



## Veterans Day Wreath Laying

## 34th Infantry Division GWOT History Book Announced



### U.S. Cemetery at Tunis, Tunisia

This photo shows the wreath which was presented by the 34th ID Association at the Tunis American Cemetery in Tunisia on Veterans Day, November 11, 2015. The 34th Infantry Division has remembered or fallen comrades at three American Battlefield Monuments Commission Cemeteries in Tunisia, North Africa, Sicily - Rome and the Florence American Cemetery on Memorial Day and Veterans Day for the past 68 years. The 34th Inf Div wreath is on the right. Wreaths are also placed at the MN and IA Veteran Cemeteries.



Mr. Brian Leehan and COL (Ret) Russ Bierl, Secretary of the 34th Infantry Division Association, met on November 25th, 2015 to coordinate the final details of the contract for the new "34th Infantry Division Global War on Terror" book. Brian has been hired by the 34th Infantry Division Assn. to work with soldiers in Minnesota and Iowa to write a chronological history of the 34th Infantry Division and units who were mobilized and served during that period. It is hoped the book will be completed and published by the Spring of 2017.

Brian Leehan is a graduate of the University of Minnesota, with a degree in Journalism. He has written a 230 page book on the 1st Minnesota (2-135th Infantry) in the Civil War. The book titled, "Pale Horse at Plumb Run," covers the strategic part in the battle which the 1st Minnesota it played in the Union Victory in the Battle of Gettysburg. It is hoped the GWOT book will be similar to the WWII 34th Infantry Division History which was over 100 pages in length and the size of a High School Annual. The book will include a memorial section for those soldiers who died during the GWOT while in service to their country. We will offer the book for sale as a modest price when it is published.

The new 34th Infantry Division GWOT History book was made possible by a generous donation from a enlisted soldier from SE Iowa who was mobilized with the 133rd Infantry Regiment for WWII and served during the entire North African and Italian campaigns. After the war he again joined the Iowa National Guard and served in the 34th Infantry Division until his 60th birthday. 1SGT John Jackson is still enjoying life at 101 years of age at his home in Fairfield, Iowa. Thank You!

### New Book on WWII Doctor's Story

Sandra Paulus Buch has published a book about her father which contains the letters he sent home to his wife during the war. Major Edward W. Paulus, from Iowa City, IA was assigned as the Commander of the 109th Medical Battalion, 34th Infantry Division, during the War.



This is the personal, wartime diary of E.W. Paulus, M.D., a day-by-day chronicle of his WWII military experience from January 1, 1942 through October 19, 1945. It covers his early days at Camp Claiborne, Louisiana, and Fort Dix, New Jersey; to Northern Ireland, where he underwent intensive training for ten months; to his participation as commander of the 109th Medical Battalion through four campaigns: Tunisia, Naples-Loggia, Rome-Arno, and North Apennines. The title of the book is "Mud, Mountains and Medicine," a WWII diary of E.W. Paulus, MD. The book is available from Amazon.com for \$19.95.

Hello RED BULL TEAM!

Happy New Year! I hope this letter finds you all well and having had a good holiday season. The Association has made some significant progress since the last letter which, I will further explain in this message. We must continue to ensure our purpose, our history, and the future of the organization is maintained.

We have settled on 14-15 October for next year's reunion at the Stoney Creek Inn, in Des Moines, Iowa. Although October is a busy month we would love to see you there. For those who will attend next year's reunion, I would like to challenge you to invite someone who is a current or former member of the 34<sup>th</sup> Division to join us. So mark your calendars to join us.

We are fostering the renewed establishment of more local Chapters. We congratulate the Mankato Minnesota and the Commanders Own Chapters in MN for their continued success. In areas such as Council Bluffs the Chapter is beginning to add new members and establish meetings. The current and past 133rd Infantry in Waterloo is reenergizing the Chapter as well, thanks to CW5 Marv Peters. Dubuque is begin the work of putting together a team and get a Chapter established. This is great news and outstanding progress.

The Association made a historic vote and put into action the writing of Global War on Terrorism,( GWOT) (2001-2015) history book on the units of the 34<sup>th</sup> ID. The book should be completed by next fall/spring. It will be written by Mr. Brian Leehan who authored the book Pale Horse at Plum Run: The First Minnesota at Gettysburg. This is extremely exciting news and I want to thank Russ Bierl and everyone involved for the work to get this started.

ATTACK!

