

News From The Cactus Patch

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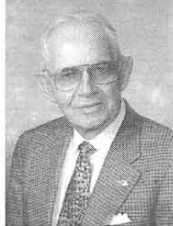
103d INF DIV WW II



Quarterly

December 2003

Issue No. 6



Presidents Message

Earl H. Clemmons

We have had a most eventful year in the CACTUS PATCH since 1 January 2003. And I am amazed. First, John Rauseo gave us guidance in developing a proper Constitution and By-Laws document. You approved it in Las Vegas. With this document in hand we are now ready to address the IRS toward obtaining the coveted "Non-Profit" status. The non-profit status will enable

done to provide tax-deductible gifts and monetary donations to our Association; additionally, we will enjoy a discount on all postage fees.

Secondly, through the tireless efforts of Harold Branton, serving as our appointed Liaison Officer to the Board of Directors of the Morton Museum of Cooke County, Texas (located in Gainesville, TX where we trained) we now have a permanent museum home. The museum director has reserved a generous area in the museum where we may, at no cost nor fee, display our Division artifacts and documentaries.

And then came the fun part... our 2003 annual Reunion. Doug Stellner, our Vice President, and his wife, Margaret, traveled to Las Vegas and laid the ground work for that exciting event. We should all be grateful to them for wisely recommending the New York – New York Hotel as our host Reunion hotel. My appreciation is extended to all of you who made the effort to attend our 38th Annual Reunion. It was a real inspiration to be in the presence of so many, of you displaying the Cactus Patch. It was truly, a great Reunion experience.

Now I wish to again mention Harold Branton and his wife, Elsie for their two years of work as Editor of the NEWS FROM THE CACTUS PATCH, the Newsletter. Their outstanding written memories have revived in me my own World War II recollections. I would like to add that before tackling the emerging Museum and Archives tasks, Harold recruited his replacement Editor. Dave Leslie, son of Bob Leslie, comes to us fully qualified and enthused to help in his new job.

My sincere appreciation and deep thanks go to Mr. "Fact Finder" Mel Wright, our Past President. Mel has gathered an unbelievable body of statistics and data about the 103d Infantry Division and its members. We are all indebted to Mel, and it is no wonder that he was awarded the first ever "CACTUS MAN OF THE

YEAR" plaque for 2001 and 2002.

Finally, I wish to publicly thank my wife, Bennye, for her unfailing support and help with the plans and decisions associated with our recent Reunion. While this information is gratifying, it must be tempered with the realization that the 604 members represent only a small percentage of the 2700 names that currently appear on the Association's mailing list. Obviously, this is a matter that will require early attention. Any suggestions and/or recommendations are welcomed.

And so, as I give my last bundle of thanks, to our wonderful Board of Directors, to our exceedingly efficient Executive Secretary, Dave Blustin, and to all who helped out this year, I would like to propose this toast:

"Friendship is a precious gift that cannot be bought or sold,
But its value is far greater than a mountain made of gold;
For gold is cold and lonely -and it can neither see nor hear
And in time of trouble it is powerless to cheer.
It has no ears to listen - no heart to understand,
And it cannot give you sympathy nor extend a helping hand.

So when you ask GOD for a gift, be thankful if he sends,
Not diamonds, pearls or riches, but the love of real true friends."

For now, Friends, ADIEU. We will be looking for you in Schaumburg in October 2004.
Earl Clemmons.

The Vice President's Message

Doug Stellner



As we conclude this 2003 year, I would like to join President Earl Clemmons in expressing my thanks to all of the members who attended our very successful Las Vegas reunion. The sense of camaraderie, plus a genuine interest in advancing into the future with a strong and viable 103d Division Association, was stalwarts for their exemplary service. Included in my personal list are the following:

- Our President and his wife, Bennye, for their leadership, friendship and inspiration.
- Our Editor Harold Branton, and his wife, Elsie, for their outstanding work in coordinating many of the reunion activities.

