

'Thundering Herd'

Newsletter of the 8th Armored Division Association



Ardennes, Rhineland, Central Europe

Spring - 2012 - Vol. I No. 1

Dear Veterans of the 8th Armored Division, Members of the Association, Descendants, Family and Friends,

Welcome to the first edition of the new Association Newsletter. We plan on publishing three (3) editions per year: spring – summer – winter. We visualize this newsletter as a means to communicate with the membership, share information, tell the stories of the veterans, and preserve the memory of this gallant fighting unit.

A number of original veterans, descendants and those committed to commemorating the service of the veterans of the 8th Armored Division have re-incorporated the Association and are planning events, ceremonies and dissemination of articles on the history of the Division.

We invite all living veterans of the 8th Armored Division to join the Association as honorary members, no dues required, although donations are welcomed. We are also seeking members who share our mission and goals. Please take a look at the outstanding Division web site <http://www.8th-armored.org/> created and maintained by Okey Taylor, C-58th AIB to obtain membership applications to fill out and mail to the Association address:

8th Armored Division Association
2345 E. Dauphin St
Philadelphia, PA 19125

Use the E-Mail address: 8thArmoredDivision@gmail.com

to communicate. We also feature a 'Facebook' account and ask all interested to enroll in order to stay in contact and share comments and information:

New Association 'Facebook' page

<http://www.facebook.com/groups/269231523148647/>

Our future plans include:

- * a WWII Reunion Tour
- * Memorials at Arlington National Cemetery
- * 8th Armored Division themed merchandise

We are in need of volunteers to assist with the following:

Web Master - to take over for Okey Taylor who wishes to pass on the operation of the site he designed so beautifully.

Newsletter Committee - we need an editor and assistants to put together an on-line version of the 'Thundering Herd' as a 'pdf' file to distribute to the membership who have an e-mail address. (For those who do not have e-mail, we will mail out a hard copy). They will also maintain contact with members via E-mail blast announcements.

Membership - to assist in maintaining the membership rolls and sending out membership cards

Treasurer - to handle the finances of the Association

Merchandise - to offer members souvenir items with the 8th Armored Division logo: hats, T-shirts, bags, etc.

Publications - a Committee to help distribute published works or articles on the 8th Armored Division, especially by veterans, such as

Ray Ross' ('When Your Number's Up')

Vern Miller's ('My Brother's Keeper')

'In Tornado's Wake' (Division History)

Dr. Bernard Metrick's ('The Dentist')

Council - would be composed of appointed or elected non-executive officers who can assist the Association through input, creative ideas, oversight of the affairs of the Association, and fill in when needed to help in any area of the Association.

Reunions - a volunteer committee to work on the details of a potential annual reunion/Association meeting where yearly business and elections and planning can be conducted.

The following have volunteered as interim officers until our next Association Reunion/Meeting:

President Emeritus – Sidney Bishop 18-A

sbb8thad@bellsouth.net

President – Andy Waskie, Jr.

8thArmoredDivision@gmail.com

Vice President – Gloria Zuccarella Layne

laynes@peoplepc.com

Membership Chair – Vern Miller 130-HQ

vernsdarkroom@aol.com

Chaplain – Norm Olson HQ-49th AIB

norm.olson1922@comcast.net

Association Web master – Okey Taylor 58-C

oet58c@8th-armored.org

Newsletter Committee Chair – Charles Gordon

charles@peppersla.com

Gettysburg World War II Reunion Weekend Tour

September 15-16 (2 Days/1 Night)

Escorted by WWII and Civil War Historian, author and American Legion Member, Andy Waskie, Jr.

YOUR STARR TOUR INCLUDES:

*Admission to the World War II Living History Weekend at Eisenhower National Historic Site

*Gettysburg National Military Park

*Gettysburg Museum & Visitor's Center

*Cyclorama Painting "A New Birth Of Freedom" Film

*Dobbin House Tavern for dinner

*Fairfield Inn for Lunch DAY ONE:

Our historic journey begins at the Gettysburg Museum and Visitor's Center where we'll see the film "A New Birth of Freedom," a dramatic overview of the Battle of Gettysburg. Next we'll experience the incredible Cyclorama painting in-the-round, depicting the charge of the Confederate infantry led by General George Pickett.