LTC Tim Sulzner  
34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association President  
timothy.j.sulzner.mil@mail.mil



### 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Final Roll Call

#### Names Winter 2016

Bernard F. Brosky, 1-168 Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Fred Iovanela, E 135<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Calvin Nading, F 133<sup>rd</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Douglas M. Dickerson, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Joseph McFarland, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Tamotsu Akiyoshi, B 100<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Arthur Seinoshin Kurahara, D 100<sup>th</sup> Inf 34<sup>th</sup>  
Shinsuke Shimabukuro, HQ 100<sup>th</sup> Inf 34<sup>th</sup>  
Naoki Takamura, A 100<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Raymond Rudolph, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Arnold L. Crable, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Roger C. Haring, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
John Kelly, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Daniel Kishter, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Rudy Monsaas, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Phillip Saladino, A 133<sup>rd</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
George Zakel, HQ 133<sup>rd</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Leigh Davis, 1-168<sup>th</sup>, 34<sup>th</sup> ID

#### Names Fall 2015 Newsletter

Charles D. Nelson, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Bernard E. Nystrom, 185<sup>th</sup> FA, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Morris Rosenberg, HQ, 168<sup>th</sup> In, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Kaoru "K" Matsumura, C 100<sup>th</sup> In, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Hiroshi "Joe Stone" Matsunami, A 100<sup>th</sup> Inf  
Fred Toshimori Takahashi, HQ 100<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup>  
Raymond Kunio Iwamoto, F/C 100<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup>  
Hideo Ueno, HQ 100<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Martin J. Tohara, D 100<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Donald S. Rogers, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Edwin L. Hlavka, B 135<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Richard L. Holmes, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Carl L. Montello, 133<sup>rd</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Dr. Kermit Laidig, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Kakuichi Shimabukuro, C100<sup>th</sup> In 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Masao Mas Takahashi C100<sup>th</sup> In 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Thomas Hiroshi Ibaraki, A100<sup>th</sup> Inf 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Robert Tomiya Sato, A 100<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Stanley Seiji Ushijima, HQ 100<sup>th</sup> In, 34<sup>th</sup> ID  
Fred Shunso Kurisu, B 100<sup>th</sup> Inf, 34<sup>th</sup> ID

*May they have no  
more hills to climb,  
nor cold, nor rain, nor mud,  
nor enemy fire,  
and may they now rest in Peace.*

#### **National Office-34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association**

Iowa Gold Star Museum, Camp Dodge - Bldg 3692,  
7105 NW 70<sup>TH</sup> Ave, Johnston, IA 50131  
**Secretary: COL (Ret) Russ Bierl** E-mail: bierlhome@msn.com  
Association Website <http://www.34ida.org>  
Archival & Original Website [www.34infdiv.org](http://www.34infdiv.org)  
**69<sup>th</sup> Reunion** 14-15 October 2016, Johnston, IA

**Treasurer: LTC (Ret) Mike Musel** 515-252-4531  
Email: [michael.musel@iowa.gov](mailto:michael.musel@iowa.gov) Gold Star Museum  
**Senior Historian & Archivist: Pat Skelly** 508-524-3948  
E-mail: [skelly@milhist.net](mailto:skelly@milhist.net)  
**Facebook Webmasters: Ashlee Sherril, Herman Poggensee**  
**WEB Site Manager: MSG Daniel Ewer** [sgtdaniel@aol.com](mailto:sgtdaniel@aol.com)

**Facebook 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn:** <https://www.facebook.com/34InfDivAssoc>  
**Internet 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn:** <http://www.34ida.org>  
Also, follow the 2-34th Red Bulls at! <http://www.dvidshub.net/units/2-34IBCT> <http://www.twitter.com/IowaRedBulls>  
<http://www.flickr.com/IowaRedBulls>  
**1<sup>st</sup> BCT:** <http://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaRedBulls>  
**2<sup>nd</sup> BCT:** <http://www.facebook.com/IowaRedBulls>

## Des Moines Chapter News

MEETING DATE	SPEAKER/MEETING	DINNER / EVENT
Jan, Feb, Mar 2016	NO Meetings	Happy New Year
April 19, 2016	Meeting	Speaker _____ Meal:
May 2016	NO Meeting	Memorial Day Celebration
June 14, 2016	Meeting	Speaker _____ Meal:
July 2016	NO Meeting	Happy Independence Day
Aug 16, 2016	Meeting	Membership Night Meal:
Sept 20, 2016	Meeting	(DuesNight) Speaker Bierl/ Albrecht Meal:
Oct 14-15, 2016	National Reunion	34 Inf Div Assn, Johnston, IA
Nov 15, 2016	Meeting	Election Officers Free Beverages Meal:
Dec 2016	NO Meeting	Merry Christmas

Chapter Dues (\$5) & National Dues (\$10) are due on 1 Sept each year.  
 President: Ronald "Curly" Albrecht 319-830-9027 [pantherfansforlife@gmail.com](mailto:pantherfansforlife@gmail.com)  
 Vice President: Jerry Jensen 515-278-5704 [ajjmjensen@q.com](mailto:ajjmjensen@q.com)



### Commanders Own Chapter, Twin Cities Area Meetings scheduled at the Rosemount VFW

MAJ Kristen Augé  
 34<sup>th</sup> ID Assn, Commanders Own Chapter  
 13865 South Robert Trail, Rosemount, MN 55068

### Waterloo & Cedar Rapids Chapter News

CW5 (Ret) Marv Peters is heading up the Waterloo and Cedar Rapids Chapter of the Association. Schedule TBD.  
 Marv's email address is [marvpeters@southslope.net](mailto:marvpeters@southslope.net)

### Council Bluffs Chapter News.

Lunch Meeting 1st Monday of every Month  
 CSM ( Ret) Bob Wege  
[csmbob@msn.com](mailto:csmbob@msn.com)

### 1st Minnesota Chapter, 34th Inf Div Association

It is with sad but proud hearts, that we remember Sgt Nicholas Turcotte this month. FEB 17, 1983-DEC 4th, 2006. Killed in Iraq. Company A, 2-135 Infantry. "Rest in Peace soldier."

