

## **“E” Company Reunion Memorial Service**

**21<sup>st</sup> Reunion  
Branson , Missouri  
June 9-11, 2005**

After last year's discussion on ending the reunions I believe that this year's gathering is a true testimony to the strong friendships and bonds that still exist between the veterans of 'E' Company and their families.

This is a year of transition for the “E” Company Association as well as the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of many bold and heroic events in our Nation's history.

It is a time of transition because this marks the first time that we have held a Memorial Service without Mr. Frank Bolton serving as Chaplain and presenting the service. As far as I know, he prepared and presented all the services the past twenty years for the association. I believe we all would agree that he did an outstanding job honoring those that had been lost each year and their service to our Country. It was obvious that Mr. Bolton felt deeply about this responsibility and we will always owe him a debt of gratitude for all his hard work.

It is also the anniversary of one of the most important and powerful times in the history of the United States. Japanese Vice Admiral Yamamoto stated, as most of you know, after the attack on Pearl Harbor that “I am afraid that we have awakened a sleeping giant”. Four years after the attack the men and women of the United States were pulling together as never before towards the final goal of victory and peace. Much hard work been done but more was still needed.

1945 began and ended with untold acts of courage, devotion, and heroism by the Greatest Generation - or as we know them our fathers,

mothers, grandfathers, and grandmothers. The year commenced with the January amphibious landings on Luzon in the Philippines and the rescue of our brave men from the enemy death camp at Cabanatuan. This was followed in February by the Battle of Iwo Jima and the historic flag raising on Mount Suribachi. In April came the terrible Battle of Okinawa where the 96<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division continued to distinguish itself and earned its Presidential Unit Citation. The middle of April saw the country lose President Roosevelt but our will and resolve was stronger than ever. By May the Germans had surrendered but to those fighting in the Pacific this was just good headline news. While the fighting was winding down on Okinawa and the terrible losses of that clash were being tallied up a huge blinding blast occurred just before 5:30 a.m. on July 16 in the central desert of New Mexico. The world had entered the atomic age and the chance to end the war without the invasion of Japan was now possible. By mid-August the men of the USS Indianapolis and the B-29's Enola Gay and Bock's Car had delivered the bombs ending the war and saving hundreds of thousands of lives in the long run. It was a year of unimaginable personal sacrifice and courage by all involved in the effort.

As we gather here tonight we would like to recognize more of the heroes from this era. We will now honor those who served in "E" Company and their spouses that we have lost this past year. We have been notified that Henry E. Bartoszewicz and his wife Edith passed away this past year. The 96<sup>th</sup> Division Newsletter did not list anyone else who passed away in "E" Company but there were surely more that we did not hear about.

I would now like to play taps as a final tribute to all these men and women. Please bow your heads as we pay our respects to Mr. and Mrs. Bartoszewicz and all those lost this year from "E" Company.