mary Bettencourt, who mentioned she had gone on a cruise summer of 2006 to Alaska with all of her children

and Grandchildren. That must have been delightful! I love the holidays because of the cards I receive.

And heard from Dr. & Mrs. Robert Sproull, of El Paso. Gosh that is a beautiful place. I visited my son there when he was assigned, he is a Medical Librarian for the Gov't. He is now in Bryant, Arkansas, getting to see a great deal of the country.

Don Davis of the 319th Inf. and also a former POW at Stalag VIIA sent me photographs of he and his wife at the 80th Division Fort Benning, Ga. site. He also sent pictures of Car a Lee in South Western Australia.

I would like to thank Helen and George West for sending me the outline for the 2007 reunion to be held, in Dayton (Fairborn, Ohio). Also the copy of the Newspaper write-up about their grandson Captain Jason M. West of Crafton, Pa. who was killed in action on Monday, July 24, 2006 in Iraq. He was serving in the U.S. Army, 1st Brigade, 1st Armored Division on his 2nd tour of duty in Iraq. Our sympathies go to all of his family.

Wasn't the last issue of the Blue Ridger very informative and so interesting. I keep all my copies, and sometimes read them over and over. Just like to read about friends, and people I have been close to since attending the reunions.

### **Florida Post 47**

After being informed by letter from our National Secretary that no articles would be printed in the December issue of the Blue Ridge Magazine, I knew the only reminder of the Spring meeting in Melbourne would be the Post letter which was received by members in early January. So my next article will include the oceanfront gathering.

Our Ocala meeting last fall was another success. It was a nice congenial group. The location is convenient to a large number of decent restaurants, which is always nice for our evening meals. The ladies (bless their hearts) see to providing our luncheons, of which they do a great job.

As usual the Hampton Inn provided a complete complimentary breakfast, eggs, sausage, cold cereals, hot oatmeal, skim and whole milk, juices coffee, tea, pastries and fresh fruit. In the evening they provide a variety of fresh baked cookies which are still warm when you eat them.

At our sit down dinner at the Lone Star Restaurant we had a friendly rivalry going about who had the largest sweet potato. They were extremely large tubers of course it takes a couple hours when you are enjoying a great comradely.

Don't forget to start making your plans for attending the great reunion Elmer Dorsten is planning at Dayton, Ohio in August.

Francis Rajnicek, Sect

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# Letters

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**DEAR SIR,**

I am trying to find some information on what my father's unit was doing when he was captured in 1944. He served as a heavy machine gunner with D-317. He sent a note on November 19th saying this was his new unit. He was reported MIA on November 28th, 1944. He was a POW in three different Stalags and escaped near the end of the war. Any information you can give me will be greatly appreciated. My dad's name was Pvt. Albert Velasquez.

My address is 2326 Woodstock Place Bloomington, IN 47401

My E-mail address is [ajevlas@insightbb.com](mailto:ajevlas@insightbb.com) (*The place was the high ground south of Farbersviller, they received heavy artillery and machine gun fire. Can anyone help with details, —Editor*)

## **Help needed from Company I 317 members**

Cpl. Joe Adams of Company I 317th Regiment who was reported as MIA on 9 November and then listed as KIA on 10 November. His Kin would like to have anything you may remember about him.

Contact the editor or Joe Adams

7283 Valley Ave

Philadelphia, PA 19128

215-482-1065 or E-mail [Jaa0022@verizon.net](mailto:Jaa0022@verizon.net)

## **314 FA Battalion Reunion**

Time: 3,4,5, May 2007

Place: Holiday Inn, Southgate MI 48195

It is our honor to invite any and all members of the 80th Division to come to our reunion.

The Program will include the Theater performance of the Andrew Sisters' story, an anticipated interview by a reporter from the Detroit News, and stories about our part in winning the war. Oh yes, sharing the comradely of one another. Can't forget the Banquet on Saturday Night. To secure reservations for the Hotel and Theater contact one of the following before 27 March 2007.

Don Carson 734-282-0310

[eitzelberger@yahoo.com](mailto:eitzelberger@yahoo.com) / [ccarson@twmi.rr.com](mailto:ccarson@twmi.rr.com)

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## OUT OF THE PAST...

