

## 2024 REUNION REFLECTIONS

### Honoring The Past, Embracing The Future

THE 104th Reunion convened in Richmond, Virginia, in 2024, bringing together veterans, descendants, historians, and friends in a heartfelt tribute to the Blue Ridge Division's legacy. The weekend was filled with opportunities for learning, remembrance, and camaraderie, deepening the bonds between those dedicated to preserving the division's history and the stories of those who served.

For those arriving early on Thursday, an informal pre-reunion gathering offered a chance to reconnect, share stories, and set the stage for the days ahead. The reunion officially began Friday morning as attendees checked in, collected welcome packets, and explored the hospitality room, where history came alive through 80th Division memorabilia, Battle of the Bulge resources, raffle tables, and research materials. A dedicated space showcased recorded interviews and historical footage, offering glimpses into the experiences of those who once wore the Blue Ridge patch. At the heart of the room sat our beloved Burt Marsh and his puzzle-making table, where attendees could sit, chat, and even interview him—so long as they helped piece together the puzzle along the way.

The afternoon featured the 80th Division Authors Panel, where experts and historians, including Andy Adkins, Christine Guidry Law, and Leon Reed, shared insights into their research and writing. Attendees had the chance to ask questions, uncover new resources, and connect with others seeking to understand their ancestors' service. Andy Adkins gave a stellar presentation on the division's website, guiding attendees on how to navigate its extensive archives and locate valuable resources for researching their 80th Division ancestors. David Nagle delivered a moving presentation on Day Turner, a Medal of Honor recipient, followed by Leon Reed's discussion on the 80th Division's role in Lorraine, Ettelbruck, and Bastogne. These talks illuminated key moments in the division's history, underscoring the bravery and sacrifices of those who served.

James Triesler, Director of Education at the Virginia War Memorial, offered a powerful keynote address over dinner. He honored the division's contributions, highlighting their sacrifices, unwavering resilience, and lasting impact.

Saturday morning's Memorial Service honored those who served and sacrificed under the 80th Infantry Division, reinforcing the deep connections shared across generations.

The ceremony's solemn beauty was elevated by special bagpiper Mary Wallace and the captivating voice of Mitchell Bordeaux, adding a profound sense of reverence.

Following lunch, the afternoon was dedicated to powerful presentations that brought personal stories and historical research to the forefront. Megan Farency shared liberation stories from the Virginia Holocaust Museum archives, offering a sobering look at the impact of war. Christine Guidry Law presented *Finding the 80th: A Journey Back to Honor*, a deeply personal account of her research into the division's history and her grandfather Dupre Lejeune's service. Lee Anthony then bridged the division's past and present with an overview of the 80th's Significant Battles in World War I. Closing out the afternoon, Mike Rauhut delivered *Two Kids—Two Towns—Two Divisions*, a touching exploration of his parents' wartime service and the sacrifices they made.



*PNC Burt Marsh and PNC Lee Anthony pose for photos after the Memorial Program*

*continued on page 4*

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Christine Guidry Law

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*Greetings, readers!*

**I**T IS MY GREAT honor to serve as Chief Editor of *Blue Ridge Magazine*, a publication dedicated to preserving the legacy of the 80th Infantry Division. Since August 2023, I have been privileged to work on this magazine, ensuring that the voices of our veterans—across all campaigns and training command (TASS)—continue to be heard.

My connection to the 80th Infantry Division runs deep. My grandfather, Pvt. Dupre A. LeJeune, served with the 319th Infantry Regiment, Company I. His service, along with that of his fellow soldiers, instilled in me a lifelong commitment to honoring our veterans and ensuring their sacrifices are never forgotten. Through this magazine, I aim to share their stories, expand our outreach, and revitalize our association by welcoming new

members into our ranks. As our WWII veterans pass on, it will be vital to bring family members and descendants into the fold. It is also crucial that we reach out to our modern veterans (Korean, Vietnam, Iraq, etc.) to remind them we are here ready to support them and share their stories as well.

Four years ago, I relocated from South Louisiana to Pennsylvania—a Cajun far from home but finding a new purpose. That move led me to serve our veterans in ways I never imagined. Whether sitting with one of our World War II survivors, preserving the memories of those who have passed, or attending commemoration events, I am reminded daily of the importance of this work. Each story, each name spoken, keeps history alive.

A soldier is never forgotten as long as his name is spoken aloud. That belief fuels my dedication—to ensure their names are heard, their sacrifices remembered, and their legacy passed on to future generations.

Are you a veteran or a family member of an 80th Division veteran? Or are you currently serving in an attachment to the 80th (TASS)? Then you belong with us! Join the 80th Division Veterans Association today. We need you! Together, we will keep history alive—one story at a time.

I invite all of you to be a part of this mission. If you have news, photos, memories, or ideas for upcoming issues, please reach out at [blueridge.editor@80thdivision.com](mailto:blueridge.editor@80thdivision.com).

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## 80th Division Plaque to Be Displayed at U.S. Army National Museum

**W**ITH DEEP RESPECT for the sacrifices and service of soldiers from the 80th Division and Training Command, the leadership of the 80th Division Veterans Association proudly announces the creation of an 80th Division Plaque for permanent display at the U.S. Army National Museum at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. This plaque will serve as a lasting tribute to the men and women who have served in the 80th from its inception in 1917 to the present day, preserving their legacy for future generations.

The 80th Division, also known as the “Blue Ridge Division,” has played a vital role in U.S. military history, from its formation during World War I through its critical engagements in World War II, the Cold War, and modern operations. The plaque represents the enduring commitment of these Soldiers to defend the nation and uphold the values of the U.S. Army.

This remarkable initiative was made possible through the unwavering dedication of Lindsay Marsh Trombetta, who spearheaded a GoFundMe campaign in the fall of 2024. Thanks to her efforts and the generous contributions of past soldiers, their families, and supporters of the 80th Division, the vision of honoring all who wore the 80th patch has become a reality.

The official unveiling of the plaque is scheduled for May 2025 at the U.S. Army National Museum, a prestigious institution dedicated to preserving the history and heritage of the American Soldier. This event will be a moment of pride and reflection for all who have been part of the 80th Division’s storied history.

For those who have served or have loved ones who served in the 80th, this plaque stands as a symbol of unity, sacrifice, and the unwavering spirit of the Blue Ridge Division. It ensures that the legacy of valor, duty, and resilience carried by 80th Division Soldiers will continue to be recognized for generations to come.

More details regarding the unveiling event will be shared as the date approaches. The 80th Division Veterans Association extends its heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to making this tribute a reality.

For updates and further information, please visit the 80th Division Veterans Association website ([www.80thdivision.com](http://www.80thdivision.com)) or follow official announcements from the U.S. Army National Museum.



# COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Brian Faulconer, National Commander

*Greetings to all members of the 80th Division Veterans Association, family, and friends.*

I AM WRITING TO you today from western North Carolina, where, late last year, the area suffered tremendous damage and devastation from Hurricane Helene. Numerous small towns, such as Chimney Rock, were completely wiped out. While hurricanes in North Carolina are not unusual on our eastern coast, one striking our western mountain range was quite rare. Many have called it “the storm of a thousand years.” I am incredibly proud of how communities across the state came together with the support of our nation.



The road to recovery is long, but what impressed me most was the strength of the mountains. That resonates deeply, as the 80th Division’s motto is “Vis Montium,” which means Strength of the Mountains!

It is my honor to be serving again as your National Commander. 2024 marked numerous monumental 80th anniversaries for our division throughout Europe, with more to come in 2025. A special thanks goes to Christine Guidry Law, who represented the 80th at dedication and commemoration events in Toul, Nancy, Pont-à-Mousson, and Ettelbruck, and commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge events in DC, Arlington, Gettysburg, and New York. I’d also like to extend my gratitude to Bill Black, who attended the highly televised 80th anniversary ceremonies for the Battle of the Bulge at the Luxembourg American Cemetery. Additionally, my deepest appreciation goes to Dr. Lee Anthony, whose unwavering dedication has taken him on 29 overseas trips since 1990 to honor our 80th Fallen. His enduring commitment ensures that the sacrifices of our soldiers are never forgotten. *(See full coverage of these events on pages 5 – 11 )*

Our 2024 Reunion in Richmond, Virginia, was a tremendous success! Given that it was our first reunion since the pandemic, we were thrilled with the turnout and the enthusiasm of attendees. While some of our regular attendees could not join us, we were pleased to welcome several new members. Feedback overwhelmingly praised the speaker panel, discussion content, and camaraderie. Many thanks to the 80th Training Command, which hosted its annual Commander’s Dine Out in conjunction with our reunion. *(See cover story on pages 1 & 4)*

More recently, we launched a GoFundMe campaign and quickly reached our goal. The funds are being used to sponsor a tribute plaque to the 80th Division and Training Command, which will be displayed on the memorial wall of the National U.S. Army Museum at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. Special thanks to MG (Ret) John McLaren, Lindsay Trombetta, Chris-

tine Guidry Law, and Andy Adkins for their efforts on this project. *(See page 2 for more info on plaque installation).*

As we continue to preserve the legacy of the 80th Division for future generations, we welcome your input on initiatives, events, and projects. Your participation is vital to ensuring our mission remains strong and meaningful. Please share your ideas and suggestions—we want to hear from you.

