

# BLUE RIDGE



THE SERVICE MAGAZINE

FALL / WINTER 2023

Volume 104 • Number 405 • Issue 2

## A Century of Excellence The Evolution and Achievements of the 80th Training Command

by Christine G. Law



### Introduction

THE 80TH TRAINING COMMAND, the cornerstone of the U.S. Army's educational system, stands as the premier organization dedicated to providing military career instruction for the men and women of America's army. With a rich legacy dating back over a century, the 80th has evolved into an agile and adaptive institution, shaping the capabilities and combat readiness of its students. Headquartered in Virginia, the 80th encompasses a force of over 6,500 army reserve soldiers and 270 civilians, spread across 85 units in 35 states and fostering synergistic relationships with training units in Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Germany.

### A Legacy of Valor

The roots of the 80th Training Command trace back to its formation as the 80th Division in 1917 at Camp Lee, Virginia. The Division was made up of men mostly from Virginia, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania. Earning the moniker "The Blue Ridge Division," it swiftly gained renown for its steadfast commitment, symbolized by the Latin motto *vis montium* or "strength of the mountains." The Division's outstanding performance during World War I, particularly in the Meuse Argonne Offensive, solidified its reputation for achieving missions. Its artillery had a longer duration of sustained combat firing than any other American division, and it achieved superior results in terms of capturing prisoners, munitions, and supplies with fewer casualties compared to other divisions in action. At the war's end, the Blue Ridge Division received accolades from the U.S. War Department, ranking first among all national army divisions.

### World War II and Beyond

Reactivated in 1942 for the Second World War, the 80th Infantry Division played a pivotal role in liberating towns throughout France and breaking through enemy lines during the Battle of the Bulge. Crossing into Germany and participating in the Battle of the Rhine, the Division ended the war by accepting the surrender of Germany's entire Sixth Army. By VE Day, the Division had seen over 277 days of fighting and captured more than 200,000 Nazi soldiers. The division's 317th Regiment carried out the last combat action and fired the last shot in the ETO. Four soldiers received the Medal of Honor for their valor: Sgt. Day Turner, 1LT. Edgar Lloyd, 2LT. Harry Michael, and SSG. Paul Wiedorfer. Post-war, the 80th underwent transformations, from deactivation in 1946 to reactivation as the 80th Airborne Division and later as a Reserve training division.

### Adapting to Modern Challenges

Responding to the call during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990 and 1991, the 80th Division showcased its commitment. After the tragic events of September 11, 2001, the Division underwent specialized training to support Operation Noble Eagle. Engaging in global efforts, the 80th provided training and reconstruction support in Afghanistan in 2004 and deployed to Iraq in 2005 for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

### The 80th Training Command Today

In October 2008, the 80th Division transformed into the 80th Training Command, expanding its reach nationwide and assuming control of the entire task mission for the Army Reserve. Presently, the 80th oversees nearly sixty military occupational specialties across twelve unique career management fields. The Command conducts nearly 150 individual courses at eight task training centers and four regional training sites, supporting the Army Reserve's annual competitions and ensuring the continuous development of its personnel.

*continued on page 4*

## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Christine Guidry Law

OVER THE COURSE OF the last few months, my journey with the 80th Division has evolved into a profound exploration of familial ties, historical significance, and the collective aspirations for the future. Unexpected encounters, such as an unexpected meeting with the President of Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine from Toul, France, and the immersive experience of attending the 80th Training Command's annual Town Hall Meeting, have enriched my understanding of the remarkable pride and honor embedded in every member of the 80th.

During these months, I've embarked on a captivating exploration that has deepened my ties to the past, present, and future course of the 80th Division in ways I hadn't envisioned before. As the editor, I am excited to transform this magazine into a platform for the 80th community to exhibit their contributions, a hub for pertinent information, and a repository for captivating photographs and stories.

I encourage you, the members of the 80th, to consider this magazine as your space to share your valuable work and experiences. Your input is crucial, and I welcome your ideas for content and contributions. Together, let's make this magazine a true reflection of the vibrant and dynamic spirit that defines the 80th Division.

## SAVE THE DATE

AUGUST 9 – 11, 2024

104th 80th Division Veterans  
Association Reunion

DoubleTree by Hilton Midlothian Hotel  
Richmond, Virginia

➤ Memorial Service ◀

➤ Meet 80th Division Authors ◀

➤ Guest Speakers on the 80th Division ◀

*Bring your research and get suggestions  
from other researchers.*

➤ Commander's Dinner ◀

## A NOTE FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

Leon Reed

I'M VERY PROUD OF the issue Christine and I put together. It's the first full 24-page issue in a while and the first, perhaps ever, to address the 80th in every era: World War I, World War II, postwar division/GWOT, and training command. Like many of our issues, it also has input from one of our European partners. And, capping it off, news on how to research your ancestor.

And in a nutshell, I believe that expresses the road map to viability for the 80th Division Veterans Association. All World War II veterans organizations are experiencing the same issues: the veterans are exiting the stage and their children, who have been the nucleus of most such groups for the past 20 years, have less interest "now that we're not taking dad to meet his friends."

But maybe there's hope to reinvent a new organization, made up of relatives of WWI and WWII veterans, active duty and 80th veterans of more recent eras, and historians, researchers, writers, and other enthusiasts.

The other exciting news is that the year 2024 marks the 80th anniversary of the deployment and baptism by fire of the Blue Ridge Division in World War II. Commemorative events are planned throughout the U.S. and Europe; we will bring you this story over the next few editions of this magazine.

Christine and I are committed to always move forward, to build this magazine and, through it, the Association.



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## COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

John McLaren, National Commander

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THE 80TH DIVISION HAS a long and proud history of service during war and in peace. Members of the 80th Division served in World War I and were rated as one of the best divisions in that war. The motto of the Division, "Only Moves Forward," was earned because they never gave up ground won during attacks against the enemy. Major battles fought included the Battle of the Somme, Meuse-Argonne, and Saint-Mihiel. In the war, the 80th took more than 6000 casualties, including 880 killed in action.

The 80th Division was called to duty again in World War II. The Division was reformed at Camp Forrest, Tennessee, in 1942, and trained at other sites throughout the United States as they awaited their ticket to Europe. The Division finally deployed in 1944 to Great Britain and landed in France in early August. Their first combat missions were in defeating German forces on the Cherbourg Peninsula. They served under General George Patton's Third Army, moving across France toward the German border, playing a key role in beating back the attacks during the Battle of the Bulge, and moving through Germany until the final capitulation of the German Army. The Division's strength was just over 15,000 soldiers and it suffered 17,087 casualties, including 3,038 killed in action.

The 80th Division was reformed many times between 1946 and 2005. It became an Infantry Division, a Training Division, one of twelve Divisions in the Army Reserve with a mission to provide Infantry – One Station Unit Training expanding the Army in case of a war with the Soviet Union, and an Institutional Training Division and finally a Training Command.

During the Division's time as a Reserve Unit, the 80th served and supported the Korean War as a ready Infantry Division. During the Cold War and the Vietnam war, the Division supported the Army in training Soldiers for the Active force and the Reserve Components. Soldiers of the Division in the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s were missioned to train Infantry Soldiers at Fort Bragg, North Carolina for a land war on the European Continent.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the Division activated two units in support of the Persian Gulf War. A Transportation Company, the 424th, deployed to Saudi Arabia and moved into Kuwait and Iraq. A basic training unit was mobilized to Fort Eustis, Virginia, to train recalled Ready Reserve soldiers in basic combat skills.

The events of 9/11 brought the 80th Division and soldiers of the reserve component into the forefront in this new fight to protect the United States. The members of the 80th Division began this period training Active, Reserve, and National Guard units to deploy into Afghanistan and later Iraq. In the summer of 2004, the Army gave the 80th a warning order that behind the 98th Division, it would deploy to Iraq to train members of the New Iraqi Army.

Since September 2001, members of the 80th have deployed to Afghanistan, Iraq, to various assignments across the United States, and to other nations across the world in sup-

port of the War on Terror. Many 80th soldiers have deployed as replacements to other Active, Reserve, and National Guard units. These soldiers have served in defense of the United States of America and have earned awards for service, sacrifice, and valor. Members have paid the ultimate price in service to the Nation. Those soldiers that gave their all served in Iraq – Sergeant First Class Otie McVey, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Wren, Specialist David Cissel and Staff Sergeant Robert Hernandez. They served with distinction and honor in difficult missions and paid the ultimate price in service of their Nation.

In 2008, the 80th changed to a Training Support Command, Commanding three subordinate Divisions – the 94th Division, the 100th Division and the 102nd Division. As a Training Command the 80th is responsible to support the Army Training and Doctrine Command by teaching 160 different Military Occupational Specialties, in Combat Service and Combat Service Support specialties. It has training locations and units in 34 States and at one time had Soldiers residing in all 50 States. The motto of the 80th Division "Only Moves Forward" continues with pride in our past and vision for the future!

Bottom line Upfront: The 80th Division Veterans Association needs to recruit new members! Our base for membership is, sadly, declining. I encourage each member to ask someone who is not a member and is eligible for membership to join our organization. The 80th Division Veterans Association was formed to keep the distinguished history of the 80th Division and 80th Training Command alive and well.

The 80th Division Veterans Association was formed after the ending of World War I. It is the second oldest divisional veterans organization in the United States Army, behind the 3rd Infantry Division Veterans Association. Our history is long and distinguished! It would be a shame to lose our history for lack of involvement!

Those who know me remember I was the last commander of the 80th Division and the first commander of the 80th Training Command. I am proud of our 80th Division Veterans Association. Serving in the 80th in peace and in war has given me great pride in our accomplishments. Pride that I'm sure many of you share! I am very proud to wear the Army authorized 80th Division Combat patch for those that deployed with me to Iraq in 2005 and 2006.

