

'Thundering Herd'

Newsletter of the 8th Armored Division Association



Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe

Winter –2015 - 2016 - Vol. III No. 3

Dear Veterans of the 8th Armored Division, Members of the Association, Descendants, Family and Friends,

Merry Christmas -Happy Holidays- Happy New Year!



Welcome to the 'Winter 2015 -2016' edition of the Association Newsletter – 'The Thundering Herd'. We hope to continue to use this newsletter as a means to communicate with the membership, share

information, tell the stories of the veterans, and preserve the memory of this gallant fighting unit.

A number of original veterans, descendants and those committed to commemorating the service of the veterans of the 8th Armored Division are maintaining the Association and are planning events, ceremonies and dissemination of articles on the history of the Division. May sincere thanks to them!

We invite all living veterans of the 8th Armored Division to join the Association as honorary members, no dues required, although donations are welcomed. We are also seeking members who share our mission and goals. Please take a look at the outstanding Division web site created and maintained by Okey Taylor, C-58th AIB. There you can obtain membership applications to fill out and mail to the Association address:

<http://www.8th-armored.org/>

8th Armored Division Association
2345 E. Dauphin St
Philadelphia, PA 19125

Use the E-Mail address: 8thArmoredDivision@gmail.com

To communicate further, we also feature a '**Facebook**' account and ask all interested to enroll in order to stay in contact and share comments and information:

New Association 'Facebook' page

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/269231523148647/>

We are in need of volunteers to assist with the following:

- * **Reunions** - a volunteer committee to work on the details of a potential annual reunion/Association meeting where yearly business and elections and planning can be conducted.

Association Officers for 2016:

President Emeritus (Honorary)

Milton Shapiro

mjshapiro@rcn.com

President – Andy Waskie, Jr.

8thArmoredDivision@gmail.com

Vice President – Gloria Zuccarella Layne

glayne731@gmail.com

Treasurer – Carol Neumann

carol.neumann@tuhs.temple.edu

Chaplain – Norm Olson HQ-49th AIB - Dr. James Christiansen

norm.olson1922@comcast.net

Membership Chair – Joseph

Nesdill

nesdillj@ct.metrocast.net

Association Web masters – Okey Taylor (58-C) (retired) & Scott Thorpe

oet58c@8th-armored.org

scott@scottthorpeflyfishing.com

Newsletter Committee Chair – Rick Miller & Sally Shapiro

r-jmiller1@juno.com

sally.shapiro@rcn.com

8th Armored Division Historian - David Clare

claredjcinc@aol.com

President's Message:

Festive Holiday Greetings from the 8th Armored Division Association!

**Update & Report on our project - Arlington National Cemetery Memorial Marker for the
8th Armored Division and Reunion**

Dear Veterans of the 8th Armored Division, Association Members and Friends,

I can finally inform you all about the status of our 8th Armored Division Association stated goal of placing a memorial marker to the Division and its veterans at Arlington National Cemetery.

In October, 2015 I and my colleague LTC (ret.) Jon Peterson, representing the Association were invited to address the Arlington National Cemetery Advisory Committee (ANCAC) and present our appeal to place a memorial marker as soon as possible.

We both spoke passionately in support of the project. The Committee listened attentively, asked a few questions and in general seemed well disposed to our presentation and the project. There was one negative comment, stating that we were requesting a marker for a *Division*, and that given the ever decreasing space available at Arlington, the emphasis is now being placed on marking the burial of *individuals*. This Committee member felt that the marker might be better placed at the proposed Army Museum or elsewhere.

We did have answers for this particular assessment. We explained that the Army Museum is years away from completion; that there are a number of 8th Armored men already buried at Arlington; that this is a sacred site unique in the country focusing on veterans honored in the Nation's capital; that there are already numerous Division markers on the edges of the plots where burials would not be impacted; that our veterans have indicated that they wish to see the marker placed at Arlington; and given the ever increasing mortality of the veterans, and to insure that our living veterans will be able to gather at Arlington to dedicate the marker, thus commemorating and honoring their comrades, the marker should be placed sooner rather than later.

After the session and presentation, we were told by inside supporters, that *political pressure by legislators, as well as calls and messages of personal support for the marker can be effective and may influence the decision of the Committee to approve the request.*

Therefore, I am making a personal appeal to ALL of you in receipt of this message: PLEASE contact your local Congressional representatives and urge them to contact the Superintendent of Arlington to urge him to approve the project. YOU as individuals can also help by making a personal call or e-mail message or note and send it to the addresses listed below.

By concerted action, we can and will succeed. Please pass the word on this appeal to family, friends, and veterans' organizations.

When I am contacted by the Arlington Committee, I will stay in touch and keep you all informed.

NOW is the time to act!

Regards

Andy Waskie, president
8th Armored Division Association

CONTACTS:

PATRICK K. HALLINAN, Superintendent
Arlington National Cemetery
Administrative Building
Arlington, Virginia 22211

Telephone:

Contact - **1-877-907-8585** (Monday-Friday 8AM to 5PM Eastern Time)

Internet:

<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/#/>

Point of Contact (POC) for the Arlington Advisory Committee (ANCAC)

LTC Samuel Chisolm Jr.
SGS/Director HR
Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, Virginia 22211
Office: 703.614.3601
samuel.chisolm3.mil@mail.mil

Thanks to Association officer – Sally Shapiro of NYC!