- Our President Emeritus, Mel WRIGHT, for his remarkable efforts in compiling a detailed database of about 5000 folk who either served evident amongst all of those in attendance.
- At the risk of overlooking some of those who labored to make this reunion such an outstanding event, I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize just a few of ourwith, or closely affiliated with our 103d Infantry Division Association. This "roster" proved to be an invaluable tool in organizing for this past reunion.
- Our new-found friend, Irvin Bell of M Company, 410th. Comrade Irvin, working with Mel Wright, did a masterful job of arranging the seating for our banquet.
- Our Executive Secretary, Dave Blustin for coordinating the registration activities and for his many long hours of overseeing the registration tasks.
- Our Association's favorite practitioner of law, Judge Tom Stagg and his wife, Miki for their selfless hours of labor at the registration desk.
- Our Future Editor, Dave Leslie, and future Vice President, Dick Ball, for their yeoman efforts in compiling and printing the final edition of our new 103d Constitution and By-Laws. This was a valiant last minute effort which made it possible for this document. to be adopted at this year's assemblage.
- My life's companion and helpmate, Margaret, for her support and understanding for making this year's reunion such a memorable event.

We are pleased to report that our Association is making progress in increasing the number of dues paying members. A recent accounting from President Emeritus, Mel Wright, reveals that in the year 2000, the Association had only 332 folk who paid annual dues. By contrast, the tally for 2003 indicates that we now have a total of 601 dues paying members. It should be noted that this latter figure includes 55 Associate members.

As to the future, we are pleased to report that the planning for our 2004 assemblage is well underway. To be hosted by Comrade Hank Goorhis, we will be mustering next year, 6 October through 10 October, at the Hyatt Regency Woodfield, in SCHAUMBURG, Illinois.

Most of you will remember, he has a special treat for our '04 gathering. As of now he's making plans for our reunion

attendees to tour the nearby 1st Infantry Division (Big Red One) museum. From all reports, this is one of the premier U.S. Infantry Division museums in the country.

Mark your calendars. This 2004 reunion promises to be another outstanding affair. More information will be provided in the spring issue of the NEWS FROM THE CACTUS PATCH.

In closing, please accept our very best wishes to you and yours for a wonderful HOLIDAY SEASON and a healthy and prosperous NEW YEAR !

Doug Stillner

MEMORIALS AT THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN

On a hazy and cloudy day, 12 November 2003, eight members

Raymond "Red" Barrett
Bill Schmeck and wife Marian
Dick Pearson and son Randy Pearson
John Kaiser and wife Anna
Mike Toohig
Bruce Hughes
Len Sattler
Dick Ball

Immediately after laying the wreath, the 103d ceremonial group proceeded to visit the grave of our General McAuliffe there in Arlington Cemetery.

The 103d group enjoyed a delicious dinner together at the Alpine Restaurant on the evening before the cemetery ceremonials. After the laying of the wreath on 12 November, the group had lunch, a

of the 103D INF DIV ASSN of WW II met and placed a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington Cemetery. The time was exactly 10:35 a.m. The wreath was a beautiful red, white and blue floral arrangement with a streaming ribbon on which was indicated that it was being presented by the men of the 103d Infantry Division of World War II.

Just after the wreath was placed, the assembled members, along with supporting personnel of the 3rd Infantry Regiment, (The Old Guard) were called to "PRESENT ARMS" by the attending Sergeant-in-Charge. The Army bugler then blew TAPS as all stood up at ATTENTION, or at PRESENT ARMS.

Attendees of the 103rd Infantry Division Association included:

Battery B, 382nd Field Artillery Battalion
F Company, 410th Infantry Regiment
F Company, 410th Infantry Regiment
F Company, 410th Infantry Regiment
B Company, 411th Infantry Regiment
HQ Company, I&R Platoon, 409th Infantry Regiment
C Company, 410th Infantry Regiment
Battery B, 382nd Field Artillery Battalion

grand buffet at the Officers Club at nearby Fort Myer.

Editor's Note: Want to join this loyal group next year, 2004. Call Dick Pearson, 937-774-7467 or Dick Ball, 703-671-9917. You will thoroughly enjoy this beautiful and inspiring ceremony. A truly intense patriotic event.

