

The Report

February 2006

Annual meeting held in January — A Memorable Year

INSIDE...

BIA Annual Meeting held on January 11

Report from the Student Exchange Committee

Upcoming 2006 Trip to Europe – a River Cruise

Binoculars returned to brother of soldier who died on D-Day

Tony Martin instrumental in return of relic

St George's Day Picnic

2006 Membership Renewal

Over 60 members of the Bedford International Alliance met at the Bedford Area Welcome Center on January 11 for the organization's annual meeting. A recap of the BIA's event during 2005 was presented by the officers.

We once again celebrated at two annual picnics - Bastille Day in July with our visiting French student and St George's Day in September with our English visitors - followed by a holiday / wine tasting party in November.

"This has been a good year for the Alliance. We have welcomed our friends and counterparts from Ivybridge (England) for the first time," Chairman Bob Bashore told members. "We have established relationships we can build on in coming years."

A highlight of the evening was a slide show put together and presented by Charlie Walker. Starting with the BIA trip in 2004, Charlie's slides stepped through all of the organizations major events.

President Al Vincent reported on planned events for this year, including the annual picnic in April, the student exchange planned for early summer and the BIA-sponsored trip in October. Information on all of these events are on the following pages.

Directors and officers were elected for 2006 and a short board meeting followed the annual meeting.

Bedford International Alliance, Inc.
P.O. Box 951
Bedford, Virginia 24523

Visit our website to see the latest updates:

www.bedfordva.gov/alliance



Chairman Bob Bashore (center above) gave everyone a few minutes to read the minutes before getting the meeting underway.

2006 CALENDAR OF EVENTS AND MEETINGS

January 11

BIA Annual Meeting
Membership Dues for 2006
payable

January - May

Fund raising activities begin to
support Student Exchange
program and activities

April 5

Board of Directors Meeting –
Planning for St. George's Day
event; continue planning for
Student Exchange activities for
student visit to England and
France

April 22

St. George's Day Celebration
for all BIA members.
Liberty Lake Park, Bedford

June 6

62nd Anniversary of D-Day at
the National D-Day Memorial

June 14

Board of Directors Meeting –
Planning for Bastille Day picnic
at Liberty Lake Park, Bedford;
Bedford students prepare for
trip

July 15

5th Annual Bastille Day Picnic
for members
Liberty Lake Park

September 20

Board of Directors Meeting –
Planning for Nov/Dec. final
Social Event for 2006

October 13-22

BIA Rhine River Cruise trip

November 1

Board of Directors Meeting –
2007 planning and plans for
Member final Social Event for
2006

November - December

2006 BIA Member Social Event
(date to be determined by
Board)

Note: BIA Committees will determine
meeting dates.

Student Exchange for 2006 Underway

The Student Exchange Committee is in the process of forming the student exchange for 2006. The trip this year will include time in both Ivybridge, England, and Normandy, France, for some very lucky Bedford students.

"We are delighted that both the French and the English are able to host us this summer; however, because we are so late in getting the information we need from them, the selection process will take place only a few months prior to the exchange, states Helen Pope, Chair of the Student Exchange committee. "This means that the parents will not have much time to come up with their part of the costs and we need to make our scholarship worth as much as possible. Any ideas that you have for fundraising will be greatly appreciated."

The BIA would like to send six Bedford County students to Europe for the Student Exchange. Students will be from the three Bedford County high schools – Jefferson Forest High School, Liberty High School and Staunton River High School. In order to be eligible, a student must be enrolled in French III or higher and possess all the qualities that would make an outstanding representative of Bedford County.

