

Summer 2024

84th Railsplitters Association

Bugler



Well wishes to my fellow Railsplitters!

Calendar year 2024 has been a busy one for the 84th Railsplitters Association but before I go into details I need to share sad news.

On June 3rd, 2024, we lost Major General Michael M. Berzowski. Major General Berzowski was a great leader, a supporter of causes and people, a mentor to those of us who served under him and with him, and a gentleman who dedicated his life to helping others.

In 1993, MG Berzowski hired me as the Command Executive Officer of the 84th Division. I had tough competition, many of whom were peers who had more experience than myself. But, with his decision, I became the first female NCO in the U.S. Army Reserve assigned to the position of CXO. A position I held until the command moved to Fort Knox when they re-located in 2008.

These are just a couple of the phrases he was known for "strength, MOSQ, drill sergeant strength & instructor strength" or there was always "this isn't no country club." He was a guy who you liked or disliked. I personally found him to be a Commander who was fair, expected people to give 100% and meet or exceed standards.

My working relationship with MG Berzowski did not end with his retirement. In recent months, we have been working together in establishing a chapter at Fort Knox. His passing is a great loss to the 84th Railsplitters. Please join me in a final salute to him.

On the evening of June 13th, the **Annual Meeting** and Elections met at VFW Post 5716, New Berlin. The meeting was well attended; with attendees having a chance to enjoy food provided by Mission BBQ, drinks, and camaraderie. Our guest speaker was Mr. Levi Marker, Director of Dry Hootch. Dry Hootch is a place where Veterans can gather informally in a coffee house; a safe, comfortable, drug-and-alcohol-free environment.

Elections for the Board of Directors took place. The board elected LTC (Ret) Thomas G. Vandenboom as our new director. Congratulations Tom, we are looking forward to serving with you. CSM (Ret) Kim Michalowski requested to resign from his service as our VP-Communications due to other commitments. Honoring his request, the committee appointed MAJ (Ret) Steve Kassens to fulfill CSM Michalowski's term until June 2025. Our thanks to CSM Michalowski for his service and to MAJ Kassens for taking on this role.

On July 14th, 28 Railsplitters enjoyed an afternoon at the ballpark with the **Milwaukee Milkmen**. The Railsplitters will have a team participate in the **5K Famous Sausages Run/Walk** at American Family Field on Saturday, July 27th. If you have other suggestions on how the 84th can increase our presence in the community, please bring them to our attention.

The **Steak Fry** is our next major event on Saturday, September 14th at VFW Post 5716, New Berlin. Casual attire, jeans or shorts are the dress of the day. This is our annual fundraiser, so bring your checkbook, bid generously, bid often on silent auction items. Donations appreciated!

Pleased to inform you that progress continues in establishing the Fort Knox chapter. More information will be forthcoming as we finalize the paperwork.

Membership is always a #1 priority, and we are experiencing a decline in our numbers. You can help increase numbers by inviting old friends and colleagues who served in the 84th to join us. Thousands of Soldiers served at various levels of command in Milwaukee and other Wisconsin based units. We now have a referral program. For every Soldier that signs up, you get one-year free membership. So, let us use the technology available to us: phone, USPS, email, Facebook, and webpage. Membership applications can be downloaded by clicking on https://www.84thrailsplitters.com/84div/railsplitter%20application_20240621.pdf. Feel free to contact me if you or the interested Soldier have any questions, email: goldgrl123@hotmail.com

Looking forward to seeing you very soon!

Goldie M. Schuh, MSG (Retired)
President, 84th Railsplitters Association, LTD

Upcoming Events:

Annual Steak Fry
14 September 2024

Major General Michael Berzowski, a personal note from COL (Ret) Allen Cottrell

General Berzowski and I first met fifty-three years ago when I was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 351st Regiment, 84th Division as a 1Lt. Then Major Berzowski was my boss as the XO. That's when I learned of his moniker "Iron Mike." I was soon to learn that his professionalism and caring far outweighed any negative thoughts the handle "Iron Mike" might suggest.

Throughout our following military and other connections, General Berzowski's handling of issues exhibited the highest levels of integrity, professionalism, and care. His penchant for getting the job done with excellence was ever present, bringing out the very best performance in those under his command, and those with whom he worked. And he did this with his "dry" sense of humor often betrayed by his "wry" smile. His talent challenged others to pursue excellence as well.

