



34th Infantry Division Association
7105 NW 70th Avenue, Cp Dodge, A-9
Johnston, Iowa 50131-1824

NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2008

34th Infantry Division Association

2008 Reunion 4-7 Sep 2008 Des Moines, IA

The 2008 Reunion of the 34th Infantry Division will be held 4-7 September 2008 in Des Moines, IA. The site of the reunion will be the Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites on Merle Hay Road. This is the same location that we had it in 2007.

This change is made because of the challenges that our President, S. Don Singlestad had in getting the required amount of help to conduct this activity. This is not to say that Don did not give his full and undivided attention to this project, on the contrary, he made a great effort to organize and coordinate.

I want to thank Don for his efforts and the long battle to get it done, but it was not to be. The annual national reunion is for all current and past soldiers who have served with the 34th Infantry Division during peace time or war. We especially want to invite our young men and women who have served with Red Bull units during the Cold War and "The War on Terror" in Iraq, Afghanistan and in Homeland Defense.

We also encourage family members of former "Red Bull" soldiers to attend and make an acquaintance you're your fathers' old war buddies. More details will follow in the Spring issue of the newsletter.

I would appreciate your help in giving me some ideas of the activities and entertainment that you would like to do or have during the Reunion. All ideas will be accepted, however not all may be feasible or practical, but they will be considered. Thank you.

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF YOU.

Your Secretary/Treasurer:

SGM (Ret) Don Prock, 515-265-3546, or the Gold Star Museum 515-252-4531, for more information.
The Email for Don Prock is csmprock@aol.com

34th Division Assn Chaplain, Sgt Howard D. Ashcraft Passes

Howard Dale Ashcraft, 84, departed this life Saturday, Dec 1, 2007 for his journey home to eternal peace. He was preceded in death by Kathleen Ashcraft, his wife of 53 years; Ronald Ashcraft, his son of 59 years. He is survived by his son, Kim Ashcraft; grandsons, Dennis Ashcraft and his wife, Jodi, and Rodney Ashcraft; great granddaughters, Taylor & Katie Ashcraft; former wife, Pat Smith.

Howard was a self-made man. He founded Ashcraft Adjusting Company in 1961, Ashcraft Sporting Goods in 1969 and Ashcraft Associates in 1981. He authored two books, "As You Were" and "Moment to My Memories." A WWII veteran, he fought in Italy as a member of Cannon Company, 168th Infantry Regiment, 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division. His military devotion lasted throughout his adult life, and he served as chaplain of the Red Bull Division Association for the Tri-State and National reunions.



Howard was born in Clarksburg, WV and attended high school in Lumberport, WV. His parents separated when he was 14 years old and Howard said he had to learn to be self-reliant. When he entered the army for WWII he stated, "he was the better man for the experiences he learned by growing up with only his father and brothers." He declared in one of his books, that, "all that I am or ever hope to be, is owed to my father." He was discharged from the army as a, Motor Section Sgt.

A memorial service was held on Tuesday, December 4, at the West Chapel of Bennett Funeral Home, in Richmond, VA. The family thanks everyone for their prayers and thoughts.

National Office- 34th Infantry Division Assn

The National Office is located at the Iowa Gold Star Museum on Camp Dodge in the suburb of Johnston.

Address:

34th Division Association
Gold Star Museum, Bldg A-9
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Johnston, Iowa 50131

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Association Website www.34indiv.org

CSM (Ret) Don Prock

Secretary/Treasurer

515.252.4531

61th Reunion for the 34 Inf Div Assn

4-7 September 2007

Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites

4800 Merle Hay Road

Urbandale (Des Moines), Iowa

Tri-State Reunion

July 10-13 , 2008

Holiday Inn, Pittsburg, PA

See the 34th Division Association Website.



ORIGINAL AMERICANS—Company H boasts eight Indian enlisted men, all from the Tama reservation, who are being trained to operate "walkie-talkie" radio units in Indian language to confuse the enemy if the messages are intercepted. Resting in quarters are, left to right: Mike Wayne, Edward Benson, Dewey Roberts, Frank Sanache, Judie Wayne (reclining) and Malvin Twain (rear, sitting). Standing at the rear are Willard Sanache and Dewey Youngbear.

