

The 95th Division Journal

IRON MEN OF METZ

A Publication of The 95th Division Legacy Association

Dear American friends,

Who and where would we be without the courage and selflessness of the veterans you represent here? The question is profound, and each of us must ask it of ourselves.

Who and where would we be without the heroism of these men who were also husbands, sons, fiancés and brothers? War is not only a collective tragedy but also a personal trial for each family.

How could we not be eternally indebted to these men for delivering us from an unspeakable evil that took lives, dignity, destinies and dreams. . . .

These courageous soldiers gave us an invaluable gift: freedom. It is a legacy we have a duty to protect with strength to ensure its continuity. Freedom is a battle fought every second. It must be defended through our civic commitment, our unity and our solidarity. Freedom is our most precious asset.

from a speech by Olivier Postal, Mayor of Terville, France, November 11, 2024

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from the president



Clif Twaddle

Dear Friends,

As you are most likely aware, our 75th reunion is right around the corner. Your officers have been working very hard on making this a memorable event. We'll be gathering in the exciting city of New Orleans, known worldwide for its vibrant music scene, especially jazz; its iconic Mardi Gras celebration; its distinctive Creole and Cajun cuisine and the historic French Quarter with its unique architecture and lively nightlife. New Orleans is also home of the National World War II Museum, immediately adjacent to our hotel, which will be a key focus for our event. Registration records are still coming in, but it already looks like this will be the largest event we've had in several years. We look forward to seeing you in New Orleans!

The Association's website has served us well over the years. However, it is old, inflexible, sometimes unreliable, and not capable of many of the things we'd like it to do. We've decided to use this opportunity for a major upgrade. The Association, our social organization, and the Foundation, our 501(c)(3) that is responsible for monuments and memorials, have teamed up to create a completely new site that represents both organizations. Much of our focus has been on creating a research tool, providing new ways to

learn about our veterans. We plan to continue to expand this over time, but the initial version will include dozens of interviews (with searchable transcriptions), links to many resources, copies of our publication *The Journal* going back 75 years, and many more items of interest. We plan to go live with this before the end of the year, but we hope to have a preview that we can share with you at the reunion.

This issue of the *Journal* includes several stories that I hope you will find of interest. High among them is a tribute to Michael Dean, a 95th soldier, historian and promoter of the Division's history and legacy. He was a wonderful supporter of the Division, beginning with his assignment in the PAO team, through his many contributions to the creation of the Memorial and more recently, with his narration of the 95th history documentary that your Foundation produced a couple years ago. You will also find an article about Maria Tortorelli, this year's recipient of the scholarship granted by the 95th Division Foundation, an article about Marsha and Mike Flora's visit to Terville, France and a unique story about a young Frenchman and his efforts to honor the 95th soldiers who fought at Fort d'Illange.

I hope you enjoy reading this issue, and for those of you able to make the trip to New Orleans, I look forward to seeing you soon!

Sincerely,
Clif, President
95th Division Legacy Association

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for questions, death notices or other information to share.

Places to go and Things to do in **NOLA**



New Orleans has an immense range of activities that appeal to a broad range of interests. Want to visit a museum? New Orleans has more than two dozen. Experience authentic Jazz, ride an air boat through the swamps or a paddle boat down the Mississippi? Explore the historic architecture and antique shops along Royal Street? Visit galleries in the Arts District on Julia Street? Ride a bike through the beautiful Garden District? Visit an old plantation? Savor a traditional New Orleans style breakfast of café au lait and beignets at Café du Monde? Go back to the WWII museum and continue exploring? The city offers lots of great options, and

Friday is your day to make that happen.

We suggest that you start with the Official New Orleans Guide at www.neworleans.com/things-to-do/ and find some things that interest you. For activities which require tickets and have seating limits (swamp boat rides, plantation tours), you may want to consider an advance purchase. We will have handouts and maps available when you check in at the hotel. Wednesday evening at the reception, we plan a brief Q&A session about Friday activities. This will be a good time to start looking for others with similar interests and sort out transportation plans.

2025 Foundation Scholarship Recipient



Maria Tortorelli is the 2025 recipient of the 95th Division Foundation Scholarship. She also received the Foundation Scholarship in 2022.

Maria is a senior at Franciscan University of Steubenville, Ohio, and she plans to graduate this year with a degree in Political Science and Criminal Justice.