It has been a busy year for the 1<sup>st</sup> Minnesota Chapter and we are grateful for all the support. As yearly memberships come due we would ask that every member continue to support us and help grow the Chapter.

Companies of the Regiment spent December enjoying great comradery during formal dining outs. December also saw the Change of Commands for HHC 2-135 IN as CPT Adam Stock transferred Command to CPT Jeremy Mollinger and Cpt Michael Rose transferred Command of C 2-135 IN to Cpt Adam Stock.

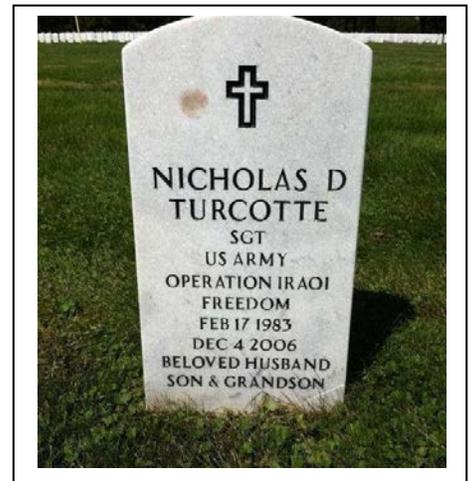
As many of our Minnesota members are aware, there is currently a debate at the State Capitol about the display of historic paintings representing the history of Minnesota's Citizen Soldiers, one of which is the Charge of the First Minnesota at Gettysburg. We are asking all members to contact their State Representatives and Governor Dayton to request that these and other historic artifacts continue to be displayed in prominent places at the State Capitol. As an Association that holds honoring and preserving the heritage of our Regiments and the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division as one of our tenets, we owe it to those who went before us to always remember the sacrifice of our comrades. A special thank you to Representative John Lesch, and current chapter member, for the letter he has already written to Governor Dayton.

Lastly we are wishing every member of our armed forces a Happy, Healthy, and Safe holiday season.

### First Minnesota- 2-135th Chapter News

#### Mankato Minnesota

CSM Chris Stroner 651-783-2838  
[cstroner@hotmail.com](mailto:cstroner@hotmail.com)

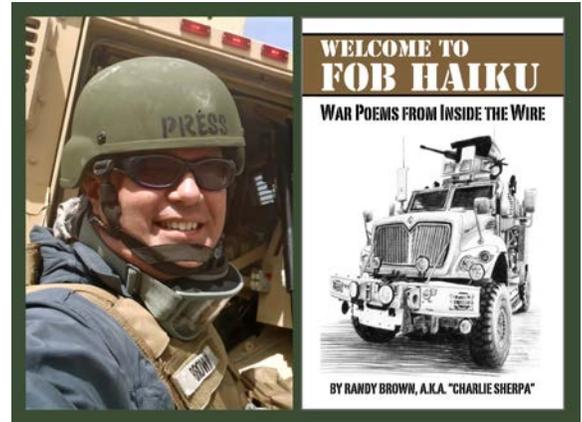


## 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Assn. Officers



## Randy Brown "AKA" Charlie Sherpa" - Military Poems

President	LTC Tim Sulzner
1st Vice President	MAJ Randall Stanford
2nd VP	MAJ Jacob Helgestad
1 Year Trustees	Hermann Poggensee LTC Scott Keeley BG Ben Corell SSG Tanner Johnson
2 Year Trustees	SFC James Sherril Dr. Chris White Daniel Ewer Ken Andresen
3 Year Trustees	Mark Zirkelbach CSM Chris Stroner 1Lt TrentWhitcomb CSM Willie Adams
Secretary	Russell Bierl
Treasurer	Michael Musel
Information Officer	MSG Ashlee Sherril
SGT at Arms	Jim Berg
Web Site Mgr	MSG Daniel Ewer
Sr. Historian	Pat Skelly
Chaplain	1LT Nathan Perry



Retired Red Bull soldier, Captain Randy Brown, has published a book of poems about some of the experiences he had while serving 20 years in the 34<sup>th</sup> ID, 2nd Infantry Brigade Combat Team. The book, "Welcome to FOB Haiku," is written in a Japanese style of poetry called Haiku.

