

Artist's drawing of Oflag 64 without barbed wire, towers and guards.
drawn by Jim Bickers

POST OFLAG 64 ITEM

WINTER 2003

Pittsburgh, PA 2004

Jerry Alexis is working on the reunion to be held in Pittsburgh in 2004. He has contacted several hotels in Pittsburgh and will provide information as time goes on.

Jerry can be contacted at:

Jerry Alexis
1021 Highland Ave
Beaver Falls, PA 15810
Pho: 724/891-2330
e-mail: ejalexis@juno.com

Ft Lauderdale, FL 2005

Ft. Lauderdale, FL was selected as the site for the reunion in 2005. Irv Solotoff volunteered to be the host for 2005 and Rosa (Di Francesco) Lee volunteered to help him. Irv was Abe Baum's interpreter during the Task Force Baum raid and Minneapolis was his first reunion.

Irv can be contacted at:

Irv Solotoff
13355 SW 9th Court # 213
Pembroke Pines, FL 33027
Pho: 954/435-7600

Rosa can be contacted at:

Rosa Lee
3117 N Indian River Drive
At. Lucie Village
Ft Pierce, FL 34946
E-mail: RoyTree50@aol.com

PUBLICATIONS

The Waters Story \$19.50
 My Tour of Russia \$ 5.00
 The Men of Oflag 64 \$ 20.00
 The Oflag 64 Directory \$ 3.00
 Oflag 64 Audio Tape \$ 5.00
 Original Roster-Oflag 64 \$10.00
 Tribute to TF Baum \$15.00
 Hammelburg Roster \$ 7.50
 Make check out to Oflag 64 PF and
 mail to the Editor.

In the Presence of Mine Enemies \$10.00
 Make check payable to and send to:
 Mrs. Rose Daniels
 5100 Sharon Road. Apt 603
 Charlotte. NC 28210-4720

Vic Kanners Diary---FREE
 Contact- Dave Kanners
 1141 Pine Ridge Court
 Rochester, MN 48306

Americans Behind the Barbed Wire-By Frank Diggs
 New Price...\$22.00 (includes shipping)
 Contact: Vandemere Press
 P.O. Box 5243
 Clearwater, FL 22205

Press Releases -----\$10.95
 Ted Roggen
 101 Westcott
 Houston, TX 77007

POSTAGE FUND DONORS (2003)

Pat Waters	Geo Juskalian IMO Jim Sherman*
Linda Slack	Mary Cupit
Mrs Hiram Wright	Bill Warthen
Shirley Weintraub	Bob Rivers
Lester Edsall	Lillian (Bill) Wright
Jean Gever	Mary Mason (Bill Korber's daughter)
Tom Johnson	Ruth (Joe) Ainsworth
Don Waful IMO John Slack	Sid Thal *
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Dave Kanners	Ted Rinehart *
Paul Lampru	Wilbur Bishop
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Tony DeSanto	Jimmie Kanaya
Charles Wilkinson	William Barnum
Chris Heisler	Stephen Schultz
George Juskalian* IMO John Slack	Hervey Robinson
Gordon Smith	Darwyn Walker
Art Bryant	Vinton Thomson
Irving Yarock	
Clementi Holder (IMO Boomer Holder)	
LTG A.P. Clark	
J.J.Sims	
Jonel Hill	
Jim Bates	
Herb Garris	
Alan Dunbar	
Nathaniel Hoskot	
Lewis Lowe	
Reid Ellsworth	

Editor- Bob Thompson 7448 E 68 th Place Tulsa, OK 74133 Pho: 918/250-0897	We lost our good friend lrv Yarock RIP Good Friend
Treasurer- Joe Sringer 1930 Edwards Wooster, OH 44091 Pho: 330/345-5878	Guest Editor- Pat (Di Francesco) Bender 7039 McCallum St Philadelphia, PA 19191 Pho: 215/242-5504
Contributing Editor- Bill Warthen P.O.Box L Vidalia, GA 30474 Pho: 912/537-	2004 Reunion Chairman- Jerry Alexis 1021 Highland Ave Beaver Falls, PA 15010 Pho: 724/891-2338

MAIL CALL

Answering all your letters this issue will be a very sad task. Our good friend , Irv Yarock, passed away and we will surely miss him. He was a very loyal member of the Oflag 64 family and answered all your letters for a good number of years.

Bob Rivers, Santa Maria, CA, writes that I flunked the test when I stated that Gen. Clark was shot down in North Africa. Bob states that Gen. Clarke was shot down in the Dieppe Raid in Aug 1942 as a member of the 31st Fighter Group. Bob was at Oflag 64 before it was Oflag 64. He was an American spitfire pilot flying with the British and was shot down and sent to Schubin as a POW. Bob sends a donation to the Postage Fund for which we are grateful.

O.M.Hessler, Charlotte, NC, sends along a donation to the Postage Fund, but no message. Thanks for the donation, good friend.

Don Wernette, Mecosta, MI sends along a donation to the Postage Fund with best wishes for everyone and hopes that everyone has a good time at the reunion. Thanks for the Postage Fund donation.

Wilbur Bishop, Lexington, KY sends a donation to Joe Seringer but no message. Thanks for the donation.

Albert Cecil, Arlington, TX writes that the North Texas area has hit the backs and he us now a victim. He was unable to attend the reunion in MN for the same reason that Roy and Helen Chappelle couldn't make it. Hopefully our good friends from Texas will recover soon. Albert sends along a donation to the Postage Fund for which we thank him and Dorothy.

Lillian Wright, Catonsville, MD, writes that she enjoys reading the Item and learning what happened to all of the men that were at Oflag 64. Her husband ,Bill, would not talk about it and she is learning things she never knew before. Her husband Bill was in the 3rd Division and was captured in Sept '44 in Southern France. She would like to hear from somebody that may have known him. Lillian's address:

Ms. Lillian L. Wright, 316 Stonewall Rd, Catonsville, MD 21228-5445,

Pho: 418-774-6012, e-mail: lwright@bcpl.net Lillian sends a donation to the postage fund for which we are grateful.

