

★ ★ NATIONAL ★ ★ WWII MEMORIAL

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Message From the National Chairman

Senator Bob Dole



Saturday, May 29, 2004. Mark your calendars. That is when we will gather on the National Mall to dedicate America's World War II Memorial.

Construction that began in September 2001 is still on schedule for completion in the spring of 2004. If you visit the construction site today you will see a lot of activity, most of it still below ground. But early next year, granite now being cut and fabricated will be shipped to the site for installation, and we'll begin the countdown to dedication.

It took too long to get to this point. More than nine years have passed since Congress authorized the memorial. We've lost close to four million World War II vets in that time. We'll lose another half million before we dedicate the memorial.

But we wouldn't be this far without you and millions of others across this great land—husbands and wives, brothers and sisters, children and grandchildren of the WWII generation. Many worked hard to make this memorial a reality.

In August I attended the annual conventions of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the American Legion to close out their campaigns for the memorial. The VFW's \$6.3 million donation was the second largest we received, and the Legion raised \$4.7 million. Both groups had stepped forward early to spearhead our fund-raising efforts when we were still trying to generate much-needed momentum. My thanks go out to the members of both of those great organizations.

More than 15,000 people showed up for the ceremonial groundbreaking in November 2000. I've been told to expect a couple hundred thousand for the dedication. We want it to be a grand reunion of the WWII generation in Washington. We hope to see you there.

God bless you, and God bless America.

Slurry Wall Completed; Pile Driving and Excavation Underway

The work tempo at the National World War II Memorial remains brisk.

Since our last newsletter, the slurry wall was completed and work transitioned into pile-driving and excavation operations.

Slurry wall construction began in February and was completed in June. The slurry wall prevents migration of groundwater under the memorial and anchors the outside perimeter of the foundation.

As this issue of the newsletter went into production, contractors were well into the pile-driving and excavation phase of construction that was to wrap up this fall. Nearly

See Construction, p.4

Dedication Date Set

The American Battle Monuments Commission (ABMC) has targeted Saturday, May 29, 2004, as the date to dedicate the National World War II Memorial.

"With construction on track for completion in the spring of 2004, Memorial Day weekend 2004 is the appropriate occasion to dedicate the newest addition to the National Mall," said ABMC Secretary Maj. Gen. John P. Herrling, USA (Ret). "We have a lot of details yet to work out, but it will be a memorable tribute to America's World War II generation."

More information on the dedication plans should be available later this year on the memorial Web site (www.WWII Memorial.com) or through our toll-free number at 800-639-4992.

TRIPLE PLAY: POW RESCUE IN THE PHILIPPINES

The following account of POW rescue operations in the Philippines was written by John H. Bradley. His account is based on personal interviews with participants and independent research. He previously contributed articles on Lt. Gen. Thomas Trapnell, who was the oldest survivor of the Bataan Death March until his death in February.

When Gen. MacArthur met with President Roosevelt in Hawaii in 1944 to discuss the war against Japan, he argued vehemently against bypassing Luzon in the Philippines to invade Formosa. Not to take Luzon, MacArthur said, “would result in the deaths of thousands of prisoners.” His strategy prevailed.

After landing on Luzon in January 1945, American commanders took action to free the allied prisoners. Lt. Gen. Walter Krueger, 6th Army commander, sent the 6th Rangers to rescue military POWs in Cabanatuan. MacArthur told the 1st Cavalry Division to free internees in Santo Tomas, and ordered Lt. Gen. Robert Eichelberger’s 8th Army to liberate civilians at Los Baños.

Cabanatuan

Planning for the rescue at Cabanatuan began on Jan. 27 after a Filipino guerrilla officer reported that up to 500 POWs were in the camp. Krueger selected the 6th Ranger Battalion led by Lt. Col. Henry Mucci to rescue the POWs. Mucci tasked Capt. Robert Prince’s Company C and a platoon from Company F to make the raid.

On Jan. 28, the raiders left friendly lines. Eighty guerrillas joined them, and they entered their

first bivouac area the next day. More guerrillas arrived and plans were improvised to support the rescue. Mucci moved out that evening, but called off his attack when told that 500 Japanese soldiers had moved into the camp.

On Jan. 30, Mucci laid the final plans, and by 6:30 p.m. the Americans moved toward the camp while the Filipinos moved into blocking positions to prevent Japanese reinforcements from attacking the raiders. Many rangers crawled the last 300 yards in daylight to the edge of the enclosure.

