



From the Desk of Roundtable President Charles Holt

July & August 2023 Newsletter www.WWIIroundtable.com

!Guten tag! !Konishiwa! !Buon giorno! Howdy from a native Missourian (I have a "The Buck Stops Here" desk placard on my desk, at home). It was the Army who assigned me to old Ft. Benjamin Harrison (FBH) to pay back my military medical scholarship to Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine. I had asked for Germany/Italy/Japan/Hawaii and never had heard of FBH...hence the term "dream sheet" the Army is famous for. Oh well, God was behind it because I married my wife the last month of active duty, before I decided to stay in Indy and in the USA. Well, enough about me and now about YOU! We have been so blessed with such a panoply of speakers over the 36 years of our existence! Help out everyone involved that we journey on! Remember, dues and donations are the ONLY means by which we maintain financially afloat; not the drawing or meals. Also, we need new members who actually have NATURAL color in their hair...so YOU invite and bring guests junior high on up and turn them on to the JOY of studying history—esp. WWII and that era. Always RSVP ASAP when you know you will be attending the next dinner/speaker meeting to Karl & Jan Kleinbub, not me. Our chef CAN NOT make meal preparations without expected numbers given to him as far out as possible!

Charles A. Holt, D.O.

July 24 & August 28, 2023, 7:00 PM



Where history comes alive!

2023 DINNER PROGRAMS

January 23	
February 27	Doors Open 5:00pm
March 27	Dinner \$11 6:00pm
April 24	Program 7:00pm
May 22	
June 26	
July 24	
August 28	
September 25	
October 23	
November 27	
December 4	Not meeting

North Side Events & Social Club
2100 E. 71st Street
Indianapolis, IN 46220



Dinner at 6:00 followed by a great program

July Program



**Vietnam Veteran
Jesse L. "Bud" Alley**

2 BN, Seventh Cavalry & Ia Drang Valley

August Program



**Our Presenter:
Roundtable Member
Steve Hogan**

Story of
"Don Graves and
the Battle of Iwo
Jima"—honoring
a living veteran

Roundtable Board

Charles A. Holt, President
William Ervin, 1st VP
Kathryn Lerch, 2nd VP
Treasurer, Andy Fulks
Asst Treas., Richard Eisgruber
Meeting Arrangements: Karl & Jan Kleinbub
At Large: Brad Damon, Travis Petrie, Marlene Mendonsa, & Steve Hogan
Web/Audio/Visual: Travis Petrie & a volunteer

Regular Monthly Dinner \$11++ Join us in person if you are able! Be sure to send your July or August RSVP to the dinner: Karl Kleinbub: knj1002@mytimestar.net or phone 317- 607- 6948, but **no later than Thursday prior to Monday's program!** A head count for Northside Events & Social Club (K of C) is very important. Also, please have CASH in exact change \$11 ++ tip for your meal. We encourage you to invite a guest! Thank you!

July Program

Bud Alley grew up in Greenville, South Carolina, and graduated with an ROTC commission in June 1964. He was assigned to the infantry as part of an experimental program called the U2. This meant he was sent directly to a unit without going to the Officer Basic course. In the winter of 1965, he was selected to attend the Combat Communication Officer's school in Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, as a Second Lieutenant. This normally was a Senior Captain's job. Shortly after his return from Ft. Sill, he found himself part of the newly minted First Cavalry Division Airmobile assigned to the Second Battalion, Seventh Cavalry, General George Custer's old unit. On August 17, they deployed by ship to Vietnam, landing 30 days later in Qhi Nhon.

Sixty days later, the Second of the Seventh Cavalry was in action in the central highlands of Vietnam in a valley called the Ia Drang. The first major encounter of the ten year war beginning at Landing Zone X-Ray and its subsequent disastrous battle beside the Ia Drang River called the Battle of LZ Albany. The Albany battle was the bloodiest day of the war and the Second Battalion lost 155 men that day and had 134 wounded—the most Purple Hearts awarded to one unit for one day's action in the entire war.

