

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

7105 NW 70<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Johnston, IA 50131

Association WEB Page:  
[www.34infdiv.org](http://www.34infdiv.org)

Fall 2011 Issue -  
The 34<sup>th</sup> ID Assn. newsletter is  
published three times a year.

## 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division 64th Reunion – Grand Success at Johnston, IA



The 2011 Reunion of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division was held on September 9-10 in Johnston, IA at the Stoney Creek Inn.

The 34<sup>th</sup> ID Association President duties were retained by current president COL Ron Albrecht, due to the illness of the 1st VP John Sunins and War College of LTC Steve Osborn.

We had a total of 50 members and guests attend the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Reunion Banquet. The main speaker at the reunion was the current commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div COL Ben Corell, who had recently returned with the BCT from Afghanistan. COL Corell briefed the membership on the deployment and success of the Red Bull soldiers. The WWII combat veterans of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division were given special recognition at the banquet.

President Curly Albrecht discussed his work to reestablish 34<sup>th</sup> ID association chapters in Waterloo and Minneapolis, MN and maintain the Des Moines, Council Bluffs and Tri-State Chapters.

The dates for the 2012 Reunion are now set for 14-15 Sept 2012 at the Johnston Stoney Creek Inn. Please note that the dates will be on the same weekend as the Iowa National Guard Alumni Day which will allow people to travel to one site for two events. This reunion date will be the weekend following the Iowa – ISU Foot Ball game. A special emphasis will be made to invite our young Red Bull soldiers to the 2012 reunion. During the “War on Terror” we have had four major deployments of our units to Iraq and Afghanistan. We plan a special welcome back for these soldiers at the next reunion. Watch for news on this special invite in the Winter issue of the newsletter.

Those not attending the Iowa National Guard Alumni Day will be offered an alternative event on Saturday morning of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Reunion schedule. This is also a spousal event and all are encouraged to participate. Each year we have hosted special activities at the reunion hotel.

We now have something new to offer those who use the Facebook social network. The membership will have the opportunity to follow the 34<sup>th</sup> ID Red Bull Association on Facebook thanks to the efforts of SPC David McChesney 113<sup>th</sup> Cav and SSG Ashlee Lolkus of 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT. Please check the site at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/34th-Infantry-Division-Association/168699226545671>

We encourage all Red Bull Soldiers who have a Facebook account to log on and share their stories and recommendations with their friends who share their interests. This can be a site where you may be able to track down a buddy.

In the coming years we hope to have 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association Reunion at other cities to include Minneapolis, MN, Waterloo, Cedar Rapids and Council Bluffs, IA as was done since World War II.



JOHNSTON, Iowa – World War II veterans Joe Boitnott, 168th Inf, Charles Wise 133rd Inf, Gerald Robertson 34th Special Troops, Jerry Barnett 168th Inf, and Stanley Vomacka 135th Inf were honored for their service at the reunion. Shown with the veterans are two current soldiers, COL Ben Corell (left), the commander of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and COL Curly Albrecht (right), DCSOPS for the Iowa National Guard. The photo was taken at the dining out Banquet on Saturday evening. (Photo by SSG Ashlee Lolkus.)



### Old Soldiers Meet Again.

The first time Gerald Robertson (L) met Joe Boitnott (R) is when they arrived in Camp Claiborne, LA for training with the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in the Spring of 1941 prior to WWII. They both served the entire war through Cp Claiborne, Northern Ireland, North Africa and Italy. Each year they look forward to seeing each again at the reunion. Gerald was mobilized with the 34<sup>th</sup> Special Troops Company in Council Bluffs, IA and Monte “Joe” Boitnott was mobilized with Co D, 168<sup>th</sup> Infantry in Des Moines. Myra Robertson is shown at left.

## Note from the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Assn. President

Greeting to the RED BULL TEAM!

