



# BLUE RIDGE

THE SERVICE MAGAZINE

WINTER 2011

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## Frederick J. Sonnenfeld

His Life Experience While Assigned to Co A  
317th 80th Division

*Excerpt from the memoir of Frederick Sonnenfeld when he was in the 80th Division.*

**A**FTER BASIC TRAINING, I came home on furlough and then reported to Camp Mead, MD. At Camp Mead, I saw a few friends from basic training, Tanner, Trayner, Rothstein, Eckart, Evin Smith and Tom Smith and Wensel. We were all in the same area of the camp at this time. After two days we went by troop train to Camp Kilmer, NJ. Little did I know then that one day, my wife and I would buy a home a couple of miles from Camp Kilmer.

The night before I shipped out, I got a 4 hour pass. I took a bus from the Camp to the New Brunswick train station and went home for an hour or two. The Captain never told us the name of the ship we were to go on, only that it was the world's largest. When we arrived at the Pier in NY, this ship looked as tall as a ten story building. We boarded the Queen Elizabeth and our group was assigned to B Deck. There was a state room which I shared with eight other men. We had 17,000 men on board. It was so crowded; we were stepping over the men on deck. The food was bad. We ate two times a day-breakfast and dinner. I was assigned to garbage detail which was an eight hour job. After four days, our ship landed in Scotland. We were then taken by train to a camp somewhere in England. I shared a pup tent with Julius Rothstein who came from Brooklyn. He was about my age and we became close friends.

After a few days, we were driven by a convoy of trucks to Southampton, England. That night we boarded a ship and the next morning we arrived at Normandy Beach, France.

It was a very warm day and I worked up a good sweat climbing the hill above the beach carrying a 50 lb full pack. When I heard music coming from a building, I went over to see and there was a swing band playing the song "Marie" and singing was Jack Leonard who sang with the Tommy Dorsey band before Frank Sinatra. We were in the field for a few hours before the army trucks arrived. They drove for about two hours before we reached our destination outside St. Lo.

Outside of St Lo there was a large cow pasture with hedge rows on both sides. I stayed here that night. The next morning the men were placed into groups. When our group was called out, we got on the trucks and were driven to an area close to the Moselle River.

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Eightieth Division Veterans Association

## BLUE RIDGE The Service Magazine

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*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, change of address, dues remittances, and death notices should be addressed to the Secretary/Editor.*

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## Editor's Notes

### DORIS WOLLETT

I WISH TO THANK each of you for placing your confidence in me by electing me as the National Secretary of the 80th Division Veterans Association. It is a job that I do not take lightly and plan to do the best I can to support each of you within the parameters of this position.

Andy Atkins and I have made a smooth transition and now I have completely taken over the duties. Of course Andy is only an email away if I have questions and concerns.

Please be patient with me as I get my feet wet and learn all there is to do as your Secretary. I'm not quite as fast as Andy may have been but I promise I will get there.

I would ask that you send all correspondence to me including membership renewals, articles you would like published in the Blue Ridge Service Magazine, notification of Change of Address, notification of TAPS for a Comrade that has passed, any donation that you would like to make to the organization, etc. Please make all checks payable to the 80th Division Veterans Association. This includes donations to the McBride Scholarship Fund as I have to deposit it into the 80th Division Bank Account and then write a check to the Bank that handles the Scholarship.

As a Veteran of the War in Iraq and a retiree of over 34 years of service in the US Army, I too like to keep in touch with those that I served with. Please keep me informed of any changes that you know of that affect our Comrades.

I hope each of you had a Merry Christmas & Happy New Year. May God continue to bless all of you.

**EMAIL ADDRESSES:** We are currently updating our email address list in our membership database. Please send an email to the new secretary, CSM (R) Doris Wollett at csmwollett@verizon.net with the subject line, "Email Address Update."

One of the items we discussed during the General Business Meetings is to provide the Blue Ridge magazine electronically to those members who have emails and would like to receive it electronically. We already post the Blue Ridge magazines (including several years of past issues) on the 80th Division website: [www.80thdivision.com/Blue%20Ridger.htm](http://www.80thdivision.com/Blue%20Ridger.htm) and we are looking into the possibility of creating the electronic version in full color. Note that we cannot afford to print and mail the Blue Ridge in full color, but the electronic version could be done in full color. More information about this in a later issue.

## From the National Commander

AT THE TIME OF the writing of this message, we look forward to the celebration of Christmas and the Advent of Jesus.

It is appropriate that we reflect upon the past, present, and future. We recall the outstanding annual reunion which took place in August 2011, with earthquake, hurricane, and wonderful camaraderie. It was good to see the faces of both old friends and new friends. The first audit of the financial records of the reunion shows that we are “in the black”.

It is with great sadness that we note the passage of veterans and family members, but we continue to be thankful for the sacrifices of those who have gone before us. We are thankful that God has allowed this Nation to flourish thus far.

We would like to thank all of those who contributed a flag or money for flags for the Luxembourg memorial. The entire set of 48 flags of WWII states have been sent to Jean Muller, our “Luxembourg Friend”, who has the conn on this memorial.

At this time, Lieutenant Colonel Grant Porter is hard at work, planning for the August 2012 reunion in the Baltimore area. As all PNCs know, this is a very challenging task, which we are sure will turn out well. We look forward to camaraderie, seafood, and a harbor cruise.

