

***SEMPRE ITALIA
RETURN TO ITALY 2009***

Tour Guide

May 2009



**Sponsored and organized
by the
10th Mountain Division Descendants, Inc**

SEMPRE ITALIA 2009
RETURN TO ITALY TOUR ROUTE

Major Tour Elements

Pre-Tour:	Rome	5/24- 5/27
Main Tour:	Chianciano Terme, Florence, Hill Towns, Lake Garda, Stresa and Milan	5/26 - 6/7
Extension Tour:	Bovec, Graz, Vienna, Budapest, Bratislava, Prague	6/6 - 6/13

DEDICATION

*This Tour Guide is dedicated to all
who have served in the 10th Mountain Division*

SEMPRE ITALIA 2009 RETURN TO ITALY

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- Thomas Brooks (85-G) and Barbara and John Imbrie (85-C) for providing maps and historical guidance in three informative books, which can be ordered through Quartermaster:

10th Mountain Division Campaign in Italy 1945

Mission Udine

10th Mountain Division Battle Sites: Then and Now

With a special note of thanks to:

- ❖ David House and Lindsey Williams of the InterTrav office in St. Charles, IL, InterTrav's Rome office staff and our tour escorts.
- ❖ The 10th Mountain Division Resource Center at the Denver Public Library, and the Colorado Historical Society in Denver, Colorado.

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME

Benvenuto a Sempre Italia 2009!



On behalf of the 10th Mountain Division Descendants, I wish to personally welcome you to the 2009 Sempre Italia – Return to Italy Tour. The torch has been passed and this year marks the beginning for Descendants Inc., as we continue the tradition that began over 45 years ago. Then, in 1963, an eastern alumni group led by Brian Carter (86-E) and John Weaver (10-HQ-MED) pioneered in arranging the first reunion trip to Italy that included Minnie Dole and General Hays.

The Sempre Italia 2009 committee has been hard at work in preparation for this trip. We will examine many of the significant 10th Mountain Division battle sites, and follow the course of a campaign that began in the Apennines, led across the Po Valley and into the Italian Alps, culminating in our celebration of the end of the war in Europe, on May 8, 1945.

The Tour Guide is designed to provide you with information that will make your trip enjoyable, not only during our reunion in Italy, but on our extended-tour visits. It gives an outline of each day's activities and at the same time provides historical background for the battle sites and other places you will visit during the day.

You will literally walk in the footsteps and see firsthand the foxholes and battle sites of Riva Ridge, Mt. Belvedere, Castel d Aiano, and Lake Garda where so many of our beloved 10th soldiers paid the ultimate sacrifice for the sake of freedom. And, you will walk the hallowed ground where many are interned at the American Cemetery near Florence.

We are honored to have sixteen WWII 10th veterans joining us, including 10th Association Immediate Past President, John Duffy (86-HQ-2), who will be our Senior Advisor. Their firsthand accounts of the war and anecdotes will prove to be a treasured and invaluable portion of the trip.

You will experience the heartfelt welcome and gratitude of the Italian people as you visit the Hill towns and surrounding areas and be prepared for “mangiare e bere” as the celebrations will be filled with music, laughter, and fellowship. Their friendship remains strong and sincere and many still remember the first visit, over 64 years ago, of young soldiers in uniform willing to shed their blood on foreign soil.

Our Italian friends have planned their town receptions with great care and pride. Be generous and warmhearted in your greetings, as only Americans can be. We believe you will have an unforgettable experience!