At 7:45 p.m., the rangers assaulted the camp, killed 223 Japanese, and ran through the buildings shouting, “This is a prison break, make for the main gate.” The surprised POWs responded slowly, but within 30 minutes the raiders were moving or carrying the sickly survivors to freedom while guerrillas fought off a Japanese reaction force.

Two POWs and two American raiders died in the rescue. The Filipinos lost at least 25 men, but killed or wounded 300 Japanese.

One POW left behind was rescued the next day; he was deaf and never heard the shooting. The raiders brought 511 POWs into American lines early on Jan. 31.

Santo Tomas

Later on Jan. 31, Brig. Gen. William Chase was pushing lead elements of the 1st Cavalry Division toward Manila, 100 miles away.

Chase organized his “Flying Column” into three serials: Lt. Col. Hack Conner’s 2nd Squadron, 8th Cavalry, and a tank company; Lt. Col. William Lobit’s 2nd Squadron, 5th Cavalry, and a tank company;

and Lt. Col. Tom Ross’s 44th Tank Battalion, minus two companies, with Capt. Don Walton’s 302nd Reconnaissance Troop. Marine flyers were to provide flank and advance cover during daylight.

At dusk on Feb. 3, the lead tank smashed through the camp’s front gate and the Americans fanned out to seize the camp. As they did, surviving Japanese fled into the Education Building and took hostages.

Inside the camp, the liberated internees went wild with joy. All survived the night, but Chase lost several troopers in a nasty fight nearby before he brought the rest of his force into Santo Tomas. The Japanese later shelled the camp, killing 17 internees and wounding others, including some in a field hospital set up in the Education Building after Chase secured release of the hostages.

More than 4,000 POWs were liberated at Santo Tomas, and troops of the 37th Infantry Division liberated another 500 from nearby Bilibid Prison.

Los Baños

The plan to liberate Los Baños was complex.

Eichelberger gave the 11th Airborne Division the mission on Feb. 3. Reconnaissance troops led by 1st Lt. George Skau, would move across Laguna de Bay, a large lake south of Manila, link up with 300 Filipino guerrillas, and surround the camp on the night of Feb. 14. That same night, Capt. John Ringler’s Company B, 511th Parachute Infantry, would assemble at Nichols Field, and other troops would assemble west of the bay.

See Triple Play, p.8

RED CROSS NEGOTIATES POW EXCHANGES IN EUROPE

Two months before the POW rescues took place in the Philippines, POW exchanges in France were being negotiated by a Red Cross field director. The following account was written by Col. Hobart Grooms, Jr., USMCR (Ret), who organized a reunion of 12 ex-POWs in Birmingham, Ala. The reunion was hosted by Samford University, where Col. Grooms is a trustee.

But for an injury sustained in a football scrimmage, 149 allied soldiers and airmen would have remained in German prisons until V-E Day. Some would not have lived to see freedom.

Andrew Gerow Hodges was a halfback for Howard College (now Samford University), a small Baptist school in Birmingham, Ala., when a jarring tackle permanently injured his shoulder, ending his playing days. When war came, he was rejected for military service.

Daily news of American casualties convinced Hodges that he had to get involved. He volunteered for the American Red Cross and eventually became its senior

field director for the 94th Infantry Division in France.

After the capture of Brest and Patton's rapid advance eastward, the

American command decided to bypass large German garrisons at Lorient and St. Nazaire. Approximately 65,000 heavily armed enemy soldiers guarded the two festungs (fortresses). By October 1944, more than 150 allied prisoners languished in these enclaves.

A desperate letter from U.S. POWs on the Ile de Groix, five miles offshore from Lorient, was the first knowledge of their plight. Winter was coming and prisoners lacked proper clothing, medical supplies and food. Existing on thin soup, black bread and ersatz coffee, some had lost over 30 pounds and others contracted pellagra, a potentially fatal disease.

Maj. Gen. Henry Maloney, 94th Division commander, gave Hodges the letter saying, "This is your job, not ours. Handle it."

Hodges eventually made contact with German authorities in Festung Lorient. Armed only with his wits and a Red Cross badge, he entered enemy lines alone near Etel in late October with medicine, clothing and personal items. He eventually made 13 cross-

ings, establishing trust with German officers who gave "their word of honor" that all items would be delivered to the POWs. The Ger-

mans were good to their word.

Since shelling continued during the deliveries and the Germans were short of food, Hodges suggested an exchange would make sense for both sides. The German officers concurred and said they would contact their commander while Hodges sought approval from U.S. Command and the International Red Cross.

All agreed and a truce was set for Nov. 16, 1944, in the vicinity of Le Magouer/Etel on the Etel River. The exchange would be carried out in accordance with the Geneva Convention, man-for-man and rank-for-rank.