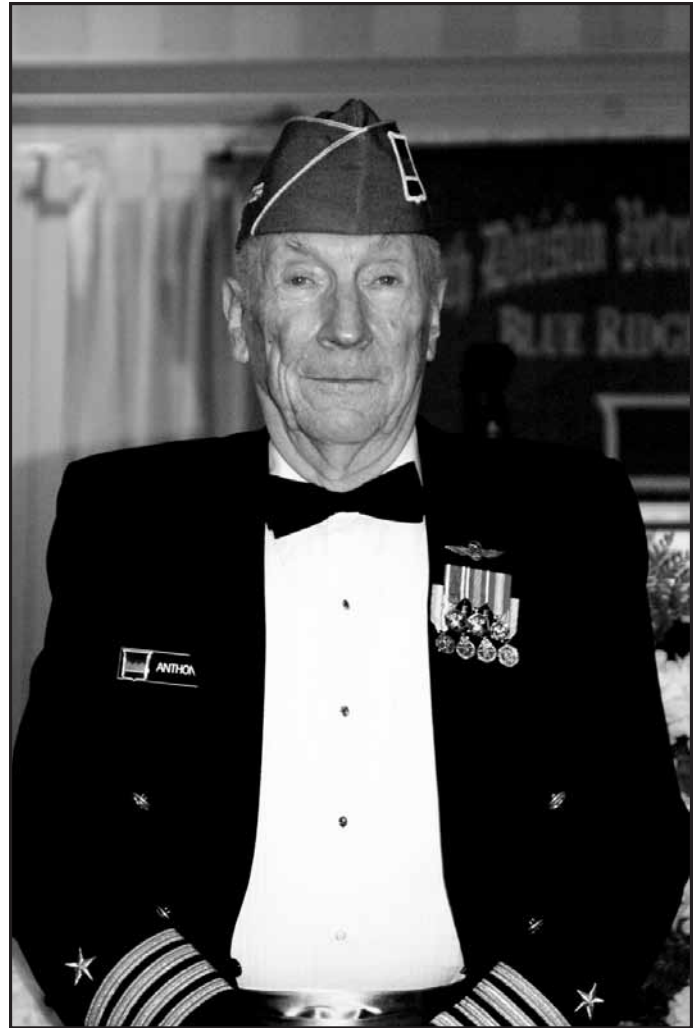
Our prayers are with all of our friends who are facing medical challenges. We pray for their speedy recovery, and for relief to their caretakers.

Post No. 50, in the Richmond VA area, continues with a robust program of get-togethers, and continues their attention to scholarships and awards.

We are now looking into two ongoing matters; first, burial details for our departed comrades, and second, a listing of resources to assist the families of overseas-deployed troops.

As we look to the future, we see the opportunity of adding to our numbers with veterans from the Cold War, and the Global War on Terrorism.

Virgil Myers continues to do an outstanding job of shepherding 80th Veterans, family and friends on the annual Luxembourg reunion trip. It is a wonderful opportunity to meet overseas Friends of the 80th, and to soak up history of WWII and the Battle of the Bulge. Roland Keller, our friend and member



of the 80th Division Veterans' Association, who live in Switzerland, continues his collection of WWI 80th Division memorabilia.

Jean Muller continues his battlefield archeology, memorializing our fallen comrades, and developing battlefield histories. We have discussed with Jean the possibility of a pre-meeting week of group battlefield archeology. If you are interested, please drop me a line.

We do see storm clouds gathering over the globe, and particularly in the Middle East. We are also concerned with the economics and morality of our own Nation. Therefore, we work and pray, and remember that “the 80th only moves forward”.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Lee S. Anthony, National Commander*

# Retired 80th WWII Veteran Receives the Legion of Honor

**SUSAN SMITH CAREY, DAUGHTER**

ON DECEMBER 8, 2011 in the Davis Conference Center Auditorium at MacDill AFB, Tampa, FL, Retired U.S. Army Major Robert H. Smith was honored with receiving the “Knight in the National Order of Legion of Honor” medal. He was one of 13 WWII Veterans to receive this award that evening. It was an extra special day for Mr. Smith as it was his 92nd birthday. Among those in attendance were Consul General Gael de Maison-neuve and chief of the French detachment at U.S. Central Command, Rear Admiral Patrick Martin. Robert Smith was further honored by the presence

of Major General Bill Gerety of the 80th Training Command as well as Maj. Melissa Tune, U.S. Army Reserves Public Affairs Officer. There to also celebrate in his honor were three generations of his family as well as friends from VFW Post 7987 New Port Richey, FL where Robert is a life time member.

Robert Smith joined the Army in 1942 and was with the 80th Division, Company C, 1st Battalion, 318th Infantry Regiment. He participated in the Liberation of northern France, Battle of the Rhine and Battle of the Bulge. In addition to the Legion of Honor medal, he proudly wears the Silver Star & 3 Bronze Stars.



*Robert Smith & wife Alberta, daughters Charlotte Durava & Susan Carey, grandson Frank Carey, great granddaughters Alexandra & Rachael Kennedy and Maj. General Bill Gerety.*



*Robert Smith, Consul General Gael de Maison-neuve & Chief of the French detachment at U.S. Central command, Rear Admiral Patrick Martin as well as other members of the French consulate.*

# PFC Ernest Kearns KIA Christmas Day 1944 on Bloody Knob

JUDY BEZJAK

ON JUNE 22, 2010 during Friendship Week in Luxembourg veterans, their family members, and members of the US Veteran Friends of Luxembourg dedicated a monument on Bloody Knob near Kehmen, Luxembourg in memory of Cpl. William E. Dodd, PFC Ernest L. Kearns, and my uncle, Pvt. Tony Ruzich, Jr., all of whom were killed in action early on Christmas morning 1944. All three soldiers were members of Company L of the 317th Infantry Regiment of the 80th Infantry Division. Terry Janes, webmaster of 80th Division web site, [www.thetroubleshooters.com](http://www.thetroubleshooters.com), was instrumental in working closely with Jean Muller, the former national historian of Luxembourg, using the unit's morning reports to help to identify the soldiers to which the artifacts which were unearthed in that area belonged. In anticipation of the dedication of the monument, several people tried without success to locate next-of-kin of Cpl. Dodd and PFC Kearns.

