Association WEB Page:
www.34ida.org

34th Infantry Division Association
7105 NW 70th Ave, Cp Dodge, Bldg 3692
Johnston, IA 50131

Page 1, Spring 2026

Spring 2026 Issue -
The 34th ID Assn. newsletter is published three times a year.

Welcome Home 2nd IBCT from CENTCOM Tour



Governor Reynolds, MG Osborn, CSM Strasser, and Congressman Nunn welcome home 140 Soldiers at the Des Moines Airport on May 30th, 2026

On 30 May 2026, Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, Major General Stephen Osborn, The Adjutant General of Iowa, CSM Eric Strasser, State Command Sergeant Major, and Senator Zach Nunn welcomed home 140 Soldiers from the 2-34th Infantry Brigade Combat Team along with many family and friends. COL Eric Soults, Commander of the 2-34th IBCT also welcomed home these Soldiers at the 132d Air Wing the Des Moines Airport.

A few hours later Lieutenant Governor Chris Cournoyer and many state and community leaders welcomed home some of the last 45 Soldiers at the 1-168th Infantry Battalion armory in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

The deployment for the Red Bulls marks the largest deployment for the Iowa National Guard since 2011, with over 1,800 Soldiers deployed in support of Operation Inherent Resolve in numerous different locations in the Central Command (CENTCOM) area of operations.



Lieutenant Governor Chris Cournoyer and many state and community leaders welcomed home the last 45 Soldiers from the 2nd Infantry BDE at the 1-168th Infantry Battalion's armory in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Over a dozen Welcome Home ceremonies have occurred since mid-winter in Des Moines, Cedar Rapids, Sioux City, and Council Bluffs, Iowa. Twenty-four Send-Off ceremonies were conducted for the 2/34 IBCT Ryder Brigade which included units from 19 States and 4 different countries (United Kingdom, Jordan, Kosovo, Germany). More than 6,000 Soldiers and Iowans began the initial deployment to Fort Polk, LA, with 1,800 Soldiers deploying forward to CENTCOM.







Welcome Home ceremony on May 15, 2026 at the 132d Air Wing near the Des Moines Airport





Mayor Tiffany O'Donnel, Lieutenant Governor Chris Cournoyer, and other state and community leaders welcome Soldiers in Cedar Rapids on April 30, 2026.





Greeting Red Bulls,

BLUF – Register for our Annual Reunion at Camp Ripley on October 2-3 hosted by the Commander's Own Chapter. The lunch speaker is COL Hobot, Cdr of the 1st ABCT and the dinner speaker is BG Joe Sharkey, Cdr of the 34th ID. Hearing from these two soldiers alone is worth the price of the admission. The highlight is Saturday afternoon and a tour of the new MN Military and Veterans Museum. Registration information is on pages 4-6. See you all there.

Pages 1 & 3 are pictures and articles of the 12 Welcome Home ceremonies for the 2nd IBCT. We welcome home all our Red Bulls that were on this deployment. We also remember SSG Howard and SSG Torres-Tovar who were KIA on December 13 along with two other soldiers who were wounded in that attack. They are still recovering at the Brooke Army Medical Center at Ft Sam Houston, TX. We pray our Lord gives our fallen soldiers Eternal Rest and gives our wounded soldiers the strength to recover from their wounds.

Thanks again to our Ironman Chapter in Italy as you continue to represent the 34th Inf Div Assoc. with the Memorial Day Ceremonies where you laid wreaths at the Florence and the Rome National Cemeteries. Two sites where many of our Red Bull soldiers are buried. The Ironman Chapter and the Cities of Filignano and Scapoli also dedicated a new monument to the 34th ID recognizing the Battle of Mt. Pantano. This is the battle depicted on the 34th ID Heritage Print entitled "Red Bulls In The Winter Line". Thank you President Alessandro for your articles and everything your members do.

CSM Doug Julin (Former 34th ID CSM) and I were talking and decided that we would throw in a hundred bucks for a lifetime membership drawing at the MN Officer's Convention and Enlisted Conference. We'll do this in other states as well. Congrats to MAJ Stacey Bushman-Ford and MSG Tyler Jackson. Please look at my Membership Challenge in this newsletter and an opportunity to win a ride in a Freedom Flight hot air balloon.

Finally, congratulations to LTC Steven Hall, the new Garrison Commander at Camp Ripley. The Change of Command was held at the Camp Ripley Training Center with a packed house as COL Troy Fink passed the colors to LTC Hall. LTC Hall also serves as the President of the Commander's Own Chapter and will be the host at our reunion next fall.

