

34th Infantry Division Association

7105 NW 70th Ave
Johnston, IA 50131

The Email for the Association is:

goldstarmuseum@iowa.gov

WEB Site is: www.34indiv.org



Winter 2010 Issue -

The 34th ID Assn. newsletter is published three times a year. Coming Issues are, Summer 2010 and Fall 2010.

34th Infantry Division Association 2010

Reunion – Des Moines, IA

The 2010 Reunion of the 34th Infantry Division will be held September 9-10-11 in Des Moines.

Our Association President, Pat Skelly, made the announcement at the 62st reunion. Please note that the dates will be on the first Thursday, Friday and Saturday after the Labor Day weekend.

The 2010 National Reunion of the 34th Infantry Division Assn. will be hosted by the Des Moines Chapter with assistance from other Iowa Chapters. Des Moines is the traditional home of the 34th Infantry Division and the site of the 34th Infantry Division World War II monument. The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum will be open to support the activities of the 34th Infantry Division Association members.

The reunion site will be the Holiday Inn on Merle Hay Road in Des Moines. The Hotel is located two blocks off of Interstate 35 / 80. Information on reservations will be published in the Summer 2010 newsletter.

Current officers of the association who will support us for the reunion are; President, Pat Skelly, 1st VP, COL Ron Albrecht, 2nd VP, John Sunins, 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 Fencil.

WAR FOR THE 34TH INF DIV IN ITALY AS DESCRIBED BY ERNIE PYLE

by LTC (Ret.) Michael J. Musel

The 34th Infantry Division as described by World War II War Correspondent Ernie Pyle in his book Brave Men. Ernie Pyle visited many different types of military units while working in the European Theater during the Second World War. Using Pyle's words from the chapter titled "The Fabulous Infantry" we're going to revisit some of the 34th Division soldiers' experiences in Italy during WW II.

Ernie Pyle may not have carried a rifle in direct combat but in reading through his book, you'll quickly find that he did not shy away from any mission the unit he adopted, his term, was going on. Here are some examples of his writing about the 34th ID based upon his experiences:

He writes, "I had been with the 34th Div Red Bulls as far back as June of 1942, in Ireland, and I had a feeling about it. In Italy I checked in with the Regimental CP and they passed me down to my old company. Of the nearly two hundred men who came overseas in my company, only eight were left.

(Continued on Page 3)



This is a December 2009 photo of the new addition to the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge which houses the 34th Infantry Division World War II records, artifacts and Division Association office.

National Office-34th Infantry Division Assn.

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

Phone 515-252-4531

Secretary: COL (Ret) Russ Bierl

E-mail: goldstarmuseum@iowa.gov

Association Website www.34indiv.org

Treasurer: LTC (Ret) Mike Musel

E-mail: michael.musel@iowa.gov

515-252-4531

Historian: Pat Skelly

E-mail: webmaster@34indiv.org

508-524-3948

63th Reunion for the 34 Inf Div Assn

9-10-11 September 2010

Holiday Inn, Des Moines, IA (*Information in the upcoming Summer 2010 News Letter*)

A Note from Association President Pat Skelly

Greeting to All Red Bulls,

2009 has been a challenging and fulfilling year for me in many ways, especially being honored to serve as your Association President. There are many changes and challenges at this time for me, for the other association and chapters officers, for all of our members.

Personally I've had the pleasure this year of attending, as a Red Bull historian, conferences at Norwich University, the US Army War College, and the US Army Center of Military History. Our Red Bull national reunion in July at the US Army Heritage and Education Center and the Gettysburg National Military Park was a big success. We owe a special thanks to our Tri-State Chapter and to the Northeast Chapter of the 88th Infantry Division Association for their assistance in organizing that event.

Then in September I was again honored as your President to participate in a rededication of the Gothic Line Memorial Park memorial at the site of our Hill 810 assault in September 1944. Joining me in placing a wreath to all the fallen soldiers was Maj. Gen. Rick Nash, commanding today's 34th Infantry Division. World War II combat veterans Don Singlestad (a Past President of our Association) and Michael Elliott of Philadelphia were joined there by Red Bull family members and a number of our Italian friends for several related events.

That "Red Bull family members" is a very important phrase in my president's report. I salute and thank you all. Our Association's successes these days are in large measure due to the families of our combat veterans who are stepping forward to fill the ranks and offices of this great organization. Please keep it up!