Terry Janes has many pictures posted on his web site to document the recovered items belonging to each soldier. Just last week, Rhonda Kearns-

Sullivan, the granddaughter of PFC Ernest L. Kearns, did a search of her grandfather's name on the Internet and was led to Terry Janes' web site. There she learned of the monument which bears the name of her grandfather as well as the place and circumstances of his death in WWII. As a result, Rhonda contacted Terry Janes who put her in touch with Jean Muller in Luxembourg. Rhonda called Jean Muller, and as a result, Jean is sending Rhonda the recovered artifacts which had belonged to her grandfather including a black army-issue plastic comb with the name, "E. Kearns" etched into the top part of the comb.

Now we are awaiting a relative of Cpl. Dodd to do a search on the Internet or to find a message left on Ancestry.com so that family will know where and how their loved one died. They will discover that there is a small monument in a peaceful glade on a forested hill in Luxembourg which pays tribute to him and his comrades who paid with their lives for the ground on which the monument stands."



CPL William E. Dodd

PFC Ernest L. Kearns

PVT Tony Ruzich Jr.



# Only Moving Forward

## The 80th Crosses the Pond

WALTER BARTHOLD, 80TH SIGNAL CO.

**M**ANY, PERHAPS MOST OF the surviving 80th veterans joined the division as replacements in France, Luxembourg or Germany. They did their full share in contributing to the glory that the 80th earned in helping to defeat Hitler's Germany.

Yet they missed out on something, an experience that will never disappear from my memory.

On July 1, 1944, the original Queen Mary set sail from a pier on the Hudson River in New York City. On board were 15,000 men of the 80th Infantry Division and 5,000 additional troops from miscellaneous units, all bound for the U.K. and eventual combat in the ETO.

The ship, designed and built as a luxury liner, had undergone drastic changes. It was painted battleship grey. A battery of anti-aircraft guns, manned by British soldiers, was mounted on its main deck. Canvas bunks, suspended on metal frames, had been installed everywhere, in the staterooms, along the corridors, in the holds, everywhere.

The Queen Mary's speed made her one of the few troopships to cross the ocean alone and unescorted. As a precaution, however, she changed course every twenty minutes. We were told, correctly I later found out, that it took at least half an hour for a submarine to draw a bead on a target.

Still further precautions were taken. Nothing was permitted to be thrown overboard, not even cigarette butts. Garbage was accumulated on board until our arrival. Smoking on deck after sunset was prohibited.

The ship was manned by a British crew, and that included the kitchen staff. British food, I need hardly say, did not go over with American soldiers. My memories of our meals are sketchy, but I do recall, not with pleasure, having been served kidney stew for breakfast.

To serve so many men, the mess hall, originally the grand ballroom, had to be in operation almost

twenty-four hours a day. To achieve some semblance of order in the process, each man was given a button of a certain color and bearing a certain letter to wear. (I remember, for example, that I had a "blue B" button.) Servings were announced over a public-address system by button.

The voyage proceeded uneventfully until what I think was the second or third day, when a sudden, prolonged burst of anti-aircraft fire shook the ship. The conviction that we were under attack from the air terrified me and I am sure many others. We soon found out that it was only a drill. I have wondered ever since why we could not have been warned of the exercise in advance.

We enjoyed fair weather and smooth sailing until the final day of the crossing, when a violent storm broke out on the Irish Sea. I believe that of the twenty thousand men on board, 19,999 were seasick, I being, I think, the only exception. (My mother, who came from Scotland, had crossed the Atlantic three times as a young woman and gave me advice on enduring rough seas. It included, how well I remember, "Just make up your mind that you're not going to be seasick.")

We arrived at Greenock, the port of Glasgow, Scotland, on July 7 or 8. The trip had taken longer than the ship's peacetime crossings because of our constant zigzagging. As we filed off the ship at its bow, German PWs were being loaded on at the stern. I recall their shouting taunts and jeers at us, and I have no doubt that U. S. prisoners in German hands would never have got away with such conduct.

Today the old Queen Mary is permanently docked as a museum and resort hotel at Long Beach, California. She will never sail again. The crossing that she made in early July, 1944, however, repeats itself and will continue to repeat itself, I have no doubt, in the memories of many others than myself.

## 80th Blue Ridge Army Reserve Association

Dear Blue Ridge Post 50 Members,

I hope you are all well as 2011 comes to a close. I wish you all happy holidays and a healthy and prosperous new year in 2012. We have a lot of exciting things planned for this year, not the least of which will be the 80th Division Veteran's Associations 93rd Annual Reunion; which is now set to take place from 22-26 August at the Baltimore, MD BWI Airport Marriott Hotel. As the Senior Vice Commander, it is my task to serve as the Reunion Chairman. I will need everyone's support in supporting this event. The Reunion will run as usual from Wednesday to Sunday morning and will consist of all the usual activities to include a reception on Wednesday and dinners on Thursday, Friday and Saturday night. I am hoping to arrange a dinner cruise tour of the Baltimore Harbor and a day trip to the Annapolis Naval Academy. We may also plan a short stop at the National Aquarium prior to the Dinner cruise if time and interest allows. I hope to see everyone there. Stay tuned for future updates. Below are some of the other projects and events we have participated in or are planning for 2012:

The new Blue Ridge Continuing Education Scholarship Fund for 2012 and 2013: Special thanks to Blue Ridge Board member George Croughwell who led a committee group that included Mike Bland, Jim Brown, and Buddy Deverill in developing plans to fund an Annual \$500.00 Scholarship that the Association will be awarding starting next year. The scholarship will be open to immediate family of Blue Ridge Members. We hope in future years to be able to award more funds for this purpose.