On the 16th, Hodges crossed the river alone to see if U.S. prisoners were there. Seeing him, the ecstatic POWs yelled, "Who won the World Series?" and "Who won the election?" Scores of German officers watched as 79 Americans were ferried across the Etel to friendly lines during the six-hour truce. The exchange made headlines in Europe and America.

Hearing of allied prisoners being held at St. Nazaire, Gen. Maloney asked Hodges to try his negotiation skills once more. After initial contact with German officers on Nov. 21, Hodges re-entered Festung St. Nazaire on Thanksgiving Day, where he was taken blindfolded by vehicle and motor-torpedo boat on a two-hour trip to enemy headquarters. When the blindfold was removed, he found himself facing four high-ranking German officers.

Presented with a list of prisoners, Hodges said, "They aren't all here." Two American airmen, he was told, had escaped the previous

See Red Cross, p.8



Red Cross Field Director A. Gerow Hodges, second from right, coordinates the Nov. 29, 1944, prisoner exchange with German officers at Pornic, France. (Signal Corps photo courtesy of the National Archives)

Construction, continued from p.1

600 steel piles were to be driven into bedrock—35 to 40 feet below ground. The piles and slurry wall together provide support for the memorial plaza, as well as the vertical structures and water elements.

“We’re making great progress because no one on the construction team is looking at this as just another

project,” said Barry Owenby, project executive for the American Battle Monuments Commission. “Everyone involved knows that we are creating an important piece of history. There is total commitment to quality and timeliness.”

Other work to be completed this fall includes the underground utility vaults, the initial rebuilding of the

Rainbow Pool as the centerpiece of the memorial plaza, and the foundation of the new comfort station.

Granite will begin arriving for installation early next year, at about the midpoint of the 30-month construction schedule that began in September 2001.

Construction is scheduled for completion in early spring 2004.



A view of the fountain vault excavation. The vault will house the pumps and valves that control the memorial’s pools and fountains. (Photo by Stefano Terricola)



A crane drives a steel pile into bedrock. Nearly 600 steel piles will support the memorial’s concrete foundation. (Photo by Richard Latoff)



Workers monitor the progress of a pile-driving operation. (Photo by Stefano Terricola)



A concrete cap is poured on top of each pile as part of the foundation support structure. (Photo by Stefano Terricola)

Veterans Organizations Reach Their Goals



The American Legion presented National Chairman Bob Dole with a check for more than \$4.5 million. Shown are (left to right) Senator Dole; Cliff Smith, commander, Sons of the American Legion; Pete Wheeler, chairman, WWII Memorial Advisory Board; Mack Fleming, WWII Memorial Advisory Board; ABMC Commissioner Maj. Gen. Pat Brady, USA (Ret); Sherry McLaughlin, president, American Legion Auxiliary; Ric Santos, American Legion Past National Commander; and ABMC Secretary Maj. Gen. John Herrling, USA (Ret). The Legion family raised a total of \$4.7 million for the memorial.

National Chairman Bob Dole and ABMC Executive Director Ken Pond receive an \$850,000 check from Veterans of Foreign Wars Past Commander-in-Chief James Goldsmith. The check presentation wrapped up the VFW's \$6.3 million fundraising effort for the memorial. (VFW photo by Gloria Montgomery)



A diamond finish is applied to granite destined for the memorial by a worker in a New England Stone Industries plant in Quonset Point, R.I. (Photo by Rick Latoff)



A view of the memorial construction site taken from the top of the Washington Monument. Completed white pile caps can be seen on the left and in the upper right. (Photo by Richard Latoff)





MAIL CALL

We welcome your letters and will print a selection in the newsletter as space permits. Letters are subject to editing and should be sent to Editor, NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL Newsletter, 2300 Clarendon Blvd., Suite 501, Arlington, VA 22201. Please include a daytime phone number and, if available, an e-mail address.

BENEFITS

Veterans of WWII who were prisoners of war are at the age when 10 are dying every day. Of the 42,781 surviving ex-POWs of all wars, only 36.5% are receiving the VA compensation benefits they so dearly earned and so richly deserve.

I urge these veterans to contact the Department of Veterans Affairs at 800-827-1000. They will be put in touch with the nearest VA regional office where they can talk with a benefits counselor. I also suggest that they call the National Office of American Ex-POWs at 817-649-2979 and inquire about the help available to them from our national service officers.

Leon Horowitz
National Service Officer
American Ex-Prisoners of War

FIREFIGHT

I was one of approximately 60 U.S. Navy men in a reconnaissance party under the command of Capt. Norman S. Ives. We left Cherbourg, France, on Aug. 1, 1944, and spent the night in Granville. We were en route to St. Malo, a port reportedly captured from the Germans by U.S. armed forces.

