

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 Fighting 69th

Change was the theme inside the historic 69th Regiment Armory in November, as approximately 90 Soldiers and well-wishers packed the drill floor to celebrate the change of command of one of the New York Army National Guard's most historic units.

Command of the 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry Regiment officially transferred from Lt. Col. John Andonie to Maj. James C. Gonyo II in a ceremony equal parts celebration, tradition and acknowledgment.

Andonie, a West Point graduate who earned a Bronze Star in Iraq, led the "Fighting 69th" for the past two years. Now, he moves onto a staff assignment at the New York National Guard's Joint Force Headquarters as deputy director of operations and training.

"The last two years have been an incredible ride for me," Andonie said. "I don't think there's any assignment out there that compares to being commander of

the 69th.

"No one ever leaves the Fighting 69th," Andonie added. "We're all part of one family, connected by our history, our lineage, and our supporters."



Gonyo, who received his commission from Officer Candidate School in Fort Benning, Ga., also received a Bronze Star for service in Iraq. During his 19-year military career, he has served in a variety of assignments, including tactical officer for the New York National Guard's Officer Candidate School and commander of the New York National Guard Counterdrug Task Force, among others.

"Today's not really about me, it's about Lt. Col. Andonie," Gonyo said. "It's about sharing our love, and our thanks for the job that he's done."

That thanks included a reception in the armory's Duffy Room, home of paintings of past commanders,
(Continued on page 4)

THE ORION GALLIVANTER



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE 27TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.

The Orion Gallivanter is published Quarterly
by the 27th Div. Assoc., P.O. Box 2522, Syracuse, NY 13220-2522.
Subscription rates included in annual dues of \$15.00 per year.

PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID, PERMIT No. 994
SYRACUSE, NY

All communications pertaining to the Gallivanter, membership dues
and contributions should be sent to 27th Division Association,
Attn: Sec/Editor, P.O. Box 2522, Syracuse, NY 13220-2522

VOL. XLVIII December 2010 NO. 116

HONORARY COMMANDERS
Sgt. Arthur J. Coakley

OFFICERS 2010-2011

Commander Eric Killoran,
12 Cambridge Dr. Clifton Park, NY 12065

1st Vice-Commander: Gary S. Yaple
7576 Poplar Field Circle, Baldwinsville, NY 13027

2nd Vice-Commander: Paul Hernandez

3rd Vice-Commander: Ray Swift Jr.

Sgt.-At-Arms: Frederick Burke

Historian: Geoffrey Milligan geoffrey.milligan@us.army.mil

Judge Advocate: Hon. Bruce Fein
1904 Preble Road, Preble, NY 13141-9738

Surgeon: Vacant

Gallivanter Editor: Robert F. Romano
633 N. Caswell Rd. Freeville, NY 13068

Treasurer: Joseph Merrill C/O DIV PO Box

Chaplain: Chaplain Knowles

Assistant Chaplain: Robert Wartonick
3412 Lynwood Place, Vestal, NY 13850

Quartermaster: Joseph Cummings
6900 Thompson Road, Syracuse, NY 13211

Secretary: James Caggy
27th Division Association
P.O. Box 2522, Syracuse, NY 13220-2522

Sr. Past National Commander: Paul Hujer
63 Argonne Drive, Kenmore, NY 14217

Sr. Past National Commander: Ray Swift Jr.

Jr. Past National Commander: Michael Leonardo
318 Walberta Rd., Syracuse, NY 13219

Jr. Past National Commander: Gregory Gallup
R.D. #3, Song Lake Rd., Tully, NY 13159

DIRECTORS

4	Ralph Marotta	Amsterdam, NY
4	Louis Noto	Amsterdam, NY
11	Robert Wartonick	Vestal, NY
11	Stanley Gardner	Johnson City, NY
16	Frank Knapik	Gloversville, NY
27	Robert Rokjer	Preble, NY
27	Gary Yaple	Baldwinsville, NY
52	Vacant	
56	Dominick DeLucia	Cold Brook, NY
105	Tiny Jackson	Schenectady, NY
108	Robert Stabb	Oneida, NY
108	Benjamin Tupper	Syracuse, NY
AL	Thomas Acquilla	Mechanicsburg, PA
AL	Thomas Gibson	Utica, NY
AL	Edward Sourbeck	Yonkers, NY
AL	Gilbert Kosiba	Amsterdam, NY

Commander's Message

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

It is with great pride and joy that I wish you a Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays this season as your Commander.

