

CALL ME SPEARHEAD

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Association of 3d Armored Division Veterans

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Volume 20

The Brief & Demeaning Life of a Replacement (The Sad Saga of the Greenest & Youngest)



"I guess it's okay. The replacement center says he comes from a long line of infantrymen."

By
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Private, Co B, 83rd Armored Recon Battalion
3rd Armored Division

The many WWII Spearhead combat stories always hold my rapt attention as they tell of tough times, fierce opposition, and then a breakthrough or a victory. Usually the tales unfold from veterans of fighting in France, the Bulge, or up to the Rhine river in Germany. Most of the writers of these narratives sound modest, but heroic to me as I compare my own experience with theirs.

I wasn't a Spearheader back during Mojave desert training days, in England, or even France. I was one of those terribly young (age 18), inadequately trained kids called "replacements." I must have had a lot of company because the 3rd Armored had 110% casualties, so there must have been more replacements than original members. If you weren't a replacement yourself, you will surely remember your attitude toward the ones that came into your unit. So often replacements looked so young you couldn't see them as old enough to be in the Army. (I looked about age 14.) Sometimes they seemed physically small, sorta' puny, as well as baby faced. (I was 5'9" and 126 lbs.) Your unit was lucky if the replacement had any training that fit your mission. My 16 weeks of infantry basic training was cut to 13 weeks when the Bulge happened and

manpower was right at the bottom of the barrel. My contemporaries were the 1944 high school graduates, often those that couldn't pass the Navy's physical exam like me (color blindness).

Our troopship took us from Boston to Liverpool and we crossed the Channel to stay a day or two at Camp Lucky Strike in La Havre. Then the French railroad boxcars to Verviers, Belgium. (I'm sure they were the same boxcars my father used in WWI.) As the train paused from time to time, French kids tried to sell us whine, their sisters, or beg for candy. At Verviers, we were given reconditioned M-1's, and we went to a range to zero them in and were put on trucks to be moved up to join our units. We crossed the Rhine on the pontoon bridge and three of us were dropped off to join the 3rd Armored division as a member of B Company, 83rd Reconnaissance Battalion.

A Sergeant took us into a house where the Lt. was sitting at a desk writing on some papers. I was sure that he was sending letters to the families of the guys who were killed that day. What an impressive introduction it was! The Sergeant said, "Lt, here are the replacements." The Lt. slowly lifted his eyes from his writing as we three stood stiffly at attention. He looked at me first, then to my left to the two others, and then slowly back to me again. His gaze had seen that we were very young, not very big of stature, and the middle guy had really thick glasses. His greeting to us was a growled, "What the hell are we getting here, a Sunday School?" I'm sure he would have sent us back if he could have. Here, late in the war he was getting the dregs of American manhood (boyhood?) and it didn't please him, especially with tomorrow being the jump-off day for the big pincer movement that was called the Ruhr (or Rose) pocket, which the 83rd would lead. Bill Mauldin captured this feeling well in his famous "replacement" cartoon. The sergeant told us to sleep in the hay in the barn, so I tried to calm down as I heard mortars crumping in somewhere in the distance and I wondered what an armored division did and if "reconnaissance" really meant what I thought it did. It sounded awfully dangerous and totally strange to me. My effort to sleep and calm down wasn't helped when I found a German "potato masher" in the hay under me.

The next day was full of new experiences because I'd never seen a tank, an armored car, a half track, etc. I was assigned to ride on the back of an armored car. Someone had stolen my rifle the first night and left one that was really dirty. (I learned this happened a lot because it was easier than cleaning your own weapon.) I was delighted at the switch as cleaned it because I had just found out that the front sight of my rifle was so loose so knew where it would shoot? We mounted up and moved out, starting the big and fast drive to Paderborn. Early in the day we were stopped and we buried our faces in a roadside hill as some mortar rounds came in. I was really scared, or course, but I didn't know how afraid I should be in this situation so I asked the driver, as we hugged the hill, "Would you call this being under fire?" He gave me a withering look, probably reserved for new replacements, and said to himself, "Oh shit!" Earlier, someone said, "Kid, put out the aircraft recognition panel for today on our vehicle," and he told me the day's color. This was my first order in my new outfit, and I wanted so much to do well, but I'm color blind so I had to beg off, for safety's sake. That first night I got the 2am – 4am guard duty, standing guard in the turret of the light tank that was with us. As my squad leader started to leave me, He said, "If you see anything move out there, just fire the .50 caliber and follow your tracers." He hesitated and turned back to me to ask, "Do you know how to operate a .50?" Sadly I responded, "I've never seen one before." So he showed me what to do. Obviously, my first day wasn't a great one as we took off on our long fast ride that took us 101 miles on one of our days. (That's still a record!)

