

"This is undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war and will, I believe, be regarded as an ever-famous American Victory."

SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL - Addressing the House of Commons following the Battle of the Bulge, WWII.



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Lessons of the Bulge

This story is reprinted from the 99th Division's newsletter, *The CHECKERBOARD*, August, 1993. It was submitted by past president Sid Salins, who served in combat alongside author Joe Doherty in H/393. Doherty has retired after a distinguished professional career with the U.S. Department of Agriculture and currently is a consultant on urban renewal questions. The article printed here was written about 15 years ago. Doherty may develop it into a full book on the Battle of the Bulge.

A New Look at an OLD BATTLE

By Joe Doherty

German cannons and rocket launchers opened up along a 60-mile front in eastern Belgium and Luxembourg, astonishing the American troops across the line and touching off the Battle of the Bulge, which one historian has called the "greatest pitched battle of World War II on the Western Front."

The Bulge legend is, of course, widely known. For six weeks--from December 16, 1944, to nearly the end of January, 1945--the battle engaged some two million American, British, and German combat and support troops fighting over 2,500 square miles of a region called the Ardennes. The Americans suffered an estimated 76,000 casualties; the Germans, 100,000. Hitler and his generals put 13 infantry and seven Panzer (armored divisions into the first strike against a sector of the Allied line held by only four U.S. infantry divisions and a few mechanized cavalry units. The Germans were grouped into three armies: Sixth Panzer on the north, Fifth Panzer in the center, and Seventh Infantry in the south for flank protection. Fifth Panzer broke through, destroying one U.S. division and reaching 60 miles west to the banks of the Meuse River. However, the Germans were unable to overcome the Americans at Bastogne, Belgium, near the center of the breakthrough area. At the end of December, Allied ground and air forces



1/14/45. Following all night attack in woods near Wiltz Luxembourg infantrymen of the 104th Regiment, 26th Division return to their own positions.

U.S. Signal Photo, National Archives

begin a massive counter attack. In five weeks they drove the Germans back east to the positions they occupied December 15th when they jumped off. The Bulge had been eliminated. (Continued on Page 11)

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If there's a chapter near you, give their president a call. You undoubtedly will enjoy their activities. You may encounter some old friends and you surely will make some new ones. If there is no chapter near you, we could use your help in developing one. Write us for information.

If you have information you would like published in The Bulge Bugle, please submit it to VBOB at least six (6) weeks before publication dates which are: February, May, August and November.

FUND-DRIVE UPDATE FOR VBOB MONUMENT

With slightly more than a year to go until the Fiftieth Anniversary, The fund raising drive to build a Battle of the Bulge monument near historic Valley Forge is moving into high gear.

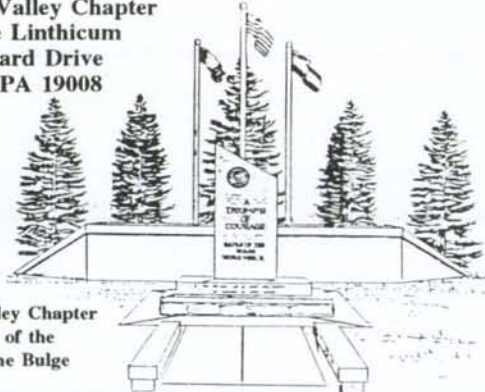
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge from the Delaware Valley Chapter have raised more than \$75,000 toward the \$200,000 goal for the memorial to be built on the grounds of Valley Forge Military Academy & College near the historic site where Washington's troops spent the bitter winter of 1777-78.

Stanley Wojtusik, VBOB vice president for Chapter Coordination, president of the Delaware Valley Chapter, is calling on all Bulge veterans to help close the financial gap, just as they joined to erase the Bulge in the Ardennes forty-nine years ago.

Wojtusik emphasized that the fund drive is being conducted by VBOB members, with no outside fund-raisers. All donations go directly to the memorial, and are tax deductible.

All contributing will have their names inscribed in a book of honor, and receive a certificate of participation. We urge you to join the drive by sending your contribution to:

**Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge
Delaware Valley Chapter
c/o George Linthicum
2605 Orchard Drive
Broomall, PA 19008**



Delaware Valley Chapter
Veterans of the
Battle of the Bulge



At a recent meeting of Tri-State Chapter, four Chapter Presidents attended for good fellowship. L. to R. John MacAuliffe, Central Massachusetts Chapter; Roger Desjardins, Tri-State Chapter; Matthew Femino, C. G. Paul New-garden Chapter; Stan Wojtusik, Delaware Valley Chapter.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Last year VBOB Headquarters was accused of not listening to the members. This year we have made an effort to be more responsive to your wishes. **It has worked!!** At Bismarck the slate of officers was elected by acclamation. The Bylaws were amended to assure that every member has a change to vote next year. Chapter representatives consulted one with another. Questions were asked, discussed and answers were provided.



George Peterson; his wife, Sybil; daughters Connie and Susan; son Terry and his wife, Teresa; and members of the entire North Dakota Chapter are to be congratulated on the fine reunion. Plans were developed and contingencies were planned for. In my opinion it was the best reunion we have had.

During my tenure VBOB established a Headquarters Office. The Executive Council has developed and approved an Administrative Plan which defines the duties and responsibilities of each officer. We are in the process of contracting with an Administrator to staff the VBOB Headquarters on a daily basis. The computer program has been updated for both the membership and financial records. A centralized filing plan is being put in place and VBOB's historical records will be safeguarded. Phew--quite a list and I'm proud to have been a part of a team effort.

I have worked closely with the incoming president, Bill Tayman, and to the best of our abilities I'm sure the change over to the new Executive Council and Administrator will be smooth.

Time Marches On. Age is continuing the process of reducing our zip and slowing our activities. We must continue to stress our recruitment of new members and the revival of lapsed memberships. Those who are no longer active are our most available prospects--we have their addresses. May we all exert a little more effort to reach the goal of 15,000 members by the date of the 50th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

Bill Hemphill

INDIANA CHAPTER FORMATION PLANNED

Stewart McDonnell is planning to form a VBOB chapter in the State of Indiana. If you would be interested in joining, please write to Stewart at:
315 South Woodland Ave.,
Michigan City, Indiana 46360.

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**ARE YOUR
DUES DUE?**

Letters To the Editor

GOOD ADVICE

...So, here it is [life membership].

Second: William R. Hemphill did all of the members a great service by running his letter in the May edition of *The Bugle*. I was one of those who thought it couldn't happen to me. Well, it did, and I'm in Class C, "Inoperable and incurable," after letting it go too long. Two doctors gave me 10% [chance] of 10 years, one said 50% [chance] for 5 [years] and the other said 50% [chance] for two years' survival. That was a year ago. God willing, I'm going to get my money's worth out of this Life Membership. But do tell everybody--Hemphill's advice is GOOD, and shout it out from the roof tops!

Best wishes from one of the 158th Engineers.

John Gressitt
158 ENGR CMBT BN A

WHAT ABOUT THE AIRMEN?

...I believe that the VBOB is a fine outfit, and praise its founding fathers. When I originally received a membership application, I understood it was open to all who fought in the Bulge. It was with dismay that after reading the many issues of *The BB* that I began to feel otherwise.

I have a warm place in my heart for the 84th Division "The Railsplitters." It was the GIs and medics of this outfit that picked up most of our bomber crew on Christmas afternoon, after our B-26 bomber was shot up so bad over St. Vith, we were forced to bail out. Some of us with serious wounds. The cordial treatment we received by the 84th GIs, who saw to our wounds, and served us hot turkey dinner at their first-aid station, will always be remembered.

Later, we saw the insides of VII Corps HQ at the Chateau de Bassines, where we gave what little we knew of enemy dispositions to their G-2. At 9th TAC HQ in Liege, I was sent to the 28th General Hospital, and after it was hit by a buzz bomb I had my wound treated at the 56th General Hospital. The night journey from Marche to Liege is still very vivid in my mind.

On my previous mission during the Bulge, on December 23, 1944, when the weather broke, our formation came under attack by 15-20 ME-109s. These German fighters shot down four of our group's bombers, and riddled several more so bad they crash-landed on returning to our base. Many airmen also bled and died during the Bulge. Manning the gun position of a bomber at 10,000 to 15,000 feet, where the winter temperatures often were 40 degrees below zero, wasn't as comfy as some GIs apparently believe.