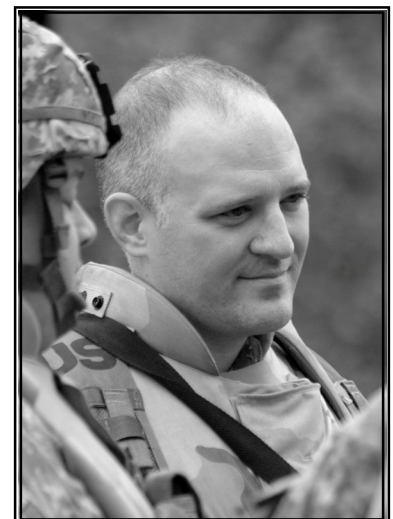
As this holiday season approaches I think of all that the members of the 27th and the sacrificed that have been made. I think of those service members who will not be able to spend this holiday season with their loved ones. I hope that you will all take a moment this season and pray for those service members and their families that have made the ultimate sacrifice as well as the members of the Division Association that we have passed away.

This holiday season we again see members of our ranks and the 27th Brigade planning and training for a future deployment.

I hope they will enjoy this season and as they do, that they will see and understand the great men and women that have come before them and strive to make the 27th not only one of the best Brigades in the National Guard but one of the best in the Army.

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
 - **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.)

Mail to this address:

27th Division Association

Attn: Secretary

James Caggy

P.O. Box 2522

Syracuse, NY 13220-2522

Email: James.Caggy@us.army.mil

Make checks payable to:
The 27th Division Association, Inc.

Hello 27th Veterans!

Another year has passed bringing with it numerous events, changes and experiences for the stars of Orion.

Certainly, 2011 will bring just as much if not more to add to the history of the 27th as the BDE continues to support State and Federal missions as were called on.

As mentioned in the last issue, The New York State History Museum in Albany continues its display, "Citizen Soldiers" - honoring and highlighting the missions of the NY National Guard over the last 110 years. The 27th is of course an integral part of this history and I urge everyone to visit the museum before the display closes in March 2011.

In early December, the BDE held a "Hail and Farewell" dinner in Syracuse. As we said goodbye to several unit members who were either retiring or moving to assignments outside of the 27th, I was reminded that everyone who has served under the stars of Orion is a member of our organization. We need to ensure that these folks remain connected to the Association. And of course, for the personnel who are assuming roles within the 27th, if they aren't Association members already, we need to welcome them to the fold. Every member needs to be an active recruiter!

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

Sincerely,
Your Editor
Robert Romano

(Continued from page 1)

members of the unit's 159 years of rich history - a history that Andonie took pains to nurture.

"You have to recognize your roots and where you came from," Andonie said. "You lose that, you lose who you are. I've been really strict that we know our traditions and our heritage. All the Soldiers here need to know what it means to be part of the 'Fighting 69th.' We have a strong tradition and heritage here, and I didn't want to see that die.

"I look forward to serving with you," Gonyo said, addressing his future Soldiers. "You're a great group of Americans, and today is one of the proudest moments in my military career."

27th BDE Soldier Dies In Accident

Specialist Andrew Wilson assigned to Company G, 427th Brigade Support Battalion died on December 2nd, when he fell through a skylight in the drill shed ceiling. At the time of the accident, he and another Soldier were attempting to spread a tarp over a section of the armory roof.

"The New York National Guard is saddened by the loss of this Soldier and extend our sympathies to his family, friends and unit at this difficult time," said Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York and Commander of the New York Army National Guard. "This is a tragic day for this family, the Guard and the Army. Our thoughts are with his family at this time and he will be deeply missed by those who knew and loved him," he said.

Specialist Wilson joined the New York Army National Guard in September 2005. He is a combat veteran and served two tours of duty in Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan in 2008 and 2009.