MG (Ret) Jerry Lang - President 34th Infantry Division Association
jerry.lang52@outlook.com, 320-250-3754

34th Infantry Division Final Roll Call

Fall 2025

Douglas Denham, 1-168th Inf Bn, 34th Inf Div
Ronnie Snyder, HHC 34th Inf Bde, A, 47th Avn
Ron Wray, Trp D 1-194 Cav, 34th Inf Div
William (Bill) M. Judge, D,109th Avn, 34th ID
LaVerne Anderson, 34th Avn Det, 34th Inf Div
Jim Wolf, 34th Sig Co, 234th Sig Bn, 34th Inf Div
Richard (Dick) Mann, 1-168th Inf, 34th Inf Div
James (Jimmy) S. Schultz, 2nd IBCT, 34th ID

Winter 2026

Darrel Jackson 168th Inf Bn, 2 IBCT, 34th ID
SGT Edgar B. Torres Tovar, 1-113 Cav, 34th ID
SGT William N. Howard, 1-113 Cav, 34th ID
COL James E. Lalley, 2-133rd Inf, 34th Inf Div
Rodney Fichtner, 2nd IBCT, S-2 NCO 34 ID
Mark David Flattery, 113th Cav Sqdn 34th ID
Jerry O. Faust, 147th Avn Bn, 34th Inf Div
Dennis Dietz, 34th Bde, & 2nd IBCT, 34th Inf Div

Spring 2026

Jimmy D. Radley, 1-168th Inf, 34th Inf Div
Carl D. Jansen, 34th Infantry Division
Darline Smith, Sergeant of Arms, 34th ID Assn.
Robert D. Conner, 2-133 Inf Mec, 34th Inf Div
Lester L. Ross, HHC, 34th Bde, 47th ID / 34 ID
Chris Mefford, 34th Infantry Division
Kent D. Kaeser,2nd IBCT, 34th Infantry Division
James Wolfe, 234th Sig Bn, Ordnance Trng Ctr
Christopher P. Brossart 2-135th Inf Bn 34th Inf Div
Dick Fullerton, 34th Army Band, 34th Inf Div
Roy Craig Dunn, 34th Infantry Division
Donald C. Schwebach, HHC 2-133IN, 34th Inf Div

Final Roll Call Prayer
May they have no
more hills to climb,
nor cold, nor rain, nor mud,
nor enemy fire.

National Office-34th Infantry Division Association
Iowa Gold Star Museum, Camp Dodge - Bldg 3692,
7105 NW 70TH Ave, Johnston, IA 50131
Association Website **http://www.34IDA.org**

79th Reunion 2-3 Oct 2026 at Camp Ripley, MN

Secretary: COL (Ret) Ed Graybill. E-Mail: edward.graybill1@gmail.com
Treasurer: SGM (Ret) Dan Cain 712-326-8808,
daniel.t.cain@gmail.com
Asst. Secretary Appointed: COL (Ret) Russ Bierl
Facebook Manager: CW5 (Ret) Herman Poggensee,
pogjack@gmail.com
Website, Historian: MSG (Ret) Daniel Ewer

Facebook 34th Inf Div Assn: https://www.facebook.com/34InfDivAssoc
Internet 34th Inf Div Assn: http://www.34IDA.org
Also, follow Red Bulls at
1st ABCT: http://www.facebook.com/MinnesotaRedBulls
2nd IBCT: http://www.facebook.com/IowaRedBulls http://www.dvidshub.net/units/2-34IBCT
http://www.twitter.com/IowaRedBulls http://www.flickr.com/IowaRedBulls
34th DIV SUS BDE: https://www.facebook.com/share/1a73Dvh8p2/?mibextid=wwXlfr

Welcome Home 2nd IBCT 34th ID From CENTCOM (cont.)



Major General Osborn welcome Soldiers home and families reunite in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, on April 8th, 2026. Several members of the local firefighters, police, and other first responders attended for support.





Below, Soldiers at the Welcomed Home in Cedar Rapids on April 2nd, 2026 at the 334th BSB Armory.





Below, "Not every Welcome Home comes with a crowd – but every one matters" Welcome home reunions with Soldiers at the Des Moines Airport on April 9th and May 1st, 2026.









Left – April 9th, 2026, and Above – May 1st, 2026 at the DSM Airport.





Left: State Command Sergeant Major Eric Strasser welcomes home Soldiers on March 7th, 2026.

Right: Major General Steven Osborn welcomes home COL Eric Soults, commander of the 2-34th IBCT, on March 12th, 2026. Both ceremonies were at the 132d Air Wing at the Des Moines airport.



COL Soults, Commander of 2-34 IBCT, briefing at the Des Chapter of the 34th Infantry Division Association on June 16th, 2026.

