

BLUE RIDGE



THE SERVICE MAGAZINE

FALL/WINTER 2019

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A Fantastic 100th Reunion of the 80th Division Veterans Association



See story on page 4

SUMMER LEFT US WITH a blaze but it is now fall and winter will soon be here. Lots of yard work to be done from cleaning up to getting ready for spring and all the lovely flowers and trees. Don't overdo it while getting those leaves up and spreading mulch around. I made it through the summer without seeing any snakes around the pond so I will call this a good year!

Holidays are approaching and I truly hope that each of you are able to spend time with your family and close friends. Even if you are not physically able to travel to see them, make that call and speak with them on the phone or send a card to let them know you are thinking of them. We all like to hear family and friends and even some folks that might only be an acquaintance. Stay happy!

The 100th Reunion of this Association was wonderful!! Thank you to Bill and Tammy Black and everyone else that made it happen. From my point of view it seemed everyone had an outstanding time and enjoyed all the outings and dinners and guest speakers. This year the Memorial Service was held at the Virginia War Memo-

rial. Not only did we remember 80th Soldiers that had passed away but saw the names of Virginia Service Members that have lost their lives fighting for this amazing Country, the great United States of America.

Start making plans to attend next years reunion which will be held July 30 – 1 August 2020 in Richmond, VA. It would be great to see everyone at next years gathering!

UPDATE: It was decided at this years reunion that the Newsletter/Service Magazine will only be published twice a year. There will be a Fall/Winter Edition and then a Spring/Summer Edition.

Continue to send me your stories and stories of your service member. Regardless of when you served we want to hear about your career. By sharing we are keeping the 80th remembered throughout the world.

Lastly, 2020 Annual Dues can be sent in at any time. Stay current so you will not miss out on any news and updates.

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



For all of Bristol USAR members

Congrats To ETSU's Newest General!

BRIGADIER GENERAL MICHAEL T. HARVEY is a native of Piney Flats, Tennessee. He received a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration from East Tennessee State University, Johnson City, TN in 1991 and his commission as a Second Lieutenant in the Ordnance Corps. Additionally, BG Harvey earned a Masters of Business Administration degree from Upper Iowa University in 2002; a Masters in National Security and Strategic Studies from the United States Naval War College in 2011; and the ASI of 3H, Joint Planner, upon completion of the Advanced Joint Professional Military Education Course in 2013.

BG Harvey's awards and decorations include: Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal with seven oak leaf clusters, Army Commendation Medal with silver oak leaf cluster, Army Achievement Medal with oak leaf cluster, Armed Forces Service Medal, National Defense Service Medal with bronze star, Iraqi Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Four Overseas Service Ribbons, Combat Action Badge, Parachutist Badge, Air Assault Badge, Army Staff Identification Badge, Canadian Parachutist Badge, France Parachutist Badge, United Kingdom Parachutist Badge, Germany Parachutist Badge, Germany Armed Forces Achievement Badge – Gold, Army Meritorious Unit Award, Army Superior Unit Award, and the Distinguished Ordnance Order of Samuel Sharp.

Commander's Message



Greetings to all members of the 80th Division Veterans Association!

THE OLD SAYING that time flies as you get a little older is certainly true. At the time of this writing it's mid-October and the reunion ended over 2 ½ months ago, but it seems like it was just last week.

I hope everyone is having a nice fall season and that you're enjoying time with family. I pray that this upcoming holiday season brings strength to our bodies and much love from those that are dear. Tammy and I are looking forward to having all of our children, in-loves and grandchildren with us for Thanksgiving this year. This will be our first holiday in Nebraska and I suspect it will be a little cooler than what we experienced in Georgia for so many years.

There is so much activity going on over in Europe this fall and winter. We have been notified about commemorations in France for the Moselle River crossing and liberations in the Saint Avold (Lorraine) region. These are all taking place around Thanksgiving time. If you have any interest in attending, please feel free to reach out to me at 404-493-6601. I can get some info to you.

In December, Tammy and I will be heading over to Chaumont, Belgium and Luxembourg for a couple of very important commemorations for the 75th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. We are expecting PNC Bob Burrows and his family, along with the current Commander of the 80th Training Command, MG Bruce Hackett, to be in attendance as well. There are certainly other 80th representatives that may also be present.

On Sunday, December 15, we will be in Chaumont, Belgium for a special recognition for 80th Division veteran, and Medal of Honor recipient, Paul Weirdorfer. The local town will be naming a street after Mr. Weirdorfer and they are expecting a large crowd for the ceremony. It's possible some of Paul's family will be attendance. That would be very special.

Then, on Monday, December 16, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg will be honoring the tens of thousands of American soldiers that fought in their country during the Battle of the Bulge. December 16 marks the 75th anniversary of the surprise German offensive which became known as the largest WWII battle, stemming from December 16, 1944 to January 25, 1945. Many American men lost their lives in Luxembourg, and even more, including my own father, was severely wounded during this battle. There will be multiple ceremonies on the 16th and 17th and may include a very high ranking government official from the United States.

I look forward to updating you on this visit in the next edition of the Blue Ridge Magazine.

Make plans now to attend our reunion, July 30 - August 1, 2020 in Richmond. Let's make the 101st Reunion the best ever!

All the best,
Bill Black, Commander

100th Reunion of the 80th Division Veterans Association

I WANTED TO TAKE a moment to recap the great time we had back in August at the 100th Reunion of the 80th Division Veterans Association. A hearty thank you to so many people who helped make the reunion a roaring success! All the officers and many of the Past National Commanders played a major role. And... a special thank you to MG Bruce Hackett, Commander, of the 80th Training Command. Allowing us to combine his Dining Out event with the reunion made for an incredible final evening on Saturday night.

We missed so many of the regular attenders but understand that it's difficult to make every reunion. We sure hope to see everyone next year in Richmond.

We were blessed to have three WWII veterans with us at this year's reunion. PNC Bob Burrows, HNC Burt Marsh and Benjamin Rupp, (see photo right) all made the trip this year and were honored at the Saturday night dinner by the 80th Training Command leadership. It was a special tribute to our honored guests and well deserved.

