

September 2009

The ORION GALLIVANTER

1917 - 1919

Dickebush Sector
Mount Kemmel
Vierstraat Ridge
East Poperignhe Line
Hindenburg Line
LaSelle River St. Souplet
Meuse-Argonne St. Mihiel



1940- 1945

Makin
Majuro
Eniwetok
Saipan
Okinawa

2001- Present

Enduring Freedom,
Afghanistan
Iraqi Freedom
Noble Eagle

Change of Command for the 27th BDE

By Spc. Ian Boudreau
27th IBCT Public Affairs

SYRACUSE – Members of the New York National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team applauded as they welcomed their new commander, Col. Geoffrey J. Slack, as he took command of the brigade from outgoing commander Col. Brian K. Balfe.

“While my emotions are mixed, as anyone who has relinquished a successful command can attest, I am confident that Col. Geoff Slack will rise to the occasion, and under his leadership, the 27th will meet and overcome all challenges ahead,” Balfe said during the ceremony, held in the Thompson Road National Guard Armory in Syracuse.



Balfe was marking the completion of more than three years as the commander of the 27th Brigade, including a

year's deployment to Afghanistan as part of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix VII, training the Afghan National Security Forces that include both the army and police forces.

A 1983 graduate of the Army's Military Academy at West Point, Balfe, who lives in Boston with his wife, Tara, became the first artillery officer to command a New York Army National Guard unit when he assumed command of the 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry Regiment. He deployed as the commander of a battalion task force to New York City in 2001 following the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center.

Col. Balfe's next assignment is with the 42d Infantry Division Headquarters in Troy, New York.

(Continued on page 4)

THE ORION GALLIVANTER



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VOL. XLVI September 2009 NO. 111

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Commander's Message

Hello and Greetings to all,

It is with mixed emotions, that I prepare my final message, as my term as the National Commander is closing.

It was at the 86th Annual reunion, the evening of 30 Sep 06, that I was sworn in as your National Commander. I felt very humble and proud to have been selected to serve in that position.

During the next year, the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team was ordered to prepare for mobilization to be deployed to Afghanistan. This meant that the one weekend a month and 15 days of annual training was out the window. All of the Officers, NCO's and Enlisted members went through many weeks and weekends of additional training and planning meetings. Included in this time consuming training, were the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Vice Commanders, the Treasurer, Editor and Quartermaster. Our Secretary was deployed to Iraq.

With all of the other activities that had to be done, they also were working on setting up a reunion for the week end of 3-5 Aug 07. It was a great reunion and I could never thank enough, all of the people involved in the preparation and execution of that event.

During the Membership meeting, a motion was made and seconded that the present slate of officers remain in place until the 27th BCT returns from the upcoming mission, It was passed.

With the 27th IBCT, including the majority of the Officers of Association, off to Afghanistan, I joined the rest of the families and friends of the deploying troops, along with the rest of the Association, in praying for them to have a successful mission and to return safely back home.

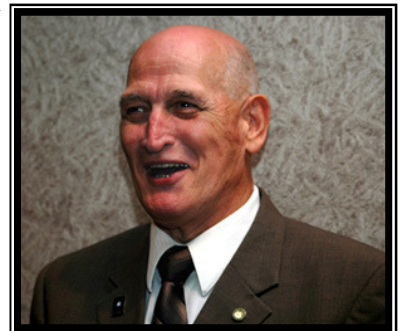
On February 14, 2009, a Board of Directors meeting was held and a motion was made, seconded and carried unanimously, that the current slate of officers maintain their present positions until the reunion Sept. 25-27, 2009.

The Reunion Committee has worked very hard and has an excellent Reunion is set up for the membership, so I hope to see a large turnout.

Thank you to the present Officers and members for all the help and support you have given me during the last three years. Please give your new National Commander Paul E. Hujer and the rest of the slate of Officers your help and prayers.

I remain yours in the 27th,

Raymond E. Swift
National commander



Editor's Corner



Mailing Addresses:

27th DIV ASSOCIATION **MEMBERS**

- Unit & Personal Remembrances
 - 80 Plus Club to the Editor
 - Historical stories
 - Reunion Notices
 - Mailbag items
 - Taps
 - New Membership application
 - **Membership Dues—\$15.00**
 - Memorial Fund Donations
 - Gallivanter Donations
 - Change of address

(The Post Office does not tell us you have changed address, you must let us know.)

