

NOVEMBER 30, 2012

7th Civil Support Command



"An Ocean Closer"

7th CSC Changes Commander

**By Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Chlosta
7th CSC Public Affairs, 21st TSC**

RHINE ORDNANCE BARRACKS, GERMANY —

Brig. Gen. Paul M. Benenati assumed command of the 7th Civil Support Command during a change of command ceremony Nov. 30 at Rhine Ordnance Barracks.

Maj. Gen. Aundre F. Piggee, commanding general, 21st Theater Sustainment Command, presided over the ceremony that passed the responsibility of command from Brig. Gen. Mark S. Hendrix, who departed after 17 months in command, to Benenati.

"To the outstanding Soldiers and civilians who are the heart and soul of the 7th CSC; I am truly awed by the great work you have done over these past couple of years in standing up this amazing outfit, training, and proving your mettle in real world missions," Piggee said.

"Thank you for your service and your extraordinary contributions to our nation. Through the hard work you have given this unit under [General] Hendrix, and the same dedication I know you will provide to [General] Benenati, you will move this organization forward, keeping it 'An Ocean Closer.'"

After Piggee's remarks, the outgoing 7th CSC commander expressed his thanks and appreciation for the 7th CSC Soldiers.

He highlighted two units currently deployed to Afghanistan; the 793rd Movement Control Team and Company D, 457th Civil Affairs Battalion.

"For me today is just a day to say thanks," Hendrix said. "To all of you thank you so much for everything."

After Hendrix's comments, the new 7th CSC commander spoke.

"It is a real honor to be chosen as the 7th CSC's commander and to serve with you," Benenati said. "I'm excited about being a member of this team. On a team, every member, regardless of their position, plays a critical and vital part in the overall success of the organization. After a decade of war, our Soldiers have begun to come home, but still, we continue to deploy Soldiers to Afghanistan to support the warfighter.

"We must be ready, tactically and technically proficient at all times, to answer the call of our leaders with little notice," Benenati said. "There is much to do and I am confident that you are the right team to take us through this strategic turning point. It's time to get back to work."

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BLUE RIDGE



THE SERVICE MAGAZINE

WINTER 2012

Volume 93 • Number 376 • Issue 4

Editor's Notes BY CSM(R) Doris Wollett

WINTER HAS ARRIVED but we continue to have a day here and there with temperatures in the 60's. I guess some of you have already seen some snow. Here in Virginia we have not had snow or flurries. That is just fine with me as I am a warm weather gal!!

As the temperatures keep dropping don't forget to winterize the outside equipment that you may have that you will not use until the weather warms up again. Also, many of you have river homes that need the water turned off and pipes drained so make sure someone takes care of that for you. Have someone check under your house to make sure that all the pipes are wrapped and doors and vents closed. We certainly don't want anyone to have busted pipes.

If you or a family member or friend are hunters, are you having any luck? I here lots of shooting around here. My Grandson got a small six-pointer. That made his day and was enough meat to last him for a while.

Most likely Christmas and New Year's will be over when you receive this edition of the 80th Blue Ridge Service Magazine. I hope that each of you had a wonderful Holiday Season and got to enjoy it with family and friends. Continue to wear your blaze orange so others can see you. We want this to be a safe hunting season.

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the 94th Reunion. It will be held in VA Beach 4-8 Sep 2013!! There will be more information to follow but mark your calendars and start making your plans to be with us.

Check the mailing label on your magazine and it will tell you the status of your membership. If it does not show Life or 2013 then you need to send your membership renewal to me. We are operating on a small budget and membership renewals are the only source of income we have.

Lastly, please keep me informed of any changes to your mailing address. I have way too many magazines returned with no forwarding address.

GOD bless each of you and remember the 80th "Only Moves Forward"!!



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SECRETARY/EDITOR:

CSM (R) Doris M. Wollett • 5101 Hurop Road • Sandston, VA 23150-5406 • 804-737-4422 • csmwollett@verizon.net

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NATIONAL OFFICERS 2012-2013

NATIONAL COMMANDER

COL GRANT R. PORTER (1st Army Division, East)
6730 Manor Gate Drive • Midlothian VA 23112

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

MG(R) JOHN MCLAREN (80th Training Command)
1233 Hartford Drive • Virginia Beach VA 23464

2ND VICE COMMANDER

JEFF WIGNALL (Family, A-318)
27 Martinack Avenue • Peabody MA 01960

3RD VICE COMMANDER

DOUGLAS KNORR (Family, A-317)
1609 Dracka Road • Traverse City MI 49685

NATIONAL SECRETARY

CSM (R) DORIS WOLLETT (HQ-317)
5101 Hurop Road • Sandston VA 23150

NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

PNC ANGELO BARONE (L-317)
116 South Jackson Street • Pottsville PA 17901

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER

COL KELLY NIERNBERGER (80th Training Command)
2812 Cameron Mills Road • Alexandria VA 22302

HISTORIAN

PNC LEE S. ANTHONY (Family, F-317, WWI)
254 Waverly Court • Fayetteville PA 17222