Our movement was so fast that we surprised lots of German units, many of whom were looking for a reason to surrender. We took thousands of prisoners, just taking their weapons and telling them to march back along the road. Fortunately, many of them didn't know that we were just a recon platoon so far out in front that it took two days for the main force to catch up to us. Good thing they didn't know! But we couldn't tell which Germany units were hard-core believers who still believed in "Deutschland uber allies," so we had to be cautious. It was in Thurland that we were dismounted and moved in to recapture the village that the Germans had retaken from us and had captured some Spearheaders. It was a very hard firefight with a lot of houses burning, and the Lt. said to me, "If it gets any hotter we may have to haul ass. If we do, shoot the prisoners." I decided what I'd do if I got the order, but fortunately things cooled down. As we checked out the chicken coops, toold sheds and out buildings behind the houses, another G.I. and I found ourselves suddenly standing about 20 feet in front of a machine gun manned by two healthy Germans. We were dead meat – except that they wanted to surrender, feeling that Germany had lost the war. Whew! As a replacement, and a young one, I was never called by any name but "Kid". And of course, seldom did anyone go ut of their way to be friendly or help out. Later I learned that it wasn't too smart to get friendly with a new replacement because they weren't likely to last very long. My squad leader, Render, a tall, lean Wisconsin farmer, looked out for me, as he should have, but that was it.

Most nights we were in a village that was astounded to see American troops. We usually moved into a house, told the residents to go stay with the neighbors, and then made ourselves at home. We slept in their feather beds, but fully clothed with boots on, and our rifle by our bed. The guys in my platoon always looked for the booze in every home we occupied and a number of times, I stood two guard duties because my relief was smashed. Fortunately, the Germans were too disorganized to think much of counter attacking in early April, 1945. And then there was the night one of our guys raped a German woman. They relieved him of his weapon but gave it back to him the next day when we got into a hot fight. Later he was sent to the rear to face the music. The best thing that happened to us was running out of gas just 10 miles before reaching Paderborn. We sat there two days as the main force of the 3rd Armored Division passed by us. They encountered Germany's tank center there and had a terrible fight would have wiped out our recon platoon in only a few minutes. Thank you, Lord!

The Lt. who led our platoon was always in the lead jeep of our column. He was a brave officer and a little nuts too, I believe. He's our guys who got to pick off a number of German motorcycle riders and staff cars that we surprised during our drive. He was pretty good with that Tommy gun. I recall the day we were just cruising along a road when he got on the radio to us and said, "Look over to the left in those trees." We looked and saw about 1,000 German troops in bivouac – and we only had a platoon! The Lt. turned left, going right up to the encampment as the Germans looked on in astonishment. He jumped out and demanded to see the commanding officer. The German colonel appeared and the Lt. demanded his surrender. We sat there, just three jeeps, an M-6 armored car, and a light tank, fingering our weapons nervously but doing nothing provocative, as the Lt. accepted the surrender. Then we disarmed all the Germans and headed them back along the road. I wonder when they finally realized the we had faked them out of their shorts because we had no backup units anywhere near us. This was a very different kind of war than earlier days before the crossing of the Rhine. We totally surprised a lot of German units by our rapid advance and a lot of them were eagerly looking for a way to surrender to us, rather than the Russians. The challenge was in figuring out which group of the enemy was going to fight and which wanted to surrender. On most days, after maybe 30 to 50 miles of advance, we would take over a couple houses to stay in and evict the homeowners. One of the guys in our platoon had been in combat for a long time, I'd heard. He seemed on the edge of cracking. These homes, just like mine back n the states, always had a picture in the living room of the husband or son, in uniform, usually on the mantle over the fireplace. This guy would clean the mantle off with one swing of his arm, cursing all German soldiers, making a real mess. I helped several hausfraus clean up things. I wonder if he's the same soldier who did that rape?