COL Eric Soults, Commander of the 2-34th IBCT, briefed on the 2nd BDE's Operation INHERENT RESOLVE at Des Chapter of the 34th ID Assn on June 16th, 2026 at Iowa Gold Star Museum. COL Soults stated that, "I couldn't be prouder of what the Soldiers and Leaders of the 2/34th Infantry Brigade Combat Team accomplished this past year. We faced one of the most turbulent mobilizations imaginable rolling straight from JRTC into a mission that changed constantly. Despite that, the Brigade closed one base in Iraq and four in Syria and safely moved more than 5,700 ISIS detainees from Syria to Iraq. All of this while navigating a dynamic operational environment that included Operation Hawkey Strike and Operation Enduring Fury.

Through every challenge, the Red Bulls led the way."

79th Annual Reunion of the 34th Infantry Division Association
Camp Ripley Training Center (CRTC), Hangar Conference Cener
October 2-3, 2026, Camp Ripley, MN

Friday, 2 October (Dress is Casual)

3:00-5:00 pm	Arrive at CRTC and Check into Rooms, Education Center Bldg 6-76	Self-Guided
4:00-8:00 pm	Reception/Registration. Meal and no Host Bar, Hangar Bldg 8-195 Supper is served at 6:00 pm	LTC Hall
8:00 pm	Personal Time, Viking Club is Open for Socializing	Self-Guided

Saturday, 3 October (Dress is Business Casual)

6:00-7:45 am	Breakfast at CDF, Ed Center Bldg 6-76 (on your own) Officer/Trustee Meeting 7:00-7:45 am at the CDF	Self-Guided MG(R) Lang
9:00-9:30 am	Registration, Hangar Conference Center Bldg 8-195	
9:30-10:00 am	Camp Ripley Overview Brief, Hanger Conf Center	LTC Hall
10:00-11:30 am	34th Infantry Division Association Business Meeting	MG(R) Lang
11:30-12:00 am	Lunch at the Hangar	Self-Guided
12:00-12:30 pm	Presentation on 1/34 ABCT	COL Hobot
12:30-1:00 pm	Movement to Museum	Self-Guided
1:00-3:30 pm	Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum Tour	Mr. Dietrich
3:30-4:30 pm	Personal time	Self-Guided
4:30-5:45 pm	Social Time, No Host Bar at the Viking Club	MG(R) Lang
5:45-6:00 pm	Posting of the Colors	MG(R) Lang
6:00-6:30 pm	34th Infantry Division Association Memorial Service	Chaplain
6:30-7:30 pm	Banquet Meal	MG(R) Lang
7:30-8:00 pm	Guest Speaker, BG Joseph Sharkey, 34ID Commander	
8:00 pm	Closing Remarks, Meeting Complete	President

Sunday, 4 October

No Association activities, thanks for coming and travel safe.

The MNNG is hosting the annual Court of Honor on Camp Ripley.

Note: Friday supper, Saturday lunch and supper, coffee/water/snacks are part of the daily/package registration fee. Saturday breakfast is on your own. The CDF is located in the Ed Center, Bldg 6-76, hours are 6:00-7:45 am, price is $10.55. Other options are Taco Johns, Subway or Little Falls restaurants.

79th ANNUAL REUNION INFORMATION

This year's Reunion of our Association is being hosted by Commanders Own Chapter on October 2-3, 2026 at Camp Ripley, MN.

The Camp Ripley Training Center (CRTC) is a 53,000-acre training base operated by the Minnesota National Guard (MNNG) and is located 7 miles North of Little Falls, MN on Highway 371 in the heart of Minnesota's vacation area.

CRTC is home to MNNG Logistics, CFMO, RTI, USP&FO, and units of the 34th Infantry Division.

THE ARRANGEMENTS

Lodging: Lodging is available on both Friday and Saturday evening at Camp Ripley or at any civilian Motel in Little Falls, MN.

Camp Ripley offers BOQ Rooms with Full size beds at $49 per night. The Camp Ripley billeting number is 320-616-3140. Please mention the 34IDA Reunion when calling.

The Little Falls community has a number of lodging options available, go to the Little Falls Convention and Visitors website: https://www.littlefallsmn.com/stay/.

Transportation:

Attendees are responsible to self-transport to/from CRTC. From the Minneapolis Airport there is a shuttle operated by Groome Transportation, link: https://groometransportation.com/minneapolis-st-paul-airport/brainerd/?&sd_client_id=6b877a95-1deb-45ac-ba62-049b8c162b3b

Requirements to attend the reunion at CRTC:

1. Send in your Reunion Registration form, located in this newsletter. **NLT September 15, 2026.**
2. Make a hotel reservation – NLT Sep 15, 2026

Final details and any updated information will be posted to our 34th Association website, link: http://www.34ida.org

THE PROGRAM

Registration:

The registration fee for the reunion covers the Friday evening dinner, Saturday lunch & banquet meal, and soft drinks/snacks. The Registration Fee, for the entire event is $55, to be paid with the pre-registration. Payment can be made by check or the Commanders Own Chapter PayPal account. Single day registration is $20 for Friday only & $35 for Saturday only. We also offer only lunch or banquet options on Saturday.

