



# TOUGH 'OMBRE TIMES

NEWSLETTER OF THE 90TH DIVISION ASSOCIATION

## Message from the President Col [R] O. Findley Brewster

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Greetings to all members of the 90th Division Association. Many exciting changes are occurring within our organization. As I reported in the Fall, 2019 newsletter, one of the goals of the Executive Committee was to update and modernize our communication and business practices. I want to personally thank those members who have agreed to receive the newsletter and other communication via email. It has resulted in significant savings on postage and other costs associated with “hard copy” communication. For those who don’t have access to email, we will happily continue to communicate through U.S. Mail. We want to keep all Association members in the communication loop.

A few months ago, the Executive Committee agreed to purchase a software program that will enable the Association to conduct business via the internet. The software will allow online membership renewals as well as online registration for Association events, including reunions. This will streamline our operations and is very cost effective. Currently we are in the testing phase of the new system and hope to have everything ready to go in time to register online (and pay with a credit card) for this summer’s reunion. When the system is ready to “go live”, you will be provided a specific, easy-to-follow directions for its use. I want to personally thank Chuck Griffith for his tireless work in securing and implementing the new system.

Plans for the 2020 reunion are heating up! A dynamic committee of Association members and others have spent the winter months planning our 102nd reunion. (July 31-Aug. 2) in San Antonio. As you know, we are returning to the historic Menger Hotel (site of the 2018 reunion.) You will find information elsewhere in the newsletter with procedures on reserving rooms for the event. There are a few changes in store for this year’s reunion, but many of our beloved traditions will remain. There will be a special event on Saturday morning (Aug. 1) in which we will honor and commemorate the men and women of the 90th Division. It will be held the Alamo, the site of the deactivation ceremony of 90th Division soldiers upon their return from WW I. We will also acknowledge and celebrate the 75th Anniversary of VE Day, the end of the war in Europe. In addition to this special event, we will be allowing more time for families to enjoy the sites and sounds of San Antonio by eliminating the Saturday luncheon. Special coupons will be available for reduced ticket prices for many of the popular tourist attractions. Also, special rates will be available for golfers to try out the Fort Sam Houston golf club. (Be sure to read the story about a famous golfer who served in the 90th Division in this newsletter.)

I hope you are all planning to attend and make the 2020 reunion the most exciting reunion in recent years! It has been heartwarming to see the increasing number of children and grandchildren of our WW II veterans attend our reunions. Their presence assures us that the legacy of the 90th Division Tough 'Ombres will endure into the future. On a more somber note, you will notice that we continue to lose Tough 'Ombres who served in WW II. Part of our mission as an organization is to honor their memories. You will find stories about our WW II heroes elsewhere

## 2019 - 2020 Officers

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Mazerolles, France

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Webmaster  
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Col [R] Tad McClung  
Immediate Past President  
Shreveport, LA

in the newsletter. As members of the greatest generation, their impact on the American way of life can never be underestimated.

I look forward to seeing you in San Antonio in August! I hope you are all making plans to attend.

## Message from the Executive Director Nancy Rasmusson



Greetings to all Association members and friends! I am excited to share details of the upcoming 102nd Association reunion! An enthusiastic committee has been working throughout the winter months to create a unique and special event.

As you know, the reunion will be held July 31-August 2, 2020 in San Antonio, Texas. We will be returning to the historic Menger Hotel, site of the 2018 reunion. The reunion officially begins with a luncheon on Friday, July 31, but there will also be a reception planned

for attendees who arrive on Thursday. In addition, a special event for “Junior Tough ‘Ombres” is being planned for Friday morning (July 31.) It will be held at Fort Sam Houston, and will be designed for our young attendees to both learn from and enjoy. More specific details about the events will be announced in the May, 2020 newsletter.

Reunion activities will include a special ceremony on Saturday morning honoring 90th Division veterans, past and present. It will be held at the Alamo, site of the 90th Division deactivation ceremony at the end of WW I. Because of the Saturday morning program, there will be no Saturday luncheon, allowing families an extended amount of time to enjoy the sites and sounds of San Antonio. Children are welcome at the reunion, and special activities are being planned for them.

