

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

The Eyes of Orion

The New York Army National Guard's 27th Infantry Brigade Combat Team will have a hawk's eye view of the battlefield thanks to the Soldiers who operate the brigade's Shadow RQ-7 unmanned reconnaissance aircraft.

Over a dozen Soldiers of the brigade, which is deploying to Afghanistan in 2012, flew the cutting-edge aircraft from Fort Drum's Wheeler Sack Airfield here on April 15 and 16. The Soldiers, who belong to the brigade's Detachment 1, Company B, Special Troops Battalion, flew four training missions during a brigade command-post exercise here.

It was the first time the detachment flew the aircraft at Fort Drum.

The training completed the Rochester-based detachment's new equipment fielding, giving Soldiers experience in launching the aircraft, flying it, operating the aircrafts' cameras, communicating with the brigade command post and recovering the aircraft. The Shadow enables the brigade to instantaneously see things they couldn't see otherwise, creating a more three-dimensional picture of the battlefield, said Staff Sgt. Nathan Edwards, the detachment's standardization instructor-operator.

"We are the commander's eye in the sky," said Edwards, who is from Livonia, N.Y.

Though the Shadow drones like an overused lawnmower, Soldiers operating it by remote-control can fly the aircraft to heights of 15,000 feet, use its infrared camera system to see minute details on the ground and gather crucial intelligence for the brigade. That intelligence, including enemy locations and actions, helps improve security for friendly forces and civilians, said Edwards.

Safeguarding lives is the most rewarding part of the job, said Shadow-operator Pfc. Brian Delaney, of Buffalo.

"The main purpose of the aircraft is to keep lives on the ground safe, both civilian and military," he said.

Over-watching troops to keep them safe is one of the exciting aspects of operating the Shadow, said Shadow-operator Sgt. Kyle Benedict, of Syracuse. The Soldiers who operate the Shadow must stay abreast of the latest intelligence and recognize suspicious activities in order to transmit accurate information to the brigade, he added.

The Shadow's infrared camera is sensitive enough to discern the temperature difference of freshly turned earth -- a sign of new digging, which could indicate the emplacement of IEDs, Benedict said. To get a better of

(Continued on page 4)



THE ORION GALLIVANTER



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Commander's Message

Fellow members of the 27th Division Association, Veterans and family members I say, "hello!"

It is a distinct privilege to be addressing you again as the National Commander.

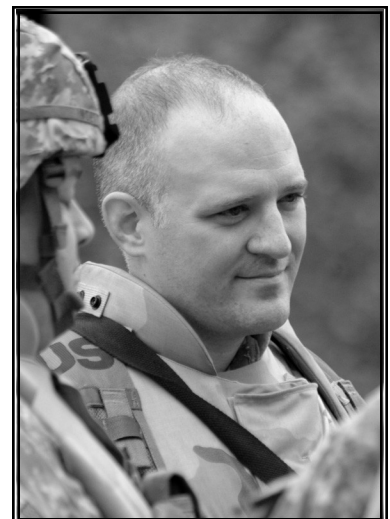
As summer approaches I know we all look forward to the good weather and spending time with love ones on vacation and outdoors.

We also move closer to our reunion. I hope you will all join me during this time and celebrate our friendship, service and honor those who have served. This year we are trying a different approach with an afternoon picnic on Saturday where all the families of the Division Association members are invited and encouraged to attend. We have also invite our brothers and sisters of Task Force Phoenix—the recent Afghanistan mission, to attend. It is my hope that they and their families will join us and enjoy the day with their families and old friends.

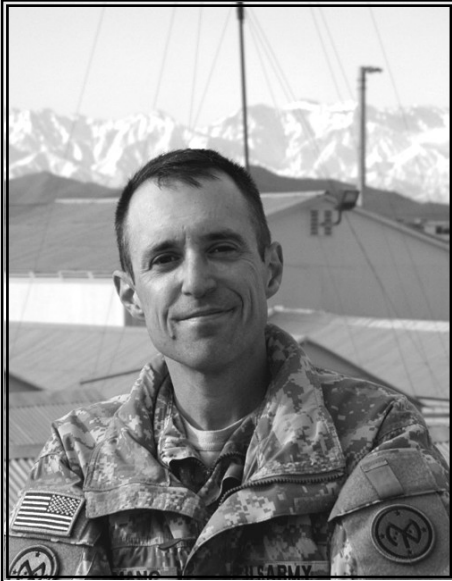
I look forward to seeing everyone in July!

