

THE CASTLE NEWSLETTER



Issue 42

July 2024

President's View

By Gil Bernabe

Hello everyone! For those of our 17th Artillery Veterans and family members who will be joining us in Colorado Springs – we have around six weeks before we check into the Hilton Garden Inn Colorado Springs.

If you plan to join us – we encourage you to make your hotel reservation as soon as you can. We have repeated the instructions on how to make your hotel reservation in this *Castle Newsletter*. And don't forget to register with Rich Siebe! (Registration form is on page 3.) Based on how many veterans have already made their hotel reservations – this could be the smallest group to join us for a 17th Artillery reunion.

Our schedule for this reunion will be very sparse. There is a lot to do in Colorado Springs and the hotel will have many brochures for you to peruse and select your activity/activities.

During the past six months, I have been battling prostate cancer. I was in good shape when the radiation began but by the end I was very worn out and I am still very weak and hardly have the energy to walk. So, you can imagine that I did not have the energy to spend time trying to set up our normal reunion activities. Actually, I hope to have the energy to make it to Colorado and through the Dallas and Denver airports. June and I are debating if this Airborne Ranger will need a wheelchair.

Our newsletter contains lots of the usual interesting articles. Kudos to Tom Kurtz who always conducts great research and puts together a most interesting article. Take a look at Kurtz's article, "Chow," on pages 7-9.

I talked to CSM Delmar Beard's executive assistant, and he informs me that CSM Beard will make it to the 2024 reunion and he will bring copies of his memoirs – entitled: *Approaching Sunset*. He plans to bring enough copies for the auction and he will autograph each copy. We are currently discussing how to donate profits from his book sale to the 17th Artillery Scholarship Program.

This newsletter also has a tribute to First Lieutenant John T. Wilkerson who was killed in the April 3, 1968, sapper attack on Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 17th Artillery, in Binh Dinh province in South Vietnam. God bless you, John and rest in peace!

Charlie Battery will hold its 2024 reunion July 26 through 28, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. (See page 13.)

Judy Dingman, secretary/editor, has provided a public service with her list of activities to enjoy in the Colorado Springs area. You can find this on page 12.

Hello Fellow Red Leg Members and Families,

This year's reunion in Colorado Springs looks to be outstanding thanks to the hard work by our president Gil Bernabe and secretary Judy Dingman. Judy has put together a list (see page 12) of where we can get information on various attractions in and around the city. Here's hoping to see some new faces this year. Be safe and see you in Colorado!

Mike Klingeman, Second Vice President

Annual Reunion Is Just Around the Corner 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
- indoor pool
- fitness center

The deadline to book a reservation and get our special rate is July 22.

To make the reservation by phone, call 719-598-6866. Using the group code **ARA** will make the process easier. To book a reservation online, use the following: <https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/coschgi>

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 3)!

Info from Hilton Garden Inn Colorado Springs

The Hilton Garden Inn Colorado Springs hotel, with its spectacular views of Pikes Peak and the Rocky Mountains Front Range, is conveniently located off I-25 at exit 151. The hotel is within minutes of the U.S. Air Force Academy, historic downtown Colorado Springs and many area attractions. The Hilton Garden Inn Colorado Springs hotel is directly across the street from The Promenade Shops at Briargate, with its many fine shops and restaurants.

The Hilton Garden Inn Colorado Springs hotel provides top quality accommodations, exceptional service, a relaxed atmosphere and a convenient location, all at an affordable price. Our accommodating staff can direct guests to many area attractions such as the U.S. Air Force Academy, Focus on the Family, Garden of the Gods, U.S. Olympic Training Complex, World Arena, Colorado Sports Center (SocNRoll), Chapel Hills Mall, downtown Colorado Springs, Cog Railway, Santa's Workshop and Pikes Peak.

Deluxe accommodations, friendly and relaxed service, and thoughtful amenities await guests with the Great American Grill, 24-hour Pavilion Pantry convenience mart, Pavilion Lounge, complimentary wireless high-speed internet in rooms and lobby, restaurant that serves a reasonably priced full cooked-to-order breakfast, complimentary 24-hour business center, microwaves, coffeemakers, hairdryers, iron and boards in all guest rooms, heated indoor pool, fitness center and meeting space that accommodates up to 85 people with on-site catering.

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 \$ _____

Association Awards Four Scholarships

The 17th Artillery Regiment Association recently awarded scholarships to four deserving four granddaughters. The four scholarships totaled \$7000. Each scholarship recipient received a monetary award, a congratulatory letter and a 17th Artillery Regiment Association Certificate of Achievement. Each year the 17th Artillery Regiment Association awards scholarships to children and grandchildren of veterans and current active-duty soldiers who have served with this proud regiment. Applicants must meet the association's eligibility requirements and are evaluated on academic achievement, community service, extra-curricular activities at school, an essay on a different topic annually and a faculty member's letter of recommendation.