I am adding her suggested draft letter to be personalized which can be used in writing to or contacting your legislators.

Draft/Example letter:

Date

Dear Congressman / Senator _____,

Over 50 years ago, many WWII veterans returned home and were greeted with support and respect for their courage for fighting for the freedom in the world. Yet today, only a few remain as they are in the twilight of their lives. My dad, a Bronze Star recipient and former army medic, is now 94 years old. He is a proud member of the 8th Armored Division Association, which works to honor those who fought for our country.

This year the 8th Armored Division Association stated a goal of placing a memorial marker to the Division and its veterans at Arlington National Cemetery. Last week the president of our Association, Anthony Waskie together with LTC (ret.) Jon Peterson, were invited to address the Arlington National Cemetery Advisory Committee (ANCAC) and present our appeal to place

a memorial marker as soon as possible. As each day that passes, our honorable Division veterans are passing away.

We believe that Arlington is the most appropriate location to erect a memorial marker for the 8th Armored Division as there are a number of 8th Armored men already buried there; a sacred site unique in the country focused on honoring veterans in the Nation's capital. In addition, there are already numerous Division and unit markers on the edges of the plots where burials would not be impacted. Given the ever increasing mortality of the veterans, and to insure that our living veterans will be able to gather at Arlington to dedicate the marker thus commemorating and honoring their comrades, the marker should be placed sooner rather than later.

I am writing to ask for your personal support so that our veterans get their wish to see their memorial placed at Arlington. Your support will be crucial, effective and will influence the decision of the Committee to approve the request. I respectfully request that you contact the Superintendent of Arlington and urge him to approve the project. His contact information is listed below. With your support, I will be able to take my dad and his comrades of the 8th Armored Division Association to see this memorial marker placed before it is too late.

Sincerely,
Sally J. Shapiro,
Milton J. Shapiro, PFC. Medic of the 7th Armored Infantry Battalion
President Emeritus
8th Armored Division Association

CONTACTS:

PATRICK K. HALLINAN, Superintendent
Arlington National Cemetery
Administrative Building
Arlington, Virginia 22211

Telephone:

Contact - [1-877-907-8585](tel:1-877-907-8585) (Monday-Friday 8AM to 5PM Eastern Time)

Internet:

<http://www.arlingtoncemetery.mil/#/>

Point of Contact (POC) for the Arlington Advisory Committee (ANCAC)

LTC Samuel Chisolm Jr.
SGS/Director HR
Arlington National Cemetery
Arlington, Virginia 22211
Office: [703.614.3601](tel:703.614.3601)
samuel.chisolm3.mil@mail.mil

Tentative Reunion/Marker Dedication - 2016

I will attempt to schedule a Reunion in either May, or September, 2016 after we receive notification from Arlington.

We will gather in the Philadelphia area for our usual Reunion Dinner as always on a Friday evening. On Saturday, we will tentatively take a bus excursion to Washington D.C. to Arlington National Cemetery to dedicate the new marker; followed by a wreath laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns, and a tour of the WWII Memorial and other sites in Washington, and return in the evening to our hotel in the Philadelphia. ALL THIS is dependent on the decision date by Arlington National Cemetery regarding the approval for the marker!

Present Merchandise

We still have 8th Armored Division caps:

Gratis to 8th Armored Division veterans

\$15 to all others (includes postage & handling)

8th Armored Division Challenge Coins

\$5 per piece

8th Armored Division shoulder patches

\$10 a piece

8th Armored Division License plates

\$15 apiece (includes postage & handling)

8th Armored Division Decals

\$2 a piece



Soon, we hope to have a beautiful 8th Armored Division wind-breaker jacket; polo

shirts. If you have any ideas for memorabilia, please let me know.

PLEASE Send in your membership dues for 2016!

8th Armored Division Association
2345 E. Dauphin St
Philadelphia, PA 19125

8th Armored Division veterans are GRATIS!

Individual membership - \$20

Family membership - \$35

Your dues support the work of the Association and are the life blood of the organization!

Join our 8th Armored Division Association 'facebook' page! It is an excellent way of staying in touch with other veterans, members and families.

Association 'Facebook' page. Please consider joining for updates and information!

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/269231523148647/>

Association web page: <http://www.8th-armored.org/>

In Memoriam:

Donald B. Tyson, served in the 88th Armored Recon, Troop D. Buried at Arlington National Cemetery

Frank C Dadas

Staff Sergeant, Company A, 36th Tank Battalion, 8th Armored Division

born - Apr. 27, 1917

Burial:

[Saint Josephs Cemetery](#)

Morris Run

Tioga County

Pennsylvania

***ROMEO A. BATTILANA**

1923 – 2015

Co. B, 49th Armored Infantry Battalion

died July 25, 2015

buried - Holy Sepulchre Cemetery

***T/5 Philip J. Sciortino**, served proudly in WWII with the 88th Armored Recon. Battalion. – H.Q. Troop of the 8th Armored Division. He was a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge. He has passed in review to join his comrades-in-arms who have gone before. His home had been in Rochester, N.Y.