LIKE FATHER, LIKE SON

By Andy Beck - Copyright © 1985, 2003



**Captain Bernard Beck Saverne, France,
January 1945**

Captain Beck was hurrying across the street when a photographer called to him, "Can you hold it right there, Sir?" Click! It was over in an instant and the image of the classic American crusader was engrained on the film forever. He was tired, but he was proud; he was saving the world for freedom.

Fade out, Saverne, France, January 1945. Fade in, the summer of 1978 in Boulder, Colorado, U.S.A. I am the Captain's son and I'm starting to think about what I can do for his 60th birthday, which is a year away. As far back as I can remember, I have always prided myself on creating unique gifts for people. I wanted this one to be the best. Ever since I was a little boy, I have had a framed 8 X 10 copy of that favorite photo of my father on my wall. I looked at it again for the umpteen millionth time and an idea began to form in my brain.

This gift was to be the ultimate compliment. I planned to reproduce the famous picture. In this

case, reproduce does not mean make another print, rather it means theatrically restaging the whole scene, with me modeling as my father. When all was said and done, the project took almost two years to complete. Many local military vehicle collectors helped supply all kinds of jeep parts, equipment and uniforms. Unfortunately, it has been a long time since you could walk into a surplus store and buy a World War II uniform. Occasionally, a piece or two still might be found, but most of these old uniforms are long since sold and now collectors' items. Indeed, it took 15 months to find most of what I needed. The rest I made up with incorrect military or civilian items.

The really big challenge was finding a World War II jeep. Checking newspaper ads only revealed overpriced wrecks. Then, on a July 4th tour in southern Colorado, I spied a jeep in a junkyard. It also was overpriced, but in good enough condition to restore. I made lots of phone calls to local collectors for advice, encouragement and suggestions. I took a deep

**Son Andy Beck, Wheat Ridge, Colorado,
U.S.A., January 1980**



breath and headed for the town of Las Mesitas, Colorado, to buy my big toy. "Are you sure buying it was a good idea?" Pity my poor friend who had to listen to that question, which was asked a thousand times on the drive home. After a ten-hour ordeal of towing the 1943 Ford GPW home, the worst case of "buyer's regret" in car collectors' history began to subside.

My father, Bernie Beck, had his 60th birthday on 29 July 1979. Unfortunately, his birthday present was not ready. Too bad it wasn't even half ready. About a week before his birthday, I called him up and, in my most confident, cocky voice, said, "Your present isn't ready. You'll get it when it is ready, and when you get it you'll know why it took so long, and that it is the best present you ever got." Evidently I had done a good job concealing the truth about the gift. The closest he ever came while playing "the guessing game" was when he asked if I was going to give him the jeep. Sorry Dad, but that's for me.

I had searched for eighteen months, in five states, for a location to stage the scene, but with no luck. In April of 1979, I purchased a house in Wheat Ridge, Colorado, a suburban community northwest of Denver. The first day I drove to work from my new residence, I saw "the perfect location" only a mile and a half from my new home. This perfect location was a small garage used by a commercial auto restorer, who specialized in 1955-57 T-birds. Outside was a gas pump very similar to the one in the famous photo. Emblazoned on the glass globe on top was "Skelley", but that didn't discourage me since I knew I could paint the "Esso" name. By January 1980, I had collected enough uniform pieces and restored the Ford GPW sufficiently to look accurate enough in a photo. Just like Hollywood, a few parts were wood or cardboard mockups. I obtained permission from the owner of the T-bird shop and I was ready to go.

The photography sessions took three days and included over 200 pictures, both black and white as well as color. On the first day the sun angle was wrong and I used an incorrect lens. On day two, I put on the right lens but I still

was not satisfied. Day three was better choreographed and I was pleased with the result. The "location" was on a very busy street. I set up the camera on a tripod and framed the photo, as I wanted it. Two friends watched for cars while a third friend told me where to stand in the photo and then tripped the shutter. It was in the darkroom, sixty prints later, that I held the photo I wanted.