Maria grew up in Stuttgart, Germany as the daughter of a U.S. Air Force officer and a career Army Department of Defense civilian. Her grandfather, Robert L. Tortorelli, is a Vietnam War veteran who served with the 95th Division Maneuver Training Command from 1975-1990.

For the past two summers, she has interned at U.S. European Command. Maria plans to pursue a career in the U.S. Military and State Department Foreign Service.

Victory Belles

Hello, Victory Belles!

I hope your travel plans to New Orleans for Halloween weekend are well underway. I'm very excited to see you all, tour the National WW II Museum, and gather for our luncheon on Saturday. We have planned a special musical program for all to enjoy. Therefore, the "others" will join us for this program, which will begin promptly at noon. When the music concludes at 12:30, we will all collect our meals from a common buffet and then separate into our respective rooms to eat, visit and (for the Victory Belles) conduct our raffle. Please get your raffle items together and bring them along with you! I'm always so amazed by the wonderful items donated by you generous ladies! See you in New Orleans!!!

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95th Division Community Loses Irreplaceable Friend

by Major General (Ret) Jim Archer



Michael F. Dean, a tireless and talented advocate for the 95th Division, passed away in Oklahoma City on July 7, 2025. He can only be described as a modern day “Renaissance Man” whose many talents contributed to preserving the legacy of the Iron Men of Metz, as few could have done. Born in 1947 in Muskogee, Okla., he served honorably in the Marine Corps from 1970–1975

and in the Army Reserve’s 95th Division (IT), including a tour of duty in Desert Storm, until his retirement as a Sergeant First Class in 2004. His awards included the National Defense Service Medal, the NCO Professional Development Ribbon, Overseas Ribbon, Meritorious Service Medal and the Army Commendation Medal, among others.

He attended Oklahoma State University and received a degree in Journalism. In his subsequent civilian career, he was a radio disc jockey, a news director, music director and engineer for several TV and radio stations in Oklahoma and Kansas. Michael was best known, publicly, perhaps, as a producer and engineer for the Sooner Sports Network, broadcasting OU football and basketball games from 1991–2021. He had one of those rare and incredible broadcast voices associated with sports programs—immediately recognizable to Oklahoma fans, even today. He was highly respected as one of the truly talented broadcasters in that field.

Additionally, he served as public relations director for the Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality and later held a similar position for the Oklahoma Historical Society and Oklahoma History Center. It was at this stage of his career that he authored and co-authored several books. Michael was also an accomplished ham radio operator and photographer.

Michael’s contributions include tireless support for projects undertaken during his division service and later in support of the 95th Division’s Foundation and Association. As a soldier, Michael brought his talent and experience to the division’s Public Affairs office, assisting the PAO to ensure that superior news products portrayed the division and its soldiers in the manner they deserved. He was a notable military historian and had a personal interest in the division’s history and legacy. He was one of several volunteers who worked with our WWII veterans, assisting them in establishing the collection known, today, as the Memorial. In the early years of the Global War on Terror, he played an important role in placing the public affairs office on a war-footing and ensuring stories of our mobilized soldiers were chronicled.

Following retirement Michael added to his legacy by continuing to volunteer. According to Major General (Ret) Doug Dollar (previous Division PAO officer and later Commanding General of both the 95th and 80th Divisions), he also played a “key role in the Oklahoma Military Heritage Foundation” with its far-reaching efforts to honor Oklahoma military veterans through its Hall of Fame.

Long retired from the division, in 2008, Michael was asked if he could assist the PAO office in preparing what was to be the last edition of the division magazine, *The IRON-MAN*. Recently retired Colonel (then Captain) Jennifer Mack was at that time the division PAO. A transformation of the Army Reserve had mandated a reduction in the size and missions of the division, and the magazine was part of the reduction. The staff planned a fitting tribute to the division and its history, including its pivotal role in the reorganization of all the training divisions.

“Michael did a lot of the historical research that we used in creating the final magazine,” Mack said.

This incredible publication overwhelmed this coincidentally retiring commanding general. It went on to garner Army Reserve awards in the two categories in which it was entered: “Best Magazine—Format Publication” and “Special Achievement in Print” in the 2008 Brumfield Excellence in Journalism competition. Mack and her staff achieved this but benefitted from Michael Dean’s research and lingering professional influence on the division’s PAO staff.