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27th Division Association
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Lana Romano
P.O. Box 2522
Syracuse, NY 13220-2522
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The 27th Division Association, Inc.

Fellow Orion Veterans,

This issue should be reaching you just prior to the Annual Division Association Reunion Weekend. As with every weekend, a great deal of planning and preparation is always undertaken by the Association Officers. This year is no exception. Similar to our last weekend, on Saturday a series of displays will be on hand prior to a memorial ceremony. This year we honor those who have served under the Stars of Orion in Afghanistan as we again expand our 27th lineage.

This issue should also put us back on our quarterly cycle that was somewhat disrupted by the deployment. I want to thank everyone for their patience over the last year and a half. Producing the Gallivanter is a project I take very seriously. When I assumed the role of editor, it was my goal to produce a high quality publication that helped to further our organization, would inform veterans on the present activities of the 27th and would continue the legacy of this document from its beginnings as the “Gas Attack” in WW1 to this issue you hold in your hands. I want every issue to be a stand alone piece of unit history. I have refrained from “re-cycling” old articles and even if I have to accept grumbles or furrowed brows on occasion, I would rather send out a high quality issue late than send out a sub-par issue exactly on time. Our Gallivanter is constantly used as a recruiting tool for new members and as such should always be filled with timely, informative news of the 27th as it exists presently but will always retain its connection to the past.

With that said, I’m working with Jeff Milligan, an Orion veteran of two theaters and an avid collector of 27th DIV memorabilia, to bring quality articles from the Division’s days of glory. (See the new “History Corner” segment in this and future issues.)

Lastly, there was an error in the mailing database last issue that left off your dues date. It should be corrected with this issue.

See you all at the reunion!

Sincerely,
Your Editor
(CPT) Robert Romano

Slack took the podium after Balfe's remarks, and with the morning summer heat and humidity beginning to rise in the armory, he took the opportunity to issue his first command to the Soldiers of his brigade: "Okay, everybody, it's hot. Take 30 seconds and shake it out."

Relieved Soldiers standing in formation flexed their knees for a few moments before snapping back to attention.

"I am honored to have been selected as the new commander of this great brigade," Slack said. "No officer could be entrusted with a more important assignment, either in peace or in time of war."

Slack is no stranger to war himself. As a lieutenant colonel, he commanded the 1st Battalion of the "Fighting" 69th Infantry Regiment in and around Baghdad, Iraq, and became known to the Soldiers in his unit as the kind of commander who enjoyed patrols more than paperwork.

Following his deployment, Slack was selected to serve as a staff officer with New York's 42nd Division, until he attended the War College, where he earned a master's degree in strategic science.

He and his wife Debbie reside in Mastick Beach, Long Island, and have two children, William and Mary.



A letter from the 27th BDE Commander

August 18, 2009

Fellow *Orion Brigade* Veterans,

Greetings! The editor of the *Gallivanter* has invited me to write a short letter of introduction and perhaps a note or two on the future of the *Orion Brigade* and I am honored to do so. My name is Colonel Geoffrey Slack. I assumed command of this great brigade in late June and I've been working hard to get to know the brigade and its Soldiers since then. What I am finding as I travel among the 30 companies of the brigade is that it is, as expected, one spectacular organization.

What separates today's *Orion Brigade* from anything fielded by this unit since WWII is its incredible number of combat veteran's. As an officer of 30 years experience and a proud National Guardsman of over 22 year's service I have seen the New York National Guard in war and peace. I glory in the "goodness" of what our Citizen Soldier's bring to New York and our local communities but I have also seen its lesser side; complacency. No more! Our *Orion Brigade* Soldiers have all entered service or reenlisted since the war began 7 years ago. They know that deployment is a part of their Guard service and approach their duties with the battlefield in mind. In deed, word, and spirit this brigade is professional, aggressive, and determined to win.