### RECENT EVENTS

The 2011 Annual Army 10-Miler: Several Blue Ridge members participated in the Army Ten-miler event in Washington D.C. on October 9th 2011. The event was completed by Glen Hence, Grant Porter, Andrew Walters, Coretta Lankford, Floyd Lewis and Angela Robey. Congratulations to all of you for participating and representing both the association and the 80th Training Command. Participants were each awarded \$25 by the Blue Ridge Association for participating. We hope to see more members participate next year.

3rd Annual Blue Ridge Golf Tournament: The Blue Ridge Golf Tournament was a lot of fun for the two

teams that played. The event was held on October 22nd at the Providence Golf Course in Richmond. Special thanks to Melissa Martinez who provided cupcakes and gift bags and was the Tournament Organizer. The two teams tied. The team of Grant Porter, Tom Kochenauer, George Croughwell and Bob Lam birdied on the 18th hole to tie the team of Rod Calhoun, Glen Hence and Lee Richards at 4 under par for the course in the Captains Choice Best Ball Tournament. Blue Ridgers Bryant Venable, Colleen Watson, Scott Kallio, and Anne Lewis (PAO) all came out to support the event. The tournament raised \$77 for the Awards fund.

Quarterly Luncheon: Doris Wollett led the Fall Quarterly Luncheon on Thursday, 27 October at O'Charley's on Jeff Davis Highway. There were 18 members and four guests participating. A raffle was held that raised \$65 for the scholarship fund. Dave Gallagher and Vernon King were recognized for becoming a Lifetime member. The former G1 civilian, Tom Lach came down from Ashland, VA to attend. It is always nice to see old friends. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend.

### FUTURE EVENTS

Blue Ridge Annual Holiday Party:

Our 2nd Annual Holiday Party is scheduled for 6PM on 17 December 2011 at the Holiday Inn at Bells Road, located at 4303 Commerce Road, Richmond, VA 23234. By the time this letter goes to print, we will have completed a wonderful Christmas party. Members attending this event are receiving a special Christmas gift this year. Please check the website for more details on how things went.

The 80th Training Command Annual Commanders Conference/Awards Dinner:

The 80th Training Command is planning the next Commanders Conference/Awards Dinner at the Virginia Beach Conference Center on Saturday night, 28 January 2012. Please check the website for more information or contact Pete Herbert for additional information. A registration form will be posted on our website for those planning to attend.

### MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Promotions: Congratulations to President Grant Porter and Board Member Terence Singleton who

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## Post News... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

were both selected for promotion to the rank of Colonel. Notifications will be forthcoming to announce promotion parties for Grant and Terry. In accordance with informal Army protocol, they are reminded that they should pay the equivalent of the increase in one month's pay (minimum) to fund the food and beverages for their promotion parties.

Coretta Lankford was selected to fill a vacancy on the Board of Directors. Coretta also recently accepted a position at the Defense Supply Center in Richmond following her retirement from the 80th Training Command. Welcome to the Board Coretta and congratulations on your new assignment.

Congratulations to Brigadier General Paul Benenati, who recently departed as the commander of the 102nd Division at Fort Leonard Wood, MO. BG Benenati turned the command over to COL (P) Thomas Evans on 6 November 2011. He has received his new assignment to the 451st Sustainment Command located in Wichita, KS. We wish him well in this assignment.

A special welcome back to Retired Major General Bruce Robinson who recently joined the association. MG(R) Robinson served in the 80th for many years before his selection to command the 98th Division in Rochester, New York. He also participated at the Army Ten-Miler this year and began the race alongside Grant Porter. Grant said that MG(R) Robinson is in great shape. We are glad to see him doing so well and back with the Blue Ridge team.

Congratulations to the recently retired MSG Charles Humphries who accepted a position as a Department of the Army Civilian at Fort Lee. Chuck served in the 80th for several years and joined as a Blue Ridge member while on active duty with the 80th. He is a former recipient of the AGR of the year award. His wife Jody works in the Family Programs office for the 80th Training Command and the two of them have been great supporters of the 80th so we are glad to see Chuck doing well in retirement.

Congratulations also go out to Blue Ridge member MSG Teri Oliver who accepted a position as a Department of the Army Civilian at the 94th Division, Fort Lee following a recent mobilization tour there as well.

### SECRETARY NOTES

Secretary Pete Herbert reported we now have 132 Active Members, 63 Lifetime members and 69 Annual Members. We have members in 14 states

and Puerto Rico and are looking for more members to sign up and join us in 2012. Please spread the word that we are actively seeking new members. Just as a reminder your Annual Dues are due by January 1st. Members have the option of paying as a Lifetime Member for \$250. \$150 of that would go to the 80th Division Veterans Association (DVA) for joint Membership in the Association. New Annual Members pay \$35 with \$20 going to the DVA, and a Renewing Member pays \$35 and \$10 in annual dues goes to the DVA. Either way, members receive a two-for-one membership in both organizations.

If any of you have any ideas for anything—future events, fund raisers, something you would like to see the Association involved in let us know. Please review the association website to keep yourself abreast of future activities at: [www.80thblueridge.com](http://www.80thblueridge.com). We are also on Facebook: [www.facebook.com/BlueRidgeAssociation](http://www.facebook.com/BlueRidgeAssociation), Flickr: [www.flickr.com/photos/BlueRidgeAssociation](http://www.flickr.com/photos/BlueRidgeAssociation), and Twitter: [www.twitter.com/80thBlueRidge](http://www.twitter.com/80thBlueRidge). We will be making an effort to keep the website updated with information about members and highlights of the organization. Please send suggestions for website updates or newsletter articles to [edmond.herbert@us.army.mil](mailto:edmond.herbert@us.army.mil).

