

THE CASTLE NEWSLETTER



Issue 41

January 2024

President's View

By Gil Bernabe

Our 2023 17th Artillery Reunion in Savannah, Georgia, was a big success.

We stayed at the Country Inn & Suites by Radisson. The hotel manager and all hotel personnel took exceptional care of all our guests. Our reunion in Savannah was highlighted by our tours of Savannah's River Area and a specially guided tour of Hunter Army Air Field. The Hunter AAF personnel and leadership from Fort Stewart did an exceptional job briefing our group on the history and mission of the two posts.

Our association secretary, Judy Dingman, and our key auctioneer, Melanie Klingeman, recorded our reunion in many photos. You will see some of their very professional photos in this newsletter. Thank you, Judy and Melanie!

While we had a fabulous time in Savannah – we must report that of the 30 folks who attended, 15 persons went home with COVID-19. After some days of medicine and quarantine, everybody recovered and seems to be in good health.

For the 2024 reunion, the 17th Artillery Regiment Association will be traveling west to Colorado Springs. After much looking and negotiating, we discovered a great hotel to host our 2024 reunion. To get a favorable rate, we moved our reunion back to the week of August 19, 2024.

We will be staying at the Hilton Garden Inn--Colorado Springs North in Colorado Springs. Take a close look at the instructions for reunion registration and hotel room reservations and also for the deadlines. **Everything is one month earlier.**

Colorado Springs offers many wonderful sight-seeing opportunities. Our association secretary has written about some sight-seeing opportunities on Page 5.

In this newsletter, we are officially announcing the 17th Artillery Scholarship Program for 2024. If you have an eligible family member who wishes to compete for a 17th Artillery scholarship, carefully read about our 2024 scholarship program on Page 4. The deadline to submit the completed scholarship application is March 15, 2024.

Our editor invites you to review Tom Kurtz's article on the 630th Field Artillery Battalion and its exploits in World War II. Tom performed a lot of historical research in the U.S. military archives to track down the battalion's history. We know you will find his story very interesting.

The association chaplain, Richard Smith, has been very busy since summer time as he listed our members and family members who have needed our prayers and good thoughts.

Our association continues to receive great support from its members. We send a special thanks to George and Donna Winton for their \$1,000 contribution for our scholarship program.

We also send a big thank you to anyone who made a special purchase during our 2023 Savannah auction. Your generosity is greatly appreciated as it benefits our Scholarship Fund.

We also send a major thank you to the Scholarship Review Committee who annually spends hours reviewing our scholarship application and determining the applicants' placement for scholarships. Our 2023 evaluators were: Bill Dahlin, Bruce LaTour, Mike Klingeman and Donald Brooks.

2023 Reunion – Savannah, Georgia



Several members present in the hospitality room in Savannah posed for an impromptu photo. Those present included (front/left) Richard Flowers, Jim Will, (back row) Don Strong, Wallace Bates, Dan Reeves, Dave Rowell, Mike Klingeman and Willie Gates.

Photo by Judy Dingman



Those taking part in the tour of Hunter Army Air Field included (left to right) Judy Dingman, Gil Bernabe, Trudy Bates, Wallace Bates, Mike Klingeman, Melanie Klingeman, Dave Rowell, Jerri Rowell, Peggy Dages, Rich Siebe, Phyllis Flowers, Richard Flowers, Steve Gerhardt, Leigh Goebel, Don Strong and Christina Strong.

2023 Reunion – Savannah, Georgia



Members of the color guard came from nearby Ft. Stewart. The hospitality room presented some space and height limitations, but the team rose to the challenge.

Photo by Judy Dingman

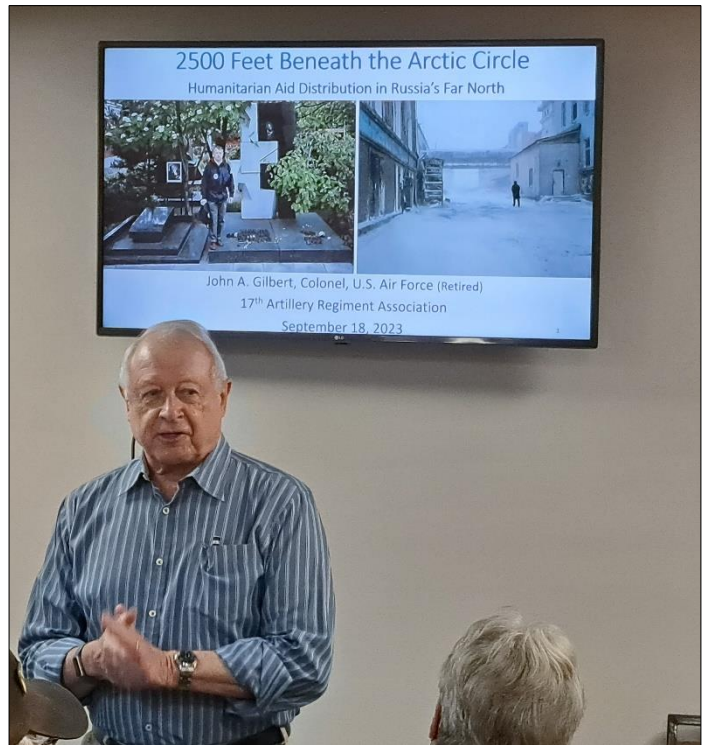


Toni Page (center/wearing apron) took care of members at breakfast and cleaned up any mess members might have made. Members presented her with a monetary gift at the close of the reunion.