October 2011

I give a hearty "Welcome Home" to all our returning Red Bull Soldiers for the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div. Congratulations on a job well done! And I bid the 1<sup>st</sup> Brigade Combat Team, 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div "Good Luck Greeting", after their arrival in Kuwait for another tour of duty in South West Asia.

The Association met for the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual National Reunion at the Stoney Creek Inn in Johnston, IA. We really had a great time with all our old and new members. Please read the articles in this newsletter about the reunion and plan to attend next year.

As I reflect on the past Reunion and look forward for the future of the Association we need to set our goals for the TEAM in 2012.

I believe that we have three major goals for our future as an organization. First we need to increase membership of the association with the returning RED BULL soldiers from the past ten years of deployments for the Division units. Our number two goal would be to set organizational goals for the Association, as far as why would a soldier want to join our organization. For example are we just a social organization or are we a organization with a focus of taking care of RED BULL soldiers before and after a deployment and in turn we come to social events to promote the goals of the organization for the future? Third goal would be the regeneration of our Chapters within the Association.

All of the goals would be laid out in a Five Year Plan and executed by our elected officers for our Association and appointed sub committees to achieve success we seek. So we have some work ahead of us but I truly believe that we need to focus on these goals to build a strong Red Bull Association for the future. I look forward to your support and ideals for the betterment of the organization.

Ron "Curly" Albrecht

COL Ron "Curly" Albrecht  
34th ID Association President,  
[curly.albrecht@us.army.mil](mailto:curly.albrecht@us.army.mil) 319-830-9027  
133<sup>rd</sup>, Ironman Battalion

### National Office-34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association

Iowa Gold Star Museum, Camp Dodge - Bldg 3692,  
7105 NW 70<sup>TH</sup> Ave, Johnston, IA 50131

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**Historian: Pat Skelly 508-524-3948**

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**Facebook Webmasters**

Ashlee Lolkus, David McChesney

**65<sup>th</sup> Planned Reunion** 14-15 September 2012, Johnston, IA



### 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Final Roll Call

James Machunas, SVC 175<sup>th</sup> FA  
Don G. Huckleberry, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Fredrick J Schlicht, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Leslie Wilson, 168<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Jon Jitsuzo Chinen, C 100<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Shoichi Harada, B 100<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Ralph E. Ohlgren, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Norman F. Graham, A 133<sup>rd</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Kaname Yui, A 100<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Sakai Wakakuwa, D 100<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Milton J. Spicer, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Wilbur A. Blanchard, 133<sup>rd</sup> 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Donald R. Scott, 34 ID  
John "Ray" Stinn, 168<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Dean R. McWilliams, 135<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Vincent P. DeAugustine, DR, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Terry L. Pasker, B 334<sup>th</sup> BSB, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Jac W. Spring, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Edward C. Dike Jr, HQ Co, 2- 135<sup>th</sup>  
SPC Robert L. Voakes, 164<sup>th</sup> MP Co,  
SGT Christopher Bell, 164<sup>th</sup> MP Co,  
SGT Joshua D. Powell, 164<sup>th</sup> MP Co  
SGT Devin A. Snyder, 164<sup>th</sup> MP Co  
John Hoffman, 185<sup>th</sup> FA Bn, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Laurence M. White, 135<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Robert Smith, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Donald D. Baker, 168<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Walter A. Mondor, D 168<sup>th</sup> In 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Otto Arndt, Co E 168<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Lynn W. Miller, Svc Co, 168<sup>th</sup> 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Hideo Uchida, B Co, 100<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup>  
Arthur Komiyama, HQ, 100<sup>th</sup> Inf,  
Francis Seichi Shinohara B Co, 100<sup>th</sup>  
Roy Y. Nakatani, B Co, 100<sup>th</sup> Inf,  
John L. Harms, E Co, 136 Med Regt  
Jack Kiyoto Mizushima, C Co, 100<sup>th</sup>  
George Robert Olson, Sr., 34<sup>th</sup> ID

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

Facebook 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn: <http://www.facebook.com/pages/34th-Infantry-Division-Association/168699226545671>

