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Andy Beck (2005)

**103d INF DIV WW II****PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

In October, many of you were attending the 2005 Reunion of the 103d Infantry Division Association of WW II in Arlington, Virginia. If you were there, I hope that you enjoyed being there. There is an article in this newsletter concerning the reunion and all that took place there. The impression on those who worked so hard to make it a success was that all who attended enjoyed their time there. There is always room for improvement, so if anyone has suggestions to better the reunions, please let us know.

The reunion in 2006 will be held in Dallas, Texas, in November. More information on that reunion, already in the planning stage, is to be found on other pages of this newsletter. Those attending the reunion have the opportunity to attend the dedication of the 103d Infantry Division memorial monument in Gainesville.

We have been getting together now for many years in all parts of the country. There has been some discussion among members as to what we should plan in the future. Some suggest that we not have one big reunion each year but a number of smaller ones in different areas to ease the travel burden. Another is to have it in the same place each year in a place centrally located for the greater number of members. A review some months ago indicated that about 60% or more of members live in the Midwest. The Hyatt Hotel in Schaumburg (Chicago suburb) said that they would be glad to serve as the host hotel every year. Those who attended our reunions there know what fine hosts they were to our several reunions there. There, of course, could be a search for nearby city locations in the same general area. The airport in Chicago is easily accessible to all and perhaps provides cheaper rates than others. The more central location would also provide the opportunity to use the automobile as a means of getting to the reunion. If you have any suggestions or comments for future reunion planning please let me know. We will, of course, be discussing this in Dallas next year and will make the decision then on our future.

May God bless you all. Depending on when this NFTCP arrives at your home, I wish you or hope you had a "Merry Christmas" and "Happy Holidays".

Richard T. Ball, President 2005

## **2005 REUNION**

The 2005 Reunion of the 103d Infantry Division of WW II Association was held October 6 – 9 at the Marriott Crystal City Gateway Hotel in Arlington, VA. Some 305 people attended the reunion, with about half being Division veterans. Some 230 attended the Sunday night banquet. Support from the Marriott staff was outstanding.

There were many highlighted activities in this Washington/Arlington agenda. The first was the bus tours. They were great, although the rain placed some fun restraints on the bus drivers. It didn't bother the Cactus folks. Once wet, one might as well hold forth. Three tours were provided, two for fun, and one perspective on why we fought.

On Friday, October 7, 173 attendees enjoyed the "Scenic Tour of Washington's Historic Sights". This tour covered both Washington and Arlington. We saw Federal buildings everywhere. We drove by the Capitol, the multiple Departments of the federal Government, the Ford Theater, where Lincoln was shot, and the White House. We saw many of the famous monuments in the city, including the Lincoln Memorial, Washington Memorial, and Jefferson Memorial. We also drove by Arlington National Cemetery, the Library of Congress, the Smithsonian Institute and Museums, and got great views of the Potomac River. This interesting tour was designed for the tourist to get acquainted with the city and its environs in readiness for the tour on Sunday. We had lunch at the International House of Fashion, a vast international restaurant with all types of ethnic food booths.



**Cactus Patch Attendees During the Bus Tour**

Saturday, October 8, 84 attendees toured the Holocaust Museum. The tour of the museum was rather brief. It was intensely interesting to the Cactus, however, because it portrayed vividly one of the real reasons that we fought. It also raised memories of the war and the scenes experienced during wartime.

On Sunday, Oct 9, 207 attendees toured the "Monuments of Washington", covering both Washington and Arlington. On this tour we tourists were allowed to visit close up the major monuments that one would expect to be of interest to aging veterans. Oh Lord! We saw the Washington Memorial, Lincoln Memorial, Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, the WW II, Korean War, and Vietnam War memorials, and the U.S. Marine Corps Monument. Lunch was held at the Washington AMTRAK terminal. Again, all those ethnic hot and cold food booths, retail stores, huge train station lounges, and confusing signs everywhere.

### **Veteran's of the 103d Infantry Division**



**at the WW II Memorial.**

The touring activity was a total success. One of our ladies declared the tours more like "Walking in the Rain" than anything else, but admitted that the rain contributed to a memorable experience.