Let's keep the 80th Division Veterans Association alive and well! Our membership is open to all current and past members of the 80th Division and Training Command, and their relatives. Let's KEEP our heritage alive! We are the "Strength of the Mountains" and will maintain the motto that the 80th "Always Moves Forward!"



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# A Day with the 80th Training Command

## The 80th Training Command Town Hall Meeting and Family Day

by Christine Guidry Law

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**M**Y GRANDFATHER PASSED AWAY on my 7th birthday, leaving me with cherished memories that, until recently, existed solely in my mind. However, everything changed when I received a special invitation to attend the 80th Training Command Town Hall on November 4. As the editor of the Blue Ridge Magazine and a representative of the 80th Veterans Association, I found myself immersed in a completely new experience.

The day was a poignant blend of nostalgia and newfound connections. Stepping into the Town Hall event at the Frank B. Lotts Conference Center, DLA-Aviation/Defense Supply Center Richmond (DSCR), I was immediately struck by the atmosphere of camaraderie among key leaders, military personnel, their families, and civilians. The open communication and engagement created a space to address concerns, share vital information, and answer questions.

Community Partners, including the 80th Division Veterans Association, played a pivotal role in fostering a sense of community. The venue's "bazaar setup" allowed these partners to engage directly with soldiers and families, establishing an open dialogue often difficult in military or other hierarchical organizations. It was heartening to witness the mutual respect and support between individuals who shared a common commitment to the 80th.

Brigadier General Patricia Wallace, the Commanding General of the 80th Training Command, took the opportunity to share insights gleaned from her ten months as the commander. This transparency and openness created an environment where Soldiers felt empowered to ask questions and make suggestions to improve command operations. Beyond the formal proceedings, the interactions extended to post-event discussions, where Soldiers had the chance to

engage with civilian partners, exploring the array of services available for themselves and their families.

During this remarkable day, I had the honor of meeting distinguished individuals who further enriched my connection to the 80th. General Wallace, along with retired Colonel Michael Flanagan (Civilian Aide to the Secretary of the Army – CASA) and retired Command Sergeant Major Sonja Brewer (U.S. Army Reserve Ambassador), extended a warm welcome. Their gratitude for my ongoing service to the 80th, intertwined with the memory of my grandfather, added a deeply personal layer to the experience.



*continued on page 5*

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## 80th Training Command... continued

### Major One-Star Divisions

Under the 80th Training Command, three major one-star divisions play crucial roles. The 94th Training Division focuses on sustainment, the 100th Training Division emphasizes leader development, and the 102nd Training Division centers on maneuver support. These divisions operate from Fort Lee, Virginia; Fort Knox, Kentucky; and Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri, respectively.

### Conclusion

With a tradition of excellence spanning over a century, the 80th Training Command remains committed to excellence, equipped to face the challenges of the 21st century. Conducting nearly 1700 courses annually and training over 47,000 military and civilian students, the 80th Training Command ensures that those who proudly wear the U.S. uniform remain the most capable, combat-ready, and lethal force in the nation's history. With a determined stride, the 80th Training Command exemplifies its motto: "ONLY MOVES FORWARD."

Source:

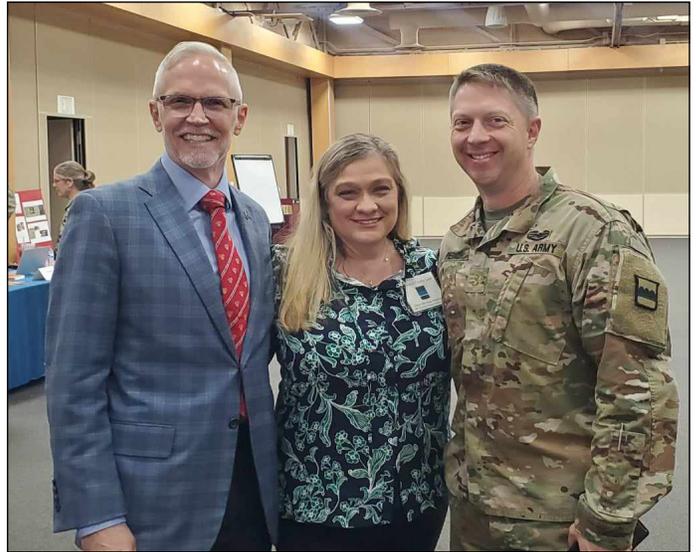
US Army 80th Training Command. (2020, September 8). "80th TC Who Are We?" [Video]. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KccGmzjoEyA&t=5s>

## 80th Training Command... continued

One of the most memorable highlights of the day was the enlightening tour provided by SFC Colleen Chesnes of the Command Headquarters and archives. The journey commenced with the profound 80th Division Monument Stone and the Veterans Association Memorial Brick Pavers. These tangible tributes, dedicated to honoring the various campaigns of the 80th Division, served as a powerful reminder of the unit's storied history.

Traversing the Command Center, I explored the artifacts lining the hallways, each telling a unique story of the unit's journey through time. SFC Chesnes, with generosity and enthusiasm, shared insights into the past by showcasing vintage issues of the Blue Ridger and other historical artifacts. This personalized tour provided not only a glimpse into the rich history of the 80th but also underscored the enduring legacy of those who have served.

In reflection, the day surpassed being a mere event; it became a chapter in an ongoing narrative of connection, service, and remembrance. The interactions, discussions, and shared experiences formed threads that wove me further into the fabric of the 80th, creating a lasting impact that went beyond the confines of that single day.



*Michael Flanagan (CASA), Christine, PAO Tom Piernicky*



*Gerald James, Private Public Partnership Office/Army Reserve (P3O), answers a question.*



*Brigadier General Steven D. Hayden, Deputy Commanding General of the 80th Training Command (TASS), addresses the troops.*

# Brigadier General Patricia R. Wallace Commanding General

## 80th Training Command (TASS)

**B**RIGADIER GENERAL PATRICIA R. WALLACE assumed command as the first female Commanding General of the 80th Training Command (The Army School System) on 5 December 2022. She previously served as first woman and person of color Commanding General of the 91st Training Division.

An Indianapolis native, she accepted her Reserve Officer Training Corps commission at Indiana University in 1990 in the Adjutant General Corps after serving two years of enlisted service. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice and a Master of Public Administration from Indiana University and a Master of Strategic Studies degree from the US Army War College.

Brigadier General Wallace's commissioned career includes: Commanding General, 91st Training Division; Deputy Commanding General 88th Readiness Division; brigade and battalion command; and a variety of staff positions including chief of internal review, operations officer, adjutant, and executive officer at varying command levels. She served in Iraq as executive officer, Iraq Assistance Group, 1st Division.

Her military education includes Enlisted Basic Training, Advanced Individual Training as a 76V (Unit Supply Specialist) Reserve Component (RC); Adjutant General Officer Basic Course (RC); Adjutant General Officer Advanced Course (RC); Combined Arms Services Support School; Mobilization Planning Course; Training Manager Course; Command and General Staff Course; Army War College, and the Joint and Combined Warfighting School, Joint Flag Officer Warfighting Course, Senior International Defense Management Course.

Brigadier General Wallace's awards and decorations include the Legion of Merit (2 oak leaf clusters – (OLC)), Army Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (1 OLC), National Defense Service Medal (with Bronze Star), Iraqi Campaign Medal with Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Service

Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Armed Forces Reserve Medal (with Silver Hourglass and "M" device).

One highlight of General Wallace's year was an invitation in May to return to her alma mater, Indiana University, to address the ROTC awards ceremony. She reflected on the Army's current recruitment and retention challenges and challenged the students to take advantage of every opportunity presented to them. At the end of the day, General Wallace had dinner with cadets who have already decided to commission into the Reserve.



## Training Command News & Notes

### Contributions by Staff Sgt Starla Lewis

**T**HE AWARD WINNING Regional Training Site Maintenance at Fort Indiantown Gap, PA (94th Training Division), graduated its latest Wheeled Vehicle Mechanics reclass course on 28 September 2023. The graduating students had the chance to get hands-on training on the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle (JLTV). The JLTV, the Army's newest tactical vehicle, provides Soldiers with more protection against threats while increasing mobility.

Soldiers from every component of the 80th Training Command competed in the 80th Training Command's Fiscal Year 24 Instructor of the Year Competition (IOY) on October 25 – 28, 2023.

The competitors presented a 20–25-minute class to students in front of a panel of judges, then answered questions during an appearance board, then finally were allowed to use creativity to bring the board members attention to a block of instruction they would teach in a classroom environment. The results were:

- Lt. Col. Brian Wice of the 10th Battalion, 80th Training Regiment, Officer Education School, was the winner for the officer category.
- Chief Warrant Officer 2 Matthew Bielli from 4th Brigade of the 102d Training Division, won the Warrant Officer category.
- Sgt. 1st Class Gregory Heckenbach with the 100th Military Police Battalion (102d Training Division), was the winner of the Non-Commissioned Officer category.
- James Harden, a training instructor for the 83rd Army Reserve Readiness Training Center, earned honors in the civilian instructor category.



# A Journey Into Camaraderie and Reflection

## Attending Family Day with the 80th Training Command

by Kathleen S. Zoll

*“Y’all up for a road trip?”*

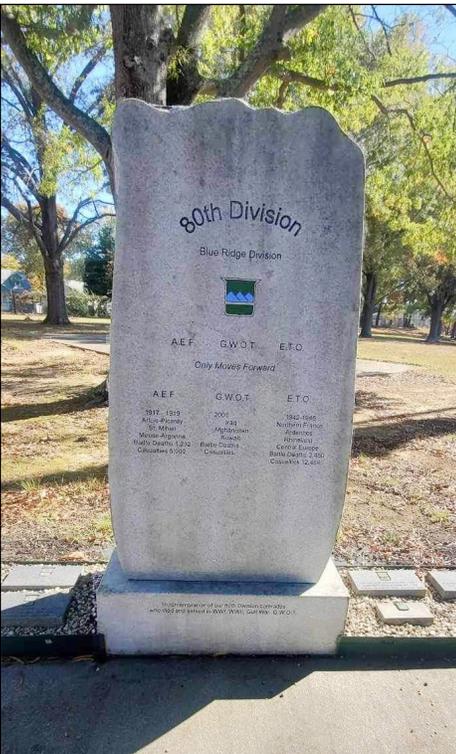
THE CASUAL INVITATION from my best friend, Christine Guidry Law, as always promised an adventure. “Of course,” I replied instinctively. As the details unfolded, she informed me that our destination was the Family Day for the 80th Training Command in Richmond, VA, set for Saturday, November 4, 2023. Christine, serving as the editor of the Blue Ridge Magazine, was representing the 80th Division Veterans Association, and I had the privilege of accompanying her as her assistant.

