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**2012 REUNION DETAILS
+ ARCHIVAL MUSEUM A
REALITY**

103d INF DIV WW II



**103d 2012 KC REUNION DETAILS & REGISTRATION -Page 3
GREAT NEWS !! - We have found a repository for archives**

103d ID WW II Association 2012 KC Reunion is "Good to Go"! It looks like a well attended reunion in spite of our dwindling numbers since our reunion site is back within the centroid of our membership base. We think you will have a great time - see Page 3 for details and event registration. You should have already made your hotel reservations: the group rate is \$99/night for one or two (Call 877-224-2870- hotel reservations) \$10 added for 3rd & 4th occupant each; free buffet breakfast included for each registered occupant. Parking your car is \$15/night - across the street - but not a hotel function.

**HALLELUJAH! - WE HAVE FOUND A LOCATION FOR 103d ARCHIVES!
The best part of this news is its LOCATION! Fort Des Moines, Iowa!**

Fort Des Moines, IA is an active military base and the "home" of the 103d Sustainment Command, a headquarters for a group of separate units which provides support (logistical, administrative, and control of all support) for combat units on foreign assignment. This command headquarters along with all organic support units maintain the legacy and colors of the WW II 103d Infantry Division and these units were activated in 1947, with "our" colors and legacy. This Fort is a "full" army military installation with an existing museum in place. Furthermore, the PIO officer has approached me, inviting the 103d ID WW II Association to join with them as they desire to "Honor" their legacy and have our history available for their members to learn and perpetuate their legacy. In essence, we are their parent unit. Ft Des Moines is an active US Army military base with many active army reserve units located there for reserve training activities. It has space set aside for a museum which currently features such history as the WAC's of WW II and the soldiers who were the Indian fighters who "won" the west. It was also the first site the segregated Army established for OCS for African-Americans. Several of the "full-time" support personnel are planning to attend our reunion. I plan to visit Ft Des Moines on my trip to KC for our reunion to assess the facility they have set aside for our use and to discuss details of what we must contribute to provide a museum for the historical display of artifacts of the 103d Infantry Division of WW II. It would be under their active development, based on their desire for display of their legacy which actually goes back to 1922, the date the 103d ID was first established at cadre strength for reserve training. This is a major break thru, which will be a real win-win for both the 103d ID WW II Association and the 103d Sustainment Command. I cannot think of a better resolution of the search for the disposition of our WW II artifacts and archives and that the location be most ideal for the convenience of our members. **LOOK FOR UPDATE AT THE 2012 REUNION!** Page 3 - For Reunion Activity Schedule & Page 4 for Mail-in registration.

Finding a "Home" For 103d ID Archives - "Our Museum"

Your Association has been "looking" for a site to store and display the 103d ID WWII records and artifacts which we have developed and programmed for public viewing for historical review as the legacy of our performance during that great event. When I became the president of this Association in 2008, that mission was very much a front burner priority and it seems that each time we evaluated a site, major flaws quickly eliminated that site simply due to the lack of space that could be committed, or the site was too far from our membership base (the mid-west). Lately, it has seemed not likely for reasonable success and, in fact, the past two years no alternatives were considered. Then, "lo & behold", our website prompted an inquiry concerning our interest in providing our "successor" army reserve unit with our "history in WW II". That inquiry quickly developed into an agreement to

provide our WW II History and other supporting documents to the 103d Sustainment Command (our successor unit - it was activated in 1947) as a US Army Reserve (active - USAR) unit in the inventory with our colors and the Cactus patch insignia on the left shoulder. In the past five years, we have considered numerous possibilities, primarily in Texas in the Gainesville area, also including San Antonio, Ft Sam Houston, sites in Dallas, Ft Tuthill AZ, Gettysburg, PA, and Kissimmee, FL. Also, in the past, sites in Chicago and Michigan had been fleetingly mentioned; this is the first site suggested which seeks our archives, and is also within the upper mid-west (the center of our activated membership). Herewith are pictures of Ft Des Moines, with its 100 year-old architectural style buildings.(with the specific Museum building in the background) In my opinion, this is a fantastic solution!

Mission

The mission of the Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center is to preserve, promote, and perpetuate the heritage of service, sacrifice, and risk taken by the Black officers of World War I and the women of World War II through exhibits, educational programming, and public use of the facility.

Vision

Fort Des Moines Museum and Education Center honors the heroes who brought gender and racial equality to the United States Army during World War I and World War II.