MAILBAG

— TAPS —

SGM (Ret.) Charles M. LoBalbo
Amsterdam, NY. DECEASED: 18 JUL 2010

Mr. James H. Famiano
Schenectady NY, DECEASED 12: SEP 2010

SPC Andrew Wilson
Queens, NY, DECEASED 02 DEC 2010

— Memorial Fund—

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

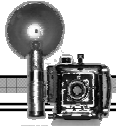
\$15.00 - Vincent Busone:
In Memory of Bill O'Brian & Tommy

- Gallivanter Fund -

\$15.00 Angelo Tiribasso
\$10.00 Roland Gadreault
\$10.00 Col. John Marca
\$10.00 Vincent Busone



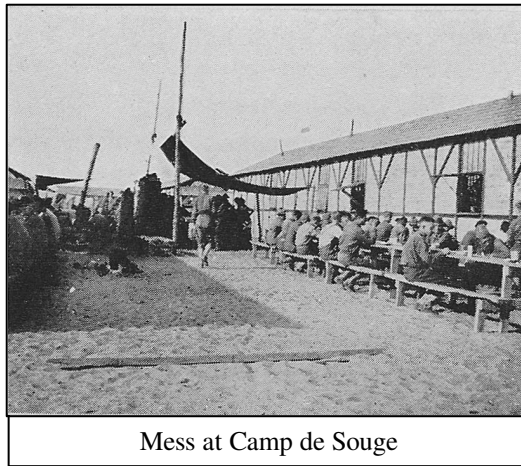
THE SHUTTERBUG PAGE



HOW IT HAPPENED

PART 4: SUNNY FRANCE

Between where we were camped and Brest we saw some large French barracks which were quite interesting as Napoleon had quartered his soldiers there. They were the *ponte Nautzen* barracks. We were camped 5 days in this field, getting acquainted with the scenery, the country side, the natives who came to sell us fruits, nuts, and so forth for exorbitant prices which we paid gladly. We also began to learn our first French. My bunkie and I felt hungry and learning that we were to have bacon and spuds only that noon, we wandered forth in search of food. We found ourselves in a farm yard with a French woman looking at us pleasantly and inquiringly. We tried English in asking for food but received nothing but “*par compre*” – then we tried motions – flapped our arms and crowed like a rooster finally conveying the idea that we wanted eggs. More motions and we had them scrambled, finally ending with putting away quite a meal. As we got different articles we learned the names of them and at the first opportunity bought dictionaries and finally graduated from sign making class and were in “*Speak French with a dictionary class*” and in this way we were able little by little to make ourselves understood. The night of July 1st, 1918 we were under orders to move to an unknown destination – packed up at 4 P.M. – marched back to Brest 7 kilometers to railroad where we were loaded in small French freight cars labeled 40 Hommes – 8 Cheveau. Can you imagine putting 40 soldiers with full pack into a space otherwise filled by eight horses? We managed it and after a bumpety bump ride of 2 days, arrived at Bomeau which is about 20 miles from the seaport



Mess at Camp de Souge

of Bordeaux and Camp De Songe was a short ways – about 3 ½ kilos – but when we hiked it that night it seemed like 15 good American miles. 11 P.M. July 3rd, we arrived at our barracks in Camp De Songe, tired and hungry. We went to sleep quickly and easily. Next A.M. we arose at the command of the bugle and the majority of the boys felt like something had been wrong during the night. An investigation followed and we found Beau Coup bed bugs, our first experience with insects in the army although later we became quite used to different species and sizes. We had been eating so much canned meat, having nothing else, that the boys began to break out with hives and plenty of them. On the change of food, water and so forth and epidemic of Diarrhoea broke out and some of the boys were seriously sick. Things were looking bad but finally, after a month or so, the doctors and the hospital got things in fair shape again so that conditions were good. After we had been in this camp for a couple of weeks we discovered a French place

where some very good eats could be procured at about 7 francs for a 5 course meal with wine. We patronized this place until the money gave out, then had to go back to the company mess line and eat corned willie. Camp De Songe was the official American artillery training camp and shortly after our arrival here, our artillery moved out to their 75's and 155's and began their course in firing data, etc. which they became so proficient in that on the firing line they gained a great reputation for themselves. The range was about two miles out and covered quite a large area, ending up in a large woods of pine trees. Our outfit had the detail at the time, with pick and shovel digging gun position, miniature trenches for the gun crews to use as a supposedly enemy trench and objective which wasn't a bit of fun as the weather was very hot. Also when first firing at a distance point, the range given would be too great, a few shells would be dropped in the pine wood and shortly after the whole camp would turn out to tramp 8 or 10 miles to fight fire. We got such

1. Pontanezan Barracks

2. The author means of course *Quarante Hommes et Huit Chevaux*, forty people or eight horses. French rail cars were labeled thusly and the French were notorious about not allowing extra numbers aboard—they were paid by the Americans per rail car.