Philip's family extends a welcome to members and friends of the 8th Armored Division Association who wish to attend his funeral services. The funeral will be held at the Bath National Cemetery, located in Bath, N.Y. 14810 (607) 664-4853. Ceremonies will be held on Friday, September 11th. The Cemetery Director asks that those who wish to attend assemble, in their cars, at the gate at 1:45 pm so that all may be escorted in procession to the burial site.

A memorial service will be held at the Clarkson Community Church, 8339 Ridge Road West, Brockport, NY 14420 (585) 637-6070 The service will be held on Saturday, September 12th at 11:00 am.

***Ralph W. Miller**

(June 11, 1923 - December 11, 2013)



Ralph W. Miller, 90, of Waco, Kentucky passed away Wednesday, December 11, 2013 at his home.

He was born on June 11, 1923, in Estill County, Kentucky and was the son of John Wesley and Ella Winkler Miller, both of whom preceded him in death. He worked as a draftsman at the Bluegrass Army Depot- Avon in Fayette County. Ralph was of the Baptist faith, he was a veteran of the United States Army where he served in Germany during WWII and he received three Bronze Stars and the Purple Heart. He belonged to the DAV, VFW and the American Legion.

Survivors include his wife, Dalton C. Miller; two daughters, June Thompson of Waco, KY and Judy Ann Carr (Ronnie) of Waco, KY; three grandchildren, Ralph Wesley Thompson, James F. Thompson and James G. Carr; a half brother, Howard Patrick of Hamilton, OH; a half sister, Betty Patrick of Lexington, KY and several nieces and nephews. He is preceded in death by four brothers, John T. Miller, Bill Miller, Tom Reed and Ronald Patrick and two sisters, Louise Dixon and Eugenia Eversole.

Graveside funeral services were conducted on Monday at 2:30 p.m., December 16, 2013 at the Camp Nelson National Cemetery in Nicholasville, Kentucky. The Oldham, Roberts & Powell Funeral home is in charge of arrangements.

Stories of the Veterans of the ‘Thundering Herd’

Interview with SGT. GEORGE HANES | 8th Armored Division, Co. A, 49th Armored Infantry Battalion

http://www.witnessstowar.org/combat_stories/WWII/1733

Witness to War: Preserving The Oral Histories of Combat Veterans

www.witnessstowar.org

[This is an article on Robert Johnston, Co D, 36th Tank Battalion, 8th Armored Division!]

Veterans' caregivers granted a two-week pass

HEATHER ROUSSEAU | The Roanoke Times

Bobbie Oyler (right) says goodbye to her father, Robert Johnston, and nurse Tiffany Epperly after visiting him at the Salem VA Medical Center.



Posted: Sunday, July 12, 2015 12:00 am

By Luanne Rife luanne.rife@roanoke.com | 981-3209

Robert Johnston pulled tighter on the blanket shrouding his slight 89-year-old frame. The chilled air bothered him, but nothing else about his two-week stay at the Salem VA Medical Center's Community Living Center was worthy of complaint.

Though Johnston was anxious to return to his Smith Mountain Lake home so he could perch facing his small personal heater, he didn't mind biding his time in respite care while his youngest daughter and her husband, Alice and Glenn Prather, took a break from caring for him.

He was one of five veterans in respite care at the Salem VA during a recent week. Some 80 to 90 veterans a year check in for two weeks to a month at a time while relatives take time away from around-the-clock duty.

"You don't really know what it's like to provide care 24/7/365 unless you've done it. There's no way to describe what it's like," said Dr. Jeffrey Lipscomb, director of the Community Living Center. "Respite gives caregivers a break so that they can have time when they don't have to be a caretaker."

"It has been a tremendous lifesaver," Alice Prather said upon returning from a 15-day vacation to Florida and South Carolina.

Her father, a World War II prisoner of war, has received much of his health care through the Salem VA, but it wasn't until last fall that the family learned he qualified for primary home health care. This allows his team of doctors, specialists and nurses to periodically make house calls, provides certified nursing assistants three times a week to tend to his hygiene and offers the Prathers periodic breaks from tending to his needs. Since Johnston is considered 100 percent disabled, the VA covers all the costs.

"When they told me about this I said, 'Lord, this is like dying and going to heaven. How long have you had these services?' They said a couple of years," Prather recalled.

She recommends that even when families and veterans think they know all their benefits, they check with an advocate.

"We had thought Daddy had everything that came down the pike," she said. "There are still a lot of people eligible for things they have no clue about."

The respite care program has been available at the Salem VA for several years, though the program administrator didn't know exactly for how long.

Johnston is one of the eight World War II veterans in the program for the first three quarters of fiscal year 2015. Vietnam-era veterans are the largest group in the program, with 16 so far this year and 32 last fiscal year, followed by Korean War veterans.

The cost runs about \$1,000 a day to care for each veteran through the respite care program. For Prather, the service is priceless. She became a caregiver in 2006 when her mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. She and her husband, who lived in Clearbrook for 30 years, moved

into her parents' lake home. She said the family paid out of pocket for extra help to care for her mother until she qualified for hospice, when Medicare helped with some services. Respite, and the break it provides, wasn't something they thought about.

Many caregivers could use the break but can't afford it.