Acting on behalf of the officers, Judy Dingman, secretary/editor, presented Gil Bernabe, president, with an engraved Cross pen for his efforts with the organization. Bernabe is precise in awarding officers and donors for their efforts, and his award of choice has been an engraved Cross pen.

Photo by Melanie Klingeman



Colonel John Gilbert (USAF/Retired) presented a talk following the social on Monday evening. His topic was “2500 Feet Beneath the Arctic Circle,” which was about his participation in Operation Provide Hope. OPH involved sending food and medical supplies to former Soviet republics suffering severe shortages of food and medical supplies. Congress appropriated \$100 million for the relief and utilized large quantities of food and medicine from stockpiles left after the Persian Gulf conflict in 1991.

Photo by Judy Dingman

Continued on page 15

17th Artillery Regiment Association Scholarships for 2024

Dr. Gilbert A. Bernabe, Chairman, Scholarship Committee



The 17th Artillery Regiment Association general membership approved the following scholarships and special awards for 2024:

- First Place \$2,500.00
- Second Place \$2,000.00
- Third Place \$1,500.00
- Fourth Place \$1,000.00
- Special Awards \$ 500.00

To date, the association has awarded 67 scholarship grants and special awards for a total of \$93,740 to the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the veterans and active-duty soldiers who have served or those currently serving in the regiment.

Request for Scholarship Application Packet: Individuals may request a scholarship application packet from: Dr. Gilbert A. Bernabe, 2916 Sedalia Trail, Sherman, TX 75092; or via telephone: (903) 421-6266; or email: Gilbernabe29@aol.com. When leaving a phone message, please provide your name and phone number.

Eligibility: To be eligible for a 17th Artillery Association scholarship grant or special award, the applicant must be a child, grandchild or great-grandchild of a parent, grandparent or great-grandparent who has served with or who is presently serving in the 17th Artillery Regiment. Those parents, grandparents or great-grandparents who have served or who are now serving with the regiment must have served or be currently serving under honorable conditions. If the parent, grandparent or great-grandparent received a discharge under less than honorable conditions, the applicant is not eligible.

The terms child, grandchild and great-grandchild used above apply to both biological and legally adopted children. **Foster children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren are not eligible.**

If the applicant has been previously awarded a 17th Artillery Association scholarship grant or special award, that applicant is not eligible to apply for another scholarship grant or award. **Applicant must be a graduating high school senior (Class of 2024) or a college student attending any college, vocational school or technical school.** Scholarship grants and special awards will be awarded in all areas of study.

Scholarship applications with all supporting documents must be returned **by U.S. mail** no later than **March 15, 2024** to: Dr. Gilbert A. Bernabe, 2916 Sedalia Trail, Sherman, TX 75092.

Applications sent by email or fax will not be accepted.

The 2024 Scholarship Selection Committee includes: Chairman Gilbert A. Bernabe and voting members: Bill Dahlin, Bruce Latour and Donald Brooks.

Scholarship Grants Since 2004

Number of Scholarship Grants
Since 2004, the association has awarded 67 scholarship grants in the amount of \$93,740 to the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of 17th Field Artillery Regiment veterans and active-duty soldiers.

Break Down of Scholarship Grants (as of 2023)

World War II Veterans
One grandson

Cold War Veterans
One son and six granddaughters

Korean War Veterans
Three grandsons

Vietnam War Veterans
Two sons, three daughters, 11 grandsons, 31 granddaughters, one great-grandson and one great-granddaughter

Operation Desert Shield/Storm Veterans
One daughter

Active-Duty Soldiers (Veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom and/or Operation Enduring Freedom)
One son and five daughters

Scholarship Grants have been awarded to 20 males and 47 females.

Awardees included: six attending college, four attending trade schools and 57 high school graduates.

24th Annual Reunion of the 17th Artillery Regiment Association Will Be in Colorado Springs on August 19-23



**Hilton Garden Inn
1810 Briargate Parkway
Colorado Springs, CO 80920**

Some of the amenities include:

- king beds
- nightly rate \$129 (plus tax)
- free parking
- cooked-to-order breakfast courtesy of 17th ARA
- on-site restaurant
- indoor pool
- fitness center

To book a reservation online, use the following: <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/coschgi>

If you prefer to make the reservation by phone, call 719-598-6866. Using the group code **ARA**, will make the process easier.

Here's The Scoop On Activities

Information from the hotel indicates:

- The Promenade Shops at Briargate (just across the street) offers a variety of shopping and dining opportunities.
- The US Air Force Academy is just eight miles away.
- The Garden of the Gods is only 10 miles south.
- The Cave of the Winds Mountain Park is less than 30 minutes away.