Kennedy Sinnott

The top 2024 scholarship recipient was Kennedy Sinnott, a student from Barr-Reeve High School in Montgomery, Indiana. Kennedy was the epitome of a well-rounded and busy student. She was at the top of her class with her grades and overall contributions to her school, community and church. Her weighted grade point average (GPA) was 4.595, and her unweighted GPA was 4.0, which placed her as the number one student in her class. Of special mention is her taking 11 dual-credit college courses and earning an A in each course.

Kennedy was self-employed as a mathematics tutor and babysitter. She was very involved in church, community and school activities, such as the YMCA Youth Council and Providence Mennonite Church Youth Group. She made time to participate in three church mission trips to Guatemala, Louisiana and Ohio.

Kennedy was very active in school sports, playing on the varsity basketball team and earning District 1 Honors, Indiana Coaches of Girls Sports Association Academic All-State First Team and Indiana Basketball Coaches Association Academic All-State Honorable Mention. Along the way to making the varsity basketball team, she made her mark as the team captain of the junior varsity team and the team was the sectional champion. In her junior year, she was a member of the track and field team and ran on the 4x800-meter relay team. As a senior, her 4x800-meter relay team ran in the Hoosier State Relays Indoor State Championships. As a member of the track and field team, she was recognized with the following awards: Academic All-state, Sportsmanship Award and Mental Attitude Award. She proved unselfish as she was the volunteer manager for the varsity cross-country team.

Kennedy's English teacher spoke highly of Kennedy's character and discipline, describing her as "...an active participant in her education...She is a go-getter, and she will take on her college education with the same ambition, determination and integrity she has displayed as a high school student."

For her outstanding accomplishments, Kennedy received a \$2,500 17th Artillery Regiment Association Scholarship. Her connection with the 17th Artillery Regiment Association is through her late grandfather, Michael Dages who served with the 17th Artillery in Viet Nam.

Madelyn LaBorde

Madelyn LaBorde is another outstanding granddaughter who earned a 17th Artillery Scholarship. Madelyn graduated from Live Oak High School in Denham Springs, LA, in 2021. Currently, she is attending Louisiana State University (LSU) and is majoring in kinesiology. As a top-notch high school student, she graduated with a 3.9 GPA and at LSU is carrying a 3.21 GPA.

In high school, besides carrying a full academic load, Madelyn was involved in the school's Ambassador Club which assisted incoming freshmen transition from middle school to high school. During orientation, she was responsible for providing school tours to students and parents and also discussing "how to study" their more challenging course work.



Kennedy Sinnott receives her \$2,500 scholarship award from her grandmother Peggy Dages. (Inset) Kennedy's late grandfather was a member of the 17th Artillery Regiment Association.

As a member of the Key Club, she organized clean up sessions after football games at the stadium and also volunteered at the local animal shelter.

Even though Madelyn is busy with a full academic college load, she makes time to work in a boutique store as a retail sales associate and as an Ink Graphics employee from 16 to 24 hours per week. In the boutique store, she has proven to be a valuable member, as she is responsible for taking inventory, ordering new merchandise and pricing and tagging new merchandise when it arrives. She is also a member of the Alpha Delta Pi Sorority at LSU; this sorority provides valuable service to the Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC), which provide parents and children a place to stay while a child is in the hospital. Madelyn and her sisters are actively involved in raising funds for the RMHC by hosting several events. She embodies the sorority's mission of helping nursing homes, food banks, animal shelters and other opportunities to give back to the community.

For her outstanding accomplishments, Madelyn received a 17th Artillery Regiment Association Scholarship of \$1,750. Her connection with the 17th Artillery Regiment Association is through her grandfather, Dave Rowell -- a Purple Heart recipient -- who served with the 17th Artillery in Viet Nam.



Madelyn LaBorde accepts her 17th Artillery Regiment Association scholarship from her grandfather Dave Rowell.

Anna Dudek

Anna Dudek is another fine 17th Artillery granddaughter who earned a 17th Artillery Scholarship. Anna graduated from Nanuet Senior High School in Nanuet, NY, in June. During her four years of high school study, Anna was a model student, participating in high school athletics, school and community activities and working. Despite her busy schedule, she earned a 3.3 GPA.

Anna was the captain of the Nanuet Varsity Cheer Team, was a three-season athlete, plus an active member of the high school's Red Cross Club and Meals on Wheels program. She also volunteered in her spare time to assist in the Helen Hayes Hospital Adapted Sports, Spring Valley Hook & Ladder Fire Department and was a trainer for the Orangetown Patriots Pop Warner Cheerleading. As the captain of the varsity cheer team, she was recognized as an All-League Athlete and as the Most Improved Varsity Athlete. Not one to take a break, in her spare time Anna could be seen on the golf course as a member of the Nanuet Varsity Golf Team.

Anna also worked each weekend – Friday evenings, Saturdays and Sundays – in a variety of jobs from being a concession worker at the Nanuet Little League, to being an ice cream server at Lolas Ice Cream Korner and as a waitress and kitchen worker at Kwan Thai restaurant.

For her outstanding accomplishments, Anna received a 17th Artillery Regiment Association Scholarship for \$1,750. Her connection with the 17th Artillery Regiment Association is through her grandfather, Henry Dudek, who served with the 17th Artillery in Viet Nam in 1965 and 1966.