When Company H, 168th Infantry Regiment was mobilized in 1941, eight Meskwaki Indians were members of the company. They were trained to be Code Talkers in the 34th Division. Seven of the men would serve in North Africa and Italy with the 168th.

34th ID Association Officers

The current officers were elected as follows:

President	Don Singlestad F/135 Inf
1 st Vice President	Richard Holmes A113 AAA
2 nd Vice President	John Ray
SGT at Arms	Mildred Fencil
Chaplain	Open
Historian/Web	Pat Skelly 133 Inf
Trustees 1 year	Ben Krall 133 Inf
	Ellen Ankrum 133 Inf
	Phil Daurio
Trustees 2 years	Lloyd Jerome
	John Churchman
	Russell Bierl 194 FA
Trustees 3 years	Roque Riojas 135 Inf
	Martin Winkle G/133 Inf
	Mike Beaman 168 Inf

Association President - Don Singlestad

Don Singlestad was with Company F/ 135 Inf, Owatonna, MN. When the National Guard was activated for WWII in Feb 41 he trained with the division at Camp Claiborne, LA. He fought with the 135th in North Africa and Italy. At wars end Don was a Tech Sergeant. His address is 16127 Dakota Shores Dr, Park Rapids, MN 56470 Phone 218-732-7360

World War II, 34th Infantry Division

Motto- "Attack, Attack, Attack"

The 34th "Red Bull" Infantry Division, was a National Guard division that was mobilized February 10, 1941. After training at Camp Claiborne, LA and participation in the Louisiana Maneuvers, the Division was the first to arrive in Europe, increments arriving in North Ireland, January 26, 1942.

The 34th Division participated in the invasion of North Africa, November 7, 1942. The Division was credited with cracking the Axis lines at Hill 609 leading to the end of the War in Africa.

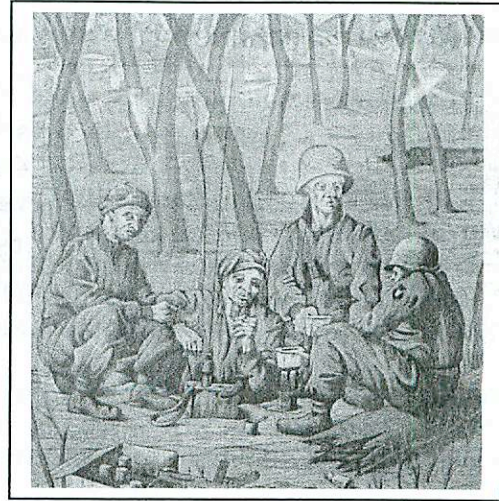
The Division arrived at Salerno Beachhead in Italy, September 22, 1943 and earned streamers for Tunisia, Naples-Foggia, Anzio, Rome, Arno, North Apennines, and Po Valley.

By wars end the Division had amassed 517 days of combat. One or more of the fabulous "Red Bull" Division units were engaged in combat with the enemy 611 days - more combat than any division in theater.

The 34th Division's Fighting Artist – CPT Baron Rudolph Von Ripper

By: LTC (Ret) Michael J. Musel

The 34th Infantry Division's WW II combat history in Italy was displayed after the war on a series of 30 original etchings developed by Lieutenant Von Ripper who lived the life of a front line soldier during the war. Von Ripper joined the division as a War Department artist in Africa just prior to the 34th Division departure for Italy in 1943. After his assignment as an artist, Von Ripper found a way to ease himself into a combat role. In the beginning he accompanied reconnaissance patrols to obtain subject material for his artistic assignments. Demonstrating combat skills, Von Ripper then received permission to personally lead patrols while continuing the subject matter collection.