Internet 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn: <http://www.34infdiv.org/index.html>

Also Follow the 2-34th Red Bulls at! <http://www.dvidshub.net/units/2-34IBCT> <http://www.twitter.com/lowaRedBulls>  
<http://www.flickr.com/lowaRedBulls> <http://www.iowaredbulls.org>

1<sup>st</sup> BCT: <http://www.facebook.com/#!/MinnesotaRedBulls>

2<sup>nd</sup> BCT: <http://www.facebook.com/lowaRedBulls>

# 133<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Solders Make An Invention On The Battle Field

October 16, 2011 Army News Service

After an intense 2 1/2-hour firefight with the enemy earlier this year in Afghanistan, the members of the 1-133<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regt, 2nd BCT, 34th Inf Div, sat around later at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam and discussed the engagement. They talked about how three-man teams with crew-served weapons struggled to stay together and provide ammo to the machine guns in fluid battles.

Prior to this deployment, light infantry soldiers carried the M249 Light Machine Gun that fired the 5.56mm cartridge. Each squad now has a heavier Mk 48 Machine Gun that fires a 7.62 cartridge and gives a lot more fire power. The 7.62mm round is similar to the U.S. 30-06 cartridge that was used in the Model 1918 Machine Gun in WWII and Korea..

Staff Sgt. Vincent Winkowski said. "This was a new piece of equipment for us, and we struggled to come up with a solution for carrying and employing ammunition for the weapon. "The ammunition sacks that came with it made it too cumbersome to carry over long, dismounted patrols and especially when climbing mountains. Initially, we came up with the concept of have each of the three soldiers on the team carrying 50-round belts and just reload the Machine Gun constantly, which led to lulls of fire."

SSG Winkowski felt they could do better. He welded two ammunition cans together--one atop the other after cutting the bottom out of the top can--and strapped the fused cans to the frame of a modified ALICE (framed backpack). To that he added a MOLLE (modular, lightweight load-carrying equipment) pouch to carry other equipment.

In order to connect the 7.62 MM Machine Gun ammo belts to the ammo can in the back pack, SSG Winkowski used the aluminum feed chute assembly off of the vehicle CROWS machine gun weapon system.

"My Mk 48 gunners, Spc. Derick Morgan and Spc. Aaron McNew, who also had input to the design and evaluation, took it to the range and tested it, and it turned out to be a much better solution. On Feb. 26, 2011, our prototype "Ironman Pack" even saw its first combat use by Spc. McNew when our squad was ambushed by up to 50 fighters in a river valley, and it worked great!" "We were able to return fire immediately without having to reload the weapon after each 50 round belt of ammo."

The soldiers of the 133<sup>rd</sup> Infantry knew they had a winner, so after attaching pictures of the prototype to a request for information, Winkowski gave it to forward-deployed science advisers from the U.S. Army Research, Development and Engineering Command.

The U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center Military Deputy's Office thought it was a good idea and refined the home made version build by the Iowa Boys of the 133<sup>rd</sup> Infantry.

Forty-eight days after the request was received, and after inspecting and measuring the Soldier's original Machine Gun Ammo Feed System, Army Quick Reaction Cell of the Natick Soldier Research, Development and

Engineering Center had a prototype of the "High-Capacity Ammunition Carriage System" back in Afghanistan.

Thanks to three Iowa National Guard infantry soldiers deployed in the combat zone, the U.S. Army now has a solution to the ammo bearing servicing problem of infantry combat squads armed with the Mk 48 Machine Gun. The Iowa National Guard 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team arrived back home from their deployment in late July of this year.