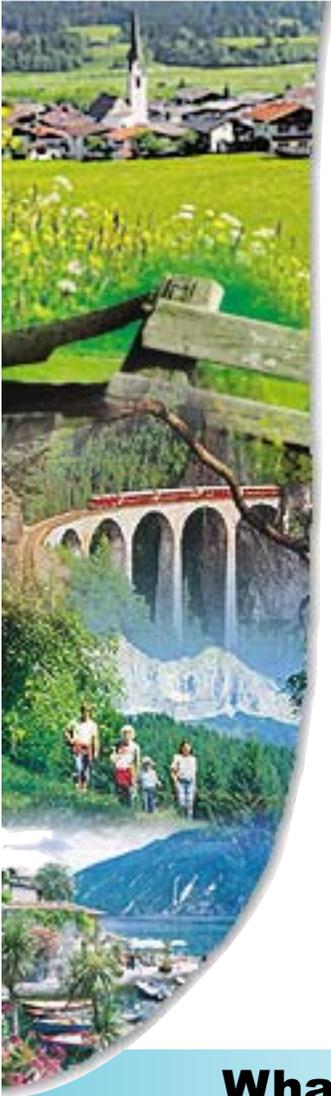
Eligible students at the three high schools will have a chance to enter a contest to win a place in the BIA sponsored trip. The contest will involve both written and verbal components designed to showcase the best and brightest students. The members of the Student Exchange Committee will coordinate the contest. Ideally, we would like to send three students from each school, but that depends on the students.

Contact has been made with our counterparts in both France and England, and plans are being made for the trip. At this time the Student Exchange Committee is tentatively planning a 10-day trip. Travel in France and England will give the students the greatest possible chance of experiencing these areas as a local, not a tourist. The lessons our students learn will last them a lifetime.

If you would like to help the Student Exchange Committee, please contact Helen Pope by phone at 540-343-4592 or by e-mail at [len4205617@aol.com](mailto:hen4205617@aol.com).

We're looking for donations to the Student Exchange Program

If you haven't made a donation to the 2006 Student Exchange committee, we encourage to do so now. Also, please consider asking your employer for a contribution. Every donation, no matter what the amount, is needed, and every donation is appreciated.



BIA Trip to Europe Planned

Romantic Rhine Cruise

Once again members of the Bedford International Alliance will be traveling as a group to Europe. The trip, scheduled for October 13 through 22, will take members for a cruise on the beautiful Rhine River from Zurich, Switzerland, to Amsterdam, Holland. The itinerary below gives a few small glimpses of the wonderful adventures that are available for us to visit and explore.

The cost varies from approximately \$3,100 per person to \$3,500 per person depending on the accommodations. All travelers will enjoy superb dining, including a Cocktail Reception, Welcome Dinner, and Captain's Gala Dinner. The dining room accommodates everyone at one open seating, and wines from Europe's most famous wine regions are available with every dinner.

Information on the trip was mailed to members in 2005 and at this time the traveler's list is filled. However, on past trips there have been a few cancellations before the trip due to unforeseen events. Because of this, we have a waiting list with a few members on it. We can still add to the waiting list. If you are interested in this wonderful cruise, please contact Hugh Bond at 540-586-8405 or Connie Messier at 540-586-3059, co-chairs of the Travel Committee. To be eligible for the trip, an individual must be a member of the Bedford International Alliance, Inc., have paid their dues for 2006 and have a valid passport.

What to look forward to...

On October 13, forty members of the Bedford International Alliance will take a motorcoach to Dulles International Airport. We will fly to Zurich, Switzerland. Following a full day in Zurich we will board the MS Tapestry, which is in her inaugural year, for a scenic tour on the Romantic Rhine River. The cruise will take us from Basel, Switzerland to Amsterdam, Holland. During the daytime, there will be a mixture of included shore excursions and leisure time on our own.

Basel is situated on the Rhine where France, Switzerland, and Germany meet. Then it's on to Strasbourg, France, which is the capital of the Alsace region. Strasbourg features the Gothic

Cathedral, La Petite France district, Place Kleber, Place Gutenberg, the Kronenbourg Beer Brewery, and the Alsace wine region.

From Strasbourg we cruise to Speyer, Germany, where we will visit the ruins of Heidelberg Castle. Then, it's on to Mainz and Rudesheim, Germany. Mainz is Germany's largest and most important wine market. Gutenberg was born in Mainz and the Gutenberg Museum is located there. Rudesheim is the location of Siegfried's Mechanical Music Museum.

Next is Coblenz, Germany, which is the cultural and business center of the Middle Rhine region. Then, it's on to Cologne, the capital of the Rhineland and one of

Germany's largest cities. The Germano-Roman Museum is located in Cologne and is a must for history buffs.