JUDGE ADVOCATE

DEMPSEY J. PRAPPAS (AT-317)
4899 Montrose Blvd., #1301 • Houston TX 77006

FLAG/COLOR SERGEANT

ROGER NELSON (Family, Eng Reg, WWI)
506 Timberline Drive • Akron OH 44333

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

BURT R. MARSH (M-319)
1897 Fontenay Court • Columbus OH 43235

TRUSTEES

TRUSTEE 1 YEAR

PNC WALTON SPANGLER(A-319)
8275 Hagerty Road • Ashville OH 43103

TRUSTEE 2 YEAR

JIM CHRISTEN (Family, G-317)
821 Dorgene Lane • Cincinnati OH 45244

TRUSTEE 3 YEAR

LAVERNE J. SCHOCK (F-317)
2489 Sharon Lane • Port Huron MI 48060

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER 1 YEAR

ROBERT MCDONALD (C-319)
221 Vernon Road • Greenville PA 16125

ROBERT MOORHEAD (L-317)

1000 Putnam Blvd #205 • Wallingford PA 19086

PNC ROBERT BURROWS (HQ, 317)

PO BOX 453 • Broomfield CO 80038

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER 2 YEAR

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208 N. Elm Street • Coldwater OH 45828

PAUL STUTTS (Family, 1-317)

3026 Champagne Drive • Aiken SC 29803

MSG EDMOND P. HERBERT (80th Training Command)

14302 Huntgate Woods Rd • Midlothian VA 23112

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER 3 YEAR

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PNC RUSSELL SICK (305 Eng Bn)

3131 Pleasant Avenue • Hamilton OH 45015

GEORGE E. ANDERSON (905 FA)

118 Timothy Avenue • Clinton TN 37716

COMMANDERS MESSAGE



**COL GRANT R. PORTER,
COMMANDER**

WELL TEAM, I just finished raking the leaves (again) and it has been a beautiful day as the autumn leaves of 2012 are all about gone. Following a rough start to the Fall season with all the wreckage left behind in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast by Hurricane Sandy, it has been a rather mild November and December thus far, (knock on wood). By the time this newsletter goes to print, the new year will be upon us, and with that, I wish you all a very Happy New Year!

As we reflect on 2012, I am grateful for all the good work that has been done to recognize and promote the 80th Division veterans, as well as the current 80th Training Command Soldiers, and the United States Army as a whole. I am thankful that the 80th continues to be a relevant force in today's army that strengthens the readiness of the Army in defense of our nation.

As the military begins to withdraw from Afghanistan in 2013, as it has done in Iraq, we are at the same time drawing down the number of service members in the Armed Forces, particularly in the Army. We will become a leaner force as we move from being a "Deployment Expeditionary Force" to a "Contingency Expeditionary Force" and the Army will focus more on training in some ways as we did prior to September 11, 2001. This will result in more back-to-basics training as we prepare for full-spectrum contingency operations. With this in mind, we know that "the 80th only moves forward" and will continue to be even more relevant as we prepare for future missions.

As we move forward with our plans for 2013, our Senior vice Commander, MG (R) John McLaren, is busy making arrangements for another great reunion at the Virginia Beach Resort and Conference Center from 4-8 September. I know he has planned visits to the MacArthur Memorial and Museum and a tour aboard the USS Battleship Wisconsin to highlight what promises to be another wonderful experience. Thanks to him for all the hard work that goes into planning the events. Meanwhile, thanks to our 2nd Vice Commander Jeff Wignall and his committee as they review and make recommendations to improve our constitution and by-laws.

We all share an active interest in making the Association a strong and secure organization. To that end, we appreciate the support of all as we strive to recruit new members and retain those who have annual memberships. If you haven't done so already, please send in your annual dues to Doris as we reign in the new year. Please look after each other and keep us updated on your status and those of others in the organization.

All the best wishes for a healthy and prosperous new year in 2013!

Sincerely,

**Colonel Grant Porter,
National Commander**



For a heart-warming holiday story, visit www.CNN.com and search for "Kindness of American Saint Nick Remembered" by Gena Somra, December 23, 2009.

It's the story of Dick Brookins, a U.S. soldier, who after sixty-five years returns to Wiltz, Luxembourg, where he played Saint Nick for the town in December of 1944.

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/europe/12/22/luxembourg.santa/index.html>



Receiving Line

RHINE ORDNANCE BARRACKS, Germany — New 7th Civil Support Command Commander Brig. Gen. Paul M. Benenati, left, shakes the hand of Lt. Col. Juergen Heinz, right, from the German Army Joint Support Command after the 7th CSC's change of command ceremony, Nov. 30, as Brigitte Benezet, host nation advisor, 21st Theater Sustainment Command, looks on.

(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Chlosta, 7th CSC PAO, 21st TSC)



Arrival of Official Party

RHINE ORDNANCE BARRACKS, Germany — Soldiers of the 7th Civil Support Command and 21st Theater Sustainment Command stand at attention during the arrival of the official party during the 7th CSC change of command ceremony, Nov. 30.

(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Chlosta, 7th CSC PAO, 21st TSC)



Changing Command

RHINE ORDNANCE BARRACKS, Germany— New 7th Civil Support Command Commander Brig. Gen. Paul M. Benenati, center, receives the 7th CSC colors from Maj. Gen. Aundre F. Piggee, commander, 21st Theater Sustainment Command, right, during the change of command ceremony, Nov. 30, as Command Sgt. Maj. Michael Biere, senior enlisted leader, 7th CSC, left, looks on.

(Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Chlosta, 7th CSC PAO, 21st TSC)

Remembering HOWARD BROCK

BY: Michael Brock



MY NAME IS Michael Brock and my Grandfather Howard F. Brock was in the 80th Infantry Division 317th Ambulance Company. He is in the famous picture at the church singing and playing the organ. (My grandfather is the one even with the white banner.)

