



December 2024

READY RIFLES and the Regulars "SITREP"

Official Newsletter of the
Veterans of the 52nd and 6th Infantry Regiments Stationed in Bamberg Germany 1972 to 1990



Vol 11 Issue 12

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Christmas Memories

Dan Harris

Intro for Dan Harris Christmas Eve

By Robert Pruitt

The Irony of this Christmas Eve story is who it happened to. Not only was he one of the ranking Spec. 4's in the Company at this time, but he was just an all-around squared way soldier. Unlike some of us who had temporary moments of stupidity and would decide I wanted to be a knucklehead just because, Dan never did those things and was consistently solid.

It came as a surprise to me we had returned from Hohenfels on Christmas Eve. Everyone was cleaning their weapons and gear and hoping they would pass the NCO's inspection so we could get clean and return to being human again.

As I passed Dan in the Hallway he had an incredulous look on his face and blurted out he had freaken arms room guard duty in the basement on Christmas Eve. As I mentioned he outranked many of us enlisted men, but I was not surprised. For those who didn't know, Dan would have streaks of bad luck. Nothing bad, just WTF bad luck. For example on more than one occasion, he would "make the man" for Battalion Guard duty selection and still end up pulling guard duty, and there was always a line at the Mess Hall whenever he went (so we never went with him when hungry).

Dans Christmas Memory

I was lucky enough to get stuck with Arms room guard duty Christmas of 1984. I remember sitting there listening to Christmas Carols which were playing on a radio in the NBC room. I would have done anything to smash that damn radio but the NBC room was locked. The last thing I wanted to hear were Christmas Carols which reminded of Christmas back home in NH. Of course, a few clowns were also singing Christmas Carols at the top of the basement stairs. I am sure this was not to cheer me up. I have another tale of woe regarding a different type of guard duty but will leave that for another time.

New Year's Eve 1984

By Robert Pruitt

It was New Year's Eve 1984; we had spent the past week getting everything back in top shape after spending a good portion of the month in Hohenfels. We knew Graf was coming up soon along with rumors of some other field problems. But tonight was not a night to think about those things, it was Party Time. A group of the guys from 1st Platoon were heading out to the "Palm Beach". As I get older the memory slowly fades, but I remember Whatley, Jones, Cook, Castro, Matis, Perkins, Gentry, and possibly Taylor and Griffith.

We are getting ready, and I could tell everyone had the song "Sharp Dressed Man" by ZZ Top going off in their heads. Whatley was exceptionally cocky that night as he forced us all to bet him that if he didn't have two girls on his arms at midnight, he would owe us something which I forget, but knowing Whatley it was something outrageous.

We got to the Palm Beach and it was already lively. We started buying rounds of Hefeweisen and one Pils (I couldn't handle the Hefeweisen). The local German young women were friendly, we were all dancing and just exchanging rounds of beer. I even remember a few guys I did not know taking naps in the Palm Beach urinal. All the while, Whatley was having a tough time making the decision as to who would be the young ladies he would grace on his arm at midnight.

At around 30 minutes before midnight Matis notices that someone from our group was missing (I think it was Gentry). Matis got excited as he was known to get and starts yelling "We all have to be together man", he starts asking where he went and is told he went to another bar. The minutes are ticking by and Matis really starts to get excited saying "we have to find him". It's now 15 minutes till countdown and I decide to go with him to find our missing man.

We get to the other bar and the place is completely dead. Just a few G.I.'s in there and most have already passed out. We checked the entire place and no luck. It's only 5 minutes to countdown and Matis is frantic so we start running at full speed to make it back to the Palm Beach. We are a few blocks away and Matis says we are not going to make it. As we pass a local residence, he runs up steps and kicks the door in. I just stood there and wondered why he didn't just turn the doorknob, since it would have been easier. I walk up the steps and I hear him saying "Happy New Year", he's hugging the men and kissing the women. As I stand there watching the scene, Grandma comes out the back and starts whacking us with the broom. The family had recovered from their shock and they start pushing him towards the front door. They are pushing and I'm pulling Matis, and he is still trying to give hugs and kisses. We get back outside, and they close the door, Matis gives me a look like, "what's their problem."