## 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association Newly Elected Officers and Trustees 2011-12

President	COL Ron Albrecht
1 <sup>st</sup> V P	LTC Stephen Osborn
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice Pres	COL Ben Corell
1 Year Trustees:	Richard Holmes, Darline Smith, Rebecca Snyder Phillips, Don Prock
2 Year Trustees:	Pat Skelly, Ed Graybill, Hal Turner, SPC David McChesney
3 Year Trustees:	LTC Stephen Boesen, LTC David Visser, BG Craig Bargfrede, SSG Ashlee Lolkus
Secretary	Russell Bierl
Treasurer	Michael Musel
SGT at Arms	Mildred Fencel
Historian/Web Site	Pat Skelly
Chaplain	Steve Cunningham

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

The Association is now on Facebook! Members Dave McChesney and Ashlee Lolkus have teamed up to promote the Association via social media on Facebook.

Dave created the page for the overall National organization, as well as the Des Moines Chapter. Ashlee, with her public affairs expertise has done a wonderful job updating and promoting the National page. Pat Skelly, the Association Historian, has also provided information and support from his experience with the Association Web Page.

We are all excited to have The Association on Facebook, where many younger members of the 34<sup>th</sup> ID returning from tours overseas spend time and can get exposure to our organization. We hope the Facebook page will assist in recruiting new members from the younger demographic and expand membership for all chapters.

The 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn. Gives a "Big" thank you to Dave McChesney, Ashlee Lolkus and Pat Skelly for making all this come to pass.

The URL for the National page is here:

<https://www.facebook.com#!/pages/34th-Infantry-Division-Association/168699226545671>

The URL for the Des Moines Chapter page is here:

<https://www.facebook.com#!/pages/34th-Infantry-Division-Association-Des-Moines-Chapter/246653428705992>

## Reflections on the 133<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion Afghanistan, 2010-2011

by Staff Sgt. Ryan C. Matson

LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan – As Task Force Ironman were preparing to return to the U.S., its leaders reflected on their tour at Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, Laghman Province, Afghanistan. For nine months, the Iowa National Guard's 1st Bn., 133rd Inf. Regt., 2nd Bde Combat Team, 34th ID, was the U.S. unit in charge of security for the coalition for Laghman and Nuristan.

Prior to the TOA ceremony, TF Ironman commander U.S. Army Lt. Col. Steve Kremer, of Cherokee, IA, and his battalion command sergeant major, U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Marcus Mittvalsky of North Liberty, IA, discussed their task force's accomplishments in Afghanistan. For Kremer, the work his battalion did in Galuch Valley in late March as part of Operation Bullwhip, an operation which cleared the valley and established a district center stands out. The operation was 101st Airborne Division's largest air assault conducted during their deployment to Afghanistan and the largest ever conducted by the Red Bulls.

"The operations that we did in the Galuch Valley or the new Bad Pech District showed textbook start-to-finish how you're supposed to go into an area and fight the counterinsurgency fight," Kremer said. "It showed how you engage the leaders in that area ahead of time to try to shape some of the changes that happen so that once you get there they're willing to accept you."

Kremer said his Soldiers walked through the valley without firing a shot, engaging the leaders in villages as they did, and this led to immediate progress when they conducted a massive peace shura at the end of the mission.

For Mittvalsky, the biggest accomplishment was not any specific mission, but the overall impact the battalion had on the area of operation. He said one of the unit's biggest accomplishments was increasing security around the forward operating bases. "FOBs are still subject to attack and our Soldiers still got in contact, but we gained freedom of movement in this area that the previous unit did not enjoy through two things – the aggressiveness of our Soldiers in going out and engaging the enemy, but also the ability of our Soldiers to negotiate, communicate and sit down with people and talk with them and really exemplify and demonstrate that we're truly here to help the Afghan National Army as a security force," Mittvalsky said.

Kremer said the deployment was significant from a National Guard perspective as well. "We came into this mission as very few National Guard units have in the past, having been giving the opportunity to be battlespace owners," he said. "We weren't in a support or security forces type role; we were given the task of owning the area, working with the government officials, working with the elders and villagers, military and police, and really taking ownership of everything that happened with our three lines of effort – governance, development and security. It's not something that the Guard folks have typically been able to do in the past."

