



34th "Red Bull"
Infantry Division

BATTLEGROUND

The Soldiers of Yesterday...The G.I. Generation
"...Not Ordinary Men"



3rd Battalion—
135th Infantry



AN INFORMATION SOURCE
NEWSLETTER NO. 34



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FINAL ISSUE— Dec 2009

Veterans Day, November 11, 2009 was the 22th Anniversary of BATTLEGROUND. November 8th 2009 was the 68th Anniversary of the 3rd Bn - 135th Inf - 34th "Red Bull" Division in the Invasion of North Africa at Algiers.

Remember our buddy, Ernie Pyle?
Remember our buddies, Willie and Joe?
There is a book called *Up Front* published with all the "Willie and Joe" jokes. Get yourself a copy. You'll love it!



"You'll get over it, Joe. Oncet I wuz gonna write a book exposin' the army after th' war myself."

Our soldiers in WWII owe a deep debt of gratitude to two remarkable heroes who were truly our "special buddies" - Bill Mauldin, cartoonist, who served with the 45th Inf. Div. and Ernie Pyle that terrific combat journalist correspondent for the news media who especially covered our movements and accomplishments in battle. Ernie always told it as it was. What two terrific guys. Bill kept up our morale with his "Willie and Joe" cartoons—and boy we needed to hear something funny where we were in combat those years. And, Ernie dug in the natty and gritty and let the folks back home know the true facts of what we were going through in battle. A smart salute and thank you to these two wonderful men of courage.

There are good books written about Ernie Pyle. One book is *Ernie's War*. He sure did like our 34th "Red Bulls."



Readers,

This is the final issue of the Battleground Newsletter. It is created in the memory of its editor, Reggie Clark. We have combined (2) issues he was working on to create this final edition. Thanks for the memories.

Regards,

Lydia and Dave Case (daughter and son-in-law) (battleground@damaca.com)



JC-T-M-P-W-BP-A
BATTLEGROUND
 "... not ordinary men"

NEWSLETTER - CHRONICLE - DIGEST - JOURNAL
 AN INFORMATION SOURCE



3 BN. - 135 INF. - 34 "RED BULL" INF. DIV.

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Fallen Heroes, Ernest C. Taylor and August Halliday, two of the tri-founders of **BATTLEGROUND**, and all those comrades-in-arms who have departed will be remembered forever by all of their buddies, as well as K-9 Assistant Editors/K-9 Morale: Toastie, Mini-Fe, Peegie, Whoopie, Buffy Pooh, and Acorn.



God and the Soldier

God and the soldier
 All men adore
 In time of trouble
 And no more;
 For when war is over
 And all things righted,
 God is neglected —
 The old soldier
 slighted.

- Author Unknown



GUEST EDITORIAL



CLARK'S CRITIQUE



Photo courtesy of Peter, Barbara and Justin Bizub

WWII Memorial - Omission of Cassino

There's an old adage "it's not written in stone". Apparently the American Battle Monument Commission believed that when they either made an error, or judgment or purpose by deleting "Cassino," one of the most series of horrendous battles known to mankind with casualties over 350,000 men, omitting this major factor of Cassino, which surely had its place in the success of the Allies winning the war in Europe. World famous authors have written volumes about Cassino. However, the Battle Monuments Commission saw fit that this great sacrifice of men apparently was insignificant in WWII.

At the Annual Reunion of the 34th Inf. Div. Assn. held in September of 2005, it was unanimously approved and adopted a petition to the Monument Commission reasons for the inclusion of Cassino which was omitted from the WWII memorial. The petition was delivered and an answer was received by the 34th Div. Association. Now the 34th Div. is not looking for accolades only a correction directly alluding to the most relevant factors in winning WWII in Europe-North Africa. As the photo above clearly shows the omission of Cassino, yet includes Salerno which played a necessary part of the campaign, and Rome, which was an open city and played no important part in the Italian Campaign, other than the race of Generals Clark and Alexander to see who would get there first—mostly a battle of egos between the two generals. The success of the Anzio breakout was the main factor in closing in on Rome—there was no battle there. Rome could have been omitted in place of Cassino, just ask any 5th Army man who was in combat there.

The answer from the Battle Monuments Commission offer a feeble excuse for the omission stating "that they cannot oblige everyone and mention about requests from battles in the Pacific, which, for all we know being in the European Theater, perhaps they deserve an inscription also.