Major General Charles W. Ryder, commander of the 34th Division, described Von Ripper's work as "accomplished in the front lines during the fighting, where he was able to sense the spirit of men in action." General Ryder goes on to say "While in no way required to, he volunteered to lead patrols behind the German lines, and many times fought with the vanguard of the Division. He was twice wounded and was promoted from sergeant to 1st Lieutenant for valor in action on the field of battle." Von Ripper had no love for the Nazi's and his nickname, "Jack the Ripper," was earned because of the frequent patrols he led and his single excursions behind the lines wherein he was credited with killing sixty-three Germans.

Von Ripper was born in 1905 in Klausenburg, a provincial capital in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His family included artists, statesmen, and soldiers. Von Ripper's father, a general in the Imperial Austrian Army died in 1918 of wounds he suffered in World War I. Von Ripper followed the artistic instincts of his family heritage as a young man and studied at the art academy in Dusseldorf, Germany. In 1929 he married Dorothea Sternheim an artist who was the daughter of a German playwright. Von Ripper hated the Nazi party philosophy and when Hitler seized control over Germany in 1933, Von Ripper and his wife emigrated to Paris.

Later, Von Ripper fought in Spain during the Spanish Civil War with the Republican forces (anti-German). He was wounded and invalided out and decided to move to the United States knowing he would be a marked man with the Nazi's in power in Europe.

Immediately after Pearl Harbor he volunteered for the U. S. Army. Because of his previous wounds and partially disabled status, he was accepted only as a combat artist. With the 34th Division Von Ripper developed the combat leadership skills that would earn him a battlefield commission. Von Ripper ended the war behind the German lines in the Balkans disrupting and destroying German communications and organizing underground resistance to the enemy. He earned two Silver Stars, and two Purple Hearts. Baron Rudolph Charles Von Ripper died of a heart attack at Vallensa, on the Spanish island of Majorca, at the age of fifty-five in 1960. The art work is displayed at the Gold Star Museum at Camp Dodge and the 2nd Brigade HQ's, 34th Division, in Boone, IA.

Correction on WWII, Lord Haw-Haw Article & 133rd Infantry Regiment

We have a correction to make on the Lord Haw-Haw article about the deployment of the 34th Division to Europe in WWII. **Carroll Baber, A/133rd Inf** and **John Gorman, 133rd Inf**, both sent us a note to point our errors about which battalion was on the HMS Straithard.

1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment and special troops were aboard the HMS Straithard that departed from New York Harbor on Jan 26th, 1942, and not the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, as the article stated. The 1st Bn, 133rd, was the first regiment to arrive in Northern Ireland.

Also, the photo shown was not of the actual ship, HMS Straithard, but of 133rd Regt on a transport "Ligher" that transferred the soldiers from the larger ship to the dock or shore. Thank you gentlemen. This article has generated much discussion and brought back many memories.

Messages Seeking information about Soldiers of the 34th Division WWII

(These are email messages posted on the 34th Div Assn WEB Site. Can anyone help with answers to these questions)

THarper2@cox.net Posted by [Tyler Harper](#) My dad, William Harper, was a Heavy Weapons Platoon Leader with the 133rd in Italy and Co Commander. His Company Commander was a Captain Stone and their 1SG was a Clem McNaughton. Dad was with the 133rd from April 1944 to August 1945. He passed away in February 1981. I finally got a copy of his DD214 and would welcome any information from anyone. Tyler Harper

celtictrinity@yahoo.com Posted by [Maureen D'Arcy](#) Hello. I would be interested in hearing from anyone who knew, or knew of my father, Patrick J. Ryan of Cannon Company, 133rd Infantry Regiment, hometown, Bklyn, NY. Thank you. Ryan's Daughter, Maureen

tclevenger@blountcountyschools.net Posted by [Tim O. Clevenger](#) I'm looking for anyone with family that was wounded on May 29, 1944. This would have been with company "F" near the town of Villa Crocetta. Forty two men died on May 29, 1944 from the 168th. Nineteen were from company "F". My great Uncle was killed by a sniper. His name was PFC Frank Clay. Can anyone help? Tim Clevenger