The journey became deeply significant when I reflected on my own father’s military service. A veteran of the Army Air Corps in WWII, my father, Richard L. Zoll, served in the 33rd Troop Carrier Squadron, 374th Troop Carrier Group, completing 101 combat missions. However, like many veterans of that era, he never revisited those days and rarely discussed the war, save for the occasional more humorous anecdote. He was proud of his service yet mourned the loss of his entire unit in a Japanese bombing raid, and stayed connected with only a few fellow survivors of that attack.

Family Day with the 80th Training Command opened a window into a world my father never discussed. Christine and I witnessed true camaraderie, dignity, pride, and strength among the members of the 80th. These men and women form a bond that extends beyond friendship – they are a true family. Observing the genuine respect and love they have for one another and for our nation, I was profoundly moved by the depth of their commitment to the United States.

Each person I had the honor of meeting that day made me proud of my country. Their stories, sacrifices, and unwavering dedication brought me closer to the memory of my father and heightened my awareness of the profound loss he endured on that fateful night.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Christine for including me on this poignant journey, and to the members of the 80th, I offer my deepest thanks for your service. Through your stories and shared experiences, you have not only enriched my understanding of my father’s legacy but have also reaffirmed my pride in being an American.



Upper left: Blue Ridge logo in lobby of Training Command headquarters building

Lower left: 80th Division monument

Above: Blue Ridge memorial paving stones

# History is Alive in Villey St. Etienne

by Anthony Guerin

WHEN I BECAME PRESIDENT of Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine in 2019, my first act was for the organization to commemorate the fighting of the French Resistance and the 80th Infantry Division in Toul and Villey St Etienne. While I was in Villey St Etienne, the mayor told me that an American soldier had died there on September 4, 1944. However, he only knew that the soldier's last name was GUIDA, and that he was a New Yorker. I immediately set out to find him, and scoured the numerous morning reports of all the infantry units of the 80th, without success... I tried other leads but found nothing either. Disappointed, I put the research aside, but never forgot it.

In 2022, I collaborated with the ABMC (American Battle Monuments Commission) to create a report on American cemeteries in France. I asked Elsa Lewuillon, assistant manager of the cemetery in Epinal, for a list of the men from the 80th who were buried there. Looking through the list, one name caught my eye: It was "GUIDA, Thomas" from New York, a member of the 305th Engineer Combat Battalion of the 80th ID. Now that I had his service number, I was able to check his records, and found that he was officially declared dead on September 5, 1944, at Villey St Etienne. A real moment of joy! I shared my research with Andy Adkins, who immediately sent me the morning reports in which Thomas was mentioned.

Throughout this time, I stayed in touch with my friend and co-Editor of the 80th Infantry Division Veteran Association Blue Ridge Magazine Christine Guidry Law. I told her the story of this soldier and explained that I'd decided to become the "godfather" of Thomas's grave. I informed her that an official sponsorship ceremony was scheduled for Saturday, September 9, 2023, and that I'd like to have a photo of him. Somehow, through her own extensive research, she managed to get a photo of him for me just a few days before the ceremony. I can hardly describe the mixture of surprise, emotion and relief! Not only did she locate a photo, but she also made contact with an extended family member of Thomas! His great nephew Joe Pisano was able to provide more of his story. I was so happy to be able to put a face to his name. And I was glad to



know that because of our efforts, future generations will know his story and that his face will never be forgotten. I was lucky enough to be able to evoke his story and show his portrait for the first time at the commemoration ceremony on September 4, 2023, a few dozen meters from the place where he died 79 years earlier. Going forward, I'll be visiting his grave and the grave of Caleb Adcock from the 319th Infantry regiment of the 80th, which I also sponsor, to plant flowers on their graves and honor them as much as possible.

*photos provided by Anthony Guerin*

## An 80th Meet Up

ON MAY 28, 2023, during Memorial Day at the Epinal American Military Cemetery in France, Lee Anthony historian of the 80th for the First World War and Anthony Guérin president of Memory of Wars in Lorraine had the chance to meet and discuss a little about the battles of the Butte de Mousson and the death of General Shearby also buried in Epinal. The General is the most senior officer of the cemetery. Time was spent to chat about Lee's father who fought with the 80th in Lorraine during the first world war and to exchange pens from each association's respective countries.

*PNC Lee Anthony meets with Anthony Guerin*



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## Thomas Guida's Story

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**T**HOMAS, SON OF SALVATORE & MARIA GUIDA, was born into a Catholic family on April 27, 1922, in the Brooklyn neighborhood of New York. He was the youngest of six children and affectionately nicknamed Tommy. Before he joined the army, he was single and worked as a driver for the Navy at the Brooklyn Navy Yard. At some point, Thomas joined the 305th Engineer Combat Battalion / Company B of the 80th I.D. He trained at his unit's various training camps.

At the end of June 1944, the 80th was moved to Camp Kilmer and the first departures for England took place. Thomas crossed the Atlantic aboard the Queen Mary and then the English Channel on August 3, 1944, aboard a Landing Craft Infantry, arriving at Utah Beach. Directed to the St Jorès sector, it was several days before the 80th was ready to strike its first blow against the enemy.



The division's first combat mission was to stem the flow of five Panzer divisions that were attempting to cut off General Patton's supply lines to Avranches.

The 80th took part in the famous Battle of Argentan, then headed for eastern France, helping to liberate Le Mans, Orléans, Troyes, Chalons sur Marne and St Mihiel, among others, before arriving in Toul on September 4, 1944. Resistance fighters had pushed the Germans back across the Moselle, and the 319th of the 80th ID fought them. Toul was the first bridgehead for Patton's army across the Moselle. The 80th immediately deployed in the surrounding villages, with the aim of reaching Dieulouard and Pont à Mousson as quickly as possible.

Villey St Etienne lies on this road, and the resistance there fought the Germans. The French were soon overwhelmed, but they found reinforcements in the American units driving nearby. The American soldiers helped push the Germans back from their positions in the village before the arrival of a second wave of the invaders.

During this short pause in battle, the villagers brought their liberators beer, mirabelle plums and flowers. I quote a 1946 extract from the writings of the village abbot, Mr. Manet:

My two lookouts, proud of their record, show me on their fingers that there are three, four, five Germans killed on the bridge and on the barge. Kneeling at the window corners, they light a cigarette. Here's Mr. Rambour, bringing a few bottles

of beer. Good idea, as it's hot! The men take a swig from the neck. Two young girls arrive with bouquets of flowers. One of the soldiers, a short dark-haired man with a black beard shading his cheeks and a few words of French, replies with a serious smile: "Soon a more beautiful one, on my grave..."

We're a little chilled by this, but it's true that the war isn't over for them... Intoxicated by the joy of liberation, we weren't thinking about the dangers they'll have to brave for a long time to come, before they're reunited with their families at the end of the world.

The Germans enter the village again from different directions, and shells fall everywhere. They want to set fire to the village before leaving, but bullets are flying, and we have to take cover. A jeep and soldiers arrive from above the village. One of them consults a small booklet and, in hesitant French, asks the FFI (Force Française de l'Intérieur = resistance): "Do you speak Italian?"

"Yes," answers Bertaso (a member of the French Resistance).

The American is happy to be able to express himself without searching for words. He says his name is Thomas Guida and he comes from New York. He asks, "But where are the Germans? If we can't see them, we can't kill them!"

Bertaso led Thomas and two of his comrades through an orchard, past wires and fences to the water tower near the village vineyards. The three GIs let off a few shots, then retreated, proud of their hunt. While his comrades cautiously bent their backs (to hide from the enemy), Thomas remained on his feet. He didn't have time to take three steps before he collapsed, killed outright.

One of his two comrades recounted, "The three of us were about to kneel in a ditch, and suddenly Tom fell to the right. I saw a bullet hole in his left temple, but we didn't hear a shot. I had to tap the commander on the shoulder to make him understand that the shot must have come from the vineyard. The commander headed for the jeep, and I followed."

The Morning Report officer described the fighting at Villey St Etienne only on September 5, 1944. With the body having been abandoned, there was no mention in the morning reports of Thomas until September 9, 1944. He was first noted as MIA (Missing in Action), then KIA (Killed in action) with the date September 5, 1944—what became his official date of death, though he fell on the 4th. On the 5th, his unit was actually at Preny, a village below Pagny sur Moselle. The official report stated that Thomas was killed by artillery fragments, at the age of 22.

*photo provided by great-nephew Joe Pisano*

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# Unlocking the Past: Researching Your Wartime Ancestor

by Christine Guidry Law

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## Special Notes for the 80th Division Researcher by Leon Reed

LUCKY YOU! There is probably no division easier to research than the Blue Ridge. That's largely because of the incredible resource provided by the 80th Division web page and the supportive group on the Facebook page.

There is also a rich literature of 80th Division soldier memoirs, notably biographies of A.Z. Adkins, Jr. (317 REGT), Bob Burrows (317 REGT), Walter Carr (318 RGT), William Elvin (318 REGT), James Hayes (317 REGT), and Frank Lembo (305 ENGR). Many of these were prepared after the death of the subject of the book and all were made possible by a discovered war diary, trove of letters, or unpublished memoir. Many World War II veterans were extremely reluctant to discuss their experiences with their families but they had no doubt that their experience in World War II was the most intense – and most important – thing they'd ever do. Thousands of soldiers who bottled their experience up for 50 years or more left detailed memories in a “box in the attic.”