For those who like to explore museums, here are some options:

- Dragonmans Museum (<https://dragonmans.com/military-museum-dragonmans-colorado-springs>)
- 4th Infantry Division Museum at Fort Carson
- Peterson Air & Space Museum at Peterson Air Force Base
- National Museum of World War II Aviation

*Get your reservation made!
Send in the registration form (Page 9)!
We are looking forward to seeing you in Colorado Springs in August!!*

Christianity 101

By Richard A. Smith, Chaplain

I had a terrific Christmas and New Year! We look at the start of a new year and think about the last year and ask ourselves, “What type of resolutions am I going to make? Will I not spend so much next year? Will I call friends and family more? Will we travel more?” There are so many things to think about!

Think about this: Will I show more love for my family, Jesus and God? Well, Valentine’s Day is right around the corner. That’s a holiday about *LOVE*! Yes, it’s meant to be your spouse, your family or boyfriend/girlfriend, but how about our *Savior*?

Jesus Christ was born as a Savior to us and the son of God. He lived a life better known as “the Perfect Son.” He knew the world would be tempted by Satan and his demons. Jesus showed the world *love*, how to live with it and how to die with it! One of the first Bible verses we learn as children is John 3:16: “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life.” It doesn’t get any plainer than that! He was brought here to be our teacher and to tell us about salvation. “Salvation comes from the Lord.” (Jonah 2:9) Salvation, accepting Jesus as your savior, living by His teachings, being baptized (washing your sins away) and confessing your sins to Him is the only way to attain this.

Now, let’s look at one other sacred holiday, Easter. Christ was crucified, died and was buried. He came and died for you, to save you and all of us from sin! Upon Jesus’ resurrection, He told his 11 disciples (Judas had committed suicide by then.) to go to a mountain near Galilee. They saw Him and some doubted after seeing him on the cross but Jesus told them this: (Matthew 28:18-20) “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the father and of the son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always to the very end of the age.” (Keep in mind, most of us have more days *behind* us than *in front of us*.)

Recent deaths reported include George Winton’s mother, Lucille, who passed away at 102, and his wife Donna’s father, Robert Eustice, (on January 4, 2024) who was 97 years old and a retired Air Force veteran.

We have several with sickness and distress:

- 1) Henry “Hank” Dudek, recovering at home from a stroke, heart attack and flu
- 2) Don Brooks’ daughter, Bethany Shafer, who was treated for cancer in her tonsils
- 3) Don Brooks’ wife Sharon, who had two tumors on a kidney
- 4) Jack Lambert, who had a successful surgery
- 5) Harry Fetsick, who is hospitalized and in rehab for infection after knee surgery; he will possibly have reconstructive plastic surgery for his knee
- 6) Ruth Will, wife of Jim, diagnosed with atrial fibrillation (Afib) after being rushed to the hospital
- 7) Bert Ryan and wife, who are recovering from Covid

Please continue prayers for those with health issues: Norman and Annette Jones, Jack Stroud, Bill Dahlin, Gene Johnson, Avery Hall and Tom Kurtz and Peggy Dages’ daughter and her family who had a house fire.

Please keep these families in your prayers. Remember, calls, cards, emails and prayers go a long way! God Bless, To contact the chaplain, email him at rsmith3024@nc.rr.com or call 919-995-2163.

Association Officers 2024

Gil Bernabe, President

Dave Rowell, First Vice President

Mike Klingeman, Second Vice President

Judy Dingman, Secretary/Editor of *The Castle*

Richard Siebe, Treasurer

Richard Smith, Chaplain

Tom Kurtz, Historian

Richard & Phyllis Flowers, Quartermasters

Edward (Ed) Hitchner, Webmaster

Gil Bernabe, Scholarship Chairman

Lucille Winton, Army Wife

By George Winton

Editor's Note: Lucille Winton accompanied her son and daughter-in-law, George and Donna Winton, to some of the reunions of the 17th Artillery Regiment Association. Sometimes we overlook the role of the Army wife and mother and the part she plays in her husband's and son's success. This offers a glimpse into customs of the past and how one Army wife/mother stayed active and on-her-own until age 102, when she died in 2023,

My mother was born in Alabama on July 1, 1921, but moved fairly quickly to North Carolina where her father worked as a civil engineer for the state. She had all her father's mechanical skills and all her mother's social inclinations. She could swing a hammer and turn a screw driver as well as a man but was also the consummate loving parent. Mother married Captain George P. Winton, Jr. the day after Pearl Harbor was attacked. They settled into Army quarters at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. Mother quickly found that all home repairs fell to her lot, because my father was mostly "all thumbs." She could repair light fixtures, change door locks, sew, make hats, cook and entertain large groups of guests. About the only endeavor that she never attempted was auto mechanics, but that would also have been within her reach with minimal instruction.

Her favorite activities were parties and travel. Being married to an Army man was therefore right up her alley. She recalled impromptu, spur of the moment dinner parties at Fort Leavenworth featuring nothing more than friends, spaghetti and red wine in a house with almost no furniture. It was the friends that were most important, not the accouterments.