This past year we shortened the reunion by a day and it seemed to work out great. We had our Executive Council meeting on Thursday afternoon and the Business meeting the following Friday morning. A big thank you to HNC Burt Marsh (319-M) who was selected to serve as our 2nd Vice Commander, and along with his daughters, Tammi Marsh and Tina Marsh Barton, will be responsible for the 2021 Reunion. There's a pretty good chance Burt will be our final WWII veteran to hold the title of National Commander. For next year—2020—PNC Doug Knorr will be our Reunion Chairman and we are planning to be back in Richmond, July 30 - August 1, 2020. PNC Knorr will have more details about this in a separate article.

Back to this past year...we opened the Reunion up on Thursday night with our annual Commander's Welcome Dinner, hosted by now PNC Brian Faulconer. We had about 40 attendees for the evening and a great presentation by our friend from France, Mr. Simon Pettite. Simon updated us on a project he, and a few of his fellow local historians, were working on to restore a French WWII bunker from the Maginot Line. We were all galvanized by the work they were doing. Such an important historical project for the people around his hometown. In fact, a group of reunion attendees established a "Go Fund Me" page to raise funds to help with the project. After only a couple of weeks, the page raised over 1,000 Euros! Now that is partnership!!

Friday brought another great day for the Reunion. We all had a fantastic journey down to Colonial Williamsburg

where we were able to walk the streets, visit the old homes and landmarks and have a wonderful lunch at The Trellis Bar & Grill in the Merchant's Square of Colonial Williamsburg. We had to dodge a few raindrops early in the day but the sun came out after lunch and made for a fantastic afternoon.

After we got back, we had our Friday Night Dugout Buffet and was honored to welcome two dear friends of the 80th – who traveled all the way from Luxembourg to join our reunion – Mr. Erny Kohn and Mr. Tom Scholtes, the current President and Secretary General, respectively, of the CEBA organization. The CEBA organization is Battle of the Bulge study and historical group that is dedicated to the preservation of the American soldier that sacrificed life and limb to bring liberation to the Luxembourg people in the cold winter of 1944-45.

We appreciated the time and energy Erny and Tom put into preparing and delivering a presentation on the role of the 80th Division during the Battle of the Bulge. Tom was able to discuss areas of battle that were experienced by all three of our attending WWII veterans and many of the family members who were present. Many thanks to Erny and Tom, and the entire CEBA organization, for warm welcome they give so many of our veterans and family members when they visit Luxembourg. Also, CEBA has been instrumental in the creation and commemoration of many 80th Division monuments across the country of Luxembourg.

On Saturday we all loaded the buses and visited the Virginia War Memorial in downtown Richmond and after a tour of the facility, we gathered for our annual Memorial Service in the theater. It was a very moving service and many thanks to our chaplain, PNC Doug Knorr, for all the work he puts into making sure we honor our those 80th veterans who have passed away over the previous year in a distinguished and dignified manner. We were honored to have the 80th Training Command color guard to present the colors and provide a buglar for "taps" and the singing of our National Anthem. A big shout out and thank you to Terence Singleton, who works with the Veterans Association and the 80th Training Command leadership to help put many of the details together for our Memorial Service and the Saturday night "Dining Out" dinner event.

After the Memorial Service, we returned to the hotel for quick change of clothes and then on to the big Saturday night "Dining Out" event, hosted by MG Bruce Hackett, Commanding General of the 80th Training Command. MG

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Academy of Richmond County Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony

Olander Jackson “Jack” Barrett Jr.

By: Tim Spivey, ARC JROTC

BORN JULY 11, 1923, to Olander Jackson Barrett Sr. and Ruth Thompson Barrett, Jack Barrett followed in the footsteps of his father and uncle as an excellent marksman. His uncle James Barrett was the state champion in trapshooting for three years. Jack, according to his father, began learning to shoot when he was old enough to hold a rifle. In an article about him in the Augusta Chronicle when he was twelve, the writer said that not only did he get good grades in school but he was an amazing young shooter, able to shoot golf balls out of the air. At Richmond Academy he used his marksmanship skills as a member of the ARC Rifle Team. He was also involved with Army JROTC at the academy, serving in 1940 as a platoon sergeant. He received the General Leonard Wood Medal for the Cadet with the Highest Year’s Average in rifle Marksmanship. When he graduated in 1942, he was Cadet 2nd Lieutenant.

He attended University of Georgia until joining the US Army in 1943, serving in the 80th Infantry Division. He turned down the opportunity to become a weapons instructor in the US choosing to serve in the European Theater of Operation. After being wounded in 1944, he returned to combat after recovering from his wounds. At that time he received a Purple Heart. His Purple Heart would add four oak leaf clusters by the time he returned home again. In January 1945 he was wounded for the fifth time; he was in combat in Luxembourg. In April 1945 he received a Bronze Star for gallantry in action. According to the cita-

tion he “conducted himself in the face of the enemy as to merit the praise of all his comrades.” He had led his squad in France, Alsace-Lorraine, Luxembourg, Belgium, and the Rhineland. He was hospitalized and underwent multiple surgeries in France before being sent home. Back in Augusta he spent 18 months in the Oliver General Hospital until he received his honorable discharge in 1947. Throughout his life, he continued to undergo surgery related to his wartime wounds, including the amputation of his left leg in 2008. Barrett never took disability income in spite of over forty surgeries.

After the war, he continued his competitive shooting, by 1948 serving as the Secretary of the Augusta Rifle and Pistol Club and for a number of years as the executive officer. Under his leadership, the club sponsored many NRA-sanctioned tournaments for the Georgia/Carolina region. He won many National Rifle Association matches, earning the NRA’s Master Classification in outdoor rifle rating. In 1950, he shot 99 of 100 at 600 yards, winning a match against the famed Marine Paris Island Rifle Team. He was at times a guest at ARC Rifle Team Awards program, sometimes presenting trophies.

When he retired from contracting business, he became a craftsman, fashioning custom-made knives. By the mid-1970s his creations were in fifteen states, desired not only by hunters and fisherman, but by collectors. He also continued to be written about and known throughout the community as an “expert outdoorsman” and a “master woodsman.”

Reunion, continued

Hackett, and his esteemed staff, did a very professional job with the dinner and all the presentations and recognitions. They bent over backward with the Veterans Association to make sure there was inclusion and representation. The Veterans Association acknowledges this and is very appreciative of the partnership we have built with the Training Command. First Class all the way!! Thank you, MG Hackett, and your entire staff.