After lunch on our own, we'll enjoy a tour of Gettysburg National Park and learn about the fighting that swept across the fields & gentle slopes of Gettysburg for 3 days in July, 1863, changing the course of history. This evening we'll bring back the sights, sounds and tastes of two centuries ago over dinner at the historic Dobbin House Tavern, a colonial restaurant. We'll spend tonight at a comfortable Gettysburg hotel. Meal: Dinner

DAY TWO: Today, we'll experience the annual World War II living history weekend at the Eisenhower National Historic Site featuring an authentic recreation of both Allied and German army camps complete with original World War II vehicles. Living history enthusiasts will present programs on World War II medical services, weapons and equipment, communications, military vehicles, and the life of the common soldier. Dozens of World War II vehicles will be displayed and a mock Army Air Force bomber squadron mission briefing presented. After, enjoy lunch at the Fairfield Inn. With origins dating to 1757, this former mansion house of Squire Miller, is one of America's oldest, continuously operated Inns. Meals: Breakfast, Lunch

Prices:

\$259.95pp/double

\$309.95 pp/single

\$239.95pp/triple

WWII Reunion featuring the 8th Armored Division Association Sat/Sun September 15-16, 2012 as part of the Starr Tours Gettysburg World War II Reunion Weekend

You can extend your trip to the Friday before (9/14/12) into Monday after (9/17/12) the **Gettysburg World War II Reunion Weekend** - if you are flying into PHILA airport, or driving. You can be picked up and shuttled to the hotel (Holiday Inn Northeast – Bensalem, PA) or meet the coach at the hotel.

The Cost of the excursion alone is ca. \$260 per person dbl;

to include the 2 hotel stays is an extra \$160; or \$79. Per night. (airfare on own). Breakfast is available at the Hotel for a modest cost.

Airport shuttle to hotel to and from the PHILA airport will be available (details to follow). Departure to Gettysburg via Starr coach and return to hotel

Members have several options:

Option 1. Arrive on Friday (9/14/12) and stay over and join the tour on early Saturday (9/15/12) morning with pick up at the hotel

Option 2. Arrive on Saturday (9/15/12) to join the tour at 8:30am at the Hotel, staying only Saturday in Gettysburg. This is the standard Starr Tour.

Option 3. Departing on Sunday (9/16/12) evening after the tour returns to the Hotel

Option 4. Stay Sunday evening at the Hotel and depart on Monday (9/17/12) morning.

The actual tour is on Saturday - Saturday night - Sunday in Gettysburg - return Sunday early evening ca. 6:00pm. Cost is based on how many days you wish to stay.

Also planned is an 8th Armored Division Association welcome reception at the Hotel on Friday evening (9/14/12) for those who arrive then.

To reserve the Reunion Excursion, contact:

(Ask for the WWII Reunion Starr Tour. Mention Andy Waskie)

Starr Tours

2531 East State St. Ext.

Trenton, NJ 08619

Email: info@starrtours.com

Phone

Toll Free: 800-STARR-03 ([800-782-7703](tel:800-782-7703))

Local: [609-587-0626](tel:609-587-0626)

Fax: [609-587-3052](tel:609-587-3052)

The Hotel booking can be done by contacting:

Jessica Grillone, Sales Manager

Holiday Inn Northeast

3499 Street Rd.

Bensalem, Pa 19020

www.holidayinnbensalem.com

JGrillone@HolidayInnBensalem.com

(p) [215-638-1500](tel:215-638-1500)

(f) [215-638-8547](tel:215-638-8547)

If you are an 8th Armored Division Association member or family member, please contact me if you are booking the tour, so I can keep a record and arrange for shuttles.

Andy Waskie, Jr

8thArmoredDivision@gmail.com

tel - [215-423-3930](tel:215-423-3930)

New Rheinberg Tank photo by Charles Gordon 2/24/2012

We received a new Rheinberg photo this week from Dan Parmley in Phoenix that will make a great addition to the picture section of the website. This is an Army Signal Corps photo and it shows a M24 Tank on March 9 that was badly damaged at Rheinberg.