Ciao e Sempre Avanti,

Val Rios

*President, 10th Mountain Division Descendants Inc.
Sempre Avanti!*

Itinerary

	Pre-Trip- Rome
Mon. May 25	<p>USA –Rome Rome Arrival – Travelers will be met and assisted with customs formalities and then directed to their transportation for the drive into the city and to the Hotel Veneto. After check-in, the balance of the day is at leisure at the hotel.</p> <p>In the evening, the group will take part in a welcome to Rome dinner at the Restaurant Marcello. (I,D)</p>
Tues. May 26	<p>Rome 9:00 a.m. – morning sightseeing featuring the highlights of the city. The afternoon is free.</p> <p>2:30 p.m. - For tour members who wish, there is an option to take part in a visit to the Vatican Museum and the Sistine Chapel. <i>(Reservations for this optional tour are to be made with your escort. The approximate cost is depending on the number of tour participants.)</i> (B)</p>
Wed. May 27	<p>Rome/ Chianciano Terme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ For Pre-Trip travelers, the morning is at leisure in Rome. ➤ 1:30 p.m. - Departure for Chianciano Terme where we will join up with the Main Tour members arriving from the USA. ➤ Dinner is scheduled at the hotel. (B,D)

General Itinerary

Main Trip	USA to Chianciano Terme
Wed. May 27	<p>Chianciano Terme</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Main Trip travelers will be met and assisted with customs formalities and then directed to their transportation for the drive to the Grand Hotel Excelsior in Chianciano Terme. ➤ Pre-Trip travelers will depart Rome to meet up with the rest of the group. ➤ Evening Dinner in Grand Hotel Excelsior
Thurs May 28	<p>Sightseeing: Florence or Orvieto</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Travelers have chosen one of two excursions for the day, or to spend the day enjoying Chianciano Terme: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Excursion to the city of Florence ▪ Excursion to the town of Orvieto and the Tuscan countryside ➤ Evening Welcome Dinner at the Grand Hotel Excelsior

<p>Fri May 29</p>	<p>Florence American Cemetery and the Hill Towns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 8:30 a.m. Depart the Grand Hotel Excelsior in Chianciano Terme. ➤ 10:00 a.m. - American Cemetery and Memorial where we will have a short private ceremony and place flowers on the graves of our 10th Mtn soldiers interred there. ➤ We will have a group photograph taken while visiting the cemetery ➤ 12:00 noon– Depart for lunch at I Falciani restaurant <p>Following lunch, the buses will depart for the Hill Towns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 5:00 p.m. - official welcome on the Town Hall of the Major of Lizzano Mr.Sergio Polmonari ➤ 7:30 p.m. – Welcome Dinner in each hotel
<p>Sat May 30</p>	<p>Castel d’Aiano</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 8:45 - 10:00 a.m. - Italian and American schoolchildren interact in Lizzano in Belvedere. American children join the group in Castel d'Aiano for the Multimedia Show of the German Gothic Line. ➤ 9:00 a.m. - Buses leave the hotels and transport group to Castel d'Aiano. ➤ 10:00 a.m.- Official welcome in Town Hal of Castel d'Aiano with the Major Mr. Giorgio Chari ➤ 10:15 a.m. - American schoolchildren leave Lizzano in Belvedere for Castel d'Aiano. ➤ 11:00 a.m. - multimedia show of the German Gothic Line - Commemoration of the new monument to MOH recipient PFC John Magrath (85 G). ➤ 1:00 p.m. - lunch fiesta in the local square ➤ Time permitting we will tour the area covered during the spring offensive by bus. ➤ Evening at leisure
<p>Sun May 31</p>	<p>Gaggio Montano</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 9:00 a.m. - Buses pick up group for travel to Gaggio Montano. ➤ 10:00a.m.- Official ceremony and procession with the Major of Gaggio Montano ➤ 12:00 noon - Lunch Fiesta in the village of Gaggio Montano ➤ Time permitting we will visit the Iola museum and surrounding area ➤ 5:00 p.m. - Mass in the local Church of Lizzano. ➤ Evening at leisure
<p>Mon June 1</p>	<p>Mt. Belvedere, Querciola and Vidiciatico</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 8:30 a.m. - private bus reserved for the Veterans departs for Mt. Belvedere ➤ 9:00 a.m. - Buses pick-up remaining group members for transport to Calcinara and climbing Mt. Belvedere. ➤ 10:30 a.m. - Mt Belvedere official Mass and ceremony near the Monument of the 10th Mountain Division. ➤ 12:00 noon - Meeting in Querciola for the Parade of the Veterans of the 10th Mountain Division, the Alpini, and the historical group of “Brothers in the Mountains”. ➤ 12:30 p.m. - Fiesta and lunch in Querciola ➤ 2:30 p.m. - Return to hotels

