



THE ATLANTA WORLD WAR II ROUND TABLE

PRESERVING HISTORY

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

VOL. 25 No. 10

250th MEETING

Editor: John E. Kovach
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Date: JUNE 16th, 2011 (THURSDAY) >> Next Meeting SEPT. 15th

Contributor(s) To This Newsletter

- * Visvaldis (Vis)Kimenis
- * Dr. Virginia D. Young
- * Fletcher Thompson/Randolph Goulding
- * Marilyn Pahr/John Davis/Guy Condra
- * Jay Lenny/Bob Rivers

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

Elected Officers 2010-2011

Commander – Fletcher Thompson
Tel: 770-952-4812

Deputy Cmdr.- Randolph Goulding
Tel: 770-436-4254

Adjutant: John Kovach
Tel: 770-928-4579

Finance Officer: Jay Lenny
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Dep. Finance Ofc: Guy Condra
Sgt.-at-Arms – Bob Rivers (Capt.)
Tel: 770-592-5611

Sgt.-at-Arms – Bill Shepherd
Sgt.-at-Arms – Lee Weinstein
Chaplain – Bill Sperry (Lead)
Tel: 770-452-1309

Asst. Chaplain – B.G. Harold A. Dye

Asst. Chaplains – Guyton McCall / H.T. Maclin

**** 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: Vis Kimenis

Subject: "The Latvian Legion"

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 JUNE 16th, 2011– Visvaldis (Vis)Kimenis (To Be Introduced By Deputy Commander Goulding)

Many of our members know Vis Kimenis as a former speaker for us in November 1990 (*On The Receiving End*) and March 1992 (*Know You're Enemy- Germany.*) and as a former Commander of the Round Table (1994 – 1995.)

Vis was born in Latvia, U.S.S.R. and as a six year old boy witnessed the invasion of his country by the Germans, to include tank battles and other combat aspects of the fighting on the Russian front. Before the war was over, he and his family escaped into Germany where he lived through bombings by the British and Americans, to include the devastation of an entire city. He was on the 'Receiving End' – not once but twice.

After the war he lived for several years in camps for displaced persons. When he finally reached the United States, he completed his education at Norwich Military College and entered the U.S. Army. After serving for 25 years, including several overseas assignments, he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel.

On June 16th, Vis will tell us about the *Latvian Legion*, a German conscripted division from occupied Latvia. The Germans formed this division after the fall of Stalingrad in January 1943 where they lost the German 6th Army commanded by Field Marshall von Paulus with the surrender of 107,800 troops. The massive loss of troops empowered Hitler to direct that 'volunteer' divisions from occupied territories be conscripted.

In contravention with the Hague and Geneva Conventions, Hitler ordered his head of the Gestapo (State Secret Police) Reichsfuhrer Heinrich Luitpold Himmler, to establish the *Latvian Legion* in February 1943. Mainly young ethnic Latvians were drafted to serve in the 15th and 19th Waffen Grenadier SS Divisions and participated in battles in Russia, Latvia and Germany.

Soldiers serving in the Legion did not necessarily share Nazi ideology and were not completely loyal to Germany. A report by the commander of the 15th Division, Oberführer Adolf Ax on 27 January 1945 says: "*They are first and foremost Latvians. They want a sustainable Latvian nation state. Forced to choose between Germany and Russia, they have chosen Germany, because they seek co-operation with western civilization. The rule of the Germans seems to them to be the lesser of two evils.*" For some, this choice was the result of the Soviet occupation between 1940 and 1941, called "The Terrible Year" (Latvian: *baigais gads*) during which tens of thousands of Latvian families were executed or deported to Siberia. In this one year the dislike between Latvians - who were German serfs for 8 centuries - and Germans disappeared almost completely.

After the war, those who surrendered to the Russians were sent to forced labor camps in Siberia; those who surrendered to the Americans joined the para-military Labor Service Guard, Transportation and Construction units in the the American Zone of Occupation in Germany. Please welcome Vis Kimenis as our JUNE 16th, 2011 speaker. (250th Meeting)

Review of MAY 19th , 2011 Speaker –Dr. Virginia D. Young (Introduced by Dottie Stephenson)

Dr. Virginia (Suzy) Young has been active in setting and meeting the vision and goals for the future soldier. She is the Director, U.S. Army Advanced Science and Technology Directorate, Aviation

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and Missile Research, Development and Engineering Center, Redstone Arsenal, Alabama.