Sincerely,

Eric Killoran
27th DIV Association
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
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Hello 27th Veterans!

We continue to draw closer to our reunion in the summer. As mentioned by the DIV Association Commander, we're trying something different this year combining the reunion with an afternoon picnic intended to draw the veterans from the 27th BDE's Afghanistan deployment. Hopefully we can bring many of these Orion veterans into the fold as we come together as a group and show the importance of keeping our history and camaraderie alive.

This is a busy year for the 27th. Numerous training and new equipment events will lead us to a culminating event in October as the Stars of Orion head to Fort Irwin California and a session at the National Training Center—a rare experience for a National Guard unit.

Within this issue are the forms for the reunion. Remember to fill it out promptly and return it with payment to get your best value and to help lock in the numbers.

Please keep your Gallivanter pictures, articles, stories and letters coming to the mailbox!

Sincerely,
Your Editor
Robert Romano

(Continued from page 1)

its optical capabilities, imagine you're standing on a ledge on the Empire State Building, looking at a penny on the pavement far below, he explained.

"You can actually read the date on the penny using the Shadow's camera," Benedict said.

The Shadow can also relay radio transmissions between units on the ground, Edwards explained. Since it's easier to maintain than a helicopter and can stay aloft longer, the Shadow is more cost-effective, he added.

Soldiers fly the Shadow and operate its cameras with computers and radios housed in specially-designed trucks, said Staff Sgt. Todd Berardicurti, the detachment's maintenance supervisor and non-commissioned officer in-charge. Two Shadow aircraft fit neatly in the back of other specially-designed trucks, which are also used to refuel them.



Though he was nervous the first few times he launched the Shadow, training and practice helped him overcome the jitters, Delaney said. Soldiers of the unit are well-trained and methodical, he stressed.

Volunteers Needed!

In honor of the upcoming 70th Anniversary of Pearl Harbor, "The New York State Military Museum and Veterans' Research Center" is indexing a list of men who were federalized from the New York National Guard in 1940. These men were sent to Fort McClellan in Alabama to train. Later, most of these men served in the 27th Infantry Division.

Volunteers need a computer and an email account. Rudimentary typing skills are beneficial.

For more information please contact:
Jim.Gandy1@us.army.mil

Jim Gandy
Assistant Librarian/Archivist
New York State Military Museum
61 Lake Avenue
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866
518.581.5109

MAILBAG

— TAPS —

*SGM LoBalbo, Charles M. Amsterdam NY.
Died, 18 JUL 2010*

*Mr. Famiano James H. Schenectady NY.
Died, 12 SEP 2010*

*Mr. Earley John P. Pine Bush NY.
Died, 22 FEB 2011*

— Memorial Fund—

*\$10.00 John Baker In Memory Of PVT
John Demming KIA in Pacific WWII*

*\$15.00 Vincent Busone In Memory of Bill
O'Brian & Tommy Baker*

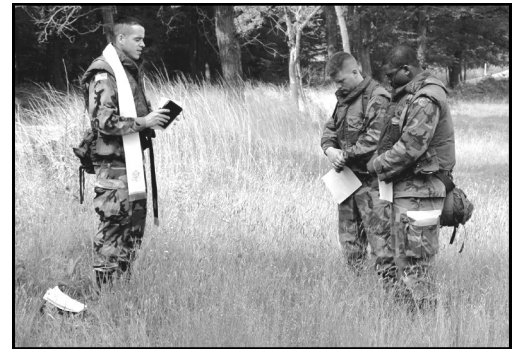
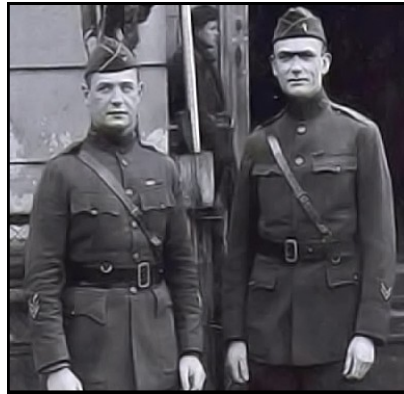
*\$15.00 Mary Slattery In Memory of Ned
Slattery*