This landmark is a:

- National attraction with artifacts, exhibits, archival photographs and period art.
- Resource center for students and educators.
- Historical site for conferences, meetings and celebrations.



View from Southwest.



South end view.



View from North end.
Rear of Clayton Hall

103d INFANTRY DIVISION WWII ASSOCIATION 2012 KANSAS CITY REUNION EVENT SCHEDULE

Wednesday August 1 - 2:00 PM

WELCOME RECEPTION – No Cost/ Cash Bar
Please join us for a complimentary champagne, punch and cookies after check-in.

Wednesday August 1 - 6:00 PM Cocktails - 7:00 PM Dinner

DINNER AT THE ROOF GARDEN BALLROOM Cost \$40/per person
Please join us for a fabulous dinner with a 1920's theme. We will have the infamous "Tom Pendergast" joining us as our guest for the evening. Tom controlled Kansas City as a political boss from 1925 to 1939. Pendergast was a patron of the early political career of Harry S Truman, a fact causing some controversy after Truman became VP and then President. We'll just have to talk to him to find out more about this! *Dinner price includes entertainment + favors*

Thursday August 2 - 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

FT LEAVENWORTH TOUR & LUNCH Cost \$38/per person
John Richley, the author of "The Haunted Houses of Fort Leavenworth" will provide a guided tour of the facility. After the tour, we will go to the Fort Leavenworth train depot for lunch where we will be accompanied by the wonderful "Harvey Girls".
Transportation & Entertainment is included in the cost.

Thursday August 2 - 6:00 PM

DINNER AT PIERPOINTS AT UNION STATION Cost \$65/per person
Transportation is included in the cost.

Friday August 3 - 10:00 AM

THE TRUMAN TOUR EXPERIENCE Cost \$55/per person
"Bess Truman" will meet us in the morning and talk to us about her life with her husband. We will all then take a motorcoach (cost included) to Independence to meet up with "Harry" for lunch in the Historic Independence Square. There will be a stop at an ice cream parlor for those that want to indulge at your choice. After which both Harry and Bess will give you a guided tour of the city and the Truman Presidential Museum.

Friday August 3 - 6:00 PM

DINNER AT THE GOLDEN OX Cost \$47/per person
Transportation is included in the cost.

Saturday August 4 - 9:00 AM

ANUAL MEMORIAL SERVICE - Roof Garden Ballroom - Hospitality Room
ANUAL BUSINESS MEETING - Following Memorial Service
Note: Business meeting likely to conclude by 10:15 am, hence free-time until 2:00pm.
Member proposing 2013 reunion site please identify site to Secretary prior to Aug 1.

Saturday August 4 - 2:00 PM

WWI MUSEUM then to the NEW CENTURY AIRPORT for
BBQ DINNER & DANCING Cost \$60/per person
Authentic KC BBQ buffet dinner, Jazz Orchestra, rides in vintage jeep, vintage aircraft tours, and a fly-over by one of CAF's vintage aircraft as well as a "surprise" guest.
Transportation, Museum, Music + extras are included.

2012 REUNION OVERVIEW FOR THOSE KANSAS CITY BOUND

One of the biggest concerns is transportation from the airport. Without prior arrangement it is \$30 per person for a taxi from airport to hotel. However, we suggest Five Guys Shuttle, for a flat rate of \$40, they will take up to 5 people, plus luggage, same rate. Sign up and I'll coordinate your arrival and departure time, OR, call or email for yourselves...913-748-5423 or Marketing@FiveGuysShuttle.com

Brandi, Sales Manager for the Aladdin Hotel, has been most accommodating, and has moved all our activities to the Roof Top Ballroom. After check-in, go to the rooftop where there will be complementary punch and cookies, and champagne. (More than likely the bar will open by 4pm)

Men, have you retrieved youroot suit out of mothballs, okay, so maybe just a pinstripe shirt will do. Ladies, have you picked up your flapper dresses from the cleaners? We will order fedoras, boas and pearls, and anything that you might need? All the individual items are just a few dollars. Please let us know. 1920's attire can be one night, two, all Or none, you decide.

Wednesday night dinner, will be in the Ballroom. By the way, that is also our Hospitality Room. The dinner will be at 7 o'clock, cocktails at 6:00. (Our B/D Meeting is at 4:00 pm in the Ballroom) Again, Brandi has been most considerate by assuring us a delectable cuisine, keeping it around \$40.