Now I hope you can join me this coming September at Camp Dodge for our national reunion and our welcome at the greatly expanded Gold Star Museum.

Patrick Skelly,
veteran, and a son of the Ironman
Battalion

Final Roll Call to Date 2009

Howard Hicks A Co 168th Inf
Bruce Abercrombie D Co, 168th Inf
Walter Mondor D Co, 168th Inf
Maurice Beavis E Co, 168th Inf
Glen Armstrong, 34th Inf Div
William Glaesser, 34th Inf Div
Eugene Linden, 34th Inf Div
John c. Miller, 34th Inf Div
Fred Topal, 34th Inf Div
Victor Knoff, 34th Inf Div
Benjamin Graham Jr., 135th Inf
Henry Jordan, 168th Inf
Bernard Cohn, 34th Inf Div
John Donnell, Cannon Co, 135th Inf
Joe Robinson, 734th Ord Co
Wallace Hollinger, 125th FA
Hubert Aanonsen, 125th FA
John Thorstad, 125th FA
Floyd Berg, 125th FA
George Kubeck, 34th Inf Div
Frank Lamantia, 168th Inf
Lars H. Martens, 34th Inf Div
Richard W. Smith B Co, 133rd Inf
Ewald Sprathoff, C Co, 135 Inf
George Miyahara, C Co, 100th Inf Bn
Tony Miyasako, C Co, 100th Inf Bn
Kenneth Nunogawa, C/100th Inf Bn
Hiroshi Hashimoto, C/ 100th Inf Bn
Thomast Kariya, C Co, 100th Inf Bn
Tomoharu Yontanza, 100th Inf Bn
Thomas Kadota, D Co, 100th Inf Bn
Conrad Kurahara, B Co, 100th Inf Bn
Yasuo Iwasaki, C Co, 100th Inf Bn
Teruo Ishii, A Co, 100th Inf Bn
Seian Hokama, A Co, 100th Inf Bn
Harold Kanemura, A Co, 100th Inf Bn
Joe Muramatsu, B Co, 100th Inf Bn
Yeiki Matsui, B Co, 100th Inf Bn

Help Us Find These 34th Inf Div Soldiers

Their mail is being returned to us. They are life members and we lost their address. Please call, mail or Email their address to us.

515-252-4531

George Webb, Life Member, 34th Inf Div

Marion Strickler, Life Members, 34th Inf Div

Randall Campbell, Life Members, 34th Inf Div

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*May they have no more hills to
climb,
nor cold, nor rain, nor mud, nor
enemy fire,
and may they now rest in Peace.*

Veterans Day Meeting of 34th Division Red Bulls

World War II veteran Cpl Joe Boitnott met up with a fellow 34th Infantry Division combat veteran, Chaplain (Major) Mike Crawford, at the Iowa Gold Star Museum on Veterans Day.

Joe is a WWII veteran who was mobilized as a heavy weapons machine gunner with Company D, 168th Infantry Regiment, from Des Moines, in February 1941. He had enlisted in the Iowa Army National Guard in December 1939 and took his basic training with the company during Monday evening IDT drills and their two week Summer Camp at Camp Ripley, Minnesota. After the war, Joe continued to serve in the U.S. Army Air Corps and U.S. Air Force, in Korea and SW Asia, until he retired as a MSGT.

Major Mike Crawford, from Fort Dodge, is currently assigned to the 734th RSG at Camp Dodge. He supports the 2nd (BCT) Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, in Boone, as a full time Chaplain. Major Crawford served in Afghanistan in 2004-05 with Task Force 168th on the PRT Security Mission. He later served in Kosovo in 2007-08 as the Chaplain with the 194th Field Artillery Battalion.

Joe Boitnott says he remembers the mobilization of Co D, 168th Inf, Regt, Iowa National Guard, from Des Moines in February 1941, like it was yesterday. They assembled at the Argon Armory in downtown Des Moines and spent their first weeks after mobilization processing their paper work and taking physicals. They billeted in the Younkers warehouse by the Rock Island Railroad depot.

The men were given meal tickets to eat at the Bolton & Hay Restaurant on 6th and Mulberry in Des Moines. There was little training they could do as the entire Heavy Weapons Company only had one M1917A1 Water Cooled Machine gun and it was in Newton because of the Maytag factory labor strike. His company was armed with 1903 Springfield rifles and they were not issued M1 Garand rifles until after they were in combat in North Africa.