My greatest concerns as I joined the 83rd as a replacement was that my fear would keep me from functioning well. During the earliest days in combat, I'd try to sense how scared I was and see if I could still do what I was ordered to do. When shooting started, things got so busy and adrenalin ran so high, that fear didn't seem to be a big problem. My greatest problem with fear came at a 2-4 am duty as a "listening post", a hundred yards out in front of our tank. "Just keep your ears and eyes open and if you see something, just run back to the tank and tell us." Those were very simple orders but they didn't know what could go on in the mind of a new replacement who was afraid of the dark anyhow. I laid there on the ground, trying to make out the blacker forms of trees and bushes in the black of a cold night. I tried to listen for any movement or strange sounds but only heard my rapid, heavy breathing. No sleepiness came on me as my anxiety grew into fear of the unknown that the darkness held. The I noticed it: some movement over on the right, bigger and blacker than the rest of the night. I looked away to the left and back again to see if it had moved – and it had. I got up and ran as fast as I could to the tank and looked up to the G.I. in the turret, trying to make my report. My words didn't come well as I stuttered out my observation. My fear out there, alone and in the dark, had become terror that was overwhelming me. The tanker looked down and said, "Calm down kid, I'll keep an eye on it." As the dawn's light finally came on, my fearsome, large, black moving object became just a bush, with no movement at all. I think I heard the tanker say, "Damned replacements!"

All through history conquering armies have taken liberties with the property and persons of the defeated people. I watched our platoon and found that we were pretty circumspect about helping ourselves to the spoils of war. In the houses we took over, the booze was always fair game. I liberated a lot of eggs from chicken coops and a ham (Which the Lt. took from me by pulling rank.) Nazi memorabilia was particularly nice. Stuff like flags, daggers, swords, lugers and such, cameras too! In my platoon, we not only confiscated weapons but their watches too. Germany money held no charm because there was no place to spend it. At one point our jeeps were getting pretty full of "liberated" items! Some unsympathetic senior officer came by and told us to unload all the stuff because there was hardly any room left for us to fit in the jeeps.

For about a week we had been shivering in the cold rain as we moved forward. When we came across a warehouse of nifty German rain gear, we put it on and felt warm and toasty. It was so much better than ours. It was wonderful until a senior officer saw us and said, "You look like a bunch of damned Krauts. Get that stuff off!" It was standard practice to sell captured pistols to Army truck drivers, who resold them farther back. Rumors had it that sailors bought them and resold them stateside at much higher prices. We all held our medics in high regard. They were important to us. I think they got some bonuses as they often took our personal items when we were hit. At least that was a widely held perception. Whatever they got, they deserved.

As we blasted along each day, a number of farms we passed had slave laborers, both men and women, from France, Poland, and other countries. They all seemed happy to see us though they didn't seem to know what to do with their new freedom. A number wanted us to arm them so they could kill some Germans themselves. I recall a Frenchman who was really eager to join us. In recent times I have come to see how rare it is to have ever seen a Frenchman who wanted to fight.

One day when we were dismounted again, we were attacking a small village. I was about the 5th G.I. to run across the open space to the first house, about 150 yards. As I ran, as hard as I could, trying to hold on to the grenades bouncing on my chest, my helmet fell off. I ran back for it and as I was reaching down the nearby dug in, Germans were raising dust all around us with their firing. I knew I was in big trouble but just then a P-47 Thunderbolt wheeled around and came right toward me, firing all the eight guns they had. As the pilot strafed the dug in Germans to keep them down, I hoped fervently that he could see that I was an American, not a German. As he pulled out of his dive, right over me, his guns stopped and I made it to the nearest house. I almost wet my pants. In the house our guys had a few prisoners. I noticed that one looked very you, like I looked. I also noticed that he had a wristwatch on which said to me he hadn't been searched yet. So I patted him down. To my amazement I found in his pockets both a Bible and a New Testament. Here was a young German who must be a lot like me, but grew up in a very different country. Given a different situation we might have been in the same Sunday School class. And here we were, trying to kill each other just a few minutes ago. What a weird world we were in! I wonder what happened to him in later life. I'd like to talk to him and compare notes about war and life.