Details on registering for the reunion will be included in the May newsletter. At this time you can make room reservations at the Menger. Rooms are available at the special rate of \$130 per night (the same rate as in 2018!) You may reserve your room by calling 1-800-345-9285, or by contacting the hotel directly at 210-223-4361, extensions 7373 or 6052. You must identify yourself as an attendee of the “90th Division 102nd Annual Reunion” to get the special room rate. You may also make your reservation online at [www.mengerhotel.com](http://www.mengerhotel.com). Parking at the Menger is available at \$20.00 per night, and there is a “Super Shuttle” from the airport that leaves every 15-30 minutes and makes drop-offs to several hotels. The cost is \$15.00 one way or \$20.00 round trip.

This edition of the newsletter highlights special recognitions of 90th veterans over the past year. Of particular note is the awarding of the James Earl Rudder Award to current Association president, Col. [R] Findley Brewster. Congratulations to Findley for this outstanding recognition!

Finally, we look ahead to important events and commemorations that will be

occurring in 2020, including the 75th Anniversary of VE Day, May 8. If you or others you know are planning to participate in commemorations or other special events (whether here or abroad) please let me know. The spring newsletter will be dedicated to stories of veterans who experienced war's end. Let us never forget.

## **Attention Golfers!**

If you are a golfer and plan on attending the 2020 reunion in San Antonio, you may want to take advantage of a great deal! Fort Sam Houston, the largest military golf club in the nation, is offering golf for the discounted rate of \$32 (for 18 holes and a cart) on Monday thru Friday, or \$39 on Saturday or Sunday. 90th Association reunion attendees are invited to take advantage of these great rates! Bring your clubs to San Antonio and enjoy a round of golf at Fort Sam Houston, a beautiful, 36 hole course. They have requested that reservations be made one week in advance. You may contact the clubhouse to reserve a time at 210-222-9386. For more information go to the Fort Sam Houston Golf Club website: [www.jbsatoday.com/FSH-Golf-Course](http://www.jbsatoday.com/FSH-Golf-Course).

## **Donations Request for Reunion Raffle!**

The Planning Committee for the 2020 Reunion is excited to add a new feature to the Reunion Raffle!

The Committee is requesting that members donate special items for a live auction during the Saturday night Banquet. The request is for significant military memorabilia, artifact or relic that others would be interested in owning or collecting. This might include autographed books or pictures, coins, military artifacts, documents, etc. If you have something tucked away in a closet or displayed in your home that you are willing to part with, the Committee would be interested in it. Some items will be small enough to pack and bring with you to the reunion. For larger items, we will find a way to get them to San Antonio.

If you have something you are interested in donating, but aren't sure if it "fits the bill", contact Nancy Rasmusson at [Nancy@90thDivisionAssoc.org](mailto:Nancy@90thDivisionAssoc.org). Together it can be determined if the item is something that can be featured in the live auction.

Thanks for your help in making the live auction a big success!

# National Museum of the United States Army Opens in June



The U.S. Army announced that the National Museum of the United States Army (Fort Belvoir, VA) will open to the public on June 4, 2020. During a visit to the Museum site, Secretary of Defense and then-Secretary of the Army Mark T. Esper praised the Army Historical Foundation for its role in directing construction of the state-of-the-art facility. Admission to the Museum will be free of charge, though tickets must be requested through an online reservation system for a specific date and time. A limited number of tickets will be available for each reservation time to help ensure a quality experience for everyone.

The museum features displays of many large artifacts. It also includes a panoramic Army Theater with an immersive sound system and earthshaking movements. An Experiential Learning Center, a state-of-the-art interactive resource center, will provide unique learning experiences for visitors of all ages.

The Army Historical Foundation continues to raise funds for the Museum and surrounding campus. More than 178,000 veterans, Army families and grateful Americans have raised \$177 million to date towards the \$200 million campaign.