After a seven week stint in the hospital, he returned to the unit in time for its next big operation: Masher White Wing, on the coast of Vietnam where they again had large losses. During that operation, he spent four days fighting with the VN 1st Airborne Battalion advised by Captain Pete Dawkins. He continued to serve a complete 12-month tour participating in every operation of the battalion, returning to Greenville on 1 August 1966 where he married Caroline Davis, his fiancée who waited for him. His awards include the Combat Infantryman's Badge, the Silver Star, the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Air Medal and others. He retired from the packaging industry and holds Master's Degrees in Business and in History. In 2015, he released his book about those first five months in Custer's old unit in 1965, "The Ghosts of the Green Grass" at Fort Bennington [now known as Ft. Moore], Georgia. [Bio from 2023 Show of Shows "Veteran Guests"] **Books will be available for purchase before and after the dinner.**

August Program Preview

Corporal Don Graves, USMC, Ret. was a flamethrower operator who fought on Iwo Jima in World War II. The average life expectancy of a flamethrower on the battlefield was less than ten minutes. The Battle of Iwo Jima began with an amphibious assault by Marines on Feb. 19, 1945, following months of aerial and naval bombardment. Seventy-thousand Marines took part in the 36-day battle, with more than 6,800 killed and 19,000 wounded. On the Japanese side, about 18,000 were killed. Only 216 Japanese were captured alive. The battle marked a turning point in World War II; it was the first time the U.S. had fought the Japanese on native Japanese soil. It was also the first time that American casualties outnumbered those of the enemy. Cpl. Don Graves was a member of Company D (Dog Company), Second Battalion, 28th Marines, Fifth Marine Division. Dog Company began the battle of Iwo Jima with 335 Marines and ended up with eighteen... and no officers. In November 2021, Don Graves sat down for an extended interview, providing detailed descriptions of everything from growing up in Detroit during the Great Depression, to enlisting in the Marine Corps after Pearl Harbor, to participating in the bloody battle to take Iwo Jima from the Japanese. His is an amazing story.

New Member Dues Accepted

Dues are: Veteran Family \$20.00; Non-Veteran Family \$25.00; WWII Veterans/widows FREE Membership Please mail your check to our PO box: WWII Roundtable Post Office Box 1965, Noblesville, IN 46061 or Pay at the dinner

Print Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Address: _____

WW2 Veteran? Yes No If yes, branch & period of service _____

July Program — Map Preview

Ia Drang Valley Nov 14, 1965 – Nov 18, 1965

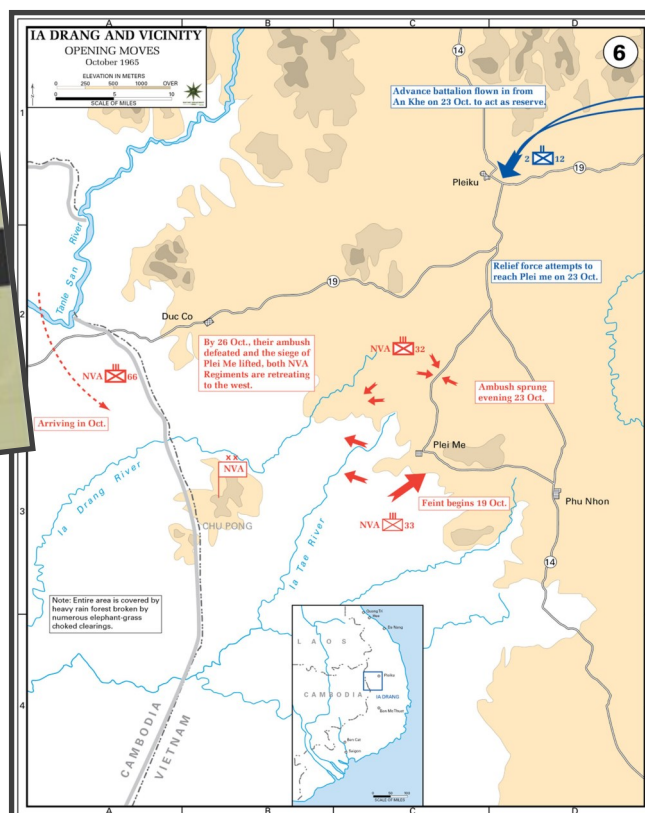
The first major battle between the United States Army and the People's Army of Vietnam