Kremer said his unit was afforded this unique opportunity due to timing and experience. That experience paid off in the battle of Do Ab. Kremer said his Soldiers fought off more than 400 insurgents who waited for them to arrive, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy without suffering any by coalition forces. He also mentioned Operation Rock Star in the Mayl Valley in January 2011.

"The operation set the conditions for security, not only around Combat Outpost Najil, but in the Alishang Valley," Kremer said. "Because of the efforts of Operation Rock Star, the people of Afghanistan and the Alishang Valley enjoy freedom of movement in and around the district and to Mehtar Lam." Kremer also gave credit to his support units. "Our HHC and Echo Company did a phenomenal job," he said. "They are the unsung heroes. Our distribution platoon that has been driving those roads every day, that is not an infantry-type unit is still running that same improvised explosive device threat every day of the week. They ran to every location we had Soldiers. As vehicles got blown up or had problems, the mechanics were getting the vehicles fixed. They are unsung heroes. My operational rate rarely fell below 95-percent, and if anybody is familiar with the military – that's amazing."

Both men said the difficult times of the deployment involved dealing with their Soldiers being injured or killed. "It started in December with a Soldier stepping on a landmine in the Quargahi District," Kremer said. The deaths of U.S. Army Spc. Donald Nicols, from the battalion's Reconnaissance Platoon and the four military police from the 164th Military Police Company and a law enforcement professional assigned to the battalion, were also difficult to deal with, both leaders said.

"Truly, the absolute hardest thing I had to do this year was help in the planning and preparation for the memorial services for Spc. Nicols and subsequently the MPs that died in the IED blast," Mittvalsky said, his voice straining. "Out of all the things I did that made me the most nervous, because I wanted them to go well to be a fitting tribute to those Soldiers. Everything else this year, really, was what I expected it to be."

Kremer said the IEDs brought him the most anxiety and pain. "I know that the last battalion here ran into some, but they weren't going into the same areas," Kremer said. "We were lucky enough to get some assets that allowed us to get deeper into the valleys. Going deeper and further into those areas also brings a risk that's associated with that. Some of the IEDs were a result of going into areas that had become Taliban strongholds and we were disrupting their activities."

Kremer said he felt the battalion came into the deployment prepared based on the training they conducted prior to deploying, but acknowledged the deployment did offer some surprises. "The thing that surprised me and was difficult for me was the fact that too many times as Americans we want to come in and change things quickly," Kremer said. "What surprised me was the level of patience and understanding you need to use in Afghanistan. The harder you push, typically the more resistance you're going to get, but the more you work with how Afghans deal with issues and really let them start to use the Pashtun Code, you find you can do so much more. We wanted them to take the lead, but we didn't always know what the lead looked like to an Afghan leader or an Afghan soldier."

Kremer also said the task force conducted 85 percent of their patrols side-by-side with their Afghan partners, Soldiers from the 201st Afghan National Army Corps. "It's been an honor to serve side-by-side with all my Afghan brothers," Kremer said. "We shared blood, sweat and tears over the last nine months. "We've taken a large number of insurgents and their commanders off the battlefield. We've disrupted their activity and allowed security to increase for both Laghman and Western Nuristan. The work that we did, shoulder-to-shoulder, made a difference, and I believe that together we have made a difference. I will not forget any of you."



**Service Award Presented to Pat Skelly**  
The Commanders Award for Public Service was presented to Pat Skelly at the reunion dine-out banquet of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association by COL Corell. Pat Skelly was recognized for his long time work on the Association WEB Site, especially his coverage of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade Combat Team during the Afghanistan deployment. (Photo by Ashlee Lolkus.)

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

The national association of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division currently has 759 paid members. The majority of these are Life Members who served during WWII. We know that there are thousands of former 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division soldiers, as well as all soldiers who are serving today, that are eligible for membership. The cost of membership is \$10 per year or \$100 for a life time membership.

Individuals interested in membership can find an application in this newsletter on page eight. Or inquire with LTC (Ret) Mike Musel at the [Gold Star Museum](#), 515-252-4531, located on Camp Dodge, Johnston, Iowa.