### “STRENGTH OF THE MOUNTAINS”

#### 313th Field Artillery Battalion

Well, I was unable to attend the reunion till's year but we were represented by Hilda Latusek and her daughter Patty and her husband, Jack and Ann Hatcher. The weather I am sure had something to do with it. I heard from Lee Anthony, the reunion chairman, who was nice enough to send me the booklets from the reunion, and if there is anyone who would like to see them, I would gladly send them on to you to look over.

Mr. Anthony mentioned the decline in attendance, seeing it is getting more difficult for the veterans to journey to the sites. He mentioned that there were only 26 veterans among the 150 attendees and that family members accounted for the majority of those in attendance.

Now let us get to the weather we have been having. Fortunately, I was lucky during the storm we had at the end of August. I received several calls from our members to check whether it had affected me and my home. I was very luck; my son Michael, who

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## Post News... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

lives in Bethel, CT came down and picked me up and took me to his home. I was there for two days, not knowing what went on where I lived. When I returned home, my home was still there and believe it or not, no water damage. I was so happy and very fortunate. So many had water in their cellars and torn roofs, etc. I would like to thank Ed Hargraves, Felix Cistolo, Hilda Latusek and family, for giving me a call. It is so good to have friends like the 80th Group.

On Labor Day, I received a call from Alice Noxon, checking on me, and it was so good hearing from her she told me that Hilda and her daughter Patty and family members who attended the reunion visited her at her home and they had dinner with her. She also mentioned that the attendance at the reunion was very low. She was without electricity for 7 days and was fortunate enough to have help from her family with food, etc.

In the memorial service booklet, they mentioned two of our members that passed away this year. Warren Burkhart and Arthur R Skinner Jr. I am sure that if you did not know this you would like to get in touch with their families and send your notes.

Today October 29, I can't believe it, it is snowing and I mean really snowing, the roads are covered and it is actually piling up outside. Too early, much too early, but even though the snow was a great deal of trouble, it made my good friends, Alice Noxon and Hilda Latusek call and see if I had gotten hit by the storm badly. Thank goodness it wasn't that bad and even though many people in the area had their electricity out, mine did not so I was really lucky.

Called the Gonzalez's and spoke to Ela and she said she and Mannie are doing well. She sounded very good and I told her to keep it up; whatever they are doing to keep in good health.

I also called John Ingles and he is in the process of moving to a smaller place since his wife's passing. He may go into assisted living, but will send me his new address as soon as he makes the move. I told him I was also looking to move to a smaller place and will be putting my home back on the market soon.

I tried to call Ed Hargraves, but his phone was disconnected. Luckily I called Jim Phillips after I was unable to get Ed, and Jim gave me Ed's new address in New Mexico and his phone number so that when

I make up a new address listing I will be able to include Ed's new address and phone number.

If you do move, please call me and give me your new address and phone number so that I may update our address listings.

I also tried to call Joseph Prost and the number I have for them was disconnected. If anyone knows their new number, please call me and let me have it. I guess there are a few of us that will be moving from our homes to a smaller place, and when you do, please call me or write and give me the new addresses.

For those of you that do not keep in touch, please do call me and let me know how you are doing. We are always concerned when we do not hear from our 80th friends, and sometimes when I do call, either the phone number has changed or there is no answer at all. Your 80th friends want to hear from you please call me. So far this will be my number 203-855-1928.

FRANCES POLETTI

### Florida Post #47

The Post meeting in Ocala was a very pleasant gathering. The weather was warm and comfortable. Our days started with breakfast provided by the hotel. It was one of variety with hot or cold selections. Lunch was in our party room. Here the ladies of the Post set out an ample buffet. Our evening meals were at local restaurants with Saturday dinner being paid by the Post. After dinner we returned to the hotel for fresh baked cookies put out by the hotel. The staff at the Hampton Inn is a very accommodating and pleasant group and we will be returning the first weekend in November of 2012 for another great time. By the way, our room rate will remain at \$79.00 per night. The Hampton Inn has given us this rate for more than five years and we thank them for their consideration.

Our next get together will be February 16-18, 2012 at the Crowne Plaza Melbourne. In making reservations be sure to tell them you are with Florida Post #47 to get our room rate of \$119.00 per night. Saturday evening's dinner will be covered by the Post. Looking forward to seeing you there.

Hope your Thanksgiving was an enjoyable one with family and friends. Wishing everyone a Happy Holiday Season and a Great New Year.

Kay Rajnicek, Secretary

# Honor Flight

COL(R) LIONEL J. ROTHBARD, USAR RET, CO B, 305TH MED BN


ON WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 12, I participated in an Honor Flight that other members of the 80th Division Veterans Association might find interesting. The day started before dawn at Chicago Midway Airport. The Veterans were greeted by Honor Flight volunteers, put in wheelchairs at the curb, if needed, and registered. A fully loaded plane then took off for Washington, DC. Upon landing, we were greeted by the Fire Department with a fire hose spray and a group of military and civilian people.

We were put into buses and driven through Washington DC. First to the Air Force Memorial where we had breakfast boxed meal and then back on the bus. We went to Arlington National Cemetery where we watched the changing of the guard and sang the National Anthem. We also saw the Vietnam Memorial and the Korean Memorial. Drove next to the WWII Memorial and watched another

changing of the guard. It had been drizzling off and on all day long, but at this time it started to really pour. We then went to the National Air and Space Museum and then back to Dulles. We were given a dinner box meal and entertained by volunteers with a 1940's party. Amazingly, our volunteers pushed us in the wheelchairs and stayed with us until we went back on the plane.

Before landing we had another surprise arranged by the Chicago volunteers and our wives and kids! Mail Call!! It consisted of letters from family and friends. Deplaning we were welcomed by Active Duty, Reserve and Retired military. Finally meeting our families and friends in a special area. On a Wednesday night after 10 o'clock at night, there were over three thousand people there to greet us. It was indeed the parade and welcome we had never received in 1946. A very long day, but one of the best days of my life.