...to write this letter to point out that I have never read one account from an airman in your *Bulge Bugle*, which leads me to my last question: Are we welcome in the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge?

William J. Thompson, Jr.

556 BMB SQD, 387 BMB GP (M), 9 AF

[You are as welcome in VBOB as you were when we heard your planes coming during that cold, cold period of 1944-45. We would welcome any further information regarding the airmen who provided so much during the Battle of the Bulge. We try to include a little bit of every aspect of the battle, but we can't if you don't provide it. Thanks, Bill.]

NO, MURRAY, YOU WEREN'T DREAMING

No, you weren't dreaming! The Air Force was dropping "chaff" or "window" both before and during the Bulge. As evidence, here is a piece that was actually dropped on the 99th Infantry Division around Bullingen, Belgium, during late November or December, 1944.

A member of the 99th picked up a bunch of it and saved it all of these years. Frank Kyser of the 324th Engineers, 99th Infantry Division, gave me some for our War Room Museum. I guess we can spare a piece to ease your aggravation with the *Los Angeles Times*.

Incidentally, all of the Air Force guys I've ever talked to about it called it "window," not chaff. I remember one of them telling me about sitting on a bale of it, idly tossing strands of it out of the window. But when

the German flak started shaking the plane they were tossing it out by the double handful

Hope this eases your mind.

Richard H. Byers
99th Infantry Division

[Incidentally, Richard came through with Ms. Davis' request in the last Bugle for a copy of the poster with the upside down helmet. He also sent the headquarters office a copy.]

CHAFF COULD BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH

There's no question that the Allied bomber forces used "chaff" (RAF: "Window") during its bombing missions in WWII. The RAF introduced "windows" on their first, of four, infamous bombing raids against Hamburg, Germany, beginning on the night of July 24-25, 1943. Group Captain Dudley Saward, O.B.E., RAF (Ret.) recalls the introduction of "window" (IMPACT, book 6, p. ix, col 1) as follows: "...Lastly, a device we called 'Window,' which consisted of bundles of metallized strips of paper, so cut in length that when scattered in large quantities would 'drown' the enemy's radar surveillance system and make it impossible to detect the approaching aircraft..."

I was a crew member on several "Window missions." I also helped toss "window" out from our B-26 Marauder's aft bomb-bay. "Window," or "Chaff," are strips of tinfoil as Mr. Shapiro described. These strips of bundled tinfoil were found with paper bands. Each carton of "chaff" contained about 24 such bundles of tinfoil. I don't know the exact number of tinfoil pieces contained in each bundle, but I'd guess several thousand strips. On the "Window missions" that I flew, the aft bomb bay of the B-26 Marauder held about a dozen cartons of bundled "window."

The 9th Bombardment Division (9th AF) deployed a three plane "Window formation" in advance of the main bombing formation. When the pilot turned on the I.P. (Initial Point beginning the bomb run), the men assigned to dispensing the "window" would begin tossing it out, tearing the paper bands in the process to allow the airflow to disperse the "window." The purpose was to have the tinfoil falling in the air while the main bomber formation made their critical bomb run.

I believe that Mr. Churchill's statement that "chaff" was put to good use is correct, but Mr. Ralph Varabedian's conclusion that, "Each side, for example, discovered that radar systems could be defeated by small strips of radar-reflective metal, later called chaff, dropped from an airplane. But neither side used the idea, fearing the loss of their own radar capability if the opponent used the same tactic," is erroneous. Chaff would cause static interference on the radar screen, similar to what you would view from a weak TV station on your TV set. This sudden interference would distort the radar's rebounding signal giving the ground operator a confused reading on his radar screen. Later, it became very apparent to those at the receiving end of German ground defenses that experienced German radar operators did a very good job of discerning false from true blips on their gun control screens. Of the approximate 11,000 plus aircraft the USAAF lost to German air and ground defenses during 1944 in the ETO and MTO, almost half resulted from German Flak (IMPACT, July 1945, p. 15). In 1945, German ground defenses (Flak) accounted for twice the USAAF aircraft losses than did the Luftwaffe.

"Window" aircraft preceded most of the bombing formations our bomber group (387th BG) flew during my time of service with the unit: August, 1944--V-E Day. I flew 42 combat missions with the 556th Bomb. Squadron, 387th Bomb. Group, as a radio operator-gunner. Our medium bomb group flew B-26 Martin Marauders. The Ninth Air Force's 9th Bombardment Division consisted of eleven bomb groups. Our A-20's, A-26's and B-26 Marauder bombers were part of the tactical arm of the USAAF in the ETO.

During the late 1960's, I was deer hunting in the upper peninsula of Michigan, north of Newberry. The weather was clear and balmy. While wandering about in the woods, I found an area entirely covered with "window," similar to Mr. Shapiro's Hurtgen Forest experience of September-November 1944. The area covered was about four, or five, acres. Later in the day, I was jostled by a series of sonic booms reverberating from high above. Looking skyward, I observed the contrails of an aircraft being

(Continued on Page 5)

Letters to the Editor

(Continued from Page 4)

pursued by two others—reminiscent of the "pursuit curve" taught aerial gunners during WWII. Apparently, some type of war game was in progress. I recognized the tinfoil and theorized that it was also being used to thwart the radar system in the cockpits of those modern jet fighters.

The ability to confuse the enemy for just a few seconds can mean the difference between life and death. "Window" did that in WWII, and is still being used for the same purposes. "Window" is also used by today's Navy to confuse the guidance systems that are mounted on such deadly missiles as the French made "Exorcet."

William J. Thompson, Jr.
556 BMB SQD, 387 BMB GP (M), 9 AF

CHAFF SEEN EVERYWHERE

Regarding "Aluminum Chaff": I served in six campaigns, including North Africa and on many occasions saw such chaff on the ground, although never in quantity. The length of the aluminum strips in those days was roughly six inches or more, relative to the radar frequencies at the time. Today's chaff is much, much shorter!

Randolph E. Kerr
353 AAA BN C BTRY

CHAFF HAS A DUAL PURPOSE

I was with the 75th Infantry Division, 289th Infantry, 2nd Battalion, Headquarters and on Christmas Eve in a place near Brisco, Belgium, my buddies and I went to the ammo dump to get a load of ammo. On our way...we were stopped and had to wait. We were stopped on a hill to wait for orders and while we were there I looked up and saw two children coming down the hill with a Christmas tree. They were 8 to 12 years old. I told my buddies that I was going to help them put up their tree. We put the tree up but had no decorations to go on it. So, I said to them: let's go and get some decorations to put on it. We had no trouble in getting our decorations for chaff was falling everywhere. We got what we wanted, went back into the house, and put it on the tree.

James O. Jones
75 INF 289 INF 2 BN HQ

VAST CLOUDS OF CHAFF

A day or two after Christmas, 1944, I joined our unit as a "repple" on a static front in Wecker, Luxembourg. On the morning of December 31, a Sunday, I was attending services with other GI's in a small church in town when a flight of B-17s came over and dropped about 150 H.E. and incendiary bombs on the town. The chaplain continued leading us in a hymn—we didn't even pause. The church was not damaged.

The next day we were practicing for the upcoming crossing of the Sauer River in very large johnboats outside the town. After a spell of make-believe paddling—the boats were sitting on the snow in a field—we got out and were mock-storming some old bunkers on the side of the hill when lo and behold out of the wild blue yonder comes the air cavalry to our aid. Twelve P-38s promptly joined in the battle and shot up Wecker. I didn't see the damage done and don't recall whether there was any casualties caused by these two incidents of what is now called "friendly fire" (we called it screw-ups by the 8th and 9th Air Forces). But according to our regimental history, regimental and battalion CP's located in Wecker moved to new quarters.

Getting on with the chaff business, while we were "paddling" in the johnboats wave upon wave of B-17s passed over us on their way to their targets somewhere in Germany. We were grateful they saved their eggs for the right folks this time, but as they approached Wecker they put out vast clouds of chaff, much of which floated down on us. We didn't know what it was, but it looked just like Christmas tree icicles. So anyone who says it wasn't used is flat wrong.

The chaff didn't help our boys in the B-17s much over the German positions across the Sauer, just a few miles away. The weather was bright and sunny, and the B-17s were clearly visible. Ack-ack fire was intense and we saw plane after plane hit and knocked out of the sky. But maybe it helped to confuse the radar farther along their flight path.