Matis, now a little deflated, starts slowly walking and I tell him we can still make it if we run fast enough. Luckily, my watch was a few minutes slow and as we entered Palm Beach the countdown had begun. By the time we get back to the rest of the guys, including our missing member, the clock strikes midnight. It was now 1985, and by the time 1986 rolled around most of us would be back home. But that night, that night

our buddies from 1st Platoon would all be together, quite a few of us were out on the dance floor after the stroke of midnight. I glanced at our table, and I saw Whatley just sitting there, by himself, with that grin and buzzed look on his face. I wish I could remember what that bet was.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

If you have any memories you would like to share, please contact Bill Bur to submit your memories and/or ideas of story at LMJWRB@msn.com

2025 Reunion Reminder



The Veterans of the 52nd and 6th Infantry Regiments Stationed in Bamberg are pleased to announce our 2025 reunion.

We will gather in Las Vegas Monday to Friday, September 29th to October 3rd, 2025. Our reunion hotel is the Tuscany Suites and Casino, 255 E. Flamingo Road. They are offering \$79 a night room rate (plus tax) for the four nights without additional resort, parking, or internet fees.

In this document, we provide the information that we have now – a year in advance of the reunion. We will continue to update this information as our plan develops.

You should do the following things now:

- Plan your trip to Las Vegas
- Reserve your room
- Call a buddy and ask him to join you in Las Vegas.

Travel to Las Vegas

Air Travel –

- Las Vegas has outstanding regular air service from many US cities to Harry Reid International Airport (LAS).
- We selected our reunion dates (Monday to Friday, vs our traditional Wednesday to Friday dates) because airline rates are cheaper during the week than on weekends to Las Vegas – by 20-30% - opposite of what it is in most places.
- You probably don't need to rent a car in Las Vegas – the airport is a short taxi ride from the hotel, and the central location of our hotel means you can walk, take short taxi / Uber rides, or public transportation to get around.

Car Travel –

- If you drive, the reunion hotel offers free parking.

Reunion Hotel Information

- We will gather in Las Vegas Monday to Friday, September 29th to October 3rd, 2025.
- Our reunion hotel is the Tuscany Suites and Casino, 255 E. Flamingo Road.
- They are offering a \$79 a night room rate (plus tax) for the four nights without additional resort, internet, or parking fees.
- The Clark County room tax is currently 13.38% - subject to change.
- The hotel also offers favorable rates for the days before and after these dates if you want to extend your stay (these are called shoulder rates.) The rates are
 - Sunday, September 28th - \$79 a night
 - Friday, October 3rd - \$195 a night
 - Saturday, October 4th - \$195 a night

2025 Reunion Spot Report – Tuscany Surroundings

Spot Report - A concise narrative report of essential information covering events or conditions that may have an immediate and significant effect on current planning and operations

By Billy Ray Marks

In preparation for 2025 Reunion in Las Vegas we have planned for you a series of monthly articles leading up to the reunion that will help you navigate your time, so you can do what you do best, Have a good time.

This month we would like you to get familiar with The Tuscany Resort and Suites and its immediate surroundings. We would like to highlight some of the many features that are available and, some incredible deals that will stretch your dollar. So if you do not want to explore Las Vegas and would like to stay close to your room pay close attention.

Tuscany has some of the largest rooms in Las Vegas and they are all suites. Rooms include a small dining area with a small refrigerator and coffee maker. A microwave will be made available on request. Also, there are four restaurants on site

- Bistecca – Steakhouse and Upscale restaurant.
- Marilyns Café – Diner
- Pub 3 6 5 – Craft Beer and Food Bites – Happy Hour 3PM-6PM and 10PM-12PM
 - Karaoke – Thursday Nights
 - Late Night Special after 10PM Prime NY Steak and Eggs \$8.99
- Caffè Bottega – Coffee and light fare

Sign up for the Tuscany/Da Vinci Rewards Players card and receive some of these additional discounts (Please Game responsibly)

Valid Military ID daily deals

- Free drink – small coffee, well drink, draft beer. Soft drink, or bottled water
- 20% off Dining
- 20% off Gift Shop Purchase

Tuesdays – for age 50+

- Free drink – small coffee, well drink, draft beer. Soft drink, or bottled water
- 20% off Dining
- 20% off Gift Shop Purchase

The Piazza Lounge has nightly musical acts, there is no cover charge, and however, there is a drink service charge.

