

The 95th Division Journal

I R O N M E N O F M E T Z

Dedication commemorates World War II veterans' legacy

By Jacob Rund

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SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- Memorial Rededication
- 70th Anniversary Celebration of the Liberation of Metz, France

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A tight-knit group of World War II soldiers who liberated the French town of Metz have another memory to add to their collective experience. It's a bridge in Columbus, named for them and their iron will.

Members of the U.S. Army 95th Division, 377th Infantry, Company I — now in their late 80s and early 90s — accepted hugs, handshakes and applause Friday as they pulled the cover off a highway sign naming the span over Clifty Creek on U.S. 31. It's now the Iron Men of Metz Memorial Bridge.

Nearly 200 people attended the ceremony, which state Rep. Milo Smith opened by saying the veterans — seated in a line in the front row — were the "Iron Men of the Hour."

Charles "Red" Whit-

tington, who served in the unit and is hosting a reunion of the veterans this weekend, said it meant a lot to the men that there would be a permanent memory of their service remembered through the bridge dedication.

And it meant a lot to him that the permanent memory was located in his hometown.

"It's the third time that we've had the guys here in Columbus, but this makes it really special," he said.

Whittington's granddaughter, Kristin, had tears in her eyes when Smith concluded his speech by reading Gov. Mike Pence's executive order to rename the local bridge.

"I'm excited and relieved, both. It's taken two years for this process to come through," Kristin Whittington

said. "My grandfather was very ill a year and a half ago. When he was ill, he didn't know that the process had started. And now I'm glad it happened. I'm glad that he was able to host his comrades."

Whittington was released from the hospital this week in order to be a part of the reunion and dedication ceremony.

His family had pursued the possibility of naming a road or bridge for the famous infantry company for the past two years. It was a process that had to wind its way through the Indiana Statehouse, Pence's office and the federal government, but the family's dream of having the infantry company recognized happened.

Friday's ceremony should show local vet-

(see BRIDGE page 3)

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FROM THE PRESIDENT



2014 – AN HISTORIC YEAR FOR THE VICTORY DIVISION

Welcome to the Fall 2014 edition of your *JOURNAL*. This copy is somewhat abbreviated because of the wish to update you on recent and future events involving the Association.

First, a brief comment about the 2014 Reunion in Oklahoma City in April. We had a marvelous time at the Wyndham Hotel. The centerpiece was the Dedication of the Memorial in its new, permanent home at 95TH Division (IET) Headquarters, Ft. Sill, Okla. It is an exceptional museum, worthy of a great Division and its legacy. You must consider visiting! Many thanks go to the Foundation & the current Division's leadership, but most especially to MAJ Jennifer (Cotten) Mack and her family and tireless volunteers. We celebrated 65 years of the Association's service at a banquet where, again, our WWII Veterans honored current generation heroes who have served selflessly in the current conflicts with the Iron Men's challenge coin.

Next, I want to inform you of a project undertaken by the 95TH Infantry Division Foundation to erect and dedicate a

Monument to the Iron Men of Metz at the new Infantry Museum at Ft. Benning, Ga. The Monument is currently being designed and contact has been made with the Infantry Museum to select a suitable site and to arrange for the perpetual care of this tribute to the Iron Men of Metz. The Foundation needs your support! Though quotes are being assembled now, the Monument could cost \$20,000 or more. Perhaps 10% of the price has been raised. It is the goal of the Foundation to cover the entire cost of the Monument with donations, by the installment and dedication date in the summer of 2015. Your Association's 66TH Reunion is slated to be in Columbus, Ga., at that time, to participate in this event. Donations are tax deductible and should be mailed to The 95TH Division Foundation, 408 West Nimitz Street, Fredericksburg, TX 78624. Your support is key to its success.

Also, in this edition, you will find the tentative itinerary/agenda for the 70TH Anniversary of the Liberation of Lorraine in November 2014 and some information on hotel registration in Metz. Please consult the Association website at www.95divassociation.com for additional guidance and information on the earlier events in Thionville. We will continue to update the site for your convenience. Please join us and our friends, overseas, to commemorate the Victory Division's valor and to remember its fallen, 70 years after its historic deeds.

BRIDGE**(Continued from page 1)**

erans that area residents appreciate their service and sacrifice, his granddaughter said.

“It’s important that everyone understand that there is a cost to freedom,” Kristin Whittington said.