I know every reader of this fine journal is proud of the professional accomplishments of the *Orion Brigade* and always will be. I take it for granted that you wouldn't spend time reading these words if you were only a casual observer of the brigade's activities. No, I assume that every reader is among the brigade's staunchest supporters and I place the greatest value on that support. I believe each of you is singularly well placed to support the brigade now and in the future. Each of you is an *Orion Brigade* veteran, each of you is likely a citizen of a community in New York in which our current brigade members live and work and each of you has a voice and a pen. I'd ask you to miss no opportunity to remember the brigade to your local newspapers, civic organizations, corporations and businesses. Our young Soldiers deserve community support and no one can do that as well as you!

I am honored to be the new *Orion Brigade* commander. I look forward to meeting each and every one of you. God bless!

Sincerely,

Geoffrey J. Slack
Colonel
27th IBCT
Commanding

'Fighting 69th' Soldiers Help Deliver Meals to Veterans

NEW YORK - As New Yorkers geared up to celebrate the July 4th weekend, Soldiers from 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment were on "active duty" on July 1 delivering boxed holiday meals to World War II veterans in Harlem. The boxes contained assorted food-items to help home-bound City Meals-on-Wheels recipients get through the three-day weekend when their local meals delivery centers are closed.

After packing up the boxed meals at the Jackie Robinson Senior Center in Harlem, the group made special meal deliveries to elderly City Meals' clients including a 93-year-old World War II veteran who served in the Air Force, an 81-year-old World War II veteran who served in the Navy and an 88-year old World War II Army veteran who served in England, France and Okinawa.



"Today, we are honored to be in the company of seven incredibly brave Soldiers from New York's Fighting 69th and a few old Soldiers who fought generations before them. It is only because of the heroic efforts of our military men and women that we are able to celebrate our freedom this Independence Day," said Marcia Stein, executive director of City Meals-on-Wheels.

Citymeals-on-Wheels attempted to deliver 4th of July holiday boxes and friendly visits to 13,174 elderly New Yorkers before the Friday of the July 4th holiday weekend.

In honor of the holiday, the 69th Soldiers presented the meal recipients with American flags and other mementos.

New York Guardsmen and the Need For Speed

WATKINS GLEN

Thirty-seven New York Army National Guard Soldiers from across New York had the opportunity to meet with Vitor Meira, driver of Indy Race Car Number 4, a specially constructed tandem race car on Thursday, July 2 as the team prepared for Fourth of July race weekend.

Guardsmen talked with the car's crew, toured the pits, and even got to take test runs seated behind the driver while dressed in professional racing attire. The car featured a hood emblem for the 27th Brigade Combat Team, based in Syracuse.

The Army National Guard car is owned by Panther Racing team owner John Barnes. The Dallara Indy race car has a 3.5-liter Honda Indy V-8 engine and runs on ethanol. It's the latest addition to the team of race cars sponsored by the National Guard.



Two Battalions of the 27th Change Command - 27 BSTB & 1-258 FA

Under the vaulted ceiling of the historic Connecticut Street Armory, one commander handed the reins of the 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion to another Sunday afternoon.

Lt. Col. Reginald D. Sanders, who works at Fort Drum as the superintendent of the Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site (MATES), handed the BSTB battalion colors to Lt. Col. John H. Burke, the former New York National Guard acting command inspector general.

The 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team Commander, Col. Geoffrey J. Slack, presided over the ceremony and spoke highly of the two officers. Slack took command of the 27th IBCT in August.

"Lt. Col. Sanders exceeded every expectation from the state and nation," Slack said during the change of command ceremony.

Slack discussed Sanders' service not only as the BSTB's commander since Nov. 15, 2006, but also as the 27th Brigade's rear-detachment commander during the brigade's recent deployment to Afghanistan in support of Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix.

"His eye to seeing you as people first is central to his success as a commander," Slack said to the battalion formation. "Through that knowledge, he led this unit to the superior state that I find it in today."

"Being a commander is what I consider to be the signature achievement in my career," Sanders said during his official remarks to the unit. "I'm very proud of you."

For his part, Burke told the gathered Soldiers of the battalion that he looked forward to leading them, and briefly laid out a list of his top priorities: accomplishing the mission, taking care of troops, making good and honest decisions, training and empowering subordinates, and smiling.

"We're in America, the greatest country in the world, and this is the greatest Army in the world," he said. "I'm a Western New Yorker, so this is coming home for me."