Second, bring your problem to the 80th Division Veterans Association Facebook page. We're a really friendly group and there is always someone who can point you in the right direction. Better yet, come to the reunion this summer (see “Save the Date” on page 2). Some of the most experienced 80th Division researchers will be there and we'll be glad to go over what you have and point you at next steps.

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**W**ARTIME ANCESTORS HOLD a special place in our hearts and history. Their sacrifices and stories often become cherished family legends. If you're eager to discover more about your ancestors who served during times of conflict, this article will guide you through the process of researching their history. Regardless of when they served, I promise that your search to discover their true stories will be both enlightening and rewarding.

### GETTING STARTED

Researching information about someone who served during any wartime conflict can be difficult, especially if your veteran never spoke about it, leaving few details about their time in service. Further, the sheer number of records involved in each conflict is daunting. More than 4.7 million men and women served in the Armed Forces during WWI, 16 million during WWII, 5.7 million in the Korean War, 2.7 million in Vietnam, many of them are our grandparents, parents, aunts, and uncles. How do you find information on a wartime veteran who never spoke about the war and/or is deceased?

The first order of business is DON'T GIVE UP! There will be many walls to climb and dead-ends to work around but perseverance is the key. There is always a workaround. Be patient and persistent in your research. Uncovering the full

story of a wartime ancestor can take time, and records may be scattered across different sources. However, each piece of information you uncover contributes to a richer understanding of your ancestor's history and the history of the conflict they participated in.

One of the very first obstacles you may encounter is the notice of a fire in 1973 which burned nearly 75% – 80% of all Military Personnel Records at the National Archives in St. Louis, Missouri. While this is true, it only burned the Army and Air Force records – not Navy or Marine Corps. However, if you are searching for a veteran's service records which were burned in the fire, don't fret. There are other ways to source out the information you are researching.

Here are a few steps to help you in your research:

### 1. GATHER BASIC INFORMATION:

Before diving into the world of wartime research, gather essential details about your ancestor. Start with their full name, date of birth, and the conflict in which they served. If available, also collect their service number, unit or division, and any other identifying details. The more information you have, the easier it will be to track down their records. Interview older family members who might have knowledge about the ancestor's service. They may recall anecdotes, stories, or details that can help you refine your search. Consider using genealogy software or family tree tools to organize the information and keep track of your research progress. This can help you build a clear picture of your family's military history.

### 2. DETERMINE THE CONFLICT:

Identify the specific war or conflict your ancestor participated in, as this will determine where to look for records. Common conflicts include World War I, World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and more recent engagements like the Gulf War or the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Each conflict has its own unique set of records and resources. For example, World War I records might be less digitized and accessible compared to World War II records. Ensure you specify the conflict when conducting research, as it will guide your approach.

### 3. NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION (NARA):

In the United States, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is a treasure trove of military records and an invaluable resource for wartime research. NARA holds an extensive collection of military records, including service records, unit histories, and photographs. You can begin your research by visiting NARA's online resources and databases, but for more detailed information, consider visiting one of their research facilities. The National Personnel Records Center (NPRC) in St. Louis is a key location for obtaining individ-

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## Researching... continued

ual service records. When visiting a NARA facility, plan your trip in advance. Check their website for information on hours of operation, required identification, and any research fees. Consult with archivists and experts at NARA for guidance during your visit.

### 4. MILITARY SERVICE RECORDS:

Request copies of your ancestor's military service records. You can do this mainly through the National Archives. I've listed a few of the types here.

[Americans]: The National Personnel Records Center in the U.S. handles such requests. Similar agencies exist in other countries. These records may contain valuable insights into their service, unit, deployments, and medals. Military service records are a goldmine of information. In the United States, you can request these records through the National Personnel Records Center (NPRC). These records often include enlistment dates, units served, deployments, promotions, and any awards or decorations earned. Service records might also provide personal details about your ancestor, such as their birthplace, occupation at the time of enlistment, and even next of kin.

If you are lucky enough to have a copy of your veteran's DD-214 (discharge paper), their service number and other pertinent details will be referenced here. The service number is sometimes called a serial number, and every soldier receives this numerical identifier upon their induction into any military branch. The length of the service number varies by branch and indicates whether or not the individual was enlisted or an officer. This number will be found on every official document and is even located on dog tags.

Of special note here is that the military began using Social Security numbers as service numbers on the following dates: Army and Air Force – July 1, 1969; Navy and Marines – January 1, 1972; Coast Guard – October 1, 1974. Service numbers from before the change can be requested under the Freedom of Information Act, however, Social Security numbers cannot.

If you do not have a copy of the discharge paper, the next step is to take the research you've gathered from any letters you've located and use the unit numbers to request records from the National Archives (NARA). The first record you should request is the OMPF (Official Military Personnel File). The OMPF serves as a comprehensive record of a service member's career, and it is a valuable resource for individuals and organizations researching military service history. It can provide insight into the individual's assignments, achievements, and personal history while in the military. Access to OMPFs is typically available to the service member, authorized family members, and government agencies responsible for veterans' affairs.

The next record to request for researching a veteran's military service might be the Individual Deceased Personnel File (IDPF), especially if the veteran you're researching passed away during their time of service. The IDPF is a comprehensive record that includes information about the circumstances of the service member's death, burial, and often additional details related to their service and personal history.

[Non-Americans] – Researching military service records for non-Americans, such as those who served in the armed forces of other countries, requires a distinct approach. Just as in the United States, many countries maintain their own archives and databases containing records of military service. Here are some guidelines to consider:

Identify the National Archives or Equivalent: In many countries, the national archives or a similar government agency is the primary repository of military service records. Look for the equivalent of the National Archives or Records Office in the country where your ancestor served. These institutions often house records related to both domestic and foreign service.

Contact Embassies and Consulates: If your ancestor served in a foreign military, contact the relevant embassy or consulate in your country. They may provide guidance on how to access records or connect you with the appropriate agencies in the home country.

International Archives: In some cases, records of foreign individuals who served alongside local forces may be stored in international archives. For example, soldiers who fought in World War II with the British Commonwealth forces or the French Foreign Legion have records preserved in archives outside their home countries.

Genealogical and Historical Societies Abroad: Genealogical and historical societies in the country of interest can be valuable resources. They often maintain local records, including wartime documents and family histories. These organizations may assist you in understanding the context of your ancestor's service.

Online Resources: Don't underestimate the power of the internet. Some countries have digitized and made military records accessible online. Explore genealogy websites and databases specific to the country in question. Online forums and discussion groups can also connect you with experts and fellow researchers who may provide insights and guidance.

Commonwealth Records: If your ancestor served in a country within the British Commonwealth, you may find military records in the UK's National Archives, which maintains records for various Commonwealth countries. Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and other Commonwealth nations have their own archives, each housing military records.

Historical Conflicts: Different conflicts and wars have distinct record-keeping practices. World War I and World War II records are often more accessible due to the sheer volume of individuals who served. More recent conflicts may have stricter access rules.

### 5. ONLINE DATABASES AND GENEALOGY WEBSITES:

Explore online resources like Ancestry.com, Fold3, and the National Archives website, which host military records and historical documents. Ancestry.com, in particular, offers access to military records from various conflicts, making it a valuable resource for tracing your ancestor's service history. It also provides a platform to create and share family trees, which can help you connect with others researching the same ancestors. Fold3 specializes in military records and is an ex-

*continued on page 12*

## Researching... continued

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cellent resource for delving into historical documents such as military unit diaries, enlistment records, and service-related photographs. When using online databases, be sure to search with various combinations of your ancestor's name, service number, or unit to increase the chances of finding relevant records. These platforms offer a wealth of information that can help you piece together your ancestor's military history.

### **6. FAMILY RECORDS AND MEMORABILIA:**

Don't forget to reach out to family members who may have personal records, letters, or memorabilia related to your ancestor's service. Look for letters, diaries, photographs, discharge papers, or even items like uniforms or medals. These items can provide a window into your ancestor's thoughts, feelings, and experiences during their service. Reading their letters or diaries, for example, can give you a more intimate understanding of their life during wartime. When interviewing family members, encourage them to share any stories or anecdotes they may remember. Oral histories can be invaluable for piecing together the narrative of your ancestor's service. Don't forget to digitize and preserve these materials. Scanning or photographing letters, photos, and other memorabilia ensures that they remain accessible and protected for future generations.

I recommend hitting the family archives first. This includes old photo albums, boxes of letters and postcards that may have been buried in the attic or beneath a bed and forgotten about. If you are fortunate enough to find these, you can rebuild a story of service by creating a timeline. Simply begin by placing the letters in sequential order. According to military researcher Beth Reuschel, it is best to place each by the date the soldier wrote on the letter and not by the postmark. She recommends you make note of any changes in the unit assignment of your veteran in the letters because, in many cases, soldiers were transferred many times during the entirety of their service. Mapping out unit assignments and the corresponding dates will be a major key in rebuilding your veteran's service history. After you have created a tentative timeline, read through the whole of each communication and record any details such as place names or public events referenced. Any scrap of information, no matter how small, can be an enormous help in recreating a record of service. You can use the places and unit numbers gathered from these letters to research your veteran's military records.

### **7. VETERANS' AFFAIRS DEPARTMENTS:**

Veterans' Affairs departments, found in many countries, are vital resources for researching your ancestor's wartime service. These government agencies are responsible for providing support and benefits to veterans. Here's how you can utilize them:

In the United States: The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is a significant resource for American veterans and their families. While the VA primarily focuses on providing benefits, it can assist in accessing certain military records, including DD-214 forms (discharge papers), which often include details about service, medals, and awards. The VA's website and local VA offices can guide you through this process.