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## RETURNED BLUE RIDGE SERVICE MAGAZINES

I have had a few Magazines returned with no forwarding address. Below is a list of those returned. I am asking for your help in locating these members. If you have a different address or way to contact them, please let me know.

Norris H. Berghaus     Harold Heemstra  
Samuel Licorish        Socrates Loulis  
Joseph Reichle

## TEMPORARILY AWAY

If you reside at two different homes throughout the year, please let me know prior to your moving so that I can update the database and you will get your copy of the Blue Ridge Magazine. Without a forwarding address I have no way of insuring you get your copy.

### Check Your Address Label

<p><b>Doris M. Wollett</b> <b>5101 Hurop Road</b> <b>Sandston, VA 23150-5406</b></p>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; padding: 5px; display: inline-block;"> <b>PAID 2011</b> </div> <p><i>Membership Expiration Date</i></p> <p><i>You have paid through Dec of the indicated year</i></p>
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**Check your name and address** (Apt., Bldg., Lot No.).  
Notify the Secretary if you find an error.

I became a replacement in the 80th Division. When the 80th Division had crossed the Moselle a few days earlier, they had suffered heavy losses and were in need of replacements. I dropped my field pack, put a shelter half on the ground, and then placed an army blanket on top. On top of that I placed a bar of soap, razor and toothbrush. These were rolled up in the shelter half, tied and flung over my shoulder.

All that night as I slept on the ground, I could hear our artillery shells going overhead. I didn't know what to expect. The next day about 5:00 PM, we were taken by trucks to about a hundred yards from the front lines. We were here to relieve the men in their fox holes. Unfortunately, the Germans were aware of this and laid down an artillery barrage. One at a time we ran to a foxhole to replace a man. Now, I know what it was like to be a rifleman in the infantry. There were a few dead horses close to my foxhole with gaping holes in the bodies. The stench from these horses was overbearing.

The next day, while in my foxhole, I heard a thundering noise. I looked to my right and coming toward me was a heard of wild boars. They passed about fifty feet from me. They looked pretty mean with their long tusks.

Our Company was there to hold our position. The Germans kept shelling our position every day to keep us in check. A few of the men were hit by flying shrapnel. We stayed in the foxholes for a few days and then our Company was relieved. The Army trucks took us to a rest area at Pont A Mousson. The town had been badly damaged; however, we stayed in an abandoned house right on the town square. Two men in our squad brought back a couple of chickens. These soldiers were probably raised on farms. They killed the chickens, plucked the feathers and cleaned them. I said I could cook and would make chicken soup. We found two big pots in the house and lit the wood stove in the kitchen. That evening we had our best meal in weeks.

The last week in September of 1944, our Division went on the offensive. The objective was Mt. St. Jean which was saddled between Mt. Toulon on the left and Hill 19 on the right. As we approached Mt. St. Jean, there was a wooded area, then an open field. The heavy weapons company fired mortars and heavy machine gun fire into the mountain. The battle for Mt. St. Jean lasted four days and nights.

Finally, Mt. St. Jean fell but not without heavy casualties.

I remember seeing a stream of German prisoners coming down the mountain, hands over their heads. After the fall of Mt. St. Jean, the 80th Division continued on the offensive.

Over the next few days, we kept the Germans on the run. We had taken a number of small towns and villages and everywhere we went we were greeted by the French. One afternoon we stopped at a patch of woods for a much needed rest. It felt so good to sit down and relax for a while. Some of us took a field ration from our jackets. Private Moore was about to open a can of C-rations when he threw his hands over his chest, the can of rations falling to the ground. He never heard the bullets that tore into his body. He kept crying out for his mama, the cries became fainter until they stopped. We called for a medic but at that moment all hell broke loose. I hit the ground under a small bush. I could hear the bullets whizzing over my body. The leaves from the bush were falling down in front of me. The next thing I felt a heavy thud. The big guy fell on top of me. Is it okay? he asked. What could I say when his body was shielding me. We left the wooded area, leaving Private Moore's body. His rifle, with attached bayonet, was stuck in the ground next to his body.

It was the end of October when they handed out absentee ballots for the coming presidential election. President Roosevelt was going for a fourth term. The republican candidate was Tom Dewey. I voted for Roosevelt.

It was the 10th of November and the weather was getting colder. The Division advanced all that day engaging the Germans all the way. Later that afternoon, I remember sitting on a high ridge with my friend Julius. Our rations were very low so we shared a box of K-rations. Overhead, we saw dozens of B17's on a bombing raid over Germany. While we were watching, I noticed Julius's helmet had a hole in it. He removed his helmet and there was a hole clear through. Toward nightfall, we entered a small village. We got word that we could stay in the empty houses for the night.

We were seated around the small kitchen table and it felt so warm and safe to be here in this

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

## Sonnenfeld: His Life... CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

small house. Even today, after fifty-six years, when I have a cup of tea in the evening, I wrap my fingers around my hot cup and think about that night.

At about 9:00 in the morning, our Company A moved out first. Our point man was out in front, then each man followed at eight foot intervals. We were going through a sugar beet field and it was very hard walking. The Germans began to shell us and some of the shells were falling very close. This one sounded very close when Julius and I hit the ground. He was to the right of me. I was down a second or two and then called over to him. "Are you okay?" In a low voice he said "Fred, call the medic". I called for the medic and then went over to Julius and held him in my arms until the medic came. He came right over and told me he was dead. I couldn't believe it. "Are you sure?" I said. The medic said yes. He took Julius's rifle, attached his bayonet and stuck it in the ground next to his body.