Burke began his military career as a Marine lieutenant, in 1981. He completed his term of service with the Marine Corps and moved back to Western New York, and joined the Army

National Guard in 1998. Since then, he has deployed with Operation Iraqi Freedom III and served as the mobilization and readiness officer for the New York National Guard during the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

He said he is looking forward to working as a commander of Soldiers again.

"If someone asks me if I'd rather build things or lead, I want to lead," Burke said. "Working with Soldiers is why I joined years ago. It validates everything I do."

The 27th Brigade Special Troops Battalion provides specialized Soldiers and resources to support the mission of the 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team.

Composed of command and control elements, military police, engineers, intelligence specialists, and communications specialists, special troops battalions were created so that modular combat teams such as the 27th would have the specialized resources that did not originally exist in older-model brigades.



Lt. Col. Michael Hoblin, a New City resident who served in Afghanistan last year, takes charge of a New York Army National Guard battalion today at a ceremony in Jamaica, Queens.

Hoblin, 39, takes command of the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery Regiment, from Lt. Col. Paul Conte, the outgoing commander.

The battalion has 433 members whose main mission is to provide artillery support to the 27th Infantry Brigade combat team, a National Guard unit based in Syracuse.

"It's a great responsibility," said Hoblin, a lifelong Rockland resident who was raised in Suffern. "As a battalion commander it's my responsibility that soldiers are trained for wartime mission and to serve the state of New York."

A graduate of Fordham University, Hoblin was commissioned as a field artillery officer in 1991. He served on active duty as a fire direction officer, a company fire support officer, a radar platoon leader and a battery commander in the 3rd Infantry Division and the 1st Cavalry Division.

He is also a veteran of the 1991 Persian Gulf War.

While deployed in Afghanistan, he was the civil military operations officer for the 27th Infantry Brigade combat team. His unit helped mentor members of the Afghan police and army. As the



civilian military officer, he was in charge of building schools, clinics, bridges and canals.

Under his watch, the unit helped build 47 schools across Afghanistan.

At today's ceremony at the National Guard Armory in Jamaica, a formal transfer of battalion colors from Conte to Hoblin is to take place. The ceremony dates to the days when the colors were always close to the commander so that soldiers knew where to rally on the battlefield.



Under Hoblin's leadership, the 1st Battalion, 258th Field Artillery, will train to handle an upgraded version of howitzers, said Lt. Col. Richard Goldenberg, a spokesman for the National Guard in Albany. The unit will also prepare for mobilization.

Hoblin said he wants to continue the tradition of the battalion, which goes back to the Revolutionary War. The military predecessor of the 258th Field Artillery was once entrusted with the security of Gen. George Washington. The unit bears the nickname "The Washington Grays."

During his years of service, Hoblin has been awarded the Bronze Star, the Joint Service Commendation Medal, the Southwest Asian Campaign Medal, the Afghanistan Campaign Medal, the Kuwait Liberation Medal, the NATO Medal and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal. He has also been awarded the Army Parachutist Badge.

He lives in New City with his wife, Rowena; and three children, Michael, Patrick and Catherine.

- History Corner -

A look at documents, memorabilia and collections that help tell the story of the 27th

Artifacts of the Quarter: 1920's Era Veterans' Patches

At the end of WWI, most mobilized Regular Army, National Army, and National Guard Soldiers were discharged immediately upon returning home from the trenches. For a majority of Soldiers, the only opportunity to wear the uniform in which they served overseas was in victory parades. When the 27th Infantry marched through New York City on March 25th, 1919, the Guardsmen wore their uniforms and the Orion Patch with pride- but it was not easy to get the patches! Standard patches were not issued or available for purchase as they are today. Many Soldiers wore hand-made insignia or patches made from Liberty Loan souvenirs or welcome home ribbons.

In the 1920's, Remembrance Day parades created a market for unit insignia. Soldiers wanted to loudly proclaim the division they served with- and few units were as proudly displayed as the 27th New York! A wide variety of styles were available, and veterans would commission their own from private tailors. The 1920's era veterans' patches are some of the most beautiful and collectable unit patches, and can still be found today.



Large felt Shoulder Sleeve Insignia worn by veterans next to a current issue patch:



"Letterman" style silk screened veterans patch:

Geoff Milligan is presently serving as the A Co. 427 BSB Commander and historian for the 27th DIV. He is a veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan. Ed.

