



THE ATLANTA WORLD WAR II ROUND TABLE

PRESERVING HISTORY

INTERNET: <http://www.atlantawwiiroundtable.org>

VOL. 26 No. 4

254th MEETING

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Newsletter

* Mort Waitzman
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Asst. Chaplains – Guyton McCall / Bill Sperry

Date: DECEMBER 15th, 2011 (THURSDAY) >> Next Meeting JAN. 19th

Time: Social Half-Hour: 11:00 AM - 11:30 > MEETING START
TIME 11:30 - Speaker Immediately Following Lunch

** **PETITE AU BERGE RESTAURANT**
2935 N. Druid Hills Road. Web Site: www.petiteauberge.com
Atlanta, Georgia 30329 (Restaurant Phone: 404-634-6268)

Price: \$ 15.00 Per Plate ** NO RESERVATION REQUIRED **

Speaker: Dr. Morton (Mort) Waitzman

Subject: “115th Regiment / 29th Infantry Division”

Mission Statement

We, who by our own actions, and by our heritage, know that liberty has not, is not, nor ever will be free, do in association with our friends and comrades, who believe as we do, pledge that we will meet at the call of our Commander no less than ten times a year:

- * To hear of the war experiences of our members and invited guests
- * To encourage and demonstrate pride in our country and its armed forces
- * To pass on to posterity our knowledge of World War II, and of the price - human and material - that was paid by our nation for the preservation of liberty in the United States and the world

Speaker for DECEMBER 15th, 2011– Mort Waitzman (To Be Introduced By Deputy Commander Weinstein)

Mort was born in Chicago in 1923, the youngest of seven children, six boys and one girl. His father was from Latvia and his mother Lithuania. Mort was in school when WW II began, nevertheless he enlisted in the U.S. Army in January 1943, three of his brothers had already joined the Army.

He trained to work with signals and secret codes for the first year and turned down a chance to go to Officers Candidate School so he could join the fight against the Nazis. Shortly thereafter, he was sent to England and then transferred to the 115th Regiment of the 29th Infantry Division (Light) for their invasion of Omaha Beach on D-Day. The 115th moved inland as quickly as they could, being bombed and strafed every day and then engaging the Germans at Saint Lo in early August 1944.

While in England awaiting departure for France, Mort had communicated with the French Underground and because of his connections with them, he was transferred to Paris after the liberation of St. Lo, where he took part in the liberation of that city on August 25th. During this period the 115th Infantry Regiment was engaged in a one of the wars forgotten chapters, "The Battle of Brest". In October 1944 Mort was sent back into combat to fight in the Netherlands near Maastricht and then in December he fought in the *Battle of the Bulge*, receiving the Bronze Star for valor after being wounded by a mortar capturing the city of Julich.

Many of you will recall that the *Battle for Brest* was one of the fiercest battles fought during *Operation Cobra*, the Allied breakout of Normandy which began on 27 July 1944. Part of the Allied plan for the invasion of mainland Europe called for the capture of port facilities, in order to ensure the timely delivery of the enormous amount of war material required to supply the invading Allied forces (it was estimated that the 37 Allied divisions to be on the continent by September 1944 would need 26,000 tons of supplies each day. (You will recall our September speaker, Sy Rosen, reminding us how important the capture of these ports were to the Allied effort, including the Port of *Marsailles* during *Operation Dragoon*.) In Northwestern France, the main port the Allied forces hoped to seize and put into their service was Brest, which also served as a major German U-Boat base from 18 June 1940 until it's surrender to U.S Forces september 1944, the 115th capturing the 60,000 Germans defending the port.

In March of 1945 Mort was present at the capture of *Munchen-Gladbach* HQ of the notorious Nazi Propaganda Minister Paul Josef Goebbels. About this same time, he helped liberate the forced labor camp of *Dinslaken*. Near the famous 'Pied-Piper' town of Hamelin, Mort's unit liberated another forced labor camp. The event did not particularly stick out in his mind, but sixty years later, after he had given a speech about his wartime experiences, a man came up to him and introduced himself to Dr. Waitzman who had been a prisoner at the same camp and he thanked Mort for his part in freeing him.

The 115th Regiment captured the infamous camp of *Dora-Mittelbau*, near Nordhausen, in April 1945. You will recall that Nordhausen was where the Germans were launching the V-1 and V-II rockets against London. In May 1945, the American Army met the Russian Army by the Elbe River, on May 5th Admiral Donitz signed the articles of surrender, ending the war in Europe.

There is no doubt that the 115th Regiment gave the enemy hell, but they paid the price as well, suffering almost 6000 casualties. Mort will fill-in all the details about the 115th Regiment and the 29th Infantry Division. CONTINUED ON BACK.

Please welcome Dr. Mort Watzman as our DECEMBER 15th, 2011 speaker (**254th Meeting** .)

Review of NOVEMBER 17th , 2011 Speaker –Greg McClelland (Introduced by Deputy Commander Weinstein)

Greg McClelland guided the Round Table through the threacherous path taken by Colonel Claus Schenk Graf von Stauffenberg, a German Army officer and catholic aristocrat, to assassinate Adolph Hitler. Although 22 attempts were made on Hitler's life beginning in September 1943, the final attempt came on July 20th, 1944, called *Operation Valkyrie*. The plot was primarily the brainchild of General Friedrich Olbricht, chief of the General Army Office in the High Command and Stauffenberg.