3. Camp de Souge, Bordeaux

calls at most any time of day or night and sometimes the fire would last for 36 or 48 hours as the only means of fighting the fire would be to start back fire or find an open space and spade the ground up. At this time we were very busy with gas mask instruction, morning and afternoon, learning how to put it on in the allotted 6 seconds and at first it was sure hard to do. We had double time, leap frog and many other games also long hikes with said gas masks on so as to become familiar with the workings of them and believe me we sure became well acquainted with them from constant rehearsal. In the dead of night or any other time, with no warning, the gas klaxon alarm would sound and anyone found 6 seconds later without the mask on would receive a demerit. Why, I can remember, back home when it would take 6 minutes to wake up; now it is a case of wake up, find gas mask and get it on in 6 seconds. Well, the army is kind of speeding things up anyway. Also, at this time we had plenty of Butt's Manual, otherwise known as all kinds of exercises with the rifle which hardened us down in great shape and is really great as a muscle developer. July 30, 1918 Gen. J. J. Pershing visited us at Camp De Songe. Of course, we had to clean up and dress up in our best and parade in front of his nibs. We were pronounced O.K. and were told that we were destined for the front in a very short time. We had lessons on what and what not to do in handling shells, fuses and powders; we learned the distinguishing marks and how to handle them safely; we were advised in lecture that the average ammunition train man's life on the front line was 7 minutes and a fraction. Fine news to feed a bunch just heading for said front.

Next: "To the Front"

History Corner

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

Artifact of the Quarter

Families tend to cherish pictures of military service members in their uniforms. To a historian or researcher, they mean an important means to determine how uniforms and insignia were actually worn in the past. Often, Army regulation was skirted, ignored, or rationalized away to keep unit

history alive in the uniforms of the Soldier, or unauthorized medals were commonly worn.

The Soldier pictured here is a NYNG Lieutenant sporting a wide variety of clues that make him an unmistakable NY Soldier. This image is taken from a 5"x7" carded photograph. It shows a veteran of the Mexican Border and WWI wearing an unusual combination of items: Branch insignia of the 15th New York Infantry Regiment (An African-American unit that trained for mobilization in FT Wadsworth alongside the 27th Division prior to WWI), Distinctive Unit Insignia of the 369th Infantry Regiment (The Harlem Hellfighters), which was created from the 15th NY in 1918, and a familiar black and red 27th Division shoulder sleeve insignia. More research and identifying this officer will help tell his story. Was he one of the white officers who served with the Black Rattlesnakes



Unidentified Lieutenant, c. 1925 (Milligan Collection)

alongside the French in WWI? Was he an enlisted Soldier with the 27th who later became an officer in the 369th? We'll try to find out. In the meantime, pop open the frame on your photo of yourself in uniform and write your name and a short history of your service on the back. Maybe you'll end up in the Fall 2120 *Gallivanter*!

From the Historian:

Many thanks to Vincent Walsh for sending in several binders of 27th related documents for the Archives. The Archives are not complete and are not a static collection. They are the history of our brothers-in-arms since 1916. We need your stories and pictures to help keep that history accurate and complete. If you can, please send in anything you have and it will be added to the Archives. Photos with names, newspaper clippings, typewritten stories, or just about anything from any era will help. Copies and digital images are just fine. Contact me if you have any questions.

Geoffrey Milligan, Historian

NY National Guard Celebrates 374th Birthday - 27th Division Veteran Guest of Honor

LATHAM, NY -- A 92-year old World War II vet, who was wounded on Okinawa and Saipan, and a 19-year old helicopter mechanic waiting for his first deployment, joined forces to cut the birthday cake as the New York National Guard celebrated the 374th birthday of America's Citizen Soldiers on Monday, Dec. 13.