On one notable occasion, during my promotion to colonel, while he and my wife Patt pinned on my rank insignia, in a hushed remark he said, with a wry smile, "well, it looks like the Army made another mistake." That promotion took me out of the 84th, no 06 slots available. I took it as a challenge to continue the march in another venue, as I did. Thank you General.

In a historical study done by the Army in 1936, entitled "Generalship, its Diseases and their Cure," addressing the personal factors of command, they found the one "pivotal moral virtue" distinguishing extraordinary leadership was "courage." Courage to make the decisions needed to achieve success, I was there, and I witnessed General Berzowski demonstrate that courage on many occasions. At all levels of command.

One such occasion was his leadership of his staff and command team assembled during an Army interview to reduce the force structure. That exercise would determine whether the 84th's flag would be put on a shelf. With General Berzowski's direction and demand for excellence, his courage in leadership at the session held in the 85th Divisions' Headquarters in Illinois, the result was mission accomplished. The 84th's flag would remain. His courage in decision making in personnel and structural issues concerning the 84th's conversion to Armor Training was likewise felt at all levels and met with success for the command and soldiers alike.

General Berzowski expressed his care in various ways, such as stating he considered his staff and commanders as "family", and the loss of any would feel to him as a loss of a family member.

As a community oriented and collaborative problem solver, General Berzowski's creative intelligence and courage was sought out to fill leadership roles in many organizations. The many honors and awards he has received bear clear testament to his success. And he was also a mentor to many, myself included, getting much satisfaction and personal enjoyment from his success of his mentees.

The War Memorial Center, The Wisconsin Club, securing of a Battle Cross Monument at the Union Grove Veterans Cemetery, The Polish Cultural Center, The Knights Templar organization, his law firm and the Marquette Law School, and others are better because of Mike's efforts and presence.

And General Berzowski was the first to recognize the support and care given him by his wife Jan and their family, reminding us all of the poet John Milton's words, "They also serve who sit and wait."

Based on our many conversations at weekend drills, administrative meetings, annual training periods, briefings and additional training exercises, and other events, we also shared a similar taste for some poetic works. And I think General Berzowski's challenge to us is well stated in the last stanza of Poet John McCrae's "In Flanders Fields," "Take up our quarrel with the foe, To you with failing hands we throw The Torch, be yours to hold it high, If ye break faith with us who die, We shall not sleep, though poppies grow, In Flanders Fields."

General Berzowski, Thank you for your service.



My thoughts, by COL (Ret) Peter (Skip) Pochowski

June 2024 brought the Railsplitters and all friends of the 84th Division tragic news with the death of our former Commanding General, Major General (ret) Michael Berzowski. In January, General Berzowski and his family were informed that he was suffering from a serious and rare cancer, and that his time was very limited. He died peacefully on June 3, 2024.

It is hard to describe the impact Michael Berzowski had on the 84th Division and its soldiers. As my friend COL Cottrell has stated, General Berzowski had a major influence on every officer and senior NCO under his command. If imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, he would be honored knowing his troops will be quoting him and talking like him and leading like him for many years to come.

I was blessed to work for him for several more years after we both had retired from the Army. My post-military relationship began when he was appointed Chairman of the Board of the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center in 2012. He asked me to be his Vice-Chairman, and we worked together for the next three years. At that time, the WMC was in serious financial trouble. Within a few years it was financially sound and growing with renewed vigor. Along with his wife Jan, he started our first Education Program that welcomed Milwaukee area school children to learn about life in the military from veterans of our Armed Services. This was often the students' first class on patriotism. Today, thousands of children visit the WMC each year, and it was Mike and Jan who planted that seed.

I recall one session that he taught on saluting – while he was standing with his broken foot in a cast. Imagine this distinguished officer joking with the kids about his accident, and he loved every minute of it. The kids didn't see the "Iron Mike" his soldiers had experienced.

Additionally, the idea for the acclaimed and recently opened Medal of Honor Exhibit and the POW/MIA Exhibit at the War Memorial were born on his watch, as were many other projects. I sincerely believe the War Memorial exists today because Mike Berzowski was our leader.

