

## 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association

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Johnston, IA 50131

Fall 2009 Issue

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WEB Site is: [www.34indiv.org](http://www.34indiv.org)



The 34<sup>th</sup> ID Assn. newsletter is published three times a year. The issues are, Fall 2009, Spring 2010 and Summer 2010.

### 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Assn. 2009

#### Reunion – A Grand Success – Carlisle, PA

The 2009 Reunion of the 34th Infantry Division was held 15 – 19 July 2009 at the Comfort Suites Hotel in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The reunion was hosted by the Tri-State Chapter of the 34th Inf. Div. Association. The reunion was a great success with 65 members, family, and friends of the 34th Inf. Div. Assn. in attendance at the final banquet.

The 88th Inf. Div. Association and TRUST – Trieste U.S. veterans held their Reunion in conjunction with the 34th. The TRUST soldiers were part of the 88th Div. and secured northern Italy against possible communist incursion following WW II.

President, Richard Holmes, 113th AAA Battalion greeted everyone for the 34th Division and conducted the National Association meetings. New Officers of the association are: President, Pat Skelly, 1st VP, COL Ron Albrecht 133rd Inf, 2nd VP, John Sunins, 34th MP Bn. 1 Year Trustees: Roque Riojas, Al Maupin, Mike Beaman. 2 Year Trustees: S. Don Singlestad, Larry Lewer, Gene Alexander. 3 Year Trustees: Richard Holmes, Darlene Smith, Don Prock. Secretary Russell Bierl, Treasurer Michael Musel, and SGT at Arms Mildred Fencl. Pat Skelly will continue to carry on his duties as Historian and WEB Site Manager.

Next year the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Reunion of the 34th Infantry Division Association will be hosted by the Des Moines Chapter from September 11-13 (Thur thru Sat), 2010 in Des Moines, IA.



***The 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association thanks outgoing president Dick Holmes for his service over the past year. He is congratulated on a job well done. Each outgoing Association President has a memorial brick placed in the Gold Star Military Museum by the Association.***

### 34<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry Division “Red Bull” Road Dedication

The 34<sup>th</sup> U.S. Infantry Division “Red Bull” Road will be dedicated in Vernio, Italy on September 20, 2009. Mr. Raolo Cecconi, the mayor of Vernio, Italy will preside at the event. The road connects Vernio to the A1 Autostrada and passes near the WWII War Memorial to Torricella (Hill 810). Any Association members who will be traveling in Italy at that time are invited to attend the dedication ceremony as honored guests. Patrick Skelly will attend the event himself and suggests those attending should be in Florence, Italy on 17, to 19 Sept prior to the road dedication on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Contact Pat Skelly for details. (508)-524-3948 or email [webmaster@34infdiv.org](mailto:webmaster@34infdiv.org)



#### New Museum Addition Time Line

The new 18,000 square foot addition at the museum will be completed in mid September. We will plan the New Addition Open House (Ribbon Cutting by the Governor) for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of April 2010. Current plans call for us to conduct our established Memorial Day activities on 24 May, 2010, as we have done for the past three years. During this time we will call on our many volunteers to assist us with the set up of the library, the weapons room and some of the major exhibits in the gallery. Our front door will remain open but the major exhibit area will be under renovation for an extended period of time. We ask that you bear with us and help with the extra work.

President, Pat Skelly,

1st VP, Ron Albrecht

2nd VP, John Sunins,

1 Year Trustees: Roque Riojas, Al Maupin, Mike Beaman.

2 Year Trustees: Don Singlestad, Larry Lewer, Gene Alexander.

3 Year Trustees: Richard Holmes, Darlene Smith, Don Prock.

Secretary Russell Bierl, Treasurer Michael Musel,

SGT at Arms Mildred Fencl, Pat Skelly Historian



### **A Note from Association President Pat Skelly**

"The 34th Infantry Division Association made history with our recent reunion by the ways in which we celebrated a shared history going back into the third generation. That reunion brought together veterans of the 34th, 88th, and TRUST (Trieste U.S. Troops)."

Called into Federal Service in February 1941, the 34th Infantry Division made its way from Camp Claiborne, LA onward to Cividale, Italy in September 1945. We were then relieved by the 88th Infantry Division, exchanging thousands of troops in the process - short point Red Bulls stayed on in Italy, while 'high-point' Blue Devils joined the 34th Division for the early trip home.