Leaving Granville on the morning of Aug. 2, we were soon passing elements of Gen. Patton's armored units. Later in the morning we encountered German units near the small town of Dol-en-Bretagne. In the course of a two-hour firefight, before the army came to rescue us, we lost about 20 killed and wounded, including Capt. Ives. Among the army rescuers was a Sherman tank named "Dingbat II." Never were we so happy to see the army!

All our dozen or so vehicles were lost to the Germans for several days before the army recaptured them and returned them to us in Cherbourg. We then learned we had been 17 miles in front of the army!

I would be interested in hearing from any members of this navy group. My address is 1508 Hinman Ave, #6D, Evanston, IL 60201, and my e-mail is Walcat@core.com.

Walter N. Dreyfus
Evanston, Ill.

LOAF OF BREAD

I am proud to be an active member of the National WWII Memorial, as well as a contributor to the Registry of Remembrances on behalf of my father Dan. E. Coffee, who served with General Patton in the North African and Sicilian

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STILL GIVING

My father Thomas L. Swanson is a veteran who at age 82 still displays his honor by participating in the color guard at Memorial Day services and several funerals throughout the year. He is one among a group of local WWII veterans who understand that honoring one's country is a lifetime endeavor and can be done in many ways.

We put this picture in our hometown paper for Father's Day with this caption: "We salute you for your love of family and country." This photo of a grandfather holding in one hand his rifle and in the other hand his great-grand-

daughter's hand, with a stream of flags for fallen soldiers flying overhead and headstones of loved ones below, seems to speak louder than words.

I thank those who are responsible for achieving the construction of a National WWII Memorial. I hope my father is alive and well when the memorial is dedicated. It will be a bittersweet moment, the honoring of lives lost for freedoms we still enjoy.

I want to let all of the WWII veterans know that we appreciate what they have given in the past and how they keep on giving of themselves.

Suzanne Lindsay
Holdrege, Neb.



campaigns. He was severely wounded while being captured in July 1943. He returned home in 1944 and died of heart disease in 1979.

The following incident is recorded in his personal diary:

“On September 22, the wounded prisoners were placed on a hospital train bound for Germany. I was still a stretcher case, never having been out of bed. My good friend

Newton, a P-40 pilot whom I met in the hospital, came over and told me that several of the Americans were planning to escape off the train that night. We left Lucca about 4:30 p.m. and we were still in Italy during the early part of the night.

“I told him that due to my condition I hardly felt like getting off a moving train. He said I was the only one he would go with and, if I felt like going, to let him know.

“About two hours out of Lucca,

the Germans came around with some dark, mouldy-looking bread, about one and a half pounds to the man, and said that was our ration for three days. Actually on the bottom of my loaf were the figures 1933 and I later learned that’s when it was baked!

“As soon as I saw this I said, ‘Newt, let’s get off!’”

Pat Coffee
Beeville, Texas

SEEKING INFORMATION

My brother Robert J. Host served with the infantry in the European Theatre. He was called to join the army Nov. 27, 1943, and was sent overseas, where he was killed in France Jul. 27, 1944.

Anyone who served with him and who might remember anything about him, please contact me at 539 W. 5th St., Williamstown, PA 17098. It will be greatly appreciated.

Shirley Host Lawrence
Williamsport, Pa.

I am writing in the hope that I can locate Ross Holden, TMC 3C, from Phoenix, Ariz., and Glen Thomas from Chattanooga, Tenn. Both men were friends of my brother David Jensen, with whom they served on the USS Walke, DD223. My brother was killed Jan. 6, 1945, when a kamikaze attacked the ship.

Following the war, a young man visited our family in Baltimore, Md. He and David had a pact that if anything happened to one of them, the other would visit his family. At the time I was only 13 years of age and so don’t remember his name, but I believe it was one of these men.

I would like to hear from anyone who knows these men, or if one

or both of them reads this I would appreciate hearing from them. I can be reached at 3472 N. Main St. Rd., Holley, NY 14470-9310.

Elizabeth J. Gleason
Holley, N.Y.

Did you serve with the 326th Ordnance Company at Fort Bragg, Fort Dix or Askchurch, England, Dept. G-25, 1941–1945, or with the 3041st Company, 622 Ordnance in 1945 at Champigny-Sur-Marne, France?

If any of the above is familiar, drop a line to me at 553 Greentree Dr., New Hope, PA 18938-1592.

Cpl. Frank C. Simons
New Hope, Pa.