Don Waful, Syracuse, NY writes and tells a great story about time in Italy spent by some of our men. It is reproduced as it was received on another page. Thanks, Don, it is a great story and this is what the ITEM is made of.

Clarence Meltesen, San Francisco, CA checks in with the news that he is in the final stages of the 3rd Edition of his book "Roads to Liberation from Oflag 64". Clarence was not able to make it to Minneapolis and he was missed. He attended a reunion of Rangers in Minneapolis but was unable to make contact with Bret.

Gottfried Dietz, Baltimore, MD checks in and says he is still teaching at John Hopkins and enjoying it as much as ever. He also sends in a donation to the postage fund. Thanks, Gottfried.

Jimmie Kanaya, Gig Harbor, WA sends a check to Bill Warthen for the Postage Fund because he was not sure where to send it. Bill sent it to me Jimmie ,(Bob T) and I will send it on to Joe Seringer to be deposited in the Oflag 64 account. Thanks.

Bill Warthen, Vidalia, GA has been writing some more letters to men that did not attend the reunion in Mn telling them what a good time they missed. In one of his responses he found a man that was at Oflag 64 and did not know we had reunions. Bill has invited him to the next one and hopefully he will attend. His name and address is:

Joseph J Zelazny, Jr

2515 N Fremont St

Tacoma WA, 98406

Pho: 253/752-8266

He was captured in the Battle of the Bulge and was transferred to Luckenwald on about the 9th day of the long cold march.

We will add his name to the mailing list and stay in contact with him.

Bill Warthen Vidalia, GA sent a copy of Peter Domes article about the Task Force Baum to the Andersonville POW Museum in Andersonville, GA. He received a thank you note from the Museum Curator.

MAIL CALL

Bill Barnum, Cazenovia, NY sent in a check for the Postage Fund to Joe Sringler and Joe will deposit the money in the Oflag 64 account. Thanks ,Bill.

Stephen Schultz, Camp Hill. PA is a relative of Irv Yarock and writes about Irv's last days. Irv died in his sleep on Sat evening, October 4, 2003. He was supposed to have visited his sister on Sunday October 5th but he was not feeling well and made arrangements to have a friend drive him for the one hour trip. It was his friend who found him in his bed when he went to pick him up. Stephen sends in a donation to the Postage Fund in Irv's memory and asks to be placed on our mailing list. This we will gladly do. Thank you for the donation to the Postage Fund.

Jim Sudmeier, Natick, MA. Jim attended our reunion in MN and had a blast. He is a friend of several of our men and made the trip to Hammelburg last spring with the men from the D-Day Museum in New Orleans. He is very interested in Oflag 64 and Oflag XIII B and would like to do something to preserve their History.

Curtis Jones, Vineyard Haven , MA sends in an obit of Irv Yarock. Several of our men are sending in Irv's obit. Thanks Curtis, but I wish your letter could have been with more pleasant news.

Nancy Leavitt, Gloucester, MA ,called a few days ago and sent the bad news about Irv Yarock. She and other family members and friends will clear out his apartment and send in pictures and letters and other articles that look like we may have an interest in. She also sends in a check for the postage fund from Hervey Robinson that she found in Irv's things.

George Juskalian, Centerville, VA sends in an obit for Irv Yarock. It is an indication of the number of friends that Irv had.

Vinton Thomson, Jackson MS, Vinton wrote Bill Warthen that he has had several eye operations in the past few weeks and was unable to make it to the reunion in MN , but assures Bill Warthen that he will be at Pittsburg. We missed a lot of our regular members like Vinton and surely hope he and Donna show up at Pittsburg. Vinton sends a donation for the Postage Fund. Thank you sir,.

Pat (DiFrancesco) Bender, Byrn Mawr, PA says that her father, **Dr Vince DiFrancesco, Wilbur Sharpe, George and Mrs Juskalian, Don Gaul, Frank Diggs and A.L.Moss**, had a get together at the Washington Golf and Country Club on October 29. They called it a mini-reunion and all had a delightful time.

Don and Lucy Lussenden, Livonia, MI wrote that they thoroughly enjoyed their time in Mn. Don has recovered enough from his recent health problems to attend the reunion and we all were delighted to see both of them. Lucy had something say and would like everybody to see it so we will put it in this space.

They have a book of letters (75 of them) written in the Civil War by Don's great-grandfather Lorenzo Gantz and two of his brothers. They were volunteers from Indiana who went to war because they thought it was the right thing to do to save the Union. I typed these letters exactly as they were written so that Don's family could more easily read them. They tell a very interesting story of what it was like to live in the field, etc, and include also some gossip about what was going on back home on the farm. The book is soft cover and sells for \$15 plus postage, etc of \$3. If any one is interested in having a copy, they can contact me either at DONLUCY@wwnet.com or (734)-591-1739. Our address is: 15413 Alpine Drive, Livonia, Michigan, 48154

Darwyn Walker, 2054 E Seminole St. Springfield, MO 65804-2535, was contacted by Peter Domes and is now a member of the Oflag 64 family. He was captured in January ,1945, near Colmar, France. He was in the 3rd Division and came up from Italy in the southern France invasion. We welcome to our group and hope he can make it to the next reunion in Pittsburgh. He also sends in a donation to the postage fund for which we thank him.