Two years later, the 88th came home, but left behind their 351st Infantry Regiment (reinforced) as the heart of TRUST - Trieste U.S. Troops - for another seven years.

Exactly sixty-four years before this reunion the following Operational Instruction was issued to begin this common thread of history: "The 34th Inf Div moves to area east of UDINE (C-4119), comes under operational control of British Eighth Army, relieves the 10th Mountain Division and elements of the 91st Inf Div of road blocks, ammunition dump guards, and motor patrols in zone."

Then, until October of 1954, we - the 34th Inf. Div, next the 88th Inf. Div, finally TRUST - stood firm against Marshal Tito in Yugoslavia, on the Morgan Line and later in the Free Territory of Trieste.

But the shared history doesn't stop there. Those of our 133rd Infantry "Red Bulls" who stayed on in Italy became 349th Infantry "Blue Devils".

Last week, we were honored to have with us a Color Guard of the 2nd Battalion, 349th Regiment, 188th Infantry Brigade from Fort Stewart GA. They wanted to meet us veterans and as new combat veterans, carry on the soldier tradition!

Want more? When our division's 1st Brigade Combat Team went to Iraq in 2006 - with the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry - the First Army training team which qualified us for that deployment included the 2nd Battalion, 349th Regiment.

"What goes around, goes around, goes around, comes all the way back around."

Pat Skelly

Honored and proud to be your new President.

[skelly@34infdiv.org](mailto:skelly@34infdiv.org) (508)524-3948

### **War Story from SSgt George Christensen Fall 1944, North of Arno River**

Capt. Jim Grey (a nice guy and good officer) ordered 60mm mortar fire on an entrenched German position. We disagreed over the merits of doing so because of the nature of the German fortifications (an 81mm couldn't have knocked them out). But we did it because we were ordered to do so.

The first round was short and to the right. I ordered another round with increased yardage and to the left but because the traversing rod was worn out, the mortar fell with increased distance but along the same line.

After the second round I was disgusted and stood up and yelled at my friend, "Mac" Richard McCormick, from Gloucester, MA., who was the gunner. He said he adjusted the coordinates correctly. I told him to hold the traversing rod down and raise it another 25 yards.

Then I turned around to face the Germans and a German soldier came out of the dugout and waved at me, because I was dumb enough to be standing out there in the open. So I looked back at him and motioned him to get down because we were about to fire another round. He returned to his dugout and the subsequent round landed right in front of his position. Our Captain then ordered us to cease fire.

My kids always liked the story and I finely put it down on paper. I came home on R&R in April of 1945 and never returned because VE occurred while I was on leave. Sorry to have lost contact with everyone. F Company was from Mason City, IA.

George Christensen

Company F, 133<sup>rd</sup> Regiment

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World War II era 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division soldiers are assembled at the memorial site of the U.S. Army Heritage & Education Center. L to R: Walt Nowotarski, Frank Day, Norbert Ulrich, Irwin Gibson, Charles Hastings, John Minotti, Clark Lease, Jim DeBellis, Walter Haven with the colors being carried by SGT Damion Loback, who served in Iraq with the 1/34<sup>th</sup> BSB.



Unveiling of the 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div, 88<sup>th</sup> Inf Div and TRUST Memorial Bricks at the Army Heritage & Educational Center. L to R: Nibs Ulrich, 34<sup>th</sup> ID, Gene Bily, 88<sup>th</sup> ID, George Enos TRUST and COL James Pierce, AHEC Director.



Mike Musel, Pat Skelly and Russell Bierl, who currently serve as the 34<sup>th</sup> Div Assn. National Treasurer, President and Secretary, are shown at the Gettysburg Battle Field.



The 2/349 Regiment served as the Honor Guard for our 2009 Reunion of the 34<sup>th</sup> & 88<sup>th</sup> Infantry Divisions at Carlisle, PA

**34<sup>th</sup> Infantry  
Division  
Reunion  
15-19 July 2009**



L to R are Dale Phillips, Philadelphia PA, Jean & Kermit Laidig, H/135th, Newville PA and Rebecca "Becky" Snyder Phillips, Philadelphia PA. Kermit was a regimental driver in the 1-2 May 1945 back-and-forth for the German 75th Corp and German 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division initial surrender to the 135th Regiment, 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div. Becky is the daughter of Carl "Dutch" Snyder, I&R Platoon, HQ Company, 133rd Infantry Regiment.