Somehow the orders got changed and now our platoon was going to take that field, not the 1st platoon. We were dismounted, which was unusual for us and we were to walk across a field almost a mile wide in bright sunlight without any cover at all. At about 5pm, we started, walking at a fast pace in the infantry crouch, holding our fire because of the distance. The dug in Germans were firing at us and the rounds were whistling by our heads. This was my first time under this kind of direct fire. Then, WHAM!, It was like a building had been dropped on me. I crumpled to the ground as massive charges of electricity surged up through my body. I couldn't seem to catch my breath, breathing short pants and struggling for the next one. I heard in the background someone yell, "Hit the dirt" and then "Medic." As I breathed rapidly, I could feel blood bubbling in a hole in my back. Then I heard a voice on my left. Render, my squad leader was saying, "Kid, crawl over to me and I'll patch you up." I tried to move my legs but they wouldn't move, scaring me even more if that was possible. So Render came over to me, tore open my shirt, sprinkled on the sulfa powder and put a bandage over the hole in my back. Then Pete Marciano drove the medic's jeep out to get me, despite the heavy enemy fire and no cover. What a guy! He got me to the aid station in time to save my life. I lay there thinking, "An arm or a leg, but not a chest wound, please, Lord." I knew how sad my parents and sister and brothers would be to hear I'd died. And I was glad that I was a Christian who could now look forward to heaven. The jeep came and they loaded me on the hood where I bounced all the way back to the aid station. Strangely, I never lost consciousness as I was given numerous bottles of plasma. I looked down at the tag that the doctor had attached to my litter. I couldn't understand all the medical jargon but I knew what part of it meant. "Probable spinal separation." My fears became overwhelming as I realized why my legs wouldn't move.

This became an 11 month medical journey from an aid station to an evacuation hospital in Halle, to an airstrip in a tent in a meadow waiting for a hospital plane. Then to Reims, France and on to the 196th General Hospital in England where 2000 chest wounded G.I.'s were being treated. After this it was home by hospital ship to Boston and months of recovery in Rhodes General Hospital in Utica, New York. As I learned to walk again and the war ended in Japan, I developed a strong conviction that my life had been spared for a purpose and that I needed to find things to do with my life that would reach beyond just my own desires. I felt I had been given a second chance to live my life.

During my 28 days with the 83rd, our platoon, remarkably, had no casualties until that Sunday afternoon of April 20, near Wolfen when several of us were hit. Earlier we were saddened to hear of the deaths of

President Roosevelt and our divisional commanding officer, General Maurice Rose. Over 30 years later I looked up Pete Marciano, who drove the medic's jeep out on the field under heavy fire to get me. I asked him what happened that day, after I got hit. He said that as we were moving across the field on foot in a long skirmish line, everybody hit the dirt when I went down. Then our light tank moved forward against the 150-200 dug in Germans and chopped them up pretty good with the tanks and machine guns. Then the Germans starting waving white flags and gave up. I asked Pete, "How long did that take?" He replied, "About ten minutes." Then I slowly asked him, "So if I'd lasted another ten minutes, I wouldn't have been hit?" Pete looked down at the floor and said a little sadly, "Yeah, I guess that's true." Timing is everything, isn't it?