2003 Oflag 64 Reunion

Attendees

Alexis, Jerry
Alexis, Roger
Ask, Claudette
Barret, Joe and Mary
Baum, Abe & Eileen
Becky Moritz
Bender, Jeff & Pat
Birkeland, Don & Carol
Bolling, Bud
Cheatham, Robert "Cheerful Charley"
Christmann, Maria
Danielson, Mervin and Leah
DeSanto, Tony and Renate
Di Francesco Lee, Rosa
Di Francesco, Vince
Diggs, Frank
Domes, Peter
Eberle, Charles G
Edsall, Les
Ellsworth, Reid F.
Evans, Bing
Ezell, Kathy Warthen
Fredrick, Don
Graf, Ed and Peg
Graul, Don
Heisler, Walter and Gloria
Herm, Littman and Lucy
Hill, Jonel and Lois
Homquist, Bette
Job, Bret and Lisa
Job, Curtis and Grace
Job, Lauryn & Nikolas
Johnson, Mandy
Jones, Curtis and Norma
Kanners, Marcia
Klinkenborg, Ray & Nancy
Knight, Judy
Knight, Tim
Korber, Evelyn
Korber, Evelyn
Kramer, Jeff & Suzy
Kramer, Rachael
Lang, Heather
Lang, Liz
Lee, Royal and Harriet
Lussenden, Don and Lucy
Lussenden, Tricia
Marlatt, Peggy
Marshall, Wheatley
Mason, Mary
McAllister, Marlene
McBrayer, Larry
MN Army National Guard
Moen, Jesse & Sarah
Muehlbauer, George and Evie
Myron, George
Nunnally, Boo & Kitti
Nunnally, Eric
Patton, Don & Wife
Pulford, Kristen
Returns
Rinehart, Ted and Barbara
Seringer, Joe
Solotoff, Irving
Sudmeier, Jim
Thal, Sid and Barbara Goldstein Thal
Thompson, Bob and Gladys
Thompson, Robert
Warthen, Bill and Dorothy
Warthen, Ellen
Waters, Pat and Martha
Yarock, Irving

OFLAG 64 POSTAGE FUND
Joe Seringer Treasurer

Statement Of Cash Receipts and Disbursements
For the period from September 1 2002 to September 3 2003

Receipts for the period:

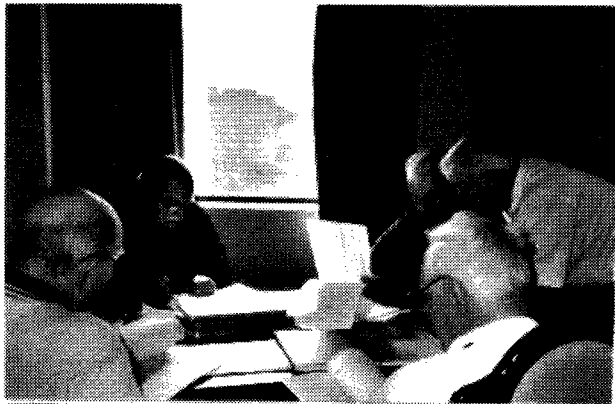
Profit from 2002 reunion	\$ 6487.69
Contributions to the Fund	3578.50
Plaque Donations	1103.50
Books Sold	116.00
Interest Earned	103.54
Total Cash received	\$ 11389.23

Disbursements for the period:

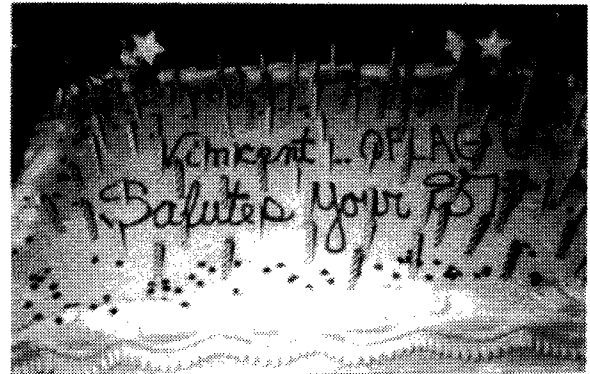
Copies for Item	\$ 2737.45
Postage for Item	1368.42
Supplies for Item	494.41
Telephone	28.51
Total Cash Disbursed	\$ 4628.79
Excess Receipts Over Disbursements	\$ 6760.44
Bank Balance August 31,2002	10363.95
Balance in Bank September 3, 3003	\$ 17134.39



The Crime Scene



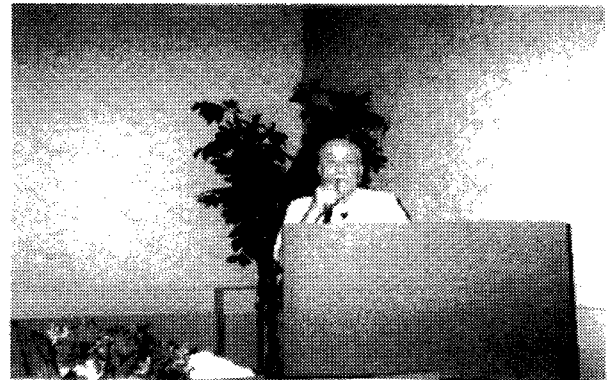
Looking @ books- The Hospitality Room



Dr Vince's Birthday Cake!!



Abe Baum @ The Tank Museum



Dr Vince in class @ The U of MN

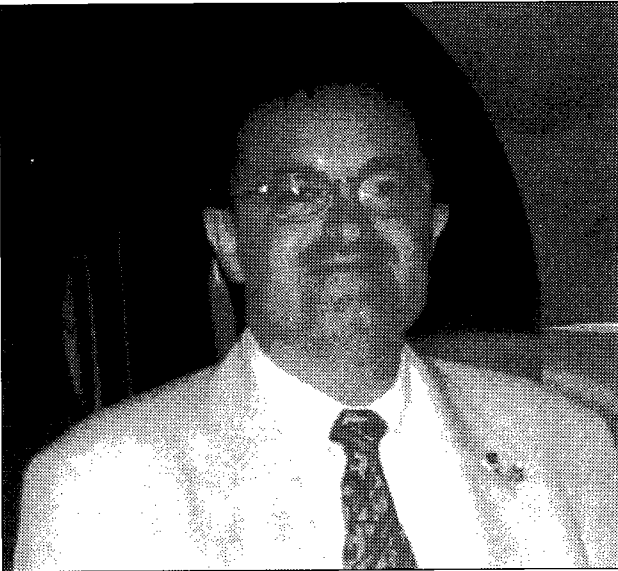


4 Old soldiers ..The Hotel Lobby



The Crime Scene again!

Peter Domes attended our reunion @ Minneapolis in Sept '03 and addressed the gathering at the business meeting



Ladies and gentlemen, let me first introduce myself. My name is Peter Domes. I'm 42 years old and I come from Koblenz in Germany. I'm a Lieutenant-Colonel in the Artillery of the Federal German Army.