Friday- October 2nd

After checking into your pre-arranged lodging, move to the Hangar Conference Center (Bldg 8-195) at 4 PM to kick off the reunion with a "Gathering of the Red Bulls". You can get directions from the Gate or Billeting office.

The social runs from 4-8 PM with a pulled pork sandwich, sides, and dessert dinner served at 6 PM. There will be non-alcoholic beverages available as part of your registration fee and a no host bar available at the Viking Club adjoining the Hangar, and will remain open following the event.

Saturday- October 3rd

Activities start at 9:30 AM in the Hanger Conf Center with a CRTC brief by LTC Hall, Garrison Commander, followed by the business meeting.

The business meeting is followed by a Subway sandwich box lunch and a briefing by COL Hobot, 1/34ABCT Commander. We then move to the new Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum for a tour, followed by personal time.

The evening continues at 4:30 PM with a social (no host bar), a memorial service at 6 PM and the banquet (roast beef & stuffed chicken dinner, cheesy potatoes, green beans, salad, roll, and dessert) at 6:30 PM. The guest speaker is BG Joseph Sharkey, 34ID Commander, to speak on the Division.

This concludes the reunion events for the weekend.

Reunion Pocket Program

Friday- October 2

4:00-8:00 PM Reception/Registration at the Hangar. Dinner and non-alcoholic beverages covered by registration fee and a no host bar.

Saturday- October 3

7:00 AM Officer/Trustee Meeting CDF, Bldg 6-76
9:30 AM CRTC Overview by LTC Hall, Hangar
10:00 AM Business Meeting, Hanger
11:30 AM Lunch (included in fee)
12:00 PM 1/34ABCT brief by COL Hobot
1:00 PM Minnesota Military & Veterans Museum
3:30 PM Personal Time
4:30 PM Social Hour with a no host bar, Hanger
5:45 PM Posting of the Colors, Hanger
6:00 PM Memorial Service, Hanger
6:30 PM Reunion Banquet (included in fee), Guest Speaker BG Sharkey, 34ID Commander

Sunday- October 4- No Association Activities
The MNNG Court of Honor is being held on CRTC

34th Infantry Division Association

2026 Registration Form- Celebrating 79 Years

Friday, October 2, through Saturday October 3, 2026

NAME: _____

GUEST: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP CODE: _____

PHONE: _____ Chapter of Membership:_____

EMAIL: _____

List any special needs during the reunion: _____

REGISTRATION FEES:

FRIDAY AND SATURDAY ATTENDANCE. Fee covers the association meeting venues/costs, Friday evening reception with dinner, Saturday lunch and banquet, and non-alcoholic beverages and snacks (cash bar available for socials). Number of Persons _____ X $55 = Total $_____

FRIDAY ONLY ATTENDANCE. Fee covers the venue, Friday evening reception with dinner, and non-alcoholic beverages (cash bar available). Number of Persons _____ X $20 = Total $_____

SATURDAY ONLY ATTENDANCE. Fee covers the association meeting venues/costs, Saturday lunch and banquet meal, and non-alcoholic beverages and snacks (cash bar available).
Number of Persons _____ X $35 = Total $_____
Saturday Business Meeting Lunch only. Number of Persons _____X $10 = Total $_____
Saturday Banquet only. Number of Persons _____X $25 = Total $_____

Please return registration form and payment for total amount to:
By mail. Make check out to: 34ID Commanders Own Association
Send to: 34ID Commanders Association
Attn: Chad Sackett
20414 213th St
Little Falls, MN 56345

PayPal option. Send funds to **@34idcommandersown** put "34IDA Reunion" in the remarks.
If using PayPal, you may eFax or scan your registration form to: chad.mitchel.sackett@gmail.com

Lodging arrangements must be made by September 15, 2026.
Camp Ripley Billeting, (320) 616-3140. Reference the 34IDA Reunion. Individual rooms with full size beds and private bath.
For local Little Falls, MN lodging options, go to: https://www.littlefallsmn.com/stay/

For questions on the reunion, contact COL(R) Sackett, chad.mitchel.sackett@gmail.com
Materials and updates are posted on the 34IDA website: http://www.34ida.org/

IRONMAN BATTALION – ITALIAN CHAPTER

WARM GREETINGS FROM ITALY TO THE PRESIDENT, THE ASSOCIATION'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AND ALL MEMBERS OF THE 34TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATIO.