It's amazing with all the units we had fighting at Cassino in the 5th and 8th Armies, no one seems to be the least interested in having this situation corrected. Why must it be just a few "Red Bulls" doing a raising hell job when things are done to our units?

It was the American people that paid for the WWII Memorial, not the Government or the American Battle Monuments Commission—we want this insult corrected!



Editor's note: Experiences of "Wilky" - 3 Bn Medic as told in a letter to Reg Clark, Editor.

Reminiscences: Staff Sgt. Lloyd "Wilky" Wilcox - Medic



Wilky 1946

PART II - CONTINUED Italy

We took care of a number of wounded Italians. Speaking of badly wounded and so-called combat-fatigue, we had a good many at Anzio. Most of them out on the point—forward observers. You were lucky if you weren't killed by a sniper nor had your hand blown off. We were dug in, and we were having a helluva barrage of German 88 artillery. One of the 88's hit on the hillside. It was a dud and it rolled down hill into a fox hole. Well, this soldier yelled "I've been hit, Medics I'm going to die!" Well, you know it burned through his jacket and shirt, enough to get off the line for a while. This incident I'm peed off about. I was reading the Life Magazine after the war and I see this picture that I knew I had taken. As I sent home three rolls of film and my folks never got them. They were taken in San Vittore. We had just taken the town, so we moved our Aid Station into this badly burned church. We had so many wounded men. The Virgin Mary Statue was untouched, also the Crucifix of Christ. The town was still getting enemy artillery fire, so we had to move forward. No way could a Life photographer have taken this picture. Later, there were 35 dead soldiers waiting to be picked up by the Grave Registration Personnel. Staff Sgt. Rooney came by and saw his brother. He shook his head and walked away in utter shock. I guess you and I had a Guardian Angel looking over us. Kind of like on-the-job experience, like a poker game, the longer you play, one will eventually lose in the end. Reggie, I knew you and Lou Fishman were knocked out of a tree as Forward Observers by an enemy aerial burst. We are lucky we are not among the 4000 white crosses in the cemetery at Nettuno, Italy. Everyone should read the book "An Army at Dawn."

After combat, I finally had some of the best jobs in the Army. After I was out of the Army-Navy Hospital at Hot Springs, AR, and in Lawson Gen. Hospital in Atlanta, GA, they assigned me to duty. I was in charge of 3 corridors, 24 wards

3rd Bn-135th Inf.-34th "Red Bull" Inf.



to a corridor. Once on duty, I had to blow my whistle, walk through the barracks of WACs in the early morn, check with each Head Nurse (Lt. or Capt.) to see how many ward boys had come on duty, or number of WACs she needed. There was this one incident where I went into this ward and this good looking 1st Lt. Nurse was pulling 2 1/2 pints of whiskey from the inside of her brassier. She said "help me put them into the Frigidaire. There's a new Sgt. Coming on duty." I had to smile, and replied "I'm the Sgt." Well, we got along jolly good from then on. Here are some of my duties: see that all the girl friends of the soldiers were out of the wards by 8 o'clock. At the end of each ward there was a large visiting room and a door you could lock. I had a master key for each lock at the end of each ward. Well, sometimes I would let some of the couples stay in there and I would lock the door. After 8 o'clock, sometimes the nurse would take bed check. Well, it was my duty, after one day, that if the soldier was not back, I was to turn his name to a Major in charge of this section of the hospital. Well, this Sgt. was gone for 12 days, I had covered for him. The MP's picked him up in his home in So. Carolina. He was in crutches and had fell down drunk and busted open the stump of his one leg. All hell broke loose. They called me before a board of officers to plead my case. They were going to court-martial me and take away my rank. After a change of thought, they sent me to a German Prisoner of War Camp, with a staff of 300 officers and men. They made me Mess Sgt. I was supposed to be raised to the rank of Master Sgt. after 2 months of duty. I was to order rations every 3rd day. I hated the Germans, so I didn't order the rations until the 6th day. (By the way, some of the German officers recognized the "Red Bull" patch on my shoulder from the Battle of Hill 609. A few were veterans from the Battle of Stalingrad and they said the battle of Hill 609 was worse. These officers spoke fluent English.) There went my chance for increase in rank. They then shipped me to Camp McCoy, WI where I was discharged. Two years later, I was with the U.S.C.&G.S. I got acquainted with a Recruiting Tech Sgt. He asked me if I would like to come back into the Service. That was in MO. He called a Capt. from Kansas City to ask me some questions. Well, I had just got married and I would have to travel some. Plus, I made more money with the Survey. Besides, my M.O.S. number was Infantry, and I would have gone to Korea when the war broke out. Lucky me. I should have written a book years ago.—Wilky.