The description from the signal corps document (shown below too) says, " Tec 5 Ray Laugherty, Sumerset KY and Tec 4 Frank O'Braza, Barberton, Ohio point out 2 out of 4 hits that knocked out this M24 Tank near Lintfort Germany where it is now awaiting salvaging at an ordnance depot"

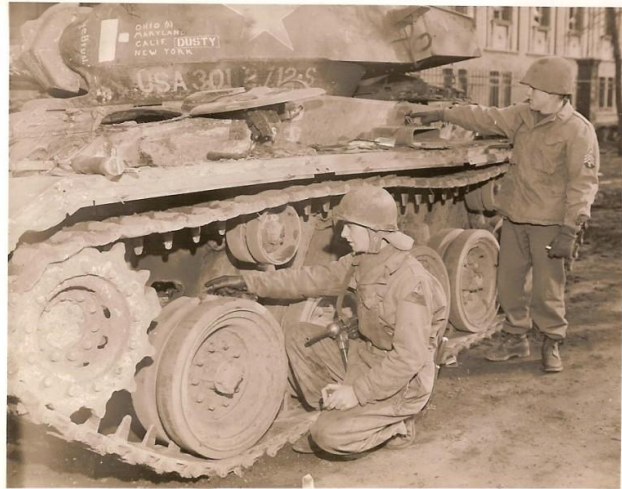
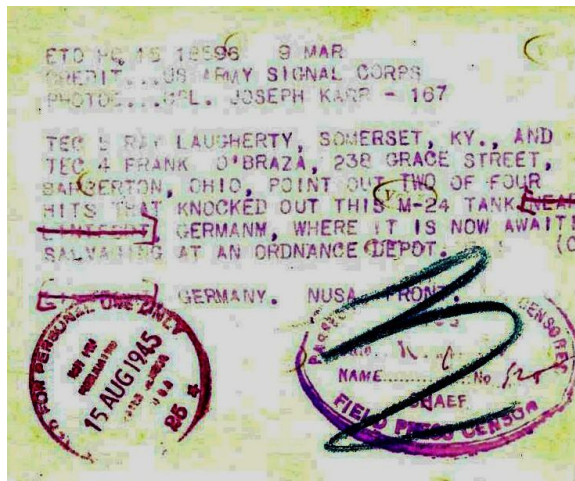
Both Laugherty and O'Braza are listed in the roster section for 36D. This company, or all companies in the three 8AD tank battalions featured M24 'Chaffee' tanks. At Rheinberg Co D lost 17 M24 tanks on March 3. My first question is, are these two soldiers pointing out damage to a tank they were crew members of since they are both from 36D?

By researching 8AD M24 tanks, I had seen this tank before ("Dusty") years ago but in a painting by Jim Laurier used in the 2003 M24 book by Steven Zaloga (M24 Chaffee Light Tank 1943-85). Note the tank painting has the same serial number and home towns of the crew members on the turret.

M24 tanks entered WW2 late (Dec 44) and only a limited number made it to the front line armored divisions before the war ended and saw limited action. Rheinberg is important for tank historians since so many M24's were used and lost (17) and the reason this same tank was detailed in the 1993 Zaloga M24 book. The description from the book on this tank (Dusty) is listed below the painting.

This M24 tank photo is difficult for me to look at showing the two hits on the left side and wondering what happened to the crew. My father (2Lt Harold Gordon) was a platoon leader in 36D over 5 M24 tanks (Platoon 1) and replaced an officer KIA at Rheinberg when 36 D regrouped at Venlo, Holland.

See the three photos below



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M24 light tank, Company D, 36th Tank Battalion, 8th Armored Division, Rheinberg, Germany, March 1945

This tank is finished in typical late-war US Army markings and is painted in lusterless olive drab. The markings are the usual stars, in the simple form on the turret side, and in the standard Allied air identification form on the roof and rear hull deck. The 8th Armored Division painted their unit identification bumper codes and the tank registration number on the turret rather than the

hull, as the hull of the M24 tended to become cluttered with the crew's gear, obscuring the numbers. In the case of the unit codes, these were carried on the front of the gun mantlet, split top to bottom, and then repeated again on the rear of the turret stowage bin, all in white. The vehicle name, following the company letter, starts with "D", in this case DUSTY. The crew has painted on their states of origin: Ohio (2), Maryland, California, and New York. The tactical marking at the front of the turret is unique to the 8th Armored Division and is presumably a company insignia. This tank was knocked out during the fighting in Rheinberg on March 3, 1945, when Company D lost 17 out of 18 M24 tanks. The town was heavily defended, and the Germans lost 14 antitank guns, 16 - 20mm antiaircraft guns, four PzKpfw Mark IV tanks, and one self-propelled gun during the encounter.