We left Julius' body and continued marching until our column reached a patch of woods which looked down a slight slope onto the bridge and the village of Hans-sur-Nied. This was a small village which consisted of a little cluster of some twenty buildings on the east bank of the river. Beyond the river, hundreds of vehicles were streaming along the roads heading east and south of the village. The wooden bridge had already been prepared by the Germans with explosives and wiring. The 68th Tank Battalion led, firing at the Germans in foxholes on the west bank and engaged the anti-tank guns across the bridge as it advanced. Beyond the tanks the 9th Armored Infantry started down the slope.

CPT James Craig and our Company A, which had been reduced to some sixty men by the fighting of the past few days, followed about two hundred yards to the rear. As the armored infantry approached the bridge, they were hit by high explosives from sixteen 40mm anti-aircraft guns coming from a hill northeast of the village. As all of this was happening, CPT Craig moved us in single file down the right and we then crept toward the bridge. I stayed very close to the ground. I could see dirt kicking up around me from the bullets. Then, I felt a tap on my back. It was CPT Craig. He just said "Go". I leaped up and ran as fast as I could toward the bridge amidst a hail of shell fragments and tracer bullets.

Fourteen men from A Company and four from the armored infantry reached the other side and took cover among the houses close to the bridge. Just off to the right was a small house. I looked inside and lying on a table was SGT Little who had been shot in both legs. A medic was taking care of him. Right behind me was my friend Trayner. We dashed across the road and went into a two story house. The door was open. We ran into the kitchen and as we did, two or three Germans ran out the back door. We saw them running past the kitchen window. We both fired and they fell to the ground. All through the afternoon, the Germans were shelling the bridge and its approaches. No other tank could cross the bridge because of the danger to the wounded lying on the narrow bridge. At dusk, the bridge was cleared and the tanks and infantry crossed to the east bank. The crossing site was now held securely.

I can still see that kitchen table, plates filled with sausages and eggs and a bottle of wine. The food was still warm. On the kitchen wall was a picture of Hitler and next to this picture, black rosary beads were hanging on a hook. I took the beads, put them around my neck. I then went down to the basement and there were a dozen or more people huddled together from the village. This house now became our command post.

One morning I was told to report to the CO's room. CPT Craig said he appreciated all that the fourteen men had done and he was giving us a three day pass to Paris. I sat down in a chair and was given a haircut. The CPT said he couldn't pay me since it was the middle of the month but what he did do was give me a carton of cigarettes. "You know what to do with them", he said. That afternoon we left for Paris in two army trucks. The next afternoon we arrived in Paris. The two army trucks came to a stop right in front of the Arc-de-Triumphe. We jumped out and coming from all directions were Frenchmen. They wanted to buy our cigarettes. Each man sold his carton for 1,000 francs.

We stayed the next three days at the American Red Cross building directly across from the Arc-de-Triumph. While in Paris we visited the Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame Cathedral and Napoleon's Tomb. I also had my photo taken in a Paris subway station. After three days we were on our way back to our outfit.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Thanksgiving came and we were given a hot turkey meal with all the trimmings, topped off with a cigar. The next day two squad men and myself were driven a mile down the road to set up a road block. The purpose was to stop anyone coming from the east. Across the road, high on a hill was a farm house, the only one around. The soldier who drove us there asked us if we wanted some beef steaks and, of course we said we did. He said they would be back around five o'clock with the steaks. After he left, one of the men with me who spoke a little French went up to the farm house and asked the woman there if she would cook the steaks for the three of us. She said she was delighted to do so. Late that afternoon, the truck returned, we paid for the beef and my friend took them up to the farm house. Only one of us could go at a time. I remember going up to the farm house and the table was set in the dining room with linen napkins and a wine glass. The father of the family sat at the head of the table, his wife at the other end. I sat down on the side and their beautiful young daughter served us our meal. She filled my glass with wine and then went to the kitchen and brought out the meals. The steaks were cooked to perfection. With the beef, there were these tiny whole potatoes with parsley flakes and some broccoli. Everything tasted so good. After the meal, I thanked them for being so kind and walked down the hill to the little shack we were staying in.

It was now the first week of December and it was getting cold and the snow more frequent. We were in a village right on the border of Germany. Our squad was staying in this empty two-story house on the second floor. I went up to the attic of this house and found a small room filled with apples. We had to stand guard duty every night.

The following day, December 6th, an order came down that everyone's feet would be checked for frost bite and trench foot. Our medic took squad by squad into a small building. I remember there was a long bench near the wall. We sat down and removed our shoes and socks. The medic looked at my feet and told me that I had to go to the hospital in Nancy. There were two others going back with me. When I tried to put my shoes back on, my feet were so swollen that I had to leave my shoes behind. I climbed into the ambulance. There were three of us and one German soldier. He was lying on a stretcher and had been wounded very seri-

## LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Life Membership

Falls, John (80th, Family)

Gallagher, COL (R) David (80th Div G3)

King, SGM (R) Vernon (80th Div G2)

Wagner, Joshua (Family G-319th)

## NEW MEMBERS

Blanco, CSM Luis (HQ, 80th Tng Cmd)

Everett, MSG Stacey (HQ, 80th Tng Cmd G7)

Hopper, COL (R) James (80th Div G1)

Ison, SFC Angie (97th ILE Bde, 80th Tng Cmd)

Robertson, COL (R) William (80th Tng Cmd G4)

Robinson, MG(R) Bruce (HQ 80th Tng Cmd)

## DONATIONS

Forster, James (H-317th)

Hooper III, Harris (L-317th)

Post 43 (General Fund)

Post 43 (General McBride Scholarship Fund)

ously. One of the two men with me by the name of Cigliano was taking the ring and watch off the German soldier. I told him not to do this but it didn't do any good. He just took them.