Thomas Pearce WWII Veteran Italy



Maria & Tom: Wedding Day 1946 & 50th Wedding Anniversary 1996

I was inducted into the Military Service in 1943 and volunteered for the Airborne. I was sent to Taco, Georgia for training but was forced to drop out due to bad eyesight. I was then transferred to Fort McClellan, Alabama for Infantry Basic Training. After I completed my training, I was sent to New York for shipping overseas.

We shipped to the European Theater of Operations and landed in a small port just below Naples, Italy. After being assigned to "K" Co. 3rd Bn 135th Inf Regt, 34th Red Bull Division, I found myself on Anzio Beach. We stayed in holes in the ground on the front line, coming out only at night until we pushed off on May 14th 1944. Our first objective was the "Open City" of Rome. We cleaned up so we could march through Rome, victoriously, under the gloriously happy eyes of all the Romans. I was then promoted to Platoon Sgt. Weapons Platoon.

Our continued advance was stopped and we took up positions in the North Apennines Mountain Area for the winter when we were told that

the war had ended. Our Company was moved to the coast and was stationed in a beautiful city called Bordighera, where we remained for over a month. The 34th was being rotated home and we became part of the 88th Blue Devil Div. We then moved to Tarcento, Provence of Udine where I was made 1st Sgt of Hqs Company. But when the Motor Pool Sgt rotated home, I asked to replace him and I became Motor Pool Sgt., a job I actually loved. While there, I met a MP Sgt. David and we became good friends.

One day he called me to tell me that the girl he intended to marry had finally come up from Florence. As she couldn't come alone, she was accompanied by her long time friend, a girl named Maria, whom he described as "beautiful and very charming." He wanted me to meet her. So, naturally, I was much interested. I went to his office to see the two ladies and when I entered the room I was immediately overwhelmed by Maria, the one he introduced me to. Somehow I knew, there and then, that here was someone very special and I wanted very much to keep her here in Tarcento. (This was the greatest moment of my life!)

My friends had intended to go back to Florence where they later wanted to get married, but they couldn't leave Maria alone in Tarcento. Somehow, they were able to communicate with Maria's aunt in Florence and she agreed to come up immediately - which she did. After two weeks of getting to know each other, I asked Maria to marry me, and she said "Yes!" I then immediately applied for permission to marry her. I was granted permission once Maria and her family were investigated and approved by the Military Legal people. So, in front of all the people of Tarcento, who came to the Church to watch us, we were married on November 3, 1946.

(Continued on page 4)



**Reminiscences : Reggie Clark
We're All Connected. . .
Coming Events Cast Their Shadow Before**

3d Bn—135th Inf.—34th "Red Bull" Inf. Div.



Photo taken July 1924 at the 1865 1st Minnesota Infantry Civil War monument in Gettysburg, PA

Now who do you think that 8 year old kid from New Jersey is, standing there in front of that famous *Minnesota* monument dedicated to that brave *1st Minnesota Infantry* and the unit named "*To the Last Man*" because of their bravery with only a few soldiers left able to fight? [Ed. note #1: *Do you believe we are all connected and coming events cast their shadows before?*] Well, let's continue with the story...Sixteen years later that 8 year old kid (me!) was drafted in Sept 1941, sent to basic training at Camp Croft, SC. and then sent, in Jan. 1942, to Fort Dix, NJ. I was assigned to the 3rd Bn - 135th Inf 34th "Red Bull" Inf. Div. (descendant unit of that 1st Minnesota Regiment). This was the first division to be sent overseas in WWII to the Middle East European Theater of Operations. The Division was to board the ship "*Normandie*", but due to sabotage by the enemy, the ship was set on fire and totally destroyed. It laid for several weeks lying on its side smoldering at its dock on the Hudson River. The next available ship was the British *HMS Aquitania*. On April 30, 1942, the main force of the 34th boarded her carrying 6,500 men to an unknown destination which turned out to be Northern Ireland, docking at Londonderry. (An earlier contingent of men from the 168th Inf. were sent ahead to make the necessary accommodations. [Ed note