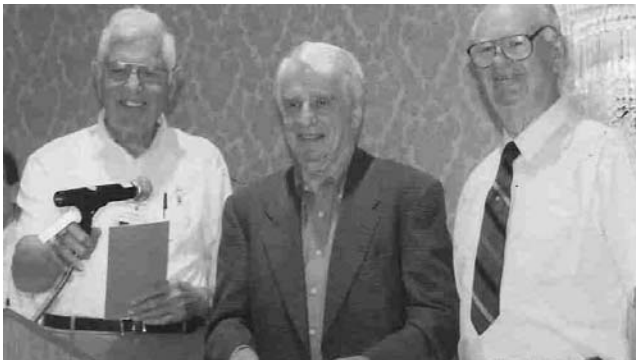
**Presenting the Colors at the Annual Business Meeting**

## HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR MEETS HIS LIBERATORS

World War II was moving rapidly toward Germany's defeat in April 1945. The 103d Infantry Division, on the evening of 25 April, prepared for a forced crossing of the Danube River in the vicinity of Ulm, Germany. The 409<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment forced the crossing in canvas boats at 0235 on 26 April and continued to exploit southward toward Garmish in southern Germany. The 410<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment joined the offensive on the left of the 409<sup>th</sup>, with the 411<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment in reserve. As the exploitation continued, the 411<sup>th</sup> was ordered to uncover the city of Landsberg on the Lech River to the east.

Company I of the 411<sup>th</sup> led the regimental assault, closing on the city before nightfall. The men of the Cactus Division discovered before them a number of slave labor concentration camps occupied by ragged, filthy, starving men of various European nationalities. Their appearance was shocking to the men of the 411<sup>th</sup>. All of the German guards had fled.

One of the prisoners at Kaufering Camp in Landsberg, liberated that day by the 411<sup>th</sup>, was Edward Gruzin, a 17 year old Lithuanian Jewish lad. Ed was our honored guest in Arlington.



Ed Gruzin with Dick Ball and Harold Branton at the Reunion

Ed had long hoped that some day he would be able to meet his liberators again, face to face. At the Reunion Business Meeting, Ed delivered a beautiful, poignant address. His words carried the deep revulsion he felt in his heart as he remembered the horrifying physical and mental torture heaped upon him and his fellow prisoners.

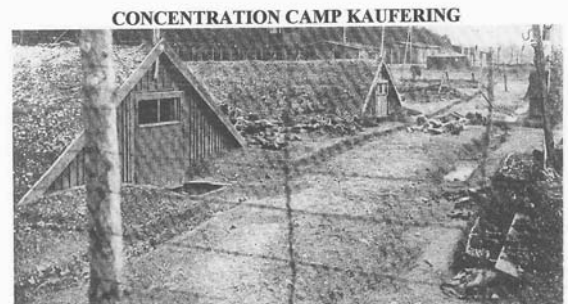
As Ed described the atrocities the Nazis imposed upon the Jewish children and other children that

were rounded up because of their non-German heritage, many of us wept openly. Thousands died in this camp and millions in the German extermination programs.

The following are excerpts from Ed's moving address to the men of the 103d and their friends and families.

"First, let me say that I feel extremely honored here this morning to meet my liberators, the 411<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment of the 103d Infantry Division. I am sure that you don't remember me, but I certainly remember you. To me you are all heroes and especially those GI's who gave the ultimate sacrifice so that a person like myself could have a chance to live.

I was born in Lithuania in 1927. In 1941, the Nazi Army seized Lithuania and immediately forced the entire Jewish population into Ghetto camps. The Nazi military rounded up Jews in the ghettos on a daily basis and shot them by the hundreds. Out of a population of 30,000, they decimated it to 2,500. They burned down the hospital with patients still alive in it, and took every child under the age of 14 away from their parents and murdered them. Somehow, my father, I, and one of my older brothers survived this onslaught. I saw another brother beaten to death by a Nazi guard.



*We were crowded into these unspeakably filthy huts. Dead and dying prisoners can be seen lying on the ground in this picture at the camp where I was incarcerated*  
U.S. Army Photo

My father and I immigrated to the United States in 1949, with help of my uncle who had immigrated in 1912. During the Korean War, I was drafted and served three years in the United States infantry, but did not go overseas. I attained the rank of corporal. My brother was able to immigrate to the United States in 1992.

Not all of my family was able to be with us today. Sonia and I had two children, and now we have three precious grandchildren. Permit me now to introduce my brother Zachary and my own son, Mark."

## AN IRONY OF WAR

It was cold in Lorraine, France. The 103d was ordered to make an 80 mile shift to the north overnight because of the Battle of the Bulge. It was Christmas Eve, and the troops settled into their new positions. Thomas R. Scott, Squad Leader, Anti-tank Platoon, 1<sup>st</sup> BN, 409<sup>th</sup> Infantry, posted his squad and found shelter in the house of an elderly French couple. Tommy and his squad shared dinner, sang Christmas carols, and attempted to talk with the older couple. Tommy learned that the couple had a son...in the **German Army!** His take on that was, "Why are we fighting a war where the folks we are supposed to be liberating are furnishing sons to shoot at us?" He continued "Think on that a while...and ponder the reasons of wars."