“ . . . North Vietnam tried to match the U.S. escalation, hoping the infiltration of its own regular forces into South Vietnam would help trigger the collapse of the Saigon regime before the U.S. military buildup could make a decisive difference. In the fall of 1965, the two contending armies clashed openly in South Vietnam’s central highlands. . . . The fiercest and most consequential of those clashes occurred in the Ia Drang Valley located in the Central Highlands south of Danang. Elements of the highly mobile U.S. 7th Cavalry Division, using helicopters for high-speed mobility, were conducting search-and-destroy missions in the area when they were attacked by three regiments of the Peoples’ Army of Vietnam (PAVN). . . . On November 14, 1965, the 7th Cavalry landed at X-Ray landing zone while B-52s bombed the surrounding enemy positions and nearby artillery provided fire support. For the next three days, the two sides engaged in bloody combat at close quarters, punctuated by heavy U.S. artillery, napalm, and B-52 strikes that exacted heavy losses on enemy forces. When the smoke cleared, the United States had lost 305 soldiers and nearly as many were wounded. According to the imperfect U.S. statistical accounting, North Vietnam had lost 3,561 troops. . . . Westmoreland was pleased he had checked the enemy’s drive to the sea and was heartened by the better than ten-to-one ratio of North Vietnamese to U.S. troops killed in action. He touted the Ia Drang fighting as “an unprecedented victory.” It seemed to validate his attrition strategy of using overwhelming firepower to produce high enemy body counts rather than taking territory or decisively defeating armies.” On the other hand, “The North Vietnamese drew their own lessons. Most fundamentally, they recognized that frontal clashes with a much better-armed adversary, enjoying total air superiority, worked to the distinct disadvantage of PAVN and North Vietnamese forces. Accordingly, for the duration of the war, they carefully avoided conventional battles, preferring guerrilla-style, small-unit actions that allowed them to control the rate of casualties.” [Source: <https://billofrightsinstitute.org/essays/the-vietnam-war-ia-drang-valley> (accessed 6/27/2023)]

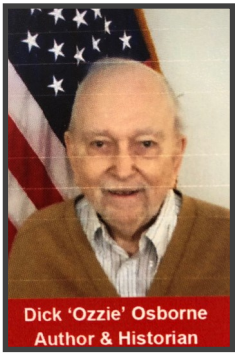
Also check the Pritzker Military Library map resource for history of the war in Vietnam: <https://www.pritzkermilitary.org/explore/vietnam-war/map> and photos on website.



US soldiers land at Landing Zone X-Ray during the Battle of Drang



West Point Map #6: https://s3.amazonaws.com/usma-media/inline-images/academics/academic_departments/history/Vietnam%0War/Vietnam06-01.png



WW 2 Trivia for July & August 2023

Inspired by Ozzie's earlier trivia reports . . .

Eighty Years ago! . . . in July & August 1943 . . .

- ◆ July 4—Battle of Kursk begins, [Russia] largest tank battle in history
- ◆ July 5—US invasion fleet (96 ships) sails to Sicily
- ◆ July 7—German sub U-951 sunk by depth charges of Cape St. Vincent in North Atlantic
- ◆ July 10—Operation HUSKY American, British & Canadian troops landed on Sicily, Italy.
- ◆ **July 11—US 82nd Airborne division shot at by 'friendly fire' in Sicily*** [see Gillespie's story]
- ◆ July 19—500 Allied air forces bomb Rome
- ◆ July 22—Americans capture Palermo, Sicily
- ◆ July 25—Benito Mussolini deposed by Fascist Grand Council. Badoglio forms a new government.
- ◆ July 27/28 Allied air raid causes firestorm in Hamburg, Germany
- ◆ Aug 12-17 Germans evacuate Sicily
- ◆ Aug 17—American daylight air raids on Regensburg & Schweinfurt, Germany**
- ◆ Aug 23—Soviet troops recapture Kharkov

down scores of Allied troops and to capture the airfields throughout Sicily. Unfortunately friendly fire caused a tragedy. Gillespie related: "The United States Navy had been bombed by some German bombers about an hour previously. . . . The Navy had not been forewarned [after the initial attack] that we were going to be flying overhead on our path to Gela, and so they thought we were German bombers. They [the navy personnel] were green and nervous, and of course we were flying at only about 600 feet because a combat jump is [made at that height]. I didn't know anything was happening until I went out the [plane's] door and saw the sky was lit up like the Fourth of July, tracer bullets everywhere." The US Navy shot down 23 out of 144 C-47s, killing about 200 American troopers and air crewmen. [Source: Gillespie, pp. 166-168. *Words of War: Wartime Memories: Oral Histories from WWII, Vol. IV*, Kathryn Lerch, editor (2009)]