Howard F. Brock was born in Canada 1901 and he, his sister and parents entered the USA and settled in Philadelphia Pa. When he was seventeen he tried twice to join the Army in March or April 1918 (first time they said he was under weight and family story is that he drank 3 gallons of water which today was impossible. He was able to join on second time and sent to Fort Lee, Va. assigned to 317th Ambulance Company. I am not sure how long they trained there but shipped over to France.

I remember as an 8 year old boy telling me he carried a French revolver for protection which he was not entitled to carry in Ambulance Corps. I have read since that mostly went out in the cover darkness to find wounded and dying to bring back to Aid Station. I remember him telling me he killed some German with that pistol.

I tried to get more out of him and he did not want to talk about anymore. I remember him telling me about an American Captain in an Infantry went out to take a surrender of Germans and using Finger Grenades killing Captain and a Sargent then American Machine-guns opening up killing about 12 Germans.

My Grandfather Howard F. Brock 1901-1975 lived in Philadelphia, Pa and Upper Darby, Pa. He was a Father of four children worked for FHA as inspector (Supervisor). He died in Dec 19 1975. He was one reasons that I joined the US Army myself.

My Grandmother, Anne C. Brock, was the past president of 80th Infantry Division Women's Auxiliary.



German Soldier Helps Americans

BY: William Clements

I COORDINATE WITH VARIOUS German government (including defense and military) organizations on behalf of Headquarters United States Army Europe—putting our folks together with theirs to work through various challenges relating to stationing issues here in Germany.

Recently, I had the occasion to converse with a former German Soldier of the Second World War, who told me a story of how he was involved in providing urgently needed medical aide to five American Soldiers, who were severely wounded in the closing days of World War II. The incident in question took place in the vicinity of Bad Wörishofen (sometimes spelled Bad Woerishofen) in southern Germany on or about 4 or 5 May 1945.

You might be interested to know that the German Wehrmacht veteran described the shoulder patch that these Soldiers were wearing as having “three light blue mountains next to another.” He then drew a reasonable facsimile of the patch of the 80th Infantry Division on a piece of paper. As I am a little bit of a history buff, I also know that the 80th Infantry Division ended up its campaign in Europe in southern Germany.

Here is his story:

After being seriously wounded on the Eastern Front, Gefreiter (Lance Corporal) Gerhard Ulrich, a combat engineer of the German 34th Infantry Regiment (Wehrmacht), was assigned to administrative and support duties at a German hospital in Bad Wörishofen. The German Army had established some type of hospital or medical rehabilitation center in that former spa vacation community. To put his emotional state at the time in context, Herr Ulrich explained that SS and GESTAPO units were scouring the countryside during these last days of the war, executing anyone perceived as being defeatist or of having lost faith in Germany’s NAZI dictatorship.

On or about 4 or 5 May 1945, a group of U.S. Armored vehicles came racing by his location along a roadway that led towards a wooded choke point. From Herr Ulrich’s description, I think these vehicles may have been self-propelled M-8 assault guns (I believe the official nomenclature is: 75 mm. Howitzer Motor Carriage M-8), also known as M-8 Scott, and derived from the M-5 light tank.

According to Herr Ulrich, as the armored vehicles entered the wooded area, explosions rang out—the vehicles had run into a mined area. Shortly after the explosions, the remaining vehicles returned up the road carrying five severely wounded American Soldiers on

their decks. Herr Ulrich explained that he had seen enough at this point in the war and was overcome by a simple desire to help other human beings. So, disregarding the threat to his own life for offering assistance to “the enemy,” he flagged down the American armored vehicles, whose occupants did not know that they had just driven by a German Army medical facility. Herr Ulrich stated that he also directed that a room be set up for emergency care and ensured that the duty Doctor (a German Army officer) was summoned immediately.

The American Soldiers were treated and later picked up by a U.S. Army medical team. In the days that followed, the German medical facilities in Bad Wörishofen were taken over by the U.S. Army. Herr Ulrich stated that during this period of time, an American Army officer—Herr Ulrich believes it was somebody in the U.S. Army unit chain of command (80th Infantry Division) - came to the location and informed Herr Ulrich that one or more of the American Soldiers would certainly have died if not for his actions.

And the U.S. Army apparently did not forget Gefreiter Ulrich’s selfless act of humanity either. On or about 3-4 June 1945, Gefreiter Ulrich was visited by another American Officer and told that he was one of a very few German Soldiers who had been selected to be sent home—and not to a POW camp.

Herr Ulrich summed up his actions that day as follows: “I like to think that this story of humanity got around and that maybe some German Soldiers were also treated with extra consideration as a result of what I did for those American Soldiers.”

I find the story interesting and it would be great if we could get the U.S. / official version of this—if one exists. Maybe U.S. Veterans of the incident (or their families) might have recollection of it.

Please let me know if you have any additional information on this incident and if you think we might want to pursue this further.

With utmost respect to our Veterans of the Second World War and all that they accomplished.

Very Respectfully,

William E. Clements

US Forces Liaison Officer

Hesse, Northern Germany & Thuringia

william.e.clements.civ@mail.mil

Tel: 0611-1746-3912

Cell Phone: 0160-908-14153

Reunion Recap

BY Barbara Brockman

NOW THAT THE 93rd Annual Reunion is over, I would like to take a few minutes to say something about the wonderful time Dad & I had with all of you. First, I would like to thank, PNC Max Schmidt, PNC Bob Borrows & Bobby Burrows for being so helpful with my Dad by showing him where to go & spending time with him.