### **BUSINESS MEETING**

The annual business meeting was held on Saturday Morning. Excerpts from the meeting follow.

**Membership:** Secretary Dennis Ryan provided data on the Association membership. He noted that as of 1 October 2005, the association counted 2,062 members. He further noted that during the year, a of 120 members passed away. The HONOR ROLL, which was later read from a roster by Associate member Baxter Fife III, registered honors during the Memorial Service. Secretary Ryan observed that our association is losing members rapidly now, due to changing addresses, disablement leading some of our comrades to take residence in assisted living facilities or nursing homes. In other cases, members move into the homes of their children. He urged that the reporting of address changes was essential to keeping good membership records and membership tracking.

**Financial Data:** At reunion time, the Association's bank balance stood at approximately \$53,000, with \$20,000 of that committed to the Monument Fund through long term dedications. Income from dues provided a mixed message. Dues paid in 2001 were 287; in 2002 there were 509; in 2003, 583 members paid dues: and in 2004 we had 1,020 dues paying members. As of October 1, 2005, 941members had paid dues. We are getting our message out to more and more people, as reflected in the increasing number of dues paying members. But still, less than half of our members are paying dues. Payment of dues is the duty of every member, and without funds, all programs suffer.

Outgoing President Dick Ball receives Cactus Man of the Year Plaque from Incoming President Harold Branton



**Cactus Men of the Year:** Each year a veteran of the

association is recognized for outstanding contributions to the Association and awarded a Cactus Man of the Year Plaque. In 2005, Dick Ball, our President for two years, was named the recipient. Similarly, an Associate Cactus Man of the year plaque is presented to an Associate Member. In 2005, the award was presented to Baxter Fife III. Well, Baxter Fife, our comrade, was asked to stand during the presentation, and understandably was all smiles.



**Baxter Fife III Receives His Associate Cactus Man of the Year Plaque from 2005 President Dick Ball**

**WW II 103d Infantry Division Historical Monument:** Cactus people will be happy

to hear that we have an official GO! GO! GO! On our monument program, Mel Wright gave an exciting report at both the Board of Directors meeting and the Regular Assembly Business Meeting. Please see page 10.

**Museum and Archives:** Historian Harold Branton announced that the Board of Directors of the Morton Museum of Cooke County, Texas, in Gainesville, has officially approved the 103d Infantry Division of WW II as a participating tenant of the museum. Artifacts and documentaries of the Association may now be accepted by the Museum Director, Ms. Shana Powell.



**The Annual Business Meeting is also a time to greet old comrades.**

**Election of Officers:** By unanimous vote, the following members of the Association were elected to serve as officers during 2006:

President	Harold Branton
Vice President	Jim White
Asst Vice President	Chan Rogers
Exec Secretary	Baxter Fife III
Sec/Treasurer	Al Eucare
Historian	Harold Branton
Chaplain	Walter Modrzejewski
Editor	Dave Leslie
Board Members	
Robert "Bob" Leslie	409 <sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt. Rep
Gene w. Halsey	410 <sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt. Rep
Jerry Brenner	411 <sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt. Rep
Red Barrett	Spec. Troops and Arty. Rep
Andy Beck	Associate Rep



**103d INF DIV ASSN OF WW II  
Officers for 2006**

The reunion success was due to the extended efforts of the local veterans. Particular thanks are due to Dick Ball who received all of the reservations, Al Eucare who compiled the attendee data, Bruce and Maureen Hughes, Ben and Marcie Goodrich, and Red Barrett for envelope stuffing and Registration Desk duty, and to Barbara Toohig and her friend Pat Overton for making the banquet's unique table centerpieces. Special thanks also goes to Hank Gooris, who overviewed the Hospitality Room, and to Dennis Ryan for his support in operating the room. Finally, special thanks go to Harold and Elsie Branton for their help in making the name tags and in overall planning, and to Baxter Fife for his assistance in operating the fundraising and souvenir sales desk.

Mike Toohig, Reunion Committee Chairman, deserves a round of applause for his loyal leadership in making this year's reunion so successful. Mike was constantly moving to assure that all plans were running well: \$600 in the black.

**2006 REUNION SCHEDULED  
FOR DALLAS TEXAS**

Our 2006 Reunion is scheduled for Wednesday, 8 November through Sunday, 12 November 2006. Saturday, November 11...that will be our BIG DAY: the dedication of our new monument.

The reunion will be hosted by the Marriott Dallas/Addison Quorum by the Galleria, 14901 Dallas Parkway, Dallas, Texas 75254 (Telephone 972-661-2800, Fax: 972-934-1731 Toll-free:1-800-811-8664). Special rates are available because of our early contract signing. The rate is \$82 for both single and double occupancy. We were there in 2002.