- Gallivanter Fund -

*\$10.00 Vincent Busone
\$10.00 Mary Slattery
\$15.00 Palmer Larson
\$25.00 Robert Skoog*



THE SHUTTERBUG PAGE



HOW IT HAPPENED

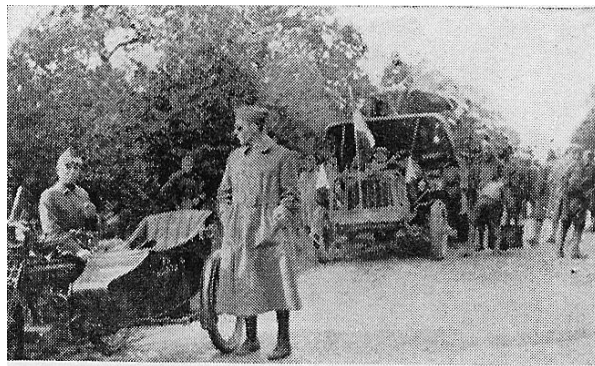
Part 5: To the Front

Sept. 7, 1918, we received final orders, packed up and said fond farewell to Camp De Songe and Bordeaux and were merrily on our way across France to really engage in actual combat with the Boche for which we had been craving and preparing since July 15, 1917. An ammunition train is composed of four motor truck companies, each company supposedly having 143 men and 33 trucks, two companies of 250 each and horse drawn caissons for carrying ammunition, then one wagon company of 250 men having mule drawn wagons for carting supplies. The train is separated into 2 battalions, the first four companies A to D being the motor battalion and E to G the horse battalion. The horse section went to the front by train while we in the motor section went overland in our trucks which was more pleasant as our previous experiences with the 40 Hommes, 8 chevau route were not of the pleasantest.

When we left Bordeaux each company had only 7 quads, 3 Riker 3 tons and one Packard 3 ton truck. We loaded our baggage and crowded on as many as possible with our feet dangling over the sides, we started merrily on our way to can the Kaiser. That night we stopped in a small town about 40 miles from Bordeaux and found that arrangements had been made for us to be billeted with the French people and to eat at our company mess or we could buy our meals if we wished. Sleeping in the French homes was also a treat. They all have very dandy feather mattresses and we slept between white sheets for the first time in months which you can imagine was surely a very pleasant experience for us; seemed almost like civilization, and in talking to the people we had to bring our whole vocabulary into play and incidentally added a few words to it. This continued for 8 days and we were favored by very fine weather, having rain only 2 days out of the 8 and each day we were getting nearer to the front. The large towns we stopped in on our way across France were Orleans, where we had 24

hours for repairing trucks, which gave us plenty of time to see the town; Lens, which is beautiful in a historic and ancient artistic sense and finally arrived at Bar Le Duc on Sept 17, 1918, where we saw our first signs of actual warfare. The Boche had gotten as far back as this town in their air raids and had tipped over a few buildings with their bombs.

Now we were getting to the interesting part of our journey. It had taken us many months to make it but we had finally arrived and felt that we were able to "deliver the goods;" also here we saw our first "bomb proofs" for the public to gather in during air raids - great concrete structures built over half circle steel affairs down in the ground and affording fine protection. Here I received my first hot tub bath in some months, although we had plenty of shower baths. Sept. 18, 1918 at 11 P.M. we pulled out of Bar Le Duc as quietly as possible as the place was full of German spies - orders against smoking - no lights of any



On the way to the Front.