I want to also recognize the great job our (now) PNC Brian Faulconer did as National Commander over the 2018-19 year. We are thrilled that he has volunteered for a second tour of duty for the 2022 reunion. Thank you, Brian! Finally,

we don’t say it enough to our Secretary/Treasurer, Doris Wollett, but thank you Doris for all you do. From preparing for the business meetings, keeping the financial records, the meeting minutes and all the work you put into the Blue Ridge Magazine, the Association is so grateful and thankful to have you on the team. We all love and appreciate you so much.

Sunday brought departures and many hugs and tears with our friends. We always look forward to these reunions and hope that next year we have even more veterans and family members attend. Until August....the 80th only moves forward!

PNC Bill Black, Reunion Chairman

100th Reunion Photo Highlights









Swearing in of the 2020 Officers



Outing at Colonial Williamsburg (left) and touring the VA War Memorial (right)

80th Division WW II Medal of Honor Awardees

 <p style="font-size: small; margin: 5px 0;">EDWARD E. GURNEA</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">First Lieutenant, 8888 Central Postal Directory, 1945-1946. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Battle of Okinawa, where he was the only member of his unit to be killed in action.</p>		 <p style="font-size: small; margin: 5px 0;">ROBERT J. HARBO</p> <p style="font-size: x-small; margin: 0;">Private First Class, 8888 Central Postal Directory, 1945-1946. He was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions during the Battle of Okinawa, where he was the only member of his unit to be killed in action.</p>
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Ben Rupp and friends at Memorial Service



WWII Reenactors



MG Hackett, Erny Kohn, Tom Scholtes, Brian Faulconer, CSM Thomas



Color Guard



Passing the Gavel of Command



**Noteworthy speakers:
Tom Scholtes, Erny Kohn and Simon Petit**



MG Hackett, MG McLaren, CSM Wollett, LTC Knapp, and MG Knapp



Ben Rupp and Bill Black



Ben Rupp and daughter Annette



Sisters: Tammy & Tina



PNC Bob Burrows



Brian Faulconer and Tammy Black



PNC Bill Black and Commander Brian Faulconer



Tammy & Bill Black



PNC Bob Burrows and PNC John McLaren

Letters of a past life make a miraculous return to WWII veteran

Annette Rupp, daughter of 80th Division member 99-year-old Ben Rupp, conveyed the following story of how letters written during World War II were finally able to reach him in 2018.

IN APRIL, 2018 AN EMAIL was received from Bill Black about a correspondence from a Belgium gentleman in his early 20's, Arnaud, who is a WWII collector that puts on exhibitions to commemorate the U.S. soldiers. Arnaud was gifted a V mail letter from a neighbor, Jacques, that was addressed to Ben. Jacques discovered the letter in the property manager's office of a castle in Luxembourg called Chateau de Birtrange which is located between Colmarberg and Ettelbruck. Jacques inherited the castle from his 95-year-old aunt, who passed in February, 2018. Until then, he, his brother, and their families were forbidden access to most parts of the castle, but were finally able to explore areas including the attic when he inherited it.

The discovered letter from Ben's youngest sister, Verda, was post marked Dec. 18, 1944 and was addressed: PFC Benjamin G. Rupp, Co. M, 318th Infantry, A.P.O. (Army Post Office), New York, NY. Then in November, 2018, another email from Jacques arrived with pictures of two more letters that were discovered among hundreds of documents in the castle office. One was again from Verda postmarked Dec.17, 1944, and another V mail letter was from his second oldest sister, Violet, postmarked Dec. 20, 1944. Eventually Jacques mailed the actual letters along with some other American memorabilia he discovered in the castle.

Some historical background includes the castle was occupied by the Germans for a while and during this time

Jacques' grandmother and aunt sewed the stars and stripes of the American flag. General George S. Patton made headquarters at the castle with the U.S. troops of the 3rd Army during the Battle of the Bulge which began on Dec. 16, 1944. During this time Jacques' grandmother and aunt evacuated the castle to reside with a friend in a safe town near Arlon. The hand-made American flag was flying from the castle alongside the Belgium and Luxembourg flags when the vehicles from the Division trains drove into the castle courtyard. Today that American flag is on display at the Patton museum in Fort Knox, KY which Ben has visited.

It is surmised that Ben entered the Battle of the Bulge from the castle grounds and the letters delivered to the castle never reached him... until 2018. For a castle owner to discover a soldier's personal letters among hundreds of documents in an old Luxembourg chateau, to a young WWII collector who took the initiative to reach out to an American Army Division using information on the letter, to the owner of the letters, an American WWII soldier who is still with us, is a rare confluence of incidents. As Jacques stated in one of his correspondences: "It is very amazing what you can discover behind a simple piece of paper found between a lot more... and of course Arnaud, an internet kid... a human story."



Birtrange Castle today (above) and in 1945 housing the US Army camp on the grounds (right).



Ben Rupp (left)

(below) Attic where the letters were found.



Map of the Blue Ridge path.



The letter...



Items found in the Castle office.



WWII medic uniform.

Historian's Report: November, 2018

Lee S. Anthony, PNC & Historian

AS WE TRAVEL through 2019, we are reminded of the events of a century ago. In mid-1919, the 80th Division Veterans' Association was formed in France; our returning Doughboys were welcomed home, and the American Legion was also formed.

At this time, we are thanking the decreasing number of survivors of WWII for their deeds of valor, and we are seeking to include as many veterans of the Cold War (including Korea, Viet Nam), and the Middle East and all other areas and times in which our citizens have gone into battle for this nation, for Liberty and Freedom. If you know of 80th veterans who are not affiliated, please invite them to do so, and join the comradery which we all enjoy.

We are still enjoying helping the families of our veterans to assemble the military history of the 80th and of their loved ones.

The acquisition of artifacts continues to be a major activity of the Historian. The Association has recently a WWII Nazi flag with many signatures of the 305th Medical Battalion, thanks to John and Karen Szczepanski. This is scheduled to be displayed at the Annual meeting in August in Sandston.

We are continuing to inventory and evaluate the hundreds of artifacts, some of which you have seen in previous meetings, and/or in displays in Midlothian, Fort Lee, Bedford Virginia Museum, Lynchburg University, Liberty University, and the Salem Virginia Museum.