Anna Dudek has the honor of receiving a 17th Artillery Regiment Scholarship from her grandfather Henry (Hank) Dudek.

Amelia Dudek

Amelia Dudek rounds out the group of 17th Artillery granddaughters who earned scholarships this year. Amelia graduated from Clarkstown High School South in West Nyack, NY, in June. During her four years of high school study, Amelia was your typical busy and dedicated student, participating in high school athletics and working on the weekends.

Amelia excelled as a member of the cross-country, winter track and spring track teams for all four of her high school years. In indoor track, she proved to be a steady middle-distance runner as she participated in the 1000-meter run and the 4x800 meter relay. In outdoor track, she took part in the 800-meter run, the mile and 4x800 meter relay. For her exploits as an outstanding runner, she was selected All-League on several occasions. Her coach was very laudatory in praising her for her “strength, both internal and external, to be a champion. As a distance runner, she is able to go beyond the norm in practice and in competition.”

Amelia also worked in a restaurant on the weekends, making desserts and salads. She also did community service with the Stars and Stripes Club by participating in food drives for veterans.

For her outstanding accomplishments, Amelia received a 17th Artillery Regiment Association Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000. Her connection with the 17th Artillery Regiment Association is also through her grandfather, Henry Dudek.



Henry (Hank) Dudek has the privilege of presenting his granddaughter Amelia Dudek with a 17th Artillery Regiment Association Scholarship in the amount of \$1,000.

Just A Common Soldier

(A Soldier Died Today)

by A. Lawrence Vaincourt

He was getting old and paunchy and his hair was falling fast,
And he sat around the Legion, telling stories of the past.
Of a war that he had fought in and the deeds that he had done,
In his exploits with his buddies; they were heroes, everyone.

And tho' sometimes, to his neighbors, his tales became a joke,
All his Legion buddies listened, for they knew whereof he spoke.
But we'll hear his tales no longer for old Bill has passed away,
And the world's a little poorer, for a soldier died today.

He will not be mourned by many, just his children and his wife,
For he lived an ordinary and quite uneventful life.
Held a job and raised a family, quietly going his own way,
And the world won't note his passing, though a soldier died today.

When politicians leave this earth, their bodies lie in state,
While thousands note their passing and proclaim that they were great.
Papers tell their whole life stories, from the time that they were young,
But the passing of a soldier goes unnoticed and unsung.

Is the greatest contribution to the welfare of our land
A guy who breaks his promises and cons his fellow man?
Or the ordinary fellow who, in times of war and strife,
Goes off to serve his Country and offers up his life?

A politician's stipend and the style in which he lives
Are sometimes disproportionate to the service that he gives.
While the ordinary soldier, who offered up his all,
Is paid off with a medal and perhaps, a pension small.

It's so easy to forget them for it was so long ago,
That the old Bills of our Country went to battle, but we know
It was not the politicians, with their compromise and ploys,
Who won for us the freedom that our Country now enjoys.

Should you find yourself in danger, with your enemies at hand,
Would you want a politician with his ever-shifting stand?
Or would you prefer a soldier, who has sworn to defend
His home, his kin and Country and would fight until the end?

He was just a common soldier and his ranks are growing thin,
But his presence should remind us we may need his like again.
For when countries are in conflict, then we find the soldier's part
Is to clean up all the troubles that the politicians start.

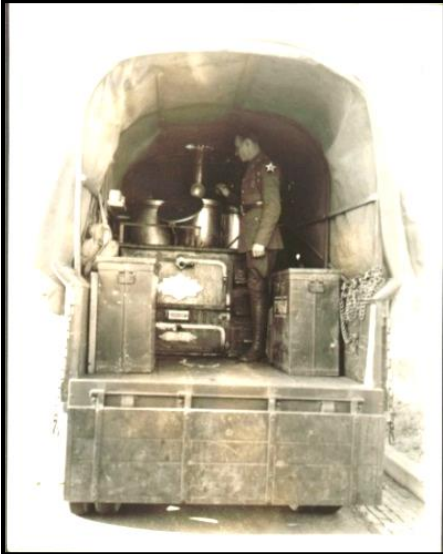
If we cannot do him honor while he's here to hear the praise,
Then at least let's give him homage at the ending of his days.
Perhaps just a simple headline in a paper that would say,
Our Country is in mourning, for a soldier died today.

Editor's Note: A member of the 17th Artillery Regiment Association submitted this poem for publication under the title of "Just A Common Soldier." After some research on the internet, we have permission from the author's son to print it in our newsletter. The son also provided the original text as his father wrote it.