The one item we were not able to secure was a piano, I'll send along a keyboard, because Patricia from California has offered to sing a few oldies but goodies. Any other entertainers would be more than welcome, please. Your guest speaker to meet and greet for the evening will be "Thomas Joseph Pendergast" who controlled Kansas City and Jackson County, Missouri as a political boss from approximately 1925 to 1939. Despite prohibition, he encouraged alcohol and gambling. Additionally,

many elections were fixed to keep political friends in power. In return, he was awarded government contracts. He was eventually convicted of income tax evasion and served 15 months in a Federal prison. Oh well. (This stuff still goes on in good ole Massachusetts) Enjoy!

Now it's Thursday morning, and departure for a leisurely tour of Fort Leavenworth is 10:00 am. Established in 1827, Fort Leavenworth is the oldest active Army post west of the Mississippi River, and has devoted more than 170 years of service to the nation. In 1881, Gen. William T. Sherman established the School of Application for Cavalry and Infantry which evolved into the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth. (Now a major tenant) You'll be greeted by John Richley-Author of "Ghosts of Fort Leavenworth". The base commander will greet you for a group photo, then off to lunch at the Leavenworth Train Depot served by the Harvey Girls and entertained by the "prison" quartet. and then back home again by 3:30, to rest up for the evening. All for \$38.

Thursday evening takes us to Union Station and Pierpoints. "Absolutely the best steak and seafood in Kansas City" -- Guaranteed! Dubbed "the culinary jewel" of Kansas City's historically renovated Union Station. The departure time will be 6:00 p.m. There is so much to see, why not just a few extra minutes to check it out. The station draws tourists from all over the world who marvel at the Grand Hall's 95-foot ceiling, three 3,500-pound chandeliers and the six-foot wide clock hanging in the Station's central arch. After your fabulous dinner, the van will leave at 9:00 p.m. It is only 1.4 mi. From the Aladdin Hotel, for those who may want to stay around.

Now Friday is very special. Bess Truman will be at the Hotel for breakfast to talk about, "My Life with Harry". The group will leave at 10:00 a.m. for Independence where you will meet Harry for a city tour, a stop for

lunch with Harry and Bess, and then Harry will give you a guided tour of the Truman Presidential Museum. Everything included for \$55. What a day! and back to the Hotel at 4:30.

At 6:00 p.m., you'll be whisked over to the Golden Ox Restaurant, "Kansas City's Best Steakhouse", one of the few restaurants that continues to have its steaks aged and hand cut. The restaurant's roots go all the way back to 1871 when the first independent stock yard was organized. At one time over 1.8 million cattle per year passed through the Stockyards. Belly full, back to the Hotel at 8:30. All for \$47.00.

Saturday is your day. Mainly for catching up on all the arduous work the men and Gloria have done. Very Special Thanks to Zack, Larry, Bob, and Gloria, just to name a few. See you at the Memorial Service @ 9:00am followed by the Business Meeting in the hospitality room. The first van will leave for the WWI museum @ 2:00pm and arrangements will be made for those not going to both events. A van also will leave for the Museum at 3:00, closes at 5:00, and for those continuing, to New Century Airport for an unforgettable evening of viewing and touring vintage aircraft. BBQ, Jazz Orchestra, two stepping, and surprises. \$60 Per Person

WWI Museum Tour Only (Round Trip From Hotel) 25 passengers: \$26 PP. Or: Individuals can take public transportation (via the MAX) to the WWI Museum. The fare is about \$2 pp round trip and single tickets at the WWI Museum are between \$6 and \$12 PP depending on age, active or retired military, etc.

**Please
send dues
for 2012
\$25/year**

3rd PLATOON - COMPANY B - 411th INFANTRY REGIMENT - 103rd INFANTRY DIVISION - World War Two
 38 in pic. 2 remained in US, 6 not a casualty, 5 hospitalized sick & returned, 7 KIA, 14 SW, 6 W & returned, 2 men /4 casualties + CO wounded) - 180 days on line