Amsterdam, Holland, is our final stop. The works of famous Dutch masters can be seen in the museums such as the Rijksmuseum or the Van Gogh. There is no better way to see Amsterdam than by Canal Boat, cruising through the elegant Grachten, lined with stately homes dating back to Amsterdam's "Golden Age."

The travelers will return to Dulles International Airport on October 22 where we will take the motorcoach for our return to Bedford's Liberty Lake Park – tired but happy!

Editor's Note – The return of Frank Draper's binoculars to Brother Warren was covered by several local papers and TV stations during December. For those of you who missed it, the following is the article that was in the *Bedford Bulletin*.

Coming home

Binoculars returned to brother of soldier who died on D-Day

By John Barnhart
Staff Writer
news@bedfordbulletin.com

The Army issue binoculars that Frank Draper carried on D-Day have come home.

Draper was one of the 23 men from the Bedford area killed in the June 6, 1944 amphibious landing in Normandy that opened up a long-awaited second front against Nazi Germany. According to the last man to see Draper alive, he was mortally wounded before he even got to the beach.

Joe Banner, left, of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation, presents Frank Draper's binoculars to his brother, Warren G. Draper. Frank Draper, one of 23 men from Bedford killed on D-Day, was mortally wounded when his landing craft was hit by a mortar shell.

The men of Bedford's Company A crossed the English Channel in a British troop ship and the landing craft that they boarded were operated by men of the Royal Navy. According to Bernard Fuller, one of the British Seaman, the landing craft was hit by a mortar shell.

Fuller recalled giving first aid to two American soldiers who were mortally wounded by the shell. The craft made it to the beach and the rest of the men went ashore. The landing craft then headed for a hospital ship with the wounded men aboard. It was a 6-mile trip and landing craft were slow. The men died on the way.

Fuller, while giving first aid, loosened one man's clothing and removed the leather binocular case from his neck. The man was horribly wounded and died before he could reach professional medical help. Fuller kept the binoculars as a personal memorial of the day.

The leather case had the initials "F. P. D." and "t/sgt" hand lettered on it. Frank Price Draper was a technical sergeant. He had been issued binoculars because he was a squad leader.

Sixty years later, a British photographer named Tony Martin



Photo by Liz Bryant

Joe Banner, left, of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation, presents Frank Draper's binoculars to his brother, Warren G. Draper. Frank Draper, one of 23 men from Bedford killed on D-Day, was mortally wounded when his landing craft was hit by a mortar shell.

met Fuller in Weymouth, England, during an observance marking the 60th anniversary of D-Day. Martin had some years before become deeply interested in D-Day, had met representatives of the Bedford International Alliance during a tour that they made in England and was collecting information on the men from Bedford who were killed that day.

Martin discovered that Fuller had Draper's binoculars. Fuller, in turn, was willing to send them back to Draper's family and forwarded them to Martin's home in Scotland. Martin made arrangements to send them to Bedford. He already knew Dave and Meg Ballard of Bedford well, so he sent the binoculars to their home. The memento arrived on Dec. 7, the 64th anniversary of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor.

Last week the Ballards turned the binoculars over to Frank Draper's brother, Warren.

"I'll take them and show them to my kids, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, said Draper, who turned 85 this year. "It feels like you got something to remember him by, that you can touch."

Later, he plans to donate the binoculars to either the National D-Day Memorial or the Bedford City/County Museum.

"It'll be something for people to see and remember what happened there," Draper said.

The last time he saw his brother alive was when Frank, two years older than Warren,

shipped out from Bedford's railroad station.

"My mother and I went down to the station to see them off," he recalled. "I remember him just as he was."

Warren Draper was later drafted and landed with the 42nd Infantry Division at Le Havre, France, a couple of months after his brother had been killed. He was part of a military police platoon and directed traffic at intersections. This made him feel like he was standing in a bull's eye as these intersections were frequently targets for shelling and strafing. The Germans weren't very happy with the traffic that Draper was directing. A younger brother, David Draper,

served with the Navy in the Pacific Theater.

Last week, Warren Draper got a chance to talk with Bernard Fuller. The Ballards placed an international call to Weymouth, England.