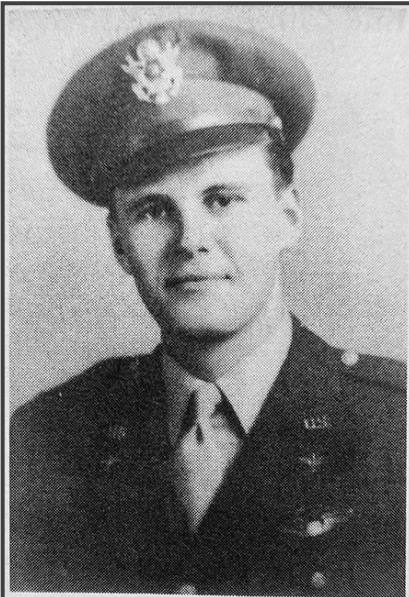
Gillespie was to land in the vicinity of Gela on the Coast. Map Source: "Campaign In Sicily, Allied Plan And Axis Dispositions, 10 July, 1943" map from USMA History Depart Atlas collection: <https://www.westpoint.edu/sites/default/>

[files/inline-images/academics/academic_departments/history/WWII%20Europe/WWIIEurope45.pdf](https://www.westpoint.edu/sites/default/files/inline-images/academics/academic_departments/history/WWII%20Europe/WWIIEurope45.pdf) Photo of field: <https://forgottenairfields.com/airfield-gela-598.html> (Accessed June 16, 2023)

* **Corporal Dale Gillespie**, 2nd BN, 504th Parachute Inf Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division, related his experiences over Sicily: Eighteen days after finishing jump school, Gillespie was thrust headfirst into combat in Operation HUSKY on July 9-10. The target was Sicily's airport at Gela. This operation had two goals—to seek out and destroy the German pillboxes that were gunning



◆ Aug 17—American daylight air raids on Regensburg & Schweinfurt, Germany** Speaking of “Schweinfurt”, there was also



Graduation photo of Roland Martin, age 19, 1st pilot B-17. (Courtesy of Roland Martin)

the second raid on this target: **First Lieutenant Roland Herman Martin, Jr.** piloted Flying Fortress KU 372 with a crew of ten. He was assigned to the 525th Bomb Squadron, 389th Bomb Group, 8th Air Force. He was reported to be the youngest pilot (age 20) flying a Fortress in 1942 (a son of a WWI pilot). He was assigned to Kimbolton Air Base in England. He participated in the Second of two infamous Schweinfurt air raids over Germany. [His experience would have been much like what others experienced on the first raid in August 1943.] Previously he had flown this series of missions: Vitry en Atois, Nantes (sub pens), Nantes (France), Emden, Emden, Bremen, Frankfurt (railroad yards), Munster, Anklam (aircraft factories), and Schweinfurt (ball bearings). An excerpt from his oral history account gives one a better understanding of the dangers inherent with the terrifying Schweinfurt raids.

“We began to feel pretty confident as time went on and made some raids where we had substantial losses over Germany. It took an hour or two to form up groups into wings and as we would be forming up there would be Spits [Spitfires] and Hurricanes that would be circling overhead in England and over the Channel. . . . The Luftwaffe was sitting out there and once we got into that situation it was pretty hairy as I remember. In addition to German fighters we had the usual problem with flak. I remember on one raid . . . we headed into Germany with high-altitude headwinds of 120 mph. We flew 150 mph indicated which we meant we were about as fast as you might on a Sunday afternoon in your car. We took a number of hits on that raid . . . We didn’t hit our target—it was an