In the Army of the 1940s and 1950s, there were many occasions that required "dressing up," and budgets were tight. My mother therefore made most of her own clothes. (See photo.) She even took a few lessons on hat making and created hats for special occasions. Most of my sister's prom dresses were made by my mother as was the tuxedo jacket I wore to my high school graduation. She gave up sewing about age 80, when her eyesight made threading needles impossible.

Traveling started when the family was sent to Germany in 1950. Even though my father was too busy to get away much himself, my mother got together with friends and toured many nearby countries. As a family, we visited Bavaria and France. I learned to ski in Bavaria and was allowed to drink a little wine in France (half and half mixed with water). I think the wine kept us from getting "Napoleon's Revenge."

During the assignment to Paris in 1964, my mother took French lessons so that she could get around town better. Her southern accent sometimes got in the way with French shop clerks asking her to "just speak English, please."

After my father died in 1995, Mother found a new traveling companion in Colonel Sarah Myers, a retired Army nurse anesthetist. The two of them traveled pretty much all over the world together for almost two decades. Even though Sarah was at least 15 years younger, my mother always kept up with her. Sarah died in her 80s of lymphoma

Mother's traveling days began to wane when she fell on a trip to Turkey cracking the top of her iliac crest (not exactly a hip fracture). It required hospitalization in Turkey for one week before air evacuation could be arranged. She spent an adventurous week helping the young nurses practice their English and then boarding a small jet with room for only three



Colonel George and Lucille Winton at a Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) function in Paris. Mrs. Winton is wearing a dress made by "Lucille."

crew and herself on a stretcher. The plane had a range of only 1200 miles, so many stops were made before arrival at home. She went to rehab and quickly recovered.

The next misadventure occurred about two years later when she was traveling on a cruise with my sister Margaret and her granddaughter in the Mediterranean Sea. She caught the flu, became dehydrated and had to be taken to Princess Grace Hospital in Monaco. Her hospital chart recorded flu, pneumonia, renal insufficiency and atrial fibrillation. Margaret endured a week “camping out” in the hospital until Mother was well enough to travel. A rescue nurse was sent from the United States to get her home on a regular flight. Margaret said the nurse immediately took charge of the situation. Mother said, “She stuck me in the shower, gave me clean clothes and a diaper, trussed me up like a turkey and wheeled me out to the airport.”

The flight home was in business class with a seat that could be made into a bed. The stewardess appeared shortly after take-off and offered beverages: water, tea, coffee or wine. My mother chose wine, but Nurse said, “NO.” After dinner the stewardess appeared again with the same offer. Mother said, “I understand that red wine is very good for you. Don’t you think I should have some?” Nurse said, “Well, okay.” The trip was thereafter quite pleasant.

Mother stopped traveling in February 2021 just before her 100th birthday. One evening, she was practicing balance exercises at the kitchen sink, which required her to close her eyes and maintain balance with eyes shut. This was supposed to be done with a spotter behind her. Instead, she was home alone. She lost her balance and fell, breaking her hip. She told us that it took almost 4 hours for her to crawl to the next room and pull the telephone down to call for help. The EMS arrived quickly and took her to an emergency room. One week later she had a hip replacement and was then transferred to a rehabilitation hospital. The COVID quarantine started a few weeks later and visitors were not allowed into the facility. In June she was allowed to return home and was yet again successfully rehabilitated.

Mother (102) passed on to her final reward on October 4, 2023. She remained fiercely independent until the end, living in her own home in Columbia, South Carolina.

Receive *The Castle* by Email

To help defray the cost of postage and printing of the association’s newsletter, please sign up to receive *The Castle* by email.

To receive the electronic newsletter, notify the association’s secretary, Judy Dingman, at jdingman@centurytel.net with your **current and **correct** email address and receive the newsletter much faster.**

We will continue to mail the newsletter to anyone who does not have an internet connection.

You must be a **PAID-UP/ACTIVE MEMBER to receive the newsletter.**

17th Artillery Regiment Association Reunion Registration Form August 19-23, 2024

Please fill out the information below.

The association's registration fee will cover Monday evening's Welcome Social, Annual Banquet and a portion of the Hospitality Room refreshments and snacks.

Please make your check or money order payable to: 17th Artillery Regiment Association.

Mail the registration to the association treasurer: Rich Siebe
3060 64th Street
Sacramento, CA 95820-2004

CUT/TEAR AND MAIL THE FOLLOWING TO OUR TREASURER.
(With your check or money order to arrive no later than August 1, 2024.)

Name _____
(Please print)

Battery _____ Battalion _____ Dates Served: From _____ to _____

Name(s) of Spouse, Relatives and/or friends attending as they should appear on name tags:

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Registration fee is \$50 per person X number attending _____ = \$ _____
(number in your party)

Please donate toward the Hospitality Room Expenses: \$ _____

CHECK TOTAL \$ _____

Membership Application

To become a member or life member or to renew your membership with the

17th Artillery Regiment Association

Please disregard if you are already a member for the year 2024 or a life member.