"Unfortunately, respite is very limited. We do see a very large need with parents, spouses or other family members as caregivers," said Anita Lancaster, a case manager at LOA Area Agency on Aging. Some nursing homes offer weekend or week-long respite when family members need to spend time away. Adult day care and home health care services are also available. But Medicare does not cover these programs, she said.

Sometimes families qualify for limited grants or have long-term care insurance to help.

"Funding for respite care outside of the VA is difficult to find," she said.

Lancaster said the concept of respite has been around for decades but the options are limited. As the population ages, more people contact the agency asking about resources. Americans older than 65 are the fastest-growing segment of the population. The U.S. Census expects that group's share of the population, currently 14.9 percent, or more than 47 million of America's 318 million people, to grow to 21.4 percent in 20 years. People 85 or older, like Johnston, who now account for less than 2 percent of the population, will grow to 3.22 percent.

Johnston's oldest daughter, Bobbie Oyler of Roanoke, who falls in the 65 or older group, dropped by often to see her father while he was at the VA. On Johnston's last day, Oyler brought flowers and many thanks for the staff.

"This was so helpful to give everybody a break. It was important so that Alice and Glenn can go away," she said.

The family takes Johnston along on some of its travels, wintering in Florida and recently attending a wedding in Charleston, South Carolina, where Johnston's middle daughter, Brenda Johnston, moved after retiring from Cave Spring High School. But the family also appreciates time off, Oyler said.

"It's OK. I haven't been mistreated," Johnston joked. "Its food is not a gourmet dining place, but I'd recommend it if you're hungry."

It's much better than the sawdust the Germans fed him back in 1945. Johnston, who grew up in Pembroke, turned 18 during the tail end of World War II. He was not long out of the Army's tank school when he was shipped to Europe.

"I was heading to Germany and I got captured trying to cross the Rhine River," he said.

"Eighteen of us in a convoy, and they got all of us."

Johnston was captured during the Battle of the Bulge and force-marched from town to town where they'd stay overnight in churches.

He got word to the Holland underground and escaped in March 1945. Three months later, he had arrived back home to marry his sweetheart, Birdie, on June 29. He's now marked the 70th anniversary of the pivotal year. He breaks into a grin as he recalls courting his late wife.

"I bought her for a penny," he said. "All the drug stores had scales outside that you dropped a penny in to get your weight. She was looking for a penny in her pocketbook, and I walked up and dropped a penny in for her." Thus began a courtship that lasted until her death three years ago.

"Mom, the love of his life, had Alzheimer's for seven or eight years. We took care of Mom, but we didn't have all the help we had from the VA," Oyler said.

The program is designed to offer 30 days of care each year. Veterans can come for one 30-day period or split it into two two-week stays.

"You can't come in a day here or there," Lipscomb said. "It's a long enough of a break that people can have a rest to avoid caregiver burnout and exhaustion."

Jennifer Holland, chief nurse of extended care, said the veterans are integrated into the unit and offered recreation and music and pet therapy alongside other community living center residents, some of whom are there for physical therapy, others for more advanced, long-term nursing care. Staff also tends to their medical needs. Johnston received all the treatments he needed before heading for home.

"He has three daughters and we all take care of him with the help of the VA," Oyler said. "If it wasn't for the VA hospital it would be a bit of a challenge."

http://www.roanoke.com/news/local/veterans-caregivers-granted-a-two-week-pass/article_73b515bb-44d5-53e4-971f-4f1ac82ed6e0.html

Winnie Bennedsen 7/23/15

Dear Gentlemen,

We thank you a lot for your initiative in this research. I would like to thank you all, also in the name of André Baud, who was very moved by the photograph with his father from April 2004. He thanks you very much for your help and wishes to all of you and to your families a good summertime and to those who will do the research, good luck !!!

Concerning the liberation of the Langenstein-Zwieberge CC in April 1945, we already received some information via mail about the 83th Infantry Division, who entered the camp the 11th of April 2015. As far as we know, the 8th Armored Division entered the camp two days later, the 13th of April 2015. Is this information correct ??? The photo of the "southern mass grave" from the archives of the USHM you sent to us, Noel, that corresponds to the courtesy of Lt. Robert Reed, has to be a part of the 83th Infantry Division records, as Reed was a member of this division. Maybe a research in the courtesy of Robert Reed can help finding a correct number of the humans buried in the southern mass grave ??? A lot of questions. and maybe some answers after a while.

Winnie Bennedsen

1. 1st message from Chuck (member of the 83rd Infantry Division)