Still later, Michael was asked if he could assist Mike and Marsha Flora (daughter of Iron Man Ed Snell), representing the 95th Division Foundation, in a project to produce a documentary about the history of the 95th Division. Mike asked Michael if he would be willing to lend his voice to narrate this video, soon to be permanently available on a new Foundation and Association website.

“He was honored to be asked to narrate the 95th history video and was enthusiastic to promote the division,” Mike said.

A fellow soldier and friend, retired Sergeant Major Judy Hindman, adds that she “remembers him as always having a big smile, always sharing great information on history with his beautiful, booming voice. These will long be remembered.”

Michael was active in the Edmond Church of Christ; enjoyed cooking for loved ones; traveling with his wife, Phyllis, and was remembered in his obituary as having lived “a life of service, intellect and heart.” He was an exceptional family man who will continue to be missed by those who love him. This incredible man is truly a “favorite son of Oklahoma.” All of us who crossed his path knew that his life was an exceptional journey. We will never forget him and give thanks for being blessed to know him.

Heartfelt Gratitude

We were puzzled when Olivier Postal requested that he meet us in the cemetery in Terville.

by Marsha Flora

**Commemorating
is essential for our consciences;
it is essential for our collective progress.**

**It is a matter of honor.
Celebrating Liberation
is to celebrate freedom, love,
respect for others,
the fight against Evil,
the belief in Good.**

**Commemorating
is to believe in the future.**

*Olivier Postal
Mayor of Terville, France
November 11, 2024*

November 11, 2024, my husband, Mike, and I attended six 80th anniversary commemorations for the liberation of Moselle in France. We visited Breistroff-la-Petite, Oudrenne, Lemestroff, Budling, Thionville and Terville. These communities ranged in size from 20 to nearly 43,000 inhabitants. Although the villages may have been small in size, their enthusiasm, gratitude and heart are unsurpassed. Along with the other Americans in attendance, we were given Red Carpet treatment. We were greeted by the local residents; we sang our National Anthems; listened to speeches; presented flowers at memorials; were entertained by the children who sang, danced, played music and created artwork for us; drank champagne and were treated to spectacular displays of French cuisine.

In Terville, I was particularly touched by Mayor Olivier Postal's speech, a portion of which is included on the first page of this *Journal*. He described the America our fathers and grandfathers represented, the America I cherish and pray will be ours forever.

After returning home, I began thinking about the book I wanted to write and share. In *The Path Taken*, I wanted to describe the experiences we had in France commemorating French Liberation and allow both French and Americans to



share their reasons for continuing to celebrate and remember the sacrifices and bravery 80 years after World War II ended.

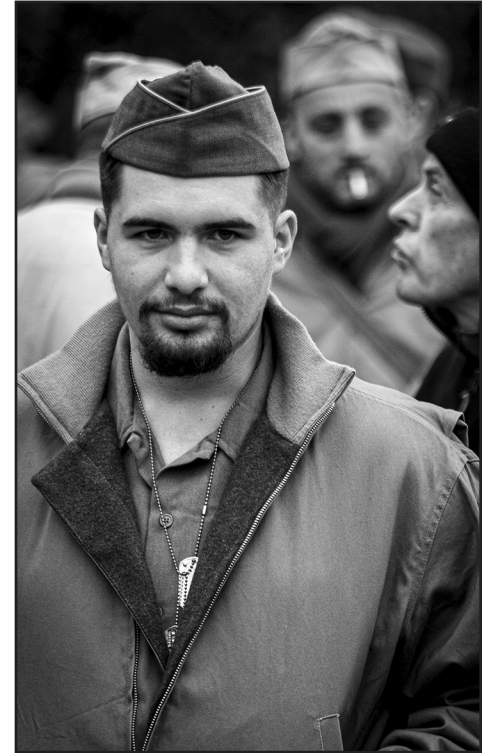
When Mike and I returned to France in June, I wanted to personally present Mayor Postal with a copy of my book. I contacted the Terville Town Hall, and within 24 hours, we met the mayor and a contingency of city officials, a reporter and photographer in the cemetery. We were taken to the War Memorial where Mayor Postal showed us the tribute to the American liberators that had been inaugurated May 8.

On November 11, 2024, Mayor Postal made this commitment to the families of the American veterans: "Our duty, and I believe this deeply, is to honor the American soldiers who died for France, just as we honor the French soldiers who died for France. That is why I am announcing today that a stele will be permanently installed near our War Memorial for France, alongside the heroes of Terville from the First and Second World Wars. So, at each French commemoration, we will have a thought and a word for the American soldiers who are part of the Terville family."