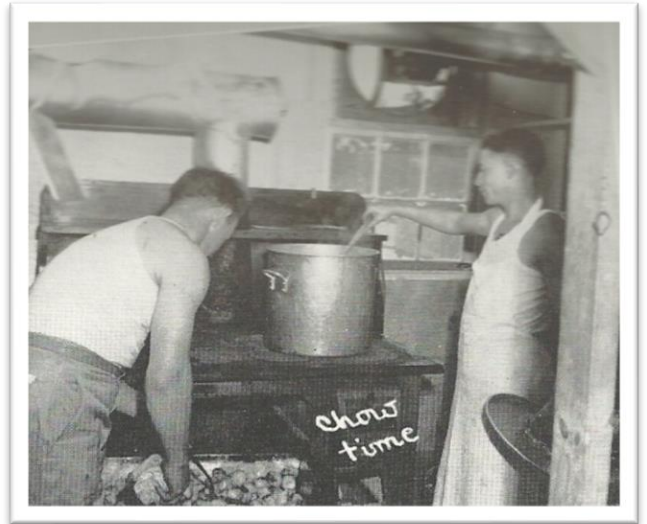
CHOW

By Thomas R. Kurtz, Historian

The two similar sayings -- “an army marches on its belly” and “an army marches on its stomach” -- are ascribed to two famous leaders. The first one is ascribed to Frederick the Great and the second one to Napoleon Bonaparte. The following pictures are from the files of the association reflecting “chow” time at different times and locations. We honor the mess sergeants, dining facility managers, cooks and food service specialists who have provided the chow to the artillerymen of the 17th Field Artillery Regiment since 1917.



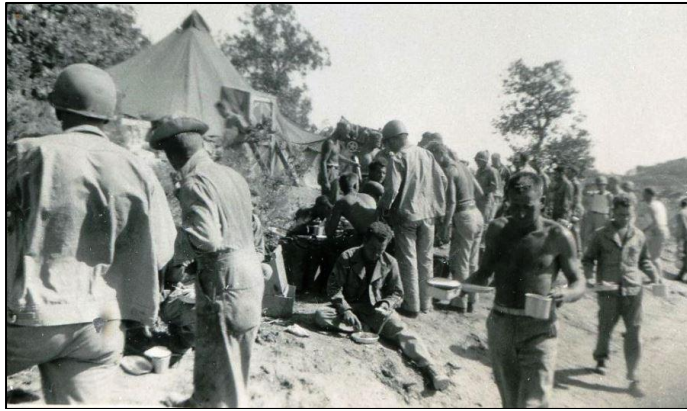
Signal Corps Photos 98220 – Kitchen truck for the light truck drawn battery. Light Truck Battery Test, Battery D, 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, on display in Washington, D.C. (1932).



17th Field Artillery Regiment, Mess Hall Kitchen, Fort Bragg, North Carolina (1941). Photo from the Regiments' Year Book, 1941.



Cooks and Bakers, Battery F, 1st Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, 13th Field Artillery Brigade, II Corps at Camp Blanding, Florida (1942). Pictures are courtesy of Ned Zuparko son of Private Edward Zuparko who served with Battery F during this time period. Photo on the left shows Edward in the second row, standing, second from the right. The photo on the right shows Edward second from the right. Edward served later as a cannoneer in Battery C.



Soldiers of Battery C, 1st Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, 13th Field Artillery Brigade, II Corps, in chow line, near Bone Cork Forest, Herbillion, Algeria (1943).



Unknown soldier from Battery C, 17th Field Artillery Battalion preparing his meal (Italy 1943).



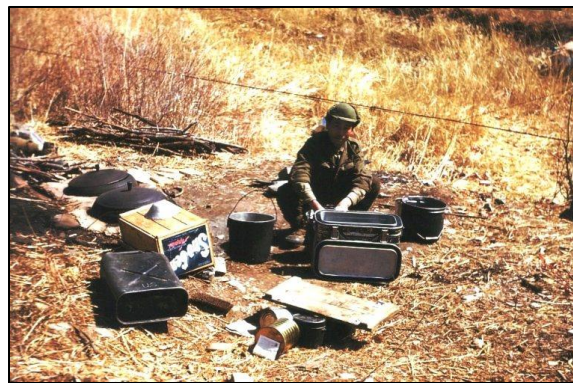
Chow line for Battery C, 17th Field Artillery Battalion (Italy 1943).



Another chow line, Battery C, 17th Field Artillery Battalion (Germany 1945).



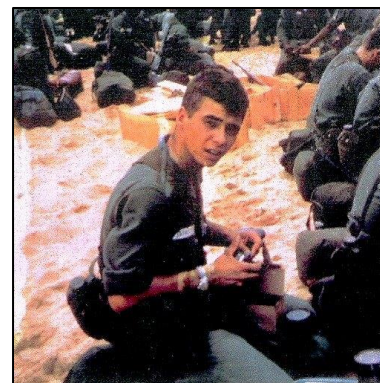
Battery A, 17th Field Artillery Battalion, unknown soldier on kitchen police (KP), Korea 1950



Battery A, 17th Field Artillery Battalion, Korean man on kitchen police (KP), Korea 1950



Battery C, 17th Field Artillery Battalion soldiers sitting next to mess tent (1952).



PFC Robert Platta, Battery C, 2nd Howitzer Battalion, 17th Artillery, eating his first meal of C-rations after landing on the beach at Quin Nhon, Vietnam (September 5, 1965).