Additionally, if you know of any family members of 80th Division veterans, veterans of attached units during wartime campaigns, or individuals currently serving with the 80th

Training Command who would like to be part of our association, please encourage them to contact us. New membership is essential to keeping our soldiers’ memories alive and maintaining the strength of our organization

*The 80th only moves forward!*

Brian Faulconer

National Commander 2024-2026



## Blue Ridge Service Magazine Staff

To submit articles contact:  
[blueridge.editor@80thdivision.com](mailto:blueridge.editor@80thdivision.com)

Editor	Christine Guidry Law
Historians	Andy Adkins, III, Historian (WWII) Lee Anthony, Historian (WWI)
European Correspondents	Anthony Guerin (Lorraine) Simon Petitot (Bambiderstroff) Paul Oechsner (Weimar) Joseph Tholl (Ettelbruck)
Contributors	Andy Adkins, Lee Anthony, PNC Bill Black, Anthony Guerin, PNC John McLaren, LTC Thomas J. Piernicky (TASS)
Design / Layout	Martha Wasik Graphic Arts
Production	Knorr Marketing

## 2024 Reunion... continued from page 1

As the reunion neared its close, attendees gathered for the raffle drawing and one last opportunity to visit the historical displays. The evening festivities began with a reception before leading into the Commander's Dine Out, a formal event hosted in partnership with the 80th Training Command. Major General (Ret.) John McLaren served as the keynote speaker, delivering remarks that honored the division's past while recognizing its continued impact in today's military.

The 2024 Reunion in Richmond was more than a gathering—it was a reflection of the enduring strength, camaraderie, and dedication of the 80th Division Veterans Association. From lively discussions to solemn memorials, every moment reinforced the importance of preserving history and honoring those who came before us. As attendees parted ways, the legacy of the Blue Ridge Division remained ever-present, carried forward by those committed to ensuring its place in history.

Our next reunion will be held in August 2026. Please stay tuned to the website and the Fall/Winter 2025 issue of *The Blue Ridge* for more details.



*PNC John McLaren administers the oath as Brian Faulconer is sworn in as the new National Commander of the 80th Division Veterans Association*



*Color Guard led by CSM Christopher Luchsinger at Commander's Dine Out*



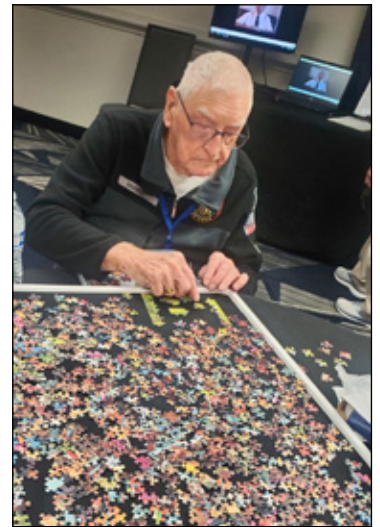
*Jim Triesler, Education Director at the Virginia War Memorial in Richmond, VA, speaks to reunion attendees*



*Christine Guidry Law, Blue Ridge Chief Editor with MG Patricia R. Wallace, outgoing Commander of the 80th Training Command (TASS)*



*Mike Rauhut gave a wonderful presentation about his parents WWII experience during the 2024 reunion.*



*PNC Burt Marsh, WWII Veteran, mans the puzzle station at the 2024 reunion, bringing camaraderie and challenge to attendees.*



# 80th Anniversary Commemoration of the Liberation of Argentan

by PNC Bill Black

ON AUGUST 20, 2024, the town of Argentan, Normandy, France, hosted a special ceremony marking the 80th anniversary of its liberation. The mayor of Argentan extended an invitation to representatives of the 80th Division, honoring the division's pivotal role in the battle. PNC Bill Black represented the 80th Division Veterans Association, while CSM Christopher Luchsinger attended on behalf of the 80th Training Command.

Local historian and dear friend of the 80th Division Veterans Association, Tristan Rondeau, served as a gracious host to Mr. Black and CSM Luchsinger. He provided in-depth battlefield tours around Argentan and accompanied them to the Normandy American Cemetery at Omaha Beach, where they paid their respects at the graves of 80th Division soldiers who lost their lives during the battle.

The Battle of Argentan, fought from August 18-20, 1944, marked the 80th Division's first engagement in combat—its "Baptism by Fire." The intense three-day battle came at a

heavy cost, with many soldiers killed or wounded. A monument in Argentan's town square bears the names of 165 men who made the ultimate sacrifice during the battle. Hundreds more were wounded, many grievously. This monument was originally dedicated in 2016, with the late PNC Bob Burrows and PNC Black in attendance.

The 80th anniversary commemoration drew local, regional, and national dignitaries, alongside several hundred Argentan residents who braved the rain to honor the fallen. Both PNC Black and CSM Luchsinger delivered speeches, reflecting on the sacrifices made by the 80th Division's soldiers during those harrowing days in August 1944.

The ceremony concluded with a grand parade through the streets of Argentan, featuring dozens of military vehicles and hundreds of historical reenactors. 80 years later, the people of Argentan remain deeply grateful to the soldiers of the 80th Division, ensuring their legacy endures for generations to come.



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1: CSM Christopher Luchsinger is greeted by the Argentan People

2: PNC Bill Black and CSM Christopher Luchsinger at Omaha Beach Cemetery in Normandy. Honoring 80th Division soldiers who lost their lives at the Battle of Argentan (our "baptism by fire"), August 1944

3: Argentan Parade Drivers with PNC Bill Black & CSM Christopher Luchsinger

4: Argentan Monument: Left to Right: PNC Bill Black; Tristan Rondeau, Argentan Historian; CSM Christopher Luchsinger; Daphne Luchsinger (CSM's wife) at the 80th Division WWII monument in Argentan, France

# A Legacy of Remembrance: The 80th Division's Journey Overseas

by Lee S. Anthony, PNC & WWI Historian

The 80<sup>th</sup> Does  
the 80th



SINCE 1990, I HAVE undertaken 29 journeys overseas to honor the sacrifices of the 80th Division, ensuring that their legacy remains alive across the battlefields of both World Wars. Many of these trips have taken place around Memorial Day, with some occurring in November, as I continue to walk the same grounds where our soldiers once fought.

The 80th Division holds a remarkable reputation among the French people, particularly in the Somme and Meuse-Argonne regions. My efforts have strengthened ties with the descendants of those liberated by the brave soldiers of the 80th, fostering enduring friendships and mutual respect.

## The Path of the 80th in World War I

The 80th Division's journey in World War I began with training alongside British and Commonwealth troops near Calais, Picardy, and the Somme. Their first independent action took place in mid-August 1918 before they were placed in reserve for the St. Mihiel Offensive—the World War I equivalent of the Battle of the Bulge. This battle concluded swiftly within three days, paving the way for the Meuse-Argonne Offensive.

The Meuse-Argonne Offensive, which commenced on September 26, 1918, saw the 80th Division uniquely positioned in three separate locations. The battle persisted until the Armistice on November 11, 1918. The cost was great: approximately 17,087 80th Division soldiers were killed, 12,484 wounded, 488 declared missing, and 1,077 captured. With an average of 54 casualties per day, the toll on the division was immense.

During World War II, the 80th Division faced approximately half the casualty rate of World War I, though the conflict itself lasted much longer. The sacrifices of these soldiers are etched into the landscapes they once traversed, and I continue to honor them by retracing their steps and paying tribute to their memory.

## A Network of Gratitude

Through my journeys, I have built lasting relationships with those who share my dedication to remembrance. Among them are Debbie and Dominique Desmetres, Stéphane Bonnouvier (Somme Cemetery Associate), the Daniel Huard family, Craig and Lorna Rahanian, and Eric and Françoise Durieux in the Jura region. Most recently, I met Dominique Payrus from Châtillon-Coligny at a brocante market. Dominique embodies the deep appreciation the French people hold for the sacrifices made by American soldiers in both World Wars.