The actual gift was two framed 8" X 10" photos, the original photo of my father next to the new photo of me. Just five days before his 61st birthday, I took my dad into his backyard, sat him down, and gave him his birthday gift. "After all this time I expected something larger," he commented, as he began to peel off the carefully chosen wrinkled, used wrapping paper. He opened up the gift to see what was inside and, for a minute, he was a bit puzzled. Certainly he knew the photo of himself, but what was this other one? When he realized what he was looking at, a big smile crossed his face. The compliment was paid. For weeks he carried the photos around showing them to friends, family and business associates. Eventually, the gift found a home prominently displayed in my parents' den. My father agreed that it was the best present he had ever received.

Obviously, I, too, am very proud of this gift, but every time I look at it I can't help seeing hundreds of technical mistakes. Then I start waxing theoretical about going out a fourth day to "do it right". Suddenly I realize that it is done and has been delivered. Technical precision was never an objective. As with all gifts, it is the thought that counts.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The author, Andy Beck, is a licensed architect with the National Park Service in Denver, Colorado. His work in both new construction and historic preservation has been recognized nationally through publications and awards. His father, Bernard Beck, commanded the 103d and 45th Infantry Division Signal Companies in World War II. In 1979, Lieutenant Colonel Beck retired from the U.S.-Army Reserve. Throughout his civilian life Bernie Beck worked in the field of sales promotion advertising. He died at the young age

of 65 in January 1985.

A NOTE FROM HAROLD BRANTON:

Every soldier has a story. And that story is important - not only to him but to posterity. The story above is about a soldier, told by his son. It is entered here to demonstrate the type of recording that will fit perfectly in our Division Archives. It is a good story, and I appreciate Andy sharing it with us.

Now let me urge every Cactus man to accomplish a work such as that above for the Archives. As to the writing, let me say this: the toughest part of it is simply getting started. The rest is easy! Try it. HAROLD

REUNION 2003... LAS VEGAS

High expectations were voiced at the Reunion in Dallas in October 2002 when the Association voted for Las Vegas, 2003. Following up on that vote, Doug Stellner and his wife Margaret flew to the fabulous city in the desert in February 03 to make what we call military "reconnaissance". Their report was exciting, much like Louisiana LOTTO! The two visited a half dozen or more fantastic hotels, and considering their several options. They determined to recommend the NEW YORK-NEW YORK Hotel as their selection for the 2004 Reunion. The Executive Committee and the Board of Directors reviewed the scenarios of the several hotels and agreed to accept the NEW YORK-NEW YORK Hotel recommendation.



The Reunion staff immediately set to work, under the guidance of Vice President Doug Stellner. Contracts were to be made; and arrangements for a myriad of details. These included hotel block reservations; agendas; registration plans and packets; name tags; the 50/50 program tickets; tour plans for Hoover Dam; golf; band for the banquet; the banquet; awards and decorations; hospitality rooms; transportation.; books and. cap. sales; and still



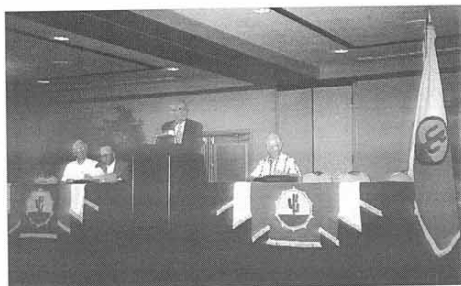
Elsie and Harold Branton man the welcome table.

more.