I would like to thank you for inviting me to your OFLAG 64 reunion in Minneapolis, and all the arrangements that made it possible for me to come here. Actually it is my first time in the USA

Some of you might be wondering what is the reason for this German officer to come here and join a US veteran's reunion. Let me explain in a few sentences.

When I was a teenager, I got my hands on a German book, describing the end of WWII in the area where I grew up –not far from Hammelburg. The most fascinating story – which sounded to me like a secret adventure – was the so called Hammelburg raid of a American combat unit. Later I began to collect material about it. After becoming familiar with the internet in the 90's, I had the idea to research this unbelievable story using the new possibilities of the internet. In the summer of 2000 I began to set up the internet project.

In the fall of 2000 I made contact, via internet, with Bob Thompson and Bill Warthen – two fine gentlemen, who accepted the challenge to work with computers and the internet. Bob and Bill gave me a lot of help and information how to find material about my research.

Now after 4 years I think we have a good result on our research:

- we founded a working group which has 7 members in Germany and the USA

- we have interviewed many veterans and eye-witnesses in Germany and the USA, who told us their experiences

- we have obtained numerous combat reports and documents – enough to fill several bookshelves

Now you may be wondering, 'Why does Peter Domes spend all this time and money to do this research?' Actually, military history and the history of my home area is my hobby. Because of this research I can better understand many of the events that took place in my home area in 1945. Our research results are also used in training of young German officer cadets at the Infantry School at Hammelburg.

When I sometimes talk to my two sons or their friends, I feel, that history is an unappreciated field of endeavor, and I think we must learn from history, especially so we can avoid repeating the costly errors of the past.

In March 2003, when Abe Baum and Bob Zawada came to Germany with the „Happy Few Group“ from the National D-Day Museum of New Orleans, I discovered that the story of the Hammelburg Raid fascinate not only me and my friends, but also the people of my home district. We got a lot of positive feedback from people saying what a great idea it was to bring American veterans and German eye-witnesses together. This has encouraged me to continue the work. We will see what comes out of it at the end.

Last week I received information from the Hammelburg Training Area that the commander carried out the recovery of a tank wreck from the Artillery impact area. We had proposed this idea and won the support of the deputy commander of the Infantry School. The wreck is a US 105mm assault gun on a Sherman tank chassis. It is our opinion that this wreck is a relic of Abe Baum's Task Force. The Sherman was pulled near Hill 427 and we plan to preserve it there. It should get a brass plate in memory of the killed and wounded soldiers of both sides during this needless operation 5 weeks before the end of the war. The final resting place is well selected, because guided tours, including US Army personnel come often to this location on Hill 427. It is also a memorial for the soldiers of my Army, who will pass it when driving on the tank road and who would otherwise never know about this story which ended here.

Now I will end my address with warm greetings from our working group in Germany, especially from my friend Martin Heinlein. I'm looking forward to speaking with you and hoping to learn from your experiences. Thank you for your attention.

9 Sept 03

Dear Bob

I write this on the 60th anniversary of Italy's surrender and supposed release of

This is a letter from Don Wafal that has been worked on to permit it's inclusion in the Item

of parts
& also
~~attached~~

8 Sept '03

Dear Bob,

I write this on the 69th Anniversary of Italy's surrender and supposed release of the POW's in Italy at PG21...mostly Brits from the 8th Army in North Africa...but also the early American POWs from the Tunisia such as Lew Lowe. yours truly and "Honeybear" Bryant.....and from the 8 Sept event sprang Dave Westheimer's "Von Ryan's Express"

this
miss

And here's my recollection of how Art became "Honeybear"

He was captured 10 Dec '42 by the Germans in Tunisia and flown to Naples by them, where he was turned over to the Italians for "safekeeping".

The "Ities" took him to a transit camp near Capua, near Naples.

It was cold in the barracks but there was a stove where he huddled, with the rest of us, to get warm.

Art hadn't shaved and one day he was huddled around the stove, wrapped in as much clothing scarves, sweaters as he could muster...suddenly another early American POW from Tunisia, Joe Frelinghuysen remarked " Look at Bryant standing there, looks like a damn Honeybear"....It stuck!

Joe Frelingeuyesen never got to Oflag 64...when the Germans took over PG21@ Cliete and moved us to Sulmona for a train ride to Poland, Joe and Dick Rossbach broke out of camp into the mountains. They were eventually retaken by a German patrol, but with Rossbach's help Joe escaped and eventually got back to the American Lines..Rossback came to Oflag 64.

Frelinghusen has written an exciting book about his experiences and in 1962 went back to Italy and located the Italian families who helped him.

He now suffers from Alzheimers disease.

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wrapped in as much clothing, scarves, sweaters as he could muster - suddenly another early American POW from Tunisia, Joe Frelinghuysen, remarked

October 9, 2003

Dear Mr. Thompson,

With the dedication of the World War II Memorial in Washington next spring, 2004, the public will be deluged with many events and festivities pertaining to that period of our nation's history. Those of us who lived through those years will relive so many memories, the joys, the disappointments, the disasters, etc. which still fill us with dread but also happiness.

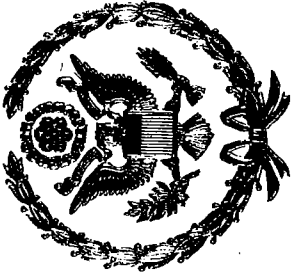
The thought occurred to me that one story says it all for us in referring to the musical play about one of our own Kriegies - Don Wafel. The true World War II love story, "I'll Be Seeing You" had its world premiere at the new Kimmel Center in February 14, 2002 in Philadelphia. I was not able to attend although my family was there as well as a number of Oflag 64 members - all of whom enjoyed it. There had not been much publicity on it, not enough media attention so it was really only for local interest.

Why couldn't this wonderful play be promoted for national entertainment during the time of the dedication of the Memorial! Of course it would need "backing," financial support, theatrical big names etc. etc. Perhaps a sponsorship, support, from Veterans' Administration - even Jack Valentia's encouragement.

This beautiful story tugs at the heart of all of us - a picture of the couple on the Playbill is really you and you, us and others.

* McCarlyle Productions Inc
in association with RetroFit
Productions, Inc.