kind allowed and no noise - things were getting mysterious. We arrived in the woods at 6 A.M. and unpacked and prepared to stay. In the afternoon we learned that we had not camouflaged ourselves properly and had been spotted by German observation planes, so at 3 in the afternoon we moved again to a woods about a kilometer from Baleycourt where we pitched our pup tents, hid trucks in the woods, were shown where the dugouts were and prepared for a night's rest. Everything peaceful; guard around under strict orders to allow absolutely no smoking. No lights of any kind and about 9 P.M. came a ziz-ziz-ziz-ziz, then a wham, then a few more



whams. Someone yelled Gas; no 6 seconds were required to get into the masks; we were in them in one second. Two of our fellows had been out on detail getting water for breakfast and strictly against orders had not taken their gas masks along. They had just gotten back to camp when the alarm sounded and this being a new camp and very dark they could not locate their domiciles to gather in their forgotten masks and their cries in the dark for assistance as to the location of their gas masks were really heart rending. "Where's my gas mask?" rang out many a time in pathetic tones as we

had had the horrors of gas thoroughly instilled into us during our training and now our first night at the front to have this pulled on us. Finally the two fellows found their gas masks and things quieted down. After about 45 minutes with the masks on the gas officer came around with the “All safe” news and we took them off. Each battalion had a gas officer who, when a gas attack is on, test the air once in a while and pronounces the air safe for the removal of the masks. We have very strict orders to wait for the gas officer to come around and order “Masks off—Lieut. Sweet” thus telling us that it was our own gas officer as we could usually recognize his voice. This was really necessary as in the trenches during a gas attack and in very good English giving the “Masks off” order the Germans had a great habit of coming over in the American trenches with very bad results to our men, making it necessary for us to be positive as to whom gave the all safe order after a gas attack. We were bombed three different times this first night at the front and had three gas alarms and a number of the boys spent the night in handy dirty dugouts and trenches playing with the rats.

The next morning tests were made and the verdict was that there had been absolutely no gas, merely that the Boche planes had come over and bombed some railways and main highways that were real close to us but we had our baptism and were learning how to really play war.

Next: “Dead Man’s Hill”

History Corner

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

Artifact of the Quarter

*This issue’s “artifact” is of one of the most treasured kinds:
an oral history*

THE BIG BANZAI

By Paul M. La Vallee as told to J. M. La Vallee

Captain Ferns had told us the Japs were going to come. There were twenty-two hand grenades jammed in the dirt at the front of my foxhole. I had ten bandoliers of ammunition for my rifle. My feet were in mud. Most people think of the tropics as hot, but I was freezing, shivering my ass off.

There was a drainage ditch running diagonally across in front of our position. I had put a grenade on a trip wire in the ditch. About 4 o’clock in the morning that grenade went off and I knew Japs were only fifty yards away.

Illumination flares went up and a machine gun opened on us. Ten yards to my right was Buttsy Desantis on a machine gun and ten yards to my left was Harry Travis on a machine gun. Slim Wright was in a foxhole behind and above me. The Japs fired on Buttsy’s gun first, then swept over to Harry’s gun without letting off the trigger. Tracers went right over my head. They swept the gun back to Buttsy’s position, then back to Harry’s gun. They fired a few seconds on each gun. When I realized what they were doing, I stuck my head up for a second and spotted the gun with two Japs on it. I fired two quick shots, aiming at the receiver of the gun. Those Japs dropped down and that gun didn’t fire again. “I got ‘em, Slim,” I hollered.

Then, all Hell broke loose. The Japs started coming by the thousands. They were coming at us running. Harry was firing nonstop. Japs were dropping two and three deep. He was shooting their arms and legs off, shooting off their heads, cutting them in two. They were falling over dead bodies getting up and getting shot. There were so many, coming so fast, you couldn’t kill them all. They were running right past my foxhole. I had to keep shooting straight ahead. If I turned one way or the other, there’d have been a Jap in the foxhole with me.

The Japs would aim at your muzzle flash. A bullet came in at an angle through the forearm on my Garand, it wouldn’t fire. I ducked down in my foxhole, took it apart, straightened the operating rod over my knee and put it back together. Thankfully, it fired again. The Garand was one hell of a good rifle; it saved my life that night.

When things settled down and it got a little light, there were Jap grenades around my foxhole that didn’t go off. We dropped back to help defend the Command Post. On the way, I found a Thompson lying next to a dead officer. I picked it up and threw my Garand away. On the way back, we came upon four Japs that had overrun us and were walking straight towards us. They didn’t know what hit them.