We currently have active chapters in Des Moines, Council Bluffs and the Tri-State Chapter in New York. Efforts are underway to reestablish chapters in Cedar Falls, IA, and Minneapolis, MN.

We invite groups of soldiers to participate in the annual reunion. It is fun to see each other and renew old acquaintances. The reunion is set up so people can attend for one day or two days. A reunion schedule will be published in the Winter Issue of this newsletter.

### 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div 2012 Reunion

Next year the 2012 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Reunion will be held in Johnston, Iowa on September 14-15 at the Stoney Creek Inn. The Des Moines Chapter will again be the sponsor chapter for the reunion. Mark your calendar. Talk to your buddies and relive some of those memories.



Gerald Robertson, 34<sup>th</sup> Special Troops Co, was surprised to see an exhibit on CPT Von Ripper at the Iowa Gold Star Museum during the 64<sup>th</sup> Annual Reunion. Gerald said, "the last time he saw CPT Von Ripper was when he came upon his patrol while he also was operating behind enemy lines in Italy. CPT Rudolf Von Ripper was an Austrian national, who immigrated to the U.S. prior to World War Two, and volunteered for service in the US Army. He was first assigned as a Combat Artist, but later was actually assigned as S2 Intelligence Officer for a battalion of the 168<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. He was known for his knowledge of the German language and fighting prowess against the Nazis. He departed the 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div after the war with two Silver Stars, two Purple Hearts and the Combat Infantryman's Badge. He died in 1960.



34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association President COL Curly Albrecht (Left) is shown with Curtis Purington at the Iowa Gold Star Museum during the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association 64<sup>th</sup> annual reunion. Curtis is the son of Kenneth L. Purington (Deceased), of Mason City, IA who was a member of Co D, 109<sup>th</sup> Medical Battalion. Mike Vogt curator of the Iowa Gold Star Museum and 34<sup>th</sup> Historian Pat Skelly are shown accepting the donation of World War II photos that were donated by the family. The association gives the family a big "Thank You" for saving the photos for the archives of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and the Iowa Gold Star Museum. Photo by Russ Bierl



LAGHMAN PROVINCE, Afghanistan - U.S. Army Lt. Col. Steve Kremer, right, the commander of 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 34th Infantry Division, from Cherokee, Iowa, and U.S. Army Sgt. Maj. Robert Warrington, left, the battalion Operations Sergeant Major from Iowa Falls, Iowa, roll the battalion colors before casing them July 5 during a transfer of authority ceremony on Forward Operating Base Mehtar Lam, Afghanistan. (Photo by U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Ryan Matson, Task Force Red Bulls Public Affairs)



Soldiers of the 133<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Battalion await the landing of a CH-47 Chinook helicopter in Laghman Province, Afghanistan after the battle of Do Ab. This effort was highly successful in destroying the enemy and ending their operations in the area. Their training and combat experience paid off in the battle of Do Ab. Lt. Col. Steve Kremer, of Cherokee, Iowa, said his Soldiers fought off more than 400 insurgents who waited for them to arrive, inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy without suffering any by coalition forces.

## 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT, 34<sup>th</sup> ID Soldiers Die in Afghanistan

The U.S. Army has announced that three 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT, 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div soldiers have been killed in combat in Afghanistan.

—Sgt. Brent M. Maher, 31, of Council Bluffs, Iowa; died April 11 in Paktia Province, Afghanistan, of injuries sustained when enemy forces attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device; assigned to Co B, 1st Battalion, 168th Infantry Regiment, Iowa National Guard, Shenandoah, Iowa. Spc. Maher was posthumously promoted to sergeant.

—Spc. Donald L. Nichols, 21, of Shell Rock, Iowa; died April 13, in Laghman Province, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit using an improvised explosive device; assigned to the HQ Co. 1st Battalion, 133rd Inf Regt, Waterloo, Iowa and posthumously promoted to sergeant.