SUMMER HAS NOT YET BEGUN, BUT THERE ARE ALREADY MANY COMMITMENTS. ON MAY 23 AND 24, 2026, A REPRESENTATION OF THE ITALIAN "IRONMAN BATTALION" CHAPTER OF THE ASSOCIAZIONE LINEA GOTICA PISTOIESE (ETS) WAS PRESENT IN LUCCA AS PART OF A MULTI-ERA EVENT HELD AGAINST THE ATTRACTIVE SETTING OF THE CITY WALLS. THE GROUP PRESENTED AN EXHIBITION OF THE 34TH IND RELATED TO THE 109TH MEDICAL BATTALION, PRESENTING A SECTION OF A FIELD FIRST AID UNIT. THE LARGE AUDIENCE APPRECIATED THE PROPOSED EXHIBITION, WHICH WAS RICH IN ORIGINAL MATERIALS.

ON MONDAY, MAY 25, CHAPTER REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDED THE MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES HELD AT THE ROME AND FLORENCE CEMETERIES. THE ASSOCIATION SENT THE CUSTOMARY WREATHS, WHOSE PRESENCE WAS MENTIONED IN THE OFFICIAL PROGRAM DISTRIBUTED TO THOSE PRESENT.

DESPITE THE SUMMERY FEEL OF THE DAY, WITH TEMPERATURES EXCEEDING 30 DEGREES CELSIUS, THE FLORENCE CEREMONY WAS WELL ATTENDED, WITH A LARGE NUMBER OF AMERICAN, ITALIAN, FRENCH, AND BRAZILIAN CIVIL AND MILITARY OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE. MANY MUNICIPAL BANDS WERE ACCOMPANIED BY THE MAYORS PRESENT AT THE CEREMONY, AMONG THEM THE BANNER OF THE CITY OF FLORENCE WAS AWARDED THE GOLD MEDAL FOR MILITARY VALOR.

FOR THE INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS, DR. ERYTH Z. ZECHER GAVE THE WAY TO LIE GENERAL (RET.) ABMC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR OPERATIONS, TOM SPOEHR, WHO, AFTER THE CUSTOMARY GREETINGS, CONTINUED BY RECALLING THAT "*AMERICA'S SUCCESS HAS NEVER BEEN GUARANTEED. AT EVERY STEP OF THE WAY, AMERICA HAS BEEN SHAPED AND PRESERVED BY THOSE WHO HAVE SERVED WHEN THEY WERE CALLED TO DO SO—MANY OF WHOM HAVE MADE THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE. THEIR LEGACY IS NOT ABSTRACT. IT IS PERSONAL. IT IS HUMAN. AS WITH SO MANY HEROIC MILITARY MEMBERS WHOSE SERVICE HAS SPANISHED THE PAST 250 YEARS OF HISTORY AMERICANA, THEIR LEGACY LIVES ON IN THE STORIES OF THOSE WHOSE NAMES ARE CARVED IN STONE AT THIS SACRED PLACE*."

HE THEN CONTINUED TO REMEMBER ONE OF THE FALLEN MEN PRESENT IN THE FLORENCE CEMETERY: PRIVATE FIRST-CLASS ST. CLAIR GIBSON, A "BUFFALO SOLDIER" OF THE 92ND INFANTRY DIVISION. HIS STORY IS VERY UNIQUE AND DESERVES MENTIONING. HE FELL IN COMBAT ON NOVEMBER 18, 1944. HIS BODY COULD NOT BE RECOVERED AS THE AREA REMAINED ACTIVE FOR SOME TIME. IN ANY CASE, BY VIRTUE OF THE HEROIC DEEDS THAT CAUSED HIS DEATH, HE WAS AWARDED THE SILVER STAR FOR VALOR. UNFORTUNATELY, GIVEN THE TIME THAT HAD PASSED BY THE TIME OF RECOVERY, IT WAS NOT POSSIBLE TO IDENTIFY HIS BODY WITH CERTAINTY, AND FOR THIS REASON, HE WAS TRANSFERRED TO THE FLORENCE CEMETERY AS AN UNKNOWN SOLDIER. NEVERTHELESS, THE ABMC'S COMMITMENT DID NOT STOP, AND IN MAY 2025, HIS REMAINS WERE CORRECTLY IDENTIFIED, AND IN FEBRUARY 2026, HIS REMAINS WERE TRANSFERRED TO ARLINGTON NATIONAL CEMETERY. TODAY, HIS NAME, STILL PRESENT ON THE WALL OF THE MISSING HERE IN FLORENCE, FEATURES A BRONZE ROSETTE.