### **8. MILITARY UNITS AND VETERANS' ASSOCIATIONS:**

Reach out to your ancestor's former military unit or any relevant veterans' associations. These organizations may have historical records and be willing to share specialized insights into your ancestor's service. These organizations often maintain historical records, newsletters, and archives that offer a deeper understanding of the unit's history and your ancestor's role within it. Veterans' associations (like the 80th Division Veterans Association) may also host reunions, where you can meet others who served with your ancestor or their descendants, allowing you to exchange stories and learn more about their experiences.

### **9. GENEALOGICAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETIES:**

Genealogical and historical societies that focus on military history can be essential allies in your research. Here's how they can help:

**Genealogical Societies:** Many regions have genealogical societies that specialize in military genealogy. These societies often have members with expertise in researching military records and can guide you on where to find information and how to interpret it. They may also organize workshops or seminars on military research techniques.

**Historical Societies:** Local historical societies may maintain archives related to wartime events and local military units. They can provide context for your ancestor's service by sharing details about the role of their unit during the conflict, the overall history of the time and the post-war return of veterans, providing additional avenues for you to pursue for information.

**Veterans' Associations:** Some veterans' associations, like the American Legion or Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) in the United States, maintain historical records and offer guidance for researching your ancestors' service. They may have local chapters where you can connect with veterans and their families.

Joining these societies and associations can help you tap into a network of knowledgeable individuals who share your passion for wartime history and genealogy. They can provide support, answer questions, and connect you with resources that you might not discover on your own.

### **10. GOVERNMENT WEBSITES:**

Government websites are reliable sources for information and resources related to military records and veterans. Here's what you can expect from these websites:

**In the United States:** Besides the National Archives and the VA, the U.S. government's official website, Archives.gov, provides an extensive section on military records. It offers detailed guidance on how to request records, what to expect, and what is available to the public.

**In the United Kingdom:** The UK government's Ministry of Defence has a dedicated webpage for requesting service records. It explains the process for obtaining records and provides information on fees, turnaround times, and who is eligible to access the records.

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## 80th Division Veterans Association

# 80th Anniversary Events – Ettelbruck, Luxembourg

by Andy Adkins

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I WAS RECENTLY CONTACTED by Jos Tholl, President, General Patton Memorial Museum in Ettelbruck, Luxembourg. He is working on a 2024 project to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Ettelbruck. This project will reside in Patton Square and will be open to the public.

Jos Tholl has requested assistance from us to help provide information for the project. In particular:

- Any living 80th Division veterans who remember this area in Ettelbruck?
- Any interviews with veterans?
- Any photographs of the area?

The project includes three silhouettes on Patton Square, each with a separate QR code, enabling visitors to access all the information about the events that unfolded in the area.

Silhouette #1: The pastor, Harold Owen Prudell, was stationed in Ettelbruck. He held a mass for the nuns and soldiers who were at the psychiatric hospital in Ettelbruck.

- Does anyone have information about the pastor?
- What unit did he serve?
- His duties while in Ettelbruck?
- Any photos or documents from his time in Ettelbruck?
- Any surviving family members?

Silhouette #2: Evacuation of a wounded soldier. The photo was taken on the outskirts of Ettelbruck, in the direction of

Feulen. The street name is rue de Bastogne. It tells the story of the harsh winter 1944-45 during which many young American soldiers lost their lives. It also depicts the resistance of the occupiers and the fierce and harsh conditions that American troops endured to liberate Ettelbruck.

- Any surviving veterans who took part in these battles?
- Any interviews or witness statements?
- Any photos of the town of Ettelbruck during this combat?
- Any films or videos?

Silhouette #3: The Café Bellwald, situated on the outskirts of Ettelbruck, in the direction of Diekirch. The American troops pushed the occupiers 100 meters past this point on 25DEC44. It is between Ettelbruck and Diekirch.

- Any known American outposts before this point? If so, which unit(s)?
- The photo depicts an officer in the jeep, the lorry on the side is a GMC. What role did this café play during the Ardennes offensive?
- Any photos of documents of this time period?
- Any witnesses that were deployed there?

If anyone has an information regarding the 80th Division's activities in and around Ettelbruck, please contact Andy Adkins (adkins@80thdivision.com). Any help or insights would be greatly appreciated.

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## Researching... continued

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In Australia: The Australian government's Department of Veterans' Affairs website is a comprehensive resource for veterans and their families. It offers detailed information on obtaining service records, medals, and other benefits.

Government websites often provide clear, step-by-step instructions for obtaining military records and understanding the available resources and services. They can be a valuable starting point for your research.

### IN SUMMARY:

Researching your wartime ancestor is a rewarding endeavor that not only honors their memory but also connects you to the past and to your family history in a profound way. As you unlock the stories of their service and sacrifices, you contribute to the preservation of history for future generations. With determination, patience, and the right resources, you can ensure that the legacy of your wartime ancestor lives on.

Happy researching, and may you uncover the remarkable stories of your family's heroes.

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### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

[National Archives and Records Administration(NARA)] - <https://www.archives.gov/>

[U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs (VA)] - <https://www.va.gov/>

[Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW)] - <https://www.vfw.org/>

[The American Legion (for U.S. veterans)] - <https://www.legion.org/>

[Ancestry.com]- <https://www.ancestry.com/>

[Fold3] - <https://www.fold3.com/>

[Royal British Legion (for UK veterans)] - <https://www.britishlegion.org.uk/>

[Ministry of Defence (for UK Veterans)] - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ministry-of-defence>

[Australian War Memorial (for Australian veterans)] - <https://www.awm.gov.au/>

[Australian Department of Veterans' Affairs (DVA)] - <https://www.dva.gov.au/>

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# 314th Machine Gun Battalion History

Submitted by Lew Dominick

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**T**HIS IS A SUMMARIZED HISTORY of the battalion taken from the publication 314 Machine Gun Battalion published as a matter of record by the officers and men of the battalion.

The plan for the newly created 80th Division was to assign men from Virginia into the 159th Brigade, (men from the 317th, 318th Infantry Regiments and the 314th Machine Gun Battalion), Pennsylvania men into the 160th Brigade (319th, 320th Infantry Regiments and 315th Machine Gun Battalion), and West Virginia men into the 155th Field Artillery Brigade.

On September 14th, 1917, Special Order #16 was issued transferring fourteen infantry officers from the 317th and 318th Infantry Regiments to the 314th Machine Gun Battalion.

In February 1918, a war department order resulted in a re-organization of the battalion. This change resulted in the increase of companies in the Machine Gun Battalions to four. The Divisional machine gun battalion was reduced to two companies. General Order No. 13 transferred "C" Company of the 314th Machine Gun Battalion to the 315th Machine Gun Battalion. The re-organization resulted in the 314th Machine Gun Battalion consisting of "A" Company, "B" Company, Headquarters and medical detachments. The 314th now became the divisional machine gun battalion. While brigade battalions and regimental machine gun companies were to have horse drawn transportation, divisional machine gun battalions were to be motorized.

Training at Camp Lee, Virginia, was delivered to the soldiers with vigor and focus. This mindset of training was applied first to the infantry soldier, with new machine gun drills, to include the mechanism of the machine gun, and with target practice on the range. At first the battalion was lacking in equipment. A few old Colt machine guns were available. Fortunately, towards the latter part of training, the newly acquired American Vickers machine gun was issued and every man had the opportunity of shooting it on the range, while learning its complicated mechanism.

Training completed, the battalion on May 26th, 1918, boarded the transport U.S. Mercury, and began its journey across the Atlantic arriving at Bassiens, France on June 9th.

On June 27th, numerous officers and non-commissioned officers were sent to various locations for schooling. Training was under the tutelage of British Non-Commissioned Officers and began with the newly issued British Vickers Machine Gun. By the middle of July 1918 with schooling and training complete, the battalion prepared for its next assignment.

On July 26th, the battalion entered Kay Camp, Quesnoy Farm for its next phase of training, which consisted of receiving front line training in the trenches.

The 80th was placed under the American First Army and was ready for action. On September 23rd, information was received that the First American Army would make an assault against the Hindenburg Line. The 80th division, including the 314th Machine Gun Battalion, would be one of the assaulting

Divisions. The battalion saw action at Bois Jure, where it incurred its first casualty.

On September 29th, the battalion moved in to trenches in Ravine Couleuvre D'Argent, where it immediately came under heavy artillery fire, causing several casualties. The battalion remained there until October 4th, during which time shelling continued with no further casualties.

The 80th division along with other American Divisions from the Meuse to the Argonne, resumed the offensive on the morning of October 4th. At 6:40 a.m., the battalion began its movement forward passing through Cuisy and Montfaucon where it established a position in a railroad cut northwest of Montfaucon. During its movement which was made under fire, Sgt. James C. Good was killed by a shell burst.

At 8:00 p.m. on the same date, the battalion was attached to the 319th Infantry Regiment. A defensive position was established south of Nantillois. The 319th moved forward and the battalion formed a second line. The battalion minus Company "A" which was moved in support of the general line, manned this position until the 5th when it withdrew returning to its original trenches south of Cuisy.

On October 8th, the battalion moved to dugouts north of Malancourt and remained there during the 9th and 10th. At 11:00 a.m. on the morning of the 11th, an attack along the divisional front was ordered. Division Field Order No. 20 ordered the 314th Machine Gun Battalion and the 317th Infantry Regiment to report to the Commanding General of the 160th Brigade. Company "A" of the 314th was ordered to support a battalion of the 319th Infantry Regiment. The Company placed its 12 guns on Hill 274 in the Bois des Ogons region. The company was under constant artillery shelling but due to fortified positions, remained relatively unscathed. At the same time, Company "B" was ordered to move forward to report to the Commander of the 317th Infantry which was in reserve at Cote 274. The Company remained there until the 12th. During this time, the battalion's P.C. remained south of Cuisy. On the morning of the 12th, having been under continuous fire since September 25th, the 80th Division was relieved by the 5th Division.