Highlights of the Reunion are reported here. Emphasis is given to those activities which provided most fun and camaraderie: First, the central hospitality room was actually two spacious adjacent rooms. Both round and long tables were all about, plus a refreshment bar operated my management. A book display and sales table (pins, books, phone books and battle death books) was managed by Elsie Branton, Bennye Clemmons, Melba Wright, and Louise Bush. Asked if things were going well, Louise announced: "Well, quite a few sales; total amounted to about a thousand dollars to go the 103d monument Fund:" Then there was the bus tour to Hoover Dam on Tuesday. What an experience! Three bus loads were in caravan. Bus guides were our own Cactus guys: Bob Leslie; Chan Rogers; Dick Ball, and Dave Leslie. Those fellows carried on a lively talkathon going and coming, thereby providing a continuous stream of information about the region, histories, cowboy and Indian tales, and about the dam itself. Special thanks go to that wonderful trip planner, Ms. Maureen, at the New-York-New York Hotel Travel Desk; and to Ms. Linda Ducas for assisting in the boardings. Thank you ladies, thank you.)

The Business Meeting on Thursday morning, 2 October 2003, was successful and harmonious. Notable actions included:

1. Museum and Archives. Approval was granted by the membership for the Board of



President Earl Clemmons opens the traditional business meeting

Director's to join in agreement with the Board of Directors of the Morton Museum of Cooke county, Texas to adopt that facility as the Museum home and Archives for the 103D INF DIV ASSN of WW II.

2. Adoption of a proper Constitution and ByLaws.
3. Oral Veterans Documentations. Approval for the embedding of a special photographic and oral recording crew with the Reunion group in Las Vegas for the purpose of engaging oral historias and documentations.

5. Election of Officers for FY 2004. Those elected are:

President	Doug Stellner	Chaplain	Walter Modrzejewski
Vice President	Richard Ball	Board Members Reperesenting:	
Asst. Vice President	Michael Toohig	409 th Infantry	Bob Leslie
Secretary/Treasurer	Dennis Ryan	410 th Infantry	Gene Halsey
Asst. Secretary/Treasurer	Cranston Rogers	411 th Infantry	Jerry Brenner
Executive Secretary	David Blustin	HQ & HQ Co/Special	J.D. Shuttleworth
Editor, The Cactus Patch	Dave Leslie	Troops	
Historian (Museum and Archives)	Harold Branton	Associates	Andy Beck

6. Reunion Site, 2004. The one bid received by the Executive Committee was presented by Henry L. Gooris of Skokie, Illinois. Hank is one of our Military Policemen. His presentation and recommendation was to return to the Hyatt Regency Woodfield, Schaumburg, Illinois. We have been there twice before, and had a great time on both occasions. The membership voted unanimously to go again to Schaumburg!

The moving idea was that the documentations be released to TV Shows, radio recordings, etc., for fee or sale. A portion of such fees/sales to be shared with the 103D INF DIV ASSN of WW II.

4. Membership Administration and Heraldry. This topic was discussed by Mel Wright, wherein he described his work in assembling data on members of the 103d Infantry Division, assignments and casualties. He invited attention especially to the Honored Dead, battle deaths. He pointed out his detailed posting of casualties, by company units from the wartime period. President Clemmons noted, following Malls closing statements, his recognition of all the Division's honored dead, including the losses during the year 2003. He went on to add that as a tribute to Mel's singular efforts, and the intrinsic values attending the listings thereby accomplished, both the listings and his (Molls) book, "BATTLE DEATHS OF THE 103d Infantry Division and Support Units" would be placed in the Division's Archives.

Prospective Reunion dates: 6 - 9 October 2004.

Now about the Banquet: Attendance was at 298, all hungry souls, and the event was just great. Western express music by the STETSINS, led by Marty Mahoney (a real cowboy) was equally superb. (Harold complained that it was a sorry note that the band did not know the songs "Cowboy Jack", "Little Joe the Wrangler", "Limpy the good Cowboy", or "Sleeping in the Wagon Yard", whereupon Marty handed Harold his guitar saying, "Here, play it for us - all those

ballads. Needless to say, that cooled Harold.)

A lull in the program provided the opportunity for special awards presentations. The first award, presented by President Earl Clemmons, was a beautifully engraved plaque presented to Mel Wright, Past President. This was a signal presentation because it was the first ever **CACTUS MAN OF THE YEAR** award given. Actually, it was for two years, 2001 and 2002. Mel deserved such an award due to his outstanding work during the two years in the areas of organization, administration, membership, Reunion planning and hosting; and Association publications.