According to critic Tom Ricks, from the Best Defense Blog, "Brown has a good ear for military life, especially for what is significant and how it is conveyed, some- times in subtle ways." He writes about Basic Training, Army Chow, Road Marches and even his former officers, to include his Brigade Commander.

After Randy retired from the Iowa National Guard, he deployed to Afghanistan as an embedded freelance writer with the 2/ IBCT.

Another author, Mr. Eric Chandler stated about Randy, "Sherpa does a great job blending the world of combat with the civilian world back home. He's good at contrasting the foreign with the familiar.

For an updated list and links to the various places one can purchase a print or e-book edition of "FOB Haiku," visit: [www.FOBHaiku.com](http://www.FOBHaiku.com). Copies are available via Amazon and Barnes and Noble. Thank you Randy for the copy for the 34th ID Assn.

## 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association Internet and Facebook Sites

We ask that all members and friends of the 34th Infantry Division view our Web Site and Face Book pages for information updates.

The 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association thanks Ashlee Sherrill, 34<sup>th</sup> Div HQ's and CW5 (Ret) Herman Poggensee for continued updates to the Face Book pages.

The URL for the 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn. national page is: [www.facebook.com/34InfDivAssoc](http://www.facebook.com/34InfDivAssoc)

The URL for the Des Moines Chapter 34<sup>th</sup> ID page is: [www.facebook.com/34IDAssocDesMoinesChapter](http://www.facebook.com/34IDAssocDesMoinesChapter)

The URL for the Minnesota Cmdr's Own Chapter is [www.facebook.com/commandersownredbullassociation](http://www.facebook.com/commandersownredbullassociation)

We encourage all Red Bull Soldiers who have a Face - book account to log on and share their stories with friends who share their common interests.

MSG Daniel Ewer is Website Manager for the Association Web Site, [34IDA.org](http://34IDA.org) Please send us documents to post on this site. We will be asking for input in the proposed book to be written this coming year, The 34th Inf Div in the GWOT.

The Web Site for the actual MTOE 34th Inf Div is: [www.MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/34id/](http://www.MinnesotaNationalGuard.org/34id/)

Pat Skelly, the Association Senior Historian and Archivist continues to make archival posts at the site: <http://www.34infdiv.org>

Pat is well respected for his detailed work has done much to bring together WWII and War on Terror archive documents for veterans.

## Purpose of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry

### Division Association (Short Version)

- Maintain association with our comrades with whom we served in the 34th Infantry Division.
- Maintain and honor the memory of those who died in action and remember all of us who pass later.
- Gather and maintain the History of the Organizations, Units and Soldiers of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.
- Support our "Wounded Warriors" who have faithfully served our nation.

This article is a extract from the 22 December 1944, Yank Magazine

It gives the reader the thoughts of the infantry soldier while in combat, the day to day ideas of food and equipment, and the tremendous personal turnover of a Infantry Battalion in the 34th Infantry Division during the Italian campaign of World War II.

### 1-133rd Infantry "Iron-Man Battalion" by Sgt Joe McCarthy,

WITH THE FIFTH ARMY IN ITALY - Most of us were still waiting for our first notice from the draft board on the day that Pvt. Milburn H. Henke of Hutchinson, Minn., walked down the gangplank at Belfast, Ireland, wearing a new helmet, blouse, necktie, regulation full field pack, M1, gas mask, and canvas leggings, and posed on the dock, smiling, for pictures that later appeared in practically every newspaper in the U.S. The date was January 26, 1942. Henke was the center of so much attention because he was the first American combat infantry soldier in this war to set foot on European soil.

Henke is back in the States now, reclassified as limited service, with an excellent combat record in Tunisia where he served as communications sergeant in a rifle company and won the Silver Star. But his old outfit, the 1st Battalion of the 133d Infantry, in the veteran 34th "Red Bull" Division is still here, finishing its third year overseas and sweating out its third straight winter in the front lines.

Only a few of the original GIs who landed with Henke in Belfast are left now - less than 60 out of the whole battalion. In Henke's old company, Baker Company, there are seven. They have more overseas time than any infantrymen in Europe today because the 1st Battalion arrived in Belfast a couple of weeks ahead of the other early infantry units in that first American Expeditionary Force. If they were shown now the pictures that were taken on the dock, they would have a hard time recognizing themselves. They have almost forgotten what blouses, neckties, gas masks, and canvas leggings look like. Few, if any, infantrymen in any theater of operations have seen more combat than they have been through in the last two years. The battalion fought the entire Tunisian campaign, including Hill 609, and it has been in the line in Italy since late September, 1943, with only one rest period that lasted more than a month.

As a matter of fact, you can get some idea of the terrific physical and mental strain of the Italian campaign by comparing the amount of time this battalion has been able to rest in the past 15 months with the amount of time it has spent in the line during the same period.