MAILBAG

— TAPS —

Joseph Simek of Binghamton, NY passed away at age 91. Joe was a long time member of the 27th DIV Association. He was deployed to Fort McClellan in October 1940 with the 27th DIV, E Co, 106th INF and proudly served with the unit throughout the Pacific campaign and received the Purple Heart. He is survived by his son and daughter in law, William and Linda Simek.

2008. He was predeceased by his wife, Margaret, in 1985.

Louis began his military career in 1938 with G Co, 2-106th IN. In 1940 he attended OCS and served in the Pacific with the 124th Regiment, 31st Infantry. He attained the rank of 1st LT and was awarded the Purple Heart and Bronze Star. After WW2 he served with Co G as 1st SGT and served with the Division of Military and Naval Affairs at the Oneonta Armory, retiring after 31 years of service.

Edmund Shultis of Oneonta, NY passed away on 15 December, 2008. He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Freda and two sons, Edmund and Larry.

Ed enlisted in the Air Force in May 1942 to become a pilot. Due to a sight issue he was returned to the Infantry. He was chosen for OCS, graduating in July 1945 and was sent to Japan for a one year tour during the occupation. After discharge in September 1946, he joined the NY Army National Guard and would later command G Co, 108th Infantry.

 Louis Bertuzzi of Oneonta, NY passed away on 10 May

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Customer Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Phone: _____

QTY	ITEM	ITEM COLOR	SIZE	LOGO TITLE	PRICE	TOTAL

SHIRT COLORS: RED, WHITE, GREY, BLACK, GREEN, RED & BLACK, AND BLUE.
 HAT COLORS: WHITE, RED, BLACK, TAN, RED & BLACK, AND BLUE.

LOGO TITLES: 27TH DIVISION ASSOC.
 27TH BCT

ITEMS	PRICE
COFFEE MUG	\$ 5.00
SHIRT	\$ 20.00
HAT	\$ 15.00

SUB TOTAL	
SHIPPING	\$ 7.00
TOTAL	



AUTHORIZED BY _____ DATE _____

The Annual 27th Division Association Reunion
 SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2009
 Doubletree Inn
 6301 State route 298
 East Syracuse, NY 13057

Timeline for Re-Union Events

Friday

1600	Registration table opens at Double Tree
1600-1830	Registration/ Membership drive, annual dues collection.
1830-2000	Blinger—Buffet
2000-Close	Hospitality Suite

Saturday

0730-0930	Breakfast at Double Tree
0945	Shuttle to Armory
1000-1115	Static Displays around Armory
1130	Memorial Service in front of 27th BDE Armory
1200	Shuttle to Double Tree
1230	Lunch at Double Tree
1400-1500	General Meeting
1700	Hospitality Suite opens
1800	Cash Bar in Dining Room opens
1900	Evening meal is served
2000	Presentations (Guest of Honor speech, swearing in of new officers, New CDR speech)
2100-Close	Hospitality Suite re-opens



27TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION BOARD NOMINATIONS

These are the current officers of the Association Board:

National Commander:	Ray Swift, Sr.
1 st Vice CDR:	Paul Hujer
2 nd Vice CDR:	Eric Killoran
3 rd Vice CDR:*	Gary Yaple
Treasurer (P):*	Paul Hernandez
Secretary (P):*	Lana Romano
Editor (P):	Robert Romano
Quartermaster:	Rollin Skellington
Historian:*	(Acting) Gary Yaple (Nominee) Paul Milligan
Sergeant-at-Arms:*	(Vacant) (Nominee) Fred Burke
Surgeon:*	(Vacant)

A member in good standing can be nominated for any position, though the Vice CDRs usually move up all the way through National Commander.