- Music starts at 7:30 PM
- Happy hour 4PM-7PM
 - ½ Price Martinis
 - \$4 Oysters
 - \$5 Champagne
 - 12 oz Martinis available

The Copa Room is currently hosting Monday – Saturday, The Rat Pack is Back show. There is a cost associated with the show, and we will recommend discount ticket sites in a future article.

In late September into October Las Vegas can still be warm. If you desire to lounge by one of the two pools, the hours are from 7 AM-10 PM. There is also whirlpool spas and a Fitness Center. If you plan to visit the slots or table games, again remember to sign up for the Club card and take advantage of the deals offered.

What's near The Tuscany Suites and Resort

- Starbucks – For the Faithful across the street.
- Lawry's The Prime Rib – Popular in Los Angeles and Rose Bowl fan's (many other unique Prime Rib locations in Las Vegas) across the street.
- Lo-Lo's Chicken and Waffles – Southern Soul Food cuisine – across the street.

- Jjanga Sushi and Oyster Bar – All you can eat Sushi. Across the street.
 - Ellis Island Hotel and Casino – This is a true Gem that has some great deals around the corner. Sign up for the Players Club to receive deeper discounts.
 - \$9.99 Top Sirloin Steak special
 - 50+ Discounts Tuesdays and Thursdays
 - Daily free beer for Active Military and Veterans (please have ID)
 - Happy Hour Monday – Friday 3 PM – 5PM
- Stage Door Casino - \$1 bottle beer and \$1 Hot Dogs. A Dive Bar with drink specials

All prices are based on 2024. We plan on having updates prior to the reunion.

Our History - Traveling Museum



As part of our corporate purpose, we are recording the history of our battalions during the cold war. To help us accomplish this we have started a Traveling Museum. Our goal is to have this museum at future reunions. It will also be an interactive museum. You, your family and others will be able to touch and try on different pieces of equipment that we used in our daily life as soldiers in the 1980's. We have a great start on items but are always looking for more. If you have any old items laying around and want to donate them please let me know. Also, you are more than welcome to bring items and display them during the reunion if you are not ready to part with them. Here are some of the items we have.

4 Major Military Events That Happened on Christmas

<https://www.defense.gov/News/Feature-Stories/Story/Article/1713087/4-major-military-events-that-happened-on-christmas/#:~:text=1776%3A%20Washington's%20Famous%20Crossing%20of%20the%20Delaware&text=The%20Battle%20of%20Trenton%20inspired,Washington%20crossing%20the%20Delaware%20River.President>

Dec. 10, 2024 | By Katie Lange | [_](#)

On Christmas Day every year, many Americans relax and enjoy time with their families. For many of our troops, though, it can be a day of sacrifice and hardship.

Over the history of the U.S., several big military actions have taken place on Dec. 25. Here are four noteworthy ones.

1776: Washington's Famous Crossing of the Delaware



The winter of 1776 didn't start as a good one for Gen. George Washington's Continental Army. They suffered many defeats in the first few months of the American Revolution and had been pushed out of New York and New Jersey into Pennsylvania. For the troops, morale was low.

Washington needed to renew faith in the battle for independence, so he decided to surprise the Hessians — German troops hired by the British — who were stationed in Trenton, New Jersey. He figured that doing so after the enemy's Christmas celebrations would find them groggy and unprepared for a fight, especially as a terrible winter storm was brewing.

So late Christmas night, Washington and his troops hopped in boats and waded across the icy Delaware River to test his theory — and he was right. At dawn on Dec. 26, about 2,400 frozen Continentals pushed into Trenton, and they did indeed surprise the enemy, who surrendered within an hour and a half.

The mission, which became known as the Battle of Trenton, was of huge significance to the Continental Army's cause. Not only did it raise the troops' spirits, but it revived the hope of the colonists, who were beginning to think their battle for independence wasn't feasible.

1864: The First Battle of Fort Fisher



For most of the Civil War, North Carolina's Fort Fisher saw very little combat. But that changed on Christmas 1864, when the Union decided it wanted to capture the last port the Confederates held on the Atlantic Ocean. It was a debacle for the Union.

First, the Union tried to pack a warship with explosives and blow up the fort's walls — but that didn't work. It just blew up their ship and alerted the Confederates of an imminent attack. So on Christmas Eve, the Union tried again, bombarding the fort with heavy gunfire, most of which fell short or missed its target.