Incidentally, not long afterwards we moved out at night and crossed the Sauer River on a foot bridge, through heavy machine gun fire thankfully passing overhead. The bridge was courtesy of the combat engineers—thanks, guys! I don't know if Patton swam the Sauer as reputed, but we were darned glad we didn't have to!

Ralph J. Wieneke
4 INF 8 INF C

[Many other letters were received about Chaff, but we have chosen to use the first few that arrived. The rest have been forwarded to Murray Shapiro, whose inquiry generated this great response, so that he may sleep better at night.]

YEP, YOU READ THE STUFF

Heading your column "Members Speak Out," in the August issue of *The Bulge Bugle*, you express concern whether [this] column generates response. The enclosed letter to Mr. Watters, seeking information regarding his father's unit, should answer your question to some extent.

I am pleased that I am in a position to assist in this case and will pursue it further as stated in the letter. I thought you would be interested in learning your column served to answer Mr. Watters' question and will probably furnish more of the information he seeks at a later date.

The Bulge Bugle is such an outstanding and informative magazine. I enjoy each and every entry in it. You have my thanks for your effort in turning out such a successful periodical.

Joseph G. Rahie
Historian, The Society of the Fifth Division

[Forgive us for shamelessly using your last paragraph to toot our own horn—we so seldom get the opportunity. We thank you sincerely for the lovely letter you wrote to Mr. Watters and your promise to try to secure more information for him at your reunion. I'm sure Mr. Watters is grateful.]

THANK GOD FOR THE BASTARD BATTALION

...know ye what you are saying at this late date. The Bastard Battalion in every type unit was called upon to support a given operation. Also know that none of the credits is mentioned on any monument, it's all credited to the division. I know of what I write since I was in a combat engineer battalion. We supported all divisions in the Third U.S. Army—yes, armored, infantry, cavalry—and never did I expect this quibbling. Let's sharpen up and, like you explain, you are not looking to discredit other units.

I had this problem when one of the armored division members told me he never heard of my outfit since they had their own engineers. You must remember Headquarters took care of supporting units and most division members didn't know who was doing what.

So, I would like to state—thank God for the Bastard Battalion, the unsung heroes of WW II. I'm sorry I was driven to get into this argument. Let's know the make up of the combat command. Many times over other Bastard Battalions were called upon. Only those of these Bastard Outfits know where they were used. The Bastard Battalion is never mentioned on any monument. But remember, we know what we took part in.

Fifty years later, we are writing what we recall. We are talking from a point of view of one's own recall—not necessarily from combat command records.

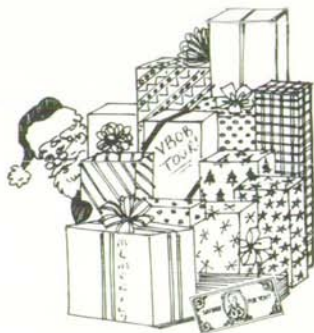
So, please let us not quibble. We don't all see it today or even then as everyone else did.

Michael Luciano
150th ENGR CMBT BN

RETRACTION, PLEASE.

...charges about the 106th Infantry Division, 592 Field Artillery Battalion, Company C, that should not go unanswered. He claims that 592/C replaced his battery (180th Field Artillery Battalion) at a place called Wittring which apparently is in Northeastern France on the day of December 12th, 1944.

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SANTA & VBOB WISH YOU A HAPPY NEW YEAR!



With the holidays upon us, time seems to be at a premium as we squeeze in shopping, wrapping, greeting cards, parties and family visits into too few days! It's hard to think ahead to the new year, and we often put off what we can, thinking (like Scarlett O'Hara), "I'll think about *that* tomorrow!"

For those of us already registered on our VBOB Golden Anniversary Battle of the Bulge Tour, it **will** be a Happy New Year, as we look forward to a nostalgic trip through Belgium, Luxembourg and France...reliving those days of our youth with heightened awareness of our effect on the war and the world! We know we'll make memories to last a lifetime and that 1994 will be a highlighted year in our own personal memoirs!

It can still be a Happy New Year for all VBOB members, IF you act quickly! **Guaranteed 1993 prices** are still available for reservations received before the new year begins! Simply by planning ahead, you can *save up to \$400 per couple* off of 1994 prices! PLUS, you and your deposits will be covered by a special, comprehensive travel insurance protection package! You can plan for a Happy New Year with peace of mind!

Many of us prefer not to count the *passing years...but the only way to keep our youthful outlook is by having something to look forward to!* With our VBOB 50th Anniversary Tour, you can have anticipation and memories all wrapped up in one great adventure!

AND - if you're still looking for a special holiday gift for your spouse, your children, your grandchildren...*give the gift of traveling together.* Show your family first hand, through your eyes, what the Battle of the Bulge was all about. Let them see and understand your part in saving the world's freedom 50 years ago! There is no gift you

can give your family more important than a real knowledge of what happened in 1944 and why it must never happen again!

Make it a Happy New Year in your home! Add your name(s) to the list of participants below. Ring in the New Year with anticipation of a once-in-a-lifetime trip down memory lane! As Father time arrives on January 1, 1994, and the year 1993 expires, so do our discounted tour prices! So don't delay another minute! Call Alison Dodge at Galaxy Tours today, toll-free, at

1-800-523-7287!

Make it a Happy 1993 and 1994!



VBOB Members Having a Happy New Year!

BECK, Ray & Foye
BECK, Woody
BOWEN, John & Mary Ann
BREEDEN, Ted & Marjorie
BRETH, John
BRIGGS, Ralph & Muriel
BRIGGS, Bob & Betty
BROWNER, Fred & Shirley
CAPS, Jim & Grace
CHARBONNEAU,
Harvey & Betty
CROSBY, Everett & Cathy
CROSS, Vick
CUPINA, John
DALBKE, Dick & Leverage
LEGGETT, Mack

LEOPOLD, Bill & Phyllis
MARINE, Danny & Josephine
McALISTER, Jim
McAULIFE, Mac
McELHENNY, John
MILNE, Bill Sr. & Bill Jr.
OLSEN, Dot
POWELL, Fred
REED, Bob
STANISH, Tom
SWOPE, Bill & Betty
TAYMAN, Bill
THRUSTON, Warren
VANCURA, Johnnie
VAUSE, Ed
WOLFE, Roy & Edna

An Invitation



* VBOB 50TH ANNIVERSARY SOUVENIR PROGRAM BOOK *

We are planning to publish a "50th Anniversary BoB Commemoration Souvenir Program Book" that will be given to each participant of the 50th Anniversary Commemoration in St. Louis, December 15-18, 1994.

We wish to incorporate a profile and photo of many members in this souvenir book.

The write-ups and photos we want are since you were discharged, we do not want "war stories." Tell us of your life after you left the service - education, marriage, children, where you worked, hobbies, coaching, church activities - remember, "A joy that's shared is a joy made double." THE WWII GI's American dream! Love to read some good ole farm story write-ups.

We request these pictures and short write-ups be submitted by March 1, 1994 to my home address (WPT). All materials will be returned when their use is completed.

Please, let us hear from you soon--remember, this is a once-in-a-lifetime observance.

William P. Tayman
Chairman
VBOB 50th Anniversary Committee

2402 Black Cap Lane
Reston, VA 22091-3002

Recently everyone received a brochure from Turner Publishing Company requesting personal bios with war time experiences. Let me make this fact clear--there is no connection to Turner's 50th book and "our VBOB 50th Anniversary Souvenir Book."

A REMINDER...

BATTLE OF THE BULGE Commemorative Events DECEMBER 15 and 16, 1993

Special commemorative events will again be held in the Washington, D.C. area, on Wednesday, December 15 and Thursday, December 16, 1993. It will be a time for the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and their friends, to pay homage to those who never came home, to enjoy the occasion and to share in the preservation of the history of the Battle of the Bulge.

The Historical Foundation will host the Commemorative Banquet, 6:30 p.m., Wednesday, December 15, 1993, at the Sheraton Hotel, Columbia Pike and Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia.

The speaker for this event will be General William A. Knowlton, USA, Ret. During the Battle of the Bulge, he served with the 87th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized), 7th Armored Division. He came into the Bulge from a hospital in Liege and reassumed the position of Adjutant to sort out the troops who had made it back through lines. On New Years Eve, 1944, he took command of "B" Troop and remained with that unit for the remainder of the war.

