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# Gary & Diana Ditto's Newsletter

Fall 2016

## ***“Roosevelt wants to talk to you”— Anthony Triantis Remembers***

Part 2

by Antoinette Kranenburg

*(The first part of this article described Mr. Triantis's memories of a visit with his grandmother in Greece as a boy age 10, which turned into a 5 year stay; his return with the help of the State Department at age 15; wartime Washington DC; and enlisting for the Army)*

Anthony Triantis, now 91, played part in a critical chapter of history, D-Day and the liberation of Europe.

As soon as he turned 18, Mr. Triantis volunteered to enlist so that he could chose his branch. He joined the Army. He and other recruits traveled by bus, not knowing where they were headed. They arrived at Fort Knox, Kentucky, for 17 weeks of training.

At Fort Knox, everybody learned how to drive. Typically Greek Americans were assigned as cooks, he says, but thanks to his good education in Greece he “aced the aptitude test.” He was sent to gunnery school for special training.

Each infantry division had a tank battalion attached. Tanks use indirect fire – “the observer gives you the degrees, and you set your wheel.” This is where his education was key. Triantis became a corporal gunner on a Sherman tank. “Two stripes, the tank commander had three stripes.”

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Long & Foster Real Estate, Inc.  
Bethesda Gateway Office  
4650 East-West Highway  
Bethesda, MD 20814  
301-907-7600

**THE DITTO GROUP**  
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Gary Ditto 301-215-6834  
Diana Ditto 301-215-6904  
gd@thedittogroup.com  
diana@thedittogroup.com  
www.thedittogroup.com



*Third Platoon - Cpl. Triantis, {the tallest} front row, right*

Triantis was with the Third Platoon, Company “C”, 745th Tank Battalion— the gunner of a five- man tank crew. The five came from across the country. He remembers that “ the tank commander was a New York slick, the gunner (Triantis) a DC Greek, the loader was from Alabama, the driver downstairs came from California, and the assistant driver was a big Swede from Wisconsin.

“I lived in that seat eleven months, from D-Day to VE Day. Behind me the commander.”

From Fort Knox they went to Southern England for training for D-Day. They practiced landing the LST – Landing Ship Tank, day after day, going out to sea and returning at the end of the day.

He especially remembers one day when they were out practicing landing. “The English girls were preparing a party for when they got back. That was what all the boys were talking about.”

But this time they did not turn back. Instead, fast boats came out to them, and priests gave communion to those who wanted it. They were told, “Roosevelt wants to talk to you.” They listened to the president on a recording.

He remembers that the sky was black with bombers hitting Normandy. This time they kept going. It was D-Day.

They landed at Pointe du Hoc. He was not in the first wave. They landed behind the GIs and blew out a track on a mine. Right away, he says, they brought another tank. The rangers had taken a cliff, Pointe du Hoc, between Omaha and Utah beach.

From Normandy Beach, they went over the cliffs, and then the hedgerows of Normandy, “making a beeline for Paris.” However, they stopped outside Paris. Instead, Charles De Gaulle, General of the Free French, entered liberated Paris the next day, August 26, 1944.

The American soldiers were to be relieved from the fronts and expected to be headed for rest. Instead, Triantis remembers, there was a big speech, and they were headed to Northern France. He explains that the Germans knew that the veterans were withdrawing and would be replaced by green troops. By then, at age nineteen, he was a veteran.

At home, pinned to the wall in the den, below the formal 1920s photo of his parent’s wedding in North Carolina, is a black and white photo of Anthony Triantis, 19 years old, on top of his Sherman tank, next to a damaged house somewhere in Northern France, Belgium, or Germany.

He says they had found a camera and tried it out, taking pictures until the film ran out. Mr. Triantis graciously let us use the photo.



*A photo of 19 year old Tony Triantis sitting on top of his Sherman tank.*

He also remembers running past a concentration camp and how the prisoners came out to cheer. Some prisoners beat up the prison guards and they let them. But the prisoners were very weak. Everyone went to see the gas chambers, to be a witness.

When they reached Sudetenland, in western Czechoslovakia, they were guarding German prisoners of war. He explains that the ethnic German village women, cooked for the POWs, who did not eat the GI food.