The 50/50 drawing came near the end of the banquet. As always, it was very exciting.

Finally, as the evening was closing, Dick Ball, in an action of standing tradition, presented to



Mel Wright accepts the CACTUS MAN OF THE YEAR Award from President Earl Clemmons

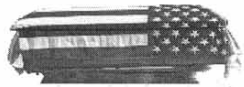
President Earl Clemmons, on behalf of the general membership, a beautifully engraved speaker's gavel. In conclusion, everyone attending the Reunion event in Las Vegas agreed that it was an exciting and highly successful get-together.

103d INF DIV ASSN of WW II 2002 CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL REPORT

CONSOLIDATED ACCOUNT					
Item	2001 Transfer from Previous Organization	2002 Gross	2002 Cost	2002 Net	2002 Consolidated Totals
General Fund	\$16,015.42	\$30,710.40	(\$27,945.38)	\$2,765.02	\$18,780.44
Golf Fund	\$2,957.50	\$1,800.00	(\$1,549.52)	\$250.48	\$3,207.98
Memorial Fund	\$1,369.33				\$1,369.33
Sub Total	\$20,342.25				
Monument Fund		\$8,521.80		\$8,521.80	\$8,521.80
Total Balance 31 Dec 2002					\$31,879.55

Las Vegas Monument Donations Received:	
Income from Sales of books, pins, telephone books, and Battle Death Books:	\$1,105.00
Expenses for telephone and Battle Death books, shipping expenses:	<u>\$189.00</u>
Amount deposited to the account of the Texas WW II Historical Monument Fund	\$916.00

HONOR ROLL



103d INF DIV ASSN of WW II
(Deceased reported after NFTCP issue No 5)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Rushing, Robert G | 103 Sig Co |
| White, John P. | 410 Co L |
| Mathias, Philip A. | 410 Hq 2nd Bn |
| Byrkett, Paul | 409 Can Co |
| Lindgren, Howard | 803 Ord |
| Gerhardt, Harold | 410 Co M |
| Love, Ivan W. | 410 Co M |
| Wangsness, Otto | 411 Co E |
| Loomis, Joseph L. | 103 MP |
| Middleton Sr., Jerome W. | 103 Hq Co |
| Steele William W. | 410 Co M |
| Brelsford, Rev. Harry G. | TX A&I ASTP |
| Nichols, Charles Joseph | 410 Co C |
| Fay, Clarence J. | 103 Sig Co |
| Magness, Stanley A. | 410 Co E |
| Pfeffer, Kenneth N. | 411 Co F |
| Lehmann, Quintus W. | 409 Co C |
| ← Donisch, Herbert E. | 409 Hq Co 3rd Bn |
| Houston, Robert W. | 103 Div Hq |
| Phillips, John F. | 103 Sig Co |
| Fioravante, Edward J. | 382 FA Hq Co |
| Hitz, George H. | 103 Sig Co |
| Welsh, John F | 103 Sig Co |
| ← Ralston, Marvin L. "Pete" | 409 Co C |
| ← Alpern, William J. | 410 Co I |
| Calhoun, John C. | 410 Co L Med |
| Coles, Fr. Edward P | 411 Co E |
| Christien, Carl J. | 409 Co I |
| Cross, Kenneth D. | 409 Co C |

It is recommended that contributions be made to our 103d Infantry Monument Fund as follows:

TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND
9737 Warwana Rd.
Houston, TX 77080

PRAYER

(By Tom Stagg / read at the Las Vegas Banquet)

Good morning, Lord,
We are back again . . . some of Your older believers, asking for some more of Your Divine Guidance and Protection. It is admitted that You heard from us more often some 55 or so years ago. Of course, You already know what we later learned . . . about there being no atheists in those foxholes. And that as the time draws nearer for our inevitable face-to-face encounter, You may find our prayers may be getting back to those previous higher levels.

Lord, we know You put us here on this Good Earth to serve You and our fellow man. To the extent we have failed in either of these assigned duties, we pray for Your forgiveness for our failings. And we will strive to improve.

