

The Century Association

By Roland Giduz, Company C, 399th Infantry Regiment, Founder and First President, 100th Infantry Division Association.

The Century Association, as it was then called, was formally organized and had its first reunion at the Sir Walter Hotel in Raleigh, North Carolina on Friday and Saturday, September 19-20, 1947, with about 100 in attendance.

I started the organizational effort after meeting Gen. Burress at Ashford General Hospital, White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, where I was a patient, in the early summer of 1945. He visited there for a few days while on leave from Army of Occupation duty with the 100th Infantry Division in Germany. Some time later, in response to my inquiry, he said he knew of no plans to organize a reunion of former members of the Division in this country. He said he welcomed my efforts to that end.

Since about 20 of us who were in Company C, 399th, had met informally for a weekend reunion at the Herald Square Hotel in New York City in the summer of 1946, I contacted them as a nucleus to organize a formal association the following year. With that support, I made arrangements for the first reunion in Raleigh the following year, then sent out press releases announcing it, asking for addresses and sending postal notifications.

While most of those at the first reunion were from the Carolinas, others were from New York, New Hampshire, Nebraska and Alabama. Speakers on the reunion program included North Carolina Gov. R. Gregg Cherry and Raleigh News and Observer Editor Josephus Daniels. A resolution formally endorsing universal military training, introduced by Paul Cox of New Bern, North Carolina, was passed unanimously.

One attendee at that first reunion attributed the occasion as a springboard for his later becoming a Congressman. Horace (Dagwood) Kornegay, who had served with Company D, 397th Infantry and who was then a GI college student at nearby Wake Forest College, happened to make friends with members of the North Carolina Young Democrats Club, who were having their annual convention in the same hotel. This sparked his interest in politics, which led to his successful election to five terms as a North Carolina Congressman.

The reunion was also marked by extraordinary weather. Six inches of rain fell on the city between 7:00 PM and 2:00 AM, causing a 30-minute power outage in the city and the hotel at about midnight. Officers of the Association elected for the coming year were President Roland Giduz of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Vice President Roy Beach of Brooklyn, and Charles Ufen of Washington, Secretary-Treasurer.

An estimated 500 people attended the 1948 reunion, held in the Lord Baltimore Hotel in Baltimore, Maryland, and at which Ed Keeling, an attorney from Wilmington, Delaware, was elected President for the coming year.

A reunion has been held every year, in September, since that time.