Second, I would like to let Mrs. Porter know how nice it was to meet her, she went around table to table at the events & made sure we were all well fed & having a great time. She is a delightful person to be around.

It was a nice time seeing so many lifetime friends & meeting new ones. Dad & I enjoyed the Airport Shuttle ride, seeing the area around the hotel. The driver was super, so were all the hotel employees.

Anna Rosmus, author, came from her home north of Baltimore to see us & several other veterans that she meet in Washington, DC 2 years ago.

But the best part of the reunion was going to Ruby Tuesdays on Friday for lunch with Max & Alice, Angelo & Kay, Vern & Margaret, Dad & I. Angelo went to the Salad Bar where a business woman came up to him & questioned him. She then followed him to our table



PNCs line up at the 93rd Annual Reunion

where she spoke to the other guys & thanked them all for their military service.

Once she left, the server came over & told us, she had bought us a round of drinks. Angelo asked if she was still in the restaurant & she was. He & Max went over to thank her for the drinks, she replied “My bill was too low, I thought you’d all have something TOP SHELF”!

What a wonderful memory for all of us to store away with so many from other reunions. National Commander Porter, thank you for the great job you did in Baltimore & enjoy your year serving the 80th Division Veterans Association.

Remembering James A. Stutts



JAMES A. STUTTS received basic training at Ft. Bragg, served in the 775th Artillery prior to training at Camp Phillips, Kansas and arrived in the ETO on August 5, 1944. He was assigned to HQ Co, 1st Bn, 317th Regiment on August 25, 1944 in the vicinity of Argentan, France and served in the Ammunition and Pioneering (A&P) Platoon for the remaining nine months of combat.

One newspaper article called his platoon seasoned “Handy Andy’s of A&P.” He made it through the Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe campaigns and on occasion, when asked, would talk about an event in the ETO. For instance how he acquired his first Bronze Star for digging fox holes (a story within itself) or how cold it was in the Ardennes.

As it happens, he passed too early in life but with the help of the 80th Division Veterans Association, I’ve been able to piece together a good part of his journey for my children.

Special thanks all.

POST #50 NEWS

Post # 50 held their Quarterly Luncheon on Wed, 24 Oct 2012 at 1230 at the Holiday Inn South on Bells Road in Richmond. We had 23 attend including MG(R) John P. Henderson, SGM(R) Vernon E. King and his wife Louise, LTC(R) Carroll Shepherd, LTC(R) Clyde Hughes, LTC(R) Charlie Elam and his wife Sandy, COL(R) Dave Gallagher, COL(R) Jim Brown and his wife June, COL(R) Bart Campbell and CW3(R) Joe Deboer.

Board Member Coretta Lankford offered the blessing. JR White gave a presentation on missionary work he and his wife are doing in Belize, Central America. At our Christmas Holiday Party we will be collecting contributions and shoes for Belize school children.

New Member Virgilio Munoz and his wife Nydia attended and we all thanked Virgilio for donating one his beautiful handcrafted mirrors for a raffle during the 80th Division Veterans Reunion in Baltimore. The Raffle raised over \$240.00 for the Post # 50 Awards Program. Virgilio has already donated another mirror for a raffle at the next Veterans Reunion and it is on display at the 80th Training Command in Richmond.

Emily Hardy, our 2012 Scholarship Winner and daughter of LTC(R) Bill Hardy, sent a thank you note to Post #50 for the \$500.00 Scholarship she was awarded. George Croughwell, Scholarship Chairman announced that Post #50 will be awarding two \$500.00 Scholarships in 2013.

Edmond "Pete" Herbert, Secretary

Dear Blue Ridge Post 50 Members,

Happy New Year Blue Ridgers!!! and thank you to everyone who contributed to this Newsletter! 2012 was a great year for the Association and we look forward to more great things to follow in 2013. In our last newsletter last Fall, we provided a recap of our Annual Meeting held in Baltimore. As a reminder, our newsletters are now incorporated into the Blue Ridge Service Magazine; which can be found online, under the link Blue Ridge. Please find all Blue Ridge publications at 80thdivision.com. Thanks to the 80th Training Command Public Affairs office for providing additional pictures of the Annual Meeting in Baltimore and to Andy Adkins for posting them to the site.

Since then we have all been very busy. We are also in the midst of our annual membership drive. Thanks to all those who have renewed their memberships and if you haven't done so already, please mail your membership form and check to Pete Herbert. In his last report, Pete noted that we have 127 Active Members, 76 Lifetime

Members and 51 Annual Members. 2013 Annual Dues are/were due on 1 Jan 2013. Our complete list of members is on our website at www.80thblueridge.us

ENDURING PROGRAMS WE SUPPORT

Some of the enduring programs we have supported provide funding from our membership earnings and others are supported by holding fund-raisers. At the time of this writing we are preparing for our Annual Holiday Party which is planned for 15 December 2012 at the Holiday Inn South on Bells Road in Richmond, VA. Highlights for this event include our annual Christmas Raffle which raises money with great donated gifts and additional special donations are made for special projects for those in need. This year we decided to support a special project for one of our members, CSM(R) J.R. White and his wife Carnell who are doing missionary work with Body and Soul Ministries in Rock Creek/Belize in Central America. There is a serious need for children in Belize to have shoes so they can attend school during the rainy/muddy season. Members are contributing low-top black tennis shoes in the following sizes: Children: 7-7½; Youth: 3-7; Women: 6-7; Men: 7-9. Payless Shoes and other outlets may give additional discounts if you advise them the shoes are for the children in Belize. For those who are interested and would still like to help, it may not be too late. Please send your check, made out to Body and Soul Ministries, to Pete Herbert and he will make sure it gets to J.R. White for the mission to Belize.