I hope to locate anyone from the 70th Infantry Division, 275 Infantry Regimental Headquarters Company who served in France, Alsace, and Germany in 1944–46.

I can be reached at 3310 Fairmount St., #12B, Dallas, TX 75201.

Charles Jennings
Dallas, Texas

I am seeking addresses and phone numbers for the following WAVE officers I served with at the U.S. Navy Hospital in Dublin, Ga.,

from 1942-45: Dolly Werner, Helen Stone, Harriet Sheets and Corinne Way. We are all over 85, so there is not much time left to seek each other.

I can be contacted at Box 362821, San Juan, PR 00936-2821.

Auguste V. Stubbe Besosa
San Juan, P.R.

Is there anyone who would remember Sheila O’Connell, who worked at Willow Run, one of the war plants in this area of Michigan? She had an Irish brogue and was 5’2”.

I can be reached at 7425 Bishop Rd., Brighton, MI 48116.

Sheila O’Grady
Brighton, Mich.

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night. But, replied Hodges, British Capt. Michael Foot's name was not on the list. "He is not for exchange," snapped a German colonel. "He has tried to escape three times and is seriously wounded. Besides, he knows too much."

Foot knew more than the Germans could imagine. An S.A.S. officer, he had entered German lines to "dispatch" an officer in the S.S. security service noted for his terrible treatment of prisoners.

Standing to leave, Hodges announced that all prisoners would be included or the exchange was off. Dumbfounded, the colonel snorted, "You would sacrifice the freedom of all prisoners for one English officer?"

"Yes," replied Hodges, "for one English officer or one French private. It is all or none."

The colonel eventually demanded five German majors holding the Knights Cross of the Iron Cross for Foot, but Hodges wouldn't budge. After lengthy haggling, Hodges asked, "Are you saying that one seriously injured, jaundiced British captain is worth as much as five highly decorated German majors?"

"Nein, nein!" shouted the colonel, "Let him have his British captain!"

On Nov. 29, 1944, at Pornic, southeast of St. Nazaire, the S.A.S. officer was exchanged with 19 Americans, two British and 32 French soldiers and resistance fighters. Of 100 S.A.S. captured by the Germans, only six survived. Foot was one of the lucky few.

The Pornic exchange made headlines and newsreels in the U.S., England, and even in Nazi Germany. The Red Cross hailed it as a "first to end firsts." Hodges was, according to the Germans, a "diplomatic wizard."

Hodges twice returned to the Lorient pocket in December, once to retrieve a badly injured U.S. soldier and later to negotiate the release of 15 American airmen.

Hodges received two Bronze Stars for his efforts on behalf of POWs. According to Foot, now a noted author, historian and television military commentator, Hodges was the "only one I know of to have personally negotiated an exchange of prisoners" during World War II. "It was quite remarkable," he said. "He literally saved my life."

Hodges remains active in Birmingham civic affairs, the scouting movement and at Samford University, where he is a trustee emeritus.

Triple Play, continued from p.2

At 7 a.m. on Feb. 15, three attacks would begin. Ringler's paratroopers would jump near the camp, Skau's force would assault the camp, and Lt. Col. Ernest LaFlamme's 1st Battalion, 188th Glider Infantry, and supporting troops would attack southward to block Japanese reaction forces, and, if needed, drive east toward Los Baños to help secure the camp. Lt. Col. Joseph Gibbs' 672nd Amphibious Tractor Battalion, with Maj. Henry Burgess' 1st Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry (minus B Company) aboard, would cross the lake and land on the beach near Los Banos, then move to the camp to transport the POWs to freedom.

Early on the 15th Ringler's paratroopers flew to their small drop zone as guards formed up for physical training inside Los Baños. Sleepy internees falling out for roll call saw four low-flying aircraft approach the camp. When Ringler's parachute popped open, Skau's men and the guerrillas opened fire, killing most of the Japanese. Ringler's paratroopers arrived and mopped up.

Within 30 minutes, the camp was secured, and by 3 p.m. 2,147 prisoners and their rescuers were safely behind American lines. Two U.S. troops and two guerrillas were killed; four internees, three or four soldiers, and five guerrillas were wounded.

American troops and Filipino guerrillas thus completed a miraculous triple play, freeing more than 7,000 military and civilian POWs on Luzon. Unfortunately, many of the liberators and liberated, including my father, did not survive the war.

The liberated have never forgotten those who gave them life and freedom.



Smiling U.S. prisoners of war re-enter American lines at Pornic, France, on Nov. 29, 1944. (Signal Corps photo courtesy of the National Archives)