## Cemeteries of Remembrance

During my travels, I have paid my respects at numerous American cemeteries, honoring the fallen soldiers of the 80th Division. These are the sites I've visited:

- Aisne-Marne American Cemetery (WWI)
- Brittany American Cemetery (WWII)

- Epinal American Cemetery (WWII)
- Lorraine American Cemetery (WWII)
- Meuse-Argonne American Cemetery (WWI)
- Normandy American Cemetery (WWII)
- Oise-Aisne American Cemetery (WWI)
- Somme American Cemetery (WWI)
- St. Mihiel American Cemetery (WWI)
- Ardennes American Cemetery (WWII)
- Flanders Field American Cemetery (WWI)
- Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery (WWII)
- Luxembourg American Cemetery (WWII)
- Brookwood American Cemetery (WWI)

Each Memorial Day, I endeavored to visit at least one, if not multiple, cemeteries over the course of the weekend. It is heartening to witness the continued remembrance and gratitude in the very places where the 80th Division made its stand.

As we look to the future, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to honoring those who served, ensuring that their bravery and sacrifices are never forgotten.



Lee S. Anthony at Epinal American Cemetery

continued on page 7



*Lee Anthony in France at WW1 & WW2 Monument*



*Roland Keller U.S. reenactor, Lee Anthony, French reenactors Chateau Chehery in front of memorial plaque for the 80th Division*



*Lee Anthony (center), Dominique Payrus (right)*



*Daniel & Anne-Marie Huard with Lee Anthony*



*Lee Anthony with son of Eric Durieux, reenactor at Somme American Cemetery*



*Marie-Claude welcomed Lee Anthony, retired US Navy reserve captain of 86 years, and John Hamill for a field visit*



*Frank and Deborah Campbell with Lee Anthony at the Eiffel Tower*



# A Legacy Remembered: Commemorating the 80th Infantry Division in France

by Christine Guidry Law

**T**HIS SEPTEMBER, I HAD the profound honor of traveling to France to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of key cities by the 80th Infantry Division during World War II. From the notorious beaches of Normandy to the observances in Toul, Nancy, and Pont-à-Mousson—and throughout the tiny villages between—this experience was a heartfelt tribute to the brave men who fought for freedom, including my grandfather, Pvt. Dupre A. Lejeune (80 INFD 319 REG).

## A Pilgrimage to Utah Beach

My journey began on the shores of Utah Beach, where my grandfather landed in August 1944 as part of the Allied effort to liberate France. Standing where he once set foot, I felt the deep connection to all who came before. The vast expanse of sand, the remnants of bunkers, and the whispers of the waves told a story of courage and incredible sacrifice. Here, the 80th Infantry Division began its arduous campaign to drive the Germans from occupied France, a mission that would soon take them deeper into the conflict.

## The Liberation of Toul

A deeply moving experience took place in Toul, where my grandfather's unit played an essential role in rescuing the city from German occupation on September 3, 1944. During the official ceremony, I unveiled a monument dedicated to the 80th Infantry Division's 319th Regiment. As the Unit's only descendant present, I represented not just my grandfather but all those who fought alongside him. Seeing his legacy enshrined in this way brought tears to my eyes, knowing the people of Toul have not forgotten their liberators.

An exhibit by Anthony Guerin, president of Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine Association, accompanied the event, specifically acknowledging the 80th Infantry Division. I was privileged to deliver a presentation on my grandfather's service in a public conference. Officials from Toul hosted a lovely reception, reinforcing their deep appreciation for the soldiers who restored their independence.

A particularly unforgettable chapter unfolded during my interview with Stefan Lewandowski, the last living member of the French Forces of the Interior (FFI) from the Pont-à-Mousson sector. Arrested and deported to Mauthausen concentration camp, he survived to see its gates open as the Nazis fled before the advancing American forces. He recounted his first encounter with the 80th Infantry Division in 1944, handing over secret German documents he had confiscated. Hearing his story firsthand was humbling, a stark indicator of the war's lasting impact.

## Nancy with Helen Patton

Another remarkable experience was spending an evening in Nancy with Helen Patton, General George S. Patton's granddaughter. The city, once a strategic headquarters for Patton's Third Army, hosted a special exhibition retracing the daily lives of U.S. troops. We learned how a bomb had fallen just meters away from Patton's location, a chilling reminder of history's fragility.

The event featured a remarkable artifact—a mural recovered from an old textile factory in Dieulouard before its demolition. Created by U.S. soldiers, it offered a rare glimpse into wartime survival.

As part of the 80th anniversary events, Maj. Gen. James R. Kriesel, United States European Command's (USEUCOM) director of exercises and assessments, attended the celebrations alongside Mayor Mathieu Klein, military delegations, and Stefan Lewandowski. The festivities featured French and U.S. color guards and paid homage to the thousands involved in releasing Nancy from Nazi control in September 1944. Kriesel also met with a Nancy resident who, at just four years old, was photographed in the arms of General Patton's driver—a powerful reflection of how personal and meaningful these commemorations remain for the people of Nancy.

*continued on page 9*

1: Anthony Guerin, President, Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine addresses crowd at the Monument Unveiling in Toul, France honoring the 319th REG/80th ID



2: Mathieu Klein, Mayor of Nancy, France and Christine Guidry Law at Liberation of Nancy Commemoration Ceremony (Sept. 2024)





### Pont-à-Mousson Memorial

My last stop in France brought me to Pont-à-Mousson, the site of intense fighting where the 80th Infantry Division met fierce resistance. In the hills above the town, I visited the monument dedicated to Brigadier General Edmund W. Searby, which stands solemnly atop Mousson Hill as a testimony to his leadership and the men under his command. On September 14, 1944, General Searby led the assault to secure Mousson Hill for artillery observation. Reaching the summit first, he directed fire missions that decimated enemy positions. When German forces launched a counterattack, he seized a wounded soldier's rifle and continued to fight, ultimately giving his own life. For his extraordinary bravery, he was posthumously awarded the Silver Star, Legion of Merit, and Purple Heart.

### Paying Respects in Epinal

Additionally, I visited three American cemeteries to lay flowers at the graves of 80th Infantry Division soldiers. At the Epinal American Cemetery, I was honored to participate in the ceremonial lowering of the American colors at day's end. Standing at the resting places of General Searby, Caleb Adcock, and Thomas Guida, I felt an overwhelming sense of

gratitude and responsibility to keep their stories—and the stories of all our soldiers—alive. The cemetery's solemn beauty, coupled with the quiet dignity of the flag's descent, made this an unforgettable part of my time in France.

### Carrying the Legacy Forward

This trip was more than a journey through the past; it was a meaningful tribute to my grandfather's service and the dedication of those who fought beside him. Standing in the places where they endured so much, I felt an unshakable connection to their bravery, resilience, and the lasting impact of their actions.

To tread the spaces where Dupre fought, witness his division still revered, and to share these memories was an experience beyond words. The 80th Infantry Division's legacy lives on—not only in the monuments and ceremonies, but in the hearts of those who remember.

I returned home with renewed purpose: to ensure the courage and dedication of these soldiers are never forgotten. Their sacrifices serve as a solemn reminder that freedom is never free—and we must always honor those who paid the price to defend it.



3: Caleb Adcock, 319th REG, Epinal American Cemetery, KIA Toul 1944

4: Yvonne Gonzales, Consulate General of France; Anthony Guerin, President, Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine; Blue Ridge Chief Editor Christine Guidry Law and Wallace Law

5: Christine with Helen Patton (Gen. Patton's granddaughter) holding Patton's boots

6: Monument unveiled in Toul, France (Sept. 2024) honoring the 319th REG/80th ID for liberating the town in Sept. 1944

7: U.S. Army 2nd Theater Signal Brigade at Nancy Celebration

8: Stefan Lewandowski, 98-year-old French Resistance Fighter, captured by the Germans

# Luxembourg Commemorates 80th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge

by PNC Bill Black

The 80<sup>th</sup> Does  
the 80<sup>th</sup>



On December 14, 2024, a solemn 80-year commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge took place at the American Military Cemetery in Hamm, Luxembourg. Among the honored guests were PNC Bill Black and his wife, Tammy, who represented both the 80th Division and the 80th Division Veterans Association. PNC Black's father, SSGT William Black (319th G Company), fought in the battle and was severely wounded during a surprise attack on the enemy on the morning of January 18, 1945, in Luxembourg.

Local historian and longtime friend of the 80th Division Veterans Association, Erny Kohn, President of CEBA, played a key role in facilitating attendance for PNC Black and other representatives.