Veterans Day is a special time for our living service members. According to Colonel Russ Bierl, **“The Iowa Gold Star** Military Museum will always be open on two of the most important holidays of

the year for veterans, which are Memorial Day and **Veterans Day.”**



Chaplain (Major) Mike Crawford (Left) meets with a fellow 34th Infantry Division Combat Veteran, Cpl (Ret) Monti Joe Boitnott at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum at Camp Dodge on Veterans Day.

(Ernie Pyle Continued from Page 1)... Those eight men had everything a military would want in a soldier. They had been at it so long they had become more soldier than civilian. Their life consisted wholly and solely of war; for they were and always had been front-line infantry men. They survived because the fates were kind to them, certainly – but also because they had become hard and immensely wise in animal like ways of self-preservation. None of them liked war. They all wanted to go home, but they had been at it so long they knew how to take care of themselves and how to lead others.

Around a little group like them every company was built. Take a handful of old timers, together so long that THEY formed a little family of their own, all sergeants and platoon leaders, such as Tag Allumbaugh, Knobby Knobbs, Jack Pierson, First Sergeant Bill Wood, of Council Bluffs, Iowa, Sergeant Pete Connors of Imogene, Iowa, and Lieutenant Libertore of South Carolina. One day the Lieutenant made some remark that caused Jack Pierson to say, **‘Why, you horse’s behind, it ain’t that way at all.’ Even in fun you don’t talk that way to an officer until you’ve been through that famous valley of death and out again together.** Then Lt. Libertore stated telling me all that he **had to put up with: ‘Now take Tag and Knobby.** They treat me like dirt. They browbeat me all the time.

(Continued on Page 5)

THE ONLY WWII DESERTION TO END IN EXECUTION

By M/Sgt. John Talbott (Ret.)

White the vast majority of the eight million of men who went to war during World War Two performed their duty honorably, a small percentage, for whatever reason didn't. As with every war Americans have participated in, a number of men "Abandoned that to which a certain degree of loyalty is considered due." This act is referred to as desertion.

Thousands of men were criminals and were wearing an Army uniform in Europe. Hundreds were caught, court-martialed, and went to the stockade. In the cases of rape and murder, the courts found that sixty-five men would be shot. General Eisenhower had to pass final judgment and changed sixteen of the sentences to life in the stockade while the remaining forty-five were shot.

Desertion was also punishable by death by firing squad. The Army had not carried out this type of sentence since 1864. In the European Theatre desertion was a serious problem because it was so easy to do. There were no reported cases in the Pacific Theatre because of the nature of the combat and very few people of Asian descent in the Army. While only .02% of soldiers deserted, almost all of those soldiers were eventually returned to their units after their brief sojourn.

One of the most prominent cases of desertion was the case of Pvt. Eddie Slovik who entered the European Theater on August 20, 1944 as a replacement for the 109th Inf. Regt. of the 28th Division.

When his unit moved out during the night, he became separated and hooked up with some Canadians for six weeks until they turned him over to Army MP's. Pvt. Slovik turned over a written confession thinking he would spend the rest of the war in a stockade, but that was not to be. The Siegfried Line fighting had caused in increase in desertions and the army was looking to set an example. Slovik was it! He was found guilty on November 21st and sentenced to execution. Gen. Eisenhower reviewed and confirmed the sentence on December 23rd during the Battle of the Bulge, which made desertion an even bigger problem. One month later, on January 31st, 1945, at 10:04 A.M., a firing squad picked from the 109th Infantry Regiment did not flinch at their onerous duty. They felt he had abandoned them and had no sympathy toward his situation.

Slovik's wife spent the rest of her life pleading to the Army to have her husband pardoned. She died a few years ago with no pardon forthcoming for Eddie Slovik, the only WWII deserter to be executed.

Des Moines Chapter News

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Gold Star Museum

16 Feb 10 Wild Game Feed -Brian Oeffner
16 Mar 10 Catered Meal -Mike Musel

Social Hour: 1730 hours. Dinner: 1830 hours.