Suzy is a civilian employed by the Army and has worked in her field for 34 years, 6 years in private industry so she has seen both the government and civilian sides of operations in the fields of science and technology. Dr. Young is one of those 'behind-the-scenes' professionals that provides the military with insight into the rapid pace of technology that has enabled the Department of Defense to capitalize on advancements in communications, sensors, networking, weaponry and computer processing to provide new capabilities to the warfighter that offer amazing advantages in the fight, often unrealized to the public.

At present Suzy oversees the operational functions of the Science and Technology Engineering Center that employs about 3000 civilians at Redstone Arsenal; she coordinates with about 4000 contract personnel that are also spread out throughout the country working on Robotics, Helicopter Technology, Applied Infantry Technology and other systems.

The teams at Redstone work on everything from battlefield robotics and current drone technology to future Star-Trek type 'Force-field' technology and Micro-Air vehicles that can fit into a soldier's backpack like the *Hand Hummingbird* and can be launched by hand to provide real-time intell and video transmitted to a small hand-held controller.

Dr. Young's Science and Technology Directorate cooperates with other centers of the military as well, one of the chief aims is to reduce casualties and deaths of our warriors. They have been very successful at this, especially using drones, vehicles and other un-manned mobile devices (land, sea and air.) It's certain Dr. Young was aware of the new *Stealth Helicopter* Technology used by the Navy Seals on May 2nd, 2011 to take out Osama Bin Laden but could not discuss this top-secret aircraft.

Thank you Dr. Young for your dedication in your field, for bringing the history of Redstone Arsenal to the Round Table, for helping to *Preserve History* and for a job well done.



I am pleased to announce that we have one (1) new member who has joined us since the May 19th, 2011 meeting:

WWII Veteran Leonard A. Meyer – Leonard served in the U.S. Air Force, 378th Troop Carrier Squadron in the South Pacific. His training was in Airstrip Control Tower Ops, and he was part of a crew operating a C47.

Please welcome Leonard as our newest member of the Round Table at our June 16th, 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: **June – Visvaldis (Vis) Kimenis (Special);** September – Major General Frank Regano; October – Seymour (Sy) Rosen; November – Greg McClelland; December – Morton (Mort) Waitzman. More info to come on future speakers as they are booked. Please note that the speaker's engagements are subject to change. Thank you John M. Davis for your continuing efforts to seek-out and engage excellent speakers for our meetings and for a job exceedingly well done.



>> **CALANDAR OF EVENTS**

July 4th events all over Atlanta – In behalf of the Round Table, please have a safe, cool and fun summer.



>>> **SPECIAL MEMBER SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

(NEW) 25th ANNIVERSARY MEETING – JUNE 16th, 2011 – As many of you know from the announcement made by Bob Snapp at the May meeting, June 2011 effectively marks the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Atlanta WW II Round Table in 1986.

The Petite Au Berge has readily agreed to present the members able to attend the June 2011 meeting with a special meal which will be *Filet Mignon* as the main entrée and *Baked Alaska* as a desert. The meeting will adhere to our normal agenda.

>>> **REQUESTS BY INDIVIDUALS TO MAKE ANNOUNCEMENTS AT ROUND TABLE MEETINGS** – In an 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 Thompson may be contacted at 770-952-4812 or via email at fandkt@yahoo.com

>>> **COMMANDER'S REQUEST** – *Commander Thompson is requesting that all members should make our Chaplain and Asst. Chaplains aware of any member who is sick, stricken, or seriously ill. This can be done at the monthly meetings or by calling Chaplain Bill Sperry at 770-452-1309. Asst. Chaplain B.G. Harold A. Dye can be reached at 404-315-9253; Asst. Chaplain Guyton McCall at 404-237-1011 and Asst. Chaplain H.T. Maclin at 404-377-3178*



>>> **(NEW) AWWIIRT Directory** - So many members, so few pictures. Just as Uncle Sam wanted you for your service, I need pictures of you for the directory – you know who you are. Please dig up that wonderful service picture of yourself and either make a copy of it or bring it to the June meeting and I'll take a photo of it. Also, if you haven't had your current picture taken, step up to the white screen and smile for the camera! >>>

(NEW) Lending Library - Just in time for summer reading – I will have a large selection of WWII books for you to checkout and read at your leisure. Just fill out the card in the book, take the book with you and return it when you're done.

Atlanta WW II Round Table Members – Please remember that there will be NO scheduled meetings of the Round Table in July or August. Our next scheduled meeting will be on September 15th, 2011 – at the Petite Au Berge – Meeting start time 11:30 AM



Monthly Quotations:

“What this power is (determination) I cannot say; all I know is that it exists and it becomes available only when a man is in that state of mind in which he knows exactly what he wants and is fully determined not to quit until he finds it”.

Alexander Graham Bell