Of my 21 months in the Army, only one month (28 days) was spent with the 3rd Armored but that's who I chose to be identified with. It's a proud division to have served with and all my later duty assignments really sucked. After serving with the 3rd and my hospital time I was a replacement again. This time at Fort Sam Houston, TX. So there I was, a combat wounded veteran from the 3rd Armored but without enough points to get discharged. I could hardly handle the indignity of their assigning me to make beds for stateside Army Air Corps officers. My shoulders slumped and my spirits sagged even worse. In a bitterly cold winter on Cape Cod, MA (Camp Edwards) I was a clerk in an Army prison. Not only was the place depressing, but we had cooks and bakers in our barracks who always awakened us at 4am when they got up. That was retaliation for our waking them at 11pm, as we hit the sack. Then at Ft. Devens, Mass., they assigned me to a supply room, handing out clothes. During lunch break I asked where the guy was that usually did this job. "He was a German POW who was sent home," I was told. That did it, The ultimate indignity for me, replacement or not. The next day I hit the sick book, got admitted to the base hospital and got lucky for the first time in a long time. A doctor reviewing my case had just been drafted and was furious about it. He got me the medical discharge I wanted so badly and even now, almost 60 years later, the government still sends a monthly disability check to me.

I attended a reunion of the Division in the 1980's where all the guys were WWII veterans. I tried to mingle and get acquainted but it didn't go well. I didn't know anyone and couldn't remember the names of fellows from my platoon. One old Spearheader saw me hanging around and said, "What are you doing here? You aren't old enough to have been with the 3rd Armored!" Even at a divisional reunion I guess the "replacement" stigma still operated. But now I don't mind being younger than those guys. They seemed so old to me.

At long last, and after running my own business for 20+ years, I moved my brother into run the company, as my own "replacement." And, come to think of it, no one has called me "Kid" for a long time.



This article was sent to us by Robert W. Dingman, a veteran of the 3rd Armored Division from WWII. I hope more veterans of WWII, the Cold War, and Desert Storm will consider writing their memoirs as well. Without people doing this, our memory will fade into forgotten history. We need more stories like this for both the newsletter, and the website. Please help us record the history of the 3d Armored Division so the efforts of all of us will never be forgotten. Send your articles to clmech@ptd.net or fax to 717-336-0693.

Steve Depuy – Newsletter Editor

President's Letter

Dear Spearheaders:

As the new year of 2005 moves forward I hope that each you make plans to attend the A3ADV reunion this summer in Indianapolis. I know it is a big commitment to attend but I would encourage you to take the first step to attend. You will meet Spearhead veterans from all era's of our great 3rd Armored Division. Now I cannot guarantee that you will find a buddy from your old unit but I can guarantee that you will make a bunch of new friends. Yes please bring any old pictures or other items to show everyone around one of the tables in the Spearhead bar/meeting room. The Spearhead meeting room is where new friendships are formed.

I would also like to encourage our members to volunteer your time to serve on the A3ADV Board of Directors. We are looking for members to become more involved in the planning for the long-term needs of the organization. Please consider helping the organization. If you are interested let us know by email at president@3ad.org or call me on the phone at my work 843-886-4047

Thank you

Kevin Colson
President
Iron Dukes 85-89

Commanders of the 3AD



Major General Leroy Hugh Watson served as the third commander of the 3d Armored Division from August 1942, to August 1944. Previous to commanding the 3d Armored Division, General Watson commanded the 66th Armored Regiment in 1941. He next commanded the 40th Armored Regiment from 1941 to 1942. General Watson next commanded Combat Command A, 3d Armored Division from August 1942 to August 1944. General Watson was relieved shortly after the division landed at Normandy and replaced by General Maurice Rose. General Watson's career is hard to follow after that. He appears to have finished up WWII with the 29th Infantry Division as the Assistant Division commander. One website I found claimed he commanded the 29th. But that conflicts with the 29th Infantry Association records of the commander during that time. I was not able to find any other information on General Watson other than that he retired in 1953. One thing we need to keep in mind is that General Watson was largely responsible for the training of the 3d Armored Division to prepare it for combat. He took over command during the Mohave Desert training and commanded the division through the start of combat in France. As a personal note, I have wondered if he grew too attached to the men under his command to be able to make some of the hard decisions that his superiors wanted him to make.

It is our intention to continue this series and do an article on each commander of the 3AD in the newsletters in the order that they commanded the division. Any information you would have available to help give proper homage to the commanders would be appreciated.