Complete the form below and mail it with your check or money order payable to **17th Artillery Regiment Association**. Mail to: Richard Siebe (*Association Treasurer*, 3000 64th Street, Sacramento, CA 95820-2004. Upon receipt of your 2024 dues or renewal, a membership card will be mailed to you. Life members will be mailed their numbered 17th Artillery Regiment Association Life Membership Coin. Members will be given the PASSWORD to access the online veteran's roster located on the association's web site (www.17thartilleryregiment.org). The password will be sent to you by U. S. Mail or email. The password is changed January 1 of each year.

Join or renew now: 2024 Membership Dues is \$30.00 (January – December) (Annual dues \$30.00 per year)

Life membership fees: Through age 30---\$270.00 31-40---\$260.00 41-50---\$240.00 51-60---\$220.00
61-70---\$190.00 71-80---\$150.00 81+---\$110.00

First Name: _____ MI: _____ Last Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ FAX or Email: _____

I served with the 17th Artillery from (year) _____ to (year) _____

Please check those that apply:

Battery or Batteries:

- 17th Field Artillery/Battalion/Group/Regiment (Prior to 1958) _____
- 1st Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (1958 – 2013) _____
- 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (1958 – 2008) (2010 - Present) _____
- 3rd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (1958 – 1995) (2007-2010) _____
- 4th Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (1959 – 1996) _____
- 5th Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (1959 – 1996) _____
- 6th Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (1959 – 1963) _____
- 7th Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (1960 – 1972) _____
- 8th Battalion, 17th Field Artillery (1967 – 1971) _____

NOTE: Please enclose a copy of your DD Form 214 with your application. (Mail a COPY, do not send the original.) If you previously mailed a copy of your DD Form 214 to the association, there is no need to send another copy.

ACTIVE DUTY: If you are on active duty, check here: ____ You may not have a DD Form 214 yet.

*Richard (Rich) Siebe
3060 64th Street
Sacramento, CA 95820
Email address: R47S89SP@comcast.net
Cell Phone: (916) 798-6329*

630th Field Artillery Battalion

By Thomas R. Kurtz

Starting in 1942, the Army started to reorganize corps artillery regiments to field artillery groups/battalions. The field artillery groups were designed to control up to five field artillery battalions. The process was slow to start out and artillery units in the states were the first to be reorganized. The corps artillery units that took part in the fighting in North Africa and Sicily were the last units to be reorganized.

In February 1944, the 17th Field Artillery Regiment began the process of reorganization from an artillery regiment to a group headquarters/field artillery battalion. Headquarters 17th Field Artillery Regiment was redesignated as the Headquarters 17th Field Artillery Group (Motorized). The 1st Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment was redesignated as the 17th Field Artillery Battalion; and the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment was redesignated as the 630th Field Artillery Battalion.

During February 1944, in Viticuso, Italy, the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery was issued eight-inch towed, M1 howitzers with M3 tractors used as prime movers and was redesignated the 630th Field Artillery Battalion effective February 14, 1944. After the redesignation, the battalion had time for recreation and training. The battalion was placed under the 17th Field Artillery Group, which was attached to the French Expeditionary Corps. From February 1944 to its redeployment to France in September 1944, the 630th Field Artillery Battalion supported the French Expeditionary Corps during the Garigliano Offensive.

The 630th Field Artillery Battalion left Italy and landed in France on September 9, 1944. The battalion supported the French Army I Corps in the Vosges Mountains from September 17, 1944, to November 13, 1944, taking part in the offensive of Belfort, France. Then from November 14, 1944, to March 10, 1945, the battalion continued its support of the I Corps of the French Army. From the end of March 1945, to the end of the war, the 630th Field Artillery Battalion was placed under the control of 6th Corps Artillery.

When the cease fire took place in August 1945, it found the battalion in Hall, Germany. The battalion then became part of the Army of Occupation. The battalion was inactivated on February 22, 1946, at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. On February 5, 1947, the 630th Field Artillery Battalion was redesignated the 537th Field Artillery Battalion.



630th Field Artillery Battalion in Belgium (1944)

There are nine soldiers in the photo with only eight names provided: (left to right) Larry Talbert (South Dakota), Alex Stamm (Nebraska), John Tensea (New Jersey), Billy Brown (Illinois), Buddy Wolf (Kentucky), Al Bigwood (Mississippi), Pop Galardo (Ohio) and Ted Shank (Ohio).

**Reference: Department of the Army General Order 43, dated 19 December 1950
630th Field Artillery Battalion (8-in How)**

French Croix De Guerre with Palm, awarded under Decision No. 267, 22 July 1946 by the President of the Provisional Government of the French Republic, with the following citation: A unit which distinguished itself particularly during operations of the Vosges from 17 September to 13 November 1944. It was charged with supporting the I Corps of the French Army and rendered valuable assistance in disorganizing the enemy by its fire behind enemy lines. Participating in the offensive of Belfort, it distinguished itself again from 14 November 1944 to 10 March 1945, by aiding with all of its fire to the I Corps of the French Army, thus permitting the infantry to advance with the minimum of losses.