September 18, 1944 Camp Howze, Texas: 3rd Platoon, Company B, 411th Infantry 103rd Division

| | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|--|--|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| SSGT Gil Kretschmann SW Nov 27 '44 | Carl Boltz W Nov 27 '44 | Gene Goldstein | Aimie Messe W Dec 15 '44 | Joe Hajkowicz KIA Nov 30 '44 | Ernie Cottenham W Mar 15 '45 | Robert Brown KIA Nov 25 '44 | Ed Quinn S Mar 27 '45 | Leon Saraut No Combat | Gene Brody S Nov '44 | Michael Toohig S Feb '45 | Robert O. Smith W Dec 19 '44 SW Mar 2 '45 | Sgt Bert Harris SW Nov 27 '44 |
| SSGT Ray Burzyski S Dec 5 '44 | Hoyt Hendricks SW Nov 27 '44 | Jack Twitchell KIA Nov 25 '44 | Bill Gale KIA Nov 27 '44 | Joe Schwartz SW Nov 25 '44 | Matt Ware SW Dec 2 '44 | Jack Laudreth SW Dec '44 | Herman Sax No Combat | Emmet Smith | Clement Cioffi KIA Nov 25 '44 | T4 Al Morrison SW Nov 23 '44 | MEDIC Lenard Redjoski | |
| SSGT (2nd LT) Sigmund Cieszkowski W Dec 28 '44 | Bob Bowden SW Nov 23 '44 | Dale Robbins | Howard Mortensen | John Malone SW Nov 28 '44 | T.J. Swift S Dec 15 '44 | SSGT Norbert Kuecker W Nov 27 '44 KIA Mar 21 '45 | CAPT Dan Levenson Co. Cmd SW Dec 19 '44 | TSgt (2nd LT) Bill Bartus SW Mar 17 '45 | Cpl John Farber SW Feb 4 '45 | Tony Vaccaro KIA Dec 19 '45 | Worth Beach | Don Emelander SW Mar 20 '45 |

KIA = Killed In Action; SW = Severely Wounded (No Return); W = Wounded and Returned; S = Hospitalized and Returned; No Combat = Stayed in the U.S.A.

3RD PLATOON COMPANY B 411TH INFANTRY REGIMENT IN GERMANY (Mike Toohig's Platoon)



Gene Brody, Mike Toohig, Marve Felty, and Carl Boltz
Frank Dyman and Johnny Freislinger on April 23, 1945 in Ulm, Germany waiting to cross the Danube River



Mike Toohig & Johnny Freislinger
mid-April 1945 in Beerfeldin, Germany



3rd Platoon Co B 411th Inf Regt. at Dallas, TX 1991 103d Reunion.
l/r Carl Boltz, Don Emelander, Gil Kretchmann & Dan Levenson. All
were wounded and Levenson was the company C.O.

EXCERPTS FROM PETE KEEFER'S* "MY WAR"

*G-2 Operation Sergeant - 103d ID Headquarters - 5/44 thru 6/45

In the meanwhile, I had finished my business courses and took a job in the personnel department of Pabst Brewing Company. More and more men were being drafted into the service. I figured that if the Army wanted me, they could come and find me. They did. In a few months I was called up for a physical exam, and in January 1943 I was inducted into the service. Within a few days I was on a troop train west to Fort Warren, Wyoming, at Cheyenne. Our train arrived at night and the temperature was 30 degrees below zero.

Basic training wasn't so terribly bad, except for the cold and snow. Those forced marches were not exactly pleasant, and firing on the rifle range was really tough in the cold weather. I volunteered to work in the pits to get some protection from the wind and keep moving to stay warm. I didn't much care how I scored on the range -- the main thing was just to get it over with and get out of there.

I was assigned to the first platoon of our basic training company. Someone told me that you were placed according to your IQ score. I am inclined to doubt that, however, as I caught a bad cold just before taking the tests and felt so miserable that I really didn't care what I wrote or how I scored. After a few weeks I was transferred to Training School headquarters where I was assigned the task of writing a preventive maintenance manual for Army 6 x 6's. That was a great experience, because I didn't even know how to drive one, let alone write a manual on how to maintain one. I feel sorry for any trainee who had to use that manual.

At that time the post was being changed over from a replacement training center to a unit training center for quartermaster units to be sent overseas. One of the officers in the Motor Training School, Major Warren Danforth, was being transferred to a new division under the Inspector General, and he requested my transfer there. I had been promoted to the rank of corporal by that time, and with the transfer I was promised a promotion

to sergeant.