tjk@surry.net Posted by [Travis King](#) I am trying to find out information about my grandfater, William Franklin Hiatt. He was in the 133 infantry. He was a POW in Germay Stalag 7A. Travis King

agravens@ndep.nv.gov
My father was Donald A. Gravenstein from Grundy Center Ia. He fought in WWII with the Battery B & F, 185th Field Artillery, Iowa National Guard. I know it is a long shot but wondered if anyone knew him. He died In Denver, Colorado at the age of 55 in 1975. I have pictures, discharge records, dog tag and military ID. His discharge records show that he received two bronze stars but I do not know if they were awarded for valor or meritorious service. I would appreciate any information you may have. Thanks. Art Gravenstein

dalemeade@aol.com Posted by [Dale R. Meade, Ph.D.](#) Andy Lifer was captured in Faid Pass and was taken to Stalag 2B. Later he was transferred to work on a farm near Kesserg (SP?). We are looking for information on his work farm time and would like to identify exactly where he was held on that work farm. He was liberated Friday the 13th in April and 1945 near Magdeburg, Germany. If you have any information of the captivity period and the death march that began in mid-February and ended with liberation, please contact me. Andy is in fairly good health and lives in Mansfield, Ohio. Dr. Dale Meade

bobbale@rocketmail.com Posted by [Robert Bale](#) My dad, Walter F. Bale, a WWII veteran and member of CO K 133rd INF passed away on 25 March 2006. He spoke very little of his experiences of WWII and I wish I could know more about those times. His discharge papers say that he was in the North Appennines and Po Valley battles/campaigns. If you knew him or wish to share your memories of those battles please email me. Thank you all and God Bless, Bob Bale.

bernard.leftault@us.army.mil & autwo@yahoo.com Seeking information about WWII military service and campaigns of the 175th Field Artillery Bn, 34th Inf Div, VII Corps, serving with 34th Division Artillery in support of the 168th Infantry Regiment in Africa and Italy. Preparing a Veterans Day tribute to members of the unit still alive. Seeking stories, photos, information on unit members, and basically anything else of interest for a tribute. I am a son-in-law to a former member of the unit. Bernard Leftault

1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Returns from Iraq Deployment

The 1st Battalion 133rd Infantry Regiment returned from Iraq to a cheering throng of family and friends at the Waterloo's Waterfront Stadium on July 25, 2007. The Soldiers and their families were greeted by Waterloo Mayor Tim Hurley and the Adjutant General, Maj Gen Ron Dardis, but the focus of the soldiers were on the thousands of families and friends that had come to welcome them home. The General was quoted as saying, "Soldiers you are heroes in my eyes, and I know you'll say, 'General we're just Soldiers being Soldiers and doing Soldiers work,' and that's true, you are." He then expressed the gratitude felt by many in the audience. We thank you for your extraordinary service to your nation. It's great to have you back and we are proud to serve with you. Thank you," he said.

With the simple words, "Dismissed," the Soldiers were reunited once more with their loved ones. Amongst the hugs, the smiles and the tears, it was official – the 640 "Ironman" Iowans were home at last. Mayor Hurley summed it up best when he said "It wasn't the same without you. Thank God, you're home.

The "Ironman Battalion," is comprised of units located in Waterloo (HHC, and Det 1 of Company B), Dubuque (Companies A and D), Oelwein (Company B), Iowa Falls (Company C), and Charles City (Det 1 of HQ's Company). The Iowa soldiers served as a battalion of the 1st Brigade Combat Team of the 34th Infantry Division.

- The 1st Battalion, 194th Field Artillery, Iowa Army National Guard, is comprised of units located in Fort



Dodge (HHB Battery), Storm Lake (Det 1 of HQ's Battery), Spencer (Battery A), Algona (Battery B), and Estherville (Battery C).

-Company E, 1st Battalion, 334th Brigade Support Battalion (BSB), Iowa Army National Guard, is comprised of approximately 130 Soldiers from more than 21 units located throughout the state of Iowa. The units operate as the Forward Support Company (FSC) for 1st Bn, 133rd Infantry, and deployed to Iraq as Company F, 1st Battalion, and 134th Brigade Support Battalion, Iowa Army National Guard.