Charles Gordon

This Rotary Club article and photo (Rotary District 5510/Arizona) is reprinted here with the approval of John Van Houten (36th Tank Battalion Commander). Please note his charity work with the Gift of Life-Arizona and the website link for donations is listed below too.

Three Family Generations support Gift of Life-Arizona - Gary Whiting, PDG and GOL-AZ Board President

History in the making! GOL-AZ has received significant support from three generations of the John Van Houten family. GOL-AZ expresses their **THANK YOU** to Flagstaff Rotarian since 1990 and PDG, John Van Houten, his son, James Van Houten, and grandson, Jameson Van Houten for their financial and personal support.

PDG John became a Rotarian in 1954 when he was invited to join the Yuma Rotary Club. He became very involved in Yuma Rotary Club community projects and soon rose to be Club President in 1958-59. In the early 60's, John's business took him from Yuma to the Phoenix area where he helped charter the Rotary Club of Phoenix Mid-Town and became a charter member. As his Rotary experience and leadership developed, John was elected to be a District Governor in 1984-85 of what now is D5490. During his year as District Governor Elect under then District Governor, Jack McFalls, John was asked to look into the New York Rotary Gift of Life project and see if a like humanitarian project could be

implemented for the Rotary Clubs of the Arizona Rotary Districts.



Along with the assistance of some Arizona Rotarians and the generous Phoenix pediatric medical community, John finalized the Arizona Rotary GOL-AZ project as a 501 (c) 3 non-profit in April, 1985 during his year as District Governor. The mission continues to be helping underprivileged children from around the world who are suffering from congenital heart defects and without this medical and surgical intervention most likely would not have an opportunity for a normal and healthy life.

So here we are 26 years later having helped save the lives of over 260 children from 24 different countries of which 24 are from Arizona, with the financial and personal support from Rotary Clubs, Rotarians, Friends of Rotarians and Friends of GOL-AZ that keeps growing each year. When the first heart surgery was performed in 1985, GOL-AZ paid a stipend to the hospital foundation of \$3,500 for a surgery that cost over \$100,000. Since then, we have had to increase the stipend to \$5,000, then \$6,000 and now we are approaching \$12,000 per surgery because of the dramatically increasing hospital costs and our present economic conditions.

Presently, there are 23 children on the waiting list as we work with hospitals for bed and staff support, and the pediatric cardiologists and pediatric cardiology surgeons who graciously donate their time and talented skills to save these children's lives. We hope that you will consider joining John Van Houten's family in making a financial donation to help make this happen.

For more information and to make a donation, please visit our website www.giftoflifeaz.org or take the time to see GOL-AZ on Facebook and let us know that you "Like" this project.

NEWS & Views of the Association

* More in the series of articles from Charles Gordon concerning his deep interest and research into the history of the 8th Armored Division, and the employment of the advanced M24 'Chaffee' tanks will follow in the next edition (summer) of the 'Thundering Herd'!

*Dear Veterans, Family members and those interested in preserving the record of the 8th Armored Division:

*Please consider sending us stories, reminiscences of service, and photos to use in the Newsletter!

*Please spread the news about the new Association to friends and family! We need new members!

*We also need someone to volunteer as **editor**; as well as other volunteer officers and for committees to advance the mission of the Association. Treasurer – Secretary – Historian – Webmaster - Sales/Merchandise – Events - Listserv

Please reply to:

8thArmoredDivision@gmail.com

New Association 'Facebook' page. Please consider joining for updates
<http://www.facebook.com/groups/269231523148647/>

- 8th Armored Division Association Web Site by Okey Taylor:
<http://www.8th-armored.org/>
- Here you will find applications for membership in the Association; details on events and programs; and a wealth of information, photos and unit histories gathered over many years by Okey Taylor to document the 'Thundering Herd' – 8th Armored Division.
- Spread the word – **The 'Thundering Herd' is back!**