On Christmas morning, Union commanders decided to shell an area north of the fort so troops could land and come ashore. But when they did, more disappointment followed — the fort's heavy artillery was completely unscathed, so that was a no-go, too. It was only then that the Union ordered troops to retreat.

While the first Battle of Fort Fisher was a massive failure for the Union, the second wasn't. In mid-January 1865, Union troops were finally able to capture the fort, effectively cutting the Confederates off from global trade and supplies. The Civil War ended three months later.

1972: Operation Linebacker II in North Vietnam



American troops were in the middle of the biggest bombing mission in military history during the Christmas season of 1972. The air campaign, called Operation Linebacker II, has largely been considered the action that ended U.S. involvement in the Vietnam War.

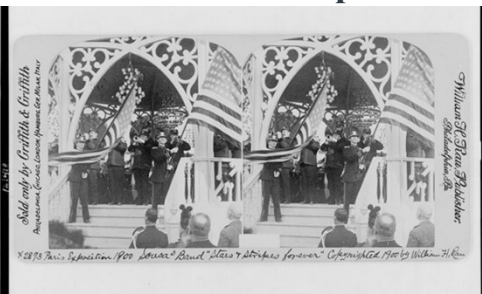
President Richard Nixon ordered the bombings to begin on Dec. 18 after North Vietnamese delegates walked out on peace talks. Nicknamed the "11 Days of Christmas," the operation consisted of 11 successive days of raids by B-52 Stratofortress bombers flown in from Andersen Air Force Base in Guam.

The only day that both sides got a reprieve was Christmas, when troops were given a 36-hour break to celebrate. During that time, Nixon ordered the North Vietnamese to return to the bargaining table. The North Vietnamese refused, so the bombings continued until Dec. 29, when they agreed to resume peace talks.

In 11 days, Linebacker II dropped 15,000 tons of bombs via 729 U.S. Air Force sorties involving about 12,000 airmen. Defense Department records show the raids destroyed or damaged 1,600 structures, 500 rail targets, 10 airfields and 80 percent of North Vietnam's electric-generating capacity. Fifteen U.S. B-52s were also destroyed in the process, killing 35 men and leading to the capture of nearly 40 American prisoners of war.

The resumed peace talks that came from the campaign led to the Paris Peace Accords in January 1973. The U.S. ended its involvement in the war soon after, but the last American troops wouldn't leave the country for another two years.

1896: "Stars and Stripes Forever" is Written



While this wasn't exactly a military action, it's definitely a symbol of America's military might. John Philip Sousa, who grew up during the Civil War, was a talented musician who became a long-time

director of the U.S. Marine Band. Known as the "March King," he was a rock star of his time, eventually starting his own band in 1892.

On Christmas Day 1896, while crossing the Atlantic on his way home from a European vacation, Sousa's lasting legacy came to him. He said the notes for "Stars and Stripes Forever" were born out of homesickness and fond memories of his time as the Marine Band's leader.

The iconic song officially became America's national march in 1987.

So this holiday season, while you're enjoying leave, family, friends and feasts, think of some of your fellow troops, past and present, who had to forgo their holidays for the greater good of the country. While you're at it, you might even want to put on "Stars and Stripes Forever" in their honor.

Have a great holiday season, everybody!

December Dates of Interest

<https://www.historyplace.com/specials/calendar/december.htm>

December 1, 1941 - The American Civil Air Patrol (CAP), a U.S. Air Force auxiliary, was founded as Director of Civilian Defense, former New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, signed the formal order. The CAP currently provides aerospace education, a CAP cadet program, and emergency services such as locating missing aircraft.

December 2, 1823 - President James Monroe introduced his "Monroe Doctrine" during his annual message to the Congress, prohibiting any further colonization of the American continents by European powers, stating, "we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety..."

December 2, 1942 - Physicists led by Enrico Fermi carried out the world's first successful nuclear chain reaction at the University of Chicago.

December 6, 1865 - The 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution was ratified abolishing slavery, stating, "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, save as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

December 7, 1787 - Delaware became the first state to adopt the new constitution of the United States of America.

December 7, 1941 - The U.S. Naval base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, was attacked by nearly 200 Japanese aircraft in a raid that lasted just over one hour and left nearly 3,000 Americans dead.

December 8, 1940 - During the Blitz, the House of Commons and Tower of London were seriously damaged amid an overnight air raid by German bombers on London.