I received your e-mail and Happy to hear from you. I wish your Family's GOOD HEALTH! how are my little DARLING'S! I know you have a new one and it is another ANGEL! I first have to tell you this, at our last Reunion at Washington, DC. When we had gone to the Holocaust Museum, We spent a good two or three hours there, as we were leaving there were two college girls there stopping us for an interview. each had a tape and also a cameraman. they asked me if they could interview me, I agreed, so they asked me questions about the concentration camps, this went on for about a half hour, asking questions, at the conclusion I asked them what is this about, and why?they told me this was their assignment at school and also they were going to also give the Holocaust Museum a copy! that is what happened at that time. this was a few years ago. I am sorry if this information was not given to the Museum or what BUT! I can verify that this is what happened that day when we liberated Langenstein. Lt. Paul Reed,Jr. was the leader of the 3rd. Squad, 3rd. platoon

of A-Company, 330th. 1st. Battalion, 83rd. Inf. Div. We were sent to reconnoiter this Camp. We were not told what it was (unless Johnnie Whiting who was our Squad Leader knew, but we were not) in any case we, the third squad went through the Wire stockade entrance and all of a sudden we were overwhelmed with men rushing to us, some were on their knees, a decrepit bunch hugging us, kneeling down to us! Sherman Morgan was our Bar man, he yelled to them get away from me and hit one with the butt of his BAR. The rest of the Platoon soon followed us and we were told to form a perimeter around the camp which we done. We stayed there that night but moved on the very next day. We still did not know that this was a concentration camp till later. We were the 3rd. squad. 3rd. platoon. S/Sgt. Johnnie Whiting Squad Leader.

T/4 Richard Hartman Asst. Squad Leader

Pvt. Charles Abdinoor, Rifleman

Pvt. Louis Sassano, Rifleman

Pvt. Edward Black, Rifleman

Pvt. Sherman Morgan, BAR Man

I will give you other names soon, I have to do an errand, I will keep in touch!

Chuck

2. message from a certain Dave who interviewed Chuck

I talked to chuck this morning. Chucks squad was the first Americans to enter this camp. The Germans had left a day or two before. The gates were unlocked. Pow's came out of their buildings and got on their knees kissing their boots and hugging them. One soldier in his squad didn't like it and hit one with his rifle butt. His squad only stayed one night. They were still fighting a war and A company 330th moved on. His LT told him later that in his inspection he went into a room that contained bottles with body parts in them.

Chuck said he told his experience to the holocaust museum staff and it is on record there.

Hope this helps some with your questions.

Dave D.

3. Message to Chuck from Wilfried de Backer (Belgium)

Dear Chuck,

2 weeks ago we had a commemoration in Bihain regarding "the Liberation of Camp Langenstein by the 83rd". I was there in contact with a lady called Daifi Gesine who made the 600 km trip from Germany to Bihain so she could be with us. Daifi Gesine works at the memorial of Camp Langenstein and told us together with survivors and family of survivors of the Camp that Langenstein was one of the most deathly camps of the Nazi's. The people inside the camp, mostly political prisoners, had to build tunnels in mountains of the area because the Nazi's needed facilities to bring over their Weapon Industry after it had been bombed by the Allied forces. The most healthy prisoners, around 3000 of them, were escorted outside the camp and had to walk a

death march 2 days prior to your arrival. Only 500 of them would survive this march. The people of the memorial know a lot of the 8th Armored Division when they took the camp under their protection but little is known about the 83rd who were first to liberate the camp. She would love to hear everything you still remember about your arrival and asked me if I could ask you to tell us more about it. I have been searching and looking after the interview you did at the Holocaust Museum a couple of years ago but at this moment I was not able to find anything. So I prepared some questions for you and if you have time and you do remember something related to these questions feel free to answer them. The people of Langenstein will be very grateful that they finally have some stories about the 83rd to tell to the world.

- 1) What was the unit that came first at the camp?**
- 2) What are the names of the soldiers who were in your unit and came first at the camp?**
- 3) What did you witness when you saw the camp and his entrance?**
- 4) Who entered the camp of the 83rd? What was his reaction or what did he say to you and the other soldiers when he came back to you?**
- 5) Do you remember the days prior to your arrival at the camp? What was your unit/regiment doing the days before?**
- 6) How long did you stay at the camp?**
- 7) Did you find any Nazi's in the camp?**
- 8) Who took over when you left?**
- 9) Is there something special that will always be in your mind regarding the liberation of the camp?**
- 10) Do you want to say something else regarding the 83rd or your presence in the great campaign of liberating Europe?**

When I was in Biéhain and when I listened to survivors or family of survivors who lost brothers, fathers, ... it was very emotional for me to hear also because I was with Dave Dimmick a couple of months ago in Breendonk (A concentration camp in Belgium) and I could imagine it all happening before my eyes. It must have been a very emotional period for you guys too and if you don't like to talk about it anymore or want to forget it. I understand that completely. I only believe that when we continue your story and tell it over and over again to my and other generations to come we can only hope that it will never happen again.

take care Chuck

your friend Wilfried De Backer

http://www.tvlux.be/video/deux-rescapes-des-camps-mis-a-l-honneur-a-biehain_19297.html

ps

above is the event at TV Luxembourg

4. Answers from Chuck to the questions below

Hi ALL!

I will try to answer your list of questions.

1) we were the very first unit that went into the camp, upon orders from Lt. Reed he picked the 3rd. squad, 3rd platoon, Co. A-330th, 1st. Bat. 330th. 83Inf. Div.

2) S/Sgt. Johnnie Whiting (KIA) in the Harz. Mts. T/4 Richard Hartman (KIA) in the Harz Mts. PFC Charles Abdinoor Rifleman, PFC Sherman Morgan BAR. Edward Black

Rifleman, PFC Herbert Boles Rifleman, PFC Louis Sassano Rifleman, (these are the ones, there were two or three more, I cannot remember their names off hand)

3) As we walked into the camp hordes of men rushed to us, they were as I remember now, dirty, thin, some were on their knees, grabbing hold of us, one went to Morgan and he hit him with the butt of his BAR (get away from me) in all they were thin, smelly, dirty, etc.