I stayed at the hospital in Nancy for two days. Everything was so different from where I was just one hour or so ago. I came from a world of snow, mud and the constant fear of death each day. Here I was in a nice, clean bed. There was hot food three times a day and constant care by the doctors and nurses. It all seemed so unreal. After this ordeal I was assigned to the 365th Chemical Company stationed in the town of Tongeren, Belgium.

I always felt bad about leaving the 80th Division when I did. I know now that God has a plan worked out for all of us. If I hadn't met Henry when I was sent to the 365th Chemical Company in Belgium, I would have never met my sweetheart and wife, Mary.

# TAPS

Bujdoso, Frank  
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Dolan, John Co C 319  
600 Spring Manor Cir Apt 4108  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-6851  
DOD: Nov 11, 2011  
Rptd by Bob McDonald & Abe Barone

Kane, George (Bill) Co A 318  
608 Dunraven Drive  
Winter Park, FL 32792-4627  
DOD: Jun 16, 2011  
Rptd by: Jeff Wignall

Kessler, Billie, CO Co M-318  
3027 Brix Drive  
Springfield, OH 45503  
DOD: Nov 6, 2011  
Rptd by Bob Murrell

Litchfield, Russell W. , 314th FA  
BN  
477 County Road 2500 E  
Toluca, IL 61369  
DOD: Nov 6, 2011  
Rptd by Son Greg

Nickols, Dale Co K 318  
PO Box 256  
Highlands, NC 28741  
DOD: Oct 16, 2011  
Rptd by Grandson Brandon

O'Brien, John P., 80th Sig  
411B Portsmouth Dr Apt B  
Lakewood, NJ 08701  
DOD: Oct 7, 2011  
Rptd by Daughter Patricia

Orsi, Ernest, Co L 317  
DOD: Jul 31, 2011  
Rptd by Grandson

Regan, Leo W. Jr.,  
207 South St Apt 1  
Plainville, MA 02762  
DOD: Oct 5, 2010  
Rptd by Grandson Andrew

Schnur, Christ J., Co G 319  
6508 W Foster Ave  
Chicago, IL 60656  
DOD: Oct 27, 2011  
Rptd by Grandson Josh

Schwendeman, George M. 317  
13 Blake Drive  
Clark, NJ 07066  
DOD Oct, 2011  
RPTD by Daughter in Law

Sonnenfeld, Frederick J. Co A 317  
155 Gubernat Drive  
South Plainfield, NJ 07080  
DOD: Nov 17, 2010  
Rptd by Daughter Kathy

Steffy, Charles W. Co D 318  
305 East Fulton St. C12  
Ephrata, PA 17522  
Rptd by Son Ashley

Van Hooser, Donald Co B 317  
3312 S. Willis St  
Abilene, TX 79605-6652  
DOD: May 28, 2011  
Rptd by: "returned Blue Ridge"

Wettig, John T.  
714 Francis Lane  
Covington, KY 41011  
DOD: Unknown  
Rptd by "returned Blue Ridge"

Williams, Walter Co E 319  
12320 Connelly Road  
Cordova, MD 21625-2054  
DOD: Dec 3, 2011  
Rptd by: Ray Patterson & Abe Barone

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### "SIMONE"

A novel about a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge was recently released. The author indicates it was written as a tribute to members of the "greatest generation" who fought in that epic battle.

Information and a reading sample are available at [www.sjdennis.com](http://www.sjdennis.com).

### MISCH LENERS

Passed away September 24, 2011. Misch and his family were wonderful host to the 80th Division Veterans that participated in the annual Luxembourg Friendship Week.

They provided a delicious home cooked barbeque with all the trimmings. No one ever left hungry. I sent a sympathy card to the family on behalf of the Association.



# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

80th Division Veterans Association  
Doris M. Wollett  
5101 Hurop Road  
Sandston, VA 23150-5406

*Desiring to maintain liaison and comradeship  
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PLEASE SPECIFY BATTLE / CAMPAIGN: \_\_\_\_\_

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ UNIT: \_\_\_\_\_  
IF FAMILY MEMBER, PLEASE ALSO PROVIDE THE NAME AND UNIT OF VETERAN

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

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*Please make checks payable to the 80th Division Veterans Association. PLEASE CHECK APPROPRIATE BOX:*

CURRENT MEMBER IN GOOD STANDING (Dues paid to date)

<b>80th Division WWII Veterans</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal: \$10/Year <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership: \$50	<b>80th Div. Veterans, Family Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Renewal: \$10/Year <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership: \$150	<b>New Members (80th Div. Veterans, Family Members)</b> <input type="checkbox"/> New Membership: \$20/Year <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership: \$150	<b>New Members—Associates Friends of 80th Division, Non-Voting</b> <input type="checkbox"/> New Membership: \$20/Year <input type="checkbox"/> Life Membership: \$150
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# Blue Ridge 80th Division The Service Magazine

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80TH DIVISION MONUMENTS: Infantry Museum, Fort Benning, Georgia (left) and Heritage Trail at the Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania.



## Website Updates

- [www.thetroubleshooters.com](http://www.thetroubleshooters.com)
- [www.80thdescendants.com](http://www.80thdescendants.com)
- [www.80thdivision.com](http://www.80thdivision.com)
- [www.abmc.gov](http://www.abmc.gov)

### What you will find at [www.80thdivision.com](http://www.80thdivision.com):

- General Orders (August 13, 1944 thru October 31, 1945) containing awards for Silver Stars, Bronze Stars, Air Medals, Distinguished Service Cross, Purple Hearts
- Morning Reports for almost all units August 1944 thru May 1945, including rifle regiments, field artillery units, medical battalion, 80th Division headquarters units
- Many After Action Reports and Unit Histories for 80th Division, 317, 318, 319 Infantry Regiments
- Many other Miscellaneous Reports