On the official Terville City website, the meeting in the cemetery was described as thus: "And there, in front of this Jaumont stone stele that connects continents, generations and hearts, time stood still. Around Marsha, her husband Mike, Olivier Postal, elected officials Jean-Paul Boulay and Nouria Guerab shared with Marsha much more than a simple moment of protocol. It was a rare encounter, a moment of truth. One where silences say it all. A pure and fraternal emotion."

In 2024, Maxime Haselmeier created a mural honoring the soldiers of the 95th Infantry Division who liberated the fort November 15, 1944.
Photos submitted by Maxime Haselmeier and David Dorkel

Maxime Haselmeier has worked tirelessly to prepare Fort d'Illange to educate his community about their local history as it relates to World War II.



Dedicated to Preserving History

at Fort d'Illange

by Mike and Marsha Flora

On the cool misty morning of November 11, 1944, the 2nd Battalion, 378th Regiment crossed the swollen Moselle river in assault boats. During three days of intense fighting, they liberated the Thionville bridgehead, Fort Yutz, Basse Yutz and Haute Yutz.

On the morning of November 14, with Lieutenant Colonel Autrey Maroun in the lead, Companies E and F of the 2nd Battalion attacked Fort d'Illange utilizing marching fire. Built by the Germans in 1904-1910, the fort was situated on a hill to protect the railroads and the bridges along the Moselle river. Six 120mm heavily armored guns with an effective firing range of 5 to 6 miles were strategically mounted on top of the fort. Company E attacked from the east, and Company F from the north. However, the German commanding officer refused to surrender and vowed to fight to the last man.

Despite the heavy defenses surrounding the fort, the barbed wire entanglements along the moat had to be cut by hand in broad daylight. Both companies were able to eliminate German machine gun positions and carefully probed for mines. Company G was brought up to assist Company E. By nightfall, two platoons from Company E and two from Company F had managed to penetrate into the fort. Sachel

charges and 10-pound blocks of TNT strung on primer cord were used to blast the remaining defenders into surrender. By noon November 15, Fort d'Illange was liberated, but the 2nd Battalion had suffered over 200 casualties in three and a half days of combat.

Many of us have attended commemorations honoring the American liberators in France. We have had direct contact with members of the C.L.V.M.A. as well as other reenactors and military vehicle organizations. However, few, if any of us know the extent to which our Iron Men have been remembered and honored. There are individuals, such as Pascal Moretti, who have formed groups like the Moselle River 1944 Association. Many individuals and groups have spent endless hours researching historical maps and first-hand accounts. They seek to know what happened in their hometowns over 80 years ago and wish to share their findings with their communities. One of these dedicated individuals is Maxime Haselmeier of France.

Maxime hosted an 80th anniversary commemoration at Fort d'Illange to honor the 95th Infantry Division's liberation of the fort. Maxime painted a mural depicting 95th soldiers on the side of one of the buildings on the grounds near the fort. In addition, he included many displays of maps, photos

Nearly 500 people showed up to tour Fort d'Illange September 14, 2025. This was the first time the interior of the old fort had been opened to the public.



Middle Left: Vintage World War II U.S. Military vehicles are parked near the remains of old barracks at Fort d'Illange.

Middle Right: Mayor Marc Lucchini and Maxime Haselmeier at Fort d'Illange in September.



and articles related to the 95th at the fort. November 16, 2024, he invited Marc Lucchini, Mayor of Illange, and the community to Fort d'Illange to interact with reenactors and see their encampments and World War II military vehicles. Maxime's carefully restored Dodge WC-52 weapons carrier was also on display. The event was a great success.

September 14, 2025, Maxime held another exhibition at Fort d'Illange. Along with the mayor, there were nearly 500 others in attendance. In addition to the displays, reenactors and military vehicles, tours were held inside the fort.

Maxime is to be commended for his great effort in organizing these ceremonies and presenting to the local people the history of Fort d'Illange and its liberation over 80 years ago by the soldiers of the 95th Infantry Division.



Guests check out an exhibition at Fort d'Illange September 14. The display included maps, photos and information about the soldiers who liberated Fort d'Illange.

**95th Division Legacy Association
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Wednesday, October 29 — November 2, 2025

75th Reunion

New Orleans, Louisiana