# 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reunion, Carlisle 2009



The new President of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association is Pat Skelly who lives in Pocasset, MA. He was accompanied by Genevieve Kazdin.



Past 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association President Richard Homes, from Ames, IA, is shown with his wife Marsha. Thank You Dick for your service. We will see you next year in Des Moines at the 63<sup>rd</sup> Annual 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Division Reunion.



Danny Quinn provided the music and led the singing at the Reunion Banquet. Danny is show pictured with Darlene Smith and Mildred Fencil.



John Minotti and wife Ann danced to the music after the banquet.

## Reunion Thank You

These are photos of events at the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reunion which was held at Carlisle, PA from 15-19 July, 2009.

Pat Skelly gave everyone a big "Thank You" to all who assisted him in the conduct of the 62<sup>nd</sup> Annual Reunion. The Tri-State Chapter, Comfort Inn, and the 3/349<sup>th</sup> Inf Regt soldiers were recognized for their fine support during the Reunion. The Raffle Drawing and White Elephant Sale were a big success.



Everyone had a good time at the Gettysburg Battlefield Tour. Pictured L to R are Clark Lease I/133, Rosemary Mayer, Charles Hastings HQ/135, Irwin Gibson G/135 and his wife Jo. After a tour of the Visitors Center and Civil War Cyclorama, the entire reunion group was treated to lunch at the world famous Pike Restaurant. A tour of the battle field was provided by COL (Ret) Tom Vossler. The weather was perfect for the tour.. A high point of the trip was visiting the site where the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota Inf., now the 135<sup>th</sup> Inf Regt, stopped the charge of the Confederates on Cemetery Ridge.

## The Story of Ernie Pyle

Ernie Pyle, born August 3, 1900, and died from Japanese machine gun bullet to the head on April 18, 1945 on the Shima island (just west of Okinawa) while covering combat units in battle. Ernie was maybe the most notable war correspondent of WWII and probably the most liked by the service men. Ernie did not hide the fact that the infantry was his favorite branch of the service. Ernie told the story of how the service man faced and endured the war from the human standpoint, more than once calling the conditions very "inhuman." I think you would agree with these statements if you would have read any of his work and certainly if you were one that was there. For you WWII vets, his work is what told your mothers, wives and sweethearts of the nature of the war you were in and how you survived those conditions.

Ernie had been a member of the Navy Reserves at the end of WW I but was discharged after 3 months. He did not "serve" in WWII but as a correspondent, he wore the uniform, received the Purple Heart, and is buried in the Punchbowl National Cemetery in Hawaii. He was working for Scripps-Howard Newspaper Alliance when he started his long affair with war, going to England in December of 1940. As a result of all his work on the war coverage there were 4 books published, In England, Here's your War, Brave Men, and Last Chapter. He won the Pulitzer Prize in 1944 for his war coverage.

Ernie didn't write as much about the battles in terms of the physical details, as he knew that was well covered by all of the other journalists, but rather wrote about the people in the battles and behind the scenes.

I think he called everyone he met a friend, and he met thousands, some in America, some in England, and in each of the future locations. He seemed amazed in "it's a small world" way that he would continually bump into friends from the past in a far part of the world. He rubbed elbows with everyone from the local natives, from privates, up to the highest brass, and they all welcomed him into their lives.

Ernie didn't want to play favorites and tried to cover all branches of services-navy, army, air corps and all. He spent time with as many different units as he could and his time with the 45<sup>th</sup> Division was referenced the most while in Sicily. Ernie was in the 45<sup>th</sup> clearing hospital on the south shore of Sicily due to illness. He says "My family physician in this case was Capt Joe Doran, of Iowa City, Iowa. Capt Doran was different from most front-line doctors in that also liked to treat sick soldiers besides the wounded ones.