The Foundation is constructing the Museum in partnership with the U.S. Army. The U.S. Army is now accepting applications for Museum volunteers. Information about the opening and activities at the Museum can be found on the Foundation's website at [armyhistory.org/opening-day/](http://armyhistory.org/opening-day/).

One area of the Museum will capture the story of the changing role of women in the Army. Historically in the Army, women were restricted to more traditional roles as seamstresses, cooks and eventually nurses and aides. With the creation of the Women's Army Corp during WW II, many more career fields became available to women, and over the next 30 years opportunities steadily expanded. With the disestablishment of the Women's Army Corps in 1978, the integration of women into the Regular Army paved the way for women to continue breaking down gender barriers.

The full story of the role of women in the Army, along with many other events of historical significance to the Army can be examined via the Museum. The theme of the Army Museum is to share the epic stories of individual soldiers throughout the history of the Republic. Through the lens of history, the stories of countless soldiers define the legacy of the U.S. Army and the role of the Army in securing and defending freedom at home and throughout the world.



## 90th Division Veterans Honored with Plaque at the National Museum

In addition to the various displays in the Museum, there is also a Tribute Wall in which plaques honoring the various units of the Army will be displayed. 90th Division Association members successfully raised \$5000 in order to secure a plaque for the wall which honors 90th Division veterans of both WW I and WW II. Thanks to Art Meier for spearheading this effort!

## US Army Reserve 90th Sustainment Brigade

Headquartered in Little Rock, Arkansas, the 90th Sustainment Brigade is the only remaining unit in the Army that still carries the 90th Infantry Division colors and wears the famous “Tough ‘Ombres” T-O Patch. Current

commander of the 90th Sustainment Brigade, Col. Daniel Hershkowitz, shared stories of the Sustainment Brigade with attendees of the 101st Anniversary reunion of the 90th Division Association last summer (2019) in New Orleans.

Hershkowitz assured reunion guests that “the 90th is alive and well at 101 years old...the Tough ‘Ombres of today in the 90th Sustainment Brigade continue to carry on the storied lineage of our past and honor the T and O patch proudly.”

A particularly meaningful event for Hershkowitz, along with 18 Tough ‘Ombre soldiers was to attend commemoration ceremonies in Normandy in 2019 in recognition of the 75th Anniversary of D-Day. The soldiers spent 10 days in a journey throughout Normandy where they had the opportunity to interact with soldiers from other countries, local townspeople and WW II veterans. It was a life-changing experience for the young men and women to learn about the sacrifice and service of the “greatest generation.” Hershkowitz stated that the 90th Sustainment Brigade is committed to keeping the legacy of the 90th veterans alive.

The 90th Sustainment Brigade is part of the 4th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary.) The command is made up of soldiers, civilians and their families in units headquartered throughout Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. As part of America’s Army Reserve, these units are trained, combat-ready and equipped to provide military and logistical support in any corner of the globe.



# Tough Ombre One of Greatest Golfers of All Time

Lloyd Mangrum has been described by sports writers as “the greatest golfer ever forgotten.” Born in Trenton, Texas on August 1, 1914, Mangrum began his golf career with his brother by forming a rough green in a patch of grass in his back yard and swinging at a ball with a beat-up golf club found in the trash. However, by age 15 Mangrum had become a professional golfer as an assistant to his brother Ray, the head professional at Cliff-Dale Country Club in Dallas. Mangrum won 36 times on the PGA tour and was one of the highest money earners in professional golf. He might have won more if his golf career had not been interrupted by service in WW II.

Offered the chance to complete his military service via a golf professional’s job at the Fort Meade golf course in Maryland, Mangrum declined. Instead, Mangrum became a part of General Patton’s Third Army, serving as a staff sergeant in the 90th Division. Mangrum served with distinction, was awarded two Purple Hearts for wounds suffered in Normandy and in the Battle of the Bulge. (One of his injuries threatened to permanently sideline his golf career.) He was awarded two Silver and two Bronze Stars. By the end of WW II, Mangrum and one other soldier were the sole surviving members of their original unit.