Another annual event is our Blue Ridge Golf Tournament, the 4th of which was held on September 22nd. Blue Ridge board member, George Croughwell who led the tournament reported that we had great weather and a great time playing at Providence Golf Course. Three teams played to include Blue Ridge members George Croughwell, Grant Porter, Bill Hardy, Angela Robey and George Newnam. The winning team had 13 under par while Angela and George Newnam took home the prizes for Closet to the pin and the Monster Put competitions, respectively. More importantly, George reported that we raised \$150 for the Association Awards Program.

Thanks also to George Croughwell for leading our Scholarship program. Our 2012 Continuing Education Scholarship winner, Emily Hardy sent a nice thank you note to the 80th as follows: "Dear 80th Blue Ridge Members, It was a pleasure to finally meet some of you last week! Thank you so much for granting me the Blue Ridge Association Continuing Education Scholarship. This will truly help me in my educational pursuits and lighten my financial obligations. I will be making

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

the most of my education. I am proud of the 80th Division and hope I can make you all proud of me. Thanks Again. Sincerely, Emily Hardy”

George will continue on as Chairman of the 2013 Continuing Education Scholarship Program and J.R White has volunteered to help. This year we will be awarding two \$500 Scholarships.

We had four Blue Ridge Members who competed in the 2012 Army Ten-Mile held in Washington, DC. Congratulations to Larry Adams, Skip Goodwillie, Corretta Lankford, and Angela Robie. Each Participant was given \$25.00 to help defray their expenses or as an alternative, the participants were allowed to receive \$25.00 in Blue Ridge Merchandise or make a donation of the \$25.00 to the Annual Awards Program which include: our Scholarship Fund, the Soldier and Civilians Awards or the Audie Murphy Awards.

FUTURE EVENTS

Blue Ridge Luncheons: Post 50 Luncheons continue to be very popular with as many as forty members coming to attend. Luncheons are held quarterly. If interested, please contact either our Secretary MSG (R) Pete Herbert at edmond.herbert@usar.army.mil, or our Vice President, CSM(R) Doris Wollett at csmwollett@verizon.net.

The 2013 Annual Meeting: MG(R) John McLaren announced the 2013 Annual Meeting will be held ICW the 94th Annual 80th Division Veterans Association Reunion; which will be held at the Virginia Beach Resort and Conference Center from 3-8 September 2013. As the Senior Vice Commander of the 80th DVA, John will serve as Chairman for the Reunion. Planned events include a Golf Tournament and visits to the MacArthur Memorial and USS Battleship Wisconsin, as well as several dinner functions.

MEMBER HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations to Blue Ridge member **Mary West-erwelle** on her promotion to Colonel! Mary serves as the Deputy Chief of Staff, G4 (Logistics) for the 80th Training Command. Blue Ridge President, Grant and Avila Porter’s oldest son, **Alexander Porter** graduated High School last June and decided to join the Navy! Grant and his family proudly attended Alex’s graduation ceremony at the Great Lakes Recruit Training Command in Illinois on September 14th and then saw him off to attend his A School training in Pensacola, Florida, where he is now studying to be an Aviation Electronics Technician.

Good luck to all in 2013! Please send in updates so we can continue to share stories about our members!

Colonel Grant Porter, President

Florida Post #47

For those who could not attend our meeting in Ocala, it was very enjoyable. The weather cooperated with balmy breezes and a lot of sunshine. Elmer Dorsten made it down from Ohio with his driver and friend Ted. We were glad to see them there.

We will be returning there the end of October 2013. The cost of rooms will remain the same as this year. The only change will be the name of the motel from Hampton Inn to Quality. We hope they will still have the fresh cookies in the evening. The staff will remain the same.

With the Holidays approaching I guess everyone is busy making plans and getting their shopping done. For those of you who will be traveling, have a safe and enjoyable trip. To all we wish you a VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and a HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Kay Rajnicek, Secretary

313th Field Artillery Battalion

I am sad to report that Frances Poletti will no longer be writing for the 313th Field Artillery Battalion. Frances sent me a card stating that she had been ill and is now recovering from an operation. She fell and hurt herself badly, however she was not aware how bad it was at the time.

She stated that the flowers she received were beautiful and she really appreciated them. Her current address is: 401 Brookside Dr, Bryant, AR 72022. Please keep Frances in your prayers as she continues to heal.

CSM(R) Doris Wollett

National Secretary

LIFE MEMBERSHIP

The last date I have entered a name is December 1, 2012

Jess Bickel (Son of John Bickel F-317)

CSM(R) Mike Phoenix, HQ, 80th Div CSM

(Annual to Life Membership)

SFC Ines Montalvo,

(3rd Bde, 102nd Annual to Life Membership)

NEW MEMBERS

COL (R) Robert Baumgardner, HQ 80th TC IR

Virgilio Munoz, HQ 80th TC Safety

DONATIONS

None received at this time

RAISED IN New Bedford, PA during the 1950's, my best friend was Tom Ratvasky. He was born July 26, 1944. Tom often talked about the father he never knew, John R. Ratvasky, who shipped out with the 80th Div about July 1 that year for England and then France. All I recall at that point was that Tom's dad shipped out of the U.S. before Tom was born and was killed in northeast France during WWII.