The 640 man battalion served 16 months in Iraq and 22 months on Active Duty. Two soldiers of the organization, SFC Scott E. Nisely and SGT Kampha B. Sourivong, lost their lives during *combat operations*. The battalion provided security for more than 500 combat logistical patrols and escorted 62,000 trucks for more than 4.1 million vehicle miles in Al Anbar province, Iraq. The 1-133rd assembled at riverfront Stadium to a crown of over 10,000 family and friends. The 133rd Infantry Battalion is the longest serving infantry battalion in the Army Guard.

In August 2004, Company A, 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry deployed to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to perform security duties as part of Operation Desert Spring. The 1st Bn, 133rd Infantry last deployed in 2003-04 for the Multinational Force and Observers ("MFO") peacekeeping mission in the Sinai Desert.

The People of Iowa welcome you home, and Thank you and your families for your sacrifices and dedication to our nation. We are proud of you.



Human Statue of Liberty (Goddess of Liberty), Camp Dodge, Iowa:

Eighteen thousand soldiers of the Camp Dodge, 163rd Depot Brigade formed the silhouette of the Statue of Liberty for the renowned photograph shot by Chicago, Illinois, photographers Mole and Thomas on August 22, 1918 at 2:30 p.m.

“COL. William Newman, commander of the 163rd Depot Brigade selected the statue of liberty as the formation for the brigade picture.” “COL. Rush S. Wells, Regimental Commander, had charge of the formation.” COL Newman was an 1893 graduate of the U.S. Military Academy.

“*Beginning at 1:00 p.m.* companies were assembled and by 2:30 the proper formation was completed and the photograph taken. The ground was marked out by blocks, in the shape of the statue, which facilitated getting the soldiers into correct formation. From the goddess’ feet to the tip of the torch the symbolical statue measured 499 yards. The picture was taken from a tower forty feet high, constructed for the occasion. On account of the mass formation and the heat twelve men fainted and were carried from the field.” The high temperature reported for the day was 94 degrees.

The photograph was taken with an 11" x 14" view camera following several day’s worth of work by the photographers to set up the image on the ground using thousands of yards of white tape. In addition, substantial coordination was required between the photographers and COL. Newman’s staff to ensure the various folds of the gown, the bible, the left hand, and the crown was properly outlined by soldiers wearing white shirts. The design for the living picture was laid out on the drill ground at Camp Dodge, west of current building S 34 and Maintenance Road. “The large photographs were on sale for \$1 at all the exchanges in the camp. Many soldiers sent the photo home to their families.

The layout at the reported 499 yards was nearly 5 times the length of the actual Statue of Liberty and the viewer will note that the correct perspective is maintained. The number of men in the various parts include: Flame of Torch – 12,000 men, Torch – 2,800, Right Arm – 1,200 men, Body, Head and balance of figure – 2,000 men.

Some have speculated that the soldiers in the photograph were members of the 88th Division who had been in training at Camp Dodge. This is erroneous as on August 16, 1918 all organizations of the Division were reported to have left Camp Dodge. The soldiers in the picture were members of the 163rd Depot Brigade under the command of COL Newman.

Most of the information contained in this brief history was found in various volumes of the *Camp Dodger*. “The *Camp Dodger* emerged on September 21, 1917, at Camp Dodge as an official publication of the 88th Infantry Division, a unit composed largely of draftees from the Midwest and forming part of the National Army.

The *Camp Dodger* was published weekly at Camp Dodge, Iowa, and later in France, during and shortly after the First World War. Editor-in-chief of the paper was Lieutenant Laurence R. Fairall, from Iowa City, who served as a Intelligence Officer in the 3rd Bn, 350th Inf Regt, 88th Div. Information on the photo was found in the *Camp Dodger* issues of Aug 9th & 23, and Sep 20th & 23rd of 1918.