—S Sgt. James A. Justice, 32, of Grimes, Iowa; died April 23 of wounds in Kapisa Province. He was assigned to C Troop, 113<sup>th</sup> Cav Sqdn, 2<sup>nd</sup> BCT, 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div. See the link shown below for more information.

<http://www.34infdiv.org/34infdivng/2bctheroes.html>



Laghman Province, Afghanistan —S Sgt. Nick Rossin (left), a squad leader from Waterloo, IA and Sgt. 1<sup>st</sup> Class Steve Beireis (right), a platoon sergeant from North Liberty, IA both with the Reconnaissance Platoon, HQ's Co, 1-133<sup>rd</sup> Inf Regt, 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div, salute the memorial stand of Spc. Donald Lee Nichols, who served in their Platoon. The memorial service took place on April 18<sup>th</sup>.

# Reunion Personal Accounts

By Ashlee Lolkus

JOHNSTON, Iowa – “I thought I’d never see my family again,” said Stanley Vomacka, a World War II veteran who served with the 135<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, U.S. [34th Infantry Division](#), from mobilization thru to Anzio. “I was wounded there. My leg was shot off, and nobody would come to me to help me because we were under enemy gun, and there’s nothing that the Germans liked better than to see a wounded soldier and somebody trying to get in there to help him.”

“So, I laid under the hot sun watching the thirsty earth drink up my blood. When the evening came, they were picking up all the wounded and the dead, but they missed me. It wasn’t until about 11 o’clock that night when a medical jeep driver decided to make one last sweep to see if anyone was left behind and he found my body.”

“I don’t know how he loaded me on the jeep; I weighed 199 [pounds] at the time. He loaded me with one end across the windshield and the other part of the litter in the back and brought me to the aid station. They cut off my clothes and threw them on the floor and I told the nurse, I said, ‘Gee, that’s a good shirt! Don’t cut my shirt!’ She just put her hand on my face and pushed me down ...”

“She walked away and spoke to the doctor, looked at me and then back. Then she walked back to me and asked if I wanted to see a chaplain. I said, ‘No! I haven’t lived yet!’”



**Mildred Fencl, of Morris, IL, whose husband served in Co C, 168 Inf Regt, and Darline Smith, of North Kansas City, Mo., whose husband served in Co A, 168th Inf., laughed about previous reunions and shared their husbands’ war stories just as if they were there.**

Even the wives of veterans shared stories of their husbands’ time serving with the Red Bulls. Mildred Fencl, of Morris, IL., whose husband served in Company C, 1st Battalion, 168 Infantry Regiment (1-168th Inf.), and Darline Smith, of North Kansas City, Mo., whose husband served in Co A, 1-168th Inf., laughed about previous reunions and shared their husbands’ war stories just as if they were there.

Both women hold official positions in the association and regularly attend the reunions even though their husbands have passed away.

Fencl, sergeant at arms, and Smith, a one-year trustee, feel it’s important to keep the traditions and association alive. “As a tribute to all vets, we want to see the association go on,” Fencl said. She and many members of the association want to see the new generation of veterans take over where they leave off. “We need the younger Red Bulls to carry on the tradition,” said Smith. “The World War II vets need to be remembered.”

Although around 50 people attended the reunion, only five of the guests were World War II soldiers.

Col. Benjamin Corell, commander of the 2-34th BCT, attended the reunion dine-out as the distinguished guest and speaker. He shared a story of his childhood when he went down to the legion hall, seeing the younger legion members honor the World War II Red Bull veterans when they came to the door.

“You’d hear them say, ‘He’s one of the guys that turned the tide against the axis powers of World War II,’” Corell explained. “That was my first experience seeing the Red Bull..I’m very proud to be associated with that.”

Everyone that attended the reunion was no doubt proud to be associated with the Red Bulls. There were Red Bull hats, Red Bull polo shirts, Red Bull watches, Red Bull blazers ... It seemed everyone had a Red Bull displayed somewhere. However, one of the biggest fans of the Red Bulls was Pat Skelly, the association’s webmaster and historian.