Current Officers:

CW5 (Ret) Herman Poggensee – President
515-331-5705

email at: herman.poggensee@us.army.mil

LTC (Ret) Larry Stougaard – Vice President

LTC (Ret) Ken Andresen -Secretary/Treasurer

Tri State Chapter News

John Monatti (President)
3783 Trenton Ct, Westlake, OH 44145
440-871-8074

Steve & Jacquie Tennant (Treasurer)
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Rebecca Snyder Phillips (Secretary)
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Council Bluffs Chapter News

Lloyd Jerome (President)
208 Sylvan Dr, Council Bluffs, IA 51503
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Robert Wege (Secretary/ Treasurer)
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csmbob@msn.com

Museum Store - 34th Inf Div Assn Price List – Dec 2009

34 th Red Bull Polo Shirts Size _____	\$ 22.00	34 th Red Bull Div Insignia Pins (Lapel Pin)	\$3.50
34 th Red Bull T-Shirt Size _____	\$12.00	Red Bull Patch (Black & Red)	\$3.50
34 th Div Red Bull Ball Cap	\$10.00	34 th Div Refrigerator Magnet	\$1.00
34 th Red Bull Window Decal	\$1.50	34 th Div Red Bull Neck Tie	\$8.00
34 th Red Bull Jacket Size _____	\$30.00	34 th Div Red Bull Flag (3X5')	\$65.00
34 th Red Bull Coffee Mug	\$6.00	Red Bull Memo Pads, 50 Sheet	\$1.50
		Dogfaces Who Smiled Through Tears (The 34 th Red Bull Infantry Division in WWII)	\$30.00
		Citizen Soldier in WWII Story of the 168 th Inf from Lt /CPT/ MAJ / LTC Ed Bird	\$10.00
		2-133 rd Inf Bn Mobilization for Vietnam	\$8.00

Books Available:

*Add \$5.00 for shipping any Book. or * Add \$3.00 for shipping any other items.

Sub Total \$ _____

Shipping \$ _____

Total \$ _____

Name: _____

Street Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____

Email: lowagoldstarmuseum@iowa.gov

or Call 515-252-4531 if you have a question.

34th Infantry Division Association
7105 NW 70th Ave, Camp Dodge, Bldg A-9
Johnston, IA 50131

.... Ernie Pyle Continued from Page 3: ...

But word came around this afternoon that six men were to be picked for rest camp and, boy, they've been sirring me to death ever since, bringing me gifts and asking if I needed anything.'

One afternoon, a couple of miles from the front, with nothing to do the Lieutenant asked if I had ever shot a carbine, I said no. Then he went to get his gun and by common consent the little circle of veterans went after theirs too. They came back with carbines, tommy guns, Garands, .45's, and the German pistol P-38. We must have shot for half an hour, I picked off the targets along with the veterans. It was really an incongruous interlude – war is full of them. Eight of the finest and most hardened soldiers in the American Army, out in picnic fashion, having fun shooting at rocks while behind the front line, where the next day they would again be shooting to kill.

We had been alerted for a night move and we collected field rations for a day and a full supply of ammunition. Full darkness came and we settled down to wait, even in heavy coats the chill came through. Every now and then the lieutenant would phone battalion for orders. Later we discovered the wire had been cut and linemen were out tracing the entire length of the wire, trying to find the break. The break was repaired but still no marching orders came. As the time dragged on, we grew colder and stiffer until finally nearly midnight, the phone rang. It was time to go. The night was utterly black. It was the dark of the moon; a soldier said this was the blackest night we've ever moved in. We were to assemble at the kitchen tent and we couldn't see it, just then a flash of fire from a nearby cannon brightened the countryside for a moment and we saw the tent, six inches from us. That's how dark it was. It took us half an hour to feel our way out of the orchard where we started from to the rough trail we were to follow. It was almost midnight when the company reached its bivouac area and dug its foxholes into the mud. Always that was the first thing to do. It became pure instinct. The drippy, misty dawn found us dispersed and hidden in the bottom of shallow, muddy depressions of our own digging, eating cold hash from C-ration cans. The men attacked just after dawn, I stayed behind when the company went forward. In the constantly circulating nature of my job, I might never again see the men in the outfit. But to me they would always be 'my' company."

The foregoing is a tiny sample of Ernie Pyle's writing about the 34th Infantry Division in Brave Men.