We all need to continue providing talks and/or displays to school children, civic groups and other interested groups in order to keep our history, and to pass it on to the next generation. I would like to initiate a program with local schools and colleges whereby their students can become involved with these activities. This would be a natural for History majors, possible integrated into a special studies program. We now have two adult assistants working as time permits, particularly in the inventory process.

I trust that all attendees enjoyed the August reunion in Sandston. I hope that you had time to visit the Historic Exhibits. Paul A. Ritter and Kevin Brookman assisted me in this project.

For those interested in the history and collection of Reunion Medals and I.D. cares, we are sharing images of a collection which began in 1919-1920. These images will be shown in three lots: 1) 1919-29 through 1941, 2) 1942-1980, and 1981-2019. Note that a number of reunions, unfortunately, had only ID cards without reunion medals.

If any of our group have either medals and/or badges from the reunions, and would send us images of some, I will try to expand our "montage." Please continue to send news to CSM Wollett for inclusion in our newsletter.



1919-1920



1919-1920



1921



1922



1923



1924



1925

"May God bless America; guide, guard, direct and protect us" from those who attack our nation and its History! Keep "Only Moving Forward"!

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1926



1927



1928



1929



1930



1931



1932



1933



1934



1935



1936



1938



1939



1940



1941

The 80th Division Veterans' Association Approaches 100 Year Anniversary

Part II – Post WWII

By Andy Adkins & MG(ret) John McLaren

Post WWII to 1990

The 80th Division was inactivated in January 1946, but reactivated in December of that year as the 80th Airborne Division. Since then, the Division has been reorganized several times.

- The deactivation of the 80th as an Airborne Division was into the Organized Reserves.
- In 1952, it was reorganized as the 80th Infantry Division and remained as such for seven years.
- In March 1959, it was reorganized as the 80th Division (Training), with a primary focus of providing Initial Entry Training to trainees at Fort Bragg, NC, and Fort Jackson, SC, a mission and structure that lasted for many years.
- In 1978 the mission of the 80th Division (Training) was modified to focus on Infantry – One Station Unit Training. The focus of the mission was to provide trained and ready infantry Soldiers to Army units during the height of the Cold War.
- In 1988 and 1990, the Division carried out ten-week exercises for wartime mobilization missions named, "Old Dominion Forward" at Fort Bragg, setting up training for nearly 700 new Soldiers.

Operation Desert Shield / Operation Desert Storm

In 1990 and 1991, two 80th Division units were called to active duty during Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.

- The 424th Transportation Company out of Galax, VA, deployed to Saudi Arabia in January 1991 after training at Fort Eustis, VA. The unit received a Meritorious Unit Commendation for operating under adverse conditions and logging 850,000 accident-free road miles. They advanced as far as the Euphrates River in support of coalition assault units. They were returned to the U.S. in June 1991.
- Soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 318th Regiment, stationed at Fort Story, VA, activated in January 1991, and were sent to Fort Eustis to train for deployment individuals from the Individual Ready Reserve and these Soldiers did deploy to the battlefield.

Training Mission Reorganization

In 1992, the 80th Division began a new training mode with a Training Base Expansion mission at Fort Benning, GA. The mission changed to Professional Roundout Training at Fort Jackson, SC, the following year when Reservists worked with active duty Army drill sergeants in training new Soldiers.

October 1994 marked the fourth major reorganization since World War II, when it became Headquarters, 80th Division (Training). Maintaining the Initial Entry mission, it expanded to provide "The Army School System" or TASS mission. The 80th took command and control of 10 Army Reserve Forces Schools, and along with legacy divisions from World War II (84th, 95th, 98th, 100th, 104th, and the 108th) became one of seven Institutional Training (IT) Divisions, located in seven regions throughout the U.S. The 80th Division (IT) provided instructions for units in Region B which included Virginia, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Maryland, the District of Columbia, and Delaware. Seven brigades of the 80th Division (IT) carried out specific training missions in the above states and proceeded to Fort Leonard Wood, MO, to support expansion of the U.S. Army Training Center and to conduct Basic Combat Training (BCT), One Station Unit Training (OSUT) and other specialized training, as directed by Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC).

Global War on Terrorism (Sep 11, 2001 – present)

OPERATION NOBLE EAGLE

After Sept. 11, 2001, specialized training to support Operation Noble Eagle commenced with Drill Sergeant and Instructor units mobilized to training posts in the U.S.

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

In 2004, 80th Division (IT) units provided training and reconstruction support to the Afghanistan government during Operation Enduring Freedom.

OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM

In 2005, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, the 80th Division (IT) mobilized and deployed to Iraq in support of the largest activation of the Division's Soldiers since World War II, serving in every specialty and skill as a part of both the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq and Multi-National Corps – Iraq.

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Over 400 Soldiers were assigned to Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq training Iraqi Army units, staffing the Multi-National Security Transition Command-Iraq headquarters, and mentoring the various ministries in the Iraqi government. Over 300 Soldiers were assigned to Multi-National Corps – Iraq.

As a separate command under 18th Airborne Corps, called the Iraq Assistance Group, these Soldiers were advisers to each battalion, brigade, and division in the Iraqi Army. The adviser mission was to train, mentor, and assist the Iraqi Army units as they fought the insurgents across Iraq. Two Soldiers from the 80th Division were killed in action and two others died stateside while mobilized during this conflict. 80th Division Soldiers earned more than 1,144 medals and citations including 31 Purple Hearts, 469 Bronze Stars, 84 Combat Infantry Badges (CIB) and 187 Combat Action Badges (CAB). The unit continues to support the Global War on Terrorism with individual and group deployments to the theater of operations, as required.

U.S. Army Reserve Transformation

On October 1, 2008, the 80th Division (IT) transformed to become the 80th Training Command (TASS). It expanded from the five states in Region B, Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Delaware, West Virginia, and Washington D.C., to reach across the entire country. Of the seven IT Divisions, only three remained, with the 80th taking command of the entire TASS mission for the Army Reserve. The 80th expanded from eight brigades and 12 battalions to three divisions (94th, 100th, 102nd), 13 brigades, 63 battalions, and 14 training centers.

The 80th Training Command has a proud heritage throughout many transformations and tours of combat, having been led by many fine commanders. Although changing and evolving, The 80th Only Moves Forward.