Following his military service, Mangrum returned to the United States and won the U.S. Open in 1946. Mangrum finished in the top ten at the Masters Tournament for ten consecutive years. He played on four Ryder Cup teams in 1947, 1949, 1951, and 1953. Mangrum was nicknamed “Mr. Icicle” for his ability to display nerves of steel on the golf course. He once stated that he “didn’t suppose that any of the pro or amateur golfers who were combat soldiers would think of a three-putt as one of the really bad troubles in life.”

Mangrum died at age 59 in Apple Valley, California in 1973. The cause of death was a heart attack the 12th (yes, 12th) he had suffered. A quarter century after his death, Mangrum was inducted into the World Golf Hall of Fame in 1998.

## Author Requests Help

**Peter May, of Brandeis University, is planning to write a book about this extraordinary soldier and golfer. He reached out to the 90th Association to request that anyone in the 90th Division Association who may have some knowledge or information about Mangrum’s service in WW II to forward that information to him. He can be reached by email at [pmay@brandeis.edu](mailto:pmay@brandeis.edu). Hopefully, our 90th historians and others within the organization will have information to share with him.**



# Tough Ombre Returns to Normandy



The idea began to take root as 90th Division WW II veteran, Robert Carlo, watched coverage of the ceremonies commemorating the 75th anniversary of D-Day. At age 94, Robert Carlo decided he wanted to return to Normandy. He enlisted the help and support of his daughter, Barbara Turco, her husband, Alfred, and several additional family members. The trip was scheduled for December 7-14, 2019, allowing them several months to develop a plan. As the family began to formulate ideas for their trip, Robert's granddaughter, Amy Fazekas, spent time doing online research which led her to the 90th Division Association website and the contact information for the Executive Director. Robert had never been a member of the Association, and neither he nor his family were aware of its existence. Amy placed a call to Nancy Rasmusson, hoping that they might learn about important places or activities they should be sure to include on their trip. Nancy put them in contact with Association historian,

Norm Richards, as well as Christian Levaufre, Chairman of the Normandy '44 Association in France. From there plans were made and relationships grew resulting in "the trip of a lifetime" for Robert Carlo and his family.

Carlo, a native of Paterson, New Jersey, was 18 years old when he enlisted in the army in July, 1943. He was deployed overseas eight months later, assigned to 358 Infantry Company E. Recalling the moment he entered the battlefield, he said: "We were in the channel for six, seven days before Eisenhower gave us the word. 'We're going to hand you over to the generals of the Army'—that's what the captain of the ship said. We looked at each other and we figured this was it. Carlo has a constant reminder of his wartime experience. As he looks in the mirror each day, he notices the crescent-shaped scar in the center of his forehead. He was injured by an exploding grenade that landed near his position, for which he later received a Purple Heart. Carlo thinks to this day how fortunate he is to have survived when thousands of Allied troops were counted among the dead or missing. Hospitalized for nearly three months



due to his serious injury Carlo was ultimately discharged from the Army and returned to the states where he went on to marry and raise a family and fulfill a lifelong career as a powder mixer for a soap company in New Jersey. Six family members accompanied Carlo on the trip: his daughter and her husband (Alfred and Barbara Turco) his granddaughter Amy Fazekas and her daughter (Robert's great granddaughter) Maci Fazekas and his grandson Michael Turco and wife Nicole Turco.

They arrived in Paris on Sunday morning, and took a train to Bayeux in the afternoon. They had arranged for a private tour with Overlord Tours, and their tour guide picked them up on Monday morning. The first day they visited Arromanches, D-Day 75 Garden, Logues-sur-Mer, German Bunkers, Colleville-sur-Mer, Point du Hoc, Omaha Beach and the American cemetery. Carlo participated in an end-of-day ceremony at the cemetery and was presented with an American flag. A group of 7th grade students on a class trip happened to be at the cemetery at the same time as the Carlo family. They were excited to meet Carlo, asked many questions and had

their pictures taken with him.