He still can’t quite believe one incident. One time Triantis was with 10 or 20 men, kids and old men “looking at my little grease gun, passing it around.” German housewives were making the coffee and they were waiting for the women to bring them food. Suddenly — “I don’t believe it happened” — someone threw the grease gun back to him, saying “Officer coming!” It still amazes him.

In Czechoslovakia, they met the Russians, a touchy moment. They were stopped at a bridge over a stream to wait for the Russians. Patrols were going out looking for them and then one came back “Man, they are coming and everyone is drunk!” The Russians came up to the bridge saying “Stoy” (stop) with guns drawn. Then, fortunately, they recognized the different American uniform.

Mr. Triantis keeps a binder with a printout of “History Of the 745th Tank Battalion, August 1942 to June 1945” by Harold D. Howenstine. It includes an outline of their many historic battles – Mons, Aachen, Ardennes, Battle of the Bulge, Remagen Bridge, through the Harz into Czechoslovakia – and the commendation of the Third Platoon, Company C, 745th Tank Battalion for outstanding performance of duty in action.



*The emblem of the 745th – a 7 petalled lotus, 4 sided square and 5 pointed star.*

The commendation highly praised the Platoon: its “indomitable spirit, resourcefulness, and exemplary devotion to duty ... contributed appreciably to clearing the battalion path of advance by routing a superior enemy force estimated at regimental strength and seizing approximately 1100 prisoners. By command of Brigadier General Andrus.”

Framed along with the emblem of the 745th Tank battalion are two Bronze Stars and several other medals that Mr. Triantis was awarded, although he says he only found out about the medals in the 1980s.

After the war, Mr. Triantis and two others opened the Mecca Grill in Alexandria at King Street and Royal Street. He says his father was disappointed that he did not finish college.

In Alexandria, he met many types of Americans, including country people and mountaineers.

The Juke box plaid all country music. They expanded into an empty shoe store next door and sold carryout fried chicken. After 7 or 8 years, they sold the Grill. The historic building was torn down for development.

After that he made a living driving buses and limousines. In winter he was a bus driver all over Virginia. In the summer he was a tour guide for Metro; being a tour guide was his passion.

He moved to Capitol View in Silver Spring from Alexandria 42 years ago. His two daughters, Maria and Lena, were born here. His son from his first marriage is in his sixties. He has grown great-grandkids.

He finally retired when his boss asked him, “Do you know you’re 67, 68?” “I know.” “You are not supposed to be driving.” Not long ago he gave up driving because of his eyesight, but he gets together with Greek friends for coffee at the Westfield Wheaton food court every day.

### Kensington Fall Festival

Sunday, October 16th, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.  
Howard Avenue

Celebrate the start of fall at the second annual Kensington Fall Festival in Old Town Kensington! There will be vendors of handmade unique crafts, antiques and vintage goods, live music, entertainment for kids, food trucks, and fun.

Festival sponsors are the Old Town Kensington Merchants Association and the Kensington Business District Association. For the schedule and updates check [kensingtonfallfestivalmd.com](http://kensingtonfallfestivalmd.com).

### E-Mail Updates from The Ditto Group—

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- Our Monthly Sold Reports, sent via e-mail
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[www.thedittogroup.com](http://www.thedittogroup.com).

For dates and news of more events, be sure to visit the Community Activities Calendar on the web site:

[www.thedittogroup.com](http://www.thedittogroup.com)

Gary and Diana Ditto’s Newsletter welcomes ideas and news items from community members. Many thanks to Anthony Triantis for sharing his memories and photo. The editor is Antoinette Kranenburg of Kensington, assisted by Cherry Wunderlich.

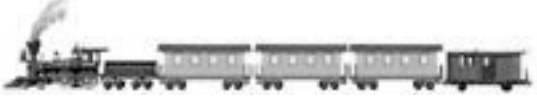
PEP’s Noted Author Series welcomes

### Alyson Schafer

**The Joys and Fears of the Teen Years**, Thursday, Nov. 17, 7:30 – 9 p.m. at Landon School, Mondzac Performing Arts Center, 6101 Wilson Lane, Bethesda, MD 20817

**Moving from Conflict to Cooperation**, Friday, Nov. 18, 9:45 – 11:15 a.m. at Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church, 6601 Bradley Blvd, Bethesda, MD 20817.