80th Division Veterans Association

As we celebrate the 100th year of the 80th Division Veterans Association, we are reminded that we are losing our WWII veterans daily—almost 300 WWII vets pass away every day. The following is a current breakdown of association membership:

WWII Veterans.....	146
Post-WWII Veterans (USAR).....	112
Family (WWI, WWII, Post-WWII).....	105
Other	17
Total 80th DVA Members.....	380

We need to keep the association Moving Forward. In order to do so, we must grow our membership. Of the 380 80th DVA members, 318 (or 84%) are “Life” or “Life Members.”

With World War II Veterans leaving us, we need to reach out to our Post-WWII 80th Division veterans to not only join the organization, but also to participate in our annual and Post meetings, share their own 80th memories, and help spread the word.

Sadly, the 80th Division Veterans Association may be on its last legs. We have held membership drives at Commanders Conferences and other events in the past. We’ve provided free membership to the Soldier of the Year, NCO of the Year, etc. Unfortunately, they do not renew after this first free year.

We’ve had several suggestions, including:

- Merge Post 50 (Blue Ridge Army Reserve Association) veterans with the 80th Division Veterans Association to form a single organization. This will help increase our membership numbers, increase association involvement, and perhaps provide a further direction for Moving Forward.
- We have both a website (www.80thdivision.com) and a Facebook Page (<https://www.facebook.com/blueidgeassociation/>)
 - ~ The website is primarily archives for WWI, WWII, and Post-WWII. It includes Morning Reports, General Orders, Photo Collections, and Oral Histories.
 - ~ The Facebook page is more social networking and usually has more activity and up-to-date information.
- Instead of annual meetings, perhaps hold a reunion/meeting every two years.

We welcome any and all comments and additional suggestions. Send a message to the 80th DVA Commander, PNC Bill Black:

PNC Bill Black
 7922 Shadow Lake Drive
 Papillion, NE 68046
williamrblack@gmail.com



Only Moves Forward

Follow Your Father's (Grandfather's) WWII Path Across Europe

By Andy Adkins

THIS YEAR MARKS the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Europe from terror. We've been notified of several celebrations that include the 80th Division and wanted to pass those along. We anticipate more announcements over the next few months (these events will continue through 2020). I urge you to continue to check both our website, www.80thdivision.com, and our Facebook Page, www.facebook.com/blueridgeassociation/ for updates.

Currently, here's what we know as we go to press for the Blue Ridge Magazine:

Moselle River: November 14 – 20, 2019

The Association Moselle River 1944 is planning a week-long celebration to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the region of Thionville and the crossing of the Moselle River. The international travel and the accommodation costs will be the responsibility of the families, but the Association Moselle River 1944 will bear the cost of transportation and meals during the commemoration. If interested, more information is available at: <http://www.moselleriver1944.org/en/invitation.html>.

Buchenwald / Weimar: April 3 – 5, 2020

The 80th Division played an important role in helping to liberate the Buchenwald Concentration Camp and the city of Weimar, Germany. Several groups are planning to organize a "Liberty Convoy," commemorating and honoring all the victims of the Holocaust and to remember the American soldiers who ended this terror. If interested in attending, contact Mr. Oswin Vogel (oswin.vogel@gmx.de) for more information. We also have a PDF on the website with more information. www.80thdivision.com.

Many of you have already made a trip or two (or three) overseas to visit the areas where the 80th Division fought. These trips typically include Argentan (Baptism of Fire); the Moselle River (Pont-a-Mousson, Dieulouard, Sivry, St. Genevieve, St. Avoird) – all in France; Luxembourg City, Dahl, Feulen, Wiltz, Ettelbruck – all in Luxembourg; Mainz, Weimar, Gera – all in Germany; and Vocklabruck, Austria. You are probably aware there are dozens of 80th Division memorials spread throughout these locations, making the trip all that more special.

I can't tell you the chills I had when my wife & I visited in a few years ago and the local citizens celebrated their liberation by the 80th Division by unveiling several of these memorials. Knowing that I was standing in the exact location my father had years ago was an honor. Trekking deep into a forest with a local historian, standing in a foxhole that my father may have been in, but knowing that his company (Company H, 317th Infantry Regiment) launched mortars

from that exact location in order to fight off the Germans, was an extraordinary occasion.

I've been on two of these trips. My wife's father jumped in behind enemy lines on June 6, 1944. He was with the 82nd Airborne. We also took the opportunity to visit the Normandy area, including Omaha Beach and Utah Beach. Being able to follow in our fathers' footsteps, so to speak, was a life-changing experience. The French, Luxembourgers, and Germans are perfect hosts and at every turn, they show their appreciation for what our veterans did for them.

Now, for your homework assignment... If you haven't visited the Digital Archives on the 80th Division website yet (www.80thdivision.com/WebArchives), you are in for a treat. I've digitized all of the 80th Division Morning Reports from August 1944 through May 1945, organized them by unit (Regiment, Battalion, Company), and by month. If you know your father's / grandfather's company, you can download each month's Morning Report (for free) and map out his journey day-by-day during the war.

By the way, in addition to the Morning Reports, I've also digitized the majority of General Orders for 1944 & 1945 (DSC, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Hearts), Regimental Unit Histories, 80th Division Operational History, After Action Reports, and a ton of other Miscellaneous Reports. All in all, I quit counting after 100,000 pages of documents. If you haven't visited the Archives, they are online and are free to download.

I hope you'll take advantage of some of these activities and celebrations the French, Luxembourgers, and Germans are planning for the 75th Anniversary of liberation.



80th Memorials Still Being Built

By Andy Adkins

EARLIER IN APRIL, I was contacted by Jean Paul Reinsch, a Frenchman in the area of Mousson, France. He wanted to let me know of a memorial he and his son built to honor the men of the 80th Infantry Division.

Jean Paul provided photos of an 80th Memorial (Coat of Arms) that is in his farm yard in the village of Champey sur Moselle, Meurthe, France. He and his son built the monument as part of their Instants History Association to “keep the future generations carved into the stone of the help that the American troops brought us during the Great War and the Second World War.”

In 2018, his association, with the help of other associations and the town hall of Mousson (a small village just north of Pont á Mousson) reconstructed the events of the fighting that the 80th Division led on the hill of Mousson. It was during this fight to take the village that General Edmund W. Searby lost his life with many of his soldiers. A retrospective of the reconstitution was made by the town hall of Mousson upon request by its mayor.