#2: *This kid was from NJ, far away from Minnesota, had no territorial connection, but perhaps a spiritual connection. There were over 16,000,000 million in the Military in WWII. There must have been a reason he was divinely guided to the 135th Inf. - 34th "Red Bull" Div. This author believes this was God's Plan.]*

After discharge from the war in 1945, intuition guided this soldier in a state of yearning to visit the battlefield of Gettysburg. He wanted to take the trip alone in an endeavor to see what was drawing him there. I became totally relaxed at the site. (A past life?) I then remembered recalled an incident in Tunisia, North Africa, where I was with Alf Jorgenson. I said to Alf that "I see (not in visual sight) two old bases of ancient columns on the other side of the dune we were at the base of and as we approached the end of the dune to get to the other side, there were the two ancient columns. Alf gave a stunned look in amazement and scratched his head. He just couldn't believe it. And I never forgot it. At the time, he felt he was there, perhaps in some past life. First in North Africa then at Gettysburg. [Ed note #3: *I truly believe in Connectivity and that coming events cast their shadows.*] Years later, on May 27, 1987 I returned once more to Gettysburg to confirm or deny what awesome feelings transpired years earlier. Lo and behold, the feelings, were the same. A sense of calm overcame me and this time I was ready to visit the entire cemetery and visit the shops and the theater. There were shows depicting President Lincoln. After one show, I had the opportunity to spend a little time with the actor portraying the President in a general discussion about the Battle of Gettysburg and especially Col. Colvin's order to fight "*To the Last Man*" of the 1st Minnesota Infantry. The actor was extremely courteous and helpful and allowed

photos to be taken of himself and me. [Ed. Note #4: *I never returned to Gettysburg, but was completely satisfied with the "We are all connected."*]

In Dec 2006, Lydia, David and Reggie visited a newly built model railroad museum in a neighboring town. We had the pleasure of meeting the owners Louis and Wendy Molinari - delightful & beautiful people. I learned that Lou was in the 50th Armored "Blue Jersey" Div. Lou said "The painter, who printed the names on a lot of the miniature "G" scale commercial buildings in the display, had a great-grandfather who was a Col. of the original "Jersey Blues" who also fought at Gettysburg. This started the "Connection or Connectivity" when I then told him about Col. Colvin of the 1st Minnesota Infantry at Gettysburg. We were both moved about the two "Colonels at Gettysburg. Lou then asked me where I was born and I answered Newark, NJ. He replied he also went to school there. He added that the sign painter's grandfather was a traffic cop at Springfield Ave. and High Street. Lou was shocked when I told him my father was a cop and was stationed on the same intersection as the sign painter's grandfather. [Ed note #4: *If these incidents aren't connectivity, then nothing is!*]

In late Dec. 2006, I had an appointment with Dr. Gil Lederman, MD in New York City for a check-up. He is a kind, caring, knowledgeable gentleman doctor who saved my life from prostate cancer six years ago. Now just guess where Dr. Lederman was born? In Iowa. Also the home of the 34th *Red Bull* Div. To me he's one of us. My adopted and honorable "Red Bull" hero. He saved my life. [Ed note #5: *Another connectivity!*]

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 3)

Thomas Pearce WWII Veteran Italy

Soon thereafter, my precious bride and I were put on a ship in the port of Livorno and set sail for New York. In New York, I received orders to report to the Presidio of San Francisco. Upon arrival there, I was assigned to the Post Intelligence Office. Eventually, we were assigned housing on the base and lived there happily for some years. In 1948, our daughter, Stephanie was born at Letterman Army Hospital on the base. Our son, Mark, was also born there in 1950. In the meantime, I had attended a couple of specialist training schools in Virginia and Ft. Riley, Kansas. While there, I met an outstanding colonel named H.G. Sheen. He was about to be transferred to a classified unit in Japan and asked if I would care to join him there later and I said, "Absolutely, Yes!" On returning home, I found that he had arranged for me to be transferred to Tokyo, Japan. I left for Japan in 1952.

Soon thereafter, I was able to bring Maria and my two children to live with me where we were assigned government housing in Momote Village, Japan. We lived very happily until 1959 when I was chosen to become part of a special unit in Hollywood, California. When got to California, we bought a home in the San Fernando Valley where we befriended many people and enjoyed our lives to the fullest. The assignment came to a close in October 1963. I retired from the Army as a Master Sgt.