Ernie Pyle wrote a number of stories about the men of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division while they were fighting in both North Africa and Italy. He first visited the 34<sup>th</sup> Division just prior to the battle of Hill 609. Cpl Joe Boitnott, D/168, remembers Ernie Pyle visiting the division a second time in Jan-Feb 1944, and interviewing members of his Regiment just prior to the crossing of the Rapido River, for the attack on to the Italian Barracks at Cassino. The articles he wrote appeared in papers back home about the men in Italy fighting the rain, snow, cold, and sickness beside the German enemy.

A sign of the times I suppose, but as I read these books I notice 3 things, besides the obvious death and misery of war, and that is cigarettes, alcohol, and souvenirs. Cigarettes seemed to be referred to as more of a necessity than the bullets needed for the weapons they carried. The men were issued cigarettes in volume and if they didn't consume them they bartered with them. Alcohol was cherished as usual, but was scarce. There appeared to be the rare occasion when the army provided a beer and just looked the other way when local libations were liberated. Souvenirs, we all expect the Luger, bayonet, or trinket taken from the Germans, but I couldn't envision the volume of local merchandise, such as jewelry, clothing, and craft work that was purchased to send home to family.

Ernie points out the fluent ability of most G.I.'s in cussing and his dispatches contain the phrase "sonsabitches" applied to German soldiers in general, or "God damn it" expressed by one of the men over the death of Capt Waskow, but otherwise these works are suitable to readers of all but the youngest ages. Note, The Death of Capt Waskow was reportedly the most read of all the dispatches. It reported the death of a beloved company captain in the mountains of Italy and the response Ernie saw in the men that knew and served with him. It typified the brotherhood that developed between the men. That brotherhood was pointed out by Ernie time and again through the course of his stories.

Ernie Pyle was loved by the soldiers he wrote about and the citizens of the U.S. who read his stories. He had a special ability to bring the life of the soldier back to the home front of the American family living room.

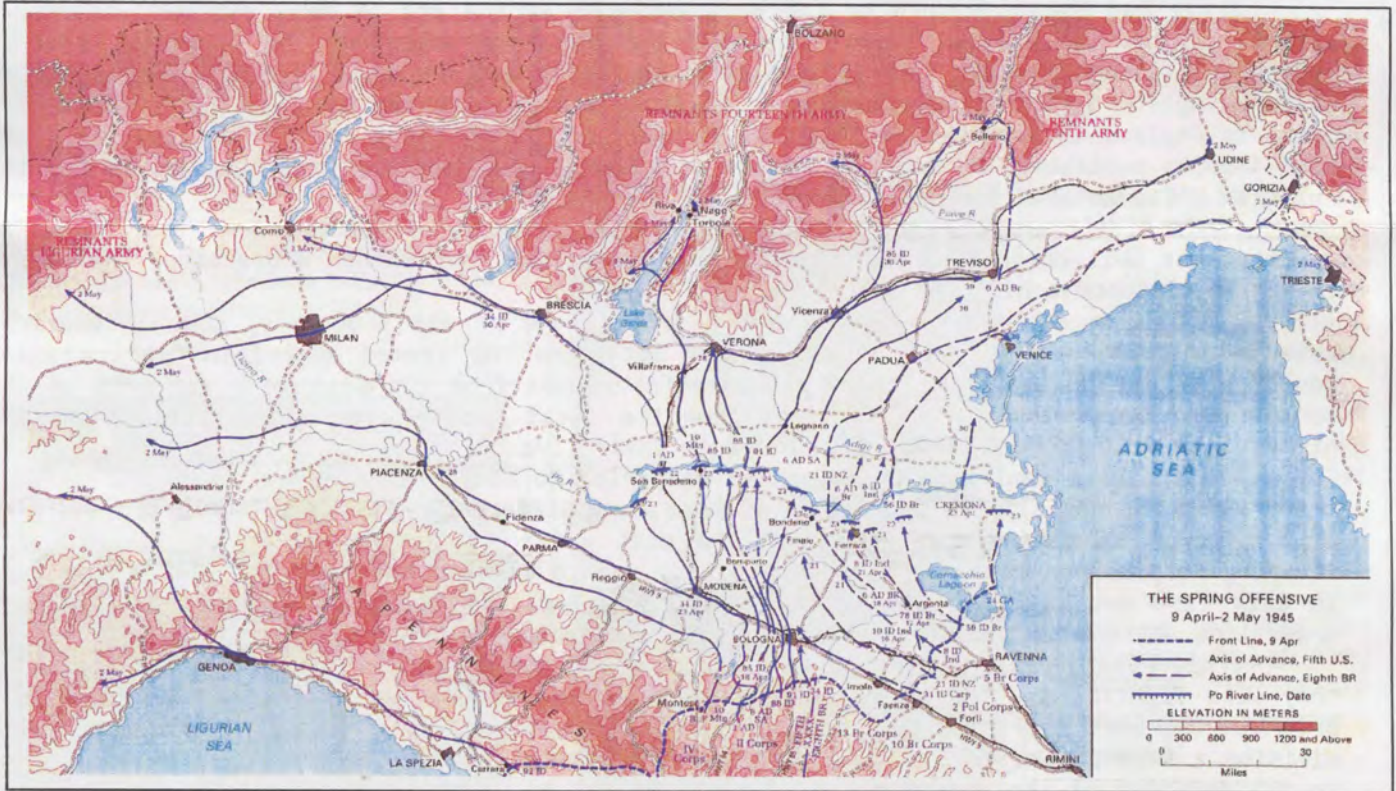
Everyone in America read his stories and loved Ernie Pyle. He was a true American.