Mess Section Battery C, 2nd Howitzer Battalion, 17th Artillery with battery on top of the north side of Mang Yang Pass, Vietnam (January 1966).



Mess sergeant and cooks of Headquarters Battery, 2nd Battalion, 17th artillery ready to serve Thanksgiving meal at Camp Radcliff (November 25, 1967).

Starting All Over, This Time with God!

Richard A. Smith-Chaplain

I hope all are well as of this writing. I don't know how many more Chaplain's Corner writings I'll be doing after this one (more on that further down), so I wanted to write one that touches *all* of us.

I've heard lots of people say, "I've done too many things to be forgiven." We all have. No one is without sin. "*All people have sinned and are far away from God's saving presence. (Romans 3:23)*" A woman was about to be stoned for committing adultery. Jesus, the son of God, told the people, "*Let he who is without sin cast the first stone.*" (Romans 8:7 NIV). The people gradually dropped their stones and walked away. Now, you pray for forgiveness for what you were about to do. See, none of us are perfect except the Son of God, Jesus!

What do I do to become a Christian and have eternal life? Now, you're starting all over with a new beginning! "*That if you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.*" (Romans 10:9 NIV) You must pray, confess your sins and ask for forgiveness.

Most of you reading this are like myself. We have fewer days in front of us than behind us. You only have two choices in eternity -- Heaven or Hell. (Read Luke 16:24 for one description of Hell.)

Finally, change your lifestyle to include praying daily and reading the New Testament, starting with the book of Matthew. Read a chapter, not a book, daily and reflect on what it says and what Jesus teaches and live by it. Remember -- the only person without sin is Jesus, the Son of God! If you'd like a free pocket copy of the New Testament, email or call me. Thanks to Bill Dahlin, I still have a few left.

SICKNESS: Harry Fetsick is at home now doing rehab after several months in the hospital and three surgeries for his knee.

Bill and Susan Dahlin both have had hospitalizations over the last two months. Bill has had another stint implanted and is dealing with an infection on his leg and ankle. Susan has had to have cancer surgery and is dealing with chemotherapy along with hiatal hernia issues.

PRAYERS NEEDED HERE: Norman and Annette Jones, Jack Stroud, Gene Johnson, Avery Hall, Tom Kurtz and Peggy Dages' daughter and family who had a house fire. Please keep these families in your prayers. Remember, calls, cards, emails and prayers go a long way!

DEATHS: None reported.

In closing, unfortunately Cathy and I will not be attending the reunion this year. We've been looking forward to this ever since the location was decided last fall. My pulmonary doctor has advised against my traveling to anything over 5,000 feet above sea level due to the lung disease I was diagnosed with in September 2022. I will "hopefully" be taking a leave of absence for just a few months due to health conditions. For 17 years I have been honored and proud to have held this position of chaplain. I hope, in one way or another, I have helped those who have come to me with sickness or deaths in their families, as well as shared prayer with you.

In the words of the late, great John Wayne, "The good Lord willing and the 'crick' don't rise," we will see you all next year at that reunion. Keep in touch.

Thank you all. God bless you.

Richard and Cathy Smith
Chaplain, 17th Artillery Regiment Association
(919) 995-2163 RSmith3024@nc.rr.com

Treasurer's Report

Richard Siebe-Treasurer

It has been a slow six months for the association. We have no new memberships and no new Life Members. George W. Winton donated \$1,000 to the Scholarship Fund. So far, we have received \$850 for the 2024 Reunion in Colorado Springs.

Currently we have \$14,672.75 in the association's General Fund and \$3,519.34 in the Scholarship Fund for a total of \$18,192.09 in bank.

I hope to see more of you at the reunion this year.

So It Seems

By Judy Dingman, Secretary/Editor

It sure seems like summer is here. If it is, that means the reunion of the 17th Artillery Regiment Association can't be to much further down the line. In fact, as I write this, we are exactly seven weeks from the date officers will be checking into the Hilton Garden Inn Colorado Springs. A good time awaits us!

Why do I like going to the reunions? Because I like the camaraderie of the group. Since I have an interest in history, I like hearing your stories about your time in Vietnam. I also like hearing your stories about where you live, where you grew up, etc. In fact, one day at last year's meeting in Savannah, I had planned to go out and be a tourist, although I had been in Savannah various time before. One by one, people began coming into the meeting room to visit. By midmorning I made the conscious decision to forego my foray into Savannah because I was enjoying myself visiting with people and hearing their stories.

I had the pleasure of getting a brief preview of our hotel when I was in the Colorado Springs area visiting my son and his family in May. The photo on page 2, shows the hotel as you would be approaching. You will see from the photo above what the view is as you stand in front of the hotel, just outside of the canopy at the front door. Yes, that's Pikes Peak! My local sources tell me the snow has mostly melted. I liked what I saw of my brief visit with the staff member. They were in the process of updating the breakfast area and planned to have it completed by July. Things were clean (even with long curtains of black plastic sealing the work area), it smelled fresh and the staff member was very friendly and courteous. I did not ask for a tour since I had just popped in and had found I was "in the neighborhood" only minutes before stopping.