MAJOR GENERAL LUIGI POSTIGLIONE, COMMANDER OF THE MILITARY GEOGRAPHICAL INSTITUTE, THEN SPEAKS. HE REMEMBERED THE CRUCIAL ROLE PLAYED BY THE ALLIED TROOPS IN THE FIGHT FOR LIBERATION. THESE MEN AND WOMEN CAME FROM FAR AWAY TO LIBERATE ITALY AND EUROPE FROM NAZI-FASCISM. OUR GRATITUDE GOES OUT TO ALL OF THEM AND TO THE FAMILIES OF THE FALLEN. OUR CONDOLENCES AND SYMPATHY GO OUT FOR THE GREAT SACRIFICE MADE BY THEIR LOVED ONES.

VICE ADMIRAL J. T. ANDERSON, COMMANDER OF THE US NAVY'S SIXTH FLEET, THEN SPOKE, PRIOR TO THE WREATH LAYING.

THEN THE WREATH-LAYING BY THE AUTHORITIES WAS FOLLOWED, A MOMENT OF SILENCE, AND THEN THE BLESSING AND FLYOVER OF THE CEMETERY BY THE 555TH FIGHTER SQUADRON OF THE 31ST FIGHTER WINGS FROM AVIANO

(CONTINUED ON PAGE)

(Continued from Page 7) **Memorial Day at the Florence, Italy U.S. ABMC Cemetery**

AFTER THE CEREMONY, WE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO BOTH THE U.S. CONSUL IN FLORENCE, DANIELA BALLARD, AND WE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO SAY GOODBYE TO HIM AS HE WILL LEAVE ITALY IN JULY FOR HIS NEW ASSIGNMENT IN NAIROBI.
WE THEN BRIEFLY MET WITH ADMIRAL J.T. ANDERSON, ALWAYS A WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY PERSON, AND THE ABMC STAFF LEAVING EVERYONE A SMALL MEMORY OF OURSELVES.
DURING THE CEREMONY, A BEAUTIFUL POEM WRITTEN BY LORD GENERAL (RET.) MASSIMO PANNIZZI WAS READ, WHICH I ATTACH SEPARATELY, QUOTING ONLY THE CONCLUDING SECTION.

MAY THEY REST IN HONOR. MAY THEY REST IN PEACE.
AND MAY THEIR MEMORY ALWAYS REMAIN ALIVE AMONG US.
THIS IS OUR COMMITMENT, NOT JUST A PROMISE,
BUT A SACRED DUTY.

34° Infantry Division Association
Ironman Battalion Italian
Chapter
Alessandro Querci



L to R. Alessandra Tolentino, Simone Pellegrini, General Council Daniela Ballard, and Alessandro Querci (Ironman Chapter) at the Florence, Cemetery.



Marco Poggiali (Ironman Chapter), Alessandra Tolentino, Director of the Florence Cemetery- Eryth Zecher, and Simone Pellegrini, from the Italy Tour



The 34th Infantry Division Association has provided funds to place flower wreaths at the Florence, and Sicily-Rome, Italy Cemeteries, every year, since the 1947 Des Moines, Iowa Reunion.



The Florence Italy Cemetery covers 70 acres. The 34th Infantry Division lost 3,737 KIA, 3,460 MIA, and 14,165 Wounded, while serving 517 days of "Front Line Combat Duty, the most in the WWII European Theater.

34th Infantry Division National Membership Application Form

NOTE: If your address Label shows (L), (W), (T) or (6) you do not owe dues for the Current Year

( ) Enclosed is $10.00 for my Annual Membership in the 34th Infantry Division Association. Annual membership period is: – 1 Sep thru 31 Aug of each year. (Open to past and present members of units / organizations assigned to the 34th Inf Div or soldiers who have been members of the Army National Guard.)

( ) Enclosed is $10.00 for my Associate Membership in the 34th Inf Div Association. (Annual Fee) (Due – 1 Sep thru 31 Aug of each year). (Individuals who do not meet membership requirements, i.e. Spouses, Families and Friends)

( ) Enclosed is $_____ for my LIFE MEMBERSHIP in the 34th Infantry Division Assn. (See Fee Schedule Below) {No Further Annual Fee)
To Age 60 $100.00 At age 60 & older $50.00

( ) Enclosed is $ _____ for my donation to the 34th Infantry Division Memorial Fund. Maintain all monuments and annual flowers for the Cemeteries in No Africa, Italy.)

Join the National Association
Dues are $10 annual or $100 for life membership (over 60 is $50).
Use the QR code:

Name_____Street_____

City:_____ State:_____ ZIP:_____

E-Mail:_____ Phone Number _____

Age_____ Military Unit/ Organization_____ Signature:_____

Note: The purpose of the 34th Infantry Division Association is to preserve the history of the 34th Divisional units & attached organizations of soldiers that have served their nation since 1917. The National Association schedules an annual meeting each Fall.