The Way it was - the Way it is

ARTILLERY OF THE 27TH

The **105 mm M2A1 (M101A1) howitzer** was the standard light field howitzer for the United States in World War II, seeing action in both European and Pacific theaters. The M101 was developed in 1928, but entered production in 1941. It quickly entered the war against the Imperial Japanese Army in the Pacific, where it gained a reputation for its accuracy and powerful punch. The M101 fired 105 mm high explosive (HE) semi-fixed ammunition and had a range of 11,200 meters (12,200 yd), making it suitable for supporting infantry.

The M101 continued to see service in Korea and Vietnam before being replaced by the M102 and other light howitzers.

Length 5.94 m (19.5 ft)

Height 1.73 m (5.7 ft)

Range: 11,270 meters



The **M119 Howitzer** is a lightweight 105-mm howitzer used by the United States Army. It can be easily airlifted, even by helicopter, or dropped by parachute. The howitzer was designed and produced by the British Royal Ordnance Factories as the L118/L119 Light Gun. In 1987 an agreement was reached to produce the L119 under license by the U.S. as the M119, to replace the M102 howitzer. Improvements were made to produce the M119A1, including increasing its extreme low temperature envelope from -30 C to -45C, adding a US digital fire control system, and improving maintainability. The army has renewed contracts for the M119 to be produced by the Rock Island Arsenal at Rock Island, Illinois into the year 2013.

Length 16 ft

Height 4.5 ft

Range: 19,500 meters (rocket assisted)



Author Captain Robert Romano has been the 27th Brigade's "New Equipment Fielding Officer" since 2006 and has been the primary project officer on over 75 fieldings from shotguns to satellite communications equipment.

The Annual 27th Division Association Reunion



JULY 22-24, 2011
Clarion Inn & Suites
100 Farrell Road
Syracuse, NY 13209



FOR TOTAL PACKAGE RESERVATIONS

Total Package Includes:

Schedule of Events:

- Lodging Friday & Saturday night
Dinner Friday, All meals Saturday &
Breakfast Sunday

- \$230 for a single (includes room,
all meals & gratuities for one person)

- \$300 for a double (includes room,
all meals & gratuities for two people)

- Friday: Check in at 4pm, “Blinger” at
5pm, followed by dinner at 6pm.

- Saturday: Continental Breakfast, General
Meeting 10am. Picnic 12pm—3pm. Cock-
tails at 6pm-7pm. Dinner Saturday evening
at 7pm.(Sliced Roast Top Sirloin, Au Jus,
Marinated Grilled Herb Boneless Breast of
Chicken, Broiled Haddock

Room and Meal Payments: Make checks payable to the 27th Division Association. Room reservations will be made by Committee, 27th Division Association as per the RSVP card received below. The Division Association will handle payment due to the Clarion Inn. A special registration table will be set up by the hosting Reunion Committee for registration, meal tickets and program package.

Total Package Reservation Card

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Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Spouse/Guest Name: _____

Street: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____ Phone: () _____

Number of Rooms: _____ Number of Persons: _____ Number of Nights: _____

Deluxe Double smoking non-smoking

Deluxe King Smoking non-smoking

Handicap Double smoking non-smoking

Handicap King Smoking non-smoking

RSVP Must be received No Later Than June 21, 2011

The Annual 27th Division Association Reunion



JULY 22-24, 2011
Clarion Inn & Suites
100 Farrell Road
Syracuse, NY 13209



FOR MEALS ONLY RESERVATIONS

Meal Package Only Prices:

- Friday Night Blinger: \$30/Person
- Saturday Morning B-Fast: Free
- Reunion Picnic: \$5 per person
- Banquet Dinner: \$35 per person
- Sunday Morning B-Fast: Free

Schedule of Events:

- Friday: Check in at 4pm, "Blinger" at 5pm, followed by dinner at 6pm.
- Saturday: Continental Breakfast, General Meeting 10am. Picnic 12pm—3pm. Cocktails at 6pm-7pm. Dinner Saturday evening at 7pm.(Sliced Roast Top Sirloin, Au Jus, Marinated Grilled Herb Boneless Breast of Chicken, Broiled Haddock

Indicate Required Meals by number of People in each box below.