undercast, but when we turned and ran for home, we were headed for home at 150 plus 120 mph—this is called ‘high-tailing’ for home. . . . Our first raids were over France; all the rest were over Germany. I can remember the second to last as a test of stamina and good luck. We flew into Anklam, Germany. It was deep in Germany. I think a little north and east of Berlin. Some planes went on into Russia. We bombed at 12,500 feet, which was the lowest we had ever bombed. There was very little flak because we were unexpected—we hit a Messerschmitt factory. . . . We did not bomb all that precisely in spite of the Norden bombsight. I think we were under attack for three and a half or four hours total. . . . I was seriously thinking if things did not get better we would head for Norway or Sweden. But, we got back to base. When we landed, I couldn’t open my hands—the fingers from the wheel and the throttles. They were locked on and someone had to peel them back. We dumped everything on that airplane on the way back . . . The last thing we threw out were our machine guns, but we did this over the North Sea. By that time we were flying alone; the formations had broken up pretty well. We let down gradually—we were burning something like 95 gallons of fuel an hour which was very, very low and cut back to two in-board engines, dropped anything that could be thrown out including the oxygen bottles. We were one of two planes that made it back to base. The B-17 was a tail dragger—when the tail dropped on the runway the two remaining engines cut out . . . There wasn’t enough gas to feed the engines when the tail dropped and we were no longer in level flight. So I was very lucky—we were very lucky. I didn’t realize how close it was going to be. Our last mission was [the second raid on] Schweinfurt [in October 1943]. **Black Thursday** The mission was flown on October 14, 1943, with the ball-bearing factory in Schweinfurt as the primary target. Ball bearings were essential for the production of tanks, aircraft and almost anything that moved. . . . Even today I get very emotional . . . Well, Schweinfurt was—this was the second Schweinfurt raid. There was an earlier one on August 17 when [we] lost six planes on that battle, and the second Schweinfurt we lost another sixty. Those are just airplanes lost over Germany. . . . We knew that it was going to be very difficult and we prepared for it. [There were] two Battle Groups going—in total about 320 bombers. . . . Anyway, airplanes were falling out of the sky and blowing up. I think we all questioned whether we were going to make it. But we flew under attack with more different kinds of attackers than we had seen ever before. There were 109s and the 190s . . . They had Me-110s, they had Heinkel-111s, then there were 210s and the fighter bombs types didn’t attack head on or en masse but over or alongside and fired rockets, they dropped bombs attached to parachutes on long cables. If you happened to hit a cable that

would either slice the wing or it would slide along until the bomb was pulled into the airplane. But we made it to the target. . . . We were all over the sky. There was a lot of physical work moving that plane back and forth and yet staying reasonably close to the formation. . . . As we were on the bomb run, I could see a three-burst 88 flak ahead of us. The bursts were brilliant red with black smoke and not very large but lethal. I could look right down the line on bursts one-two-three. I could count each one of them—and they were all in line and right at my altitude. And at this point on a bomb run you couldn't take evasive action. So that was the first volley. The second one I saw two flashes and then there was an explosion and we lost the two starboard engines and with that, about that time, it was also bombs away We immediately began losing speed. Within a minute maybe less than a minute—whatever it took for them to reload, this same flak battery had us dead on and they were cutting the fuses

for our absolute almost exact altitude. I could see two more explosions and another one which rocked the ship and we lost the two port engines.

With that, of course, we were dead in the water. The [bomb] group kept going and we were left with the world's heaviest glider. I could look out the left side—the pilot's side—and the wing was shattered, gasoline was pouring out. I could look back and there was a hundred yards of fuel just spraying out behind and . . . There was a [German] mop-up plane . . . A JU-88 . . . Came in to finish us off." At this point, Martin's *Iron Maiden* fell from formation. According to Martin "a powerless B-17 has the glide angle of a brick". "We had gone from 15 and 20,000 feet to about 1500 feet. There was no room to bail out, no altitude. There was only one thing to do an that was to crash land and I had picked out a field as we were trained to do in primary training. . . ." From this time on, Martin and another crew member (the rest had bailed out) were on the lam with their escape kit and maps. Two weeks later the two men were captured and sent to Stalag Luft I near Barth, on the Baltic.