December 8, 1941 - A day after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States and Britain declared war on Japan.

December 8, 1991 - The USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) ceased to exist, as the leaders of Russia, Byelorussia and the Ukraine signed an agreement creating the Commonwealth of Independent States. The remaining republics of the former USSR, with the exception of Georgia, joined the new Commonwealth.

December 9, 1941 - During World War II, China issued a formal declaration of war against Japan, Germany and Italy.

December 10, 1898 - The Treaty of Paris was signed between American and Spanish representatives following Spain's defeat in the Spanish-American War. Under the treaty, the U.S. gained the Philippine Islands, the islands of Guam and Puerto Rico, and an agreement by Spain to withdraw from Cuba. The treaty passed by a single vote in the U.S. Senate on February 6, 1899, and was signed by President William McKinley four days later.

December 11, 1941 - A major turning point in World War II occurred as Japan's Axis partners, Italy and Germany, both declared war on the United States. The U.S. Congress immediately declared war on them. President Roosevelt then made the defeat of Hitler the top priority, devoting nearly 90 percent of U.S. military resources to the war in Europe.

December 13, 1991 - North and South Korea signed a treaty of reconciliation and nonaggression which also formally ended the Korean War, although actual fighting had ceased in 1953.

December 14, 1799 - George Washington died at Mount Vernon.

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December 15, 1791 - The Bill of Rights (first 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution) became effective following ratification by Virginia.

December 16, 1773 - The Boston Tea Party occurred as colonial activists disguised as Mohawk Indians boarded British ships anchored in Boston Harbor and dumped 342 containers of expensive tea into the water.

December 16, 1944 - During World War II in Europe, the Battle of the Bulge began as the Germans launched a big counter-offensive in the Ardennes Forest along a 75-mile front, taking American troops by surprise. Aided by foggy, snowy weather, the Germans penetrated 65 miles into Allied lines by the end of December. The German advance was eventually halted by Montgomery on the Meuse and Patton at Bastogne. As the weather cleared, Allied aircraft attacked German ground forces and supply lines and the counter-offensive failed. There were an estimated 77,000 Allied and 130,000 German casualties.

December 20, 1606 - The Virginia Company expedition to America began as three small ships, the *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed* and *Discovery*, departed London under the command of Captain Christopher Newport. In May of 1607, the royally chartered company established the first permanent English settlement in America at Jamestown (Virginia).

December 20, 1989 - The U.S. invaded Panama attempting to capture Manuel Noriega on charges of narcotics trafficking. *Operation Just Cause* occurred seven months after Noriega had declared unfavorable election results in his country to be null and void. The invasion toppled the Noriega government and resulted in the installation of Guillermo Endara as president. Noriega temporarily eluded capture, but surrendered a few weeks later to U.S. troops. He was then tried, convicted, and imprisoned in the U.S.

December 21, 1945 - World War II General George Patton died in Germany following a car accident. He had been injured on December 9th near Mannheim and was taken to a hospital in Heidelberg where he died. He was buried in Luxembourg. Nicknamed "Old Blood and Guts," he once stated during the war, "We shall attack and attack until we are exhausted, and then we shall attack again."

December 21, 1972 - East and West Germany established diplomatic ties, ending nearly two decades of Cold War hostility and paving the way for international recognition of East Germany.

December 22, 1783 - Following a triumphant journey from New York to Annapolis, Maryland, George Washington, victorious Commander-in-Chief of the American Revolutionary Army, appeared before Congress and voluntarily resigned his commission.

December 24, 1814 - The Treaty of Ghent between America and Britain was signed, officially ending the War of 1812.

December 24, 1914 - The first-ever German air raid against Britain took place when a German monoplane dropped a single bomb on Dover, England, during World War I.

December 24, 1942 - The first surface-to-surface guided missile, later known as the V-1 Flying Bomb, was launched by German rocket engineer Wernher von Braun. Called "Buzz Bombs" for the loud buzzing sound of their motor, they were used by Nazi Germany against Britain beginning in September 1944.

December 24, 1943 - General Dwight D. Eisenhower was appointed Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Force preparing for D-Day.

December 25, 1776 - During the American Revolution, George Washington took 2,400 of his men across the Delaware River. Washington then conducted a surprise raid on 1,500 British-Hessians (German mercenaries) at Trenton, New Jersey. The Hessians surrendered after an hour with nearly 1,000 taken prisoner by Washington who suffered only six wounded (including future president Lt. James Monroe). The victory provided a much needed boost to American morale.