Meal Payments: Make checks payable to the 27th Division Association. The Division Association will handle payment due to the Clarion Inn. A special registration table will be set up by the hosting Reunion Committee for Registration, meal tickets and program package.

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27th Division Association National Reunion 22-24 July 2011

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Street: _____ City: _____

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- Fri Blinger** **Saturday B-Fast** **Reunion Picnic** **Commander's Dinner** **Sunday B-Fast**
\$30 each **FREE** **\$5 each** **\$35 each** **FREE**

RSVP Must be received No Later Than June 21, 2011

The Fighting 69th Infantry:

When the 69th Leads the Parade, Their Dogs Come Along

On 5th Avenue St. Patrick's Day, military tradition trotted on four legs.

With wagging tongues and eager, up-turned tails, Benny and Jerry, two shaggy, hulking Irish wolfhounds, enjoyed a long walk up and down Manhattan's avenues with the Soldiers of the New York Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, Fighting 69th Infantry Regiment.

For 160 years, the Fighting 69th has led New York City's 250-year old St. Patrick's Day parade, and for as long as anyone can remember, Irish wolfhounds like Benny and Jerry have been there at the front of the line.

Ask the Soldiers holding the leashes, however, and they'll say it was less of a walk, and more like a pull. "It's a 150-pound dog -- it pretty much walked me," said Spc. Daniel Messina, the unit's Soldier of the Year, adding that both he and Sgt. Adam Drobecker, the unit's Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year, often found the dogs pulling them toward strange whims as the dogs took in the estimated two million spectators at America's largest St. Patrick's Day parade.

Nonetheless, both Soldiers said they were thrilled by their opportunity -- to be in the front of the St. Patrick's Day parade, to be guiding the unit's mascots, to be guardians of such a long tradition.

"The Irish wolfhounds and the regiment have a very long history, dating back to the very beginning of the regiment," said Eileen Flanagan, for 20 years owner and handler of the unit's dogs. "They've always had them in parades."

Flanagan said the protective instincts behind the dogs' normally gentle nature were what inspired the unit's founders to adopt them as mascots, as well as the source for the motto emblazoned on every unit crest: "Gentle when stroked, fierce when provoked."

"They were originally battle dogs, which is why the regiment took them as a mascot," Flanagan said. "Their main job was to protect their master's back. They wouldn't go

in and be aggressive, but if you were threatening their owner, they would take you down. And it's not a dog that you want to see coming at you angry -- it's a very fitting mascot."

The crowd saw no glimpse of ferocity from Benny and Jerry on St. Patrick's Day, but what they saw was something very important to the Soldiers of the 69th: the continuation of the St. Patrick's Day tradition, a tremendous source of pride for so many in the much deployed, much celebrated Fighting 69th.

"You take a unit that has a celebrated past; it leaves something to live up to," said Thomas J. Fitzsimmons, commander of the unit's veterans corps. "Our past, to us, is very important. The most important part of the past is that no one else forgets. We haven't -- we want to keep it that way."

Fitzsimmons, who has marched in nearly 50 parades, said while upholding the traditions of the past is key, he

sees the Soldiers of today preparing to go to Afghanistan in November, and he said he is encouraged by both what he sees as respect for the past and motivation to succeed in the present.

And that's the crux of it -- at the intersection of 5th Ave. and 79th, the Soldiers of the 69th turned and left the parade route, and at the intersection of past and present, Soldiers like Messina and Drobecker cannot help but be propelled by the pull of their unit's tradition, by Benny and Jerry and much, much more.

"It was a great honor to lead the New York City Parade," said Drobecker, "especially on the 250th anniversary. To be up front with the battalion's mascot, the Irish wolfhound, is a great honor. It's been something they've been doing for years and years, and I just felt privileged to serve in a unit with such history and tradition.

"I love representing my unit," said Messina. "It's the best unit ever -- the Fighting 69th."



Spec. Jay P. Lawrence - 42nd Infantry Division

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VOL. XLVIII April 2011 NO. 117

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

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