There were a great bunch of guys in Headquarters Company, many whose names I have long forgotten, but whose faces linger in my memory. A few who became good friends I kept in touch with for a number of years until finally, over the years, I lost contact with all of them. My job was to write up the results of the inspections and submit a report to Col. Ephraim Jolls, the Inspector General. The colonel was a gruff regular army officer. He liked the reports I submitted and asked me to take all of the department reports and give him a consolidated report periodically. This was good and bad. The colonel liked me and I could get by with a lot of things that no one else could - like borrowing his staff car and driver if I wanted to go anywhere on the post. The bad side was the razzing I had to take from all the enlisted guys in headquarters for being the colonel's "fair haired boy". The kidding got worse when I made Staff Sergeant, but it was all good natured ribbing. One thing I learned when I was young -- and that was to be innovative.

One Sunday night toward the end of the month before pay day I went to the Service Club on post where there was a dance and the place was crowded. I have forgotten just who was with me that night -- I believe it was Russ Powell, but perhaps it was another buddy of mine, Bruce Rascoe. One girl who was dancing by in the arms of a GI caught my eye. She was a "looker". I noticed that she was wearing plastic shoes that looked like glass slippers, so when she was dancing by I made some dumb comment like, "How about the next dance, Cinderella?" All I got in return was a withering glance. Oh, well!

The next day, back at work, Colonel Jolls summoned me to his office. When I walked in I was surprised -- there sitting across from his desk was "Cinderella". The colonel introduced her to me as Patricia Snyder and said she was a new employee and I should find a job for her. I pretended I had never seen her before. I saw that she did recognize me but she likewise didn't react. When we left the colonel's office, Pat said "Small world, isn't it?" It wasn't easy to find a spot for Pat to work -- she had no office skills -- I

guess she could type with two fingers if there was no rush. She had been elected as Miss Wyoming for the Miss America Contest of 1941, the year the title was won by Rosemary LaPlanche of California. Pat and I became good friends. She was a lot of fun and had a great sense of humor, but she sometimes chided me for my "Cinderella" remark.

Meanwhile, while I was spending those months out west in cowboy country, safe and sound, there was a big war going on -- in Africa and Europe and out in the Pacific. We kept up with the news of the war and wondered if we would ever be sent into action.

One day Bob Johnson showed me a bulletin regarding transfer, in grade, to the infantry. I am not sure what we were thinking, but we decided to apply. Bob was a few years older than I, so I figured if he could handle the infantry, so could I. No surprise, our applications for transfer were immediately accepted. A number of people tried to talk me out of going to the infantry. The colonel told me he could have me reclassified for limited service. I didn't want any part of that. I was eager to see some action.

OFF TO THE INFANTRY

Orders were soon received for our transfer to the 103d Infantry Division, in training at Camp Howze, Texas. We were given railroad passes and were even able to wheedle a compartment -- the last bit of luxury I was to enjoy for a long time. Actually I looked forward to some warm weather -- and to be able to wear suntans (Army warm weather uniforms). I had spent two winters in Wyoming, where the weather was always cold. There were about 3 days each year that were warm enough to be considered summer, and we wore olive drab uniforms the year around. The thing I disliked most about the uniform was the GI-issued overcoats, which were long and heavy -- it was like wearing a blanket.

The officers had short coats and were allowed to wear arctic fur-lined hats, but this was not permitted for the enlisted personnel. We just froze our ears in the sub-zero weather.

One afternoon when I was just lounging

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around, Bob Johnson came by. His company had also finished basic training and was just goofing around, so he suggested we go for a walk. We did just that, without any specific destination in mind.

In the course of our meandering we came to division headquarters, which was spread out in numerous buildings. One of the buildings housed the Inspector General's department. Inasmuch as we had both worked for the IG at Ft. Warren, we decided to go in and check it out. As I recall there were only about three people in the IG office, two enlisted and one officer, a captain. The captain, Parker Fielding, introduced himself and asked if he could help us. He was the acting IG at that time.

We explained that we had worked for the IG, had recently transferred to the division, had completed infantry basic, and were just sitting around. We offered to help if they had any work to do. Before we went on our way, Captain Fielding asked for our names and the units to which we were assigned.

The next morning I was summoned to the company orderly room and told I was being transferred to division headquarters and assigned to the Adjutant General's office. Bob was also transferred to headquarters, and we reported to the AG, Lt. Col Alfred Croll, an old timer, who had been a master sergeant in the regular army. He told us that his office had been charged with the responsibility for making sure that all of the service records for the division were up to date before the division moved to the port of embarkation for overseas service. In as much as he had no one who was a specialist in service records, he had been informed by the acting IG that we were experienced and available, so he was putting us in charge of that operation. In less than 24 hours we had gone from "dog faces" to super record inspectors.