I can only express my absolute gratitude to all the people I met in the service during wartime and after who were so instrumental in helping me succeed in all aspects of my many duties and assignments. I will always be grateful to God for Maria. The most precious, loving and beautiful angel that ever walked on this earth. We had a most enviously beautiful life together for over fifty seven years. Amen.

The following Benefactors and Contributors have voluntarily donated to help defray expenses for publishing, research, computer software, fonts, communications, materials, printing and mailing this newsletter from **December 1, 2006 through Dec 7, 2009**. Thank you for your help, kindness, thoughtfulness, understanding and co-operation.



MEMORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS



In Loving Memory of Orval Zummach
 By his son Martin, Betty and Carolyn Zummach

In Loving Memory of Maria Pearce
 By her husband Thomas Pearce

In Loving Remembrance with prayers of our wonderful friend and great patriot, Dr. Peary "Doc" Berger and his loving, wife Annie
 By his comrade and buddy Col. Thomas E. and Loretta Chegin

In Loving Remembrance of Max Sirstins, Jr- 3rd Bn -135th Medics
 His memory will be with me forever
 By his comrade and buddy, Robert "Bob" and Bettie Dehnhard

In Loving Memory of George Polakiewicz
 By his comrade and buddy Louis and Alice Vago

In Loving Memory of Peter Del Vecchio
 By his wife Marie E. Del Vecchio

In Loving Memory of Joseph Lawniczak and Sol Horwitz
 By their buddy and comrade George and Barbara Calendo

In Loving Memory of Lt. Col. Merlin Stratmoen
 By his wife Evelyn Stratmoen and Family.

In Loving Memory of Chris Williams
 By his father and mother William and Dorothy Williams

In Loving Memory of Col. Jerry Dickinson
 By his daughter Theresa LeCompte

In Loving Memory of Walter J. "Whitie" Brelowski
 By his wife Ann M. Brelowski

In Loving Memory of Max Sirstins, Jr.
 By his daughter Susan Bowlden

In Loving Memory of August "Gus" Halliday
 By his wife Grellanda Halliday

In Loving Memory of Neil Kindhart
 By his father and mother Lawrence and Ruth Kindhart

In Loving Memory of Robert Pache
 By his wife Betty Pache and Family

In Loving Memory of Elmer and Mary Linde
 By their son and daughter Peter and Kathy Linde

In Loving Memory of Charles Smith
 By his wife Darline Smith

In Loving Memory of Kenneth "Kenny" Brown
 By his wife Chloe W. Brown

In Loving Memory of Phyllis Belseth
 By her husband Glenn Belseth

In Loving Memory of Ray Hefner
 By friends Lydia and Dave Case

In Loving Memory of Don Hoagland
 By friends Lydia and Dave Case

In Loving Memory of Evelyn Totaro
 By friends Lydia and Dave Case

In Loving Memory of Acorn, one of Reggie's K9s
 By Lydia and Dave Case



2002: Lydia, Dave, and Reggie



May 2009: Reggie Clark was posthumously honored as the Grand Marshal of the local Memorial Day Parade.



2006: Reggie, Lydia and the four "pups"



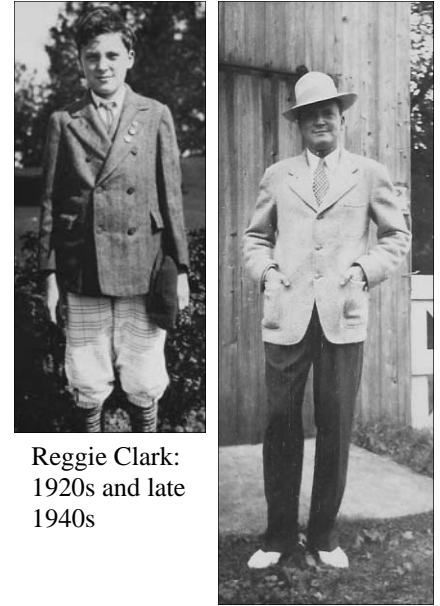
Nov. 2008: Reggie Clark receiving Veteran's Day honor