"Love to all of you,
Mom" (Mary Di Francesco)
(Mrs. Vincent L. Di Francesco)



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

CERTIFICATE OF ACHIEVEMENT

AWARDED TO
OFLAG 64

In special recognition of your reunion in Minneapolis on 12 September, 2003. Your dedication, trustworthiness, fidelity, and service represent the highest ideals of our Nation. To understand your captivity and adventures, your trials and successes, your bonds and memories are things we can only strive toward. As soldiers, from the birth of our Nation until now, we continue to walk in your footsteps and kneel before the long shadow of your gallant service. On behalf of Governor Tim Pawlenty, Brigadier General Shellito, and the soldiers of the 34 ID DISCOM it is my proud honor to present this Certificate of Achievement to the former POWs and spouses of OFLAG 64.

Charles L. Parins
C.L.P.

34th Division Support Command
Bloomington, Minnesota

CHARLES L. PARINS
LTC, OD, MNARNG
Commander

Pat (Di Francesco) Bender, is our guest Editor, and supplies us with happenings at the reunions. Thanks, Pat.

Peter R. Domes, Lt. Col. German Army

Peter developed an interest in Task Force Baum at the early age of 14 when he read a book about the area where he grew up (Spessart, a forest area in Germany). The book he read included a bibliography, and he read most of the books listed as well. In 1999, he found an article on the Internet in *After the Battle* magazine, Item #91 called "Hammelburg." He investigated further, and began to set up his own homepage on the subject of the Hammelburg Raid. In the Fall of 2000, Peter made contact with Bob Thompson and Bill Warthen after discovering that they were both POWs in Schubin and Hammelburg. This led to contact with Abe Baum. Eventually, Bob Thompson sent someone from the D-Day Museum to Peter. This person asked for a tour of the area. Peter contacted local history clubs who had information on the villages close to Hammelburg during World War II. They were able to gather some eyewitness accounts to share with the tourists. I think that Peter said Abe Baum, Larry McBrayer, Bob Zawada and Tony DeSanto, among others, were part of the tour group. Larry had videotaped the tour and when Peter asked for photos of the participants of Task Force Baum, Larry sent him the video. Don Patton, on another trip to Germany, told Peter about the Minneapolis Reunion and plans were made for Peter to join us in 2003. The The Historical Roundtable group paid for Peter's trip and Peter's boss, recognizing the importance of his being in Minneapolis, arranged for a replacement to carry on Peter's military duties.

Peter's website can be found at: <http://www.taskforcebaum.de>

Wheatley Marshall, daughter of Lindsay Marshall, great-niece of Bob Cheatham.

Wheatley decided to join us when her mother, Lindsay, who attended last year's Columbus Reunion was unable to come to Minneapolis. Wheatley lives and works in Manhattan where she is employed by a public relations agency. She feels very privileged to have joined us this year. She considers her "Uncle Bob" a hero and admires his upbeat outlook on life. She loves to hear his personal stories and finds that talking to the Oflag 64 men is a great way to immerse oneself in the World War II POW experience.

George Myron, Age 91, Egg Harbor, NJ

It took George 2 ½ days to drive to Minneapolis for his first Oflag 64 reunion. He read about it in *American Legion Magazine*. His daughter e-mailed Bret Job who sent him the registration package. George has 4 daughters and 15 grandchildren.

George landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day, and was captured on June 10, 1944 about 15 miles from St. Lo. An account of his battalion's activities (the 115th) can be found on pp. 254-255 of *Citizen Soldiers* by Stephen Ambrose. George carried a photocopy of these pages to Minneapolis and read from them at the Banquet Dinner. George was originally in the 116th Battalion but was asked to go to OCS. He graduated from "Wax Point" and was reassigned to the 115th as a 2nd Lt. In July 1944 George ended up at Oflag 64, but when he started out on the march to Hammelburg, he was sent to Luchenwald with the other prisoners who had frozen feet. After the Russians took over Luchenwald, George and two others escaped. They ran into more Russians who ordered them back to the camp. They started out toward the camp, made a U-turn and headed

west. A single Russian in a horse and carriage gave them a ride, but when a skirmish broke out, they had to get out and walk. They eventually made it to the American lines on the other side of the Elbe.

Larry McBrayer, a Volunteer at the D-Day Museum in New Orleans

This was Larry's second Oflag 64 reunion. He attended part of last year's reunion in Columbus. He met Bob Sawada, a Hammelburg Raid participant, and became acquainted with Bob Thompson who invited him to Columbus. He hopes to attend all future reunions. Larry brought flyers and other information about the D-Day museum with him.

For **Jim Sudmeier**, a filmmaker, this was his first time at an Oflag 64 reunion. Abe Baum asked him to come. Jim is about half finished writing a screenplay for a feature film on the Hammelburg Raid. Jim lives in Boston but is originally from Minneapolis. He has read most of the accounts by the Oflag 64 POWs, bought and viewed Robert Galloway's documentary, *Oflag 64: a POW Odyssey*, and interviewed about 35 to 40 Raid survivors. His biggest obstacle is that everyone remembers the Hammelburg Raid differently, resulting in conflicting stories. For the sake of accuracy, Jim has tried to gather as many sources as possible.

Jeff Bender expressed interest in attending an Oflag 64 reunion last year when I returned from Columbus, GA. Jeff is my son (Pat Bender) and the grandson of Dr and Mrs Vincent Di Francesco. A high school English teacher in Philadelphia, Jeff was skeptical about taking a day off from school, but he felt the trip was well worth it. You may have heard Jeff's remarks at the Memorial Service. I am hoping that he will contribute some of his thoughts to the *Item*.

Pat Bender

Dr Vince DiFrancesco sends in this newspaper article. If you know anyone who has not applied for 100% disability compensation, they should contact the no listed in the article.

A4 SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2003

5 DC MD VA

Washington Post, 2003

**VA Says Some Ex-POWs
Are Not Getting Benefits**

The Department of Veterans Affairs wants former prisoners of war who are not getting disability compensation, health care and other benefits to contact the department.