The annual gathering at New York State Division of Military and Naval Affairs headquarters celebrates the National Guard's past, but is also a salute to the men and women, Soldiers, Airmen, and federal and state civilian employees who serve and who support those who serve, said Maj. Gen. Patrick Murphy, the Adjutant General of New York.

"It is truly a team effort, as you can tell from the mix of uniforms and suits," Murphy said.

The National Guard, a force composed mostly of part-time Citizen Soldiers, traces its birthday back to Dec. 13 1636 when the General Court of the Massachusetts Bay Colony passed a law establishing formal militia companies in the colony. These companies were made up of all adult males older than 16 and were expected to meet and train in military skills regularly.

Traditionally the oldest Soldier and the youngest Soldier present, team up to cut the cake at Guard Birthday events.

In this case, Murphy opted to have the honors of the oldest cake cutter performed by John Sidur, a resident of Loudonville, NY who enlisted in the New York National Guard's 105th Infantry Regiment in July 1940, a month before President Franklin D. Roosevelt federalized the National Guard for one

year.

He joined the Guard because the draft was going to be instituted and he figured he could serve for one year and get his military service over and done, instead of waiting to be called up, Sidur explained. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor intervened, though, and Sidur and the rest of the New York National Guard's 27th Division served a total of five years; serving as defenders of Hawaii and then the invaders of Saipan and Okinawa.

"I enjoyed being in the service, even though I got hit twice: once on Okinawa and once on Saipan," Sidur said.

Being asked to be part of the birthday event was a real

honor, he said. "I was glad to be where I was and I am lucky to be here," he added.

Pvt. 1st Class George Wade, of Niskayuna, NY, the youngest Soldier at the Dec. 13 cake-cutting, headed for basic training in July 2009, 69 years after John Sidur enlisted in the National Guard. Although he is 19 he looks much younger, Wade admitted. "I've been called baby-faced," he said.

He was honored to be part of the same event with Sidur, and two other World War II Guardsmen-- Spike Mailloux, age 87 and John Trudeau, age 89-- who attended the ceremony.

"I want to be in their place someday, carrying on their tradition," he said. "I want to deploy. I want to do that to get the experience they've had."



The Way it was - the Way it is

INFANTRY RIFLES OF THE 27TH

M1903 Rifle: During the Spanish American War of 1898, US troops were shocked to see the glaring deficiencies in their small arms (Krag and "Trapdoor" Springfields) as compared to the German Mauser rifles carried by the Spanish Soldiers. The Mausers were easier to load with a smoother action and the ammunition used was smokeless and had greater range and accuracy.



The Springfield armory set about designing a new rifle that would incorporate many of the superior qualities of the 1893 Mauser rifle—integral five round magazine, three lugged bolt, etc. The result was the Model 1903.

Production would be limited as improvements were made in sights and the bayonets in 1905. Along with the new rifle came new ammunition. Drawing from German and French "pointed" designs the new .30-06 round was far more effective than the 30-30 round it replaced allowing the M1903 barrels to be reduced in length to 24 inches.

At the start of WWI, over 800,000 M1903's had been produced. Due to a somewhat complicated production cycle the M1917 (Enfield) was actually produced in greater quantities and used more extensively.

The M1903 was considered obsolete in 1936 with the acceptance of the M1 (Garand) semi-automatic rifle but production would continue through 1944 as a supplemental weapon. Numerous manufacturing changes would result in the M1903 being re-designated the M1903A3.

The M1903 series would be modified into a Sniper variants utilizing a Weaver or Unerlt telescopic sight and would continue to see use in Korea and in Vietnam.

M1903 (A1/2/3/4 Variants)

- Length: 44 in
- Caliber: .30 (30-06)
- Weight: 12.75 lb (5.8 kg)
- Range: 2,500 yards (sighted)
Effective: 500 yards (point)
- Rate of Fire: 20rds Per Minute



M4 Carbine: The M4 is a direct descendent of the AR-15 rifle originally designed by Eugene Stoner in the early 1960's. The AR-15 would be modified and brought into production as the M-16 series of rifles. The M4 and its predecessors are gas operated, magazine fed, selective fire rifles that fire the 5.56mm (.223 Caliber) round.