The commemoration featured speeches from Henri, Grand

Duke of Luxembourg; Philippe, King of Belgium; the U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg, Thomas Barrett; and 99-year-old Battle of the Bulge veteran Jack Foy. Mr. Foy's heartfelt speech was the highlight of the ceremony, moving the audience to tears as he shared his firsthand account of the battle.

The 80th Division played a pivotal role in the Battle of the Bulge. It was one of three divisions that Gen. George S. Patton deployed within 24 hours of receiving orders to reinforce the Bulge sector. Racing 120 miles in under 24 hours from Lorraine, France, the 80th reached the southern flank of the Bulge in Luxembourg on December 21, 1944.

Hundreds of 80th Division soldiers were killed or wounded in action during the battle, many of whom now rest in the Luxembourg cemetery. Their sacrifices must never be forgotten.



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1: Maj. Gen. Peter B. Andrysiak, Chief of Staff of the U.S. European Command, greets WWII Veterans

2: 80th Anniversary commemoration at Luxembourg American Cemetery.

3: PVT. Louis H. Rachel 318th INF, 80th DIV, (KIA 02/11/45) Biesdorf, Eifelkreis Bitburg-Prüm, Rheinland-Pfalz, Germany

4: Pvt. Louis H. Rachel, Luxembourg American Cemetery

5: Tom Barrett, U.S. Ambassador to Luxembourg, greets the WWII Veterans

6: Luxembourg American Cemetery, Hamm, Luxembourg



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# A Weekend of Remembrance and Reflection in Ettelbruck

by Christine Guidry Law

The 80<sup>th</sup> Does  
the 80th



ATTENDING THE 80TH ANNIVERSARY commemoration in Ettelbruck, Luxembourg (Sept. 20–22, 2024), was one of the most profound experiences of my life. Representing the 80th Division Veterans Association and the Battle of the Bulge Association (BOBA) at this series of events wasn't just an honor—it was a deeply personal journey of remembrance.

The commemorations began with an opening ceremony in the town center, where I was honored to deliver the opening address alongside Patton Museum President Jos Tholl and Ettelbruck Mayor Bob Steichen. Throughout the weekend, WWII reenactors and historic military vehicles filled the streets, accompanied by displays which brought the history of Ettelbruck and its surrounding areas to life for visitors.

The weekend began with the solemn act of placing flowers at General Patton's grave, a moment made even more meaningful as I stood alongside Benjamin Patton and his son, Tiger. As part of the American delegation, we were joined by numerous ambassadors and dignitaries, all gathered to pay tribute to Patton's enduring legacy. The commemoration culminated in a series of powerful tributes, including the wreath-laying ceremony at the Patton monument in Patton Square, the unveiling of a newly restored monument, and moving speeches and dedications by ambassadors and officials. The events concluded with a grand military parade, a striking display of remembrance and respect for those who served.

One of the highlights of these events for me was meeting Madame Marie Siedler Thill, a 93-year-old survivor of the German occupation. She spoke no English and understood little, which made it difficult for visiting dignitaries to converse with her. Noticing she stood alone, I approached her for a photo and a conversation. After realizing the language barrier, I reverted to the French I learned growing up in my Cajun family and asked if she spoke French. Her face lit up, and I became her translator for the rest of the day. Marie began sharing sto-

ries and memories that transported us both back in time.

At nine years old, she had witnessed the German occupation of her town. Boys were taken to be trained for the German army or killed if they resisted, while girls were placed in special schools designed to groom them into supporters of the German soldiers—and eventually bear their children. Marie told me she had two brothers: one was captured, and they never saw him again, while the other managed to escape and was hidden. She recalled being thirteen when two American soldiers arrived in an army jeep, rescuing her and her mother. By the end of our time together, Marie had embraced me as “her American granddaughter,” a title she bestowed with warmth and sincerity. Her resilience and enduring gratitude for the Allied forces left an indelible mark on me, a powerful reminder of the personal connections and stories that make these commemorations so meaningful.

Another meaningful aspect of the weekend was engaging with U.S. Ambassadors Thomas Barrett (Luxembourg), Michael Adler (Belgium), Denise Campbell Bauer (France and Monaco), Yvonne Gonzales (Strasbourg), Jane Hartley (United Kingdom), and Amy Gutmann (Germany). Their participation, along with Luxembourg's Minister for Culture Eric Thill, Minister for Defense Yuricko Backes, and other distinguished officials, emphasized the global importance of these commemorations.

Sharing moments with University of Miami students during a special roundtable to discuss the importance of preserving veterans' stories and listening to survivors of the German occupation were especially humbling. Their resilience and gratitude toward the Allied forces further reinforced the crucial need to safeguard these histories for future generations. These interactions reaffirmed my commitment to preserving this legacy. They also deepened my sense of responsibility to ensure the sacrifices of those who served are never forgotten.



American Delegation, Luxembourg Ambassadors, and Ettelbruck Dignitaries at General George S. Patton's grave, Luxembourg American Cemetery



Christine & WWII Reenactors Ettelbruck, Luxembourg

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# The 80th Division's Role in Training the New Iraqi Army

by PNC Major General John P. McLaren, Jr.

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**Y**EARS HAVE PASSED since the 718 outstanding American Soldiers from the Blue Ridge Division returned to the United States and resumed their lives as an integral part of our society. This story details the operational and foxhole levels of that mission in direct support of the War on Terror.

The U.S. Army decided in 2004 that training the New Iraqi Army was critically needed. The Old Iraqi Army was dissolved and its Soldiers cashiered. The first training efforts used various methods, which did not go as anticipated. Some may remember when untrained Iraqi Army units attempted to step into the counterinsurgency fight in early 2004. Their lack of training was telling. Leaders across the Army faced a nagging question: "How do we train the Iraqi Army?" There was a shortage of Regular Army units available to train them and still fight the growing insurgency; these units were deploying, deployed, or recovering from earlier deployments. Part of the answer was found in the six Training Divisions from the Army Reserve. The first unit to deploy for this mission was the 98th Division (IT). The 98th was a "sister" Division to the 80th and had the unenviable task of starting a revised training program for the New Iraqi Army.

In June 2004, the deployment order for the Army Reserve Training Divisions was set for the 98th, the 80th and the 108th. The tour length for the 98th would be 10 months; the 80th and 108th would each deploy for one year. The mission was to have combat capable Iraqi Army units at the Battalion, Brigade and Division levels within three years. The first personnel from the 98th deployed in July and August of 2004, with the last deploying in December 2005. The 80th Division deployed at the end of July 2005 after a train-up period.

The 80th got a verbal warning order for deployment in November 2004, and the actual warning order in February 2005. If you read about MG Cronkite's experience trying to prepare to deploy in 1917, our Iraq experience mirrored his. Indecision from higher headquarters on whether we would get the mission, insistence from the Regular Army that we would, shifting deployment dates, last-minute mission changes, and a lack of funding for pre-mobilization training—along with a host of other issues—sowed frustration throughout the force.

We attempted to take five leaders to Iraq in January 2005 to "see the ground truth" and enable the 80th's leadership to focus on training our Soldiers. Unfortunately, the request was disapproved until May 2005, after mobilization. The 80th coordinated extensively with both the 98th and 108th prior, during, and after our deployment, sharing extensive lessons learned. Nothing, however, is as good as living the mission. Especially when, after it is over, you realize, as we did—the mission evolved many times during a year tour of duty. The fight in Iraq, we learned firsthand, was different all across the country. The Tactics, Techniques and Procedures needed to fight the enemy varied with location. Education on these facts was all in our future.

The original concept for the mission, as stated above, was not the mission performed. The 98th, 80th and 108th had one vision, but it evolved as it progressed. After the 98th Division's tour ended in August 2005, the Combat Studies Institutes at Fort Leavenworth conducted an interview with LTG Helmly chief of Army Reserve and commanding general of the Army Reserve Command. No better explanation of the thinking and reality of the original mission exists:

"Helmly related how early on he saw a need to reconstitute the Iraqi forces, a chronic shortage of US Special Forces to train them, and thought to himself, Why can't we use our table of distribution and allowances organized institutional training divisions and training support divisions? The biggest problem he encountered in developing this idea was actually resident in his own staff. 'That is, they kept coming back with the schoolbook answer. So we had a Come to Jesus meeting one day and I slammed the door and said to them, 'Goddamn it! Let me make it abundantly clear what we're going to do...' You could sort of see the eyes opening on these guys and they finally understood.' After the concept was briefed and accepted, Helmly states that another group of problems arose from 'this bastardized system of request for forces (RFF). Instead of being given a mission or a task with commander's intent and then allowing the units to generate the capability, we went to a bastardized thing off the back of some sloppy envelope for an RFF that was frankly just very cumbersome. It really tied our hands in terms of the flexibility of putting together a task organized unit of the 98th.' As the deployment of the 98th to Iraq proceeded, its employment varied considerably from his original concept.