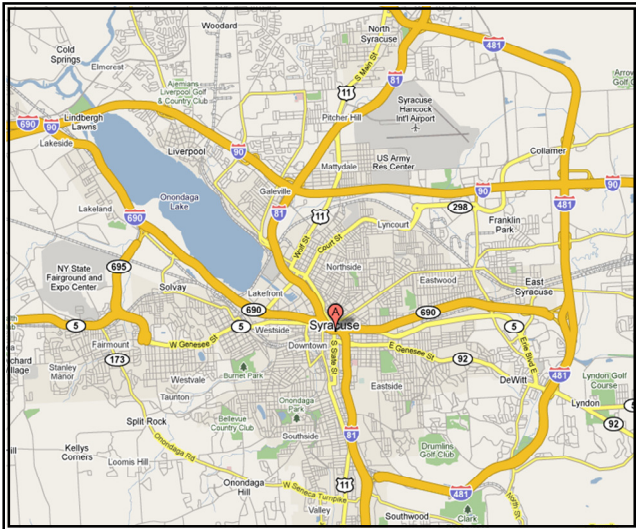
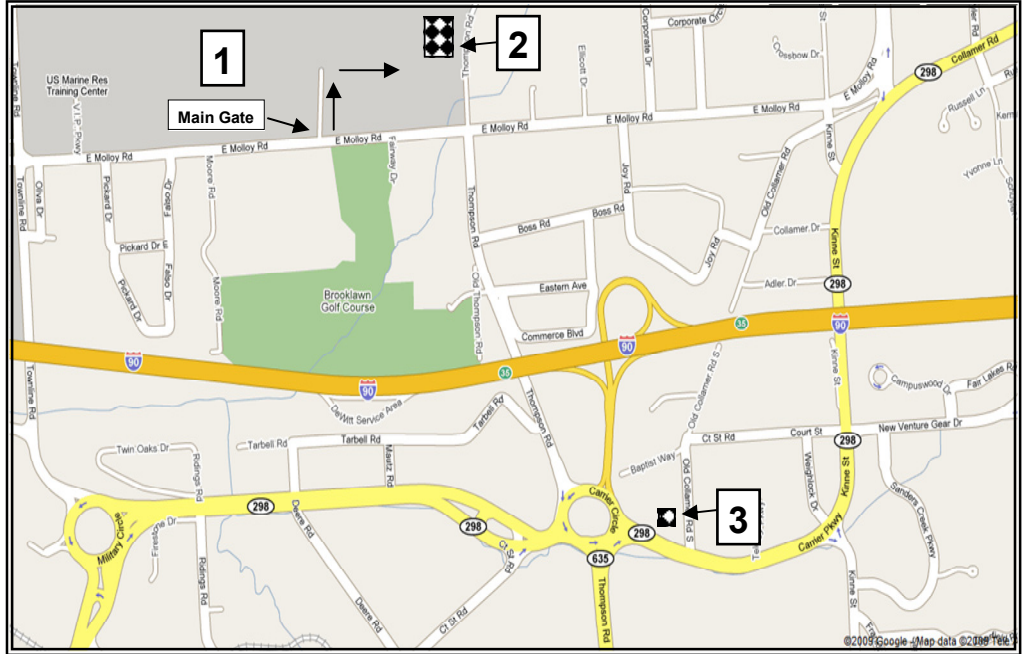
Specifically, positions in which we are looking for nominations are:

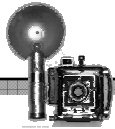
- 3rd Vice Commander
- Treasurer
- Secretary
- Sergeant-at-Arms
- Surgeon

The Annual 27th Division Association Reunion
 SEPTEMBER 25-27, 2009
 Doubletree Inn
 6301 State route 298
 East Syracuse, NY 13057

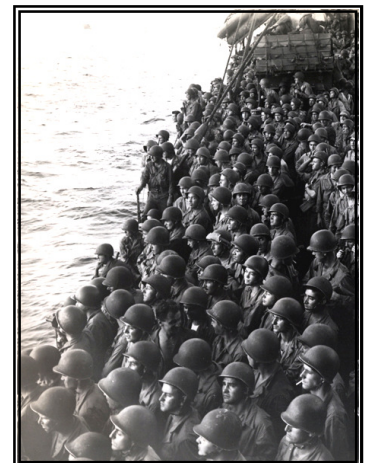
Reunion Destinations

- (1) Hancock Air National Guard Base
- (2) Army National Guard Armory
- (3) Double Tree Hotel





THE SHUTTERBUG PAGE



Have a picture you want to submit for the Shutterbug Page? Mail a copy of the photo to the Editor's Home address (See: Masthead) or E-Mail a scanned copy to the Editor at: Robert.romano@us.army.mil

THE ORION GALLIVANTER



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Age Please check <30 \$200 31-40 \$190 41-50 \$170

51-60 \$150 61-70 \$120 71-80 \$90 81 & up \$60

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