Shortened versions of the M16 had been produced in small numbers since the mid 1960's but were never generally issued. (Select Military Police, armor and air crews, etc.) The US military felt the need for



a shorter, more maneuverable weapon for the majority of service members. A shorter weapon would be better for close quarter combat and as most engagements occur at less than 300 meters, the minimal loss in range was considered a worthwhile tradeoff for a lighter weapon.

Sharing nearly 80% commonality with the M16 series, the M4's can also utilize all of the same accessory battle aids—reflex and telescopic sights, laser pointers, forehand grips, etc. The M4 can also mount the M203 grenade launcher and a modified shotgun.

The US Army has replaced the majority of its M16 series rifles with M4's and is continuing to purchase additional weapons through 2012.

An upgrade program is underway to either replace the M4 entirely or to modify the upper receiver to accept a piston style gas system instead of the direct impingement system currently used.

M4 Carbine (A1 Variant)

- Length: 33 in
- Caliber: 5.56 X 45mm (NATO)
- Weight: 5.9Lb (Unloaded)
- Effective Range: 500 meters (point)
- Rate of Fire: 700-950rds Per Minute (Cyclic)



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.

2-108th Soldiers Attend South African Military Competition

Eric Durr—NYDMNA

The weather was hot; the weapons were different; and there was little time to practice. But five New York Army National Guard Soldiers had the time of their life and placed fifth out of 22 teams during the South African Reserve Force Council Military Skills Competition 2010 at Potchefstroom Military Base Nov. 8-13.

The Soldiers, all members of Company C, 2nd Battalion, 108th Infantry headquartered in Gloversville, N.Y., represented the United States at the annual South African event, known as "Milcomp."

The event combines athletic ability with basic military skills over a three day period. "The great thing about it was we were able to do a military exchange program with the South African Army and see how the South Africans operate and see similarities between Soldiers," said Sgt. 1st Class Troy Mechanick, the non-commissioned officer in charge of the team.

Accompanying Mechanick were Sgt. 1st Class Miguel Orabona, Staff Sgt. Jeffrey Dorvee, Sgt. David Hansen and Pvt. 1st Class Michael Ellsworth. The South African trip was the first time out of the United States for Ellsworth, who has not yet deployed on a mission. The other Soldiers are all veterans of contingency operations in Iraq or Afghanistan.

New York National Guardsmen regularly visit South Africa as part of the Guard's State Partnership Program, which pairs a state's National Guard with a developing nation's military. New York has been partnered with the South Africa National Defense Force since 2005.

After arriving in the South African summer ("It was ninety degrees at 0900," Mechanick said) from a cool fall in upstate New York, the Guardsmen had a day to practice before launching into the competition, which involved shooting, negotiating obstacles, and running.

For the shooting competition, the Americans were issued the unfamiliar South African R4 rifle, a 5.56mm assault rifle based on the Israeli Galil, which operates like an AK-

47. Each team member fired 30 rounds in different positions at 100 meter targets. The top four scores provided the team score. The R4 is a good weapon that is not very different from the M-4 American Soldiers use, Mechanick said.

"We practiced the fundamentals of marksmanship and we scored very high on it," Mechanick said.

The weapon used in the pistol shooting competition, the South African Z88, is a South African copy of the M-9 Beretta that Americans Soldiers are familiar with. Again, the Soldiers fired 30 rounds but this time at 25 meter targets.

The Americans got a break from the heat during the water obstacle competition. The Soldiers had to dive into a pool and negotiate obstacles within the water as rapidly as possible. The Americans didn't

do so well here.

Day two of the event included a grenade throwing competition. Soldiers were scored on accuracy and distance. The Americans did well at the grenade throw, Mechanick said.

Dorvee impressed his South African hosts by heaving a grenade 79 meters, 15 meters farther than the closest South African and four meters less than the world record, Mechanick said.

They did less well in the land obstacle course. The 20-obstacle South African course rewards agility and balance, while American obstacle courses require brute strength to negotiate, he explained.

The final event, an eight-kilometer run, was tough on the New Yorkers, Mechanick said. The American Soldiers were not used to running that much and it was very, very hot.