"I want to thank you for all you did do and I appreciate you holding onto the binoculars," Draper told Fuller.

Even after 61 years, the events that he witnessed still carry an emotional impact. Fuller sent a brief letter to Draper along with the binoculars. He closed the letter writing, "Sorry I will have to say goodbye as tears are beginning to fall."

His interest in D-Day leads to the return of the binoculars

Tony Martin instrumental in return of relic

Tony Martin's interest in D-Day has taken him from his home town of Southampton, England, to the beaches of Normandy to Bedford, Virginia. His photography has led him to British and American D-Day veterans, as well as members of the Bedford International Alliance.

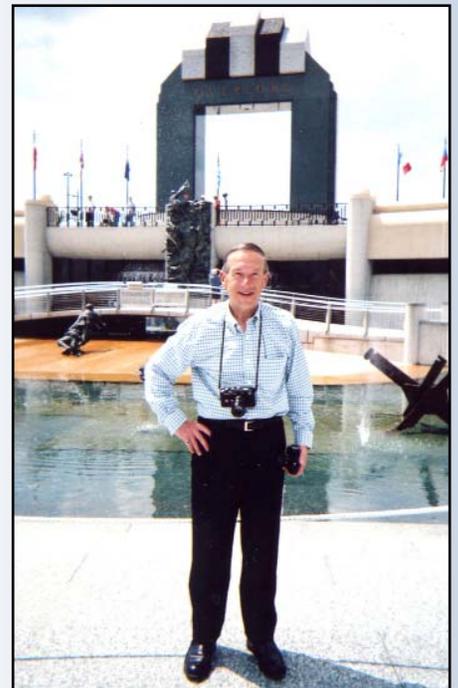
Tony's help in the return of Frank Draper's binoculars began shortly after meeting and talking with Bert Fuller in Weymouth, England. Bert, whose memory of D-Day is still painfully vivid, wanted to return the binoculars to the Draper family. Tony decided to find Draper's brother during a visit to Virginia in mid-2005. With the help of friends Dave and Meg Ballard, the family was located

and Tony, upon his return to England, made the arrangements for the binoculars to be returned.

The package arrived at the Ballard home on December 7. Meg, knowing the importance of the binoculars, arranged a brief ceremony for the presentation to Frank's brother Warren. Joe Banner, associate for special projects of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation, presented the binoculars to Draper on Wednesday, December 14.

"It feels like you've got something to remember him by that you can touch," said Warren Draper as he held the binoculars during the ceremony at the home of Dave and Meg Ballard.

"I think I already have a home for them - the museum or the D-Day Memorial."



Tony Martin visited the Bedford area and members of the BIA in 2005.

You're invited to the Bedford International Alliance's Annual St George's Day Celebration



When 6:00 p.m., on Saturday, April 22

Where Liberty Lake Park in Bedford

Menu Caterer-provided Fish & Chips

Bring Those whose last names begin with
A through M should bring a **DESSERT**

Those whose last names begin with
N through Z should bring a **SALAD DISH**

Provided Beverages, plates & utensils (by the Alliance)



St George's Day Celebration

Yes, I want to celebrate St George's Day with my friends in the Bedford International Alliance.

Yes, I (we) will be there! _____

Address _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

RSVP by April 14, 2006, to either of the following:

Charlotte Vincent
1811 Oakwood Street
Bedford, VA 24523
540-586-0219
CVIN99@aol.com

Janice Humphrey
9732 Goodwill Road
Goodview, VA 24095-3045
540-297-6085
HJanice611@aol.com



2006 Membership Renewal

The deadline for paying dues for 2006 is March 1st.

If you have not renewed your membership in the Bedford International Alliance, now is the time to do so.. Please make your check payable to the "Bedford International Alliance" and mail it to the Treasurer. You must have your dues payment up-to-date in order to participate in the activities of the Alliance.

NAME _____

MAILING ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

HOME PHONE # _____ WORK PHONE # _____ CELL PHONE # _____

E-MAIL ADDRESS(ES) _____

Mail to: Meg Ballard, Treasurer, 995 Ashland Avenue, Bedford, VA 24523

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P.O. Box 951
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