The plan was based on orders issued by Hitler under the name *Operation Valkyrie*, which intended to use Reserve Soldiers to restore order in the event of an uprising. The concept was fairly straightforward; Kill Hitler, accuse the SS of attempting to seize power, initiate *Operation Valkyrie* and have the Nazi's arrested in a counter-coup. The operation was brilliant and may have succeeded if Hitler had actually been killed by the bomb intended to set this chain of events in motion.

Stauffenberg was a decorated German Officer having lost his left eye, his right hand, and two fingers on his left hand when his vehicle was strafed by British Fighter-Bombers while he was a Operations Officer of the 10th Panzer Division in North Africa. Although he had limited use of his left hand, a special tool had been made up for him to arm the bomb which he placed in his brief case 10 minutes before he walked into the conference room to join Hitler's meeting. The location of the conference had unexpectedly been changed from the subterranean *Führerbunker* to Albert Speer's wooden barrack/hut, a room with windows and ventilation which offered some comfort from the July 20th heat; if the bomb had exploded in the subterranean *Führerbunker* as planned, it is almost certain Hitler would have been killed.

Greg closed his audio and visual presentation by reminding us that the death toll for the unsuccessful attempt would result in more than five thousand people losing their lives as a direct result of that day and Hitler using the July 20th plot as a excuse to destroy anyone he feared would oppose him. It is estimated that eventually, over 20,000 Germans were killed or sent to concentration camps in the purge.

Thank you Greg McClelland for your thought-provoking presentation to *Preserve History* and for a job well done.

I am pleased to announce that we have one (4) new members who have joined us since the NOVEMBER 17th, 2011 meeting:

U.S. Army Veteran Don Traub – Don served on Active Duty for 25 years in the U.S. Army; Vietnam 1968-69 with the 101st ABN Div.; 3 tours in Germany plus another 10 years as Dept. of Army Civilian.

Paul W. Doetsch, Ph.D – Paul is a Professor at Emory University, a Scientist and Cancer Researcher. He is interested in the battles of the ETO & Pacific and U.S. Japanese Militaria.

Neil A. Kahn, M.D. – Neil's father was in the 45th Infantry Division.

Christopher (Chris) Landry – Chris has been accepted into the *Citadel* in the fall of 2012 and is interested in D-Day and Nazi Germany.

Please welcome Don, Paul, Neil and Chris as the newest members of the Round Table at the DECEMBER 15th, 2011 meeting.

>>> **Upcoming Speakers for - 2010-2011** Program chairman John Davis and program co-chairman Bill Owens have done a splendid job in lining up a wonderful list of speakers for the Atlanta WW II Round Table for our January through June 2010 meetings. The following speakers will be making a presentation to the Round Table in: December – **Morton (Mort) Waitzman-U.S. Army**. More info to come on 2012 and future speakers as they are booked. Please note that the speaker's engagements are subject to change. Thank you John M. Davis for you're continuing efforts to seek-out and engage excellent speakers for our meetings and for a job exceedingly well done.

>>> **(NEW) Upcoming Events – FEBRUARY 2012 BANQUET**– It's almost that time again. A Reservation Form and Return-Address envelope have been included with your December Newsletter for the Atlanta WW II Round Table's February 18th, 2012 (Saturday) Banquet. **All Dues-Paying Members (current with Dues) will receive complimentary meals; Guests will have to pay a modest \$ 26.00 per meal.** The selection of meals will be the Petite's Beef Burgundy Roast, Hunter-Style Roasted Chicken and Fresh Salmon. The Petite has again offered the entire restaurant to the Round Table based on last years attendance and we will again have entertainment by *Jill Sherman* and *The Stu McGee Band*; a full compliment of hors d'oeuvres; open bar and festive decorations by Kay Secrist, not to mention a very special guest speaker. Please send your reservation form into our Finance Officer Jay Lenny as soon as possible. More info will follow on the Banquet in the January 2012 Newsletter.

>>> **SPECIAL MEMBER SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(NEW) The Round Table Executive Board discussed reducing some of the expenses relative to the Atlanta WW II Round Table Newsletter at the Board Meeting on August 18th. The Board approved asking as many members as possible that have email addresses, if they would be willing to accept only the email version of the newsletter and not a mailed version. This new effort will be rolled-out over several months so members can express their preference for the digital or hard-copy version of the monthly newsletter. I expect by December 31st, 2011 the roll-out should be complete. If you have a email address and are not on the email roster at present, please make your email address known to Adjutant Kovach at 770-928-4579 or email at jkovach2000@yahoo.com. Those members who do not have email addresses will not be affected by this austerity measure.

>>> **REQUESTS BY INDIVIDUALS TO MAKE ANNOUNCEMENTS AT ROUND TABLE MEETINGS** – In a effort to not interfere with our scheduled speaker's allotted time and also to allow more time during our lunch for table-conversation, the Atlanta WW II Round Table Executive Board has approved the following policy: **Requests by individuals to make announcements during the Atlanta WW II Round Table meetings must first be cleared through the Commander prior to the date of the meeting.** The number of announcements will be limited at each meeting and will also be based on priority of interest to the Round Table. Commander Goulding can be contacted at **770-436-4254** or via email at **rgoulding@charter.net**

Monthly Quotation:

“There are some people so addicted to exaggeration that they can't tell the truth without lying.”
American humorist Josh Billings (1818 – 1885)