Other highlights of this occasion will include the 3rd Infantry Color Guard; and the presentation to each World War II veteran the newly-minted 50th Anniversary copy of the Lapel Discharge Button (fondly called the "Ruptured Duck").

Arrangements have been made with the Sheraton Hotel (which is located only a few minutes from Arlington Cemetery and Fort Myer), for a reduced room rate of \$59.00, single or double occupancy. This rate is available for any night(s) between December 13 and December 17. You may call for room reservations, Sheraton National Hotel, Columbia Pike & Washington Blvd., Arlington, Virginia--Telephone #800-468-9090, by December 1, 1993. (Mention that you are attending the Battle of the Bulge Banquet and events.)

On Thursday, December 16, the impressive wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Memorial, Arlington Cemetery will be held at 11:00 a.m. After these moving ceremonies a reception buffet will be hosted by the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge at the Officers' Club, Fort Myer, Virginia.

Reservation form for the Commemorative Banquet and the December 16 events is on the following page, please complete and return by December 7 to:

Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation
P.O. Box 2516
Kensington, MD 20895-0818

For more information on the Commemorative Banquet call:
Dorothy Davis, Telephone #301-881-0356

For more information on the December 16 events, call:
Peter Dounis, Telephone #301-589-6730

For Sheraton Hotel Reservations call:
Telephone #800-468-9090

RESERVATION FORM

Commemorative Banquet WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1993 SHERATON NATIONAL HOTEL, ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

RETURN FORM BY DECEMBER 7, 1993, to:
BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION
P.O. Box 2516, Kensington, MD 20891-0818
Please make checks payable to BoBHF GALA

Telephone: 301-881-0356

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

Unit: _____

Spouse / Guest: _____

Number of Reservations: _____ Total Cost @ \$42.00 per Person _____

Dress: Business suit / black tie / military dress uniform (miniature metals encouraged).

Table assignment for the Banquet will be on your name card. If you wish to be seated with friends, please include their names with this form.

THE AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1993
COMMEMORATIVE BANQUET
Hosted by
Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation

1830 hours Reception / Cash Bar
1930 hours Seated for Dinner
Posting of Colors ... 3rd Infantry Color Guard
Pledge of Allegiance
Invocation Msgr. William O'Donnell
Toasts

2100 hours Introduction of Guest
Speaker Gen. William V. Knowlton
USA Ret.

2130 hours Entertainment

DINNER MENU

Fruit Medley in Pineapple Boat
Esquire Salad with Choice of Dressing
Breast of Chicken Piccata with Lemon Caper Sauce
Red Bliss Roasted Potatoes
Green Beans Almondine and Julienne Carrots
Rolls and Butter
Ice Cream Ball rolled in Pecans with Shaved Chocolate
Coffee or Tea
Wine — Taylor White

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1993

1100 hours Wreath laying Ceremonies, Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge at the
Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Arlington National Cemetery, Arlington, VA

1130 hours Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Monument Ceremonies
Posting of the Colors Color Guard
Placing of a Wreath
Brief Program

1200 hours Reception, Officers' Club, Fort Myer, Virginia
Buffet / Cash Bar
Comments President of VBOB

Letters to the Editor

(Continued from Page 5)

[The] 592/C moved into its first combat location on December 10th, East of St. Vith, at a place called Laudesfeld, which is on the fringe of Germany. Our division artillery replaced the 12th and 15th Field Artillery Battalions of the 2nd Infantry Division. We stayed at that location for approximately seven days. We never replaced any 3rd Army Division! The idea [of recovering] ...one of our howitzers with the Breech full of cosmoline is ludicrous. [Anyone] ...should know that you never move into a combat position unless your howitzers are in a state of readiness for firing.

I tried to find out who replaced his unit on the date in question but the major works by Cole and McDonald fail to show any listing of the 180th Field Artillery Battalion. This is understandable since the Alsace-Lorraine was below Luxembourg-3rd Army territory, hardly Bulge territory.

...Clearly a retraction should be made.

Victor C. Rauch
106 INF 592 FA BN C

Murray Shapiro, who wrote to see if others knew anything about "Chaff" writes to thank all of you who responded to his request for more information on the subject. Murray had great response. You VBOBers are great in responding to inquiries. Thanks to each of you.

THE SILENT GERMAN

[The following story was sent in by RODNEY HESTERMAN, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 50 FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, COMPANY A.]

...we were setting up just about dusk when the Germans fired a shell right where we were going to put the gun. We put it there anyway because shells never hit the same place twice.

One night the man on guard woke me up. He said a German was standing behind the gun pit.

I took my carbine and gave him a good whack with the stock.

Turned out it was a raincoat, one of ours, hanging on the camouflage net.

Do you have a funny story with respect to your being involved in the Battle of the Bulge? If so, send it along--please keep it as brief as possible. The shorter the better and probably the quicker it will be used.

GEN. RIDGWAY DIES

One of the nation's foremost military commanders, Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway, 98, passed away on July 26, 1993, at his home in Fox Chapel, Pennsylvania. During WW II, he organized the country's new airborne forces and led the 82nd "All American" Airborne Division in the invasions of Sicily and mainland Italy before jumping into Normandy at the start of the D-Day Campaign and the Battle of the Bulge.

In *A Time for Trumpets: The Untold Story of the Battle of the Bulge*, the author Charles B. MacDonald, said of Ridgway:

"Matthew Bunker Ridgway... was born into an army family, and the U.S. Army had been his life. He was a man of great personal courage (he wore a harness with a hand grenade attached to each of the front straps, not, he maintained, because he wanted to create a distinctive image but because he might need them). His airborne troops...admired his toughness and called him 'The Eagle.' He drove himself relentlessly and saw no reason not to drive others the same way. You won wars, in Ridgway's view, not by giving ground but by taking it and holding it."

He served in World Wars I and II and the Korean Conflict, ending his illustrious career as Army Chief of Staff in June of 1955.

ORDNANCE MUSEUM ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND IN MARYLAND

DALE E. WOORMERT, 78TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 303RD ENGINEER BATTALION, writes to tell us about the Army's Ordnance Museum at The Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland. It includes both weapons and vehicles of both U.S. and foreign armies a great many of which are operational. The mission of the museum is to collect, preserve and account for historically significant property that relates to the history of the U.S. Army Ordnance Corps and the evolution and development of American military ordnance materiel from the colonial period in American history to the present.

The museum is open Tuesday through Friday from 12:00 Noon to 4:45 p.m. and on Saturday and Sunday from 10:00 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. It is closed on Mondays, National Holidays, Armed Forces Day, Independence Day, Memorial Day and Veterans Day. The museum is off of U.S. Route 40 about half way between Baltimore, Maryland, and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. (There are direction signs posted at all Route 40 turn-off points.)

If you plan to visit, write to Dale at 2208 Titan Terrace, Havre de Grace, Maryland 21078. He will be happy to meet you and show you around the area.

Dale also advises us that many of the Army's Materiel Command Bases also have museums: Transportation Museum at Ft. Eustice, Virginia and the Engineer Museum at Ft. Belvoir, Virginia. An excellent collection of tanks may also be found at Ft. Knox, Kentucky. In England there is a tremendous collection of tanks and weapons at Bovington in southern England--not too far from Christ Church.

[Thanks, Dale, for the information. Bet our members run your legs off taking you up on your offer.]

OUR APOLOGIES TO LUXEMBOURG

The August, 1993, issue of *The Bulge Bugle* contained a very serious error. We entitled an article "An Invitation for You From Belgium." It should have read "An Invitation for You From Luxembourg." The title was written before the article arrived so that we would be sure to have space for it. We were remiss in not having noticed this obvious mistake. Many of you wrote to let us know of this mistake and we thank you.

COMBAT INFANTRYMEN'S ASSOCIATION FORMED

An association has been formed for those who have been awarded the Combat Infantryman's Badge as certified to by official notation on the applicant's DO-214. If you are interested in membership in this organization please contact: Combat Infantrymen's Association, Inc., 138 Locust Avenue, New Rochelle, New York 10805.

We played remote bases, the kind of bases where guys went to bed with their rifles by their sides; not for safety, but for companionship.