Jean Paul also mentioned that his association is making a documentary film of the days of the 80th Division combat

in his area, tracking the evacuation of the Mousson School by the Germans just before the fighting, the death of General Searby, and the mounted 80th in combat. I will make that available on the 80th Division website when received.

In Jean Paul’s email correspondence (which I used Google translate to correspond with him), he asks that I let the veterans of the 80th Infantry Division know how grateful he is. His maternal family was deported to Germany to a camp near Kassel, his mother being a part of that deportation. This happened a little before the arrival of the 80th Infantry Division and the 702nd Tank Battalion. In anticipation of the advance of the American troops, the Germans had already started the evacuations to exterminate their occupants. During an aerial bombing, they managed to hide in a shelter. After the bombing, “the ground of the shelter continued to tremble, but no longer by the bombs, but provoked by the firing of an American tank which was above them. Their liberators had finally arrived.”

75 years later, the memory of all the soldiers remains intact and he is grateful.



Excerpt from: **You Can't Get Much Closer Than This – Combat with Company H, 317th Infantry Regiment, 80th Division**

By A.Z. Adkins, Jr. and Andrew Z. Adkins III

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Chapter 18 The End of the War April 29, 1945 – May 8, 1945

The war was a rat race now. It looked as if the dough boys' job was about over. Armored columns were shooting out from everywhere. All we could do was to pile into our jeeps and trucks and drive like hell to catch up. Occasionally, we ran into some die-hard Nazis who refused to surrender.

When we took these long jaunts along the autobahns or other roads, we didn't even bother with prisoners. There were too many of them. They were giving up by the thousands. All along the road were Krauts in a column of twos marching to the rear. Sometimes they carried white flags and sometimes they didn't. Wives were walking with their husbands while they were going to turn themselves in. Sometimes they carried the baby along. No one was paying any attention to the Krauts. We just told them to keep moving to the rear.

German equipment was everywhere. I wished that some of my buddies were still alive to witness these sights. What a contrast these people were to the SS troops we had fought a few months earlier. We never took an objective without being counterattacked, and those counterattacks were of the first order, too. The Krauts came in until it was hand-to-hand combat, and somebody was always hurt.

In addition to its original personnel of approximately one thousand men and officers, the 2d Battalion had 3,334 reinforcements come to it during its nine months of combat. My company landed in France with 152 men and 7 officers. During its time in the ETO, Company H, 2d Battalion, 317th Infantry Regiment, had 608 men and 31 officers come in as replacements. Thirty-six of them were killed in action. Hundreds of others were wounded. Of course, there were other outfits that had experiences that made ours look like a walk in the park. But there were also outfits that hadn't seen as much of this war. When the Germans surrendered 274 days after we landed at Utah Beach, 187 men of Company H were still in the hospital.

★ ★ ★

We left Nuremberg early on the morning of April 29 and moved to the little town of Alteglofsheim. My CP was in a school house. I opened a door of a bedroom. In bed was a dreamy-eyed brunette with her hair spread out on the pillow. I didn't know what to think. She was pale. I brought Million in to do a little interrogating. A plane had strafed her house and she had been hit in the arm. She had no doctor to look at her. Her arm was swollen and black. It looked like gangrene. I asked Doc Price to drop around. He dressed her arm and the next day we sent her to Regensburg in an ambulance.

There was an old-maid school teacher living there who could speak a little English. I tried to get her views on the status quo. I've never seen a woman so scared of men. If I tried to move to within ten feet of her, she would raise her screechy voice to such a high pitch that I thought the windows would break.

On April 30 we moved to a little town on the north bank of the Isar River. Across the river from us was the town of Dingolfing, Germany. We were nearing the Austrian border. Two of our battalions had already crossed the river to the west of us and were getting ready to move into Dingolfing. Our mission was to secure the north bank opposite Dingolfing while the other battalions moved in.

Lieutenant Edwin Heller set up the mortars and I sent Sergeant Ross and Sergeant Christopher with their machine gun platoons with Company E and Company G to the river bank. Right before dark the Krauts pulled out of Dingolfing and our other battalion moved in. We settled down for the night. There were two pretty girls in my house, but Colonel Williams kept me busy all of the time. I didn't have time to get to know the frauleins. The weather was cold and rainy and we had frosty mornings.

The next day, May 1, 1st Sergeant Bloodworth left for the States. He had been with the company a long time and had seen his share of fighting.

Around noon, we crossed the Isar River to Dingolfing in assault boats. Even though we had intermittent rain and snow, this was the way I liked to cross rivers, in assault boats. Best of all, no one was shooting at us.

After changing positions and outposts a few times we settled down to enjoy the advantages of Dingolfing. It was a beautiful little town scattered over several hills. Most of the homes were new and modern. George McDonell and Company E were in the center of town down by the river.

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He had setup in a hotel. It was quite a scene. He took over a restaurant for his men and had a blonde vocalist and a guitarist to entertain them while they sat around and drank beer. The men had it easy.

We just had a few outposts and changed them frequently. Some of my men liberated quite a few boxes of silk stockings, sweaters, and gloves. Everybody got all they wanted, and we stowed the rest away on our jeeps to save them for men going to Paris or the Riviera.

★ ★ ★

We received word on May 1 that Adolf Hitler was dead. He had committed suicide. All kinds of thoughts went through my mind, including what I would have done had I gotten my hands on him. I'm sure the other men had similar thoughts. Fighting Krauts for months in the cold, living in rain-filled holes, and seeing so much death—well, it kind of got to me after a while. If Hitler was dead and the Krauts were retreating, then the surrender couldn't be far off, could it?

One day, while one of the runners and I were walking down the street, two good-looking girls passed us, gave us the eye, and made some remark in French. I knew a little French, so I tried out my line to see if it was rusty or not. The girls were French and had been brought to Germany as workers. I had a quiet little house up on the hill. The girls were hungry and liked my silk stockings. I always did have a warm place in my heart for the French.

We hadn't seen our kitchens for quite some time. While we were in Dingolfing, I ate eggs and french-fried potatoes. I had been eating so many eggs lately that I began to cackle. Our kitchens finally caught up with us the day before we moved out.

★ ★ ★

On May 4 we moved a hundred miles to Vochlabruck, Austria. We crossed a few rivers that day, including the Danube. We also crossed the Inn River that divides Austria from Germany. There was a sign on the bridge that we crossed: "You are now leaving Germany through the courtesy of the Engineers."