And, Lord, we pray especially for our companions in battle who have already departed this life and we trust our eventual welcome into Your Heavenly Kingdom will be the occasion of many joyous reunions.

And, thanks, Lord, for listening.
Amen.



SPECIAL TRIBUTE

Thanks for the Memories
Bob Hope 29 May 1903 - 28 July 2003

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

We can all empathize with Washington, Jefferson, Hamilton and others about developing a Constitution and By-Laws. It took the founding fathers 10 years, give or take, to fully debate the U.S. Constitution. It must have been a tough "debate" indeed. It took your Executive Committee and Board of Directors two years. Then you approved their work at the Las Vegas reunion. Securing a proper document of this type is good reason to rejoice.

A copy of the new Constitution and By-Laws is available from the Association's Secretary Treasurer, Dennis Ryan, 5138 Pepin Place, Madison, WI 50705. Telephone Number (608)232-0580. Office e-Mail: dryan@aol.com Home eMail: ermary@aol.com

For information, a resume of the new document is here presented:

Articles I, II, and III establish the name of our Association, the purposes and duration, in that order. Article IV identifies classes of members: Regular, Associate and Honorary. The Regular is a former member of the 103d Infantry Division; the Associate is a descendant of the Regular, wife or widow; the Honorary is a select person authorized to become a member by written approval of the Executive Committee. Likewise, a non-family person may become a member when approved by the Executive Committee. Article V addresses organization, declaring the Association as non-stock, nonprofit and consisting of a body of members, a leadership staff (Executive Committee and Board of Directors), certain standing committees, and provisions for appointed or temporary committees. Articles VI through XV detail the duties of the several officers, committees, elections and terms of office, dues and assessments, meetings, reunions and the How-To of conducting business.

We are grateful for getting this document approved and in place as a stabilizing influence on how we do business. It must be noted here that the underlying spirit of the guidance

provided in the document is designed to enhance our relationships and camaraderie, one with another, throughout the duration of our Association.

MUSEUM AND ARCHIVES

The prospects of our Association establishing a presence in a Museum and Archives setting has been of keen interest for a long time. At last, through a liaison with the Board of Directors of the Morton Museum of Cooke County, Texas (Gainesville) and Ms. Shanna Powell, Director of the museum, an opportunity arose. The 103d INF DIV ASSN OF WW II was welcomed to that Museum. The Museum Board of Directors has voted to adopt our Association as a participant in the Morton Museum, on a non-fee basis.

At the recent business meeting in Las Vegas, the Association voted unanimously to adopt the Morton Museum as its museum home. Now, it's a done agreement.

The above described proceedings were conducted during the period July to September 2003 by our Association Editor, Harold Branton. He and Mel Wright over time made several contacts with Cooke County authorities and with Ms. Powell about this project, the sum of which gained the agreement.

We thank Harold and Mel for their efforts, and look forward to their development of a plan for our participation in Morton Museum. Harold says, "We anticipate that our participation in this fine museum will emphasize the storage and display of the Association's artifacts and documentaries." He added, "The area offered to us to house our materials, which will include a private study center and library, appears ample for all our contemplated needs." Mel elaborated further, on the business floor in Las Vegas, "The Morton Museum in Gainesville, Texas is the logical place for our museum home. After all, we trained at Camp Howze which is at Gainesville."

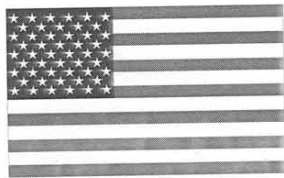
MEMORIALS IN FRANCE

Roland PRIEUR, Superintendent, Epinah American Cemetery, France and our loyal friend and liaison, sends warm-greetings to the 103rd folks. He declares that he felt great honor visiting the commemorative ceremonies at the A Comapany, 411th monument, Saulcy, France, 23 November 2003. There were many dignitaries, school children waving U.S. and French flags, WW II vehicles, a parade, and speakers. Appreciation for the liberation of France by U.S. forces in WW II/103d Infantry Division, seems very much alive today. Same for citizens and veteran groups assembled and parading around the 103d Inf Div Square in St. Die.