MY RESEARCH:

I remained curious about the details surrounding John's death, since no-one seemed to have much information. In 1998, while driving across NE France with my son I noticed that the roadmap showed a U. S. military cemetery, the Lorraine Cemetery, located near St. Avold in northeast France. We stopped at the cemetery office and inquired at the desk whether a John R. Ratvasky was buried there. After checking their cemetery's database, the answer was "no", but upon typing his name into a larger database, they found that he was buried at Epinal Cemetery, located about 60 miles south. So I took a left turn south through Metz and Nancy to find the U.S. Cemetery at Epinal before closing time, and found John's gravesite. "JOHN R. RATVASKY S.SGT 318 INF 80 DIV PENNSYLVANIA NOV 22, 1944."

U.S. ARMY IDPF INFORMATION:

Upon returning home in August 1998, I wrote a letter requesting the unsealed information about John and was so happy to receive a packet of about 22 pages in September, 1998. The pages were captivating. One form listed effects found on body. This form for some reason shows a date of death as February 9, 1945. But it lists the personal effects as 3 Photos and one 14 Karat Gold Wedding Ring. The "Date Delivered" of Feb 19, 2005 indicates when his personal effects were delivered to the Effects Quartermaster. This is perhaps the best indication of when he was found on the battlefield, long after his Nov. 22 '44 actual death. Another form dated April 25, 1945 "Report of Death" indicates that John was "killed in action" on November 22, 1944. The form indicates that John had an Expert Infantryman designation (SO#90, Hq. 318th Inf. 20 May 1944). The MIA status of John was apparently lifted on March 1, 1945, "when evidence considered sufficient to establish the fact of death was received..." A form dated Feb. 24, 1945 indicates that John died of a "G.S.W. Pen. Frontal Area" – Gun Shot Wound Penetrating the Frontal Area. He was killed near a village: Tritteling, FR. This village is located in NE France. Therefore, it's likely that John's body lay on the battle field for 2 or 3 months from Nov 22 '44 through mid Feb 45.

INFORMATION ON THE 80TH DIVISION:

After receiving the IDPF, I searched the web for "80th Division" and found information and ordered a document: "318th INFANTRY HISTORY, E.T.O. 80th "Blue Ridge" Infantry Division." I also called Robert Murrell, listed as the National Secretary/Editor residing in Oakmont, PA, a suburb of Pittsburgh. I received a packet of information from Bob confirming "ETO"—European Theater of Operations, "France 9"—Laudrefang region of NE France, "SO #90"—Special Order #90, for qualifying as an Expert Infantryman, "PH/OLC"—Purple Heart with an Oak Leaf Cluster (Meaning receiving the purple heart twice), Cause of Death – Gun Shot Wound Penetrating the Frontal Area, and "Company B"—John's company of the 80th division. Bob enclosed a letter he received from a fellow Company B person.

ED BREDBENNER'S LETTER:

This letter gives a chilling account of the military action in which John was killed.

"BOB: He was killed 22 NOV. near LAUDREFANG, 22 NOV. I well remember this action. We had been in FALQUEMONT and moved out early on 21 NOV to outpost TRITTELING. Our CAPT SWEENEY heard about the forts of the big MAGINOT LINE. The area near LAUDREFANG was one of them. He did not have any orders to do so, but we took off to capture LAUDREFANG all by CO B, with no supporting tanks, etc. I remember we had to cross a very deep anti-tank ditch and immediately came under fire from three sides. Instead of retuning we charged the enemy and lost many men. We were under sniper fire and artillery and mortar fire, as well as machine gun fire. We got in LAUDREFANG ok AND we were surrounded by men and tanks. Our platoon outposted the upper part of town and we heard many tanks or some type of armored vehicles. At that time, I still had the bazooka, so I was posted by the road. We dug some deep holes. I had a new recruit as my assistant and he was scared to death. We all were very worried to be in this spot and especially without any orders to be there and isolated by the deep tank trap. We were on the same side as the German tanks. The enemy infiltrated all of the Co positions, in town and out. We did not have enough man power to control all of the big area and it was very hilly in spots. The Capt. was set up very nicely in town, well guarded, and was enjoying good food and drink. Luckily the tanks stayed put for the night. They knew that we had some bazookas and usually did not move into the attack at night. We were firing at men and shadows. I had to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11



David Gibson (L) and Evin Gibson (R) with John R. Ratvasky's grave marker, Epinal Cemetery, France

RATVASKY continued from page 10

keep telling my assistant, in the hole with me, to get his head up and fire and protect my rear area, while I fired the other direction. We held off the enemy for the time, but my bazooka was gone. It had been right near our foxhole and the enemy must have borrowed it while my assistant was hugging the bottom of the hole. I never found it and nobody from the platoon had used it. I guess we were lucky we did not get a grenade dropped on us. My assistant was later hit and never returned.