Spearhead in the News

“Veterans remember battle”

They billed it as a meeting of two old WWII veterans who would swap stories and probably make up things to fill in the gaps. But Robert Dingman, 78, of Newbury Park, and Pete Marciano, 84, of Rochester, N.Y. have one story in which there are no gaps. It's about a bonding they experienced on April 20, 1945, less than two weeks before Adolph Hitler committed suicide near the end of the war in Europe. By April 20, many German units were surrendering to the advancing American, but many were still fighting. Dingman and Marciano encountered a force of the latter. Before the firefight was over, Dingman was wounded and probably would have died had it not been for the fast, heroic action of Marciano. It was this incident that brought Marciano, a retired construction worker, west this weekend to what might be their second and last reunion since the war. Their first get-together was in 1988 or 1989, neither is sure of the year, when Dingman, a retired executive search consultant, tracked down Marciano through a veterans association. The second time they met was Saturday. The weekend trip from Rochester was a gift from Marciano's daughter, Pam Roth, and her husband, Ray Roth Jr. Ray accompanied Marciano on the trip. The pair arrived Friday, were at Dingman's home Saturday, and were on a flight back to Rochester on Sunday. They talked about the time in March 1945 when Dingman, a “green replacement”, joined “B” Company, 83rd Armored Reconnaissance Battalion, 3rd Armored Division, First Army. Marciano was happy to see him because Dingman lived in Geneva, N.Y. within striking distance of Rochester, and could talk to his parents in the event he got killed. They remembered the guy in their outfit who raped a German woman. The man continued to fight until he was arrested and sent back to the rear lines to face charges. Dingman wondered what happened to the young German soldier he patted down, finding the Gospel of John, the New Testament, and a complete Bible in three different pockets. Marciano talked about the Hitler Youth School where they rounded up 7-8 and 9 year olds and herded them off to a prisoner of war camp, the kids' frantic mothers in hot pursuit. Dingman remembered the emaciated slave laborers who wanted the Americans to give them their rifles so they could shoot the owner of the farm they had been forced to work. It happened in an open field near Wolfen, Germany. The company B soldiers who normally rode vehicles had become infantrymen and were making their way across an open field when a firefight broke out. The dug-in Germans were firing at us and the rounds were whistling by our heads. “This was my first time under this kind of direct fire.” Suddenly, Dingman was hit. A bullet went in near his chest, spun around, nicked his spine, and exited his back. He went down in a heap struggling for breath. He couldn't move his legs. He heard someone yell “Medic!” His squad leader crawled to him, tore open his shirt, sprinkled sulfa powder on the wound and put a bandage over the hole in his back. Marciano heard the shouts. He was not a medic, but he had just been assigned to drive a medics Jeep. Against German fire, he raced onto the field to Dingman. Two men in Dingman's platoon lifted him and secured him to the jeep. Marciano told Dingman he had “a million dollar wound” (which meant he'd be going home) and sped off, heading for the nearest aid station. A critical moment happened when Marciano came to a fork in the road. He had heard that the medics had moved their aid station to a new location and while he thought he knew the new location, he wasn't 100% sure. With blood pouring from Dingman, Marciano trusted his instinct and picked one of the roads. It was the right one. “He saved my life,” Dingman said. “Ten more minutes and I would have bled to death. They gave me seven or eight pints of plasma.” Later, Dingman was able to see the tag the doctor had attached to the litter. It read, “probable spinal separation.” Now he knew why his legs wouldn't move. It terrified him. He would recover, but it would take a year. From April 20, 1945, until Dingman called Marciano in the late 1980's, they thought of each other but never connected. Dingman found Marciano through the 3rd Armored Division Association. When Dingman called, he asked Marciano if he knew who he was. “Sure,” Marciano said, “You're the kid with the million-dollar wound.”