LTG Helmly was asked what happened after the unit was deployed: 'I visualized the (98th Division) deploying and establishing a deployed version of an institutional training base. I saw us establishing a Fort Benning, Georgia or a Fort Knox, Kentucky inside Iraq and training civilians to become soldiers... When I was a young private, when my unit was completing basic combat training it was announced that one of the drill sergeants I had was going to deploy as a platoon sergeant to Vietnam. A couple years later, I learned he had been killed—and he had been a very fine noncommissioned officer (NCO). The point of this is: everyone knows that the ultimate objective of any soldier is to engage in ground combat, but I thought the 98th would essentially do a training base kind of thing. But what actually happened was that many of these outstanding soldiers found themselves embedded inside Iraqi units. As a result, there were several who were killed or wounded in action that was operating more or less as advisors rather than trainers in a training base capacity. Had I known that, I wouldn't have argued against using the 98th, but I would have understood things better from the

*continued on page 13*

beginning. My original initiative was to use them in a training base capacity inside a foreign army. After all, one of the things we've learned in this war is that clerks, cooks and truck drivers all have to be prepared to fight as infantrymen. I have to say, though, that the 98th soldiers did it all very well and I admire and respect them greatly for that."

LTG Helmly's original mission thoughts about creation of a training base to turn Iraqi civilians into soldiers set the training model. By May 2005, after training started for the 80th, the mission changed to become embedded advisors for the part of our Soldiers going to the Military Transition Teams. Helmly's concept for his mission was, and was not, what the 80th encountered in Iraq. We adapted and embraced a mantra of "Semper Gumby," a play on the Marines motto, meaning Always Flexible!

Thank God for the Emergency Operations Center staff, the 80th Division "cadre staff" at the mobilization station, and the dedicated Division staff. They didn't deploy for the mission but were indispensable in supporting those Soldiers who did. They found us equipment, soldiers from across the nation, and supported us every step of the way! We could not have been successful without them.

The mission, living conditions, and obstacles were not always easy, but my personal admiration for the 80th's soldiers has never been greater. They adjusted to each and every change; they always moved forward!



*Iraq Assistance Group Personal Security Detail. SFC Edward's, SSG Vale, 1LT Rogers (Aide de Camp), BG McLaren, SP Sproll, SGT Whitman, SSG Martin*



*Destroyed T-72 tank on Camp Victory Iraq*



*MG McLaren and Defense Minister Abdul Quater during a visit to US Joint Forces Command 2007. He was the past Commander in charge of Iraqi Ground Forces Command from 2004-2006 during the 80th Division tour in Iraq*



*SFC Eley, BG McLaren, and CSM Blanco at Camp Atterbury in May - July 2005*



*COL Kaark, Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) MiTT team leader, member of the IGFC operations staff, MG (Promotable) Ali CDR IGFC, Operations officer IGFC*

# The 80th's New TASS Commander: Leading with Experience

General Michael J. Dougherty Commanding General, 80th Training Command (TASS)

**MAJOR GENERAL MICHAEL** M.J. Dougherty assumed command of the 80th Training Command (The Army School System) on 23 July 2024. Commissioned as a Second Lieutenant on 20 May 1995, he earned a B.S. in Electrical Engineering and Computer Science from the University of California, Berkeley, through ROTC. He completed the Signal Officer's Basic Course at Fort Gordon, Georgia, in November 1995.



His first assignment was with the 141st Signal Battalion, 1st Armored Division, as a Platoon Leader. In January 1996, he deployed to Bosnia for Operation Joint Endeavor, followed by a second deployment in September 1997 for Operation Joint Guard. During his time with the 141st, he also served as a Company Executive Officer and Battalion Maintenance Officer.

Leaving active duty on 1 October 1998, MG Dougherty joined the Army Reserve on 1 August 1999 as an Observer/Trainer for 1/91st Battle Command Systems Training (BCST). From September 2006 to December 2010, he was the Battalion Operations Officer for 2-104th Signal Battalion, later cross-leveled to the 77th Sustainment Brigade, where he deployed to Iraq in 2011 as the Sustainment Automation Support Management Officer and Deputy Support Operations Officer.

In January 2012, he returned to 2-104th Signal Battalion as Battalion Operations Officer, then commanded the battalion from January 2013 to January 2015. He went on to command 2nd Brigade, 100th Division (2015), the 319th Expeditionary Signal Battalion (2015-2017), and the 505th Theater Tactical Signal Brigade (2020-2021). Other key assignments include Assistant Chief of Staff, G-6, for the 79th Theater Sustainment Command (2017-2018), Northern California Emergency Preparedness Liaison Officer (2018-2020), and Deputy Commanding General of the 335th Signal Command (T) (2021-2023). He assumed command of the 86th Training Division in April 2023.

His military education includes the U.S. Army War College, Command and General Staff College, Combined Arms Exercise, Signal Officer's Advanced Course, and Signal Officer's Basic Course. He also holds an MBA from the University of Phoenix.

MG Dougherty's awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (2 OLC), Army Commendation Medal (2 OLC), Army Achievement Medal (2 OLC), Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal (7th award), National Defense Service Medal (1 OLC), Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Armed Forces Service Medal, and NATO Medal (1 OLC).

With over 25 years in senior engineering and operations roles in high-tech, he currently manages hardware development for Google's computer and storage data center products.

## TASS NEWS

### Capt. Shanna Sivels Earns Volunteer Service Medal

U.S. Army Reserve Capt. Shanna Sivels recently received the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal (February) for exceptional community service beyond her military duties. After completing Fitness Warrior Training in 2021, she became an instructor, offering free workouts to promote healthier lifestyles.



This medal honors active duty, reserve, and National Guard members who make significant, sustained contributions to their communities, producing tangible results that reflect positively on the U.S. Armed Forces. While there is no set time requirement, most recipients log over three years or 100 hours of service. Though no official citation accompanies the award, commanders often present a personal letter in recognition of the achievement.

### CSM Rogelio James Jr. Selected as 80th Training Command Sergeant Major

Command Sergeant Major Rogelio James Jr., a Queens, New York native, enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1993 as a Military Intelligence Analyst (96B). After transitioning to the Army Reserve in 2000, he has held every leadership position from Intelligence Sergeant to Sergeant Major.



On February 3, 2025, CSM James was selected as Command Sergeant Major of the 80th Training Command (The Army School System). His previous roles include CSM for the 100th Training Division, 335th Signal Command, Army Reserve Cyber Protection Brigade, and multiple battalions. He has three overseas deployments supporting OIF, OEF, OSS, and OIR.

A graduate of the U.S. Army Sergeants Major Course (Class 61), he has earned the Legion of Merit (2 OLC), Bronze Star Medal, Combat Action Badge, Parachutist Badge, and Drill Sergeant Badge.

CSM James holds a Master's from the University of Texas at El Paso and a Master of Science in Criminal Justice. He is a Retired NYPD Detective Investigator and currently serves as a Supervisory Staff Administrator in the USAR.

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# ★ UPCOMING EVENTS ★

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## Mid Atlantic Air Museum's 34th Annual WWII Weekend A Gathering of Warbirds

**S**TEP BACK IN TIME at the Mid Atlantic Air Museum's 34th Annual World War II Weekend, happening June 6 – 8, 2025, in Reading, PA. This premier event, known as "A Gathering of Warbirds," brings history to life with authentic aircraft, reenactments, and immersive WWII experiences.

As the museum's largest fundraising event, your attendance directly supports efforts to preserve and share the Mid Atlantic region's rich aviation history. Visitors will have the opportunity to explore historic aircraft, interact with reenactors, and gain insight into the experiences of those who served during World War II.

Look for 80th Division Representatives and Battle of the Bulge Representatives—they'll be present and eager to chat with you!

For more information, visit the Mid Atlantic Air Museum at 110 Air Museum Drive, Reading, PA 19605, call 610-372-7333, or go online at [www.maam.org](http://www.maam.org).

## 6th Annual World War II Conference Brings Top Historians to Virginia

**H**ISTORY ENTHUSIASTS and scholars will gather in Glen Allen, Virginia, November 7 – 9, 2025, for the 6th Annual World War II Conference, hosted by America's History LLC. This premier event has established itself as a must-attend gathering for those passionate about World War II history, attracting renowned historians and authors over the past five years.

The 2025 conference promises a dynamic lineup of expert speakers, in-depth discussions, and an exclusive bus tour to sites of historical significance. Attendees will have the opportunity to delve into new research, engage in thought-provoking conversations, and connect with others who share a deep appreciation for the complexities of the war.