4) I do not understand Question #4.

5) We were clearing out our section assigned to us, plenty of walking, clearing Villages, Towns, City's whatever was in front of us we cleared. German Civilians were still in their Villages, we had to search basements, cellars, looking for soldiers that were left behind, to hand them over to Headquarters.

6) We only stayed there that night that we came. We cleared the Camp, no soldiers were there, they had taken off before we came, the inmates were on their own.

7) We as Infantryman cleared the Camp first, all we had were inmates. I would assume when we left, we still had a war to fight, that Battalion would have their men that had their job to do, as we. We moved out the next day to continue to fight this war.

8) I would assume the Men in Division Headquarters. We were not there to go sightseeing we still had a war to win. (being in the infantry, we were under strict orders, we were as a tight little group. We were like family within the squad, everybody were close with one another. We slept together, ate together, fought together and last but not least, we also had two men together to pull Guard Duty.

9) I do not ever remember them telling us we were to be taking a Concentration Camp. The Officers would have known, also the Platoon Sergeants, we were like sheep following one another. I did not even know the name of the Camp until I was discharged and went home. It probably was about ten or fifteen years ago that I learned that we had liberated a Concentration Camp.

10) Being a National Officer as National President in 1959 I attended the very first Reunion and my buddy Frank Burgess was from my home town went Cleveland , Ohio and have gone to many since then. I will be 90 years old in January and this will be my last. Frank Burgess passed away about nine years ago. I and Steward Barrick are the only surviving members of A-Co. 330th.

PS: If there are any other questions , just let me know. We as Infantryman do not have the convenience as Officers have. Paul Reed, Jr. who was our Officer in the 3rd. platoon told me that he and other Officers toured the camp then, and going into one room there were body parts in jars lined up on a shelf. He got sick just looking at them.

2) S/Sgt. Johnnie Whiting (KIA) in the Harz. Mts. T/4 Richard Hartman (KIA) in the Harz Mts. PFC Charles Abdinoor Rifleman, PFC Sherman Morgan BAR. Edward Black

Rifleman, PFC Herbert Boles Rifleman, PFC Louis Sassano Rifleman, (these are the ones, there were two or three more, I cannot remember their names off hand)

5. Also "news" according to the 83th Infantry Division

Dear Sir or Madam,

Our family will be in Washington, D.C. on Friday, August 7, at 11 AM to present a US flag created by concentration camp prisoners to the US Holocaust Museum. **Our father, Sergeant Donald J. Hall**, Service Company, 331st Regiment, 83rd Division, brought the flag home with him after World War II and we would like it to have a safe and respectful place where everyone can appreciate the flag's significance.

Dad explained that the red, white and blue flag was hand painted by the prisoners of Langenstein, a sub-camp of Buchenwald in Germany. He spoke little of the flag or its history while he was alive, and since his death in 1987, it has had a dusty and unceremonious existence in the attic of our family home where it was nearly tossed out on more than one occasion and was later stored in my brother's garage. It was only by chance that we siblings (there are 10 of us) began to research the flag's origins and realized the importance of what we had. The Filson Historical Society located here in Louisville, Kentucky got us in touch with the US Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. where it will become part of their permanent collection.

As fate would have it, the 83rd Division is having their 69th Reunion in Louisville from July 30 to August 2, 2015, so they will be joining us for a send-off reception being hosted by our US Congressman, John Yarmuth (D-KY) on Friday, July 31st. In addition, the president of the 83rd Association and one of their local members will be joining us in Washington, D.C. for the presentation to the US Holocaust Museum on August 7.

I know it is very late notice as most of these plans have come together rather quickly, but our family wanted make sure any survivors who may live near Louisville or Washington, D.C. are aware of these events and let them know that we would be honored if they could join us. Your thoughts please on if there are survivors living in these locations and how I might best contact them.

Warm regards,

Mary Kay (Hall) Flege
2322 Glenmary Avenue
Louisville, KY 40204
[1-502-664-8560](tel:15026648560)

Noel March and David Copland visited Langenstein-Zwieberge Concentration Camp in Apeil, 2015 at the 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Camp by elements of the 8th Armored Division and 83rd Infantry Division. Noel is the son of **Leonard Marchlewski Co B, 78th Medical Battalion** who helped to liberate the Camp and ministered to the prisoners

Noël March,

During your visit at the Langenstein Memorial last April, I unfortunately had no chance to talk to you, as my practice of the English language is really too bad.

Somehow, I would have liked to talk to you on a subject on which I have a lot of questions for a very long time.

On the territory of the former concentration camp of Langenstein, as you know, there is a mass grave called “southern mass grave” created after the liberation by American soldiers.

Upon this mass grave there is a commemorative plaque installed, deriving from the former GDR and indicating that 800 people are buried there. However, we only know the identity of 151 people - there is therefore a large number of unidentified bodies that with no doubt have been found on the vast territory and have been buried in this mass grave.

This difference (of about 650 people !) seems to me more than enormous.