The second day of the tour, the family visited Utah Beach, the T-O Memorial, Three Soldiers statue, the Higgins Boat Monument, Sainte-Mere-Eglise, Amfreville (where Carlo was injured) and Gourbesville. Christian Levaufre had arranged for the family to visit Periers, where his brother, Francois, and friend and Deputy Chairman of the Normandy 44-90th US Infantry Division Association, Pierrot Sauvage, conducted a special private tour of the Hamilton-Levaufre museum. Francois and Pierrot spent time explaining the history of the museum and the family saw a short film about Henri Levaufre. Carlo was amazed and impressed by the museum, knowing that everything he saw came from his fellow Tough Ombres. They took lots of pictures and exchanged contact information with their new French friends. Visiting with Francois and Perriot and experiencing the museum in Perriers was the highlight of their trip and something the Carlo family will always remember.

Carlo's family worried that the visit might conjure up difficult memories for their father and grandfather, but Robert remained positive about the whole experience. He was happy to see the way the beaches and towns he had marched through back in 1944 look today. Carlo stated, "they're so beautiful...it was all worth it." Since their return from Normandy, Carlo has relived it over and over with family and friends. His granddaughter, Amy, made him a book of photos from the trip and he looks at it every day, often sharing it with anyone who visits. A local journalist wrote a story about the family's trip which came to the attention of the New Jersey Department of Veterans Affairs, resulting in a medal ceremony in Robert Carlo's home. (See the story elsewhere in the newsletter.) Barbara Turco feels blessed to have shared this experience with her father. It makes the stories he had shared with them about his experience very real. She was amazed to stand on the very beach her father had stormed as a "19-year-old kid" and to learn so much about the war, the courage of the Tough 'Ombres and the resiliency of the French people.

The family of Robert Carlo wanted to expressly thank the 90th Division Association, Norm Richards and Christian Levaufre for all of their efforts in creating an experience they will never forget. Robert Carlo has since become a member of the 90th Division Association. Hopefully we will be able to meet him in person in the future to learn more about his service and his return trip to Normandy!





# Association President Awarded Prestigious Maj. Gen. James Earl Rudder Medal

Those of us who know Col. Retired Col. Findley Brewster know that he is a champion of people...a tireless advocate for soldiers, for young people seeking a career in military service and for civilians seeking to improve their communities. Thus, we are not surprised to learn that Col. Brewster was recently honored as the recipient of the Maj. Gen. James Earl Rudder Medal in Washington, D.C., Oct. 14, 2019.

The Maj. Gen. James Earl Rudder Medal, established in 1999, pays homage to an officer who was a proven war hero known for taking chances. As a lieutenant colonel, Rudder took part in the invasion of Normandy and commanded forces at the Battle of the Hurtgen and led a series of action and ambushes during the Battle of the Bulge. Rudder was also known for his courageous and “outside the box” thinking in his approach to solving problems. A former president of Texas A&M, Rudder opened the universities’ doors to women in 1963 in spite of negative feedback regarding the decision. The Rudder medal is awarded annually to a soldier who exemplifies Rudder’s commitment to service and who has made major contributions to the Army and to his or her community.

Col. (R) Brewster was selected for the prestigious award for his ability to lead and champion new causes that contributed to the mission of the Army and assisted in preparing soldiers for duty. Brewster, a Texas A&M graduate who long considered

Rudder to be his personal hero, was attending a meeting at the university when he first heard about the Texas A&M Colonias program. Colonias are small communities of approximately 500,000 people living outside city limits. They exist primarily at the border and most exist in third-world conditions. Upon learning about the communities,



Brewster undertook the mission to help them. Brewster’s work and passion led him to the Innovative Readiness Training mission. The IRT program is a collaborative effort between Army Reserve units and communities throughout the United States. Brewster was instrumental in establishing a working partnership between Army Reserve units and Colonias communities. The partnership is a “win-win” allowing soldiers the opportunity to get real world training and help communities in need of assistance. In addition, the program is a great recruiting tool because it affords civilians an opportunity to experience the Army Reserve up close and personal. Brewster is proud of what has become of the program and the results of the work that have been achieved. Construction of miles of roads, a ballpark and culverts are a few of the examples. The program also impacts the life and health of community members in positive ways.