There was also time for the Soldiers to get to know their hosts better. The Americans attended a South African barbecue, known as a braai with some veteran South African NCOs, and there was always time to joke around.

"A Soldier is a Soldier everywhere," Mechanick said. The trip was a great chance to "represent the United States and New York State and to let them see what a typical United States Soldier is like," he added.



Stories of the Citizen Soldiers: *“The most dangerous road in the world”*

When New York's 1-69th Infantry arrived in Iraq in 2004, they patrolled Taji, north of Baghdad. Having excelled at suppressing insurgent activity, the 69th was assigned the daunting task of securing the highway connecting Baghdad Airport with the fortified "Green Zone." This 6-mile stretch of road, nicknamed "Route Irish", was an inviting target. The busy road was used by supply convoys, diplomats, and civilians.

In the five months before the 69th's mission began in February, insurgents fired at passing vehicles 63 times, attacked with rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) 70 times, and detonated 42 Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) killing soldiers, contractors and Iraqi civilians. The "Highway to Hell" was only patrolled during the day, allowing insurgents to plant bombs at night. By the end of July 2005, the "Fighting 69th" had largely neutralized the IED threat along Route Irish.

When an explosively-formed projectile hit their vehicle, Specialists Wai Lwin, (right) a Burmese immigrant, and Azhar Ali, (left) a Muslim American, were killed. Sergeant Dan Maiella was seriously wounded.



To secure "the most dangerous road in the world," Lieutenant Colonel Geoffrey Slack, the 69th Infantry commander, divided his soldiers into three groups to patrol the road 24 hours a day. Aside from a few drive-by shootings, the enemy had planted only nine IEDs, of which the

69th had discovered and disarmed eight.

The enemy soon developed a new weapon, the explosively formed projectile (EFP). An EFP shoots near-molten steel that easily penetrated the armor of American vehicles. Two soldiers of the 69th were killed when an EFP exploded next to their humvee.

Drawing on their experiences driving through New York City road construction, the National Guard soldiers rounded up thousands of Jersey barriers. The 69th lined the entire highway with the concrete structures, neutralizing the threat of roadside bombs.

The 69th began training Iraqi forces in the spring of 2005 to assume the security of Route Irish. By July 2005, the airport road could no longer be called the "most dangerous road in the world."

(Below) Members of 1st Battalion, 69th Infantry, install concrete Jersey barriers along the airport road in Baghdad, Iraq. These barriers helped to significantly reduce the threat of improvised explosive devices along that highway. *Photo courtesy of LTC Michael Murphy, New York National*



THE ORION GALLIVANTER



PRESORTED STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT No. 994
SYRACUSE, NY

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
THE 27TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC.

The Orion Gallivanter, Attn: Sec/Editor
P.O. Box 2522, Syracuse, NY 13220-2522

VOL. XLVIII December 2010 NO. 116

CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP YEAR ON THE LABEL!

If it doesn't say 2010 or LIFE after your name then it's time to pay your dues. Post Members remit payment to your post.

27TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Full Name _____
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Spouse's Name _____

Address _____
(House Number and Street) (City) (Zone) (State) (Zip)

Current Phone: _____

E-Mail Address _____

Post No. _____ or Check if member At Large _____

Unit Served _____

Date: From _____ To _____ Rank (Optional) _____

*Make remittance (\$15.00) payable to: The 27th Division Association, Inc.
Send to: Attn: Sec/Treasurer; P.O. Box 2522, Syracuse, NY 13220*

LIFE MEMBERS:

Dues paid to National for life memberships are **NATIONAL DUES** only. Remain a member of your local post and pay your **POST DUES**.

REMINDER:

2011 Dues are **\$15.00**
(or *Life Membership*)

At Large Members

Please make checks

payable to:

**The 27th Division
Association, Inc.**

Mail to: Secretary

James Caggy

P.O. Box 2522

Syracuse, NY 13220

Member of a Post?

See your Post Secretary

27TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION LIFE MEMBERSHIP

Full Name _____
(First) (Middle) (Last)

Spouse's Name _____

Address _____
(House Number and Street) (City) (Zone) (State) (Zip)

Current Phone: _____

E-Mail Address _____

Post No. _____ or Check if member At Large _____

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

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

LIFE MEMBER