**Exterior View of Dallas  
Addison Marriott Hotel,  
site of 2006 Reunion**

Full details of planned activities for the 2006 Reunion will be furnished in the summer News from the Cactus Patch. "Rabbit" Wilson (972-233-1426), who was the chairman of the 2002 Reunion, will again be the chairman for

2006. "Rabbit" says, "Stay healthy, because you don't want to miss this one!"

It is going to be a joyful event when we unveil the monument that gives lasting honor to the division, to all its members, and especially to those who made the ultimate sacrifice for the defense of our liberty.

**~ REMINDER ~**

to

**All Members and Associates**

Dues notices will be mailed out in January 2006. A special form will be provided for each member to send in the \$15.00 annual dues.

Comrades, dues are essential for the financial life of our association! We appreciate your loyal support.

## HONOR ROLL



### 103d INF DIV ASSN of WW II

(Deceased reported after NFTCP issue No 9)

Ameise, Benjamin	328 Med Co C
Burge, Henry B.	410 Co B
Chance, Hugh	??? Co G
Dosta, Ray	410 Co M
Faber, Vincent H.	409 AT
Falk, Jack G	103 Sig Co
Faught, Stewart R.	409 Co C
Gierhart, George W.	410 Co C
Gundrum, John	410 Co C
Hamm, William "Bill"	409 Co G/HqCo, 2dBn
Hawley, Dr. James W.	Unknown
Holka, Arthur V.	Unknown
Hopp, Erith L.	384 FA Hq Bty
Jaruzel, Mac	Unknown
Kokensparger, Robert	409 Co D
Mallette, Weldon B.	TX A&I ASTP
Marten, Arthur J.	382 FA Bty C
McConnell, Joe A.	411 Co A
Merz, Albert F.	103 Sig Co
<b>Miner, Herbert</b>	<b>409 Co C</b>
Moore, George J.	410 Co B
Morris, Virgil	410 Co D
Peeples, Rod	382 FA Bty B
Peterson, Herman	411 Co A
Peurach, John S.	409 Co H
&409 Co G	
Podewitz, Howard	384 FA Hq Bty
Porter, Wilbur	41? Co L
Powers, Robert N.	411 AT Co
Ransom, Robert J.	Texas A&I ASTP
Richter, Raymond W.	928 FA Bty C
Rueb, Rubin	410 AT Co
Russell, Dan E.	411 Co C
Samulski, Donald J.	??? Co G
Saremba, Milo F.	411 Co K
Schram Jr., Charles	409 Can Co
Shirley, Raymond	Unknown
Steffen, W. Richard	410 Co F
Tarkoff, Nathan	409 Co B
Taylor, Derrell F.	411 Co M
Tipton, Ira M.	411 Co F
Unnerstall, Elmer L.	410 Co L
Vega, Robert J.	409 Co G
Warrick, Wendel	929 FA Bty C

## OUR 1<sup>ST</sup> RECORDED KIA'S

Ridout Walter A. 1LT	383 FA Hq Bty	KIA 06 Nov44
Sumrall Troy H. 1LT	383 FA Hq Bty	KIA 06 Nov 44
Wiggins Leon W. 1SGT	382 FA Hq Bty	KIA 09 Nov 44
VanMatre Clarence G, PFC	409 Co E	KIA 09 Nov 44
Robinson Patrick H. PFC	409 Co L	KIA 09 Nov 44
Tillema Jacob A. PFC	409 Co L	KIA 09 Nov 44

## OUR 1<sup>ST</sup> RECORDED POW'S

Foster Bernard G. 2LT	410 Co H	MIA 11 Nov 44
Raley Sherrill W. 1LT	410 Co H	MIA 11 Nov 44
Sobotta Max A. SGT	409 Co G	MIA 16 Nov 44
Freerks Russell M. PFC	411 Co E	MIA 17 Nov 44
Thomas Harry E. PFC	411 Co E	MIA 17 Nov 44
Hoffmaster Calvin C. PFC	411 Co E	MIA 17 Nov 44
Roberts Paul E. PFC	411 Co E	MIA 17 Nov 44
Rosales Encarnacion PFC	411 Co E	MIA 17 Nov 44

## FOR YOUR OBITUARY

(A suggestion for all members)

in the event of my death please request the following statement be included in my OBITUARY:

**In lieu of flowers please make donations to:  
TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND  
9737 Warwana Rd.  
Houston, TX 77080**

**This fund is planning a Gainesville TX Monument honoring men of the 103d and their Support Units.**

## REPORTING OF DEATHS

Report deaths to:

**103d INF DIV of WW II  
6708 Lansdale St.  
District Heights, MD 20747**

For recording into our Historical Records.  
This is the address of our 2006 Secretary Treasurer:  
**AI Eucare**