December 29, 1940 - During the Blitz, German aircraft dropped thousands of incendiary bombs on the center of London, causing the worst fire damage since the great fire of 1666. St. Paul's Cathedral survived but eight other Wren churches along with the Guildhall and Old Bailey were badly damaged.

December 30, 1803 - The *Stars and Stripes* flag was raised over New Orleans as the United States took formal possession of the territory of Louisiana, an area of 885,000 square miles, nearly doubling the size of the U.S. The territory had been purchased from France for approximately \$15 million.

December 30, 1922 - The USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics) was established through the confederation of Russia, Byelorussia, Ukraine and the Transcaucasian Federation.

Medal of Honor

Paul J Wiedorfer

<https://www.cmoahs.org/recipients/paul-j-wiedorfer>



Rank: Staff Sergeant (rank at time of action: Private)

Conflict/Era: World War II

Unit/Command:

2d Squad, 2d Platoon, Company G, 2d Battalion, 318th Infantry, 80th Infantry Division

Military Service Branch: U.S. Army

Medal of Honor Action Date: December 25, 1944

Medal of Honor Action Place: near Chaumont, Belgium

Citation

He alone made it possible for his company to advance until its objective was seized. Company G had cleared a wooded area of snipers, and one platoon was advancing across an open clearing toward another wood when it was met by heavy machine-gun fire from two German positions dug in at the edge of the second wood. These positions were flanked by enemy riflemen. The platoon took cover behind a small ridge approximately 40 yards from the enemy position. There was no other available protection and the entire platoon was pinned down by the German fire. It was about noon and the day was clear, but the terrain extremely difficult due to a three-inch snowfall the night before over ice-covered ground. Pvt. Wiedorfer, realizing that the platoon advance could not continue until the two enemy machine-gun nests were destroyed, voluntarily charged alone across the slippery open ground with no protecting cover of any kind. Running in a crouched position, under a hail of enemy fire, he slipped and fell in the snow, but quickly rose and continued forward with the enemy concentrating automatic and small-arms fire on him as he advanced. Miraculously escaping injury, Pvt. Wiedorfer reached a point some 10 yards from the first machine-gun emplacement and hurled a hand grenade into it. With his rifle he killed the remaining Germans, and, without hesitation, wheeled to the right and attacked the second emplacement. One of the enemy was wounded by his fire and the other six immediately surrendered. This heroic action by one man enabled the platoon to advance from behind its protecting ridge and continue successfully to reach its objective. A few minutes later, when both the platoon leader and the platoon sergeant were wounded, Pvt. Wiedorfer assumed command of the platoon, leading it forward with inspired energy until the mission was accomplished.

Additional Information:

Accredited to: Baltimore, Baltimore County, Maryland

Awarded Posthumously: No

Presentation Date & Details: May 29, 1945

137th Gen. Hospital, Ellesmere, Shropshire, England, presented by Brigadier Gen. E. F. Koenig,
UK Base Commander

Born: January 17, 1921, Baltimore, Baltimore County, MD, United States

Died: May 25, 2011, Baltimore, MD, United States

Buried: Moreland Memorial Park Cemetery, Baltimore, MD, United States

Succession Roster – B Co. 1984

We are trying a new approach to finding more information about our brother 1-52/7-6 brothers. The following is a list of names from Bravo Company 1984. We're looking for first and middle names, rank, what platoon and position these men served in and any contact information any of you have for them. God bless you and your families. Please see attached.

Helping Veterans manage holiday stress

Focus on your mental health and keep stress levels in check

December 19, 2022

Matthew Miller

Executive director, VA Suicide Prevention, Office of Mental Health and Suicide Prevention

<https://news.va.gov/113447/helping-veterans-manage-holiday-stress/>

They come every year whether we're ready or not... the holidays. The holiday season is marketed as "the most wonderful time of the year," but it can also be one of the most stressful times of the year. Purchasing gifts, preparing special recipes, decorating inside and out, and attending large family or social gatherings can be expensive, exhausting, hectic and overwhelming.

