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)
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

CLARK’S CRITIQUE

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 serious 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 Memorials 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. However, the Battle Monuments Commission saw fit that this great sacrifice of men apparently was insignificant in WWII.

The answer from the Battle Memorials 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.

The answer from the Battle Memorials 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 Memorials Commission—we want this insult corrected!
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 the North Apennines Mountain Area for the winter when we were told that 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 had 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 extended 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 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 there was something 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 my showing her each battle of Hill 609 - how 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.
Reminiscences: Reggie Clark
We’re All Connected...
Coming Events Cast Their Shadow Before

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. Fire and totally destroyed. It laid for several weeks lying on its side smoldering at its dock. (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 overwhelmed 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” Division. 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 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 Sargent.

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 enviably 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 December 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 Dehnard

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

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

2002: Lydia, Dave, and Reggie

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 Div. 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!

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

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 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 Hildeahl 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.

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.