## **STEADFAST**

### A Tribute to All Cactus Men



Each of our lives is somehow touched by a special personality, a special event, or a special experience. In our Cactus camaraderie, each of us recalls “that somebody” or “that event” that evokes unique memories. Our association roster today lists 2,062 surviving members of our common “event”, World War II and the 103d Infantry Division. Among those who have passed on and those of us who remain there resides an eternal bond of connectivity. James Joseph “Jim” Kallod (1920 – 1999), CO D, 409<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 103d Infantry Division, personifies that unique spirit in transition. There was in Jim Kallod that special something that resides in each of us. The following is not just a tribute to Jim, but is provided because Jim personified so much of what many of us Cactus Men did during the war, and just as importantly, after the war. His story is our story.

Jim Kallod, solid citizen, sound and courageous soldier and veteran, loyal and patriotic servant, dutiful and loving husband, father, and provider, could be any one of the thousands of Cactus Men who stood for their country, yesterday and today. Like the motto of the 409<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, Jim was “Steadfast”.



It was in a review of my roster recently that I found the notification of Jim’s death. Jim had been a dear friend of mine since the first time we met in St. Die, France back in July 1992. On that occasion, he and his lovely wife Laverne and I visited Steige, France, where Jim had been wounded. I detected then that Jim was a unique person. He, in my mind, was the epitome of the True Cactus Man.

Following Jim’s passing, Laverne prepared and forwarded to me the most beautiful eulogy for a loyal and faithful veteran that I have ever seen. I will keep that memorial as one of my greatest treasures.

To Laverne, we the members of this association, wish to thank you and your stalwart sons, Larry, Jerry, Randy, and Tracy, and your faithful and loving daughter Tyla, for sharing with us your wonderful words. Jim personified the best in all of us, and we are grateful.

Now, as I view the 2005 listing of our Honor Roll, I see other Cactus Men who loom big in my memory. I see the name “Big John” John Andrade, CO G, 409<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment. He and his strong and solid wife Sylvia never missed a reunion. Leo Cefkin, CO E 409<sup>th</sup>, Jose Martinez, CO E 409<sup>th</sup>, and the list continues...410<sup>th</sup> Infantry, 411<sup>th</sup> Infantry, and Special Troops.

When it comes time for lasting memorials, the 103d Monument comes to mind. The recording of our Battle Deaths on the monument is particularly moving. And as the inscription on the monument announces, honor of equal measure goes to the thousands of others of the Prickly Crowd who served so gloriously.

by Harold Branton, Historian

### **The One-Oh-Three**

*In World War II our skills were tried  
The One-Oh-Three – Cactus of pride.  
Through bitter cold and winter snow,  
Dodging bullets, we fought the foe.*

*Through Vosges Mountains from St. Die  
We fought the Germans all the way.  
On to Alsace – that Siegfried Wall –  
The One- Oh -Three would do it all.*

*Five hundred miles we mountaineered  
In our memories war was seared.  
We fought and died. We fought and won.  
We fought until the war was done.*

*We thank thee, Lord, for our reprieve.  
For comrades lost, we still will grieve.  
Now sixty years the war is gone,  
But those memories linger on.*

Charles Fulton 10/7/05

Please report known deaths for recording in our Historical Records. Send to the Association President:  
Harold M. Branton  
2635 Roman Forrest Blvd.  
New Caney, TX 77357  
281 399 1118  
hbranton@netscape.com

**103D INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION**  
**VISIT TO THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN**  
**SOLDIER**

As is our usual practice, members of the 103d Infantry Division Association made their annual visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on November 7<sup>th</sup> to place a wreath of remembrance on the tomb as our contribution to the events in conjunction with Veteran's Day. Those present were Red Barrett, BTRY B 382<sup>nd</sup> FA BN, with daughters Barbara Sanders and Kathi Johnson, and three of Red's grandchildren; Colleen, Lauren, and Barrett Johnson; Dick Pierson, CO F 411<sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt., and daughter Patti Heater; Bill Schneck, CO F 411<sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt., and friend Merriam Alexander; Dick Ball, BTRY B 382<sup>nd</sup> FA. BN., and Howard Buckley, CO E 409<sup>th</sup> Inf. Regt.

There was quite a crowd of tourists still present after the changing of the guard when the officer in charge announced that men from the 103d Infantry Division would be placing a wreath at the tomb. After Instruction from the representative of the



“Changing of the Guard” at the Tomb of the Unknown

Army 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard), we proceeded down the steps from the amphitheater to the level of the tomb. The 103<sup>rd</sup> flag was carried down also. We were met there at the bottom of the steps by the soldier with the wreath. With his assistance, we proceeded forward to place the wreath in front of the tomb. After “PRESENT ARMS” was called, TAPS was played by the Army bugler. After “ORDER ARMS” was called, we then retraced our steps back up to the amphitheater. It was a very solemn and impressive event.