Source: *Oakland Tribune* (Oakland, California) · 10 Dec 1943, Fri · Page 17

According to an article in the *Oakland Tribune*, Martin was the youngest pilot (age 20) flying a Flying Fortress in the US Army Air Corps in 1942. He was assigned to 379th Bomb Group, 92nd Bomb Group, 407th Bomb Squadron, 525th Bomb Squadron. Martin's air crew report indicates that all of his 10-person crew survived the second Schweinfurt mission, but were captured. All were returned to the US at the end of the war. I had the good fortune of interviewing Martin in Pebble Beach, California in about 2002. It was difficult for him to tell the traumatic story and he alerted me that he might have to pause. He had only told his story about his wartime experiences once—to his wife and not his children. The second time he told his story was to me. He was forever grateful for this opportunity because PTSD had prevented him from doing this previously—and only after tell his story in 2002, was he able to sleep without nightmares. His story is also online at the National WW2 Museum: <https://www.nationalww2museum.org/war/articles/roland-martin-iron-maiden-us-army-air-forces>. He is also listed in the American Air Museum in Britain database. <https://www.americanairmuseum.com/archive/person/roland-h-martin>

Berkeley Air Hero Captured

BERKELEY, Dec. 10.—The dramatic story of a pilot who risked death under enemy fire to count how many of his "buddies" were parachuting to safety from a doomed plane in his flight, brought happy tidings today to a Berkeley family.

As a result, Mr. and Mrs. Roland H. Martin, 1530 Beverly Place, are confident that their son, Lieut. Roland Martin Jr., who was reported missing in action over Germany on October 14, a few days before his 20th birthday, is now a prisoner of war.



Lieut. Roland H. Martin Jr., who may be a German war prisoner, his Berkeley parents have learned.

It was in a letter received from Tech. Sgt. Joseph Mazzatosta from a British base that the Martins heard of their son's probable capture. Sergeant Mazzatosta, a former radioman on Lieutenant Martin's Flying Fortress, "The Iron Maiden," looked into an empty hangar on a British flying field to learn that the Berkeley's ship was among 60 lost in a raid on Schweinfurt, center of the German ball-bearing industry.

ALL BAIL OUT

"But, I wasn't sad long," the radioman wrote the Martins. "I talked with one of the pilots in the same flight as your son. He told me that he saw 'The Iron Maiden' hit by anti-aircraft fire and go down. The pilot's own fortress war target for German fire but, despite his own danger, he took time out to watch the plunging plane. Never, he said, was it out of control. He then waited to see how many parachutes opened. The pilot counted 10 and that's all there are! It means the entire crew bailed out about 120 miles southwest of Berlin."

Jubilantly, the Martins conveyed the good news to families of their son's co-pilot, Lieut. Linden Price of South Pasadena, and Lieutenant Daniel Maher, New York, navigator, and as many other of "The Iron Maiden's" crew as they could reach.

SON OF FLIER

Lieutenant Martin, graduate of Berkeley High School, is the son of a World War I flier, now working in the aircraft industry. He had the distinction of being the youngest pilot of a Flying Fortress in the U.S. Army Air Corps, which he entered in April, 1942. With members of his crew, Lieutenant Martin was awarded the air medal after a raid on Emden.

"I'll bet he's the maddest boy ever cooped up in that German prison camp," says happy Mrs. Martin. "First, he'll have to sit by and watch other Fortresses go over, and, second, he'll be forced to live on turnips, accepted fare in a German camp, and he won't like either one!"

So, to give vent, by proxy, to her son's emotions, Mrs. Martin purchased a \$100 war bond from savings sent home by the young flier "just to take an added swat at the Nazis."

INFLUX AWAITED BY ALBANY SCHOOLS

ALBANY, Dec. 10.—The Albany Board of Education last night voted to make preparations for a probable influx of new pupils to the two elementary schools with completion of a new Federal housing project, now being completed.

The board voted to buy new furniture for approximately 70 pupils. In the meantime, Superintendent of Schools Paul Bryan was authorized to inspect sites for possible temporary school structures.

Bryan has been informed by officials that no school housing will be authorized by the Government until the schools are operating on a 200 per cent basis.

The two schools now have enrollments of approximately 200 each, and can care for another 100 each. After that it will be necessary to operate on double shifts, officials said.

Beginning next week the fees charged by the nursery school, operated with Lanham act funds, will be reduced from 75 cents to 50 cents a day.

The board was informed by Robert McKay, commandant of the new Albany High School cadet corps, that there now are 65 boys in the company, organized on a volunteer basis.

Member of Pioneer Family Succumbs

Mrs. Sara Merithew Dunbar, 79, member of a pioneer California family, died today at Highland Hospital, after a year's illness.