Another program Brewster is proud to be involved in is the Minuteman Scholarship. The Minuteman program is an ROTC scholarship that covers full tuition and fees, or \$10,000 per year toward room and board at any college or university served by an Army ROTC program. Brewster has helped many future leaders find their start in Army



ROTC programs, as well as university study.

The ways in which Col. Brewster has opened doors to young people, improved communities and upheld the finest traditions of the Army are too numerous to mention. Nominated by LTC (R) Rich Stinson, President of the Alamo Chapter AUSA, Brewster was recognized as a “selfless servant-leader” who has “left an enduring imprint on the success of the Army, the Army Reserves and so many other efforts.”

Stinson continued that “having schooled under MG James Earl Rudder while at Texas A&M University, serving in the 90th Division “Tough Ombres” that claims MG Rudder as one of its own, and most recently attending and representing both Texas A&M and the 90th Division at the unveiling of the MG Rudder statue in Brady, Texas, I cannot think of a more fitting and more deserving nominee for the Major General James Earl Rudder Award than Colonel (R) Olin Findley Brewster.”

The award was presented to Col. (R) Brewster at an official ceremony in Washington, D.C. during the annual Association of the United States Army meeting. Col. Brewster was humbled and honored to receive this prestigious award, stating that it was one of the most meaningful experiences of his lifetime.

As President of the 90th Division Association, Col. Brewster shares his passion for the Army, for his country and for his fellow Association members in ways large and small. Congratulations to Col. (R) Brewster for this outstanding recognition of his leadership and commitment to the United States Army.

## Veteran Awarded Distinguished Service Medal, 76 Years After WWII Service

Robert Carlo enlisted July 30, 1943 at the age of 18. In a few months (March, 1944) Carlo boarded a ship headed to England, one of thousands of 90th Division Tough ‘Ombres preparing for the invasion of Normandy. Carlo’s role in the army was a Rifleman. Dale Lundhigh, another Tough Ombre who served as a rifleman during the war described the Rifleman’s “job” in his 2009 memoir, [Show Me the Hero](#):

*The Infantry Rifleman is the lowest common denominator on the combat ladder. It is he who shelters all others on the battlefield, he whose actions makes possible the histories so profusely documented by the higher echelons. The Rifleman’s existence isn’t recorded in grandiose memoirs or documented in broad historical reviews. A single soldier’s actions seem insignificant in the context of a battle. Multiply the single GI Rifleman by his squad, by his platoon, by his company and you have compounded the guts of Wartime histories. Actions of individuals become lost when translating Wartime strategies and grand maneuvers. Yet if those individual’s actions could be dissected, the human stuff that Wartime history is made of, the very reasons for a general’s memoirs rests in the soul of these whose fate it was to be assigned as “Rifleman.”\**

In December, 2019, Carlo, along with six family members returned to Normandy to retrace the path of the 90th Division through Normandy. (See the story of their experience elsewhere in the newsletter.) A local journalist picked up the story, which was published in NorthJersey.com and in turn Carlo’s wartime service was brought to the attention of the New Jersey State Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. It was discovered that Carlo had never been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, the state’s highest military award. The medal initially was issued in 1858 to veterans who had distinguished themselves in the New Jersey state militia. Later, the medal was awarded to Jew Jersey soldiers who returned from combat after the Spanish-American War, the Mexican Expedition of 1916 and World War I. However, there were no such awards for veterans of WW II and later conflicts. That changed in 1988 when then-governor Thomas Kean brought back the original medal.

In January, 2020, Carlo was notified that he would be receiving the award. Mark Piterski, New Jersey’s deputy



commissioner for veterans affairs, traveled to Carlo's home to award the medal. Robert Carlo, who was joined by several family members for the ceremony, was honored with the award.

To Carlo, the medal is a small, but meaningful token that recognizes the sacrifices he made to defend his country. Carlo had previously received a Purple Heart.