So why was I visiting my family then rather than just waiting until August? Because my son is posted at Fort Carson and was going to be in a change of responsibility ceremony as he assumed his new rank of command sergeant major. This mom just doesn't miss things like that if at all possible! I got there a few days prior to the ceremony and was able to attend another ceremony, where he was "pinned" with the new rank and received the Order of St. Maurice, patron saint of the infantry.

Tom Kurtz's history story about "Chow" (pages 7-9) hit a chord with me. My father, Edwin Burris, told stories of being a cook in World War II in the Pacific Theater. I'm guessing, but I think this photo was taken early in his time of service from September 1942 to November 1945. I base that guess on a couple photos my mother and I were looking at one day. One was taken early in his time in the Army and the other later, but the aging in his face in that three-year time span was phenomenal. It gave more meaning to the term "War is Hell." He told stories of delivering food to the troops on the front line, spending nights in foxholes and upon his return to the kitchen, hearing his buddies say, "Burris, we didn't think you were going to make it back." He died when I was 21. It wasn't long after that when I realized I really did not know his story. Yes, he talked about things, noted when the calendar date corresponded with a major event he experienced, etc. In my youth, I had not asked for more of the stories, and by then it was too late. My advice to veterans is to be sure you tell your family your stories. Don't wait until it's too late.



Pikes Peak is visible from the parking lot (and some rooms) of the Hilton Garden Inn Colorado Springs.



*Command Sergeant Major
Eric E. Dingman*



Edwin Burris (right), a U.S. Army cook, is pictured some place in the Pacific Theater in World War II. The other men are unidentified.

Make Plans Now

By Judy Dingman, Editor

For those who want to get out and see some sights while in Colorado Springs and the surrounding area, there's a plethora of choices. Following is a list of sights and/or activities and the websites where you can find more information:

Colorado Springs (distance from hotel; time to drive)

- 4th Infantry Division Museum --
https://history.army.mil/museums/fieldMuseums/fortCarson_4thInfDiv/index.html -- (19 miles; 24 minutes)
- Air Force Academy Visitor Center -- <https://usafa.edu> -- (1.5 miles; 4 minutes)
- Peterson Air and Space Museum --
<https://petemuseum.org/draft-visitor-information/> --
BE SURE TO READ VISITOR ACCESS INFO -- (16 miles, 25 minutes)
- National Museum of World War II Aviation --
<https://www.worldwariaviation.org/> -- (14 miles; 25 minutes)
- Dragonman's Military Museum --
<https://dragonmans.com/military-museum-dragonmans-colorado-springs> -- 23 miles; 33 minutes
- Glen Eyrie Castle -- <https://gleneyrie.org/visit-us/> -- (10 miles; 17 minutes)
- Garden of the Gods Visitor Center --
<https://gardenofgods.com> -- (10 miles; 18 minutes)
- Cliff Dwellings -- <https://cliffdwellingsmuseum.com> -- (16 miles; 20 minutes)
- Cave of the Winds -- <https://caveofthewinds.comManitou> -- (17 miles; 23 minutes)

In Manitou Springs

- Manitou Springs -- offers eight naturally carbonated mineral springs available for tasting from artistic fonts. Each spring has a different taste. Cheers! --
<https://manitousprings.org/mineral-spring-water/> -- (16 miles; 22 minutes)
- Pikes Peak Cog Railway -- take the train and relax --
<https://www.cograilway.com/ride/purchase-tickets/> -- (18 miles; 25 minutes)
- Pikes Peak -- entry permits are required to drive to the summit -- <https://DrivePikesPeak.com> -- Don't forget your jacket; it could be a bit chilly at 14,115 feet above sea level. -- (40 miles; 1 hour, 14 minutes)

In Cañon City

- Royal Gorge Bridge and Park -- www.royalgorgebridge.com -- (69 miles; 1 hour, 26 minutes)
- The Winery at Holy Cross Abbey -- <https://abbeywiner.com> -- (55 miles; 1 hour, 5 minutes)
- Royal Gorge Route Railroad -- <https://RoyalGorgeRoute.com> -- view of the gorge from the bottom -- (57 miles; 1 hour, 10 minutes)



Glen Eyrie Castle was the home of the founder of Colorado Springs. It is open for tours, high tea, overnight stays and various events.

Photo by Judy Dingman



The Royal Gorge Railroad follows the Arkansas River for a scenic tour of the gorge from the bottom, while other tours are available from the top of the gorge.

Photo by Judy Dingman

The Blue Angels will be performing on August 16 and 17 at the Pikes Peak Regional Air Show at the Colorado Springs Airport. Visit <https://www.pprairshow.org/> for more information.

According to our contract, our hotel offers two days prior and two days after our reunion at our preferred rate.

A Tribute to Lieutenant John T. Wilkerson

The following recognition was in an email sent from Bill Dahlin (Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 17th Artillery) to his brother Dave Dahlin and Gil Bernabe (association president). While we always remember all of our Artillery comrades who perished on April 3, 1968, Bill gives special mention to First Lieutenant John Wilkerson because they worked together in the fire direction center.