French Croix De Guerre with Silver-Gilt Star, awarded under Decision No. 128, 22 July 1944 by General of the Army JUIN, Commanding the French Expeditionary Corps, with the following citation: Under the command of Lt. Col. Henry

P. Ward, this unit took part in all operations of the French Expeditionary Corps, with magnificent zeal, from the month of February 1944. On the occasion of the attack of 11 May, it contributed to a great measure by the accuracy of its shooting to the neutralizing of the enemy artillery. During the pursuit of the enemy, it contributed to the enemy's disorganization by pushing forward its batteries and rapid and outright firing. Its action afforded the French forces particularly efficient support.

Lineage and Honors

630th Field Artillery Battalion

Constituted 3 June 1916 in the Regular Army as the 2d Battalion, 17th Field Artillery

Organized 6 June 1917 at Camp Robinson, Sparta, Wisconsin

Assigned to the 2d Division, 21 September 1917

Relieved from the 2d Division 18 December 1920

Assigned to the 1st Division, 22 July 1929

Relieved from the 1st Division and assigned to the 2d Division, 1 January 1930

Relieved from the 2d Division, 16 October 1939

Reorganized and redesignated 14 February 1944 as the 630th Field Artillery Battalion

Inactivated 22 February 1946 at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey

Redesignated 5 February 1947 as the 537th Field Artillery Battalion

Campaign Streamers

World War I

Aisne

Aisne-Marne

St. Mihiel

Meuse-Argonne

Ile de France 1918

Lorraine 1918

World War II

Tunisia

Sicily (with arrowhead)

Rome-Arno

Southern France

Rhineland

Central Europe

Decorations:

French Croix de Guerre with Palm, World War I, Streamer embroidered AISNE-MARNE

French Croix de Guerre with Palm, World War I, Streamer embroidered MEUSE-ARGONNE

French Croix de Guerre with Palm, World War II, Streamer embroidered VOSGES

French Croix de Guerre with Gold Star, World War II, Streamer embroidered ROME-ARNO

Coat of Arms: None

Distinctive Insignia: None

NOTES:

* Little information could be found on the 630th Field Artillery Battalion. The WWII Army European War Records were transferred from the National Archives to the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas, some time ago. Due to the condition of the records, they can only be accessed by professional researchers.

* According to the National Archives Web Page on WWII POWs, the 630th Field Artillery Battalion had a total of 159 of its soldiers captured and held in 19 different POW camps. On December 24, 1944, 145 were captured in Belgium. All were captured in Belgium with only four being captured in Germany. The battalion had one of its POWs, Private John (Elmer) Henry Horridge, die from starvation while in captivity. Private Horridge was captured on December 26, 1944, and held at Stalag 9G, Bad Sulza, Saxe-Weimar. Private Horridge was the only soldier from the 630th Field Artillery Battalion held at that camp.

*The POW records of the 630th Field Artillery Battalion may have some errors, as a search of the Find a Grave website for obituaries of those names listed as POWs revealed. Of those names I found, nine of the deceased soldiers, either from their grave headstones or obituaries posted online, served with the 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion. One was listed as being captured on August 29, 1944, in Belgium, but the battalion did not arrive in France from Italy until September 9, 1944.

*In the picture with this article, I found information on only one of the soldiers pictured, Sergeant Theodore A. Shank, SN 33428543, who served as a supply sergeant with the battalion. He enlisted at Greensburg, Pennsylvania, on February 2, 1943, took training at Aberdeen Proving Ground and in 1944 was shipped to England. He was then shipped to France arriving on June 17, 1944, and joined the 630th Field Artillery Battalion and became part of the 3rd Army. He fought in campaigns through Belgium to Germany, including the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of a concentration camp. Shank was a part of the occupation army and spent time in Heidelberg, Heinbach, Karlsruhe, Nenuhuten, Weinsburg and Kaslsruhe Durlach. After the war, he returned to Ohio; he died December 5, 2004. at the age of 87.

References:

1. The Organizational History of Field Artillery 1775-2003, by Janice E. McKenney, Army Lineage Series, CMH Pub 60-16-1, Center of Military History, United States Army, Washington, D. C. 2007
2. History of the 2d Howitzer Battalion, 17th Artillery, Technical Library, USAAMS, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, dated March 1969.
3. Field Artillery Battalions of the U.S. Army, Volume Two of a two-volume set, Compiled and edited by James A. Sawicki, 1978
4. Department of the Army General Orders 43, dated 19 December 1950
5. National Archives Records of World War II of POWs <https://aad.archives.gov/aad/>
6. Find a Grave <https://findagrave.com>

From the Treasurer

By Richard Siebe

As we start our 25th year and we are all a year older, the association is in a good financial state. We currently have \$23,317 in our account, of which \$9494 is dedicated to the Scholarship Fund and \$13,823 is allocated for the General Fund. I'm proud to say that we have given out \$93,740 in scholarships since the founding of the association.

Unfortunately, we only had two annual dues payers and no new Life Members last year. Hopefully, we will do better this year.

I hope to see as many of you as possible at the reunion in Colorado Springs in August.

Information on the Charlie Battery 2024 Reunion

When: July 26 to July 28, 2024

Where: Hilton Garden Inn -- Grand Rapids, Michigan

Hotel Rate: \$149 per night

Hotel Phone: (616) 608-8800

Closest airport: Grand Rapids, MI (GRR)

Charlie Batter POC: Jeff Wilcox, wilcox.j79@att.net or (616) 581-9659

Charlie Battery members along with family and friends are welcome. The plan is to gather, hangout and catch up with each other. Dinner plan for July 27 is in the hotel or at a nearby restaurant.