The bridge dedication is the third tribute in the United States to the U.S. Army 95th division, the other two being highways in Kansas and Texas.

Richard Caldwell, a Columbus resident and commander of the AMVETS Department of Indiana, said the bridge dedication ceremony paid tribute to honorable men.

“This is what it’s all about. Taking care of veterans who have gone before us. We can’t thank them enough,” Caldwell said. “They went through so much on that day and their spirit never wavered and our freedom today is because of them.”

After unveiling the bridge sign, the veterans paused to allow family and friends to take photos. Each received a commemorative plaque of the bridge sign as a keepsake, presented by state Sen. Greg Walker.

They posed for photos under-

neath and around the bridge sign, some wearing caps with the 95th Division insignia.

“We can never repay these guys for the debt of gratitude we owe them, but what we can do is never forget,” Mayor Kristen Brown said during the ceremonies.

“It’s just a tremendous honor for the community to be able to give these brave men and those who couldn’t attend a lasting memory for their efforts,” she said.

ceremony and as they shook hands after unveiling the sign that honors their service.

Ceo Bauer, 91, said memorials such as Friday’s ceremony have increased in meaning as time goes on because there are fewer veterans to tell their story.

“This is a permanent way for people to remember the contributions we made in World War II,” Bauer said. “We liberated Europe.”



The Iron Men did not speak during the dedication ceremonies, allowing the dignitaries to have the podium and the well-wishers to congratulate them as cameras clicked in a steady pace in the background.

The bond they continue to share was apparent — as they sat shoulder to shoulder during the

I Company veterans in attendance at the bridge dedication received commemorative plaques of the bridge sign. From L to R: Frank Bever, 93, North Manchester; Frank Pagliaro, 88, Bridgeport, Connecticut; John Komp, 91, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Charles “Red” Whittington, 92, Columbus, Indiana; Steve Jamison, 91, Jackson, New Jersey; Fred Stark, 88, Anderson, Indiana; Stephen Bodnar, 89, Fredericksburg, Texas; and Ceo Bauer, 91, Ithaca, Michigan.

Memorial Rededication

By Sgt. 1st Class Andre E. Anton

The re-dedication of the 95th Training Division (IET) Memorial was held Friday, April 11 at the Armed Forces Reserve Center at Fort Sill, Okla. The Memorial was originally located in Oklahoma City, Okla. and was disassembled in 2011 when the division headquarters was relocated to Fort Sill. Veterans of the division who fought in World War II were in attendance and took part in the ribbon cutting ceremony.

The Memorial, located in the same building as the 95th Training Division (IET) headquarters, is dedicated to the history of the division and the memory of soldiers who died while serving. Among its historical artifacts are memorabilia, uniforms and equipment from WWII to present-day operations. Veterans and their families have also donated photographs, personal mementos, and other personal effects.

Speaking to the veterans of WWII in the audience at the re-dedication ceremony, Brig. Gen. Daniel Christian, commander of the 95th Training Division (IET), said that today “we rededicate the 95th Division Memorial in honor of your contributions to the freedom and liberty of our Nation. And in the memory of the “Victory Division” soldiers who paid the ultimate sacrifice.”

After the division’s relocation to Fort Sill in 2011, its public affairs officer, Maj. Jennifer Mack, began the monumental and painstaking task of moving the Memorial to the new headquarters location, completing the memorial just hours before the re-dedication ceremony. Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Douglas O. Dollar, president of the 95th Division Foundation and former commander of the division, presented Mack with the newly created “95th Division Foundation Jennifer K. Mack Outstanding Volunteer Award” in recognition of her

dedication and efforts in successfully relocating the memorial from Oklahoma City.

Mack thanked members of the Foundation and fellow soldiers for their help and support. She thanked her daughter for the many evenings and weekends spent alongside her, working on the Memorial walls and displays. She said, “The Memorial was created in 1993 to honor the fallen comrades of the Iron Men of Metz. We have updated it to recognize the contributions of Division soldiers past and present and I hope that it will be a source of pride for all who have selflessly served the 95th.”

A short ribbon-cutting ceremony was followed by a tour of the memorial led by WWII veterans who distinguished themselves in battle and earned the division its nickname of the “Iron Men of Metz”.