Following is Bill's report on Wilkerson: *First Lieutenant Wilkerson had joined Battery C shortly before the VC sapper night attack on our 155mm Battery (Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 17th Artillery Regiment). On April 3, 1968, we were located five miles north of Qui Nhon near the South China Sea. He took my place (temporary assignment) as the battery fire direction officer (FDO) while I moved up to battery executive officer (EXO) while First Lieutenant Morris Boyd was on RR for a week. At the beginning of the sapper attack, 1/Lt Wilkerson was in the battery fire direction center (FDC) with the enlisted crew of about eight men when he was killed. Several other artillerymen were wounded.*

I was in or around the EXO's post (bunker) 25 to 50 yards away at the time fighting off sappers, coordinating resistance, including artillery fire, and aiding the battery medic in caring for and collecting and moving the wounded to a medivac helicopter. At the start of the battle, the battery commander, Captain George Williams, was wounded in the shoulder as we both faced a sapper in front of the XO's post. Captain Williams shot the sapper through the heart with his 30-caliber carbine. The sapper was shooting an AK-47 at us.



1/Lt John Terrell Wilkerson, a member of Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, was killed April 3, 1968, by the Viet Cong in a sapper attack.

Following is a commemoration posted by Tom Turpen on April 3, 2023, on Facebook on the 17th Field Artillery Regiment Veterans page: *Today, we commemorate the life of John T. Wilkerson who was killed on April 3, 1968, one of 46 killed on this day in 1968 while in the service of their country. We shall never forget any of you. Rest in peace, brothers.*

Wall Name: John T. Wilkerson. Date of Birth: 3/22/1946. Date of Casualty: 4/3/1968. Home of Record: Manchester. County of Record: Coffee County. State: Tennessee. Branch of Service: ARMY. Rank: 1LT. Panel/Line: 47E, 58. Casualty Province: BINH DINH.

One of 46 killed this day in 1968. Terrell is buried at Manchester City Cemetery in Manchester, TN. PH Terrell is the name he used growing up in Tennessee, not John.

Bill Dahlin's report continued: *C Battery had been placed in an untenable position on a brushy hillside with many gullies running around and through the position. The men received warnings about possible sapper attacks and did what they could to prepare for any eventuality. The fact the battery was not completely overrun speaks of their bravery and doing the best they could under near impossible circumstances -- having to making bricks without straw. I talked with him conversationally a few days before when he was in An Khe and he discussed the situation. He was one of the "good guys" for sure.*

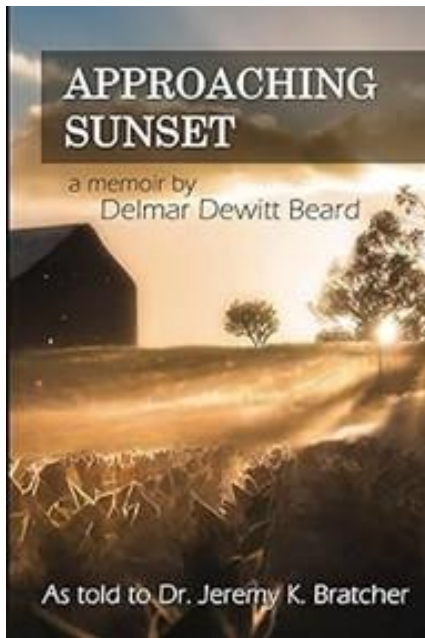
Charlie Battery, 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment

Who is Charlie Battery? The artillerymen were in Vietnam in 1968, 1969 and 1970.

Where were they stationed in Vietnam? They were at the following locations -- LZ Kyson-South near Qui Nhon, LZ Helen, LZ Annie, Special Forces Camp - Bu Prang.

When will they meet for a reunion? The group's biannual reunion is set for this July 26-28, in Grand Rapids, Michigan. For more information, call/text Jeff Wilcox at 616-581-9659, call 616-241-0907 or e-mail wilcox.j79@att.net.

CSM Beard Captures Many Unique Memories in His Biography



Command Sergeant Major Beard has made a successful effort to capture the many fantastic adventures that make up his 97 years on this earth.

His memoirs are recorded in his book, **Approaching Sunset: A Memoir Told by Delmar Beard to Dr. Jeremy K. Bratcher.**

CSM Beard will be attending the 2024 reunion of the 17th Artillery Regiment Association in Colorado Springs. He will bring many copies of his book, promises to autograph each book and will make a modest contribution to the 17th Artillery Scholarship Program from every book sale. So, bring your cash and be ready to purchase this outstanding memoir by one of our top soldiers.

Book Review

By Judy Dingman
Editor

Patience has not always been one of my virtues. Thus, one day last winter I was searching for something on the internet and stumbled across information that indicated Command Sergeant Major Delmar Beard had shared his memoirs with Dr. Jeremy K. Bratcher, who put those memories to print.

I anticipated being able to secure the book at the August reunion of the 17th Artillery Regiment Association, but I didn't want to wait that long to read it!