This article was printed in the Ventura County Star on Jan 11th, 2005. If you have a newspaper article to share with the Association in a future newsletter, please send it to PO Box 158, Reinholds, PA 17569

Looking back at our last reunion, and forward to our next



A historic event took place in July of 2004. Were you part of it? After talking about it for almost 5 years, the 3rd Armored Division Association, and The Association of 3d Armored Division veterans held a joint reunion in Columbus Ohio. Many people were unsure ahead of time how it will go. But everyone I talked to had a great time, and by the last night, we were all looking forward to Indianapolis this year. We got to watch 3 old friends from the 1960's be reunited in the Spearhead bar each night. It was where Frank Mulligan provided much entertainment for the rest of us with his stories. I got to sit down with a number of WWII veterans and record their stories on video tape and those stories are now part of the history we have been able to record. And now that we have all gotten over our jitters, we are going to do it all over again July 6th to 9th in Indianapolis at the Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel & Suites. I have even heard a rumor that a certain member has procured a small amount of Lischer beer in 5 liter mini kegs. We are going to have a benefit auction at the reunion. And if all goes according to plan, one of those 5 liter mini kegs will be auctioned off during the reunion. Where else are you going to get Lischer beer on tap this summer in the USA. That alone should be a great reason for many of you to come. We will be visiting the Indianapolis Speedway on Thursday. How many of you have ever had the chance to see the track the famous Indy 500 is run on, up close and personal. So make your plans today. There is a registration form in the back of this newsletter. Fill it out, send it in. Call the hotel, make your reservation. The members of the Board of Directors are working hard trying to make this the best reunion yet. We hope you will consider joining us for this historic event this summer. If you have items that you would like to donate to the benefit auction, please contact the Association Secretary at A3ADV, PO Box 158, Reinholds, PA 17569. Or e-mail him at secretary@3ad.org

Association Store

Have you checked out the Association Store recently? There are many new items available. We have a "WWII" coin that has been struck to honor our WWII veterans. You may order the new WWII commemorative print to hang in your home or office. Check out the store on line, or come to the reunion and see the great new merchandise available to show the world that you are a Spearhead Vet. Check out the store at www.3ad.org/store today or write them at A3ADV Store, C/O Dave Feller, PO Box 556, Waukesha, WI 53187-0556.

BOD 2005 Election

Due to the early date of our reunion this summer, we need to be able to get the people lined up who want to submit their names on the ballot. The next election will be held in July at the reunion. All members will be sent a ballot with the spring newsletter. They will need to be returned to the Association Secretary by July 1st to be considered. If you are willing to serve the Association, we need you to consider running for the BOD. It is not a paying job, and you have to pay your own expenses. All of the BOD members pay their own airfare each year to attend the meeting we must hold in NC. They also pay for their rooms while they are there. The only thing the Association pays for is the board room at the hotel, and a meal for the directors after the meeting is concluded. So if you are willing to serve the Association and help this group move forward towards our goal of 10,000 active members, please submit your name today for the next election. You can submit your name by writing us at PO Box 158, Reinholds, PA 17569. You may also send an e-mail to secretary@3ad.org. You must have your name submitted by April 1st, 2005 to be on the ballot.

Fundraising Drive



The Association is conducting its first annual fundraising drive. Paul Smith who is the current Vice President of the Association is heading up this drive. Why does the Association need to raise money you might ask? Well here are some answers. Our association has a unique thing that sets it apart. Our group was started, and continues to grow because of our website, www.3ad.org. This website is maintained on a server that we own. The server is a Pentium II, 233 megahertz machine. Any of you who know much about computers will understand that we are operating on a very old machine. We would like to upgrade our server during the next year. We also would like to be able to expand our selection of merchandise such as coins, flags, license plates, and so forth. To order an item like this requires a large amount of money due to minimum order sizes. One thing that the money is not used for is paying people in the Association. All of the people who currently work for the

Association are unpaid volunteers. Even during the board of directors meeting that must be held in North Carolina once a year, the board members pay their own travel and hotel expenses. So please consider donating today. You may mail your donation to the Association at PO Box 158, Reinholds, PA 17569-0158, or on line on the website. Just click on the marquee on the main page and it will take you to a screen that will allow you to donate via Pay Pal. If you have any questions, you may contact Paul Smith at bandits132@bellsouth.net

Mail Bag

The following was submitted by Phil Mitchel, a long time member of the Association and BOD member

In May of this year Jeanne and I had the wonderful experience of attending a reunion of my father-in-law's SeaBee outfit, the **101st United States Navy Construction Battalion**, in Seattle. The story behind all this is as follows