While there are many environmental and life factors that can increase stress, this time of year can highlight mental health concerns, like depression and anxiety, as it can be a time of self-reflection, loneliness and sadness. Specifically for Veterans, the holidays can enhance difficulties adjusting to civilian life, exacerbate posttraumatic stress disorder symptoms, put a focus on certain dates or anniversaries, and induce guilt.

However overwhelming this season can be, there are ways to focus on your mental health and keep your stress levels in check over the next few weeks.

Recognizing symptoms of depression and anxiety

The holidays are notorious schedule interrupters. If you have time off from work, you may stay up late and miss your usual workout. Parties usually offer a variety of food and drink you may not usually consume. Trying to squeeze in a multitude of obligations can leave you feeling worn out.

All of these things can make it difficult to take care of ourselves and increase the chance of ignoring our mental health.

Here are some of the symptoms of depression:

- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Difficulty sleeping
- Headaches
- Excessive drinking
- Overeating

Here are some of the symptoms of anxiety:

- Feeling restless, wound up, or on edge
- Being easily fatigued
- Having difficulty concentrating
- Being irritable
- Having headaches, muscle aches, stomachaches or unexplained pains
- Difficulty controlling feelings of worry
- Difficulty falling or staying asleep

People cope with stressful situations in different ways and can often work through them. If you feel like you might be heading toward a crisis, VA or community-based services could help. Take a confidential, anonymous risk assessment to see if stress and depression might be affecting you.

Causes of holiday stress

Often, tension-inducing situations revolve around three things:

- Relationships: Misunderstandings or conflict can be an issue, and if you're unable to be with your family and friends, you can feel lonely.
- Finances: It's easy to get caught up in spending too much on gifts, travel, food and entertainment, especially when the holidays add pressure and unrealistic expectations.
- Physical demands: There's no shortage of things to do... shopping, social gatherings, preparing meals and hosting house guests.

Coping and managing holiday stress

Here are some tips:

- Manage expectations: Learn to say "no." You can't be everything to everyone. Setting boundaries is normal and healthy.
- Look toward the future: The end of the year is naturally a time for reflection, but try to focus on the future, not the past.

- Do something for someone else: Serving others was likely one of the reasons you joined the military. You can continue to serve once you're out. Look around your community. Chances are, volunteers are needed for a variety of good causes.
- Look for free activities to enjoy: Take your dog for a walk, play board games with friends, or join a book club.
- Understand perfection doesn't exist: At this time of year, social media explodes with pictures of seemingly perfectly cooked meals, loving families and gifts that look like they took hours to wrap. Don't compare yourself to others. The reality behind these images may be quite different from what you see on the screen.
- Set differences with others aside: Focus on forging healthy connections.
- Make a budget: There are usually increased financial demands this time of year. Plan to make a budget and stick to it.
- Plan ahead, make lists, schedule activities in advance: There's only so much time in a day. Don't pack too much into a short amount of time.
- Try to keep up healthy habits: Find ways to stay active and if you're going to be drinking or around substances, consider decreasing use.
- Reach out for help if you're starting to feel overwhelmed: No matter what you're experiencing, we're here to connect you with resources and support systems. Even if you're not enrolled in VA health care or benefits, our resource locator can help you.
- Be flexible and give yourself a break when you need it: Sometimes plans change, presents don't get delivered on time, or loved ones aren't able to visit. Try to remain flexible and adapt when situations don't fit your expectations. Give yourself time to make decisions, take a breather, or take some time away from others when you do need it. Remember that it's ok to feel things as they happen. Learn from them and move forward.

You're not alone

Please use this information to have a safe and healthy holiday season. If you need help this month or any time of the year, the Veterans Crisis Line is here for you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year.

Contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive confidential support. You don't have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect. To reach responders, dial 988, then press 1, chat online at VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat, or text 838255.

Merchandise for Sale:

Unit Crest Hats, Coins, and Coasters for Sale



Hats \$20
Coins \$10
Coasters \$12.50



You can pay for them in several ways.

How to Pay

Check, payable to "Veteran of the 52nd and 6th Infantry Regiments, Inc". Mail to Mike Streff 25 South Point Lane, Moneta, Virginia 24121 PayPal <https://www.152-76inf-coldwarvetsbamberg.org/support-our-cause> You can pay using credit card through PayPal or use PayPal to pay. Use "Support our Cause" button – and specify what items you are purchasing. All proceeds go into our general fund.