Charles “Red” Whittington was one such “Iron” man who toured the memorial. Whittington was a squad leader in the 377th Infantry Regiment. “We trained in California, Louisiana and West Virginia in preparation for the war. We trained for almost two years and I think we were one of the best-trained outfits in the

Paul Madden of Shreveport, La. looks at an exhibit in the 95th Training Division Memorial in the Armed Forces Reserve Center at Fort Sill, Okla. A re-dedication ceremony marking the opening of the memorial was held April 11. The memorial was moved from Oklahoma City to Fort Sill following the relocation of the 95th Training Division headquarters. (U.S. Army photo by Capt. Janelle Jones)





Brig. Gen. Daniel Christian, commander of the 95th Training Division, along with soldiers and veterans of the division, cuts the ribbon during the rededication ceremony of the 95th Division Memorial located in the Armed Forces Reserve Center at Fort Sill, Okla., April 11. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Andre E. Anton)

Army. But on the first night attack we lost 93 men,” said Whittington.

Paul Madden, a private first class in A Company, 379th Infantry Regiment said the memorial is about honoring the memory of those who died. Madden has been part of the division association since 1946 when an article in a Shreveport, La. newspaper invited veterans of the 95th division to join an association to honor and remember their fallen comrades.

The rededication was attended by veterans and their families from near and far. Anthony Duno, an infantryman in the 95th Division during WWII, still is employed full time as a logistician at Ramstein Air Force Base in Germany. He said the trip was long and tiring but he looks forward to the annual reunions and was glad to visit the newly rededicated memorial with his daughters and pass

the history on to them.

The WWII veterans who attended the rededication ceremony, like Col. (Ret.) John S. Komp, see the relocation of the memorial as a way to honor all that have served in the 95th Division, not only the original “Iron Men”. Komp said that the rededication ceremony

marks the passing of the torch to soldiers currently serving.

On April 11, Arthur Wood, 358th FA, views artifacts during the reopening of the 95th Memorial rededication ceremony. The 95th Division Memorial is now located in the Armed Forces Reserve Center at Fort Sill, Okla. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. 1st Class Andre E. Anton)



70th Anniversary of the Liberation of

TRIP ITINERARY TO METZ AND LORRAINE

- Wednesday, 19 November Arrive in *Metz*, most will check in at the IBIS Metz Center Cathédrale Hotel.
- Thursday, 20 November AM - Bus to *Maizieres les Metz*; Commemoration and Reception - Guests of the Municipality
Lunch in the area.
PM - Bus to *Woippy*; Commemoration and Reception - Guests of the Municipality.
EVENING - Free time at the Hotel or with Friends.
- Friday, 21 November AM - Free at the moment. An event may be added.
PM - 1:30 Bus to *Crehange*; Events hosted by the Municipality and by the C.L.V.M.A.
- Saturday, 22 November AM - 10:30 to 12:30 in *Metz*. Ceremony with the Jewish Community and Reception.
Lunch, free time or rest.
PM - 3:00 in *Metz*. Military Exhibition, "1944", at City Hall
EVENING - Reception & Concert by the Lorraine National Orchestra offered by the City of Metz.
- Sunday, 23 November AM - *Metz*. Commemoration of the Liberation at the Iron Men of Metz Monument and on Place d'Armes (Cathedral).
Reception at the City Hall.
Lunch - Offered by the Mayor of Metz
PM - Possible bus tour of the City of Metz
EVENING - Thanksgiving Dinner offered by Lorraine Etats-Unis.
- Monday, 24 November AM - Bus to *St. Avold* and Cemetery.
Ceremony and Wreath Laying organized by Lorraine Etats-Unis.
Lunch - Metz Officer's Club (Lorraine Etats-Unis).
PM - Free at the moment. Possible Ceremony at the Museum.
EVENING - Free time at Hotel or with Friends.
- Tuesday, 25 November AM - Bus to *Saarlouis (Germany)* for the day retracing route to the Saar.
Reception at City Hall.
Lunch - To be determined.
PM - Complete Tour and return to *Metz*.
EVENING - Free time at Hotel or with Friends.
- Wednesday, 26 November AM - Departures.

Metz

19-26 November, 2014

*Lorraine American Cemetery
and Memorial*



St. Avold



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TRIP ITINERARY TO METZ AND LORRAINE
70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE LIBERATION
19 - 26 NOVEMBER 2014

| | |
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IRON MEN OF METZ

Bravest OF THE Brave!

YOU ARE NOW ENTERING GERMANY THRU COURTESY 95 INF DIV