The battalion landed at Salerno two weeks after D-Day and took over a sector from the 45th Division on Sept. 27, 1943. Its men did not get a chance to relax from that day until the day after Thanksgiving when they were relieved by the French and brought back to Castelnuovo for two weeks rest. During those two months of combat, which included two bloody crossings of the Volturno and the taking of Ashcan Hill at Santa Maria de Oliveto, they had only one week, in October, out of the line. That week could hardly be called a week of rest because they spent it in an area where they were shelled by German artillery every day.

They moved up front again on Dec. 11 and stayed there until Feb. 22 when they were pulled out of the Cassino sector and given 21 days off to prepare for a move to Anzio. During this long, uninterrupted stretch of fighting in bitterly cold winter weather, the battalion made five attempts to cross the Rapido River.

The battalion landed at Anzio on March 25. It did not get another rest until June 8, a few days after it had advanced on Tarquinia, 18 miles ahead of the Fifth Army with no protection on its flanks, and completely wiped out a whole German bicycle battalion.

"We made our first contact with them a little after midnight," Pfc. John F. Weidler of Wichita Falls, Tex., one of the battalion headquarters men, was saying recently. "By 4 o'clock the next afternoon it was all over. That next night every man in our battalion had his own bicycle."

They were relieved 24 hours later by a battalion from a new American infantry division which had just arrived from the States.

"I think it was the only time I ever saw a whole outfit with fixed bayonets," S/Sgt. Ned Levinson of the Bronx, N.Y. says. "There wasn't a German within miles of us. But these guys came up at night in trucks with everyone of them carrying his rifle at port arms with the bayonets fixed on every gun. And not a German within miles. Damndest sight I'd ever seen."

A little more than two weeks later, on June 25, the battalion was back on the line at San Vincenzo. Then came the tough battles at Cecina and Mount Maggiore. At the end of July the battalion went on the first real vacation it had enjoyed in Italy - six weeks at a beach resort on the coast below Leghorn [Livorno].

"It did us a lot of good," one of the officers says. "We came out of there pepped up and in the best of spirits. If it hadn't been for those six weeks on the beach last summer, I don't think we could have taken what we went through in September and October."

On Sept. 10, the battalion moved north from Florence and plunged into the hardest fighting over the most difficult terrain they seen overseas. Slugging their way up the steep ridges of the Gothic Line, they found an enemy who was resisting as strongly as he did at Cassino and Anzio. They had six days out of the line at the end of the month. Then they went back for six more weeks. Early in November, when the advance had slowed to stop in the rain and mud before Bologna, the battalion hiked out of the mountains at night, climbed into trucks and drove to a rest camp west of Florence for 10 days of peace and quiet.

When you figure it out, the battalion has had about 16 weeks of rest in the last 15 months.

Adding this long stretch of Italian combat to the battalion's time at the Tunisian front, you get something like 350 days of line service. [The division's combat service at war's end, 2 May 45, was 516 days.] And 76 Bronze Stars, 64 Silver Stars, nine Legions of Merit, and 17 Distinguished Service Crosses. (When the Fifth Army announced on the first anniversary of Salerno that it had awarded 201 DSCs, the battalion had 16 of them.) The battalion also had one Congressional Medal of Honor, awarded posthumously to Pvt. Robert D. Booker of Callaway, Neb., who was killed April 9, 1943, at Fondouk when he was making a single-handed attack across 200 yards of open-ground on two enemy machine guns and a mortar position. "With his last remaining strength," the citation says, "he encouraged members of his own squad and directed their fire."

The 34th Division was an Iowa-Minnesota-Dakotas National Guard outfit when it went into active duty at Camp Claiborne, La., in February, 1941. Later that year, while the Army was still wearing dark-blue fatigues and old flat-topped World War I helmets, the 34th was streamlined from a four-regiment square division to a three-regiment triangular one. The Dakota regiment, the 164th, was lopped off and sent first to the West Coast and then to the South Pacific where it later became famous at Guadalcanal and Bougainville as part of the Americal Division.

That left the 34th almost exclusively a division of soldiers from Iowa and Minnesota. Two of the regiments, the 133d and 168th Infantries, were Iowa National Guard outfits. The other regiment, the 135th Infantry, was from Minnesota. Two of the divisional artillery battalions were from Minnesota, the other one was from Iowa.

In the 1st Battalion of the 133d, A Company was a National Guard unit from Dubuque and most of the boys in Baker and Dog Companies were from Waterloo. Charlie Company was organized by men from Cedar Rapids. After they moved away from home to start their training at Claiborne, the draftees arrived in the battalion area, it turned out that 75 percent of them were from Iowa.

The battalion was still an Iowa outfit in Ireland, in North Africa and in Italy until it moved into the Cassino sector. Then it began to change. The familiar Iowa faces of the original National Guardsmen and the early draftees started to disappear. A lot of them were killed; others, with what the boys enviously called "million dollar wounds," didn't come back from the hospital. When the battalion embarked for Anzio, it was almost a new outfit. And later when it pushed north from Rome to the Gothic Line, most of the remaining old men went home to Iowa on rotation or "TD" Temporary Duty.