Peterski stated that he was "honored" to recognize a WW II veteran. He loves thanking them for their wartime service. Peterski stayed on hand following the ceremony for an hour as he and Carlo traded laughs and war stories. Carlo's family, who had accompanied him on a return trip to Normandy, was on hand to witness their father and grandfather receive the important recognition of his wartime service.

\*Dale Lundhigh, Show Me the Hero. AuthorHouse, 1663 Liberty Drive, Suite 200, Bloomington, IN 47403, 2009, p. 3.

## 90th Veteran Honored for Wartime Service



Join us in bestowing to WWII Veteran with the

### FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR

France's highest distinction

**Mr. John J. Day Jr.**

90th Division - 358th Infantry Regiment - Anti-Tank Company  
Normandy - Northern France



1944-2019

75th Anniversary of the Normandy & Southern France Landings

**Tuesday, October 8, 2019 at 10:45 a.m.**

American Legion Hall - VFW Post 7883

393 E. College Avenue

Westerville. OH 43081



October was an important month in the life of John J. Day, Jr.

Born in Bronx, NY in 1922, John, the oldest of three boys, attended public schools. Following his graduation, Day began a career with the Pennsylvania Railroad. On October 16, 1942, John was drafted into the U.S. Army. On October 30, John took the subway to Penn Station and departed for Camp Barkley, Texas, where he would join the heralded 90th Infantry Division, assigned to the 358th Infantry Regiment, Anti-Tank Company. Day trained in Texas, California and New Jersey before boarding a ship in March, 1944 departing for England, arriving on Easter Sunday.

Approximately two months later, Day boarded a ship for Normandy, as part of the Allied Forces, whose mission was to drive German forces out of France. As a Tough 'Ombre, Day survived extreme conditions in the Battle of the Seves River. For his courageous service, Day earned the European Theater Badge, Combat Infantry Badge and the Bronze Star. Following his discharge on November 12, 1945, Day returned to civilian life where he met and married Mary Ann Gross. They went on to raise four children: James, Elizabeth, Barbara (died at age 19 from leukemia) and John III.

Fast forward to October, 2019. Almost exactly

seventy-seven years after John received his draft notice at age 20, Day and his family members were notified that he would be receiving the French Legion of Honor medal, the highest distinction that France can bestow upon those who "have achieved remarkable deeds for France." Day was awarded the medal at a ceremony held at the American Legion Hall VFW Post 7883 in Westerville, Ohio on October 8, 2019. The medal was bestowed by Consul General Guillaume LaCroix on behalf of French President Emmanuel Macron. In a moving tribute,

LaCroix thanked Mr. Day for liberating his country and for saving his family's life. LaCroix's grandfather, you see, spent five years in a Nazi POW camp. LaCroix commented that prior to the award, Day was an American hero. Upon receiving the French Legion of Honor Day officially became "a hero of two nations." In typically modest fashion, like so many other veterans, Day underplayed his own significance in the war. While honored to receive the recognition, Day countered that "the boys that were sent over that didn't make it were the real heroes."

Sadly, later that same month, on October 31, 2019 at age 97, John J. Day, Jr. answered the Call of Taps. He was laid to rest in Long Island National Cemetery with full military honors. The 90th Association was saddened to learn of the loss of another of the greatest generation. Members may recall that John Day attended many reunions, often accompanied by his daughter, Elizabeth Duckwitz.

Throughout his long life, John stayed involved with various veterans' organizations, never failing to recognize and remember veterans who had given so much for their country. It is fitting that the bookends of his long life encompassed unselfish service to his country, and, in the year of the 75th anniversary of D-Day, and 77 years after his conscription into military service, a hero's recognition for that service.

## Call of Taps

### Winter, 2020

John J. Day, Jr. 358/AT	31 October, 2019	Galena, OH
Roger W Gagnon 358th	23 February, 2020	Plainfield, CT
Donald G. Webster 357/K	26 June, 2019	Danvers, MA
Russell E. Wentworth 712/D TK BN	29 January, 2020	Ephrata, WA