For a long time I supposed, that the Special Unit of the American Army, that took the wise decision to bury these dead, could not have made this without listing the precise number of the individuals.

Unfortunately, I do not have the opportunity, to get any time soon in touch with the archives of this unit.

Could I ask you to try with the help of your historical knowledge about the subject and the help of your connection to the association of former members of the American Army, who accompanied you this April, to collaborate on a sort of research regarding the unit which was obliged to do this hard task?

If this research was successful, certainly we'll have the chance to know most precisely, what the historical truth is. In the opposite case, but I would be very much surprised; we will have to continue relying on these numbers unchecked and possibly exaggerated.

I am allowing myself to count on you and your friends to help us in this research for the true history of this camp. You'll understand that this approach to me is a very emotional one, as the son of a former prisoner, a man who may have been cared for and liberated by your own father!

Counting on your help and hoping to see you again, I send you my best wishes as a friend, also to your wife and your children.

André Baud (son of Claude Baud, who arrived in Langenstein the 14th of November 1944, who has been evacuated and miraculously saved the 18th of April 1945 by your comrades...)

An American flag made by Holocaust prisoners travels from Louisville to Washington

UPDATED 11:34 AM EDT Aug 03, 2015

LOUISVILLE, Ky. —A U.S. flag made by prisoners of a concentration camp in World War II will travel from Louisville to Washington D.C. next week.

It will be added to the collection at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

The flag was unveiled Friday during a reunion of the 83rd Infantry Division.

A World War II veteran with ties to Kentucky brought the flag home after helping liberate Langenstein Concentration Camp.

Those in attendance spoke about the importance of honoring this painful moment in history.

“I really cannot think of a more perfect example in history of good triumphing over evil than the United States Army freeing the survivors of the concentration camp,” said Matt Goldberg with Jewish Community of Louisville.

Representative John Yarmuth, as well as several World War II vets, attended Friday's event.

<http://www.wlky.com/news/American-flag-made-by-Holocaust-prisoners-travels-from-Louisville-to-Washington/34477624#comments>

Dear Survivors, Families of Survivors, and the Victims of Langenstein-Zwieberge concentration camp: (from Dr. Bernard E. Metrick)

A generation ago, 70 years to be exact, I accompanied a war-crimes General sent by General Eisenhower and we entered the barracks of this concentration camp. To this day I am still haunted by what we saw, and the vivid picture of the hell these men went through. The widespread dysentery and its' result on the walls, the choking odor of the dead and the huge lice crawling over the bodies, and the “walking skeletons” of men barely able to remain alive.

When I came back here 10 years ago on the 60th anniversary, a survivor told me he had been in 3 concentration camps before Langenstein-Zwieberge, and this camp was by far the worst of all. How the survivors here today lived through the torturous beatings, the 12 hours-a-day slave labor, the starvation rations and the death marches, is nothing short of a miracle. Look upon a survivor and you are looking at a miracle and a will to live, despite man's inhumanity to man.

Unfortunately today, the world has learned very little from 70 years ago. The hatred of Jews and Christians is on the rise again. Intolerance of religion, modern civilization and liberty is causing terrorism all around the world. But here, at this museum, is an everlasting light into the darkness of human hate.

Here today, the survivors and Frau Fauser and her staff deserve many thanks and admiration for their tireless efforts in eliminating hatred and educating future generations towards a world living in peace and tolerance. Also, a special thank you to Mr. Noel March for reading my remarks to you, and representing the 8th Armored Division of the United States Army.

My best wishes to you and may we never forget.

Dr. Bernard E. Metrick (Captain retired, 8th Armored Division Medical Corps.)

A tale of the 398th Armored Field Artillery of the 8th Armored Division

As told by Ray Staskewich – Co. A, 398th Armored Field Artillery Battalion

“We were staying in a town near Pilsen, Czechoslovakia, when there was a huge 4th of July parade organized with the U.S. and Russian troops. Both armies participated in the parade.

I was sitting in the front seat of our unit’s half-track with the top half of the steel door down. A camera was given to me to take pictures. I just sat in my seat and took pictures. It happened that guys in other units were standing up and taking pictures.

It happened that a camera was in the area of the reviewing stands taking pictures of the troops. Some sergeants were caught on film standing up to take pictures. I don’t know who gave the order, but these soldiers were busted and lost their stripes!

Someone told the C.O. that I was also taking pictures. He saw me and asked if I was taking pictures. But he had not seen me on film. I answered and said, ‘NOT ME!’ I kept my stripes”

Ray Staskewich
1312 Terrace Ave.
Waukegan, IL 60085

Does this sound familiar?

This is **Ken Bradstreet’s [Co. A, 494th Armored Field Artillery of the 12th Armored Division]** story of his transition from civilian to soldier. It may be similar to the experiences of all the young recruits into the U.S. Army for service in WWII.

It is reprinted from the 12th Armored Division Association newsletter – ‘Hellcat’ News October 2015 with thanks.

If any of our ‘Thundering Herders’ have a similar or different story, we would all LOVE to hear them.

First Day of Induction.

We were taken into our barracks where we were assigned bunks and left our barracks bags. Our next move was to the supply room where we received more GI personal equipment.