The agency said an estimated 11,000 former POWs are not getting benefits to which they are entitled. The VA issued the plea in conjunction with National POW-MIA Recognition Day.

VA Secretary Anthony J. Principi said more ex-POWs are eligible for benefits as new illnesses are determined to be related to their captivity. In July, the VA said it would provide benefits to former POWs

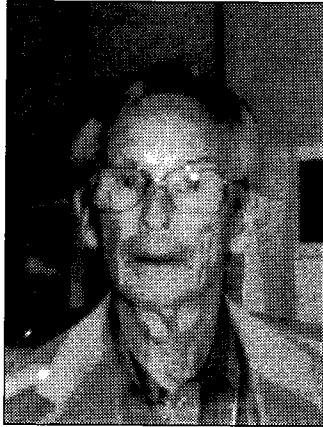
with cirrhosis of the liver.

Former POWs are eligible for VA medical care and are exempt from health care co-payments. Free dental treatment is available if their captivity lasted more than 90 days.

The VA said more than 23,000 former POWs receive compensation. The agency sent a letter to 4,700 more to tell them that they were entitled to benefits.

The VA said it is hard to find many former POWs because they served during World War II, before Social Security numbers were used as military service numbers.

The VA is asking anyone who knows of former POWs who are not enrolled for benefits or who did not receive a letter to call 1-800-827-1000.



Jack @ Spokane Reunion. Jack died on Sept 17, 2003. He was cremated and his ashes scattered near Estes Park, CO

Jack Rathbone was born on December 11, 1917 in Lincoln, Nebraska. He was the son of Samuel Harvey Rathbone (Harvey) and Hazel Vandenberg Rathbone (Dan). His father was a graduate of the University of Nebraska where he was a football star. Harvey was an early realtor and developer in Lincoln and built many high-quality Lincoln neighborhoods and shopping centers. His mother Dan was also a University of Nebraska graduate and an artist and Greek scholar. Jack grew up in Lincoln as an only child until he was 10 years old when his little sister Julie was born. During his early years Jack enjoyed playing baseball with the neighborhood kids such as Jack Avery and Jim Bunting (who remained one of Jack's best friends until Jim's death in 1980), and participating in the Boy Scouts. As an adult, Jack fondly remembered the early days in Lincoln and told many stories about his pit bull dog Jiggs who hated other dogs and often came home with battle wounds, about his German shepherd Fritz who retrieved baseballs for the boys, and about the family pet rooster named Punjab who traveled throughout the neighborhood, terrorizing the neighborhood dogs but always returned immediately when called home for dinner.

Some of Jack's fondest childhood memories were of his summers spent exploring Rocky Mountain National Park with his parents and with Cheeley camps which he attended during the summers of 1927 and 1932. During those summers Jack came to love the high mountain country of Colorado and this love grew throughout his life and determined the direction of his career. With

Cheeleys he climbed Longs Peak, Mts Lady Washington, Chequita, Ipsilon, Chapin and many of the other peaks in Rocky Mountain National Park. He learned to fly fish, a hobby he loved throughout his life and had his first experiences photographing the Rockies. He never tired of talking about his experiences at Cheeleys and frequently took out-of-town guests through the Park, identifying each mountain peak for them.

As he grew he continued his education by attending Lincoln High School and graduated from the University of Nebraska

in 1942 with a bachelor's degree in geology. He attended graduate school but his plans to finish it were interrupted by

the entrance of the United States into World War II. Because he had been a member of the ROTC at the University of Nebraska he received a commission as a second Lieutenant in the Army. He was first sent to Camp Claibourne in Louisiana and joined the 34th Army Division. From there he went to Fort Dix, New Jersey and then to Scotland, North Ireland and England to prepare for the North African Campaign. He entered the fighting but he was only there for a short time before he was captured in February of 1943 by the German Army under the direction of General Rommel at Kasserine Pass. From Africa he was transported to a German POW camp for officers in Schueben Poland called Oflag 64. He was held there for 27 months. In winter of 1945 the Germans felt pressure from the advancing Russian Army and the Germans marched the American POWs out of Oflag 64 and into several other (more western camps). The POWs were underfed, underclothed and tired but were marched for 2 weeks across Poland in blizzards and bitter cold. Jack left the march due to illness and was shipped by train to a POW camp in Lukensvald Germany from which he was liberated in March 1945.

Although his POW experience was harrowing for him there were good times as well and he made some of his closest and most lasting friendships when he was in Oflag 64. He remembered with fondness many of the men who were there and the antics they carried out together. He spoke about his bunkmate Brad whose real name was Otis. Brad hated that name and so was teased unmercifully when his son was born and the fellow POWs called him "little Otis." Cookie, one of the British POWs had a crystal set radio built into his 3-legged stool

and added a cloth flounce around the bottom edge of the stool to hide the radio. When the German guards inspected the barracks Cookie would sit on the stool and do card tricks to distract them and prevent them from finding the radio. Jack worked in the library at the Camp and began a close friendship with the book binder, Don Lussenden also called the "little gen-o-me." Toward the end of his internment Jack and 3 other prisoners were arrested by the German guards for walking on the sidewalk (rather than in the street) as they were being taken to the doctor in the town outside the prison camp. These 4 men were brought to trial and surprisingly were acquitted by the Germans. Later, Hitler personally withdrew the acquittal and sentenced the 4 to death. Fortunately the European war ended before Hitler's orders were carried out.