**GET TOGETHER IDEA**

We do get a chance to sit and talk to old comrades at the annual reunions once a year. It is always an enjoyable and interesting time. Similarly, in the Virginia/DC area, a group of about ten 103d Infantry Division veterans make an effort to get together about once a month for lunch, reasonably close to their homes. This group lives in Northern Virginia, the District of Columbia, and nearby Maryland. Not everybody shows up every time, but we always have a good group, which generally includes a number of wives and friends. We meet at the Ft. Myer Officers' Club for a wonderful Friday buffet. They serve the best clam chowder in the world. It is an “all you can eat” affair of great food. You might want to try a similar get together of 103d Division friends in your area. We are sure you will enjoy the experience. You can scan the Division Directory for names and phone numbers of those veterans in your area. If you don't have a directory, write to Harold Branton at the address noted on the front page to get the directory so you can find the names of those in your vicinity. If you are in or near a big city, you should be able to find some of your comrades relatively close by. You might want to give this a try. We enjoy it a lot, and we think you will also.

**CACTUS CALENDAR**

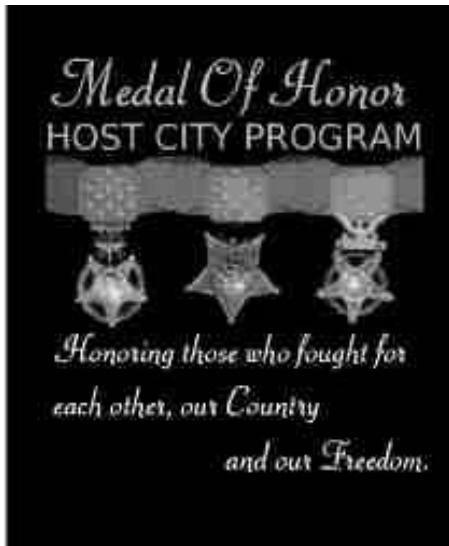
At the 2005 103d ID Association reunion Al Eucare, 2006 Secretary/Treasurer (elect), presented a calendar, which he had created, for 2006 which included significant events and dates in the history of the 103d. The dates cover the period from activation to deactivation, a period of 35 months. Al worked with Association President Dick Ball and Reunion Chair Mike Toohig to select the memorable events of the 103d. The 11" X 17" calendar printed in color on 32 lb paper was offered free to those attending the 2005 reunion. The Cactus Calendar is now being offered to those unable to attend the reunion. The cost of \$3.00 for printing, handling and shipping is requested for the first calendar. A cost of \$2.00 is requested for each additional calendar delivered to the same address. The Cactus Calendar highlights our combat history. Order one for yourself and one for each of your children and their offspring. To place your order, just write direct to: Al Eucare, 6708 Lansdale Street, District Heights, MD 20747. Tel:(301) 736-2324.



## CAMP HOWZE, AND GAINESVILLE, TEXAS

Camp Howze, northwest of Gainesville in central Cooke County, was established by the United States War Department in 1942 as a United States Army infantry-training camp. It was located on a 59,000-acre tract purchased from local landowners beginning in December 1941 and named for Maj. Robert E. Lee Howze, a Medal of Honor winner who had seen action in the Indian campaigns of the late nineteenth century, the Philippine Insurrection, and World War I. Col. John P. Wheeler activated the base on August 17, 1942, and Maj. Gen. John H. Hilldring was its first commander. With a troop capacity of 39,963 men, the camp served as the training ground for several hundred thousand men between 1942 and 1946. Among the units prepared for action in World War II were the 84th, 86th, and 103d divisions. Camp Howze also held German prisoners of war.

Gainesville, Texas receives special recognition for being the first city in the nation to establish The Medal of Honor City of Host



Program. The purpose of this unique program is to recognize those legendary, humble heroes who, through great personal sacrifice, have preserved our freedoms. At the same time this program pays tribute to the principles that the medal represents - Duty, Honor, and Country. To this end, it provides Medal of Honor recipients a stipend to cover lodging, food, and fuel expenses while visiting Gainesville.

While designed to honor living recipients of the nation's highest decoration for military valor, it also exposes the citizens of Gainesville to these role models of selfless service. While visiting the city,

these men of uncommon valor are invited to share their experiences with students, clubs, and local organizations.

## CACTUS MEN REUNITE

After 61 years, Oscar Olson and Tony Palladino were reunited. Both men, from Co K, 410<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, had fought together side by side, but had lost track of each other after the war. They were able to find each other through the Internet, and a great article in the *Daily Telegraph*, of Watertown, NY, told their story.