BOB HOPE

Members Speak Out

MICHAEL (MIKE) KLEMICK, 87TH RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON, HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, would like to locate (CAJE) LEGUNE (he was from Louisiana). Mike states that he and Cajé had planned a trip to Cajé's home, but Mike's pass was cancelled. There was another fellow from Louisiana with whom they remained close until they were shipped overseas. Write to Mike at: Rural Route 1, Box 585, Elysburg, Pennsylvania 17824.

Robin Neillands is writing a book regarding the last five months of the war in Europe. He would like personal accounts of the war starting from the Battle of the Bulge on New Year's Day onward. The more personal the recollections, the better, i.e., meeting German civilians, Russians, seeing or hearing about concentration camps, etc. Write to Robin at: P.O. Box 345, Bourne End, Bucks, SL8 5NH England.

EDWARD A. HILTON, 90TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 357TH INFANTRY, COMPANY C would like to locate anyone who helped take Doncols on January 11, 1945—particularly his unit. He would like to also locate the ambulance driver who drove him to the Barley Duke Hospital. Ed has never been able to locate anyone who was with him in Doncols. He hopes he wasn't the only survivor. Can you help him locate someone? Write to Ed at: P.O. Box 265, Altmar, New York 13302-0265.

LIONEL J. ROTHBARD, 587TH AMBULANCE COMPANY, writes to give praise to the soldiers who fought in the Bulge and to call attention to the support given by the "medics who carried out their mission to conserve the fighting strength of the Army." *[We have carried several "medic" stories in the "Memorable Bulge Incidents" section; however, if any one has a story you think would be interesting, please send it to VBOB.]*

REGGIE R. OSBORNE, 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 424TH INFANTRY, COMPANY F, who was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge on January 15, 1945, would like to hear from other paraplegic veterans who served in the Battle of the Bulge. Reggie remembers waking in a field hospital with blood running from a dead German soldier's arm via intravenous feeding into his arm. Write to Reggie at: P.O. Box 74, Jefferson, North Carolina 28640.

Gary Maloney would like to have literature or information on the Aachen region during the Battle of the Bulge. Write to him at: 18 Nick Vedder Road, Buzzards Bay, Massachusetts 02531.

STAN C. BELLENS, from Belgium, has written to say that he is ready to drive any veteran coming back to the Liege area of Belgium this year or next. He states: "I'll do my best for each of you wanting to visit some places where you have fought." Write to Stan at: 209, Rue Resistance; B4351 Reimcourt; Belgium.

Bertha Dering would like to hear from anyone who can verify the wounding of her husband **ALBERT J. DERING, TRAFFIC REGULATING COMPANY,** during the Battle of the Bulge. Please contact her at: P.O. Box 10932, Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17605. Bertha asked that we run this item again—she had no response to her first inquiry. Surely someone can help her or knows where she can find help.

The son of **BILLIE J. COLLINS, 17TH AIRBORNE DIVISION,** would like to locate two close friends of his father's: **BILL FOSTER** and **BILL BULLOCK, 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION.** If you can help him locate them, write to: Bobby J. Collins, P.O. Box 1601, Hillsborough, North Carolina 27278.

JAMES H. BURKE, 299TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, is trying to locate all of the privates and PFCs that were captured with him at Martelange, Belgium, on December 21, 1944. He has located the officers and most of the non-coms but few of the privates and PFCs. The battalion

holds annual reunions and because POWs were not carried on the final roster, it has not been possible to contact most of them. Your former buddies would like to hear about you and possibly get you to attend a reunion. Contact James at: 54 East Elizabeth Street, Skaneateles, New York 13152.

Helen M. (Wilson) Lawson writes in response to our recent press release to let us know that she would love to hear from anyone who remembers her husband **WILLIAM WILSON, 101ST AIRBORNE, 502 PARACHUTE INFANTRY, HEADQUARTERS COMPANY.** Drop Helen a note at: 716 Tyler Avenue, Peru, Indiana 46970.

Robert Knauff writes to see if any member of the **84TH INFANTRY DIVISION** remembers his father **ROBERT E. KNAUFF,** who was killed in BoB action January 4, 1945, in Derentare (Deventave?), Belgium. His uncle **JULIUS E. MIELKE, 78TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 309TH INFANTRY,** was killed in the Bulge on December 14, 1944, and he would like to hear from anyone who remembers him. Write to Robert at: 2842 Bason Road, Mebane, North Carolina 27304.

DAVID E. BROWN, 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 12TH INFANTRY, COMPANY G, would like to hear from anyone in his old outfit. David was captured December 16, 1944, at Echternach, Luxembourg, and was carried to Luckenwalde Stalag A3. Write to David at: 8324 Scottingham Drive, Richmond, Virginia 23236.

LEO HUMPHREY, 99TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 395TH INFANTRY, 3RD BATTALION, I COMPANY, would like to know if anyone can give him information about **HERBERT BREITMAN** or his family. Herbert was in the same company as Leo. Herbert was originally from somewhere in New York. Write to Leo at: R.R. 2, Box 415, Cynthia, Kentucky 41031-9547.

We received a letter from Alice M. Sturgis, who would like to know the whereabouts of a man who served in the Battle of the Bulge. His name was **WILLIAM CROSS** and in 1947-48 he lived in Greenfield, Massachusetts, and, for a short while, worked at the New England Box Company there. After 1948 he returned to Germany to work in the "Graves Registration" detail where he reinjured a leg (previously hurt in the BoB) getting off of a train in Hamburg. Can anyone help? Write to Alice at: Willey Road, Milton Mills, New Hampshire 03852.

CATHERINE KREMER, who recently joined as an Associate Member, writes to say she would like to hear from **SGT. FRANK E. IVANCSIOS, BATTERY A, 482.** Catherine and her family entertained American soldiers in Weiswampach, Luxembourg, on many occasions. They had the only well water in town, often providing 50 gallon barrels at one time. Catherine and her sister also did washing and ironing for some of the GIs. As her home was only 4 kilometers from the German border, often the soldiers who stopped by did not know if they were in Germany or not. One bitterly cold day, while soldiers were out in front of her house, the family prepared a huge pot of coffee, but the soldiers were afraid to drink it until Catherine drank a cup. If anyone remembers any of this, Catherine would like to hear from you. Her address is: 1454 Burham Avenue, Calumet City, Illinois 60409.

Elaine E. Tatro would like to hear from anyone with the **329TH INFANTRY** and/or anyone who might remember her brother **SGT. MELVIN GIBBS THOMPSON.** Write to Elaine at: 6303 S.W. 25th Avenue, Portland, Oregon 97201. *[Also provide VBOB with the address for the 329th association, if there is one.]*

Vernon Reimer had two uncles who were killed in the Battle of the Bulge. Vernon would like to know the names of the cemeteries where his uncles are buried. The uncles' names are **CHARLIE A. REIMER** and **HOMER F. REIMER.** Can someone out there help him? Write to Vernon at: Box 245, Thorndale, Texas 76577.

MICHAEL LUCIANO, 150TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, writes to "...let you know what a great job you are doing. I contacted Fred Morabito, who wrote looking for information on the Bridgehead at Oppenheim. That was the Rhine operation. I wrote to Fred and let him know what I knew since my

(Continued on Page 12)

Members Speak Out

(Continued from Page 11)

outfit built two bridges on the Rhine (Treadway) floating type. Fred was looking for infantry assault information. Fred wrote me and thanked me for what I conveyed. You can't know it all. This was [in] *The Bulge Bugle*, May issue. I can't tell you how pleased I am that you print these bits and pieces for us to keep in touch."

CLARK ARCHER, 517TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY, 1ST BATTALION, B COMPANY, needs some help with the following: A silver bracelet was found in a house used as a 517th medical aid station in the Bergeval, Belgium, area. It was engraved as follows: "JOHN L. MILLER-5327." He would also like information on any of the following men of the 517th Parachute Infantry regiment who were killed in action in or near Epinal, France: Pvt. **DEAN E. KAIL** (39214184 WA 1 Apr 45); PFC **JOE B. OLEA** (39858193 AZ 26 Jun 45); and Pvt. **MERIDITH WINSTEAD** (06849650 NC 22 May 45). If you can help Clark with either item, write to him at: 525 North Halifax Avenue #6, Daytona Beach, Florida 32118-4066.