The battalion began its march to a rest area on the afternoon of October 12th and arrived in the village of Beaulieu on October 15th. The village, once occupied by the Germans, was now occupied by the 314th, the first American organization to be billeted, (housed) there. On October 22nd, the battalion turned in the Vickers machine gun and was issued the new Browning machine gun.

At 7:30 a.m. on October 23rd, the battalion left Beaulieu and in a combined march and embussing, and arrived at Le Nefour at 2:00 p.m. The battalion remained there until October 30th. At noon on the 30th, the battalion marched from Le Nefour through the Argonne Forest camping in an orchard one kilometer southwest of Apremont.

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## History... continued

On the afternoon of the 30th, platoon commanders moved to the front and identified gun positions from which to fire a barrage of artillery under which the infantry was to attack on the morning of November 15th.

Field Order No. 27 stated that the 313th and 314th Machine Gun Battalions, under the direction of Divisional Machine Gun Officers, would execute long range, overhead and indirect fire from the “H-1 hour to the time limit of safety in the infantry advance.” After the execution of fire, the battalions would return to the divisional reserve.

After nightfall on October 31st, the platoons began to move and get in to position approximately two kilometers east of St. Juvin, in a slight valley south of the St. Juvin-St. George’s Road. By 2:00 a.m. on the morning of November 1st all platoons were ready to fire. The Battalion P.C. was located 500 meters to the rear of the gun positions.

By this time the 160th Infantry Brigade had moved up to the jumping off point and lay ready to advance. Artillery and machine guns of the 2nd Division located to the right of the 80th Division, opened fire at 3:30 a.m. They were followed by the 72 Browning machine guns of the 313th and 314th Machine Gun Battalions at 4:30 a.m. It was documented that as a result of the barrage, only 1 gun stopped working out of the 24 in the battalion due to a broken part. Lieutenant Browning, son of the inventor, came up to the line to observe the gun’s performance. It was agreed that the machine gun’s performance was “up to the mark.” After the barrage, the battalion was withdrawn to the neighborhood of the Battalion P.C. and remained in the divisional reserve.

Between November 1st and November 6th 1918, the 317th, 318th, 319th, and the 320th Infantry Regiments, along with the 313th Machine Gun Battalion and regimental machine gun companies, pressed the attack. By early morning on the 6th, patrols of the 80th Division were on the west bank of the Meuse River. On November 7th at 6:30 a.m. the division assembled in the area of Sommauthe and was relieved by the 1st Division.

The 314th Machine Gun Battalion remained in the ravine, east of St. Juvin, on November 2nd and 3rd. On the morning of the 4th, the battalion was ordered to form a skirmish line across the divisional section, advancing northward, with orders to bring in stragglers and all men who could not show written authority for their presence. These men who came from six different divisions, were put to work burying dead Germans and horses.

The battalion spent the night of the 4th and the following day in shell torn billets in Buzancy. During this time the battalion came under attack from German aircraft. This resulted in Company “B” being used for anti-aircraft work. On the morning of November 6th, the battalion moved on to Sommauthe, where the 80th Division was assembled.

While encamped in Sommauthe, word was received that the Germans were ready to surrender. On the morning of November 8th as the battalion was starting its march south, one German artillery shell exploded in an open field a few hundred yards south of the Sommauthe-St. Pierremont Road. This

would be the last sounds of war that members of the battalion would hear.

On November 11th, the battalion rested in billets in Les Vignettes. The first actual news of the armistice was received on this date as the battalion marched through the Argonne Forest.

The battalion was to begin its long march to the Fifteenth Training Area. Between November 18th and 28th, (Thanksgiving Day), portions of the battalion spent time in Senard, Noyers, Maison du Val, Mussey, Vassincourt, Saudrupt, Allis-champs, Rochecourt sur Blaise, Mertrud, Fresnay, Spoy and Couteron. The battalion arrived at Sennevoy le Haut, Department of Yonne, American Fifteenth Training Area on the 29th. It was here the battalion would spend the winter.

On the first day of April, the battalion began its trek which ended on May 20th as the battalion boarded the battleship “New Jersey” bound for America. Early on the morning of June 7th, just 12 months and 12 days after sailing for Europe, the battalion aboard the “New Jersey,” entered Boston harbor.

On June 10th, the battalion was split into detachments and sent to Camp Lee, Virginia and Camp Dix, New Jersey to begin the mustering out process. The Colors of the battalion were sent to Richmond, Virginia to remain forever in the custody of the Governor.

During its time in Europe, fourteen members of the battalion, whose home states were Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York, were killed in action or died in France. Twenty-two members of the battalion suffered wounds.

### REFERENCE

*314 Machine Gun Battalion History: Blue Ridge (80th) Division.* Published as a Matter of Record by the Officers and Men of the Battalion, n.d.

[https://digitalarchives.powerlibrary.org/papd/islandora/object/papd%3Asstlp-wwi\\_724#page/84/mode/2up](https://digitalarchives.powerlibrary.org/papd/islandora/object/papd%3Asstlp-wwi_724#page/84/mode/2up)



# 80th Division in Iraq: Iraqi Army Advisors in Action (EXCERPT)

McLaren • Linkhofer • Schreckengost

YEARS 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. What follows is the story from the operational level and the foxhole level of that mission. This was the largest mobilization of the 80th Division since World War II. The 80th Division would deploy to a foreign land, in direct support of the War of Terror.

The United States Army had decided in 2004 there was a critical need for training of the New Iraqi Army. The Old Iraqi Army was dissolved and all of its soldiers were cashiered. The first training efforts used a variety of methods; these efforts did not go as anticipated. Some may remember when untrained Iraqi Army units faced the unenviable task of stepping into the counterinsurgency fight in early 2004. A lack of training was telling in the performance for many Iraqi units. For leaders across the Army there was a nagging question – “How do we train the Iraqi Army?” There was a shortage of Regular Army units available to accomplish the training task and still fight the growing insurgency. Most Regular Army Units were deploying, deployed or recovering from earlier deployments. There was great debate about the capability to accomplish the task within the Army. One part of the answer to the question was found in the six training divisions that were a part of the Army Reserve. The first unit out of the box to deploy for this training mission was the 98th Division (IT). The 98th Division 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 of 2004 the order of deployment for the Army Reserve Training Divisions was set with an order for deployment for the mission of the 98th, the 80th and the 108th. The tour length for the 98 would be 10 months, and the 80th and 108th would each deploy for one year each. 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 Division deployed in July and August of 2004, with the last of that unit deploying in December 2005. The 80th Division would deploy at the end of July 2005 after a train up period at an undetermined mobilization station.

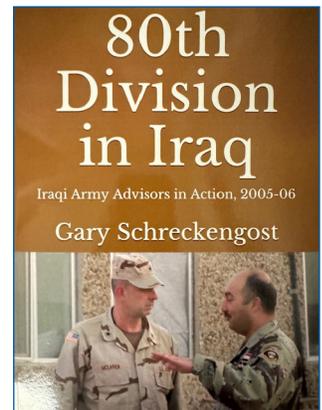
The 80th Division got a verbal warning order for its deployment in November 2004 and the actual warning order in February 2005. If you ever get a chance to read about MG Cronkite’s experience in trying to get ready to deploy in WWI, our Iraq experience mirrored his in 1917. There were changes in deployment dates, indecision from our higher headquarters if we were going to get the mission, insistence from the Regular Army that the 80th Division was going to get the mission, changes to the mission, lack of funding for pre-mobilization training, and a myriad of other “issues to deal with” that caused consternation through-out the force.

We attempted to take five leaders to Iraq in January 2005 to “see the ground truth” and enable the 80th Division leadership to focus our efforts in training our Soldiers for the job ahead.

Unfortunately, the request to see the ground truth was disapproved until May 2005, after our mobilization. The 80th Division coordinated extensively with both the 98th and the 108th Divisions prior, during, and after our deployment. We gathered and gave extensive lessons learned. Nothing you can capture for a lessons learned is however as good as being there and living the mission. Especially when, after it is all over, you realize, as we did – the mission evolved many times during a year tour of duty. The fight in Iraq, we would learn from firsthand experience, was different all across the country. The Tactics, Techniques and Procedures needed to fight the enemy varied with the location. Education on these facts, prior to our deployment, was all in our future.

The original concept for the mission in Iraq, as we stated above, was not the mission performed. The 98th, 80th and 108th Divisions had one vision for the mission assigned, but the mission evolved as it progressed. After the 98th Division’s tour of duty ended in August 2005, the Combat Studies Institutes at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas conducted an interview with LTG Helmly. No better explanation of the thinking and the reality of the original mission exist than LTG Helmly provides in that interview. Here is what the Combat Studies Institute said:

“LTG Helmly was the chief of Army Reserve and commanding general of United States Army Reserve Command. In his interview, focusing on the 98th’s deployment and conduct of its Iraqi Army training and advisory mission and related larger issues, 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,” he explained, “we went to a bastardized



*continued on page 17*

## 80th in Iraq... continued

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. According to Helmly, “My original initiative was to use them in a training base capacity inside a foreign army.... What occurred, though, was that many of the 98th became embedded trainers inside Iraqi units.” Even so, he added, “the 98th soldiers did all very well and I admire and respect them greatly for that.”

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. What occurred, though, was that many of the 98th became embedded trainers inside Iraqi units. 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 capac-

ity. Had I known that, I wouldn't have argued against using the 98th, but I would have understood things better from the 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 original training model for the 80th's mobilization station. By May 2005, after training had started for the 80th Division, the mission had changed to become embedded advisors for the part of our Soldiers going to the Military Transition Teams. We had to adapt. LTG Helmly's concept for the mission stated above in the Combat Studies Institute article was, and was not, what the 80th Division encountered in Iraq. We adapted and embraced a mantra of “Semper Gumby.” Marines have a similar motto, “Semper Fi.” “Semper Fi” means Always Faithful. “Semper Gumby” means Always Flexible!