The few GIs left now who have been with the battalion since the beginning are, for the most part, clerks, cooks, truck drivers and cannon company men - the soldiers in the Infantry who get the low priority on rotation because, compared to the riflemen and machine-gunners, they have a somewhat lower priority on death. Most of the cooks, truck drivers and cannon company men in this battalion, however, have Purple Hearts. When it gets rough, they work up forward as litter bearers and face as much danger as anybody else. But that doesn't show up on their service records.

And probably because rotation and TD are worked on an alphabetic basis, most of the Jan. 26 men in the battalion seem to have last names beginning with "S" and other low letters. There is, for instance, S/Sgt. Everall Schnobrich of Casey, Iowa, from the Dog Company mortar platoon; S/Sgt. Jerry Snoble of Hazleton, Iowa, supply sergeant of Charlie Company who served in a rifle platoon before he was wounded in Tunisia; S/Sgt. Stanley Setka of Raceville, Iowa, an anti-tank squad leader; and T-5 Raymond E. Snokenson of Gurney Center, Iowa, acting mess sergeant in Baker Company. There were 22 men from Gurney Center back at Claiborne. Snokenson is the only one left.

And only two of the Waterloo men who formed almost two full companies of the original National guard battalion are still here. They are S/Sgt. Max Shepherd, whose father, Major Lloyd H. Shepherd used to be battalion commander, and Pvt. Ralph Loy, who has one more of those very important combat stars on his theater ribbon than anyone else in the battalion. Loy was transferred to the 3d Division after Tunisia, went through the Sicilian campaign and then managed to get back into his old Iowa battalion when it was leaving for Italy. "The adjutant fixed me up," he says. "He and I were old friends. He court-martialed me one time in Ireland."

Although the battalion is now composed of soldiers from practically every state in the Union, the old Iowa men still have great pride in their outfit. They will argue for hours to prove that their battalion entered a certain town last July three hours ahead of one of the other 133d Infantry battalions. They are sore because the recent official account of the advance to Rome gives the [Canadian-American] 1st Special Service Force credit for taking Highway 7 and the railway line during the breakthrough from Anzio. "We passed through the Special Service Force there on the night of May 24 and attacked the next morning," they say. "Charlie Company did most of the job and cleaned it up in two hours."

Just as they think their battalion is the best in the regiment, they also consider the 133d the best regiment in the division. They have a deep respect for the 3d and 45th Divisions, which shared their hardships in Italy before moving on to Southern France, but they don't feel that any division in the U.S. Army can quite measure up to the 34th. In a rest town recently, one of their officers noticed a GI, loaded with cognac, passing out on the street in front of his CP [Command Post]. He asked a couple of his men to pick the soldier up and put him under cover. When they started to lift him from the sidewalk, one of them noticed he was wearing the shoulder patch of another division. Without a moment's hesitation, they dropped him back on the

sidewalk and walked away brushing their hands gingerly. It took the officer quite a while to convince them that it was their duty to take care of the drunk, even though he wasn't a member of the 34th.

The pride in their outfit, and the personal pride of each man, who knows the silent contempt that veteran GIs feel for those who turn in stragglers or awols without good reason, keeps the battalion going at times when the demands made upon them seem to be more than a human being can take. These demands are made often in the Italian campaign.

"Sometimes, the men will gripe about going out on a tough patrol," one of the officers says. "They'll curse the war, curse the people back home, the government and the Army that sent them here and the higher command that is making them do this insane thing. But all the time they are cursing, they are putting on their equipment. Then, when they are loaded down with grenades and ammo and when they have given their BAR or Tommy Gun a last check, they'll stop cursing and turn on somebody and say, 'Well, what the hell are you waiting for? Let's go.'

"Times like that when they're griping, it's not so bad. The worst times are when they don't say anything at all. The phone rings in the CP and the battalion tells you what to do. You know that it has been bad for the past three weeks and that every man has been through about as much as he can stand. But you have to call in the platoon leader and his sergeant and say to them, 'Look, we got to do this job tonight.' The platoon leader just nods. Maybe he says, 'O.K. Got a map?' But not much more. He listens and he says to his sergeant, 'Get soandso and soandso and tell them we are going out tonight.' That's all. They get ready to go and nobody says anything because they know if they start talking about it, they'll probably break down and start to cry. Jesus, it tears you all to pieces inside."

When you talk with the men in the battalion about the war in Italy and ask them why it has been so slow and tough, they give you straight and simple answers that make more sense than most of the profound comments that military experts have written on the subject. For instance, they don't go back into the terrain of the Po Valley or the industrial centers of Milan or Turin to explain why the Germans are putting up stiff resistance on this front.

"Listen," they say. "The Jerry has got all that stuff piled up here. He can't take it with him and he doesn't want to leave it for us. So he is staying here until he uses it up, just like any smart guy would do. You can tell that's the way he is thinking from the amount of artillery he's throwing at us. It's as bad as Anzio." They feel that GIs in the rear echelon and the people at home do not understand the number of Germans they are facing.