In World War II, it was said that the American soldier was the best equipped in the world. When I was issued my equipment at Camp Dodge and Camp Callan, I was amazed at how much I was given in the line of clothing. Back home I had three pair of bib overalls, some blue cotton work shirts, old underwear, a work felt hat, a pair of work brogans, work gloves and several pair of work socks. For dress I had a couple pair of slacks, my graduation suit, a couple dress shirts, a pair of dress shoes, a couple pair of dress socks, a couple changes of good underwear and a dress hat. When I reported for service in the Army I had only what I was wearing with a change of socks and underwear plus my toilet kit. When I was issued my GI gear, it seemed like an awesome lot for me to take care of and carry. I soon found out that the clothing was too big but I was told I'd grow into it...and I did! I was issued the following:

- 1 Field Cap, Cotton (Khaki, Overseas)
 - 1 Field Cap, wool (Olive Drab Overseas)
 - 1 Denim Fatigue Hat (Blue)
 - 1 Field Jacket (Field Green)
 - 1 Raincoat (Rubber)
 - 2 Wool Shirts (Olive Drab)
 - 1 Wool Uniform Blouse (Olive Drab)
 - 2 Cotton Summer Shirts (Khaki)
 - 2 Denim Fatigue Blouses (Blue)
 - 2 Pair Wool Trousers (Olive Drab)
 - 1 Cotton Necktie (Khaki)
 - 2 Pair Cotton Summer Trousers (Khaki)
 - 2 Pair Denim Fatigue Trousers (Blue)
 - 6 Cotton Undershirts (Olive Drab)
 - 6 Cotton Boxer Underpants (Olive Drab)
 - 6 Cotton Handkerchiefs (Olive Drab)
 - 6 Pair Cotton Socks (Olive Drab)
 - 6 Pair Wool Socks (Olive Drab)
 - 2 Pair Leather Service Shoes (Brown)
 - 2 Bath Towels (Olive Drab)
 - 2 Hand Cloths (Olive Drab)
 - 1 Toilet Kit (Olive Drab)
 - 1 Cotton Mattress Cover (White)
 - 2 Wool Blankets (Olive Drab)
- Plus-
- 1 Waterproof Canvas Shelter Half (Olive Drab) with 6 Wooden Tent Pegs, 1 Jointed Tent Pole, Rope
 - 1 First Aid Pouch and Packet (Olive Drab)
 - 1 Canteen Cover (Olive Drab)
 - 1 Aluminum Canteen with 1 Aluminum Canteen Cup
 - 1 Canvas Musette Bag (Olive Drab)
 - 1 Aluminum Mess Kit with Knife, Fork, Spoon
 - 1 Steel Chamber Pot Helmet with Liner (Olive Drab)
 - 1 Entrenching Tool (Olive Drab)
 - 1 Steel Bayonet

- 1 Pack Carrier (Olive Drab)
- 1 Haversack, Open (Olive Drab)
- 1 Gas Mask and Carrier Bag (Olive Drab)
- 1 1903 Springfield Bolt Action .30 Caliber Rifle

These items were many times more personal possessions than I had ever possessed in all the previous years of my life. After making up our bunks, hanging up our clothes and stowing our small gear in our foot lockers we were suddenly honored by the appearance of Sgt. Decker blowing his whistle (God, he was good on that whistle – a veritable symphonic musician. I so wanted to sheath it for him!) and shouting, “Attention” at the top of his voice. He then endeared himself to us for life, saying, “You are the dirtiest God damn slovenly son of a bitch recruits we have ever accepted for training in C Company of the 58th and I can’t stand your stink!” He turned and went out the door, slamming it shut. He came right back in, holding his nose and said, “You have one hour to wash, shave, crap, dress in O.D.s, tag your dirty laundry and fallout in formation on the parade ground outside the barracks.” He left and Cpl. McDowell said, “Fall out and get with it.” There was a mad scramble to undress and get to the shower and latrine. We were overjoyed to have the chance to get clean again. We dressed in our O.D.s and I thought, “And this is called Sunny California.” It was generally agreed that Sgt. Decker was a dyed-in-the-wool bastard, with McDowell, his two-stripe parrot, running a close second. We decided that Cpl. Powell, an older quiet spoken career man, was the best of the group of non-coms. Soon McDowell shouted, “Fall out!” We scrambled out and formed in ranks.

After being called to attention we were inspected by Lt. Crowell and Sgt. Decker for proper attire. Several were gigged and informed that they would be on K.P. (Kitchen Police) the next day. We were then given ‘Parade Rest’ and the Lieutenant welcomed us and explained that we would be taking 13 weeks of Army Basic Training in Battery C. When he finished it was time for retreat so we remained in ranks and stood retreat. After retreat we were dismissed for evening mess call. It could come none too soon for we had not eaten since breakfast. The meal was like a feast, we were famished and that ocean air really created a healthy appetite. When we left the mess hall we found that the O.D.s were appropriate wear, the ocean air became very cool when the sun dropped.

I went to the barracks and wrote to Mom and Ruth, then prepared to spend my first night in the Coast Artillery. I knew that reveille would sound at 0530 and that we would again meet our lovable Sgt. Decker, of the protruding teeth, who never smiled and had the personality of a Piranha. It had been a day to remember.