109th Engineer Battalion Motorcycle Photo

This is a photo of four soldiers 34th Division soldiers with their issued Harley Davidson motorcycles taken in Italy during World War II. The motorcycles pictured at this bivouac site were issued to 109th Engineer Battalion, which was a South Dakota National Guard organization. Pictured from left, Orlando C. Allemon, Bennie Kaiser, unknown and Ross Brimer. On July 21st, 1944, Bennie Kaiser, from Hot Springs, SD, was killed by a S Mine (Bouncing Betty "Schrapnellmine"), along with his buddy, John Machnik, near Vara, Italy, shortly after this photo was taken. Submitted by CW5 Duke Doering (Ret) of Rapid City, SD.

Everyone in the 109th Engineer Battalion will always remember the date of March 30th 1943 when an entire 12 man engineer squad of A Company was killed while they were unloading a truck load of 450 neutralized mines. No one ever found out why the mines exploded but suspect an enemy artillery shell hit the truck. Killed that day were Willard Bean, Robert Christensen, Cleo La Fave, Roger Loesch, Michael Marchisen, James O'Neil, Leland Ortmyer, Wayne Satre, William Stanton, Joseph Thomas, and John Yaworski.



Note from the Association President

The current Winter 2010 issue of the 34th Infantry Division Association Newsletter will be mailed to all current 34th Div Assn. National Association members as well as those Tri State Association members who are not also National Association members. We invite all Tri State members, who are not current National Members who wish to continue to receive this newsletter to complete the 34th Infantry Division National membership form, which is enclosed. We also ask all members to send their stories and questions to the National Office at Camp Dodge for publication in our coming newsletters.

We thank all our veterans for their service and wish them a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

THE ONLY WWII DESERTION TO END IN EXECUTION

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Robert Wege (Secretary/ Treasurer)
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csmbob@msn.com



34TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
 7105 NW 70TH Avenue
 Camp Dodge, Museum Bldg A-9
 Johnston, Iowa 50131

Date_____

SUBJECT: 34th Infantry Division National Membership Application

NOTE: If your address Label is (L), (W), or (O) you do not owe dues for the Current Year

(Check One Box)

- Enclosed is \$10.00 for my Annual Membership in the 34th Infantry Division Association. Annual membership period is – 1 Sep thru 31 Aug of each year.
 (Open to past and present members of units / organizations assigned to the 34th Inf Div or soldiers who have been members of the National Guard for six years or longer.)
- Enclosed is \$10.00 for my Associate Membership in the 34th Infantry Division Association. (Annual Fee) (Period is – 1 Sep thru 31 Aug of each year). (Individuals who do not meet membership requirements, ie: Spouses & Friends)
- Enclosed is \$_____ for my LIFE MEMBERSHIP in the 34th Infantry Division Association. (See Fee Schedule Below) {No Further Annual Fee}.

To Age 60	\$100.00	At age 62	\$80.00	At age 64	\$60.00
At age 61	\$90.00	At age 63	\$70.00	At age 65 & older	\$50.00

- Enclosed is \$ _____ for a donation to the operation of the 34th Inf Div Assn.
- Enclosed is \$ _____ for my donation to the 34th Inf Div Memorial Fund.
 (Maintain all monuments and annual flowers for the Cemeteries in North Africa, Italy & U.S.)

Name_____Street_____

City:_____ State:_____ ZIP:_____

E-Mail:_____ Phone Number _____

AGE_____ Military Unit/ Organization_____

Signature:_____

Note: The purpose of the 34th Infantry Division Association is to preserve the history of the divisional units and soldiers that have served their nation since 1917. The National Association schedules an annual meeting at a site designated by the hosting Chapter. Each e local chapter schedules their own activities as needed.

The National Secretary is COL (Ret) Russ Bierl who takes U.S. mail at the above address. His E Mail address is goldstarmuseum@iowa.gov The National Association WEB Site is <http://www.34infdiv.org/index.html>

The association is a Non Profit Iowa Corporation. A newsletter is sent to current members three times a year by U.S. mail. The Gold Star Military Museum maintains an office for the association. WEB site www.iowanationalguard.com Phone No 515-252-4531 or email goldstarmuseum@iowa.gov

- Enclosed is \$5.00 for my Annual Dues for the - Des Moines Chapter only of the 34th Infantry Division Association. (Annual Fee Only) (Period is – 1 Sep thru 31 Aug of each year).