PHOTO FROM an album of Mr. Palladino, at left, with his Army buddy Oscar, holding a swastika flag they came upon during occupation duty at Oppenheim, Germany. The photo is dated April 13, 1945.

"I always wondered what happened to Oscar. We used to joke. I was the little Italian, and he was the big Swede", said Palladino.

From Co.C, 411<sup>th</sup> Infantry, held a "mini" reunion on 20 July 2005. Present and accounted for: John Diefenbacher, George Pringle, Webby Young, Joe DeLuca, Joe Genovisi, and Robert Enterling. (Hey, guys! Be sure to join the division association in Nov '06.)

## TRIBUTES FROM THE NEXT GENERATION

We have decided to put a new column into the Cactus Patch. In this column, we invite the next generation, the sons, daughters, or grandchildren of 103d Division veterans to share what their Father or Grandfather's service meant to them and how they were influenced in their own lives. In this issue are memories that John P. Naly shared with his son.

"When the war ended, my Dad was given a choice to spend the remainder of his stint stateside or on assignment in Europe. He stayed in France and was assigned to write for the "Stars and Stripes" newspaper and to cover the war crimes trials in Nuremberg, where he saw many of the Nazi leaders. Dad recalled that there was only one Jewish soldier in his unit, and that he hated the Nazis with a passion that was unmatched. Dad wondered if the soldier had known about the atrocities against the Jews and if he did know, why didn't he tell others."

## TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT

Scheduled for Dedication, 11 Nov 06

Texas WW II Historical Monument Fund, a Non-Profit 501 (C) (3) Corporation, has planned for, and is now in the process of contracting for, this monument honoring the 103d Infantry Division of WW II.

The object of the project is to preserve a piece of our notable history for future generations. Casualty records and list of UNITS will be included.

The location of the monument is at the Texas Welcome Center (TX DOT), Gainesville, Texas on US Interstate I-35.

An official news release, issued by Mel Wright, President and Custodian of the Fund, provides details: (Excerpts of a News Release dated 10 Sept 05)

"The Historical Monument Fund and the 103d INF DIV ASSN of WW II are pleased to announce that the Texas Department of Transportation has approved plans to place a historical monument at the Welcome center just north of Gainesville on the west side of US I-35. It will preserve vital history for future generations.

15,000 men of the 103d Infantry Division trained at Camp Howze, which was located just west of the Welcome Center, during the period 1943 and 1944. From Camp Howze, the Division was deployed to combat action in France, Germany and Austria to end World War II. 847 men of that division gave their lives to preserve our freedom.

Current plans are to erect a one-man bronze statue, 1½ man tall and dressed in combat gear, atop a pentagonal shaped base with inscriptions. The inscriptions cover the division's WWII HISTORY, RECORDS AND ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE.

This project has the blessing of the City of Gainesville, the State Veterans of Foreign organizations, MORTON MUSEUM of Cooke County, Texas, local Civic Clubs, and the Texas State Historical Commission.

To assist in the accomplishment of this noble venture, the City of Gainesville has declared that they will start a fundraising program in the city, with the objective of raising \$20,000. The First Bank of Gainesville has pledged the first \$1500.

Based on our projections and the estimated cost of the Bronze sculpture of the Monument, it was agreed by the Fund's Board of Directors to go with a one-man action figure, combat armed and clothed, plan. While this plan is great as of itself, a gracious Monument and certainly one that we will be proud of, it would be vastly enhanced by an engraved listing of our comrades who died in action onto readily available prominent granite plates.

The following is a projection of funds as currently used for planning:

Fund's Bank Balance as of 12 July 2005.....	\$ 61,221.00
Budget Reunion Registration Donations.....	5,000.00
Budget 103d Inf Div Funds, Dues 2001-2005.....	20,000.00
Budget from city of Gainesville Fund Drive.....	<u>13,779.00</u>
	\$100,000.00

Miscellaneous resources could total to an additional  
\$4,200.00: (City of Addison, Texas, \$3,000;  
Marriott Hotel, \$1,200).

With the availability of the above funds virtually assured, the Fund's Board agreed to proceed with the plan and contract the sculptor. Any arrangement to enhance the statue by adding the inscribed granite plates would be a separate effort. The cost, \$24,000, would exceed the funds now assured. Please anticipate a special issue of the NFTCP soon which will address complete details covering the Monument Program.

**ABOUT THE MONUMENT  
FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT/HISTORIAN**

The success of the Monument Fund in accumulating and arranging for sufficient funds to pay the \$100,000 construction cost of the Monument is apparent. The Monument Board of Directors was wise, therefore, in view of the twelve months construction time required, to proceed with contracts. The \$100,000, as pointed out in the foregoing report, did not include the \$24,000 required to inscribe the names of our 847 war deaths onto those five impressive granite slabs (plates). Nor did the \$100,000 include funds for future maintenance. Of those two projects, the inscriptions of our fallen is certainly of greater significance presently and of greater priority.