Full details, including speaker announcements and tour information, will be available soon at [www.AmericasHistoryLLC.com](http://www.AmericasHistoryLLC.com). For inquiries, contact America's History at 703-78-4373.

Mark your calendars and prepare for a weekend of immersive history and expert insight at the 6th Annual World War II Conference!

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## Commemorations at WWII Memorial

### V-E Day 80th Anniversary

**J**OIN VETERANS, HISTORIANS, and guests in honoring the 80th anniversary of V-E Day at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., on Thursday, May 8, 2025, at 11 a.m. This special event will commemorate the Allied victory in Europe and pay tribute to the sacrifices of those who served. All are welcome to attend this historic remembrance ceremony at one of the nation's most iconic memorials.

### Memorial Day Observance

**G**ATHER AT THE World War II Memorial on Monday, May 24, 2025, at 10 a.m. for a solemn Memorial Day ceremony honoring the brave men and women who gave their lives in service to our nation. Veterans, families, and guests will come together to reflect, remember, and pay tribute to their sacrifice. This annual observance serves as a powerful reminder of the cost of freedom and ensures their legacy is never forgotten.

*All are welcome to attend both events as we honor the Greatest Generation and all who have served.*



## The 2026 80th Division Reunion in the Works!

Plans are underway for the 80th Division Veterans Association's 2026 Reunion, set for August 2026! While the exact date and location are still being finalized, this gathering promises to be a meaningful time to reconnect, honor our veterans, and share the stories that keep our history alive.

Stay tuned for more details in the next issue of The Blue Ridge and on our website: [www.80thdivision.com](http://www.80thdivision.com). We look forward to seeing you there!

# The Kiss: A Forgotten Mural of War and Liberation

*Historical facts and photos provided courtesy of editor's interview with Richard Dagherne, Chief Heritage Curator and Director of the Musée Lorrain and the Department of Museums, Visual Arts and Heritage Promotion, Nancy, France*

ART HAS LONG SERVED as a reflection of history, and in the case of *The Kiss*, it captures an intimate moment amidst the chaos of war. Part of a remarkable set of thirteen murals, *The Kiss* stands as a rare artistic testimony of the presence of American soldiers in Dieulouard, France, during World War II. While its creator remains unknown, evidence suggests that the mural, along with the others in the set, was likely painted by soldiers—most likely members of the 80th Infantry Division—stationed in the area during the fall of 1944.

## An Artistic Mystery from War-Torn France

The murals, painted in an abandoned tannery occupied by American forces, exhibit different styles, suggesting multiple hands contributed to their creation. Research into the precise circumstances of their production is ongoing, but it is widely believed that the soldiers used their artistic talents to escape, at least momentarily, the grim reality of war. Unlike the documented work of Ralph Owen, a known soldier-artist of the time, *The Kiss* exhibits a different artistic approach, further deepening the mystery of its origins.

## Rescue and Restoration of a Wartime Relic

With time and neglect threatening the survival of these murals, action was taken in December 2021 to salvage *The Kiss* before the industrial building housing it was demolished. The mural was carefully removed and transported for preservation, marking the beginning of an extensive restoration effort. Over the course of four months in the spring of 2024, mural restoration specialist Franck Blondel meticulously restored the piece, bringing it back to its former vibrancy. His work involved stabilizing the fragile surface, reinforcing its integrity, and painstakingly reassembling sections to maintain the authenticity of the original composition.

In preparation for its exhibition, I (Editor Christine) was invited to visit the warehouse where the mural was repaired and awaited transport. During my visit, I had the opportunity to view *The Kiss* firsthand and interview Richard Dagherne, Director of the Palace of the Dukes of Lorraine – Musée Lorrain and Nancy Museums at the City of Nancy. Additionally, I assisted in the ongoing effort to locate and identify the artist(s) responsible for the mural—a process that continues to unfold as new information emerges.

## A Celebration of Liberation and Art

The 80th anniversary of the Liberation of Nancy provided the perfect moment to reintroduce *The Kiss* to the public. Unveiled during the Liberators: The GIs in Nancy exhibition from September 19 - 22, 2024, the mural found itself displayed in a historic setting—the very house where General George Patton resided in the autumn of 1944. Accompanying the mural's pre-



*A close-up of the restored mural, The Kiss.*



*Left to right: Wallace Law; Christine Guidry Law, Blue Ridge Chief Editor; Richard Dagherne, Chief Heritage Curator and Director of the Musée Lorrain and the Department of Museums; Frédérique Gaujacq, head of the collections department at the Musée Lorrain.*

*continued on page 17*



sentation, the documentary *Made in Dieulouard*, directed by Renaud Yong, chronicled the remarkable journey of the mural from its wartime origins to its preservation.

### A Reflection of War, Love, and Escape

Unlike the simple celebratory images of Allied victory often seen in wartime media, *The Kiss* conveys a deeper narrative. The mural portrays an impassioned embrace between an American soldier and a local woman, evoking themes of longing and human connection in a time of uncertainty. The fervor of *The Kiss* is reminiscent of Hollywood's romanticized depictions of love during war, yet it remains grounded in the reality of soldiers seeking solace amid conflict. A second figure, a woman seated nearby, adds an air of contemplation, perhaps waiting for her own reunion with a soldier.



(Left to the Right): Nicole Creusot, Deputy Mayor of Nancy; Renaud Yong, director of the film "Made in Dieulouard"; Frédérique Gaujacq, head of the collections department at the Musée Lorrain; Franck Blondel, restorer of the mural painting; Helen Patton; Vladimir Erard, in charge of the museums' common reserve; KENZA-Marie Safraoui, curator at the Musée Lorrain.

### Part of a Larger Artistic Heritage

*The Kiss* is not an isolated example of wartime murals created by American troops in France. Similar artistic expressions were found across the Grand Est region, including murals in Nancy and Reims. These artworks often reflected themes of music, camaraderie, and escapism. In Dieulouard itself, another mural depicting a jazz band, also believed to have been painted by American soldiers, is set to undergo restoration in 2025, further preserving this unique visual history.

### Preserving the Past for Future Generations

Now part of the collections of the Musée Lorrain, *The Kiss* stands as a powerful artifact bridging art and history. While it will return to storage after its public exhibition, efforts continue to secure a permanent display space for this extraordinary piece of wartime heritage. The survival and restoration of *The Kiss* ensure that future generations can witness not only the military legacy of the 80th Infantry Division but also the human stories woven into the fabric of World War II's history.

## Liebschwitz to Commemorate 80th Anniversary of U.S. Troops' Arrival

ON APRIL 13, 2025, the Liebschwitz district of Gera will mark 80 years since the arrival of U.S. troops, an event that signaled the end of World War II for the region. On this day in 1945, soldiers of the 80th U.S. Infantry Division reached Gera and its surrounding areas, leading to the surrender of the city's garrison and bringing the war to a close for its residents.

To honor this milestone, Liebschwitz will host a commemorative event featuring volunteer historical actors reenacting key moments from those fateful days. Attendees will have the chance to experience life as it was in 1945, with reenactments of both U.S. military presence and civilian life staged at the former youth center and town center. The local history room will also be open, showcasing artifacts and exhibits related to the period.

The organizers are seeking historical materials and first-hand accounts to enrich the event. Those with photographs, newspapers, diaries, or artifacts from the era are encouraged



to contribute. Individuals willing to share their knowledge can contact Mr. Bauch at the local history room or reach out to the organizers via the district office by email or phone.

Food and refreshments will be available, making this a meaningful and immersive tribute to a pivotal moment in local history.

For more information, contact the event organizer Roger Rassl at [rassl@t-online.de](mailto:rassl@t-online.de).

# A Passion for Collecting and Preserving History: Honoring the 80th Infantry Division

Submitted by Anthony Guerin, Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine Association, Toul

FOR OVER 18 YEARS, I have dedicated myself to preserving the memory of the soldiers of the 80th Infantry Division (80 IFND), the American unit that played a critical role in the liberation of Lorraine, France, during World War II. My journey as a collector began in 2007 when, as a teenager, I sought out an American helmet as a tribute to the GIs who had fought to free my homeland. What started as a simple wish grew into a mission of historical preservation, one that now fuels my efforts through the Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine Association.

## A Personal Connection to History

Hailing from Toul, a region deeply scarred by the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), World War I, and World War II, I grew up immersed in stories of wartime resilience. Unlike many who find their heroes in comic books or film, my admiration was reserved for the real-life soldiers who braved unimaginable hardships for the freedom of France.