Mike Jackson would like to hear from anyone who remembers his father, **NAPOLEON "JACK" JACKSON**, a sergeant with the **18TH FIELD ARTILLERY**. Write to Mike at: 5502 Ensenada, Atascadero, California 93422.

William J. Reilly is looking for someone who remembers his father, **WILLIAM J. REILLY, 39TH INFANTRY, COMPANY K**, who was killed in the Battle of the Bulge and is buried at Henri Chappelle Military Cemetery. Write to William at: 115 Armstrong Avenue, Staten Island, New York 10308.

Paul L. Ferguson would like to hear from someone who knew his uncle, **FRANKLIN "FRANK" FERGUSON**, from Iowa. (No unit given.) He was baptised January 26, 1945, in Belgium, by Chaplain Arthur F. Fleming. If you can help, write to Paul: 124-1/2 South 2nd Street, #203, Knoxville, Iowa 50138.

Ruby Van Dissen is the grandmother of **ERVIN PRICE, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION(?)**, who was killed in the Battle of the Bulge. Ruby would love to hear from anyone who may remember her grandson. Ruby sends the following wishes to all who served in the BoB: "God bless everyone of you wonderful people who fought for us and our country so that we might live. We love you all." Write to her at: 5621 South Harrison, Fort Wayne, Indiana 46807.

ROLAND DUSCHECK, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION, 36TH AIR, COMPANY C, wants you to know that a good time was had by all who attended their recent reunion. If you would like to know more, write to Roland at: P.O. Box 311, Markesan, Wisconsin 53946.

MANUEL P. (TEX) HERRERA, 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 39TH SIGNAL COMPANY WIRE PLATOON, (Sgt. Chester Dunn's Team), would like to hear from anyone he knew. Write to Tex: P.O. Box 2244, Shingle Springs, California 95682.

Gayle Mellcher would like to know if anyone remembers **HAROLD DUNKIN, 79TH INFANTRY DIVISION**. Harold was a jeep driver who was killed in the Bulge on December 19, 1944. He is buried at St. Avold, France. If you can help, write to Gayle at: 622 3rd Avenue, S.W., Pipestone, Minnesota 56164.

Derek S. Gould would like to hear from anyone who knew his uncle, **JAMES P. GOULD**. James was a tank radio operator in the **5TH ARMORED DIVISION**. He was taken prisoner in the BoB. Please contact Derek at: College of St. Joseph, Box 83, Rutland, Vermont 05701.

Deborah Bolton-Clark would like to know if anyone remembers her uncle, **CARL ASEL AYLESWORTH**, who was killed in the Bulge. He was with the **106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 422ND INFANTRY, COMPANY H**. Write to Deborah at: 37 Garfield Street, Cortland, New York 13045.

REYBURN F. CROCKER is trying to locate and correspond with every living member of the **401ST FIGHTER SQUADRON, 370TH FIGHTER**

GROUP. He will welcome any information. Write to him at: 1701 Dinuba Avenue #136, Selma, California.

GLEN HENDERSON, 1306TH REGIMENT, ARMY ENGINEERS, would like to hear from any of his old gang. Write to him at: 212 West Spencer, Box 734, St. Francis, Kansas 67756.

Bill Lawrence would like to locate anyone who can give him information regarding his brother's death in the BoB. His brother's name was **TRIMBELL D. LAWRENCE**. He was with **359TH INFANTRY, COMPANY C**. If you can help, write to Bill: 1614 S.W. 41st, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73119-3320.

JoAnn Langmaid would like to hear from anyone who knew her uncle, **LESLIE JACK FARR, 467TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS**. Please write to her at: P.O. Box 209, Birch Run, Michigan 48415.

John C. Ausland announces the publication of his book *Letters Home: A War Memoir*. It begins with the 4th Infantry Division landing on Utah Beach on June 6, 1944. It ends, nearly a year later, south of Munich. In between were the breakout from the beachhead (Operation Cobra), the Liberation of Paris, the Hurtgen Forest, the Battle of the Bulge, and the final offensive across the Rhine. It's available from Sidney Kramer Books, 11910-U Parklawn Drive, Rockville, Maryland 20852. Cost \$33.50.

Walt Johnes would appreciate hearing from any veteran who served with his brother, **HERBERT E. (ED) JOHNES**, who was with **329TH INFANTRY, 3RD BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS COMPANY**, (possibly attached to the **3RD ARMY**). Ed was killed on January 9th in Belgium—after being wounded earlier in France on July 6, 1944. Walt would appreciate hearing from anyone who can shed information on Ed's activities during this period. Write to Walt at: Box 363 0 9928 Hiway 150, Greenville, Indiana 47124-0363.

Royce Lewis would like to hear from anyone who knew his father, **JOHN B. LEWIS, 29TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 19 CORPS ARTILLERY, 459 AAA, COMPANY A**. Write to Royce at 1704 South Pine, Brady, Texas 76825.

MUSTARD GAS WERE YOU EXPOSED?

You may be eligible for benefits now from the Veterans Administration if you were exposed to mustard gas during field and chamber tests while in military service. At the time of these tests, those persons in such testing were sworn by pledges of absolute secrecy not to reveal their participation. This is no longer true.

The following medical conditions can be caused by poison gas: respiratory cancers; skin cancer, obstructive pulmonary disease; non-lymphocytic leukemia; chronic laryngitis; bronchitis; emphysema and asthma; chronic conjunctivitis; keratitis, and clouded vision.

Chamber tests were conducted at: Great Lakes Naval Training Center, Illinois; Naval Research Lab, Washington, D.C.; Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland; Bainbridge, Maryland; Camp Lejeune, North Carolina; and Camp Seibert, Alabama.

Field tests were conducted at: Dugway Proving Ground, Utah; Edgewood Arsenal, Maryland; Bushnell, Florida; and San Jose Island, Panama Canal Zone.

Survivors of exposed veterans may also be eligible and should contact the VA for additional information. For further information, call the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs--1-800-827-1000 (toll free).

Three-quarters of a soldier's life is spent in aimlessly waiting about.

EUGEN ROSENSTOCK-HUSSY

A New Look at an Old Battle

This legendary account of the battle is accurate as far as it goes. But it leaves out some important parts of the story that over the distance of years have pretty well been forgotten, or were never known by anybody except the participants themselves and a few historians. For one, at the time of the German attack the American ground forces were being punished much more severely than is now recognized.

For another, contrary to legend, U.S. and British intelligence officers in the days preceding December 16 had considerable information that the Germans were up to something big across the line. For a third, the Battle of the Bulge was not settled at Bastogne at all, but around an obscure and isolated area of woods and villages 30 miles southeast of Liege, Belgium, in the first week of the German attack. In short, as often happens with great battles in history, the legend has blotted out much of the reality.

Things were not going well for the Allies on the Western Front in the fall of 1944. Following the breakthrough in France and the race across Belgium and the Netherlands to Germany, the Allied drive bogged down. Long supply lines caused a shortage of essentials, i.e., gasoline, ammunition, replacement parts, etc. The disorganized German formations had escaped into their West Wall fortifications and assembly areas. This system of bunkers, mine fields, and tank obstacles stretching from Nijmegen in the Netherlands to Basel in Switzerland greatly expanded the number of German fighting effectives, as the military call them. Weak troops could man the fortifications, while mobile fighters moved in front, behind, and around as needed.

General Omar Bradley, who commanded the American 12th Army Group (First and Third Armies) under General Dwight D. Eisenhower, wrote in his memoirs *A Soldier's Story*, "between early September and mid-December (the enemy) had tripled his forces on the Western Front to 70 divisions. Of his 15 Panzer divisions, eight were refitted with Panther and Tiger Tanks." In December 1944, the number of German troops along the front rose from 420,000 to 1,323,000, due in great part to the Nazis' stripping rear echelon and Luftwaffe (air force) units of men, retraining them, and moving them west to face the British and Americans.

The remarkable, albeit temporary, recovery on the German side was having its effect on the Allies even before the Bulge. In late September 1944, a joint British-American parachute attempt to jump the Rhine at Arnhem, Netherlands, failed. Throughout November General George Patton's Third U.S. Army suffered heavy losses in its drive on Germany's Saar Valley. General Courtney Hodges' U.S. First Army had finally captured Aachen, Germany, after a bloody fight, but had seen four of its divisions decimated in the grim Hurtgen Forest battle south of Aachen. (A U.S. infantry division in World War II had about 14,500 men.) In the five weeks preceding the Battle of the Bulge, American ground force casualties totaled 64,000 in 12th Army Group alone. By mid-December, the two U.S. armies that made up this group were short 17,000 riflemen, i.e., the men who bore the brunt of combat in World War II.