My father-in-law enlisted in the Navy during WWII, and served on Guam and Saipan. He and his buddy Jake were there together, and when they were discharged, came home and continued their close friendship for several years. My in-laws eventually moved back to Washington, and gradually lost contact with Jake and his wife. Somewhere around 1988 My father-in-law, Jim Harris, received a telephone call from a member of his outfit. Through this Jim found out that the 101st had been holding reunions for several years, in a different location each year. Jim definitely was interested in attending. During the course of the conversation Jim asked if anybody had heard from Jake. Yes, he had attended several of the reunions. Jim asked where he was living and was told, "Soldotna, Alaska". This was unbelievable! My in-laws had been summering up there at a fishing resort for the last 2 or three years, and found out that Jake and his wife lived not more than 12 miles out of town. The rest you can imagine; over the next 10 years the two families enjoyed each other's company every summer, and the stories just got bigger and better, and the friendship ever stronger. My father-in-law passed away on June 14, 2000 (Flag Day; how about THAT for a perfect finish!). My mother-in-law didn't think that she would ever attend the reunion again.

In April of this year Jake called her from Soldotna just to talk. He had lost his wife of fifty-eight years 4 months earlier, and was struggling with the loneliness of it all. He had gotten the notice of the upcoming reunion, to be held in Seattle this year, but was not planning on attending. Well, between Jeanne, Mom Nd myself, we talked him into coming down. We would get them both to the site and be on hand for anything they wanted or needed. So, down he flew. Jake is 80 years old, and is somewhat stove up with arthritis and other benefits of advancing years, but he couldn't wait to get out of the courtesy chair and hug all of us. It was a great moment. The reunion came, and we went. Both Jeanne's mother and Jake had a great time, as we knew they would. To the both of them is was an event to treasure, as they knew it would probably be the last one for both of them (too many other memories of departed spouses). Out of approximately 1,100 original members of the outfit of that time, there were just 13 attendees, plus spouses. They all came to commemorate their departed comrades once more; those whom they lost in the war, and those who passed on over the years following.

Membership Report

Total Memberships	875
Lifetime Memberships	302
Annual Memberships	531
Associate Memberships	19
Memberships inactive	<223>
Members who have passed away	<23>
Active Members	628

Fifth Annual Reunion Registration Form

(A Joint Reunion with the WWII Third Armored Division Association)

Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel & Suites

July 6th – 9th, 2005 Indianapolis, Indiana

Name _____ Phone # _____

Address _____ Town _____

State _____ Zip _____ E-Mail _____

_____ Complete Registration Package (Covers all events and meals) @ \$158.00ea _____

(If you are planning on attending the reunion and would like to participate in all the meals and events, this fee will cover all costs listed below.)

_____ Registration Fee (Includes Saturday Night Banquet Meal) @40.00ea _____

_____ Commemorative Reunion T-Shirt @ \$12.00ea _____

_____ Thursday Tour @40.00ea _____

(Indy Speedway, Downtown, and White River State Park Lunch Provided)

_____ Thursday Night Italian Buffet @ \$24.00 ea _____

_____ Friday Men's Luncheon @ \$17.00 ea _____

_____ Friday Ladies Luncheon @ \$17.00 ea _____

_____ Friday Night All American Cookout @ \$25.00 ea _____

Total Cost of Registration _____

The banquet on Saturday night will have 3 meal choices, please indicate the meal you prefer and the quantity below. One selection per registration fee paid.

Prime Rib _____ Chicken Wellington _____ Norwegian Salmon _____

Please indicate T-Shirt Size and Quantity for each T-Shirt You Have Paid for;

2X _____ XL _____ L _____ M _____

Credit Card Type _____ Credit Card Number _____

(we accept Visa, M/C, & Discover)

Expiration Date _____

(Signature)

Send Payment to: Association of 3AD Veterans, PO Box 158, Reinholds, PA 17569

Remember to make your hotel registrations as soon as possible. Contact the hotel at 800-325-3535. Make sure you tell them you are with the Association of 3AD Veterans to get your discounted room rate.



A3ADV
PO Box 158
Reinholds, PA 17569-0269