The National Secretary is COL (Ret) Ed Graybill. E-Mail: edward.graybill1@gmail.com The National Association Website is http://www.34ida.org Membership Treasurer: Dan Cain (Text 712-326-8808) Email: daniel.t.cain@gmail.com

A newsletter is sent to current members three times a year by E-Mail or U.S. mail. All newsletters are shown on the Association Website.(www.34ida.org) The 34th Inf Div Assn. maintains files and a desk at the Iowa Gold Star Military Museum, at Cp Dodge, Johnston, IA.

Museum Store - 34th Inf Div Assn Price List – May 2026

34th Red Bull Polo Shirts	Size ____	$25.00	34th Div "Camouflage" Red Bull Ball Cap		$22.00
34th Red Bull T-Shirt	Size ____	$15.00	Red Bull Patch (Black & Red)		$6.00
34th Div Red Bull Neck Tie		$15.00	34th Red Bull Div Insignia Pins (Lapel Pin)		$6.00
34th Red Bull Window Decal		$2.00	34th Div Red Bull Flag (3X5')		$65.00
34th Red Bull Rain Jacket (Red)	Size ____	$25.00	Red Bull Memo Pads, 50 Sheet		$2.00
34th Red Bull Coffee Mug		$6.00	34th Red Bull Lined Red Jacket – **New**	Size _____	$45.00
34th Red Bull "Iowa" Challenge Coin - **New**		$10.00	34th Red Bull Polo - Dry-Fit – **New**	Size _____	$25.00
34th Red Bull "Iowa" Insignia Pin (Lapel) – **New**		$5.00	34th Red Bull Vest (tan) – **New**	Size _____	$35.00
			34th Red Bull T-Shirt w/logo on back- **New**	Size _____	$15.00

Special Price on Books: **Roaring Bull, 34th Infantry Division in the Global War on Terror $10.00**

*Add $5.00 for shipping the first ITEM and $2.00 per each added ITEM in the same shipment.

Sub Total $ _____
Shipping $ _____
Total $ _____

34th Infantry Division Association
7105 NW 70th Ave, Camp Dodge, Bldg 3692
Johnston, IA 50131

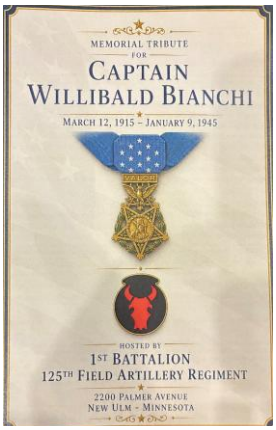
Name: _____

Street Address _____City _____ ZIP _____

Call: 712 326 8808, if you have a question.

1st Battalion 125th Field Artillery Hosts Welcome Home to WWII MIA

On April 25th, 2026, the remains of CPT Willibald C. Bianchi, a WWII Veteran, landed at the MSP International Airport. His remains then convoyed a large escort to New Ulm, MN, exactly 85 years to the month when he left home to fight in the Pacific Theater in WWII.



Medal of Honor recipient Willibald Bianchi was buried May 2nd in his hometown of New Ulm, Minn., more than 80 years after the Army captain died aboard a Japanese "hell ship" near the end of World War II. His remains had been buried for eight decades at the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu.

In August 2025, Bianchi's relatives were told a forensic laboratory had found a match between remains and samples the family provided. CPT Bill Bianchi had been positively identified! Bianchi was buried with full military honors at the New Ulm City Cemetery with many of his 17 living nieces and nephews attending. The Memorial Tribute was held at the National Guard Readiness Center in New Ulm. Senator Amy Klobuchar, MG Shawn Manke, Adjutant General-MN, Brad Lindsay, MN Veterans Affairs, and others spoke of CPT Bianchi's service and how his remains were finally identified after being listed as Missing In Action for 80 years.



MG Shawn Manke presents the burial flag of CPT Willibald Bianchi to his niece, Sue Marti

Bianchi fought with extraordinary bravery in World War II, survived the Bataan Death March, and endured years as a prisoner of war before he was killed by friendly fire when American aircraft unknowingly bombed a Japanese "hell ship" carrying American prisoners. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on Feb. 3, 1942, in the Philippines.

1st Combined Arms BN, 194th Armor observes the 84th Annual Fall Of Bataan Wreath Laying Ceremony

Members of Company A, **194th Tank Battalion** (now the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor Reg, 34th ID) held their 84th Anniversary Wreath Laying Ceremony on April 9th to commemorate Fall of Bataan and the Battan Death March in April 1942. Co. A was among the American and Filipino troops who endured the Bataan Death March and the unit regularly hosts the Brainerd Bataan Memorial March at Camp Ripley. This event features half-marathon and ruck-march distances where service members and civilians walk or run to honor the survivors and the fallen.