To assemble troops and armor for the large and costly attacks being made by Patton and Hodges, the 60-mile Ardennes sector in the center of the U.S. front was stripped to a force sufficient only to defend against light, localized enemy attacks. None of the four U.S. Divisions holding the Ardennes line was in fighting trim. Two, the 99th and 106th, were without any previous combat experience. The other two divisions, the 4th and 28th, had been cut up badly in the Hurtgen Forest and were still being rebuilt. Scattered among these units or on their flanks were a few mechanized cavalry and armored forces.

This neglect of the "ghost front" in the hilly, wooded Belgian Ardennes by U.S. commanders was due in no small part to the failure of their Intelligence staffs in the weeks preceding the German attack on December 16. Contrary to much that has been written over the years about the Bulge, American and British Intelligence were picking up hints that the enemy along the West Wall was planning a major operation. Allied intelligence knew of the existence and arming of the German Sixth Panzer Army. Knew its commander was Hitler's old Nazi crony, Sepp Dietrich. Knew it was located to the southwest of Cologne, Germany, and included a strange spy and saboteur type formation. Captured Wehrmacht prisoners and friendly civilians did inform front line U.S. Intelligence officers of the German build-up. Allied bomber pilots spotted an unusual amount of traffic along the German rail lines leading over the Rhine toward eastern Belgium.

Tragically, most of the Allied Intelligence officers behind the front lines in higher headquarters simply couldn't bring themselves to believe what the reports trickling in seemed to show. They were convinced the enemy was nearly beaten, that at best he would wage only defensive war until the end, which couldn't be far off. John Eisenhower has written, "Caught up in the tide of buoyant optimism engendered by the dash across France, Allied Intelligence at all echelons contributed a chorus of happy news." The Intelligence officers were misled by other developments as well. Gerd von Rundstedt, a cautious Wehrmacht man of the old school was supposed to be in charge of the Western Front for the Germans, a man unlikely to order any wild counter attacks. But von Rundstedt was not in charge of the operation.

Hitler was personally running things through Walter Model, another professional soldier but a younger one with definite Nazi sympathies. Also, the remarkable "Ultra" information gathering system the Allies used throughout the war to tap into German communications was not turning up anything on a planned counter attack. The reason was simple. Hitler confined knowledge of the big Ardennes attack to a few of his highest generals. He also forbade any radio transmission of orders. "Ultra" had nothing to work on.

Whatever the reasons for the U.S. Intelligence failure in the late fall of 1944 regarding German preparations, it blinded U.S. commanders to the true peril their forces were facing. General Bradley writes that the American commanders took a calculated risk in thinning out the American forces in the Ardennes in order to make men and armor available elsewhere on the front.

"In accepting (this risk) we counted heavily on the speed with which we could fling (our) mechanized strength against the flank of the German attack," he writes. However, in the

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A New Look at an Old Battle

Ardennes this strategy depended on the Germans putting in a weak attack that the badly stretched and inexperienced American troops could contain until such "mechanized strength" was brought up. As it turned out, the German Ardennes attack was neither weak nor localized. It came down on the thin American line in December 1944, like a tidal wave.

At no other place along the 60-mile Ardennes front were the Americans so vulnerable as in the forests and villages 30 miles southeast of Liege, Belgium. Here the American position lay in front of a line of hills five miles long called Elsenborn Ridge and across a main highway to the south of the ridge. This was the north corner of the great 60-mile attack area, as planned by Hitler, the "door post" his commanders called it. The position to the east of Elsenborn Ridge facing the Germans was held by only five battalions of the green U.S. 99th Division (about 4,000 men). The main highway to the south was covered, loosely, by a mechanized cavalry group of some 3,000 troopers in light tanks and armored cars. Against this weak infantry and light armored force, the Germans through the spearhead of the entire Ardennes counter attack, First SS Panzer Corps.

This corps was made up of two veteran Panzer divisions armed with the best and heaviest of the new German tanks, plus two Volksgrenadier and one parachute division, all backed by artillery and mobile assault guns. First Panzer Corps was the main striking force of Dietrich's Sixth Panzer Army, which Hitler assigned the critical role in the assault. To the east of Elsenborn Ridge on the cold, foggy December day the Germans attacked, the Americans were outnumbered seven to one in men and outgunned even more.

Before the attack was 36 hours old, a Kampfgruppe (task force) of German tanks, mechanized infantry, and parachute troops under command of the notorious Joachim Peiper broke through the U.S. cavalrymen and scattered rear echelon units of the 99th along the highway south of the ridge. (Kampfgruppe Peiper was responsible for the murder of American prisoners at Malmedy, Belgium, a few miles from Elsenborn Ridge.)

However, the rest of the First SS Panzer Corps was blocked, its infantry ran into rougher terrain than expected—hilly, wooded, heavily mined, and shrouded in fog. Even though shocked and battered, the 4,000 infantrymen of the 99th Division directly in the path of the attack fought a murderous delaying action during the first few hours after First Panzer Corps hit them.

Sheer luck saved the day for the Americans. By chance two veteran U.S. units, the 1st and 2nd Infantry Divisions were within striking distance. The former in a rest area 15 miles to the northwest; the latter trying to take a dam 15 miles to the northeast. By the afternoon of December 16, infantrymen of the 2nd Division were mixing in the fight in front of Elsenborn Ridge; and by the next day a combat team of the 1st Division.

Between December 17-25, the men and tanks of First SS Panzer Corps tried again and again to get through the

Americans and capture the ridge. They fought a running, seesaw battle with the American infantry, now backed by tanks and tank destroyers. Their tanks battered their way into a few villages, but still couldn't get up on the ridge. By Christmas, Dietrich and his 6th Panzer Army generals gave up. They shifted First Panzer Corps far to the south to reinforce the German breakthrough now swirling around Bastogne.

It was all too late. Sixth Panzer Army's failure at Elsenborn Ridge was fatal, for the position was the key to Hitler's strategy as well as to the American defense tactics across the entire north shoulder of the Bulge.

Peiper's Kampfgruppe would have reached the Meuse River near Liege if the rest of First Panzer Corps had gotten over the ridge and protected his flank. The U.S. 7th Armored Division could not have been brought down to defend St. Vith, Belgium, a vital road network center 10 miles to the south, if the Germans had struck beyond Elsenborn. With the ridge gone, Peiper racing west, and St. Vith indefensible, the axis of the great Ardennes counter-offensive would have moved to the northwest, as Hitler intended, toward the vital Allied centers of supply and communication, Verviers and Liege in Belgium, and Maastricht in the Netherlands.

Instead, Hitler's generals were forced to concentrate their divisions far to the south over terrain of little strategic value, toward a distant river 65 miles away, and in space highly vulnerable to counter attack by Patton's powerful Third Army.



American Infantrymen of the 2nd Infantry Division advance through fog into town of Schenassifen, Germany past enemy anti-aircraft gun abandoned when Germans retreated.

U.S. Signal Photo, National Archives

John Eisenhower is one of the few historians of the Ardennes counter-offensive to acknowledge the importance of the Elsenborn Ridge battle. He writes in *The Bitter Woods*, "To avoid disaster (there) it has been necessary for two divisions to make enormous sacrifices. The 99th Division alone lost 2,200 men. But the action of the 2nd and 99th U.S. divisions on the northern shoulder could well be considered the most decisive of the Ardennes campaign." (It should be remembered the 99th's losses were concentrated among five battalions of infantry, i.e., 4,000 men, in a 48-hour period.)

It was all a long time ago. Nevertheless, the lessons of the Bulge may still have some relevance: Underestimating the enemy can be dangerous. Tolerating poor intelligence, foolish. And dismissing the factor of individual character and courage in winning battles, plain stupid. In a skeptical age, a nation's survival still depends of a few commonplace verities.

Hospitality Reigned Supreme at North Dakota Reunion

George Peterson, President of the North Dakota Chapter, members of the North Dakota Chapter, and the family of George Peterson provided the 127 members of VBOB and their families with a most memorable trip to Bismarck, North Dakota. No detail was left unturned in seeing that those in attendance enjoyed the flavor and the sights of the area. They had even coaxed the weatherman into providing some absolutely gorgeous days for us to enjoy the outdoor activities they had arranged.