My passion for collecting military artifacts took shape when I started attending flea markets, auctions, and specialized fairs in search of rare pieces. Over time, my focus narrowed to the 80th Infantry Division, as I sought to commemorate the men who had directly impacted my region. Helmets, dog tags, uniforms, and equipment—each object tells a story, a fragment of a soldier's journey across war-torn Europe.

## From Collector to Historian

For me, collecting was never just about possessing historical items. It became a vehicle for research, leading me to meticulously trace the lives of the men whose belongings I acquired. Using Morning Reports and genealogical records, I have successfully identified soldiers, unearthed their stories, and even connected with descendants eager to learn about their relatives' wartime service.

The real satisfaction comes when I find a name, a face, or a family story tied to an artifact. It's about making sure these men are remembered, not just as numbers in a report, but as individuals who fought and sacrificed.

## Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine: Keeping History Alive

My passion led to the founding of Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine, an association dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of the region's wartime past. With a mission to bring history to life, our organization engages in exhibitions, reenactments, commemorations, and conferences aimed at educating the public about the significance of the 80th Infantry Division and other military units that fought in Lorraine.

We collaborate with veterans' organizations, library institutions, municipalities, and schools to ensure that the stories

of those who fought are passed down to future generations. By acquiring and showcasing artifacts, Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine provides tangible connections to history, allowing people to engage with the past in a deeply personal way.

## Expanding the Collection and Its Impact

I spare no effort in expanding my collection, often sourcing artifacts from the United States and Belgium to ensure their preservation. Each uniform, document, or personal effect serves as a bridge between history and the present, offering a glimpse into the experiences of the soldiers who once carried them.

The goal isn't just to collect but to honor and educate. These men came from thousands of miles away to fight for our freedom. The least we can do is remember them.

Through my work with Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine, I ensure that the legacy of the 80th Infantry Division and the soldiers who fought for liberation remains alive. By combining historical research with hands-on education, I continue to bring their stories to new audiences, ensuring that their bravery and sacrifices are never forgotten.

I look forward to sharing my new discoveries with all of you and informing you of our efforts to tell the 80th Infantry Division's stories here in the Lorraine Valley of France as well as inform you about upcoming activities you may wish to join in.

For more information about Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine or to support our mission, visit our official website (<https://memoiredeguerresenlorraine.fr/>) or follow our ongoing projects on social media (<https://www.facebook.com/memoiredeguerresenlorraine>).



*Alde Harmand, Mayor of Toul and Anthony Guerin, President Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine at Exhibition honoring the 80th ID*

*continued on page 19*



Helmet of Corporal John Kozar, wounded in action in September 1944



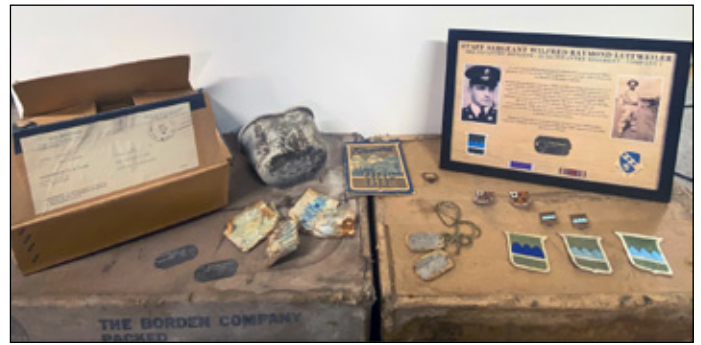
WWI and WWII uniforms of the 80th ID and a few other artifacts from Anthony's collection



Duffel bag of Private Robert E. Feebeck of the 317th Infantry Regiment who died in 1944 & is buried in St Avold



***The 80th only moves forward!***



SSgt. Wilfred Raymond Luttwailer nominal quarter, dog-tags, and burial flag in original cardboard box from soldier's family



History, maps of the route through Europe, postcards and correspondence from the 80th ID

## Thanks for your support of the 80th Division Veterans Association

(through January 2025)

### LIFE MEMBERSHIP

- Barwell, LTC(R) Felicia – HQ 80th TC
- Law, Christine – Annual to Life
- Norman, SFC(R) Kenneth – 6/80th & 2/319th
- Pully, Manson – Father, Theodore B-317
- Sandy, Jeff – Father, Gerald K-317
- Schneider, Duane – Family of Antone Schneider, Jr
- Wallace, BG Patricia – HQ 80th TC Commander

### ANNUAL MEMBERS

- Aوليو, COL Jeffrey - HQ 80th TC
- Smith, Charles – Uncle, James O. Smith D-319
- Smith, Mary Ann
- Tamez, Robert – HQ 80th TC

### DONATIONS

- Pully, Manson "Jordan" –
- In Honor of Father, Theodore Pully, B-317

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# 80th Division Veterans Association – 2024 Website Updates

by Andy Adkins

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**WHERE DO I START?** So much to tell, so little time. There's so much more to do, but here goes... Have you tried the site "Search" yet? Awesome new feature (read the "red" print, though).

## Oral Histories

There are more than 180 Oral Histories from 80th Infantry Division soldiers on the site now. These include audio and video interviews, and written histories. I also spent time transcribing the video and audio & video interviews using a digital transcriber. That basically means I haven't edited the final transcripts yet (there are more than 1,200 hours of interviews), but it does mean most of the transcripts can be searched, which was my main intent.

## New Photo Collections

- **Jill Doak Collection:** Jill's grandfather, Harold D. Standard, served with the 317th Infantry Regiment, Company M.
- **Brock Brockman Collection:** Clarence "Brock" Brockman was attached to the 317th Infantry Regiment, HQ Company.
- **James Spencer WWI Collection:** 305th Engineers, donated by Bruce Smith.
- **R.J. Nemzek Collection:** Original photos digitized by R.J. Nemzek. Photos by a member of the 80th Division during their occupation duties.
- **Mimi Korach Veterans Sketches Collection:** In 1944, New York commercial artist Mimi Korach was invited to accompany the USO overseas to visit recuperating GIs in Europe. She made more than 600 sketches during her two-year tour. Several are of 80th Division soldiers.
- **Panoramic Photo – 317/Co L (Ft. Dix, 1944):** Panoramic shot of 317th Infantry Regiment, Company L, Ft. Dix, N.J., May 1944. Includes a partial roster of names.
- **Panoramic Photo – 318/Co D (Ft. Dix, 1944):** Panoramic shot of 318th Infantry Regiment, Company G, before shipping overseas.

## New 80th Division Books

***The Valiant Die Once: James Hayes' Memoir (The War Years)*** by Col Jim Hayes

Col Jim Hayes served as the 317th Infantry Regiment S-2 (Intelligence), 2d Battalion commander, and Regimental S-3 (Operations). He stayed in the Army after the war and retired as a Colonel with 27 years of military service.

***The Last Night of my Life: The World War II Adventure of Lt. Walter Carr, Combat Rifleman, Platoon Leader, Night Prowler*** by Walter Carr & Leon Reed

Lt. Walter Carr was a valued platoon leader and a no-nonsense infantry leader in the 2nd Battalion (E Co.), 318th Regiment, 80th Division. But it was his ability as a patrol leader that his superiors valued most. Whether they needed a POW to in-

terrogate, a patrol behind enemy lines, or a key intersection checked out for Germans, all too often, Lt. Carr was called on.

***Too Many Memories: The Recollections of an Infantryman who Served under General Patton from Normandy to Austria*** by James O. Smith and Charles M. Smith

These are the firsthand memoirs of a soldier that survived the meandering journey from France to Austria while serving in Patton's Third Army. PFC James O. Smith (Company D, 319th Infantry Regiment) was a part of a mortar platoon giving support to the infantry companies as they pushed the Germans into their homelands and their surrender on May 8, 1945. His memoirs give an insight into the demanding situations and sometimes mundane daily movements. He continued to serve during the occupation of Germany until October 1945.

## Additional Resources/Links

- WWI – Troop Transport Spreadsheet
- WWI – 80th Division WWI Casualties; 1,493 Names, Alphabetized (PDF)
- WWI – 305th Engineer Battalion, Co B Command Posts (PDF)
- WWI – A new page with links specific to WWI Research
- WWII – Dean Dominique Resource Collections
- WWII – Troop Movement to LUX for Battle of Bulge (Report)
- WWII – 101st Evacuation Hospital Booklet
- WWII – 8th Tank Battalion (4th Armored Division) After Action Reports

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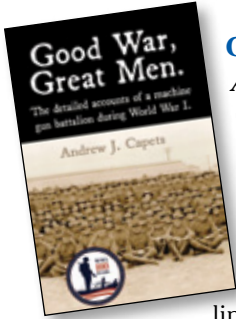
## Books by Robert T. Murrell

**ROBERT T. MURRELL SERVED** with the 318th/Company M in the 80th Division during WWII. He was one of the historians of the 80th Division Veterans Association and compiled several historical books, all available on Amazon.