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### GOETTERDAEMMERUNG

Although the Germans had no formal plans for a National Redoubt, Adolph Hitler had intended leaving Berlin on 20 April, his fifty-six birthday, to continue the fight from southern Germany. By mid-April the bulk of the ministerial staffs already had abandoned the capital in a frantic exodus to the south, through Hitler himself began to procrastinate. While conscious of the difficulty of holding Berlin indefinitely, he persisted in the self-delusion that time remained and even that his armies might achieve a spectacular victory before Berlin.

The atmosphere in the Fueherbunker beneath the ruined city ranged alternately from despair to blind hope. One moment Hitler railed that the German people had failed him; they deserved the cruel fate they would suffer at the hands of the conqueror from the east. The next moment it was his generals, incompetent, negligent, spineless; they were fools, fatheads. Yet when a general occasionally dared to speak the truth, to reveal that the end of the war was near, Hitler seized on some new scheme designed to set everything right again, previously uncommitted (and untrained) Luftwaffe and naval troops thrown into the line, a counterattack here, a shift of forces there.

The early moments of 13 April brought news that elated many of Hitler's coterie, if not the Fuehrer himself. Goebbels, the propagandist, reported it to Hitler by telephone while an air attack raged over the city. As it had been written in the stars, to save the Third Reich, as in an earlier day another had saved Frederick the Great had come to pass.

"My Fuehrer!" Goebbels exclaimed, "I congratulate you! Roosevelt is dead."

The events that followed, among other reverses, Vienna fell that day to the Russian's, hardly confined Gobbler's expectations of deliverance from the enemy of the Reich. Hitler nevertheless used the President's death to exhort his troops to supreme effort. In an order of the day on 15 April, he proclaimed: "At the moment when fate has removed the greatest war criminal of all time from the earth, the turning point of this war shall be decided.

As the military high command and the party hierarchy gathered in the bunker to pay obeisance to the leader on his birthday, Hitler repeatedly professed faith that the Russians were about to incur their worst

defeat in front of Berlin. Even though the generals warned that Russians and Western Allies soon would link to cut escape routes to the south, he declined to leave the capital. Should the link occur, he decreed the front was to be divided into two commands, to be headed in the north by Grossadmiral Karl Doenitz, the naval chief; in the south by someone else, perhaps Kesselring or Luftwaffe's Herman Goering.

Hitler then sanctioned the departure of various commanders and party leaders from Berlin, which most were happy to leave in desperate hope of saving their skins or at least postponing the end. The SS chief, Himmler, scurried north to continue peace negotiations he had recently opened in secret with Count Folke Bernadotte, head of the Swedish Red Cross. Doenitz too moved with luxuries, Goering turned south. Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop also got out, as did most of the staff officers and clerks of OKW and OKH, though Keitel and Jodl remained with a small staff in a western suburb to keep OKW functioning. The faithful Goebels was invited to move into the bunker, to which Hitler's mistress, Eva Bruan, already had repaired.

The next day 21April, Hitler hit on a new scheme to set everything right. From the north an SS corps was to counterattack to break through Russian columns and relive the city. Yet twenty-four hours later even Hitler had to admit that this offered no hope. At the daily situation conference, he exploded in what may have been the greatest of many notable rages. This was the end. Everybody had deserted him; lies, corruption, cowardice, treason. They had left him no choice but to remain in Berlin to direct the defense of the capital himself and die.

Then hope stirred again as General Jodl proposed that Wench's TWELFTH ARMY turn its back on the Allies at the Elbe and come to the relief of Berlin. That Hitler ordered, along with a drive on Berlin from the south by the NINTH ARMY, already threatened by Russian encirclement. Keitel and Jodl were to direct the converging attack. When the stratagem inevitably failed, continued Russian advances forced the remnants of OKW to displace farther and farther to the north.

Learning on the 23d of Hitler's decision to stay in Berlin, Reichmarshal Goering, whom Hitler long ago had designated to be the successor, believed the time had come for him to take over and try to salvage something by peace negotiations. From Berchtesgaden, he radioed Hitler for instructions, noting that if he received no answer by late evening, he would take control.

That same evening, in the north, Heinrich Himmler was up usurping the powers of dictatorship without asking. Concluding his negotiations



with Count Bernadotte, Himmler signed a letter to General Eisenhower. Germany he wrote, was willing to surrender to the Western Powers while continuing to fight the Russians until the Allies themselves were ready to assume responsibility for the campaign against bolshevism.