Continued from page 3

Reminiscences: We're All Connected . . . Coming Events Cast Their Shadows Before

Usually Lydia, David and I go to a local restaurant on Sunday mornings. Every Sunday there's also attending six to eight gentlemen enjoying breakfast together. One day, our waitress mentioned that one of the gentlemen, Col. John Ricker, asked about me being in WWII. After we finished breakfast, Col. Ricker came over to our booth and graciously introduced himself. He said that it was mentioned that I was in the famous 34th "Red Bull" Div. in WWII. Was I ever shocked and surprised when the Col. told us all about the 34th Div. in North Africa and mentioned the 135th Inf. "To the Last Man." I was flabbergasted with the knowledge this gentleman Col. knew about the 34th. Whew! For a moment, I thought I was in outer space. Could anyone be more connected than this? Col. Ricker was a Co. Commander in the 9th Division in Vietnam. Now, we all know the 9th Div. is way up there in our best unit column—they were there in North Africa - even at Hill 609 area. A salute to the 9th, 3rd, 36th, 45th, 1st Armored Divisions - all tough fighters along with the 34th Red Bulls.

Now, also, in the last #33 issue of Battleground, I mentioned that we had to wear winter underwear while fighting in North Africa. Well, last week, I mentioned to Lydia and David that after all these years since North Africa, maybe I should get some winter underwear. We all forgot that conversation. But God's energy didn't and lo and behold, on Sunday morning, January 28, 2007, while having breakfast at the local restaurant, Col. John Ricker again comes over to our booth and hands me brand new Army winter underwear that he and his dear wife purchased, especially for me, at the Fort Monmouth Army Base here in NJ. What a most refined, respectable, honorable gentleman Colonel—he is a most valuable asset to our 34th "Red Bull" Div. and I am so thankful for God for introducing him to me, my family, and to our great 34th Inf. Div. [Ed. Note #6: *You'll have to admit we're all connected - It's God's Energy Plan - We are in tune with the Infinite - Coming events cast their shadows before. We all know that silent closeness men of combat have. It's unexplainable. Keep that energy flowing!*]



Reggie Clark:
1920s and late
1940s



**Don Hoagland's
Command Post**

Message from the Commander



This is Don's last message to the Battleground newsletter. He passed away in 2009.

Hi Gang:


Wasn't it great to see the **Battleground** show up again. And, as always, a great issue. **Reggie** seems like his old self - for instance, he calls me with orders to "write something for the next one." I just said "Yes Sir" - and here it is I especially enjoyed the stories of personal memories from several of you. **Keep it up!** And I hope you are writing stories of your experiences down for your grandkids, and beyond. We don't have much time to do that.

Staff Sgt. Rooney's diary told of being in the French jail as a P.O.W. I've also talked to **I Company's Gerry Haverberg**. He was in the jail also & said one day an American officer appeared and told the French commander that he had artillery in close and would fire if the prisoners weren't released. The French officer didn't buy the bluff, but lined 5 or 6 prisoners including **Haverberg** up against a wall with a firing squad in front. He said "when you fire on us we shoot one of these."

I was on the **Malcolm** which was shelled heavily going in. I and my squad were packed in a small area below deck so I couldn't see anything. But I could hear the shells going through the thin walls of the old destroyer. Our boilers were hit so we were dead in the water and **I Company** had six men killed up on deck. Ammunition boxes were burning and big **Gordy Hildahl** was **tossing them overboard like loaves of bread**. The bodies, and parts of some, were buried at sea. Quite a start for a bunch of landlubber country boys.


Once more I want to thank and commend **Reggie, Lydia, David and their four-footed friends** for their dedication to the **Battleground** which has done so much to help old comrades stay in touch. I doubt if many old military units have anything close to it. Thanks **Reggie. And to all who read this - hang in there. I love you all.**

Don Hoagland



**Reggie Clark's
Observation Post**

Clark's Critique—
34th Red Bull
Battles



North Africa—Italy—
Cassino— Anzio

This is Reggie's last message to the Battleground. He passed away in 2009.

My thanks to those who have always supported this project. They are the true Red Bulls!

General MacArthur upon his retirement, said "**old soldiers never die—they just fade away.**" How true, and today we are in that twilight zone. Some of us have all our marbles, some are forgetful as hell, others just plain lazy and/or don't give a damn, and some poor souls sick and living in misery. Its been said over and over that we are the Greatest Generation. Thank God I am one of those fortunate Red Bulls who have a loving, caring daughter, Lydia, her husband David, and four loving, adorable doggies, Acorn, KC, Sunny and Buddy. I am truly blessed! . . . Thanks for everything.