General Berzowski was also one of four volunteers who created, developed, funded, and built the Battle Cross Memorial at the Wisconsin Veterans Cemetery at Union Grove. The project stalled at one point due to the bureaucracy in the VA System. Then he stepped in, and used his significant influence to make things happen. The project went from start to finish in less than one year. It was fully funded, and the team raised so much money it expanded the size of the statue, then the base, then the area around the statue, and closed it all out when lights and benches were added. Finally, when all had been done to complete the monument and surrounding area, he directed the remaining dollars to be donated to the Fisher House. That monument had no chance of getting built without him, and every time I look at it, I see him standing behind it, reassuring those it watches over, that all is well.

Rest in peace, sir, your job here is over, but your legacy will live on in the Battle Cross, the War Memorial, and in the hearts and minds of thousands of your soldiers. I think he would like that.



Michael "Mike" Mitchell Berzowski
March 27, 1940 to June 3, 2024



ANNUAL MEETING WAS HELD AT OUR NEW HOME!

THE 5091ST-1/334 RECEPTION BN REUNION



**TOO MANY GOOD PICTURES TO CHOOSE FROM!
NEXT ISSUE MIGHT HAVE FOUR PAGES OF PICS!**







Hello, my name is Jim Hauke, some of you may know me from my time in the 84th Div (1985-2005) (the end of which was in the 100th Div), having served in 1/351, 2/339, and the Drill Sergeant School. But what I am really here to talk about is an amazing organization serving our veterans, Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, for which I am a volunteer. And hopefully, get as many of you that are eligible, to sign up.

Stars and Stripes Honor Flight is the southeastern (Milwaukee) Wisconsin based hub of the national Honor Flight Network. The Honor Flight Network, an organization founded in 2005, has 129 hubs in 45 states, having flown almost 300,000 vets to Washington D.C., all at no cost to the veterans. The Honor Flight got its start with WWII veterans, and has since added Korean and Vietnam War veterans, and veterans from any

war/conflict that are terminally ill. See our website (<https://www.starsandstripeshonorflight.org/>) for more details on the founding of the national network, it really is an awesome story.

Here in Milwaukee, Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, Inc. was started in 2008 by Joe Dean after Dean had seen a brief national news segment on the Honor Flight Network. He was inspired to bring this program to Southeastern Wisconsin. Within days, wheels were in motion. The Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, Inc. story was told one person, one small group at a time, and grew from tiny fundraisers to partnerships with many local businesses, organizations, and individuals, who have all stepped forward to ensure that our WWII, Korean and Vietnam War veterans feel appreciated. Our hub recently celebrated flying our 10,000th veteran, had our 75th flight on June 15th, 2024, and has over 200 volunteers! Our motto is "Every Day Is A Bonus", which appears on the shirts and jackets each of our veterans, and their guardians, are given to wear on their flight. Why "Every Day Is A Bonus" you might ask, I think it's very important to tell you why...

Joe Demler was a track athlete at Port Washington High School, who took a deferment to join the Army in the fall of 1944. He completed boot camp and training, was sent to Europe, and found himself in the midst of the Battle of the Bulge during the terrible winter of 1944-45. His unit was surrounded, and they were taken prisoner by the Nazis. They were loaded onto train cars and sent to POW camp Stalag 12-A near Limberg, Germany. During his months in Nazi captivity, Joe and his fellow Army prisoners were worked and starved almost to death, and many did not survive. When Joe was liberated in late March of 1945, he weighed only 70 lbs. The soldier in the bunk next to Joe's was alive when liberated, but passed away before he could even get something to eat. When he was asked how he survived that camp when others did not, Joe told us that he learned how to pray in captivity, and that he adopted the mantra that "Every Day is a Bonus" to get him through each day. Stars and Stripes Honor Flight believes that every day that we can thank our veterans is a bonus day. You can read more about Joe's incredible story at <https://www.life.com/history/behind-the-picture-life-with-joe-demler-wwiis-human-skeleton/>. Joe who was on the first Stars and Stripes Honor Flight, and is one of the vets featured in "Honor Flight The Movie", passed away with his loving family at his side on February 5, 2020.

So, let's look at some of the key details for vets to fly with Stars and Stripes Honor Flight:

WHO IS ELIGIBLE:

- Veterans that served active duty (beyond basic training), honorably, in ANY BRANCH, ANYWHERE, IN ANY CAPACITY between December 1941 - June 1975
- Would like to fly out of Milwaukee's Mitchell Int'l Airport

GUARDIANS / GUARDIAN REQUIREMENTS:

- Typically every vet flies with a guardian, and if they don't have one of their own, we will provide one.
- Cannot be the veteran's spouse or significant other
- Be at least one generation removed from veteran – a minimum of 15 years younger than the veteran
- Between the ages of 18-64 years old (65-69 may be considered with a medical review by our doctors)
- Physically, intellectually, and emotionally capable of taking care of the veteran on flight day
- Must attend a guardian training session, usually on Saturday, two weeks before the flight.
- Guardians are responsible for a \$500 tax deductible donation to cover their flight day expenses (this is currently waived, but they can still donate!!!)