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 7:00 p.m. - Traditional Dinner and music in the square of Vidiciatico village
Tues June 2	<p>Riva Ridge and Lizzano</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 9:00 a.m. - Optional Tour #1: Explore Riva Ridge – we will tour the base of Riva Ridge in the travelers will be able to hike to the top of Riva Ridge. ➤ 9:00 a.m. - Optional tour #2: Bologna ➤ Lunch during optional tours ➤ At 4:30 p.m., we are invited to attend a Mass morning, and the backside following lunch. Time and conditions permitting in Lizzano. ➤ At 5:30 p.m., we will assemble in front of the church for a parade. ➤ At 6:30 p.m. there will be a street party and buffet, a celebration that will help us remember our warm reception from the people of the Hill Towns. <p>Note: Today is The “Festa della Repubblica” an important Italian national holiday that like July 14th in France (Storming of the Bastille) and July 4th in the USA (Independence Day), celebrates the birth of the modern nation.</p>
Wed June 3	<p>Hill Towns – Po River, Po Valley and Riva del Garda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 9:00 a.m. - Leave the Hill Towns, travel out of the Apennines, crossing the Po Valley, and arrive at the town of Riva del Garda at the north end of Lake Garda. ➤ 12:00 noon - Lunch- San Benedetto Po ➤ Visit the site of the Division’s crossing of the Po ➤ Arrive Riva del Garda
Thurs June 4	<p>Riva del Garda</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 8:30 a.m. - Optional Tour to Venice ➤ 10:00 a.m. - Optional Lake Garda cruise ➤ Lunch and dinner at leisure
Fri June 5	<p>Torbole</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 9.00a.m. - Depart hotel in Riva for Torbole ➤ 9.30a.m. - Arrive Torbole ➤ 10.00a.m. - Ceremony at General Darby Monument - - place a wreath at the Monument ➤ Following this, we will walk to the shore of the Lake where another wreath will be placed in the lake where the DUKW was lost. ➤ 11.00a.m. - End of ceremony ➤ After the Ceremony, some time is available for guests to socialize or to explore Torbole. ➤ Approximately 12.30pm - Return to Hotel Du Lac et Du Parc ➤ 6:00 p.m. - Gala Farewell- to- Italy Banquet. Class A uniform for this event.
Sat June 6	<p>Lake Garda/Milan</p> <p>8:45 a.m. - Main tour group depart from Riva for Milan</p> <p>1:00 p.m. - check into the Crowne Plaza at the Milan Malpensa Airport</p> <p>2:30 p.m. - leave for Stresa for the boat trip to Isola Bella for dinner at the restaurant Delfino</p> <p>Return to hotel.</p>

	<p>PLEASE TAKE NOTE:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Your escort will give you a different color luggage tag for the departure from Riva on June 6. 2. After you have arrived at the Du Lac et Du Parc Hotel in Riva, you must change your luggage tags for the Extension Tour. 3. The original luggage tag must be removed from your suitcase. <p>InterTrav Corporation and the 10th Mountain Division cannot accept responsibility if you do not change your tags and your luggage is lost or misplaced. This is covered by the travel insurance that is included in the tour price.</p>
Sun June 7	<p>Milan / USA</p> <p>This morning we drive to Milan Airport where our escort will assist us with baggage check-in as we start our return journey to your USA Gateway City.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">* * * Welcome Home * * *</p>

Extension Trip

IMPORTANT: There are 36 travelers taking part in the Extension Tour.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE:

1. Your escort will give you a different color luggage tag for the departure from Riva on June 6.
2. After you have arrived at the Du Lac et Du Parc Hotel in Riva, you must change your luggage tags for the Extension Tour.
3. The original luggage tag must be removed from your suitcase.