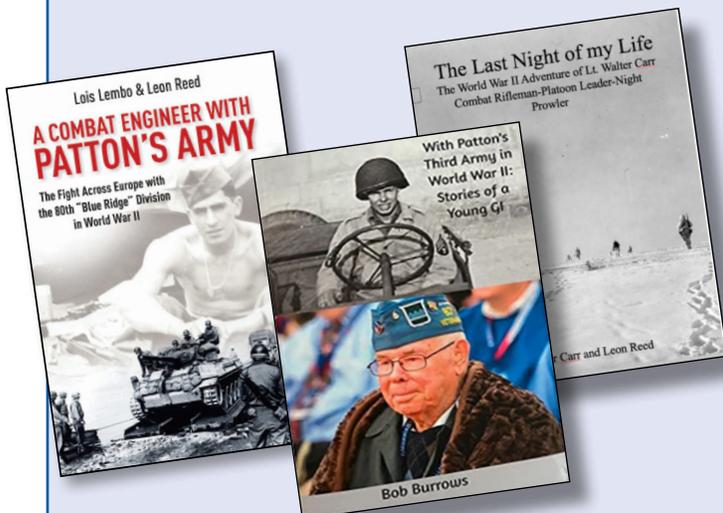
Thank God for the Emergency Operations Center staff, the 80th Division “cadre staff” at the mobilization station, and the dedicated Division staff. They didn't deploy for the mission but were indispensable in supporting, in so many ways, those Soldiers that did deploy. They staffed the myriad of changes that we encountered. They found us equipment, Soldiers to deploy 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. The 80th Division's Soldiers adapted to each and every change; *they always moved forward!*

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## Three 80th Division Memoirs

- A Combat Engineer With Patton's Army, who was part of the infantry group that made the first infantry contact with the defenders of Bastogne on December 28, 1944
- With Patton's Third Army, the story of Bob Burrows, S-2, 317th Infantry Regiment
- The Last Night of my Life, the adventures of Walter Carr, patrol specialist (available January 2024)



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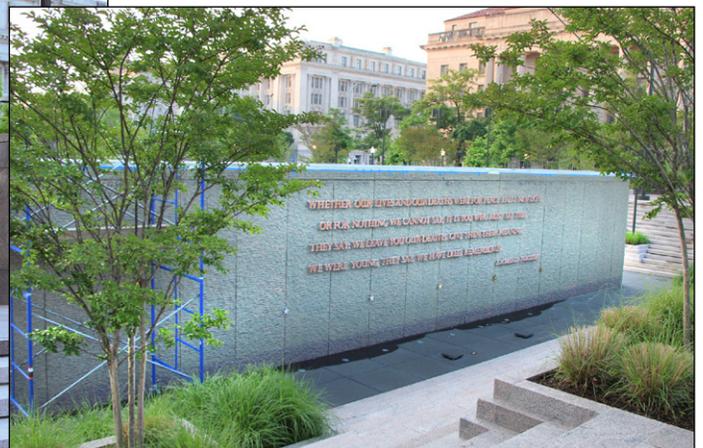
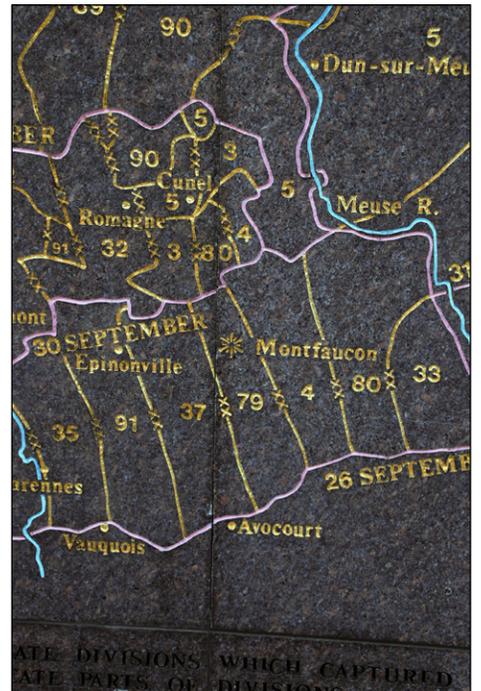
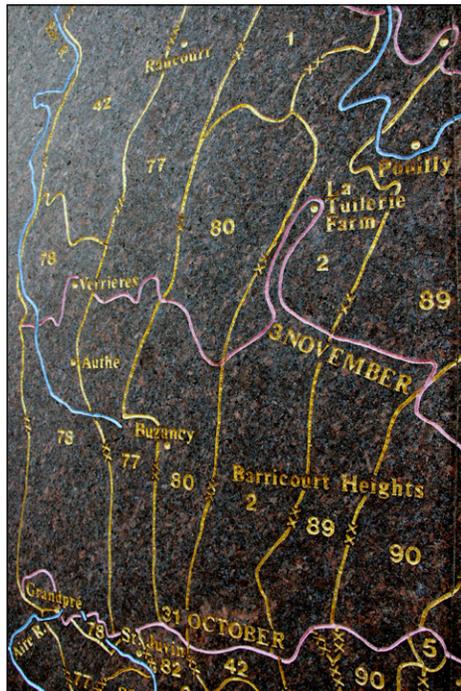
# World War I Memorial Takes Shape Near White House

FROM THE WAR WITH no proper memorial in Washington, DC, World War I is on the verge of having one of the most spectacular and well-sited memorials. The World War I Memorial, which honors the 4.7 million Americans who served their nation in World War I, including 116,516 who fell, is racing toward completion next fall. It was built by the United States World War I Centennial Commission and incorporates the existing memorial to Gen. John J. Pershing, who commanded the American Expeditionary Forces during the war. The new memorial also includes the Peace Fountain; an excerpt from the poem "The Young Dead Soldiers Do Not Speak," by Archibald MacLeish; engraved quotes and references to campaigns and

battles in which American forces participated; and exhibits about the role of the United States in World War I.

The memorial's central feature will be a sculpture titled A Soldier's Journey. The piece should be installed by September 2024. The 58-foot-long bas-relief sculpture will feature 38 figures depicting the journey of a recurring American soldier and representing the larger American experience of World War I.

The open-air memorial is open now. It is located at the former Pershing Park, 1.76-acres along Pennsylvania Avenue NW between 14th Street NW and 15th Street NW, across from the White House Visitor Center.



## OVERSEAS CONNECTIONS

### An Unexpected 80th Meetup

ANTHONY GUERIN, PRESIDENT of the Mémoire de Guerres en Lorraine (Memories of War in Lorraine Association) and Christine Guidry Law, Editor for the Blue Ridge Magazine, met for their first face-to-face meeting on August 18, 2023 at Harper's Garden restaurant in Philadelphia, PA. It was Anthony's first trip to America. Christine and Anthony first "met" online in 2019 through one of the 80th Division's social media pages. Anthony discovered a photo of Christine's grandfather while he was doing research for an exhibition for the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Toul, France. He included her grandfather's photo and story of his service in his World War II exhibit in his hometown. Thus began a long distance friendship which now includes Anthony penning the foreword for the book Christine is currently writing about her grandfather's experience. They are currently planning to meet up again, as Anthony has offered to guide Christine on a trip to France where she will retrace her grandfather's footsteps through WW2.



Thanks for your support of the 80th Division Veterans Association (transactions through September 30, 2023).

## LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Christen, Gerard – Leo Christian Family  
Christen, Susan – Leo Christian Family  
Eaton, Pat K. – Loretta Koneski Family

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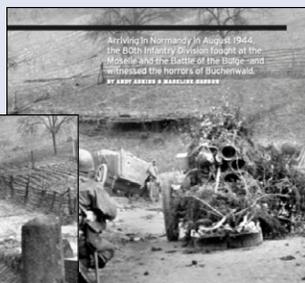
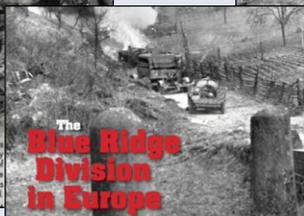
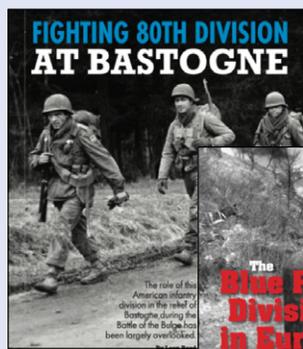
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# 80th Division Veterans Association Website Updates

by Andy Adkins, Webmaster

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## WEBSITE SEARCH ENGINE

With over 150,000 pages, images, and documents on the website, it was time to implement a search engine. As most people know, many of these archived online digitized documents are in poor shape and hard to read. Yet from my preliminary testing, Google has done a decent job of indexing them, allowing me to capitalize on their search engine.

At the top of all the primary website pages, I placed a search engine. I've also noted that it will NOT return everything on the site that matches your search request, ONLY those that are found in the search index. But it's still a good start – try it yourself and see.

## BLUE RIDGE MAGAZINE

[<https://80thdivision.com/blueridge.html>]

For years, I've uploaded the Blue Ridge Service Magazine (now searchable... see above). In addition to uploaded copies beginning Summer 2004, I also digitized many from the World War I era, beginning with Volume 1, Number 1 (October 1919). These are also PDF searchable documents. If you're researching a WWI 80th Division veteran, check out the November 1920 issue, which includes an extensive roster of WWI men who were members of the 80th Division Veterans Association.

## PHOTO COLLECTIONS – WWI

[<https://80thdivision.com/photos.html>]

- PFC Eugene Balizet (318th Inf Reg, Supply Co) Scrapbook – compliments of Kenneth Norman.
- Lunsford M. Jordon (317th Inf Reg, Med Det) – compliments of Jordon Sellers.
- Walter Lee Rorrer (315th FA Bn, Btry B) – compliments of Ed Elam.

