



LISA SCHREIBER/POST-TRIBUNE

Chuck Baudouine is a World War II veteran who will travel to Washington to view the World War II Memorial.

Vet recalls photo mission

Air Force serviceman was in the Panama Canal when WWII ended.

By DIANE KRIEGER SPIVAK
Post-tribune staff writer

VALPARAISO — Chuck Baudouine's unit was attached to a topographic engineering outfit in Sienna, Italy, during World War II.

A member of the United States Air Force, Baudouine typed up handwritten reports made on intended targets after photographers took pictures from P-38s as they flew over ammo dumps, fuel dumps, and anything else in Europe that could be an asset to the enemy.

"Our photographers brought back huge rolls of film to be developed," Baudouine said. "They made developing labs out of big trucks.

"Those photographs went all over the world. We always sent two sets to Washington, D.C."

Later, the guys would return to see what had happened after the bombers hit their targets.

"One day I was in the office alone and some officers said they needed a target for the next day," Baudouine said. "The day after that they came back and said, 'That was a good one! There's nothing left.'"

On another occasion, Baudouine and his comrades heard a rumble outside the college in Sienna where they were stationed.

"We made a mad dash for the front door and looked up. The sky was black with American bombers. I counted 5,000 of them."

Baudouine remembers sleeping in a field not far from the ancient Colosseum in Rome, as

he traveled across Europe.

"In Naples we were put in barracks where they had held the Olympics, and the swimming pool was there," he said. "I took advantage of that."

Baudouine was on a banana boat that had been converted into a transport ship carrying military personnel to the South Pacific when the war ended.

"We were in the Atlantic near the Panama Canal when they dropped the bombs on Japan," he said. The ship made its way into the canal.

The ship's commander called all 1,500 men together to make an announcement Baudouine would never forget.

"This ship is headed to ... New York City, USA," Baudouine said. "It was the way he paused when he said it. Everybody was tense.

"Did we jump? Oh, boy, did we," Baudouine said. "I saw that ship come three feet out of the water. There was a lot of cheering."

He got home in October 1945. In December, he married Florence Peterson. The two had dated on and off for years since they met at church when they were 11.

"She and her mother made me care packages with homemade fudge and pecan pralines," Baudouine said.

Florence also played piano for the USO Club in Chicago, but it was against the rules to date the servicemen.

"When I got home on leave I went down and joined the gang," Baudouine said. "We got special permission from the director to go out."

The Baudouines have been married 61 years and raised four children.

Veterans to D.C.

Pines Village has raised \$88,353 toward its \$115,000 goal to send 40 veterans and support personnel on the Tour of Duty, Taking our Veterans to D.C. trip Oct. 4-8. The retirement community is looking for more volunteers to assist in the following events to raise the remaining \$26,647.

■ Fifth Third Bank parking lot, adjacent to the European Market, Chesterton, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Saturdays through September.

■ 29th annual Popcorn Festival, Cookie Sales, Downtown Valparaiso, 7 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Saturday.

■ Tour of Duty Fest, Benefit Dinner and Dance, American Legion, Wanatah, 6 p.m. to midnight Sept. 15.

To volunteer for all events, ticket sales and to donate door prizes call Pines Village, 465-1591.

Charles Baudouine

Birthplace: Chicago

Birthdate: Feb. 25, 1922

Military service: U.S. Air Force, 1943-1945

Family: Married to Florence, 61 years. Four children

Education: Bowen High School, Chicago, Class of 1940.

Employment: Chemical operator, Union Carbide, Whiting, retired