InterTrav Corporation and the 10th Mountain Division cannot accept responsibility if you do not change your tags and your luggage is lost or misplaced. This is covered by the travel insurance that is included in the tour price.

Saturday, June 6	<p>LAKE GARDA/ BOVEC</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 8:45 a.m. – Depart from Lake Garda to Bovec ➤ 6.00 p.m. - arrival at Hotel ALP Bovecin Bovec ➤ 7.00 p.m. - Welcome drink hosted by locals from Bovec, Slovenian Authorities and Representative of the US Embassy Ljubljana (Mayor of Bovec, Mr. Daniel KRIVEC, Representative (BG or MG) of Slovenian Armed Forces, President of Slovenian IFMS BG (Ret.) Janez KAVAR) ➤ 8.00 p.m. - Dinner at Hotel
Sun., June 7	<p>BOVEC/GRAZ</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Meet with WWII veterans in Bovec and visit Mount Mangart, the site of the 1945 ski races. ➤ Drive to Lake Bled ➤ Cross the border into Austria and to the lovely medieval city of Graz. <p style="text-align: center;">(B,D)</p>

	<p>Please Note: The timings of the rail journey Graz – Vienna have changed. The new times would not allow enough time in Vienna for city sightseeing. So that we will have enough time for Vienna sightseeing, we will travel Graz – Vienna by coach. To replace the rail journey, dinner has been included in the tour on June 7 and June 8.</p>
<p>Mon., June 8</p>	<p>GRAZ/BUDAPEST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Coach ride to the Austrian capital of Vienna. ➤ Lunch in the old town in Vienna. ➤ Coach ride to Hungary’s capital city of Budapest. (B,D)
<p>Tues. June 9</p>	<p>BUDAPEST</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tour the twin cities of Buda and Pest. ➤ Visit to the Heroes’ Square. ➤ The afternoon is free for shopping and exploring the city. ➤ Evening dinner with typical foods, wines, and traditional gypsy entertainment. (B,D)
<p>Wed. June 10</p>	<p>BUDAPEST/BRATISLAVA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Drive to the picturesque riverside village of Szentendre. ➤ Continue to Visegrad. ➤ See Esztergom, and visit the splendid cathedral. ➤ Cross the Danube at Komarom and enter the Republic of Slovakia, ➤ Arrive at our hotel in Bratislava. ➤ After checking into our hotel, we drive to the 9th century castle perched high above the Danube for a panoramic view of Bratislava and view the baroque presidential palace. ➤ Take a leisurely walk through the Old Town, stopping at the medieval Town Hall. (B,D)
<p>Thurs. June 11</p>	<p>BRATISLAVA/PRAGUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cross Slovakia – Czech border and arrive in Brno, the capital of the Province Moravia. ➤ Continue through the Czech countryside to “Golden” Prague – aptly named for its gleaming spires. ➤ In the early evening, we will cruise the River Vltava by steamer and enjoy Prague from a different perspective. ➤ After the cruise, we will return to the hotel. ➤ Enjoy one of Prague’s many restaurants. (B)
<p>Fri. June 12</p>	<p>PRAGUE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sightseeing tour with a local guide to the 1,000 year--old Hradcany Castle and majestic St. Vitus’ Cathedral and Old Town. ➤ Conclude tour at the fascinating Astronomical Clock. ➤ Leisure time for shopping for fine Bohemian crystal, Carlsbad porcelain, or superb costume jewelry. ➤ Evening farewell dinner at one of Prague’s most famous breweries. (B,D)

Sat. June 13	Sat., June 13 – PRAGUE/USA Your Tour Escort will tell you the departure times for you to leave the hotel for the airport and will assist you with check-in for the journey back to the USA. (B,I) PLEASE NOTE: Changes could occur in the travel itinerary during your tour, and if this should occur, your Tour Escort will advise you. Departure times for sightseeing and events will be posted at your hotels and will be given to you by your Tour Escort and Bus Captain.
	* * * Welcome Home * * *