Approaching Sunset was delivered to my doorstep shortly after Sunday dinner. I sat down and began reading. By the end of the day, I had finished the book.

I found it interesting. I recalled hearing him tell some of those stories at previous reunions of the 17th ARA. I found it entertaining. Some parts I found sad. Other areas revealed different facets of the man.

I passed my copy on to my current favorite CSM – Eric E. Dingman, (Sorry, Delmar!) CSM Dingman had heard me mention CSM Beard over the past few years.

My recommendation: buy the book while you are at reunion and get the CSM to autograph it for you.

Maybe we should schedule some time for reading into the reunion schedule?

Receive “The Castle” by E-mail

To help defray the cost of postage and printing of the association's newsletter, please sign up to receive “The Castle” by e-mail.

To receive the electronic newsletter, notify the association's secretary, Judy Dingman at jdingman@centurytel.net with your current and correct e-mail 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.

Chairman Appreciates Committee's Help

Gil Bernabe, chairman of the 17th Artillery Regiment Scholarship Committee, extends a “BIG Thanks” to the scholarship evaluators who reviewed and judged each of this year's scholarship applications and scored each application accordingly.

Committee members included: Bill Dahlin, Brue LaTour, Mike Klingeman and Don Brooks.

Members help fund the Scholarship Fund by their purchases at the auction held annually at reunions and through direct donations. As a reminder to those attending this year's reunion in Colorado Springs, don't forget to bring you auction items!

(See a report on this year's scholarship recipients on pages 4-6.)

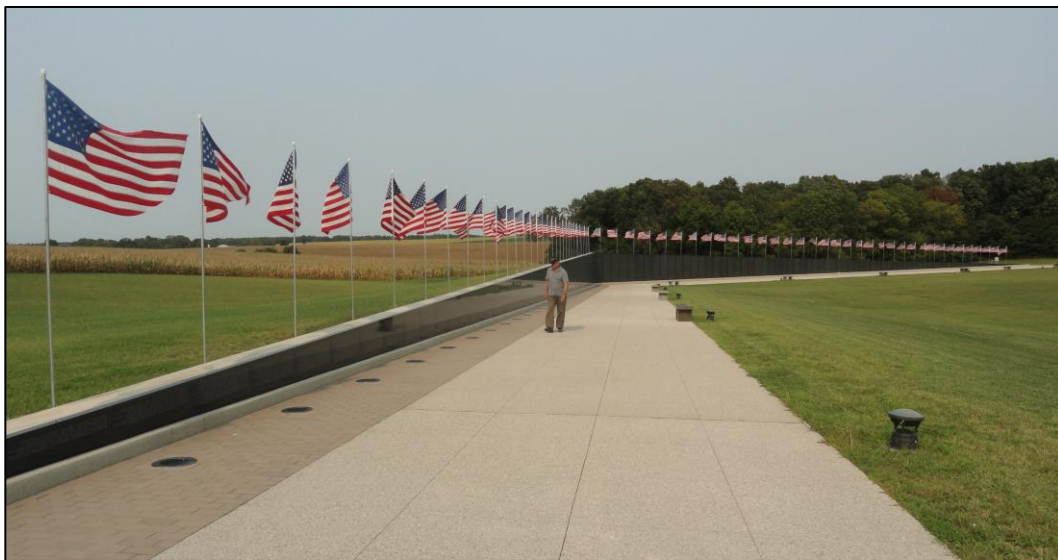
Memorial in Missouri Seems Familiar

By Judy Dingman

For some interesting surfing on the web, check out <https://mnvmfund.org/> to learn about Missouri's National Veterans Memorial. You will find the design of the memorial very familiar.

On that site, you can learn how one soldier made good on a promise he made while in Vietnam. His promise came to fruition in the farmland of southeast Missouri in a county bordering the Mississippi River.

To get a tour without leaving your armchair, visit <https://mnvmfund.org/virtual-experience>.



One veteran makes his way around the memorial looking for a name. Missouri's National Veterans Memorial in Perryville is identical in size and detail to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Except here, you have the peace and quietness of the farming area and far fewer people to interrupt your reverie.

Photo by Judy Dingman

Members' Suggestions Are Welcome

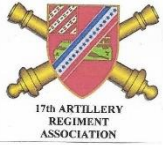
Members and readers of *The Castle* are welcome to make suggestions regarding the newsletter. Likewise, any suggestions you have regarding locations for reunions are welcome. Feel free to send your suggestions to: Judy Dingman, editor, at jdingman@centurytel.net. Suggestions will be shared with officers as appropriate and required.

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 (Leave of Absence)	Chaplain
Tom Kurtz	Historian
Richard & Phyllis Flowers	Quartermasters
Edward (Ed) Hitchner	Webmaster
Gil Bernabe	Scholarship Chairman

Newsletter has been approved by the Board of Directors.

Gil Bernabe
President, 17th Artillery Regiment Association
www/17thartilleryregiment.org



Judy Dingman
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Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) September 18, 2007, Soldiers of the 2nd Battalion, 17th Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division on patrol southwest of Baghdad, Iraq.

17th ARTILLERY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER
THE CASTLE