Tickets for each event are \$35. For information and tickets, visit [www.PEPparent.org](http://www.PEPparent.org) or call 301-929-8824



**A big thank you** to all who made the *Kensington Train Show* such a wonderful community event — the large numbers of children, parents, and grandparents who came out to enjoy the trains and the numerous volunteers, including the National Capital Trackers, members of the Kensington Historical Society and the Noyes Library Foundation, railroad storyteller and singer Matthew Dodd, GIGS guitar studio, JennyCakes Bakery, Scout Troop 439, the Town of Kensington, and all who made the event possible.

This wonderful show returns next year the weekend after Labor Day—September 9 and 10, 2017 — save the dates!



### Apple & Yard Sales

Wednesday to Saturday, October 19 to 22, 2016  
St. Paul’s United Methodist Church  
10401 Armory Avenue, Kensington

Apples in several varieties, jams, and apple cider will be on sale, along with the Yard Sale on Friday and Saturday.

Kensington Arts Theatre presents

### Cabaret

Kensington Town Hall / Armory  
3710 Mitchell Street, Kensington

Set in post World War I Berlin—a time of economic depression, underground avant-garde culture, and the rise of the Nazis—*Cabaret* is a provocative musical and a classic.

Performances are October 28, 29; November 4, 5, 6 (Sunday); 11, 12, 13 (Sunday); and 18 and 19. Evening shows are at 8:15 p.m. and Sunday shows at 2 p.m. For information and tickets, please go to [www.katonline.org](http://www.katonline.org).

### Art and Craft Fair

*The Woman’s Club of Chevy Chase*  
Saturday, October 29, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
7931 Connecticut Avenue, Chevy Chase



Make a start on your holiday shopping! Local artisans will exhibit and sell unique handmade items. A light breakfast and lunch will be served. Admission and parking are free.

Fair proceeds will benefit local charities. Please contact Mary Ourand at

301-652-8480 or [wcccmd@hotmail.com](mailto:wcccmd@hotmail.com) with any questions.

### First Annual Hawks 5K Run & 1K Fun Run/Walk

Saturday, October 29th, 8:30 a.m.  
Holy Cross Elementary School  
4900 Strathmore Ave, Garrett Park

Come out to run and in support! Part of the proceeds will go to the *Cup of Joe Project*, which provides bagged meals for 1,000 DC homeless daily. Visit [www.hcross.org](http://www.hcross.org) to register or donate..

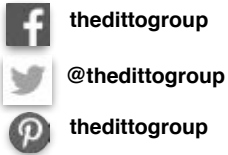


**Long & Foster Real Estate, Inc.**  
**Gary & Diana Ditto**  
 Bethesda Gateway Office  
 4650 East West Highway  
 Bethesda, MD 20814

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**Kensington/Kensington**  
**FOR SALE - \$ 1,224,000**



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**9624 Old Spring Road**  
**Kensington/Rock Creek Hills**  
**UNDER CONTRACT**  
**List Price - \$ 899,000**



**9604 Old Spring Road**  
**Kensington/Rock Creek Hills**  
**UNDER CONTRACT**  
**List Price - \$ 899,900**



**4018 Glenridge Street**  
**Kensington/Chevy Chase View**  
**FOR SALE**  
**List Price - \$ 799,000**



**3500 University Boulevard**  
**Kensington/North Kensington**  
**FOR SALE - \$ 685,000**



**SOLD**  
**10111 Kensington Parkway**  
**Kensington/Kensington**  
**SOLD - Worked with Buyers**  
**\$ 675,000 - August**



**9302 East Parkhill Drive**  
**Bethesda/Parkhill**  
**FOR SALE**



**SOLD**  
**3211 Fayette Road**  
**Kensington/Homewood**  
**\$ 621,000 - AUGUST 2016**



**5117 Bangor Drive**  
**Kensington/Garrett Park Est**  
**UNDER CONTRACT**  
**List Price - \$ 619,000**



**SOLD**  
**10601 Meadowhill Road**  
**Silver Spring/Northwest Branch Est**  
**\$ 435,000 - August 2016**



**SOLD**  
**3402 Cheverly Avenue**  
**Cheverly/Cheverly**  
**SOLD - Worked with Buyers**  
**\$ 396,000 - August 2016**

**Don't Miss the**  
**CARDINAL 5K**  
**Saturday, November 12th, 2016**  
**8:30AM**



**GO TO**  
**<http://www.cardinal5k.com>**  
**to register to run!!**