Goering's message threw Hitler into another rage, as would the news of Himmler's act when it reached the bunker several days later by way of a monitored broadcast of the BBC. Accusing Goering of "High treason, Hitler demanded his resignation from command of the Luftwaffe and from the Nazi party. Before dawn the next day, the heir apparent of the Third Reich found himself under arrest by the SS.

By that time, 23 April, the Russians had completed encircling Berlin. Although linkup between Russians and the Allies was yet to come, the encirclement, in effect split the German command. As Jodl notified all senior commanders that the fight against bolshevism was the only thing that mattered and that loss of territory to the Western Allies was secondary, Hitler on 24 and 25 April approved a new command structure for the Wehrmacht. Abolishing OKH, Hitler made OKW responsible, subject to his authority, for operations everywhere. As head of OKW, KEITEL reserved for himself control of all army units in the north until such time as communications with Hitler might be severed, whereupon he would submit to the authority of Admiral Doenitz. He designated another commander for those forces opposing the Russians south of Berlin, General der Gebirgstruppen August Winter, and directed Field Marshal Kesselring to assume command of German force in Italy, Austria, and the Balkans in addition to his command of ARMY GROUP G and the NINETEENTH ARMY.

OKW's primary mission, Hitler directed, was to re-establish contact with Berlin and defeat the Soviet forces there. Making a redoubt, he issued a half-hearted directive to units in the south to prepare a defense of the Alps "envisioned as the final bulwark of fanatical resistance and so prepared." Just how either of those assignments was to be accomplished, he did not say.

As the futile efforts, to keep up a pretense of hope persisted on the German side. A fever of expectation that contact with the Russians was imminent and had begun to grip Allied troops and commanders, particularly those of the First and Ninth U.S. Armies holding the line of the Elbe and MULDE Rivers. Eager to go down in history as the unit that first established contact, divisions vied with each other in devising stratagems to assure the honor for themselves. Which unit was the leading contender at any given time might have been judged from the size press

corps that flittered in an impatient wait to report the event.

What would happen when Allied and Russian troops came together had been on many minds on the allied side for a long time. Because the Russians throughout the war had treated the Western Powers with suspicion and distrust, creating workable liaison machinery had proved impossible; even where makeshift arrangements had been made established, the Russians had distrusted them constantly by procrastination and delay. While the disruption was merely exasperating in early stages of the war, it became as the war neared an end potentially dangerous. Misunderstandings, even collisions resulting in casualties, were possible among U.S. units fighting side by side; as Allied and Russian troops devoid of liaison approached each other in fluid warfare where even division commanders were not always sure within twenty to fifty miles where their forward troops were located, serious clashes might ensue, resulting not only in casualties but possibly in postwar recrimination.

The problem for the air forces had long been acute. As early as the proceeding November U.S. fighters attacking what they identified as a German column in Yugoslavia had killed the Soviets charged, several Russian soldiers including a lieutenant general. Despite the incident, efforts to establish effective co-ordination with the Russians by means of a flexible bomb line had been basically unproductive until March 1945, when the Russians at last agreed to a bomb line 200 miles short of forward Russian positions. The line was not to be violated by Allied planes except on a 24-hour notice, which the Russians might veto.

Although the western Allies and the Russians had sealed an agreement on zones of occupation at the Yalta Conference, no one pretended that the demarcation lines corresponded with military requirements, though the Russians from time to time expressed concern about Allied intentions to withdraw from the Soviet zone once hostilities ceased. In a series of exchanges lasting past mid April, the Combined Chiefs of Staff, General Eisenhower, and the Red Army's Chief of Staff finally agreed that the armies from the east and west were to continue to advance until contact was imminent or linkup achieved. At that point adjustments might be made at the level of army group to deal with any remaining opposition while establishing a common boundary along some well-defined geographical feature.

Since the arrangement did little to forestall the possibility of Allied-Soviet clashes, General Eisenhower began, even as the exchanges proceeded, to negotiate on recognition signals. At Eisenhower's request, the Red Army's Chief of Staff suggested as an over-all recognition

signal, red rockets for Soviet troops, green for Allied. Eisenhower concurred. To a Russian proposal that Soviet tanks be identified by a white stripe encircling the turret, Allied tanks by two white strips, and that both place a white cross atop the turret, General Eisenhower suggested instead that to avoid delay in operations while putting on new markings, with existing Allied markings. The Russians agreed, and by 21 April identification arrangements were complete.