VENMO. @Michael-Streff-1

Zelle – Use phone number 703-599-3723

Purchase your 52nd and 6th Infantry Gear



Bill Burt has information on the purchase of 52nd and 6th Infantry logo clothing and hats.

Go to the web site: <https://the52and6infantry.qbstores.com/home> or a link is posted on the groups website: <https://www.152-76inf-coldwarvetsbamberg.org/>

VA Information and Helpful Phone Numbers

Find a VA location

Main VA phone numbers

MyVA411 main information line

[800-698-2411](tel:800-698-2411)

Hours: 24/7

Telecommunications Relay Services (using TTY)

[711](tel:711)

Hours: 24/7

VA health care

VA health benefits hotline

[877-222-8387](tel:877-222-8387)

Hours: Monday through Friday,

8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET

My HealtheVet help desk

[877-327-0022](tel:877-327-0022)

Hours: Monday through Friday,

8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET

Civilian Health and Medical Program of the
Department of Veterans Affairs (CHAMPVA)

[800-733-8387](tel:800-733-8387)

Hours: Monday through Friday,

8:05 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET

CHAMPVA Meds by Mail

[888-385-0235](tel:888-385-0235)

Hours: Monday through Friday,

8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. MT

[866-229-7389](tel:866-229-7389)

Hours: Monday through Friday,

8:00 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. ET

Foreign Medical Program (FMP)

[877-345-8179](tel:877-345-8179)

Hours: Monday through Friday,

8:05 a.m. to 6:45 p.m. ET

Quit VET (get help from a counselor to stop
smoking)

[855-784-8838](tel:855-784-8838)

Hours: Monday through Friday,

9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET

MISSION Act

[800-698-2411](tel:800-698-2411), Select 1

Hours: 24/7

Spina Bifida Health Care Benefits Program

[888-820-1756](tel:888-820-1756)

Hours: Monday through Friday,

8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET

Caregiver support line

[855-260-3274](tel:855-260-3274)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and
Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET

VA benefits

VA benefits hotline

[800-827-1000](tel:800-827-1000)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET

GI Bill hotline

[888-442-4551](tel:888-442-4551)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET

Students outside the U.S.

[+1-918-781-5678](tel:+1-918-781-5678) This isn't toll-free.

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET

VA loan guaranty service

[877-827-3702](tel:877-827-3702)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ET.

National pension call center

[877-294-6380](tel:877-294-6380)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET

Support for SGLI or VGLI

[800-419-1473](tel:800-419-1473)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET

All other VA life insurance programs

[800-669-8477](tel:800-669-8477)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. ET

Special issue hotline (Blue Water Navy Act, Gulf War, Agent Orange, and other information)

[800-749-8387](tel:800-749-8387)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. ET

Burials and memorials

National Cemetery Scheduling Office

[800-535-1117](tel:800-535-1117)

Hours: Every day, 8:00 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. ET

Headstones and markers

[800-697-6947](tel:800-697-6947)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET

Other VA support

Women Veterans hotline

[855-829-6636](tel:855-829-6636)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. ET, and
Saturday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. ET

eBenefits technical support

[800-983-0937](tel:800-983-0937)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. ET

Debt Management Center (collection of nonmedical debts)

[800-827-0648](tel:800-827-0648)

Hours: Monday through Friday,
7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. ET

Vets Center call center

[877-927-8387](tel:877-927-8387)

Hours: 24/7

White House VA hotline

[855-948-2311](tel:855-948-2311)

Hours: 24/7

Veterans Crisis Line

[800-273-8255](tel:800-273-8255), Select 1

Hours: 24/7

Websites and Contact Info.

We have 3 websites. Our main website for distribution of information is <https://www.152-76inf-coldwarvetsbamberg.org/>. This is also the one that you can register for the reunion on. Also we are on Facebook, search the groups for 1st Battalion 52nd Infantry Bamberg Germany. The Facebook group is a

public group. The other site is on the Ning network at <http://deltacompany-52nd-inf.ning.com/>, which is a private site where you need to have served in 1-52 to be able to enter. Please answer the question when requesting to enter these groups. My contact information is either by phone at 507-696-8429 or Email at Bill.Burt@152-76inf-coldwarvetsbamberg.org. You can also contact us through our main website <https://www.152-76inf-coldwarvetsbamberg.org/>.