On the morning of Nov 22, Co. C and some battalion men arrived to take over and we were to return to our lines. We got about halfway back and were under fire again by heavy machine guns in light pillboxes. We hit the hedgerows and returned fire. We were taking a beating again. Luckily some tanks from the 702ND were on top of the distant hills and gave us supporting fire. They could not get past the tank ditch, but occupied the enemy while we withdrew back to the area of the tanks. This was the only time I ever saw our company disorganized, all during the war, and they were mad at the Capt. We moved back into FALQUEMONT and spent the night in a barn. Not many left in the CO. For a few days men wandered back into our lines. On the night of the 22nd we all took a vote and signed a notice that we did refuse to serve under CAPT. SWEENEY. We would serve, but not under his command.”

SIMON PETITOT:

A Thankful French Young Man—I first met Simon in Sept 2009 when I drove over to this battle field area, following Ed Murell's 1944 map. Without knowing it, they were having a celebration event that day at the

Laudrefang Maginot fort – celebrating the liberation of the area by the US troops in 1944. He was dressed then in a full French military uniform, and he and many others were so happy to see an American at the event with connections to the 80th Div. Since then he has collected many WWI and WWII items from the woods around the area – and now has a full 80th division US uniform and gear – taking part in re-enactments and US Military Cemetery memorial events. During my 5-month stay in France this 2012 summer, my wife and I drove to Simon's house. We drove over to the battlefield area near Laudrefang, France. We walked up to the Maginot fort on the ridge above town, then drove through town to a field where we found a WWII machine gun bunker used by the Germans firing on US troops – probably where John was killed. We drove around some more, driving up the road that the US 80th Div. troops used to liberate his town Bambiderstroff in Nov. 25, 1944 – he was so thankful to the US troops. On this past Memorial Day, Simon and other French people placed two small flags in the ground at each grave – one French and the other US. Each November Simon and others gather at the St. Avold Lorraine Cemetery to celebrate the area's Nov, 1944 release by the 80th.

CONCLUSIONS:

In any case, this research has meant a great deal to me in understanding details of the death of my friend's father and the extreme hardships of war. I have renewed reverence for John and the many others who fought. I thank Bob Murrell, Ed Bredbenner, the U.S. Army and all others who helped me assemble this information. But most of all I recognize the Ratvasky family for the burden they have born.

Only Moving Forward: The 80th in Germany, Part II

MANY, PERHAPS MOST surviving 80th veterans will recall, as I do, the summer of 1945 as pretty much a vacation. For us, the war was over. The possibility, indeed the likelihood of being sent to the Pacific to help finish the defeat of Japan seemed, rightly or wrongly, remote. We concentrated on enjoying the summer and longing for the day that would see us back in the States in civilian attire.

V-E Day, May 8, found the 80th in Völklabruck, a city in what is now Austria. Our weeks there consisted, to my knowledge, largely of inactivity and recreation. As had been the case ever since we crossed the border into Germany, we were quartered in civilian homes, which, so far as I know, the Army had simply commandeered as enemy property. As a radio operator in the 80th Signal Company, I stayed, along with the rest of the radio section, in a spacious house in what I am sure was one of the city's finest residential sections. It was a good life in comparison with the relatively rugged conditions we had grown used to while the war lasted.

It was here that the Signal Company organized a softball league, in fact two leagues, designated "A" and "B." I played on the radio section's "B" team. I give the Army credit for its diligence in supplying troops with sports equipment, and not only for softball.

Early in June, in fact on or about the 8th, my 21st birthday, the 80th Division moved to Kaufbeuren, Bavaria, where we spent most of the summer. Again we were billeted in civilian homes. This time our quarters were somewhat less splendid than those we had enjoyed in Völklabruck, but still quite comfortable and more than adequate. It did not bother us that from time to time the regular occupants of the premises visited us to reclaim items of personal property or for other purposes. We were altogether conscious of our status as a victorious army and, without being cruel or oppressive, took full advantage of that status. We knew that we were treating the Germans far better than they had treated the peoples whose lands their army had occupied.

I must admit, however, that U. S. troops did not always respect the personal property that came our way in the occupation of German homes. To call a spade a spade, looting was prevalent and went unpunished. We learned that to send back to the States what were sometimes euphemistically called souvenirs, it was only necessary to label a package with the magic words "captured enemy equipment" to get it past the censors at A.P.O. 80, no questions asked. This practice does not stand out as a proud chapter in the history of the 80th Infantry Division.

With the unconditional surrender of Germany's armed forces, the attitude of the civilian population changed. Germans, at least the great bulk of them, recognized that they had no choice but to make the best of their situation. They gave at least the appearance of friendliness and cooperation.

Before long, however, it became apparent to any of us who achieved a relationship of confidence with a German or Germans, that their apparent conversion from Naziism had not always been wholehearted. A feeling seemed to prevail among them that their army had not really been defeated but overwhelmed. Germans, some insisted, made better soldiers than Americans.

Many Germans, moreover, once they realized they had no reason to fear reprisals on our part, spoke with admiration of the benefits Hitler had bestowed on the population by programs such as "Strength Through Joy" and the two Nazi youth organizations. All, of course, claimed ignorance of the horrors their country had inflicted on Jews and on the "inferior" occupants of the lands they had subjugated.

Today Germany is recognized and respected as a responsible member of the European community with a dedication to a democratic form of government that has by now become a tradition. Such was not the case in 1945.