We took a break soon after we had crossed the Inn River. I saw a little puppy dog, just a few weeks old, playing on the grass. He was solid white with the exception of a black spot on the very tip of his tail. The minute I saw him I knew that he was mine and that his name would be Slingshot, named after my good buddy, Captain Mattlock. Slingshot was a name applied by Mattlock to anybody or anything he did not know. Many's the time I had seen some Kraut come up to Captain Mattlock and start rattling off in German. Mattlock would let the Kraut rattle his head off and nod his head occasionally, even though he didn't speak a word of German. Then Mattlock would say in his slow Arkansas brogue, "Now look, Slingshot."

Slingshot and I came to be good buddies. He ate and slept with me, and after a while he became an old hand at the game of jeep riding. He was careless about his personal habits though, and would relieve himself at the most inopportune times and in the most inappropriate places.

★ ★ ★

May 5 was a day that I'll never forget. Everything and everybody was going wild. We moved sixty miles to Steinbach, Austria even though we got tangled up with convoys of tanks, tank destroyers, artillery, engineers, and everything else. Everybody was chasing Krauts. Colonel Williams got two of my machine gun jeeps and led our column. Our troops were so thick that one time the colonel tried to cut cross-country. We got to the top of the hill, and down in the valley were several hundred Krauts. They didn't know which way to turn. The men threw their machine guns on them and they scattered like rats. Things were too congested to move, so we settled down for the night a mile and a half east of Steinbach.

The next morning, May 6, we moved two miles back across the river to Unt Grunburg. The 3d Battalion was there, but it moved out so we took over their area. I hated to kick that woman out of her nice room, but Slingshot and I had to have a place to sleep.

That afternoon Sergeant Christopher came to tell me that he and some of his men had met this girl who worked in a large small arms factory out from town about ten miles. He wanted to go out and look the joint over. I told him to take two machine guns with him and take a look, but not to stay more than an hour. A few minutes after Sergeant Christopher left, Colonel Williams called me up and told me that he saw my men with a civilian in their jeep. I told him what happened. He didn't seem to like the idea.

About an hour later Christopher came back with two British soldiers that he had found at the factory. I took them to the colonel and they told us about the two small factories. They were prisoners of war and had been working in the factory. They were mighty glad to see the Yanks. They told us that there were several hundred German and Hungarian troops in the valley around the factory and that they thought they would surrender if the Americans would come after them.

The colonel wanted to go fishing out that way, so he arranged to take a rifle platoon, a machine gun platoon, and a section of 81mm mortars with him. On the way out to the factory we went through a little town. The civilians stopped us and told us that there was an SS trooper dressed in civilian clothes who was threatening to kill the civilians if they didn't fight the Americans. We found him in a house. He wasn't so tough when there was someone there who could kick his ass. The colonel brought him along with us.

We went to the first factory and met the British prisoners.

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Man, were they glad to see us. Down the valley, across the bridge about a mile, were the Kraut and Hungarian garrisons. Two of the British boys went over to tell them to come out in thirty minutes in a column of twos. While the British boys were gone, a liaison plane flew over. We were undecided as to whether it was Russian or German. Our Kraut SS man told us that it was German. I grabbed one of the machine guns on the jeep and let go with a belt. It was pretty seeing those traces shooting up. I came close, but the plane didn't fall.

The British boys came back and said the Krauts and Hungarians wanted three hours to get ready. Sergeant Christopher took one jeep and I took the other, and he went after them. The Hungarians were sitting around outside their barracks and it looked as if their first sergeant was having a little trouble getting them to fall out. Christopher fired a few rounds from his machine gun and they came out a little faster.

Down the way a piece was a group of Krauts. They didn't want to march with the Hungarians. Van Court was driving me. He drove that jeep around like he was herding cattle. We backed up a little way and fired a few rounds. The Krauts decided the Hungarians weren't so bad after all.

The British boys said they would destroy the weapons and take care of the stragglers. We went back. The colonel had gone to look the gun factory over. He didn't seem to think there was much to this business, so he had left me to hold the bag.

About that time a Kraut officer came up. He wanted to know what the score was. The British boys were doing the interpreting for me. I asked the guy how many men he had. He said about a hundred and twenty-five. I told him that I'd give him one hour to gather his men, lay down their arms, and come down to us in a column of twos. He wanted two hours. I said one. He was getting red around the gills. Then I told him that if he wasn't out in one hour that I would call back for the artillery and the tanks that were waiting down the road and we would come in and get them.

If he had known that all we had were two jeeps, he would probably have scalped me. The British boy made it sound authentic about the tanks and artillery, and the Kraut took it all, hook, line and sinker.

Shortly, he came out with his men in a motorized column, everything from convertibles to trucks. I was scared as hell. He stopped his convoy and his men pitched everything from Lugers to machine guns over the sides of the trucks.

About that time, a Hungarian SS trooper came down out of the hills and asked what was going on. His commanding officer had sent him down to find out the score. I told him the same thing. "Come out or we're coming in after them." He came back a little later. His commanding officer told him to tell me to come and get them. I decided that then and there was the time to get the hell out.

I led the motorized patrol back while the riflemen took care of the foot column. All the way back to Unt Grunburg the Kraut officer kept looking for our tanks and artillery that were supposed to be there. The farther we went the redder his face got.

When we got back to the POW cage, we compared notes. He had been in command of a tank unit back in Normandy and had fought around Argentan the same time as us. He had three tanks knocked out from under him and had been unable to get a replacement lately.

Colonel Williams came in ahead of the foot column and went fishing with Tom Moss in a little stream on the edge of town. I told him that I would appreciate it if he would not ask me to go on any more fishing trips with him. He laughed and praised the men for bringing in the 850 Krauts and Hungarians.

Slingshot and I were staying in a guest house. When we came in that night, the old lady who ran the joint had supper for us. She had made a lettuce salad. Those were the first fresh vegetables I had in quite some time. She called me Herr Kommandant.

The next day, May 7, we moved to Hofern where we arrived at 10:30 P.M. Nothing much happened, so the men took it easy.

During the middle of the morning on May 8 we held up in a little country town in the vicinity of Spital, Austria, and got the men into billets. It was a beautiful day and the grass in my yard was green and soft. Slingshot and I were sitting under a tree and I was cleaning my rifle. Slingshot had oil all over him. I took my shoes off. It really felt good to wiggle my toes in the grass.