- 317th Infantry Regiment History in World War II, \$24.95.
- 318th Infantry Regiment History in World War II, \$24.95.
- 319th Infantry Regiment History in World War II, \$24.95.
- Stories of the Men of the 80th Infantry Division World War II, \$24.95.
- The Blue Ridge Division Answers the Call in World War II, \$24.95.
- 80th Infantry Division Operational History - WWII E.T.O., \$34.99.

(All sales go to the 80th DVA)

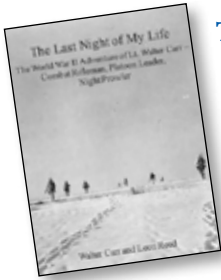
## Blue Ridge Books: World War I, World War II, and Beyond



### **Good War, Great Men**

*Andrew J. Capets*

This book provides first-hand accounts of more than a dozen soldiers who served together during the Great War. Their stories have been rediscovered by compiling unpublished letters and journals with historical insights to provide a compelling history of the men of the 313th Machine Gun Battalion, 80th Division. This second edition printing includes new maps and illustrations not provided in the first edition. Available on Amazon, \$16.95.



### **The Last Night of My Life**

*Walter Carr & Leon Reed*

*318th Infantry Regiment*

Lt. Walter Carr was a valued platoon leader and a no-nonsense infantry leader in the 2nd Battalion (E Co.), 318th Regiment, 80th Division. But it was his ability as a patrol leader that his superiors valued most.

Whether they needed a POW to interrogate, a patrol behind enemy lines, or a key intersection checked out for Germans, all too often, Lt. Carr was called on.



### **Too Many Memories**

*James O. Smith & Charles M. Smith*

*319th Infantry Regiment*

These are the firsthand memoirs of a soldier that survived the meandering journey from France to Austria while serving in Patton's Third Army. PFC James O. Smith (Company D, 319th Infantry Regiment) was a part of a

mortar platoon giving support to the infantry companies as they pushed the Germans into their homelands and their surrender on May 8, 1945. His memoirs give an insight into the demanding situations and sometimes mundane daily movements. He continued to serve during the occupation of Germany until October 1945.



### **With Patton's Army in World War II: Stories of a Young GI**

*Bob Burrows, 317th Infantry Regiment*

Bob Burrows had a safe, behind-the-lines job that was interesting and supported a large and important program: a driver for XII Corps G-5, Office of Civil Affairs. Best of all, the job virtually guaranteed that he would

make it home safely. But he hadn't signed up for a rear echelon job. Frustrated in his attempts to become an aircrew member or to join the Marines, he applied several times for a transfer to the Infantry.



### **A Combat Engineer with Patton's Army**

*Lois Lembo & Leon Reed*

George Patton is renowned for his daring tank thrusts and rapid movement, but the many rivers and obstacles his Third Army encountered crossing Europe required engineers spearheading his advance. A Combat Engineer with Patton's Army is the untold story of Frank Lembo, one of

Patton's men who helped move the American command in the battle of Argentan in the Normandy Campaign, in the high-speed pursuit of the German Wehrmacht eastward across France, and in the brutal battles waged during the Battle of the Bulge and during the final combats along the borders of the collapsing Reich. Available on Amazon, \$11.99.



### **Mother of the Company**

*Philip M. Smith, 317th Infantry Regiment*

The letters of Sgt. Percy Smith (G Company, 317th Infantry Regiment, 80th Division), a World War II soldier, and his memories as an aging veteran reveal how military training, wartime, and occupation brought out strengths, vulnerabilities, and changing judgments about fellow soldiers, military leadership, the enemy population, and

home. Capturing the story of a common enlisted man from embarkation to discharge, the letters and stories in *Mother of the Company: Sgt. Percy M. Smith's World War II Reflections* also provide an intimate window conveying his feelings for his wife, though tempered in expression as well as subject to censorship. The letters add depth to the story of this soldier, and they expand the narrative to capture more of the experience of all veterans who felt at risk and needed comfort during and after the war.



### **80th Division in Iraq**

*Gary Schreckengost (Author)*

*John McLaren (Contributor)*

This is a first-hand account of three Army 80th (Blue Ridge) Division Soldiers who were sent to Iraq in 2005-06 as Iraqi Army advisors. Brig. Gen. John McLaren, who commanded the Iraqi Assistance Group in Baghdad, Col.

Paul Linkenhoker, who advised the Iraqi base commander for Taji, and Maj. Gary Schreckengost, who was the lead operations advisor for the Iraqi fightin' 4th Brigade, 1st Division, in Fallujah. Read how these Blue Ridge Division Soldiers answered their country's call and what it was like to be combat advisors to a very foreign army in a very foreign land in varied settings and situations. Available on Amazon, \$14.99.

# TAPS

*The men of the Greatest Generation, who saved the world from Hitler's tyranny,  
are facing their last muster with grace and dignity.*

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Roanoke, VA  
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SECRETARY: CSM (R) Doris M. Wollett • 5101 Huroop Rd • Sandston, VA 23150-5406 • 804-737-4422 • csmwollett@verizon.net. Change of address, dues remittances, and death notices should be addressed to the Secretary.

Commander  
PNC Brian Faulconer  
132 Roslyn Hills Dr  
Holly Springs, NC 27540  
919 986 0186  
bfaulconer@me.com

Historian  
PNC Lee S Anthony  
3769 Carvins Cove Rd  
Salem, VA 24153  
540 563 0165  
lsa80division@gmail.com

PNC Bill Black  
6422 Grand Reunion Dr  
Hoschton, GA 30548  
404 493 6601  
williamrblack@gmail.com

PNC John McLaren  
1305 Prestwick Ct  
Chesapeake, VA 23320  
757 237 3611  
johnpmclaren@yahoo.com

PNC Calvin Webb  
520 Benschhoff Hill Rd  
Johnstown, PA 15906  
814 536 3438

Sr Vice Commander  
Lindsey Trombetta  
1792 White Pond Rd  
Athol, MA 01331  
508 737 8658  
billlinz1992@gmail.com

Historian  
Andy Adkins  
3520 NW 41st St  
Gainesville, FL 32606  
352 538 5346  
azadkinsiii@gmail.com

PNC Brian Faulconer  
132 Roslyn Hills Dr  
Holly Springs, NC 27540  
919 986 0186  
bfaulconer@me.com  
  
PNC Douglas Knorr  
1609 Dracka Rd  
Traverse City, MI 49685  
231 218 1747  
dougk@knormarketing.com

PNC James Phillips  
600 Freemason Dr  
Elizabethtown, PA 17022  
717 367 5025

PNC Jeff Wignall  
27 Martinack Ave  
Peabody, MA 01960  
978 532 0741  
member9219@aol.com

2nd Vice Commander  
Christine Guidry Law  
4506 Country Drive  
Doylestown, PA 18902  
225 247 1099  
christineglaw@gmail.com

Judge Advocate  
Flag/Color Sergeant  
  
Sergeant-At-Arms  
PNC Burt Marsh  
1899 Fontenay Ct  
Columbus, OH 43235  
614 725 2573  
TinaBarton91@gmail.com

PNC Burt Marsh  
1899 Fontenay Ct  
Columbus, OH 43235  
614 725 2573  
TinaBarton91@gmail.com

PNC Grant Porter  
8617 NE 30th St  
Vancouver, WA 98662  
503 484 8015

gpmailtime@yahoo.com  
PNC Paul Stutts  
3026 Champagne Dr  
Aiken, SC 29803  
803 507 5599  
paulstutts@bellsouth.net

3rd Vice Commander  
  
National Secretary  
CSM(R) Doris Wollett  
5101 Huroop Rd  
Sandston, VA 23150  
804 737 4422  
csmwollett@verizon.net

PNC  
PNC James Allen  
P O Box 322  
Minneola, FL 34755  
352 394 5280  
  
PNC Lee Anthony  
3769 Carvins Cove Rd  
Salem, VA 24153  
540 563 0165  
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### IN THIS ISSUE

2024 Reunion Reflections.....	1
From the Editor's Desk.....	2
80th Division Plaque Displayed.....	2
Commander's Message.....	3
The 80th Does the 80th.....	5 - 11
Training New Iraqi Army.....	12
TASS News.....	14
Upcoming Events.....	15
The Kiss: A Forgotten Mural.....	16
Liebschwitz Commemorates 80th Anniversary.....	17
A Passion for Preserving History.....	18
80th Division Website Updates.....	20
Books.....	21
TAPS.....	22



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