Bob had worked with service records at Warren -- that was his specialty. I had been exposed to them when I attended Administration and Personnel School. But I had never worked with them. I asked Captain William Dorn, an assistant AG if I could borrow his AR's (Army Regulations) to check out any recent updates. That evening Bob and I went to the service club and reviewed the subject.

The following morning we started the inspection. We arranged to get the company clerks together, a battalion at a time, checked to see the status of their records and pointed out any discrepancies that required correction, and then followed up to see that these corrections were being made. Most of the clerks were competent and cooperative. Although our contact with the company clerks was very brief, I still remember a couple of them who impressed me. While most of the personnel in the division were aware that we would soon be going overseas, there was a good deal of speculation as to whether we would be going to Europe or to the Pacific. I quickly learned in which direction the 103d Division was headed. We received instructions to earmark any German-born personnel. Their background was then checked out and a number of them were transferred out as replacements to the Pacific. It was obvious we were going to be headed across the Atlantic.

The AG was part of the rear echelon. We were back of the artillery and generally out of range of enemy fire, except for occasional strafing by the enemy air force. I was thankful that I was not back with that rifle company in the 410th Regiment, slogging through the Vosges Mountains. There is not much paper work for units in battle. At least not until there are purple hearts to hand out and next of kin to notify. Within a very short time I was informed that I was being transferred to the G-2. The commanding general, Major General Charles C. Haffner wanted to establish a war room, primarily staffed by the G-2 (Military Intelligence) and G-3 (Plans and Training) Sections., headed by Major Bland West, the G-2, and Major Richard Thomas, the G-3. Neither of these sections had adequate personnel to staff the war room.

The war room was the center of command for the division. Every morning the commanding general, chief of staff, and general staff met to brief and be briefed on the situation. Our G-2 section collected information about enemy activity as it was reported to us by the Regimental S-2s and other sources, such as our "spies" and some of our attached units who reported to us, such as the interrogators of prisoners we had taken, aerial surveys, etc. All reports were entered into a

running log and details posted to large maps. The G-3 section kept a log and mapped the movement of our own troops. We operated in shifts, so that there was someone on duty at all times, day and night.

Because my duties were with the war room, I had very little contact with most of the enlisted men in the G-2 section. M/ Sgt Tim Welch, who was the chief non-com and T/Sgt Lloyd Stalker, who was the second in rank, were both decent guys. Tim was very quiet and serious. I never really figured out what they did except to get maps and shuffle them around. The same was true of other enlisted personnel I never knew or much cared what they were doing. I was happy that I was on duty in the war room -- that's where the action was. I liked the G-2, Major Bland West, a lawyer in civilian life, who knew his job and kept his cool in all situations. The assistant G-2 Major John Rhea, was one of the good guys, but he was always off with the reconnaissance troops and stayed around only a short time when he reported in. Another assistant G-2 was Captain Anthony J. Drexel. Tony Drexel came from the Philadelphia banking clan. His grandfather had served as U.S. ambassador to France. Tony had gone to school in France and spoke French fluently. We had several duty officers -- Captain Lewis Dickson, a Texas lawyer, Lt. Bill Bruck and a few others who came and went. Because we worked closely with the personnel in the G-3 section, I became better acquainted with some of the guys there. They had several junior officers who were very competent. Captain Erle Cocks, "a gung-ho" guy from Georgia and Lt. Young are two I remember. There was a very sharp and competent 2nd lieutenant who was a duty officer with G-3 who I really liked and respected.

I wish I could remember his name, but it completely eludes me now. At first our war room was set up in a large tent, but as our troops advanced, it was rather impractical to keep taking down the tent and setting it up again. We soon started using space wherever we could find it in some of the villages, often in a local tavern, the town hall, or wherever there was adequate space.

The Corps and Army commanders were from West Point and it seemed that our division came under criticism because we

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were advancing faster than the divisions fighting alongside us. This left exposed flanks -- not the way things should be done according to the training at West Point. Finally the word came down from General Eisenhower, the supreme allied commander that we were to draw back to straighten out the lines to maintain a winter position. Some of that territory had been taken at a good price in lives lost, and much as we disliked giving up the advances we had made, there was no choice other than to retreat as commanded.