A complication arose in relations between soldiers and civilians. Not long after V-E Day, General Eisenhower issued a regulation prohibiting "fraternization" with German civilians. It excepted purely business transactions but was obviously intended to remind all concerned that we had overcome a system of monstrous evil in which the great majority of the German people had been compliant if not necessarily participants.

The prohibition against fraternization soon proved unworkable and unenforceable. It collapsed of its own weight. The population of Germany in 1945 included millions of young and not-so-young women whose husbands, sweethearts or potential suitors were either dead or confined in far-off PW enclosures. Set down in their midst were hundreds of thousands of healthy young men, all lonely and far from home. Trying to keep these two groups apart was like defying the law of gravity. Some time during the summer, I do not remember just when, realism prevailed, and the anti-fraternization policy was rescinded. We were admonished, however, to exercise "discretion" in our relations with the civilian population. That admonition, if noticed at all, provoked only laughter.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13



Mary Westerwelle's Promotion

Mary C. Westerwelle was recently promoted to Colonel. Participating in the ceremony were her daughters Donna, Susan, and Madeline. COL Westerwelle is now serving as the 80th Training Command Deputy Chief of Staff, G4.

James McBride Scholarship

THE RECIPIENT of the 2012 Eightieth Division Veterans Association James McBride Scholarship is Jose A Fuentes. His award letter was sent to him on May 2nd. This is not a scholarship that goes to a selection committee. The Lincoln Community Foundation receives the name of the Madison High School Valedictorian from the High School counselor after grades have been determined and they are automatically the recipient.

Only Moving Forward, continued from page 12

Like every German city or town in those days, Kaufbeuren had a multitude of disabled veterans. Unable to find employment, they tended to share one another's company by gathering in small groups on street corners or other public places. To this day, I wonder what it did to those men, legless or armless as they were, to see young German women or girls passing them by on the arms of their erstwhile enemies, able-bodied American soldiers.

So much for the occupied Germany of 1945. As I have tried to indicate, it differed from present-day Germany as day differs from night or land from sea. Yet I have no difficulty recalling it in detail, and to me it then becomes reality.

Walter Barthold

80th Signal Company



Gid Adkisson, Jr Memoir

BY: Gid Adkisson

MY FATHER, Gid B. Adkisson, Jr., joined the 80th Infantry Division at Camp Laguna, Arizona in early 1944 as a newly commissioned Second Lieutenant. As a platoon leader with Able Company, First Bn, 317th Regiment, he landed with the division on Utah Beach on 6 August and was either in the field or the hospital for the duration of the war and beyond.

I have written a first-person account of his memories of the war, along with stories of several other men of Able Company, acquired through phone interviews. Thanks to Andy Adkins' 80th Division web site and help, as well as Robert Murrell's book, I have had access to records that have given me a high level of confidence about the accuracy of the book. I hope the members of the 80th division and their families will be able to read it with a sense of pride and honor for the sacrifices they and their fellow soldiers made for our country many years ago.

TAPS

Acree, James
C-319
2215 Bluestar Lane
Dallas, TX 75235-4604
DOD: Oct 24, 12
Rptd by: Bob McDonald & Bill Costley, Sympathy Card returned with no forwarding address

Barksdale, LTC(R) George D.
HQ 1-318
Waynesboro, VA
DOD: Oct 31, 2012
Rptd by: David Gallagher

Borges, MAJ(R) Carmelo
HQ 80th TC G8
Fredericksburg VA
DOD: Dec 6, 2012
Rptd by: CSM(R) James Stavely

Cody, MSG(R) William (Bill)
HQ 80th Div G4
DOD: Sep 20, 2012
Rptd by: David Gallagher

Connor, William H.
HQ, 319
148 Goldfinch Lane
Ballston Spa, NY 12020-2666
DOD: May 3, 2011
Rptd by: Wife Jean

Loe, Stanley R.
HQ, 317
2635 E. 39th St
Panama City, FL 32405
DOD: Sep 9, 2012
Rptd by: Wife Betty

Rankin, Charles
Do NOT send any correspondence
DOD: Oct 18, 2011
Rptd by: Edmund Jones, Estate Attorney

Riley, Terence
3-318
1407 87th St
Kenosha, WI 53143-6435
DOD: Oct 27, 2012
Rptd by: Tom McTernan
Sympathy Card returned with no forwarding address

Smith, MAJ(R) Robert
C-318
6857 Hills Drive
New Port Richey, FL 34653-2825
DOD: Apr 19, 2012
Rptd by: Daughter, Susan Carey

Swingen, Eldred
905th FA Bn
906 Farwell Dr
Madison, WI 53704
DOD: Nov 13, 2012
Rptd by: Daughter, Regina

Williamson, Rufus (R)
2nd Bde
Wytheville, VA
DOD: Aug 26, 2012
Rptd by: CSM(R) Bob Riley

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Beier, William	Life
Brown, William	Life
Fowler, Lorenza	Life
Grunow, Richard	Life
Linck, Homer	Life
Miles, Jesse	Life
Mitchell, George	Life
Myers, L. Richard	Life
Neighly, Francis	Life
Saenz, Eladio	Life
Shaffer, Carl	Life
Trimbley, Fred	Life
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80TH DIVISION MONUMENTS: Infantry Museum, Fort Benning, Georgia (left), Heritage Trail at the Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania (center) and HQ 80th Training Command, Richmond, VA (right).



Website Updates

- www.thetroubleshooters.com
- www.80thdescendants.com
- www.abmc.gov
- www.80thdivision.com

What you will find at 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