John Erickson, local historian, archivist and curator for the Brainerd Public School System was the keynote speaker at the event. John recently narrated "The Boys of Bataan" a powerful documentary that delves into the lives the young men from Brainerd, MN, who served in the 194th Tank Battalion, Co. A during the Bataan Death March. The documentary can be found at, *The Boys of Bataan - Watch Now* .

A Filipino lunch and National Anthems were provided by the FIL-AM Bayanihan Group. LTC (Ret) Larry Osvold was also recognized at the ceremony for his many years of involvement with the 194th Tank Regiment Assoc. serving as the president and other leadership positions in the Regiment. Congratulations Larry. The Unit Legacy; Remember Bataan – Never Forget, still serves as the official motto for the 1st Combined Arms Battalion, 194th Armor Regiment

President's Membership Drive Challenge – And Win a Ride in a Hot Air Balloon.

Membership is the lifeline key to any organization; new members bring in new ideas for the organization and bring in new revenue to continue the programs we have been involved with for years. I think it is time we had a good old-fashioned Membership Drive for our association just like some of you may have done with Enlistment Recruiting Drives if you served in the 1980's timeframe.

We have six chapters across three states, plus one in Calenzano, Italy. Our mission is to preserve the proud history of the 34th Infantry (Red Bull) Division and, more importantly, keep members informed about the Division's activities and deployments around the world. Many people assume the Association is only for retired soldiers or those who previously served with the 34th ID. While that is partly true, membership also offers value to those currently serving by helping them stay informed about the Division's work and where it is engaged. For example, did you know that former 34th ID Commanding General Mike Whitman went on to serve as Deputy Commanding General, ARNG, United States Army Europe and Africa, and that our most recent past Commanding General, MG Charles Kemper, is currently serving as Deputy Director, Army National Guard, NGB, Arlington, VA. We share updates like these in our three annual newsletters, and these leaders are among the speakers featured at our annual reunions each September and October.

We recently updated our Membership Form to make joining easier by adding a QR code for those who prefer not to mail a check. The form also includes information about items available from the Red Bull Store, and membership rates remain unchanged. Please see the Membership Form in this newsletter for details. As some of you know, I have been involved with Freedom Flight, the POW/MIA Hot Air Balloon Team, for more than 20 years. We own and fly four POW/MIA hot air balloons across the country to honor and raise awareness of the more than 80,000 service members who remain missing in action and unaccounted for from World War II through the present-day Global War on Terror. This is our website; www.freedomflight.org.

My challenge is to anyone who signs up 5 new members to the Association, and we'll put your name in a drawing for a free hot air balloon ride on me. We will draw the name on October 3rd at our Annual Reunion held at Camp Ripley this fall. If you sign up ten new members, you get your name put in twice and so forth. Let's get some new members.



The enclosed photo shows the POW – MIA Hot Air Balloon preparing to launch #III at the St Cloud, Minnesota Rox Baseball Team's Military Appreciation Day 2025. According to MG (Ret) Jerry Lang, "there is nothing like taking a ride in a Hot Air Balloon!"



WWII Red Bull Soldier Turns 103

On February 24th, Technical Sgt. Don Halverson, a 34th Inf Division WWII veteran, celebrated his 103rd birthday. BG Sharkey, Commander of the 34th ID, hosted a birthday party for Don at the Division HQs in Arden Hills, MN.

Don joined the Army in 1943, and was assigned to Co G, 168th Infantry Regiment, after the 34th Division had already been immersed in heavy fighting across North Africa. Twenty-year-old, Tech. Sgt. Halverson, led his machine gun and mortar squads, as they fought for two years through costly, lengthy battles against Axis Forces, from Naples, all the way to the border of Switzerland. Halvorson was awarded the Bronze Star, Combat Infantryman's Badge, Good Conduct Medal, and wears the Presidential Unit Citation Badge for the Battle of Mount Pantano.





Pic 1: BG Sharkey and the saber he used to cut Don's Birthday cake and presenting him to the audience present in the auditorium at the Division HQs.
Pic 2: Halverson in Italy, WWII

Tech Sgt Halverson stayed with the Red Bull s until spring of 1945 and was present when the German forces surrendered to the American 34th Infantry Division, on May 1, 1945. The 34th Infantry Division endured 517 days of front- line combat operations – the most for any American division in the European Theater of War.

BG Sharkey went on to say at Don's birthday party, "Young soldiers who haven't deployed overseas could benefit from hearing Halverson speak, and to hear those stories and what they had to endure during World War II, specifically in Italy - Heaven forbid our division see another day like that," Sharkey said. "But it's a good reminder to our current serving soldiers that service does come with sacrifice."

According to the National WWII Museum there's only 45,418 remaining World War II veterans - and one of them is Technical Sgt Don Halverson - A Red Bull Soldier. Happy Birthday Don and Thank You for Your Service!

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