Resultant of long discussions with Mel Wright, the Fund's Board of Directors, and members of our own Board of Directors, it was unanimously agreed that the inscriptions on the granite panels were absolutely essential. Those names carry the essence of what we are about. To reach a goal of securing the \$24,000, two options considered viable are here presented:

**OPTION No. 1.** A voluntary one-time, even an once-in-a-lifetime, tax-deductible donation of \$50.00 (more or less according to comfort) by every surviving member of our Association to the Monument Fund. We currently have 2062 registered members.

Our deepest prayer is that, at this advanced period in our lives, every standing Cactus member positively participates in this one-time momentous opportunity. The yield from participants would lower the doubt that both the STATUE and the INSCRIPTION OF NAMES would be assured.

**OPTION No. 2.** Provide an idea in action whereby at the death of a Cactus veteran, the Family members, by way of the published obituary, request in lieu of sending flowers, give a tax-deductible donation to the Monument Fund. The spiritual connection here is that the Monument while honoring the 103d Division also honors the deceased 103d veteran.

If the family would like to do so, then at the time of the Cactus veteran's passage, a brief statement at the bottom of the obituary, such as here suggested, would suffice:

Association. "He was a veteran of World War II and has been active with the 103d Infantry Division

In lieu of sending flowers, please make donations to  
TEXAS WW II HISTORICAL MONUMENT FUND  
9737 Warwana Road  
Houston, Texas 77080  
This Fund is presently building a Gainesville TX Monument  
Honoring the men of the 103d and their support units."

With existing wide spread approval of the above options, and the firm approval of the Board of Directors, the Association President has been authorized to initiate, establish and launch a program to sponsor these activities.

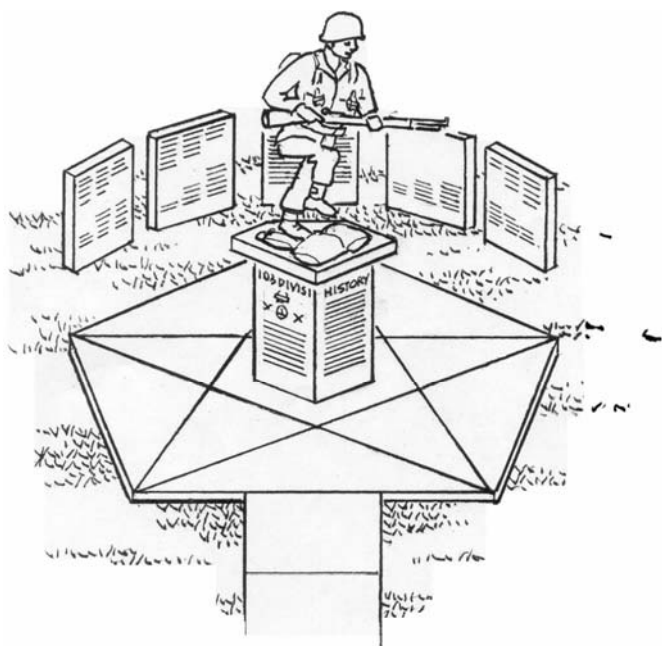
The first step in sponsorship is to publicize the plans on this Newsletter and provide arrangements for all members to participate. To that end a SPECIAL ISSUE of the NFTCP has been formulated for you. That special issue should arrive at your home in early January 2006. Please anticipate the good news that the SPECIAL ISSUE will bring to you and your family.

GOD Bless you as we continue to advance together.

Harold Branton  
Vice President and Historian

# OUR LEGACY

Our Monument is planned for dedication 11 November 2006. It is the result of seven years of labor spent to leave vital important historical records at a meaningful and prime location for our future generations.



SKETCH FOR WWII HISTORICAL MONUMENT  
HONORING THE 103<sup>D</sup> INFANTRY DIVISION

An agreement has been signed with a world class sculptor Edd Hayes to provide the Bronze 1-1/2 life size Figure. It is in process and on schedule.

Here is a sneak preview that includes the addition of five black granite panels in the rear on which will be inscribed the names of our 847 men that made the supreme sacrifice of their life. Mel Wright has already generated the complete database for the name additions.

To include this meaningful part of our monument will require additional funds and we are counting on all members to assist us in this endeavor. This will be your last chance to leave an honorable mark in our History.

**LOOK FOR MORE DETAILS IN A JANUARY  
SPECIAL ISSUE OF NEWS FROM THE CACTUS  
PATCH**

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