After the war Jack returned to Lincoln and the University of Nebraska where he continued to take the coursework required for a Master's degree in geology. His Master's research consisted of excavating the fossilized skeleton of an extinct giant camel. The skeleton is still on display at the University of Nebraska. Jack met and married Lois June Scofield, a graduate of the University of Nebraska Department of Education. Before writing his Master's thesis he was offered a job as a geologist with Mobil Oil company and, after a 3 month honeymoon in the Rockies, Jack and Lois moved to Wyoming. Jack monitored oil wells for Mobil in western Wyoming and lived in such scenic places as Big Piney, Pinedale and Rock Springs. Their first apartment was in Big Piney over the town pool hall. While they lived in Big Piney, Lois worked as a telephone operator. In western Wyoming they met some lifelong friends such as Pinedale veterinarian Bert Reinow and his wife Ruth, Jim and Juanita Keenan, Al Nelson and Rock Springs neighbors Bev and John Lockridge (Bev is here today). Jack and Lois' daughter Julie was born in Rock Springs sometime in the late 50s ☺. In 1955, to avoid being transferred out of the Rockies, Jack quit Mobil and moved to Denver to become an independent consulting geologist. He was a successful "well man" but almost as successful as a geological photographer. The Rathbone family weekends were often spent trucking around the Rockies carrying "Dad's" photographic equipment in order to get the perfect shot. Jack's photography mostly involved geologic sites and Lois was frequently heard grumbling that if Martians ever saw his pictures they would think that

the earth was uninhabited. Jack became a well-known western photographer and his pictures in appeared in many books, in several magazines and in educational materials. Jack became the official photographer for the Rocky Mountain Association of Geologists and his photos appeared in their mailings and guidebooks for 4 decades. In 1994 he was received an outstanding achievement award from that organization.

Later in his life Jack slowed down a bit but he never really retired. He continued to maintain a downtown office, and to take excellent photographs. In 1994 Jack's book Mountains and Canyons was published by the RMAG. The book contains many of his best pictures, most of them of the Rocky Mountain region. Jack's wife Lois died in 1996 but he continued to hike in the Rockies with his daughter Julie and his son-in-law Jim, enjoy the comradere of his longtime friends and "coffee buddies" Jim Rogers, Bob Padboy, Al Nelson, Larry Davis, Alex Borgman, John Osgood, Sue Gordon and many others. He had coffee downtown with them only a week before his ill-fated fall early this summer.

Jack was a gentle, kind, intelligent man. He was an excellent and talented geologist and photographer. He was a consummate scientist an avid birdwatcher and naturalist and an insatiable reader. He loved the animals, plants and mountains of Colorado and Wyoming. He was an adoring father and wonderful husband. He will be greatly missed by his family and friends.

George Raymond Britto



March 17, 1919 - August 7, 2003

COLUMBUS, GA — Lt. Col. Retired George Raymond Britto, 84, of Columbus, died Thursday, August 7 at Columbus Hospice House.

Graveside funeral services with Full Military Honors will be held 11 a.m. Monday, August 11 in Fort Benning Main Post Cemetery with Chaplain Michael L. White officiating, according to McMullen Funeral Home, 3874 Gentian Blvd., Columbus.

Lt. Col. Britto was born March 17, 1919 in Bethel, Conn., the son of the late Grace Raymond Britto and George S. Britto. A U.S. Army veteran, he was at Pearl Harbor when it was attacked on December 7, 1941. He returned to continental United States in 1942 to Officer's Candidate School at Fort Benning and was commissioned 2nd. Lt.

Lt. Col. Britto took part in the landing on Omaha Beach on D-day June 6, 1944. For 11 months he was a POW at Oflag 64 in Schubin, Poland. He was wounded twice while serving in the Korean war 1950-51.

In 1953, he attended Command and General Staff College; and in 1960, he retired at Fort Benning after 20 years of service. During his military career, he received the following awards and medals: Silver Star Medal, Purple Heart Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Army Commendation Medal, European African Middle Eastern Campaign Medal, American Defense Service Medal with cluster, Korean Service Medal, United Nation Service Medal, National Defense Medal, Distinguished Unit Citation, Prisoner of War Medal, Combat Infantry Badge (2nd Award), Expert Infantry Man Badge.

After reverting to U.S. Army Corps Reserve in 1960, he was employed with Metropolitan Insurance Company for 23 years.

Lt. Col. Britto was a familiar figure at the Fort Benning Golf Course, which he attacked with his usual vigor and drive. He was rewarded with several holes in one, and ignoring father time, made a habit of shooting his age.

Survivors include his wife, Betty Brower Britto of Columbus; a daughter, Darby Britto of Portland, Ore; two nephews and seven nieces.

In lieu of flowers, contributions may be made to Columbus Hospice, 7020 Moon Road, Columbus, GA 31909 or The Alzheimer's Association, 707 Center Street, Columbus, GA 31901.

Those who wish may sign the online guest registry at www.mcmullenfuneralhome.com

ROBERT ECKMAN

Des Moines

Robert Eric Eckman, 91, of the 2300 block of 40th Street died of complications of cancer Thursday at Hospice Kavanagh House. Services will be at 1:30 p.m. Tuesday at Immanuel United Methodist Church, of which he was a member. Burial will be at Glendale Cemetery.

Mr. Eckman was born in Oskaloosa and had lived in Des Moines most of his life. He was a retired lieutenant colonel with the Iowa National Guard and a veteran of World War II, when he had been a prisoner of war. He was a volunteer with Gold Star Museum at Camp Dodge.

He is survived by his wife, Lillie; a daughter, Marilyn Rittel of Des Moines; four sisters, Maxine Gibson of Terrebonne, Ore., Frances Anderson of Gallatin, Mo., Elaine Read of Chula Vista, Calif., and Gloria Barras of Downey, Calif.; two grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren.

Friends may call from 6 to 8 p.m. Monday at Westover Funeral Home. Memorial contributions may be made to Gold Star Museum at Camp Dodge.

Irving J. Yarock, 87

WORCESTER — Irving J. Yarock, 87 of 57 Barclay St. died suddenly at home on Sunday, Oct. 5.

He leaves a sister, Ida Y. Caplan of Springfield and several nieces and nephews, grandnieces, grandnephews and cousins. He was predeceased by his sisters Evelyn Alberts and Helen Fried.



He was born in Worcester, the son of Samuel and Tillie (Lesber) Yarock and was a lifelong resident. He graduated from Classical High School and the University of Rhode Island.

He was a major in the Army during World War II when he was taken prisoner by the Germans in North Africa. He was held for 30 months in prisoner of war camps in North Africa, Italy, Germany and Poland until his liberation at the end of the war. He served 30 years in the Army Reserves and retired with the rank of colonel.

For many years he owned and operated Star Trading Co., the family business on Green St. The closing of the business ushered in his retirement, and his full time schedule of volunteering.