## PHOTO COLLECTIONS – WWII

[<https://80thdivision.com/photos.html>]

- S/Sgt Richard C. Fisher (317th Inf Reg, HQ Co) – compliments of John Fisher.
- Capt Edward W. Stewart, Jr. (317th Inf Reg, Svc Co) – compliments of CWO3 Ed Stewart.
- Lindsey Stockman (318th Inf Reg, Co G) – compliments of Michelle Stockman Spickler.
- Sgt Leonard P. Maslowski (319th Inf Reg, Co A) – compliments of Kenneth Norman.
- Dupre A. LeJeune (319th Inf Reg, Co I) – compliments of Christine Law.
- 305th Combat Engineer Bn – compliments of Lois Lembo & Leon Reed.
- 633rd AAA AW Bn – compliments of Anthony Guerin.

## ORAL HISTORIES

[<https://80thdivision.com/oralhistories.html>]

Lowell Silverman is a historian based in Delaware and has compiled a series of biographies for American troops from Delaware, including the following men who served with the 80th Infantry Division.

- 1st Lieutenant Thomas O. Hudson (315th FA Bn, HQ); KIA 12/23/44, Heiderscheid, LUX.
- Pvt Charles M. Brittingham (319th Inf Reg, Co F); KIA 1/23/45, Kautenbach, LUX.
- Pfc Gilbert B. Bryan (317th Inf Reg, Co G); KIA 3/28/45, Kastel, GER.
- S/Sgt George C. Curdy (317th Inf Reg, Co E); KIA 3/16/45, Greimerath, GER.
- Pvt Clifford L. Hook (610th TD Bn); KIA 9/8/44, Saiserais, FRA.
- Pvt Joseph D. Johnson (317th Inf Reg, Co B); KIA 10/9/44, Jeandelincourt, FRA.

## 80TH DIVISION RESOURCES

[<https://80thdivision.com/links.html>]

- WWI – 313th Machine Gun Battalion, compliments of Andrew Capets.
- WWI – 314th Machine Gun Battalion, compliments of Leon Reed.
- WWII – “Virtual Cemetery of 80th Division Casualties,” compliments of Jeff Hall.
- WWII – “Front Seat to War,” (319th Inf Reg, 305th Eng Bn), compliments of Diana Mara Henry.
- WWII – “Task Force Pearson, The Real Story behind the Monuments Men Treasure Hunt.” Article in Southern Sonoma Country Life magazine.
- WWII – “Patton’s Desert Training Center in WWII” – photo collections & brief history of the California/Arizona Maneuver Area (CAMA).
- WWII – “The 80th Division’s Baptism by Fire” – compliments of Warfare History Network.

## MISCELLANEOUS UPDATES

- “The Gravel Agitator,” Newspaper of the 319th Inf Reg in WWII

[<https://www.80thdivision.com/WebArchives/MiscReports.htm>]

- 808th Tank Destroyer Bn, After Action Reports (Sep-Dec44, Feb45, May45)

*continued on page 21*

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# TAPS

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

## Callahan, Jerry 3-319th

Abingdon, VA  
DOD: 5/3/2023  
Rptd by: MSG Terry Moore



## Little, George 3-319th

Jonesborough, TN  
DOD: 8/10/2023  
Rptd by: MSG Terry Moore

## Hanline, Leoard HQ 319th

Mecosta, MI  
DOD: 6/19/2023  
Rptd by: Leonard Hanline, Son

## Millard J. Mahala 3-319th

Bristol, TN  
DOD: 6/3/2023  
Rptd by: Larry Smith

## Hupman, CSM(R) Hal 2079th USAR School, 80th MTC, & 4th Bde

VA Beach, VA  
DOD: 6/22/2023  
Rptd by: SFC(R) Nelson Smith

## Nophlin, Clyde A. Sr. 3-319th

Waynesboro, VA  
DOD: 6/28/2023  
Rptd by: Mike Baker

## Knight, SFC(R) Rufus Jr. 1-319th

Lynchburg, VA  
DOD: 4/16/2023  
Rptd by: SGM(R) William Wilson

## Pope, James 2-319th

Piney Flats, TN  
DOD: 5/3/2023  
Rptd by: MSG Terry Moore

## Koneski, Loretta

Medina, NY  
DOD: 5/22/2022  
Rptd by: Pat K. Eaton

## Shatley, LB 2-319th

Hampton, TN  
DOD: 7/15/2023  
Rptd by: Mack Moore

## Leonard, Jerry 2-319th

Bluff City, TN  
DOD: 9/4/2023  
Rptd by: MSG Terry Moore

## Smith, Cecelia

Chambersburg, PA  
DOD:  
Rptd by: PNC Lee Anthony

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## Website Updates... continued

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[<https://www.80thdivision.com/WebArchives/MiscReports.htm>]

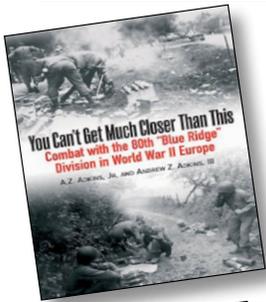
- 4th Armored Division – Morning Reports, Medical Units; compliments of Dr. Reinier Groeneveld.

<https://www.80thdivision.com/WebArchives/MorningReports.html>

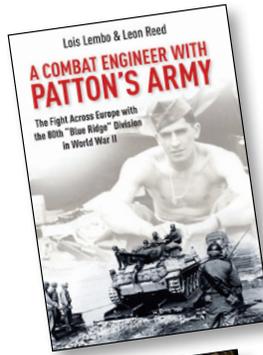
Andy Adkins developed the 80th Division Veterans Website in 2005 and continuously adds new materials. His father, Capt. A. Z. Adkins, Jr. served with Company H, 317th Inf Reg. He is the author of *You Can't Get Much Closer Than This, Combat with the 80th 'Blue Ridge' Division in World War II Europe*, published by Casemate Publishers.

Andy welcomes additional 80th materials to add to the site. Contact him via email: [adkins@80thdivision.com](mailto:adkins@80thdivision.com).

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



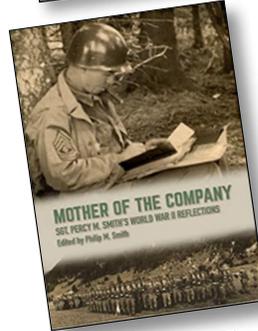
You Can't Get Much Closer than This: Combat With the 80th "Blue Ridge" Division in World War II Europe  
A.Z. Adkins, Jr., and Andy Adkins III.  
317th regiment



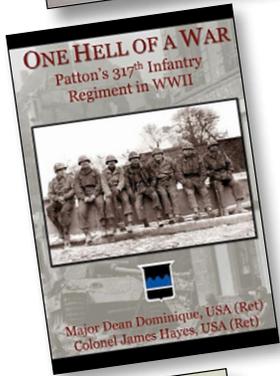
A Combat Engineer with Patton's Army: The Fight Across Europe with the 80th "Blue Ridge" Division in World War II  
Lois Lembo & Leon Reed (Savas Beatie)  
(see ad page 15 of this newsletter)



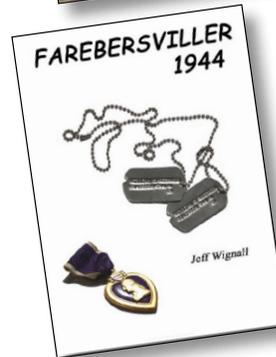
With Patton's Third Army in World War II: Stories of a Young GI  
Bob Burrows's (317th regiment) memoirs, finished shortly before he passed. \$15  
(see ad page 15 of this newsletter)



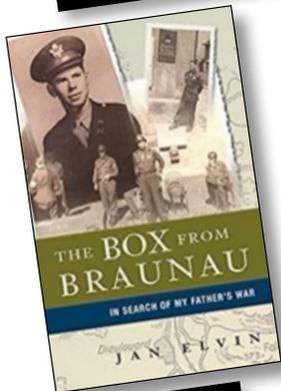
Mother of the Company  
Sgt. Percy Smith (G Company, 317th Infantry Regiment)  
Available on Amazon



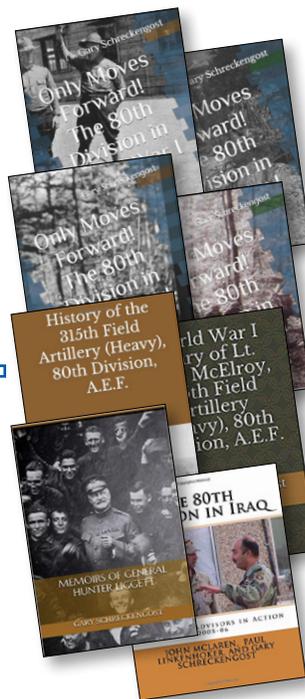
One Hell of a War: Patton's 317th Infantry Regiment in WWII  
Major Dean Dominique and Colonel James Hayes  
\$24.99, 273 pages, (317th)



Farebersviller 1944  
Company A, 318th Regiment, during the Fall of 1944  
Jeff Wignall  
Available from Amazon.com or from the author.



The Box from Braunau: In Search of My Father's War  
Jan Elvin  
\$24.95, published by American Management Association.  
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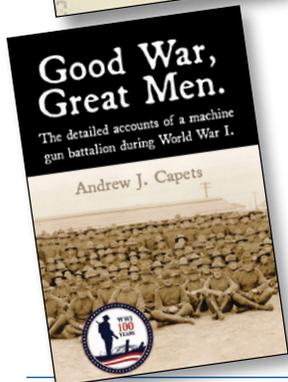
**BOOK 5:** History of the 315th Field Artillery (Heavy), 80th Division, A.E.F.

**BOOK 6:** World War I Diary of Lt. John McElroy, 315th Field Artillery (Heavy), 80th Division, A.E.F.

**BOOK 7:** Memoirs of General Hunter Liggett

**BOOK 8:** 80th Division in Iraq: Iraqi Army Advisors in Action, 2005-06

Available on Amazon



Good War, Great Men, the 313th Machine Gun Battalion of World War I  
Andrew J. Capets  
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