"This may be a forgotten front and all that, but we had 10 battalions against our division last month. It may be forgotten by us, but it's not forgotten by the Germans. We captured a Jerry payroll a while back. It showed a decision with a strength of 10,300 men. That is a pretty good sized division these days in any Army," they will tell you.

The terrain? "Miles on the map here don't mean anything. They may tell you to advance to a point three miles away. But by the time you get there, up and down ridges and around chasms, zigzagging up the sides of mountains, you will cover eight or nine miles. The squad on your right may be within talking distance. But there is a canyon dropping down between you and them. If you want to get to them, you have to walk a half mile to the rear and then a half mile forward again on their side of the canyon. I heard about a captain, a company commander in the 168th, not far from us. On pay day he covered 72 miles paying off the men in his platoons without going outside his own company area."

Despite the ample German supplies and men and the difficult terrain on the Fifth Army front, the GIs in the battalion think that the Allies could have been more successful here if they had been able to attack the Gothic Line in more depth. "That's been our trouble ever since we've been in Italy," they

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say. "When we take a position or make a breakthrough, we never seem to have enough fresh troops behind us to really make something out of the gain. We have to stop and there's nobody to follow us up and keep on pushing."

They don't blame the command for this lack of depth. "If the command hasn't got enough troops to give us strong supporting forces, it isn't their fault," they say. The older men in the battalion and the veteran officers, like Capt. Richard Wilkinson of Toano, Va., who missed only 15 days of Charlie Company's combat until he was transferred recently to battalion headquarters, have seen a lot of changes in the Army's methods during the two years they have been in action. Most of the changes, they feel, have been for the better.

"Take the handling of replacements," Capt. Wilkinson says. "We used to get our replacements sent to us when we were on the line. Sometimes they'd come up at night, a couple of hours before we were due to make a combat patrol. Their platoon sergeant wouldn't even have a chance to talk to them before they went out. He wouldn't even know their names or what they looked like. Now it's being done more sensibly. We take them when we're out of the line or in a quiet sector where we can have a chance to find out exactly what kind of weapons and training they've had and where they can get acquainted with the old men before they go under fire. That helps."

"These replacements we're getting now are younger and better trained than the ones we got last year," Shepherd says. "But now and then we get truck drivers or ack-ack men, who've never had infantry training. They're useless."

All the men in the battalion say they're eating much better food now than they had earlier in the Italian campaign or in Tunisia. "The 10-in-one rations are damned good," Snokesen says. "We're getting fresh meat and bread more often. Back in Tunisia we used to go without bread for weeks. The boys had it so seldom they used to eat it for dessert, like cake, when they did get it. Somebody ought to tell somebody to give us more coffee and lay off the bullion and lemon drink powder and cocoa. And speaking of coffee, the Coleman stove is one of the great inventions of the war."

"You ain't kidding," Shepherd said, using another word in place of kidding. "The Coleman stove, the jeep and the Bailey Bridge are winning the war. The guys who have Coleman stoves would rather go up forward without a helmet than leave them behind. We carry them in German gas mask carrier. And they don't make much light, either, once you get them started. That hot cup of coffee and hot can of K-ration ham and eggs in the morning makes all the difference."

When you mention clothing, the GIs in the battalion think first of shoes and socks, the most important items in the infantry's wardrobe. They don't know why the Army didn't give them combat boots, instead of service shoes and leggings, back in 1941. They don't have a high opinion of the combat shoe with the rough side of the leather on the outside. It doesn't shed water as well as the smooth finished boot and it takes longer to dry. They are not satisfied with the shoepac, the new type of winter boot with a rubber foot and waterproof black leather top.

"It's a step in the right direction," Weidler says. "It's an attempt to keep our feet dry and that's the only way to beat trenchfoot. But the shoepac gives the foot no support. If you walk a long distance in them, they kill you."

Everybody likes the GI woolen socks. The men usually carry two pairs of them. When the socks on their feet get wet, they take them off, put on dry ones and pin the damp socks inside their shirts. Their body heat dries the wool in a short time.

Everybody also likes the GI woolen sweater, but they prefer last winter's combat jacket with the zipper front and high woolen collar and cuffs to the new green hip length jacket. "The new jacket is not bad," one GI says, "but it

acts like a shelter half in the rain. If you rub against one spot from the inside too much, the water comes through."

Nobody wants any part of the new sleeping bag with the zipper that pulls up from the feet to the chin. "It may be fine for the Air Force," one of the BAR men says, "but I wouldn't get into one of those things in the line if you paid me. Suppose a Kraut found me with my arms and legs all zippered up, like I was in a strait-jacket? No, brother. I'll take an old ordinary GI blanket that I can get out of in a hurry."

The battalion has not noticed much change for the better or for the worse in their weapons or ammunition in the two years that they have been in combat. Some of the men would like lighter weapons with more fire power; others would prefer more heavy weapons, like the BAR. They still envy the German smokeless powder as they did in Tunisia. They like the German light machine gun better than ours and they think that the German machine pistol is a better weapon than our Tommy Gun.