Earlier this year, on 4 July, large crowds attended ceremonies at the American cemeteries in France. Something was special. Scores of citizenry and veterans organizations, working have gone through, we want to reaffirm strongly this profound feeling. We cannot, do not, and will not ever forget the ultimate sacrifice American heroes made during the two World Wars to liberate France.

To show our gratitude and demonstrate again this feeling, we have launched an unprecedented initiative, a symbolic gesture to lay by July 4 a red rose on each and every one of the 60,511 graves and 11 Missing In Action monuments of Americans fallen in France during World Wars I & II.

July 4, the anniversary date of the independence of the United States, is also an historic date for France. France supported the American Revolution and was the first country to recognize America's independence. This year also marks the 225th anniversary of the 1778 treaty of friendship between our two nations.



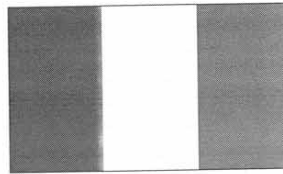
together, placed a red rose on the grave of every American serviceman who fell and was buried in French soil or reported missing.. This was a unique and real tribute to our comrades resting there.

Wherein was the initiative for such a wide spread memorial? The recorded statement below, sponsored by broad acclaim, tells the story, and, even as we read, Roland reports that the French people are preparing for the NEXT BIG THING in French-American celebrations for 2004. We appreciate Roland's liaison and keeping us informed on these matters. And now, the story:

THE FRENCH HAVE NOT FORGOTTEN...

The French People have always cherished and valued the tradition of friendship and alliance between France and the United States, which dates back 225 years. Whatever circumstances and differences of views this friendship might be, this grassroots initiative met with immediate enthusiasm from French associations and organizations throughout the United States and France. One of them particularly worth mentioning is Les Fleurs de La Memoire (The Flowers of Memory), which was created three years ago and already counts several thousand French families among its membership. The organization's sole mission, to which members commit in writing, is that at least once a year during their lifetime and that of their children they will lay a flower on the grave of an American fallen in France.

This demonstrates yet again the deep feelings of friendship that unite the French and American peoples, a friendship that has and will always survive the passage of time. As President Roosevelt said, "There are no two nations more united by history and mutual friendship than the People of France and the People of the United States of America."



Dear Comrades,

That which appears above was forwarded to me by our friend, Roland Prieur, Supt. of the Epinal American Military Cemetery at Dinozb, France. In an accompanying message, he reports that he'd received his allotted 6000 roses and that they had been properly placed on the graves by the local French citizenry.
Fraternally, Doug Stellner

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Amazing Battle Death Research Story:

Mel Wright to John Born: Our records indicate Samuel Abney KIA 02 Jan 45 but you indicate it was March 45, How sure are you. To help trigger your memory here are names of 5 other men of 411 Co F men that were KIA on 15 Mar 45. We wish to have correct data and if the records are wrong to correct them. **John Born to Mel Wright:** I am certain that Sam died in March of 1945. I had leave to go to Brussels. While I was gone the big jump-off happened on 15 March. On my return I found out that he had been killed. The reason I recall him is the fact that I took his watch, minus the watch band, to Brussels (on leave) for repair. When I returned to the unit I learned that he had been killed.. After the war I returned his watch to his parents.

Sams IDPF (Individual Deceased Personnel File) that we obtained recently from the army lists the following inventory of Sam's personal effects that were sent home to his parents:

- 1 stamp and pad
- 1 Tube of leads
- 1 Bottle of stamp pad ink
- 1 Tooth brush
- 1 Wrist Watch Band *****

This convinced us to set the rcords straight. Our Battle Death Records now have Sam's listed Death 15 Mar 45.

From Harold Branton: Keep those letters coming, Buddies. We will find your comrades it we can. We will publish mail as we have space; otherwise, your notes of value will be deposited in the archives. In fact, you can send letters to the ARCHIVES... we have a place now!

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