This Newsletter has been approved by the Board of Directors.
Gil Bernabe, Association President
www/17thartilleryregiment.org

17th Artillery Veteran Takes Part in Honor Flight

By Barry Matthews, Veteran
Charlie Battery, 2nd Bn, 17th Artillery

I was honored to be a participant of the Honor Flight program sponsored by Honor Flight of West Florida. Honor Flight is dedicated to honoring our veterans for the sacrifices they have made to keep our nation safe by providing them an all-expense paid trip to visit the memorials in Washington, D.C. Honor Flight symbolizes the spirit, sacrifice and commitment of our veterans.

On the morning of October 24, 2023, Honor Flight mission 48 took place from Clearwater/St. Petersburg airport.

In Vietnam, I served in Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 17th Artillery. In 1970, when I returned home to the United States, the reception was not nearly as warm and thoughtful as this Honor Flight to Washington, D.C. For me, the Honor Flight program treatment was the best “Welcome Home” experience since my return from Vietnam.

My son, Barry Anthony Matthews, was along on the trip to Washington as my guardian, which is an integral part of the Honor Flight Program. The purpose of the guardian is to assist the veteran as necessary – performing duty as the wingman, butler, escort or handler.

The organizers for the trip did a magnificent job in coordinating the air flights to and from Baltimore/Washington International Airport (BWI), bus trips to and from Washington D.C., and memorial visitations in Washington D. C. The charter flights up and back went off like clockwork, on time and no hiccups. There were greeters at BWI airport who lined the terminal with flags and signs of gratitude. The fire department was there at our arrival and performed a water truck spray as the plane approached the terminal to welcome all of the veterans.

Our tour of the memorials began when we arrived at the National Mall in Washington D.C. Our tour guides took us to the World War II Memorial, the Viet Nam Wall, the Korean War Memorial and Arlington National Cemetery. The tour guides explained the history and meaning of each memorial and answered any questions we had about the memorials.

That evening on our return flight, we received a bag with thank-you letters from friends and family and from strangers thanking us for our service to our country. I received 75 thank-you letters from friends and strangers. This was the best welcome home present that a veteran could receive!

But our Honor Flight experience was even better when we arrived back at the Clearwater/St. Petersburg Airport. We got off the plane to a welcoming crowd of over a 100 friends and strangers. Our reception included a band playing and, the crowd cheering for the veterans and saying “Welcome Home!” to the veterans. Photos were taken and hugs and kisses given to the returning veteran heroes. Honor Flight was a truly great experience and a wonderful welcome home experience.

Editor’s Note: Honor Flight Network was formed in 2005 and now includes about 125 hubs across the country. If you would like to participate in the Honor Flight program, contact your local Veteran Service Officer or a local Honor Flight Hub and ask for information to apply for a flight.



Barry Matthews, a member of the 17th Artillery Regiment Association who served in Charlie Battery, and his son, Barry Anthony Matthews, took part in an Honor Flight from Florida to Washington D.C.
Submitted Photo



Barry Matthews is standing by the fountain that is part of the World War II Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.



Barry Matthews and others with him on the Honor Flight pose for a group photo inside the World War II Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. The Lincoln Monument can be seen in the distance. The whirlwind of a day began at o-dark-thirty and ended with a welcome-home event late in the day. Those on an Honor Flight spend the day with other veterans. Each veteran has a “guardian” for the day. Many veterans enlist the help of a family member to share the experience as they visit many of the memorials on the Mall. Most usually, a wife is not allowed to serve as a guardian, but children, other relatives and friends are allowed. The trip is at no cost to the individual veteran.

Submitted Photo

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Present for the banquet on the last day of the reunion were: (clockwise from left) Valerie Graber, Ruth Will, James Will, Dave Rowell, Willi Gates, Rich Siebe, Sandy Vail, Don Strong, Christina Strong, Mike Klingeman, Judy Dingman, June Bernabe, Gil Bernabe, George Winton, Donna Winton, Jerri Rowell, Richard Flowers, Phyllis Flowers, Peggy Dages and Melanie Klingeman (behind the camera).

Procedures for Burial in a National Veterans Cemetery

You can apply to find out in advance if you can be buried in a Veterans Administration National Cemetery. This is called a pre-need determination of eligibility and it can help make the burial planning process easier for your family members in their time of need. Follow the steps below to apply.

How do I prepare before starting my application?