He was a long time member of Yeshiva Achei Timimim, Tefereith Israel Synagogue and Shaarai Torah Synagogue East. He was a member of Beth Israel Synagogue. He is currently and for the past 15 years has been president of Chevra Kadisha, which governs all religious preparations for Jewish funerals and its Holy Society Cemetery. He has received two keys to the City of Worcester.

He is past president of By the Way, Inc., By the way II, Mental Health Center Housing, Mohegan Council, Boy Scouts of America, Treasure Valley Scout Reservation. He is past secretary of Worcester Rotary Club, past treasurer of Worcester Jewish Community Committee, Inc., Worcester Veterans Council, Age Center of Worcester, the Worcester Jewish Community Housing, and The Armed Forces Committee of Worcester County. He is formerly or currently on the Board of Directors of the aforementioned organizations as well as Armed Forces Committee of Worcester County, Worcester Jewish Federation, Minuteman Chapter Association of the U.S. Army, Military Order of the World Wars, Jewish Service Center for older adults, United Way of Central Mass. Jewish Healthcare Center, Community Healthlink and the board of trustees of GAR Memorial Hall.

He is past commander of Post #32 of Jewish War Veterans and a member of its executive Board. For 30 years he served as a trustee and later as honorary trustee for Bay State Savings Bank. Last month he received an award of merit from the bank.

The ROTC unit at Worcester Polytechnic Institute is named "Irving J. Yarock AUSA Company" in his honor.

He received many awards of merit from many organizations and the Irving J. Yarock Award is awarded annually by The Age Center of Worcester. He was inducted into Worcester Boys and Girls Club Hall of Fame.

Funeral services will be held at 1 PM on Thursday, October 9 in Perlman Funeral Home, 1026 Main St. Burial will be held in Holy Society Cemetery in Leicester.

Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of one's choice.

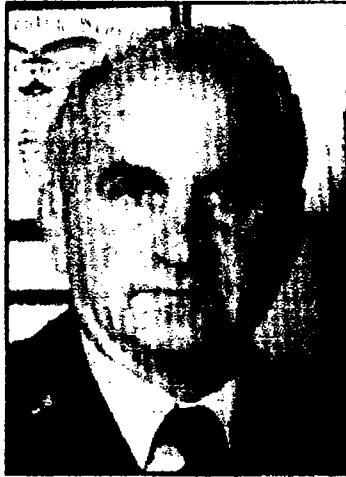
Immediately following the interment service at Holy Society Cemetery, the family invites everyone to return to a reception at the Jewish Healthcare Center, 629 Salisbury St. in Worcester.

Brig. Gen. George M. Donovan

Services for retired Brig. Gen. George M. Donovan, 80, will be at 3 p.m. Friday at First Baptist Church with Dr. Alton Fannin officiating. Interment will be at Provence Cemetery under the direction of Craddock Funeral Home.

Born March 23, 1922, in Provence to George E. and Sally Amerson Donovan, he died Nov. 4, 2002, at his home.

A graduate of various military schools, including the War College, command and general staff college and advanced infantry school, he served in the Army with the 45th Division during World War II and the Korean War, receiving a battlefield commission on the Anzio beach head while serving in Italy in 1944. He was awarded numerous awards and decorations including the Combat Infantry Badge with Second Award, Silver Star, Purple Heart, Bronze Star, Legion of Merit and European Campaign Ribbon with five stars. He retired after 33½ years as Commanding General of the 45th Infantry. He then organized Hu-Don Manufacturing Company, retiring in 1985 as co-owner and board chairman.



Brig. Gen. George M. Donovan

He served as president of the Carter County Veterans Council, chairman of the Southwest Oklahoma Memorial County which established the veterans memorial in 1984, was founder of the Military Memorial Museum and a charter member of the Southern Oklahoma Retired Officers Association. He was also a member of Disabled American Veterans, Veterans of Foreign, American Legion, Purple Heart Chapter, Prisoner of War and 45th Division Association, National Order of Battlefield Commissions and First Baptist Church.

He was preceded in death by his first wife, Jacqueline Ford Donovan on March 24, 1972; two sons, Capt. George R. Donovan and Huston Bradley Donovan, both in 1978; and a grandson.

He and Phyllis Huston were married on March 8, 1973, in Denton, Texas.

Survivors include his wife of the home; two daughters, Donna K. Landrith, Oklahoma City, and Dianna L. Riley, Ardmore; a stepdaughter, Tracy Drennan, Davis; two stepsons, Mike and Brent Oxford, and a sister, Virginia V. Brooks, all of Ardmore; eight grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.

Bearers will be William E. Mitchell, David Cupps, Jim Paton, Dr. Harry Barnes, Jerry Flanagan and Roy Worley.

Memorials may be made to the Military Memorial Museum, 31 Sunset Drive; or Cross Timbers Hospice.

MISSISSIP

Joseph C. Ainsworth Jackson

Joseph C. Ainsworth, 82, died Monday, June 23, 2003, at home. Visitation is 5-8 p.m. today at Baldwin-Lee Funeral Home with a prayer service at 6:30. Services are 10 a.m. Thursday at St. Therese Catholic Church with burial in Lakewood South Cemetery.

A native of Clinton, Mr. Ainsworth had lived here for the past 39 years. Mr. Ainsworth was a veteran of WWII serving in the US Army and was captured in North Africa where he became of P.O.W. and was a recipient of the Purple Heart. He was a member of the MS Chapter of the Ex-Prisoners of War and the American Legion and the D.A.V. Mr. Ainsworth was a member of St., Therese Catholic Church where he was very active visiting shut-ins and was a member of the Knights of Columbus and the Legion of Mary.

Mr. Ainsworth is survived by his wife of 55 years, Ruth A. Ainsworth of Jackson; daughters and sons-in-law, Diane and Lindsay Harwood of Jackson and Kathie and Charlie Pearson of Jackson; sisters, Clara Virostek of east Vandergrift, Penn., and Julie Egetian of Fresno, Calif.; six grandchildren and six great grandchildren.

Memorials may be sent to: St. Therese Catholic Church Building Fund, 309 west McDowell Road, Jackson, MS 39204.