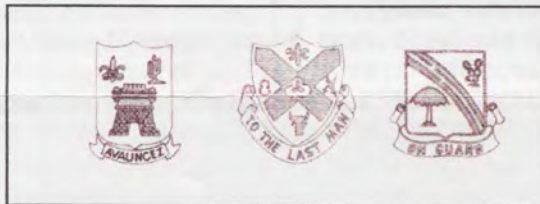
# Po Valley Campaign: World War II, 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

## 5 April – 2 May, 1945

It is April 1945 and the 34<sup>th</sup> Red Bull Infantry Division is fighting in Northern Italy. The Germans are trying to defend a wide front and prevent an allied breakthrough to the Austrian border. Progress against a determined German defense is slow, but ultimately superior Allied firepower and lack of German reserves take their toll. The 34<sup>th</sup>, advancing north and then west, liberates the key cities of Bologna and Milan. The division captures 40,000 prisoners and, finally, accepts the surrender of the German 34<sup>th</sup> Division on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. This will be the last of 500 days in combat for the 34<sup>th</sup> Red Bull Inf Div. Just six days later, the war in Europe ends on May 8<sup>th</sup> 1945.



Crests of the  
133<sup>rd</sup>, 135<sup>th</sup> and  
168<sup>th</sup> Inf Regts



**Final Roll Call**  
Philip Fields, Cannon 168<sup>th</sup>  
Darrell Turner, 168<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Robert Sherman, 168<sup>th</sup> Inf  
John Appelhons, 133<sup>rd</sup> Inf  
George Frode, A-133<sup>rd</sup> Inf  
Henry Grover, 133<sup>rd</sup> Inf  
Wayne Robinson, 34<sup>th</sup> Div  
John McQuatters, 133<sup>rd</sup> Inf  
Harold Canady, 34<sup>th</sup> Div  
Ross Russell, 168<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Thurston Hammersley, 168<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Russell "Bill" Smith, 133<sup>rd</sup> Inf

Harry Langin, B -168<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Ralph Hess, H-168<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Horace "Bill" Reeve 34<sup>th</sup> Div  
Dick Tennant, 34<sup>th</sup> Div  
Paul Allumbaugh, E-168<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Minoru Tamayose, B-100<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Yoshitoshi Monji, HQ-100<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Ted Sato, A-100<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Masato Kodama, HQ-100<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Yubun Nohara, D-100<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Earl Wingate, 133<sup>rd</sup> Inf  
Max Schober, 125<sup>th</sup> FA  
Michael Dalosin, 34<sup>th</sup> Div

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL:

It's time to renew your membership if you don't have a O, L, or W on your address label of the mailing.

The Association dues for one year (September – August) are \$10. This provides 3 newsletters per year plus information on Association activities such as the national meeting, and events. Members who have inadvertently let their membership lapse are encouraged to reactivate their account with the association by paying the \$10 for the new 2010 year to:

**34<sup>th</sup> Division Association**  
Building A-9, Museum  
7105 NW 70<sup>th</sup> Ave