Skelly, who never served under the Red Bull division directly, started getting involved when his father died. While going through his father’s old documents he discovered a chronology. Skelly’s father served as the 1st Battalion, 133rd Infantry Regiment (1-133rd Inf.) commander during World War II, from Dec 1944 – Sept 1945. Skelly says his father never really talked much about the war except for the funny stories.

Upon discovering his father’s history with the Red Bulls, Skelly set out to capture all of the Red Bull history. In 2000, Skelly set up the first dedicated Red Bull website: [www.34infdiv.org](http://www.34infdiv.org). On it, Skelly, who recently completed his master’s degree in military history at Norwich University, in Vermont in 2007, posts current Red Bull activity as well as archives of history and updated association information.

“I intend to keep the archives up forever,” he said. The association budgets for maintaining the website and he wants to make sure it stays that way. “We’ve taken to the idea of getting current guard members with us because that is the future of the association.”

According to Pat Skelly, “The first few years won’t mean much,” he explained, “but as they get older they will want to start seeing their buddies.” Many of the current serving Red Bull guard members are either deployed or have recently returned and need to spend time with their families and get situated, but after a couple of years of not seeing their comrades, they need the association, he said.

The association is happy to accept new members at any of its chapters.

# 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division National Membership Application Form

**NOTE: If your address Label shows (L), (W), or (2) you do not owe dues for the Current Year**

- ( ) Enclosed is \$10.00 for my Annual Membership in the 34<sup>th</sup> 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 34<sup>th</sup> 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 34<sup>th</sup> 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, Other Services)
- ( ) Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for my LIFE MEMBERSHIP in the 34<sup>th</sup> 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 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn.
- ( ) Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for my donation to the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division 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 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association is to preserve the history of the 34<sup>th</sup> Divisional units & attached organizations of soldiers that have served their nation since 1917. The National Association schedules an annual meeting each September.

The National Secretary is COL (Ret) Russ Bierl. His E Mail address is [bierlhome@msn.com](mailto:bierlhome@msn.com) The National Association WEB Site is <http://www.34infdiv.org/index.html> Phone No 515-252-4531 or email [goldstarmuseum@iowa.gov](mailto:goldstarmuseum@iowa.gov)  
 A newsletter is sent to current members three times a year by U.S. mail. All newsletter are shown on the Association WEB site.  
 The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum maintains an office for the association. WEB site [www.iowanationalguard.com](http://www.iowanationalguard.com)

## Museum Store - 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn Price List – Dec 2011

34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull Polo Shirts Size _____	\$ 22.00	34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull Div Insignia Pins (Lapel Pin)	\$5.00
34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull T-Shirt Size _____	\$15.00	Red Bull Patch (Black & Red)	\$5.00
34 <sup>th</sup> Div Red Bull Ball Cap	\$12.00	34 <sup>th</sup> Div Refrigerator Magnet	\$1.00
34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull Window Decal	\$2.00	34 <sup>th</sup> Div Red Bull Neck Tie	\$8.00
34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull Jacket Size _____	\$30.00	34 <sup>th</sup> Div Red Bull Flag (3X5')	\$65.00
34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull Coffee Mug	\$6.00	Red Bull Memo Pads, 50 Sheet	\$2.00
		<u>Books Available:</u>	
		Dogfaces Who Smiled Through Tears (The 34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull Infantry Division in WWII)	\$30.00
		Citizen Soldier in WWII Story of the 168 <sup>th</sup> Inf from Lt /CPT/ MAJ / LTC Ed Bird)	\$10.00

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

Sub Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Shipping \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association**  
**7105 NW 70<sup>th</sup> Ave, Camp Dodge, Bldg 3692**  
**Johnston, IA 50131**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Email: [lowagoldstarmuseum@iowa.gov](mailto:lowagoldstarmuseum@iowa.gov) or Call 515-252-4531 if you have a question.