General Eisenhower also proposed exchanging liaison officers, which the Russians neither refused nor encouraged, and asked neither the Russians for details of their operational plan while expanding on his own, which to the chagrin of the British, he had revealed broadly not quite a month before. Repeating the intent stated earlier to stop his forces on the Elbe-Mulde line, Eisenhower noted that the line could be changed to embrace upper reaches of the Elbe should the Russians want him to go as far as Dresden. His northern forces, he made clear, were to cross lower reaches of the Elbe and advance to the Baltic Sea at the base of the Jutland peninsula, while forces in the south drove down the valley of the Danube into Austria.

The Russians responded with unusual alacrity. Agreeing to the line of the Elbe-Mulde as a common stopping place, they noted that the Soviet armies, in addition to taking Berlin, intended to clear the east bank of the Elbe north and south of Berlin and most of Czechoslovakia, at least as far as the Vltava (Moldau) River, which runs through Prague.

Co-ordination with the Russians would come none too soon for commanders of units that were hourly anticipating contact. General Hodges of the First Army, for an example, spent much of the morning of the 21 April trying to get instructions from SHAEF on procedures to be followed, only to obtain little guidance other than to “treat them nicely.” It was past midday when confirmation from the Russians on recognition signals arrived and word went out to subordinate units.

As finally determined, whoever made the first contact was to pass the word up the chain of command immediately to SHAEF, meanwhile making arrangements for a meeting of senior American and Russian field commanders. To the vexation of the smaller army of excited war correspondents, no news story was to be cleared until after simultaneous announcement of the event by the governments in Washington, London, and Moscow.

First word was that bridgeheads already established over the Elbe (the 83rd Division's at Barby) and the Mulde (those of the 69th Division east of Leipzig; the 2nd Division southeast of Leipzig; the 6th Armored

and 76th Divisions near Rochlitz, northwest of Chemnitz; and the 87th and 89th Divisions west of Chemnitz) might be retained; but another message from the Russians early on the 24th changed that.

Beginning at noon that day, the Russians revealed, they were to start an advance on Chemnitz by way of Dresden. During the advance, their air force would refrain from bombing or strafing west of the line of the Mulde as far south as Rochlitz, thence along a railroad from Rochlitz to Chemnitz, then to Prague. General Eisenhower promptly ordered all bridgeheads across the Mulde River withdrawn as far south as Rochlitz with only outposts to protect bridges and small patrols to make contact with the Russians remaining on the east bank. Patrols were to venture no more than five miles beyond the Mulde.

Excitement among the First and Ninth Army units was mounting all along the line. Rumor piled upon rumor; one false report followed another. Russian radio traffic cutting in on American channels convinced almost everybody that contact was near. Word was on the 23rd that a staff sergeant in the 6th Armored Division actually had talked by radio with the Russians. Unit after unit reported flares to the east, attaching to them varying interpretations. A battalion of the 69th Division on 23 April reported sighting a Russian tank with a white stripe around its turret, then had to admit that it was actually a grassy hummock with a clothes-line stretched across it.

Men of the 84th Division painted signs of welcome in Russian. The division canceled all artillery fire beyond the Elbe lest it hit Russian troops, but rescinded the order when German soldiers on the east bank began blatantly to sunbathe. At General Hodges command post, a specially outfitted jeep was ready by the 23rd for presentation to the army commander of the first Russian troops encountered.

After pilots of tactical aircraft reported numerous (but erroneous) sightings of Russian columns east of the Elbe, almost all divisions sent their frail little artillery observation planes aloft for a look. The pilot of a plane belonging to the 104th Division was convinced of success late on the 23rd when far beyond the Mulde he spotted a column of troops. Landing he found only Germans with a few British prisoners heading west in hope of surrendering. Another pilot from the 104th Division flew fifteen miles east of the Elbe beyond the town of TORGAN on 24 April, where he observed what appeared to be an artillery duel between Russians and Germans. Although he tried to land behind Russian lines, antiaircraft fire turned him back. Other unit on the 24th reported seeing Russian planes over American positions.



The following is taken from an old issue of THE SERVICE MAGAZINE OF THE 80TH DIVISION, by Robert A. Higgins to the "New" 80th—the soldiers of WWII.