They won't always admit it to you but you can tell from talking to them that the men in the battalion have a deep satisfaction from the knowledge that their job is the toughest one in the Army. They know that, if they come through the war safely, their own part in it will be something they will be able to look back on with pride for the rest of their lives. They know that it will be a good feeling to be able to say at a gathering of veterans years from now, "I was with the 34th Division in Tunisia and Italy. First battalion of the One-Three-Three."

But that is something connected with the remote future. Right now they are tired and their attitude toward the fate that put them here in the Infantry in the snow of the Apennine Mountains instead of some softer branch of the service is one of resignation. They are accepting it, trying to make the best of it and trying to tell themselves it could have been worse. One of the men in the battalion, describing recently the ordeal he had been through at Cecina, ended up by saying, "I think we were the first ones to get into the town itself. Anyway, we were pulled out of there for a couple of days on July 3. On the Fourth of July we had a hot holiday meal."

Then he thought for a moment and added, "You know, that's one thing about this outfit. We've had it tough all along but, somehow or other, we've always managed to hit some place on holidays where we can have a hot meal. Christmas of 1942 we were on the boat in Liverpool harbor, waiting to push off for North Africa. On the Fourth of July, 1943, we were back in a rest area after the Tunisian campaign. Thanksgiving Day in 1943 we had just finished the fighting at Ashcan Hill but we had a turkey dinner, right there on the side of the hill. It was raining and the Germans were shelling us but we didn't give a damn - we had the turkey. That Christmas we had another hot meal because we were in division reserve, just before we went to Venafro. Then on the Fourth of July, like I just said, we had a hot meal at Cecina. This last Thanksgiving we were lucky again. The week before they had brought us back to a rest town for 10 days. So we were still there for the turkey."

He smiled and shook his head. "Maybe you better not print that," he said. "Somebody at division headquarters may read it and say, 'Those guys have had it too good. We'll see that they spend their next five Thanksgivings and Christmases on the line eating K-rations.'"

The battalion reminds you of the Bill Mauldin cartoon of the infantryman looking sadly at the rifle on his lap and saying to it, "I've given you the best years of my life."

Source: "Iron-Man Battalion". Sgt Joe McCarthy, *Yank Staff Correspondent*. *Yank Magazine, European Edition*, Vol. 1, No. 38, Dec. 22, 1944. pp 2-5.

# 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division National Membership Application Form

**NOTE: If your address Label shows (L), (W), (T) or (6) you do not owe dues for the Current Year**

- ( ) Enclosed is \$10.00 for my Annual Membership in the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association. Annual membership period is – 1 Sep thru 31 Aug of each year. (Open to past and present members of units / organizations assigned to the 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div or soldiers who have been members of the National Guard for six years or longer.)
- ( ) Enclosed is \$10.00 for my Associate Membership in the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association. (Annual Fee) (Period is – 1 Sep thru 31 Aug of each year). (Individuals who do not meet membership requirements, ie: Spouses , Friends, Other Services)
- ( ) Enclosed is \$\_\_\_\_\_ for my LIFE MEMBERSHIP in the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association.  
(See Fee Schedule Below) {No Further Annual Fee}.  
To Age 60 \$100.00 At age 60 & older \$50.00
- ( ) Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for a donation to the operation of the 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn.
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(Maintain all monuments and annual flowers for the Cemeteries in North Africa, Italy & U.S.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Street \_\_\_\_\_  
 City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_  
 AGE \_\_\_\_\_ Military Unit/ Organization \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The purpose of the 34<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division Association is to preserve the history of the 34<sup>th</sup> Divisional units & attached organizations of soldiers that have served their nation since 1917. The National Association schedules an annual meeting each Sept / Oct.

The National Secretary is COL (Ret) Russ Bierl. His E Mail address is [bierlhome@msn.com](mailto:bierlhome@msn.com) The National Association WEB Site is <http://www.34ida.org> Phone No 515-252-4531 or email [goldstarmuseum@iowa.gov](mailto:goldstarmuseum@iowa.gov)  
 A newsletter is sent to current members three times a year by U.S. mail. All newsletters are shown on the Association WEB site.  
 The Iowa Gold Star Military Museum maintains an office for the association. WEB site [www.iowanationalguard.com](http://www.iowanationalguard.com)

**Museum Store - 34<sup>th</sup> Inf Div Assn Price List – Dec 2013**

34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull Polo Shirts Size _____	\$ 22.00	34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull Div Insignia Pins (Lapel Pin)	\$5.00
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34 <sup>th</sup> Red Bull Coffee Mug	\$ 6.00	Red Bull Refrig. Magnets (1.75 x 1.5 inches)	\$ 2.00

**Books Available:** Citizen Soldier in WWII (Story of the 168<sup>th</sup> Inf by LT /CPT/ MAJ / LTC Ed Bird) \$10.00

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