1. Find out if you're eligible. One of these must describe you:
 - a. A Veteran who didn't receive a dishonorable discharge when you separated from the military
 - b. The spouse or dependent child of a service member or Veteran even if the service member or Veteran has already passed away
 - c. In some cases, the adult dependent child of a service member or Veteran (if you aren't married)
 - d. The decision of whether or not you qualify for burial in a VA national cemetery is based on the history of the Veteran or service member who's sponsoring your application for burial as a spouse surviving spouse or unmarried adult child.
2. Choose the VA national cemetery where you'd prefer to be buried.
 - a. Visit <https://www.va.gov/find-locations/>
 - b. If you want to be buried in a state or tribal Veterans cemetery, contact that specific cemetery ahead of time to find out about their pre-need program.
 - c. If you'd like to be buried in either Arlington National Cemetery or the United States Soldiers and Airmen's Home National Cemetery, call 877-907-89585, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., ET, and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m., ET.
 - d. Getting a pre-need determination of eligibility doesn't guarantee you'll be buried in a specific VA national cemetery. They do not take reservations at any VA national cemetery. However, they ask where you prefer to be buried so they can try to help fulfill your final wishes.
3. Gather the supporting documents and information you'll need to fill out the application. (If you don't have everything on the list, you can still apply and they will help by finding the supporting documents needed. Just keep in mind, the more information you can give when you apply, the faster they can review your application and give you a decision. They will contact you if they need you to provide additional information. If both you and your spouse are applying, you'll each need to fill out your own application.)
 - a. Social Security Number
 - b. Date and place of birth
 - c. Military status and service history (like service dates, discharge character, and rank – commonly found on the DD214 or other separation documents.
 - d. Discharge papers (DD214 or other separation documents)

How do I apply?

1. At <https://www.va.gov/burials-and-memorials/pre-need/form-10007-apply-for-eligibility/applicant-information>
2. By mail. Download VA Form 40-10007 (<https://www.va.gov/find-forms/about-form-40-10007>). The person applying for preneed must sign the form. If that person is under 18 years old, mentally unable to make decisions for themselves or physically unable to sign the form, a spouse, parent or court-appointed representative may sign the form. Send the completed application (with copies of supporting documents – do not send original of your DD214 and other supporting documents since they cannot be returned) to: NCA FP Evidence Intake Center, PO Box 5237, Janesville, WI 53547.
3. By fax at 855-840-8299

What if I need help filling out my application?

1. Call the VA's toll-free hotline (800-535-1117), Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m., ET and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., ET.

2. Go to <https://www.benefits.va.gov/vso/varo.asp> to get help from a trained professional trusted to help with VA-related claims, like an accredited representative or Veterans Service Officer. Find your state's Veteran's agency at <https://www.va.gov/statedva.htm>
3. These services are free. No one should ever ask you to pay them to help you fill out VA Form 40-10007 or file your request.

What happens after I apply?

The amount of time it takes to review your application depends on:

1. The number of applications the VA is reviewing
2. How much information you provided in your application
3. Whether you provided your (or your sponsor's) DD214 or other separation documents along with your application

The VA receives a large number of pre-need eligibility applications, and that slows the approval process. They will let you know when they have received your application and how long they think it will take to make a decision. You do not need to do anything while you wait; they will contact you if they need more information to make the decision.

What will I receive if I qualify?

You will receive a folder that includes:

1. A letter telling you if you can be buried in a VA national cemetery. This is called your pre-need decision letter.
2. A National Cemetery Administration brochure and a burial benefits information sheet. These will tell you more about the benefits you'll receive.
3. A copy of the support documents you submitted with your application.

What should I do after I receive my pre-need decision letter and folder?

1. Keep your pre-need decision letter and folder in a safe place. Talk to your family members or authorized representative about your burial wishes – including any memorialization requests and inscriptions – and make sure they know where your benefits folder is located. They'll need this information to request your burial at the time of need.
2. You may also want to choose a funeral home to help you with pre-need funeral plans. Provide a copy of your pre-need decision letter to your funeral director and tell him/her about your plans to be buried in a national cemetery.

What does my family need to do to request my burial at the time of need?

1. At the time of need, the person arranging your burial should call the National Cemetery Scheduling Office at 800-535-1117 (TTY: 711) to request a burial. We're here Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET, and Saturday, 9:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET. They'll need your pre-need decision letter at that time.
2. The VA will also keep a copy of your pre-need application, the decision letter and your supporting documents in the system to help speed up burial arrangements. When your family member or authorized representative requests your burial, the VA will confirm your pre-need eligibility determination based on the laws in effect at that time.

Will my family have to pay for my burial?

No, if you qualify for burial in a VA national cemetery, you'll receive burial benefits at no cost to your family. Burial benefits include:

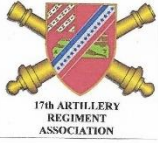
1. Opening and closing of the grave
2. A burial liner provided by the government
3. A headstone or marker provided by the government
4. Perpetual (ongoing) care of the gravesite.

Sources:

<https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/pre-need-eligibility/>

<https://www.va.gov/burials-memorials/pre-need-eligibility/after-you-apply/>

(Editor's Note: This was a handout provided at Reunion 2023 in Savannah. We are reprinting here to reach more members.)



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Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF), December 2009, a M777 howitzer from the 1st Platoon Battery A, 3rd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division firing its only round from COP Mescall. The platoon spent two weeks in December supporting the Romanian soldiers stationed there. The Romanian soldiers from COP Mescall were supporting the Afghan National Army (ANA) and police (ANP) in the area.

17th ARTILLERY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
THE CASTLE