# The NEW 80th

The work of the day being over, I sit down upon my porch step, pipe in hand to rest awhile in the cool of the evening. Almighty God knows how lovely is our Pennsylvania land especially at eventide. I watch the lazy summer's sunlight as it moves gently over the hills and a peaceful calm settles in the busy purple valleys.



Comes stealing over me, as I sit, the weirdest sensation. As in a dream the past and present seem to blend and spotted here and there in the picture are even slight indications of future events.

In this eerie mood I look down, as it were, a vista of thousands of years. I see Nature and Man working together, building of God's material this beauty which spread out before me is our Tri-State Area, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia. With patient care, toil and blood I see them, over thousands of years, building so that you and I, today, may enjoy the cumulative fruits of their labor.

Then what I see makes my blood run cold. Nature, at times and in limited localities destroys but, God damn it, Nature in her most savage mood could never view and would turn her head in horror at such hellish devastation as I see man now carries on and further contemplates. Murder, pillage, wreckage, misery, famine, disease, rape, arson and every filthy destruction and debasement of human beings; such a horrible picture was never before spread out for the eyes of man.

At this point my mind turns back to my own personal struggle in the general attempt of the last World's War to prevent again for the World the

very thing that intensifies itself in the present conflict.

A certain day pictures itself, when as a young man, I entered military life with the 80th. Evenings at Camp Lee flash back, when, again the day's work done, the sun slowly sinking behind the pines on our sun washed drill ground, we are lined up at parade, all spic and span and shining like new pins. The flag floats slowly down to the strains of, "To the Colors," followed shortly by the clear ringing command of Major General Cronkhite, "March Off Your Companies" echoed and re-echoed down the field as the company commanders take up the completion of this command, "A Company—Squads Right," "B Company—Squads so and so," "C Company . . ." and so on down the line. I remember the sense of almost intolerable beauty this scene aroused in an impressionable youth.

Another picture flashes vividly across my mind. I see the lone figure of a boy, before an entire platoon, marching and counter marching, at the command of a tough top sergeant, repeating a movement which he had before bungled badly. Believe me, Boy, he never again forgot that one.

Again, in France, my water gone, Joe Whazzhisname offers his canteen. I didn't like Joe a damn bit. Joe and I had just read each other off plenty proper. There was nothing of appeasement in Joe's eye or attitude. He seemed to dare me to take a drink, so of course I had to. When I had the stuff down I suddenly began to wonder what was wrong with it. Poor Joe was killed the morning of September 26th and I have ever since been glad that I took that drink. I guess he figured we belonged to the same outfit and had to get along whether we liked each other or not. He was big enough, if I wasn't, to make the first overture.

Now my mood again changes and I find myself, as it were, talking to the New 80th. As if they were one man, I hear myself saying, "when it's all over and you come back . . ." and then I stop as I hear this New 80th man drawl, "Aren't you kinda—shall we say—optimistic?" and I say, "No on both counts." I know how you feel all right, I felt the same way myself, as if there never would be an end, but there was, and it came so damn fast my head is still spinning even after 25 years. About that coming back—you'll come back just as surely as it will be over. The percentage is tremendously in your favor—sure you may get hurt and a certain number will get killed but the same thing will happen if you stay at home and stay in bed—about the same percentage will die as will get killed in battle. With these few thoughts, learned by hard experience, and with no more pre-

amble, we are passing the 80th on to you. With the 80th go 80th ideals, 80th traditions, 80th men, 80th words, 80th deeds, 80th action and 80th prayers; all become a part of you, just as you become a part of us.

To you also goes the 80th shield, which has been emblazoned on so many caissons, guns, ammunition carriers, trains and heaven knows what all else of equipment and impedimenta and which each of us wore so proudly on his left shoulder; 30,000 men wore this shield, brother; it's clean and bright—it's yours. We know you will treat it proudly.

Our Divisional flag goes to you, and with you, wherever you can take it and we are confident that no task will be too difficult, no hill too steep for you to scale so that you can sink its staff into the ground at the summit.

The 80th dead will be watching and praying for you and moving with you as a ghostly army wherever you go and whatever you do. An 80th man never dies (he just transfers)—we never give up an 80th man.

“Artois-Picardy, Saint Mihiel, Argonne,” the words ring of steel and fire. Some day will be added, who knows—maybe “Bataan,” maybe “Singapore,” maybe “Tobruk,” but whatever and wherever the 80th goes, “The 80th Division Moves Only Forward.” May God bless you.







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