Of course, no one referred to this as a retreat -- it was just a realignment. But I remember it well. We had set up our war room at Worth and were to pull back some 30 or 40 kilometers. It was necessary to keep our forward position in place until all of the division had made the withdrawal. I got the duty. With only a field phone, a jeep and a driver, I maintained our position until I received the word that all of the troops had withdrawn to the winter line. It was well after midnight when the driver and I pulled out of Worth -- the only ones between the Germans and our troops some 30 kilometers behind us. By day-break the Germans had moved forward and reoccupied those areas we had fought hard to seize.

Our war room was relocated at Imbsheim, a small Alsatian village. We were told this was to be our winter line and we would hold until orders were issued for all armies to advance. General Patton, who commanded the Third Army, apparently didn't subscribe to the theory of maintaining straight front lines. Although a West Pointer, "Old Blood and Guts" as Patton was known, often sent his tanks out far ahead of the foot troops, leaving them exposed from all sides.

Alsace had been fought over for many years by France and Germany. It seemed strange to find that one village would be German, have a German name and German speaking people, and a few kilometers down the road the next village would have a French name and all the residents spoke French. It would seem logical that people throughout the area would be able to speak and understand both languages, but that often was not the case.

Although we did not have a great deal of time to get acquainted with the locals, it

seemed to me that the German-speaking Alsatians were warmer and more congenial than the French, who were somewhat cool and distant. The French amused us at times, particularly the French military who were fighting with us against the Germans in the Vosges Mountains. When the French army moved, it was a laughable thing to view -- their old trucks wheeling recklessly along filled with soldiers and their gear, including some of the wildest things imaginable -- such as bird cages, brooms and who knows what else that couldn't be seen -- I hate to speculate on what other things they may have had in those trucks. It was only about two months after we had arrived in combat that General Haffner left his command and returned to the States. It was said he was ill, but I am more inclined to believe that he was relieved of his command because he wasn't part of the West Point elite. He was replaced by General Anthony McAuliffe, who had become a hero at Bastogne while he was in command of the 101st Airborne Division during the absence of Major General Maxwell Taylor. Those who remember or have read about World War II will recall that the Germans had surrounded the 101st Airborne and demanded they surrender. General McAuliffe sent back a one-word reply -- "Nuts". The 101st held out and soon prevailed and McAuliffe became a hero. He was promoted to Major General and took over command of the 103d Division, replacing General Haffner.

Tony McAuliffe was immediately accepted and popular with the men of the 103d. He was a "mover and shaker". Where General Haffner moved as if he were wearing blinders, never looking right or left or appearing to see anyone -- particularly enlisted personnel or junior officers -- McAuliffe always was warm, though brisk and constantly on the move. The troops on line were amazed when he would show up unexpectedly to check on what was going on. Most of them had never before seen the commanding general of the division and it was a real "shot in the arm" for their morale to see him out moving among them. Our headquarters remained at Imbsheim for a couple of months during the winter of 1944 - 1945. The war room was set up in a tavern, and we had found billets with various families in the village.

There are several things that I vividly recall from our stay at Imbsheim. One of these was the visit to our war room from General Maxwell Taylor, who was the commanding general of the 101st Airborne. He had been absent at the time of the Bastogne stand, having been called back to Washington for one reason or another. I remember him so well, because he had such a broad smile and greeted all of us like we were personal friends. This was a guy you couldn't help but admire on first meeting. He went on after the war to become Army Chief of Staff, later Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and after his retirement was the U.S. Ambassador to South Viet Nam. He was truly a distinguished American.

Another recollection of Imbsheim is not nearly as pleasant. As I recall, a German soldier had crossed our lines with a white flag, and it was presumed that he wished to surrender as a prisoner of war.

The standard procedure for our troops in such events was that the enemy soldier should be blindfolded and then taken to headquarters POW for interrogation. In this instance, however, the German was not blindfolded and made it known that he was coming to deliver a message from his commander and wished to return to his own lines after completion of his mission. The problem that I had to present to Major West was that the German had not been blindfolded and could return with a great deal of information about our installations. Major West weighed the decision carefully and instructed me to have him retained as a prisoner.