Sergeant Albert Melcolm came out and said there was a conference called for all COs. He read a message to us and said that an order would be down in a few minutes. I prayed to God. I asked 1st Sgt Ed Turner to assemble the company. When the men came in, I told them to sit down. Then I read General Eisenhower's order announcing the end of the war.

Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces Eisenhower's General Order

A representative of the German High Command signed the unconditional surrender of all German land, sea, and air forces in Europe to the Allied Expeditionary Force, and simultaneously to the Soviet High Command at 0141 Hours, Central European Time, 7 May 1945, under which all forces will cease active operations at 0001 Hours, 9 May 1945.

Effective immediately all offensive operations by Allied Expeditionary Forces will cease and troops will remain in their present positions. Moves involved in occupational duties will continue. Due to the difficulties of communication there may be some delay in similar orders reaching the enemy troops, so full defensive precautions will be taken.

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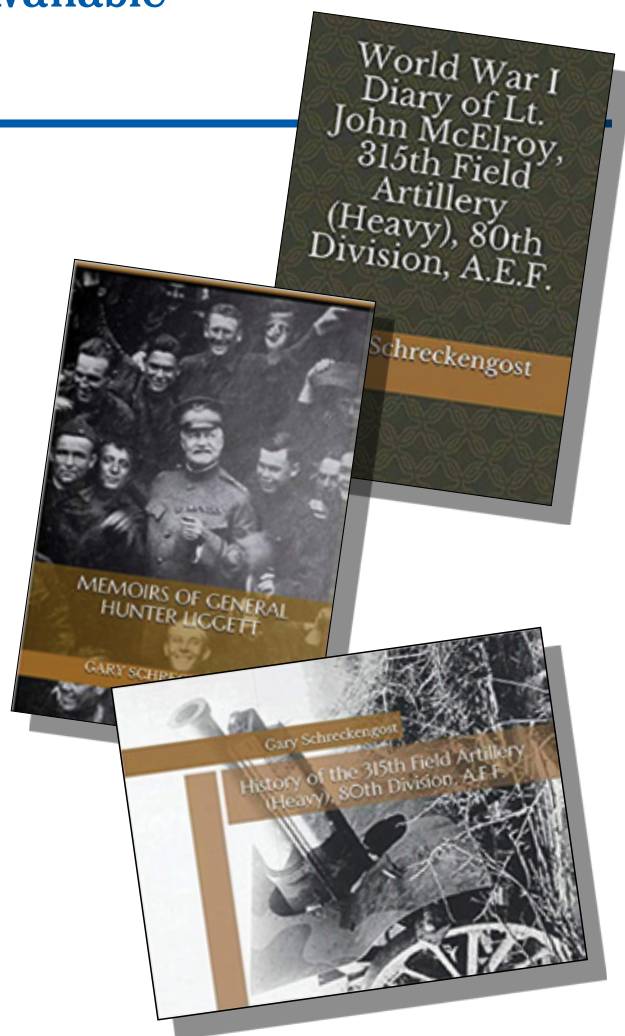
History of the 80th Division Books Available

By: MAJ(R) Gary Schreckengost

STILL THINKING THAT the division hasn't gotten its due for its exploits during the Great War (1917-18), I have endeavored to convert my historical fiction of the 80th Division in WWI into a scholarly three-volume non-fiction, drawing from all known sources, including the articles in *The Service Magazine*, the new photos provided to the Association, diaries, official records, the Stultz book, etc.

These volumes, entitled *Always Move Forward! The 80th Division in WWI*, should be ready for publication next year, all proceeds, as usual, going to the Association. That said, I've converted three rare, out-of-print books that may be of interest: *The History of the 315th Artillery (Heavy)*, \$9.99; the *World War I Diary of Lt. John McElroy, 315th Artillery (Heavy), 80th Division, A.E.F.*, \$6.99; and *The Memoirs of Hunter Liggett*, \$9.99. The 313th Arty (L) has been re-published by Forgotten Books and it's fantastic and the 314th Arty has also been reprinted, although its only strength is its daily "Combat Diary."

Forgotten Books has also just re-published Liggett's *Commanding an American Army*, which is one of the books I reproduced in *Memoirs*. It sells for \$12. Forgotten Books also has a website that offers thousands of books on PDF for a small fee and I was able to grab at least 50 period books for use in "Always Move Forward," including several Army manuals, books on Infantry and M.G. tactics, etc. What I've learned is how eclectic our forbearers were and how utterly complicated and interesting (as well as tragic and bloody) the campaigns were. They just weren't "charge this trench, etc."



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Eisenhower

No one said a word for several minutes, then one of my men got up and said, "Lieutenant, read us that again, please."



Austria

8 May 1945

Dearest Mom & Dad,

Shortly after I wrote to you day before yesterday I received the cease fire order. At that particular time I had my shoes & shirt off & was playing with a little dog on the grass of some Austrian's yard. My men were all in houses taking it easy. My battalion had momentarily stopped in a little mountain village.

I told the first sergeant to assemble the company. As my men came marching up a big lump formed itself in my throat because many familiar faces were missing from the files of men who were to hear me read to them General Eisenhower's order that hostilities had ceased. I told my men to sit down & take it easy & that I had something to tell them. Then I read to them General Eisenhower's order telling of the unconditional surrender.

When I finished no one said a word. Finally, one man said, "Lieutenant, read that again please." The day that we had died & bled for so long had finally arrived.

No one knows what the word peace means except those who have been at war. As yet I feel no great emotional change. But gradually I am beginning to realize that there will be no more suffering & no more dying & the sensation is truly wonderful.

Tonight I am in another mountain village high in the Bavarian Alps. I have a radio & can listen to the celebrations that the people in England & America are having. Here, we are having a different type of celebration. Ours is a quiet celebration. We still have to maintain order, but we are so happy & it's hard for us to realize this mess is over.

I love you both dearly.

Devotedly,

Andy

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Bier, CPT John, 318th
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McKenzie, William H-319
Finksburg, MD
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Only Moves Forward

The last date I have entered a name is Sep 30, 2019

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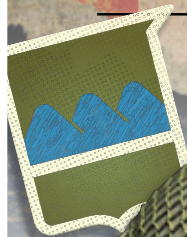
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