WHEN DO WE FLY:

Typically 6 flight days a year, 1 each in April, May, June, September, October, and November, most days with 2 planes (subject to change). We make every effort to get our vets on earliest flight possible, but we do usually have a wait list of about nine months

Sunshine Club

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of those who recently passed away:

MG (Ret) Michael Berzowski

Ann LeFever, wife of LTC (Ret) Ron LeFever

Get Well Wishes for:

COL (Ret) Don Ford and his wife, Rita, COL (Ret) Don Kleist

MAJ (Ret) Stephen Kassens

CSM (Ret) Dave Gramins, and CSM (Ret) Frank Parker Jr.

Remember to send any information, or correspondence for Get Well, Encouragement, Sympathy, etc. to:

Mary Orley at (414) 425-0256 or email, maryo_44@yahoo.com

Honor Flight, continued from page 4

GROUPS:

Want to fly with your eligible veteran friend(s), or someone you served with? Let us know, we can make you a group!

Hopefully I've piqued a lot of you eligible veterans' interest, so once you sign up, what's going to happen? When your name reaches the top of our fly list, you and your guardian can expect a call from your V.E.T. (Veteran Experience Team, of which I am one) representative approximately 6 weeks before your scheduled flight date to let you know you're scheduled, go over your information, answer any questions, etc. That person will be your main P.O.C. until you fly. If you cannot make that date, let your V.E.T. rep know as soon as possible so you can be rescheduled.

Let's take a look at a typical flight day. Remember the old Army slogan, "we do more before 9am before most people do all day"? So do we. Expect to arrive at the airport by 5 or 6 am depending on your flight assignment. We'll run you through our registration process, take some pictures, get you through security, sing the National Anthem, and off to D.C. you'll go! We try to place vets on planes based on branch of service, and time of service, so you never know who you may be sitting next to, it could be somebody you served with. Once in D.C., you might be surprised by an amazing reception at the airport, then you'll board your assigned bus (we have outstanding bus captains), and start heading to the memorials. Typical stops are The National Mall (Vietnam, Korea, WWII memorials), Arlington Cemetery for the Changing of the Guard (former Drill Sergeants will love this, I know I do), Marine Corps and Air Force Memorials, 9/11 Memorial at the Pentagon, and FDR/MLK Memorials. Might not be all of the above, could be more, it all depends on weather and traffic (we say we operate on "Honor Flight time"). We'll keep you fed and provide water throughout the day, and you can expect your guardian, who will be thoroughly trained, to take great care of you. Once you're done seeing all the memorials, you'll head back to the airport and board the plane home. You'll arrive home around 2030-2130 (remember Honor Flight Time), where there will be an AMAZING Welcome Home Parade. I have had the honor of being the guardian for two Vietnam vets, including CSM Kim Michalowski, whom I believe many of you know, and can say the Welcome Home is truly a highlight of the day for our Vietnam vets who did not get treated kindly when they came home 50-60 years ago.

Many vets voice concerns over the amount of walking involved (we estimate a total of about 4-6 miles total throughout the day), but please know, we do everything we can to accommodate you. Your guardian has been trained on proper wheelchair handling, and we bring enough wheelchairs on our flights to accommodate those in need, and then some. We also have a full medical staff on the planes to assist with other medical needs.

It is a long day, but it is a GREAT day, and the memories created will last a lifetime! And remember ...

EVERY DAY IS A BONUS!!!!!!



Have you been on an Honor Flight? Please let us know... We want to feature Honor Flight honorees in an upcoming issue.

Please send: ♦ a picture or two of you from the trip and
♦ your best memory of the trip.

Please email the information to: railsplitters84th@yahoo.com

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Humor noun

hu·mor| \ 'hyü-mər, 'yü- \

Definition of *humor*

1a: that quality which appeals to a sense of the ludicrous or absurdly incongruous : a funny or amusing quality // Try to appreciate the *humor of the situation*.