Captain Lewis Dickson, who was the G-2 duty officer that day, nearly went berserk after the Major had left the war room. He exploded, said this was in direct violation of the Geneva Convention and ordered me to rescind the Major's order. I refused. Right or wrong, it was proper to follow the orders of the officer in command, not a subordinate. As I recall there were a good many people in the war room that day, including the G-3, who had just been promoted to Lt. Colonel, the Chief of Staff and a couple of duty officers from the G-3 section, plus a number of enlisted personnel. I can still recall the faces of the onlookers when I told the captain, politely, to take a hike. No one applauded, but the Chief of Staff and the G-3 smiled.

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The G-2 Section of the 103d ID at Imbsheim

Back row - M/Sgt Tim Welch, T/4 Everett Bauer, Major John Rhea, Major Bland West, Captain Anthony Drexel, Captain Lewis Dickson, 1st Lt. William Bruck. Middle row - T/5 Karl Wennerstrand, Pfc. Robert Hickey, Pfc. Norman Henderson, T/4 George Sandstrom. Front row - T/4 Nick Dallino, Cpl. George Schelhorn, T/4 Val Martinez, Pfc David Smith.

I must add that I liked and even respected Lew Dickson. It was the only time we had angry words between us, and I am sure that he accepted the fact, as I did, that the decision had been made and it was not up to either of us to change the orders. The subject never came up again.

Soon we were on the attack again. When we took back the area we had previously occupied, it was particularly devastating to see that many of the places we remembered having visited before had now been completely destroyed, whether by our artillery or that of the enemy. We progressed through Alsace and part of Lorraine. We passed through many towns and villages -- the names of most of them I have long forgotten. Wheeling through one town on one day I noted a woman -- a very attractive woman -- dressed in an army uniform, waving to the troops driving by. It was Marlene Dietrich. This

was a real morale booster. We didn't expect to see any movie stars this far forward where we were continually subject to enemy fire. We knew from reading the "Stars and Stripes" that some stars like Bob Hope and Bing Crosby had been entertaining troops in the ETO -- but not those in combat. To my knowledge they confined most of their

entertainment to Paris or places far from the front lines.

Whatever you may have read or heard about Marlene Dietrich, it is very likely true, but she showed great courage in supporting our troops, and I am sure none of them could ever forget her. I attended her show one night. The lighting was supplied by generator. About half way through her performance there was an air attack -- all the lights were turned off and we sat in the dark until the "all clear" sounded. When the lights came back on, Marlene continued the show as though nothing had happened.

She was cheered enthusiastically. Marlene stayed with our division for several weeks. I believe she was attracted to General McAuliffe, who was a handsome and charming man.

During the course of our forward progress, a dachshund puppy had latched on to me and Sgt. Val Martinez, one of the draftsmen in the war room. I don't have any idea where the puppy came from, but it didn't seem to belong anywhere and would follow either Val or myself wherever we might go. We named him "Schnappsie" -- not too original but appropriate.

One day General McAuliffe told me that Marlene would like to have a dachshund puppy and wanted to know if I knew where we could find one. This seemed a ready-made solution, for we couldn't continue to look after this puppy, so Val and I delivered him to Marlene. I hope she loved him and provided a home for him, but I rather doubt it, for a few years ago I read the book Marlene's daughter, Maria Riva, wrote about her mother, in which she commented that her mother did not like cats or dogs.

Hmmmm!

The division moved swiftly after we crossed the Rhine and had entered into Germany. We spent a few days at Garmisch Partenkirchen, on to Oberammergau, which was well known for the passion plays which they produced, and on into Austria where we were to link up with the 5th Army at the Brenner Pass, south of Innsbruck on the Italian border. We all knew that the war in Europe was drawing to a close. The enemy could not hold out much longer!

SSgt Keefer's book is posted on the 103d's website under the stories section, and may be read there, or a copy secured - it is very interesting reading.



French General Weygand with Captain Tony Drexel



S/Sgt Pete Keefer (Seated) 8/45 w/45th T-3 checking service records.

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Clayton Hall - U.S. Army Museum Fort Des Moines, Iowa



Frontal view of the 20,000 sq Clayton Hall US Army Historic Museum located at Fort Des Moines, Iowa. Renovated 2003/4 for display of historic Army events occurring at Fort Des Moines - the current home of the 103d Sustainment Command (Exp) - the successor unit to the 103d ID WWII. The 103d ID WW II Association has been invited to display our archives and artifacts at this museum. This is a fantastic opportunity for our Association to resolve this critical issue of preserving our WW II Legacy.

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