ON THE SOCIAL SIDE:

On Wednesday evening we enjoyed a ride on the *Lewis and Clark River Boat*--traversing down the Missouri River where Lewis and Clark had made their memorable trip so many years ago (1804-1806).



Executive Vice President Bill Tayman and President Bill Hemphill, perhaps discussing the change at the VBOB helm, aboard the riverboat.

Thursday, the ladies were entertained at a style show/luncheon featuring 1870's period clothing and demonstrating Victorian social graces. This gave the ladies a real feel for the history of the area. (Not to mention a brief thought or two about the washing and ironing that had to be done.)

Know what a "pitchfork steak fondue" is? Well, many of us didn't either, until we arrived at one on Friday evening. Slabs of steak are placed on a pitchfork (which looked brand new, thank goodness) and cooked in boiling kettles of hot grease. The outside sears so quickly that the flavor is sealed in and the grease does not penetrate the meat as it cooks. Needless to say, it was delicious.

The entertainment provided during the evening gave many of us the opportunity to see Indians and their authentic dances for the first time. Members of the Hidatsa/Sioux Tribe told us stories behind the different dances performed and the significance of the brilliant feathers adorning their costumes. We also received a museum trip which further enlightened us regarding Indian times and culture.

The evening was topped off with a trip to Ft. Lincoln and

the home (rebuilt after a fire) occupied by George Custer and his wife, Elizabeth, at the time he went off to the Battle of the Little Big Horn (June, 1876). Our lovely guides through the home (portraying themselves as maids to the Custers), provided us with many insights into the lives of an army officer during the 1870's. Many corner stones mark the sites of the fort's original buildings.

Saturday found us at the State Capitol, where we learned much about the state's history.

The reunion banquet was delightful. Prior to a succulent meal of pheasant, we were entertained by a Western singing group and enjoyed dancing to '40's music played by the 188th Army Band, North Dakota Army National Guard.

ON THE BUSINESS SIDE:

Thursday morning we were briefed by Bill Tayman, Chairman of the VBOB 50th Anniversary Commemoration activities, regarding the many functions planned for this event in St. Louis, Missouri. Bill explained that the Post Office will sell a Battle of the Bulge stamp at the St. Louis meeting which can be affixed to a provided first day cover (envelope) which can be stamped with a pictorial December 16, 1994, cancellation in the hotel lobby.

Nancy Monson, VBOB Administrative Director, introduced VBOB's new "Education Kit," which was designed to assist members in telling students about the Battle of the Bulge. (These are available to all members.)

Information was presented on how VBOB'S National Office can be instrumental in assisting members with the formation of chapters and/or provide assistance in increasing the membership of existing chapters. (Write if you need assistance with either of these projects.)

Friday morning found us attending the General Business Sessions, where former Lt. Governor of North Dakota Ernie Sands told us of his experiences during WWII. A contraband radio brought he and the prisoners in his camp the news about the commencement of the Battle of the Bulge. The spirits of the prisoners were greatly up-lifted upon learning that the U.S. Army was pushing the Germans back in this battle.

Grover Twiner, Vice President for Membership, reported an increase of over 1,200 members since this time last year. He also reported on other activities of his office.

Peter Leslie, VBOB Treasurer, reported plans to electronically connect VBOB officers and the National Office.

President Hemphill encouraged members to attend the ceremonies to be held at Arlington National Cemetery on December 15th and 16th, 1993. (Further information elsewhere in this newsletter.)

Past President and *Bugle* Editor George Chekan urged members to send in their "Memorable Bulge Incidents."

Dorothy Davis reported that the Historical Foundation has made arrangements for a conference table to be made of Ardennes wood for placement in the Battle of the Bulge Conference Room at Fort Meade, Maryland. Several members will travel to Belgium next April to receive the table and dedication will take place in July 1994.

Chapter representatives reported on the activities of the various chapters.

VBOB 1993-94 Executive Council Officers year were elected as presented and the Bylaws amendments were approved.

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MEMORIAL SERVICES:

George Peterson conducted the ceremonies to honor those who passed away during the Battle of the Bulge and those veterans who have passed away since that time.

Members of the North Dakota Chapter presented the colors and the Roll of Bulge Participating Units was read.

Monsignor O'Donnell, VBOB Chaplain, offered words of prayer for our departed comrades and the list of VBOB members who passed away in the last year was read. (This list appears elsewhere in this issue.)

Taps echoed through the room, the representatives for the

units returned to their chairs and the colors were retired. The attendees filed from the room in silence as they remembered their comrades and times so long ago.

DEPARTURE:

Sunday morning found everyone rising early to catch planes for their connections home. Many new friends had been made at this reunion and many old friends were reunited. Memories of a grand reunion will last in our minds for many years, **THANKS TO OUR GOOD FRIENDS AND GRACIOUS HOSTS IN NORTH DAKOTA.**

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE 12TH REUNION

Bismarck, North Dakota • September 15-19, 1993

Pictorial Highlights

1. Tour of General Custer's Home
2. Indian Dance Hidatsa Tribe
3. Welcome Address
former Lt. Gov. Ernie Sands
State of North Dakota
8th Air Force - POW
4. Reunion Chairman
George Peterson & Co. covers all
details for a successful
VBOB sojourn, Thanks, George
5. Memorial Services for
Deceased Members
6. Pitchfork Fondue Dinner
7. Banquet Entertainment



86TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION PASSING IN REVIEW

[The following is an edited version of a speech given by Col. (Ret.) James J. Doyle (who was Executive Officer from activation until November, 1945) at the 86th Chemical Mortar Battalion Association's reunion banquet May 15, 1993, celebrating the 50th anniversary of their activation.]

...Many of you will remember that big paycheck of 50 years ago--\$21.00 per month. Before I came to the reunion, I visited an army recruiting office and found that the pay now is \$725.00 per month. Anyone want to enlist?

Speaking of memories, come with me in your mind's eye to the rolling hills of Kentucky and a large army post there. We are on the side of a large field, the post parade ground. Across the way, troops are beginning to form. The tall slender soldier apart from the troops is their adjutant who is to form the troops. He has a great voice for it. The problem is that you never know whether he is going to give the right command or a rendition of "The Face on the Bar Room Floor." We are about to witness a review of these troops so come join me in the reviewing stand.

"Who are these troops?" you ask. They are as fine a group of men as you will ever see. They are back from the war in Europe and this is their final review before breaking for home and a new life. They are the 86th Chemical Mortar Battalion! It is one of the few special combat units of the chemical warfare service. The battalion was activated on 23 February, 1943, and the first troops arrived at the tar paper barracks on Wake Island at Camp Swift, Texas, on 15 May, 1943. I was the first officer there and I was really glad to get back to Texas. The unit's Table of Organization called for some 600 officers and men and a Headquarters, Medical Detachment, and four letter companies. Each company was equipped with twelve 4.2 inch mortars, an accurate, rifled, muzzle loading weapon designed for high angle fire with a range of up to 5,000 yards. The weapon was to be used to fire poison gas and smoke screen shells. Since there was no need for poison gas, the 86th fired white phosphorous shells for smoke screening and casualty effect and high explosive shells. A shell weighed 25 pounds and a mortar crew could fire 20 shells per minute. It was a very effective weapon for close support of the infantry. Men and equipment were transported in jeeps.

"What did the 86th do?" you inquire. They finally moved out of the tar paper barracks to uptown wooden ones at Camp Swift, completed their rigorous training program, and shipped out to England in April, 1944. While there, the entire battalion was billeted in private homes in the little Village of Port Sunlight, near Liverpool, where they were treated like heroes. They landed on Utah Beach in Normandy on 29 June, 1944, and immediately went into action not as a battalion unit but as separate companies attached to infantry divisions for close support of front line units. Operating thusly, the companies developed their own leadership and strategies which enabled them to operate effectively and to face courageously the many difficult situations they encountered. The entire battalion was in combat 315 days out of 335 without relief and traveled all across France, Belgium, Germany, and Czechoslovakia. The 86th participated with distinction in all the five major battles of the European Theater of Operations during which it was assigned to three different armies, seven army corps, and provided close fire support for 27 different divisions, firing 152,257 rounds of white phosphorous and high explosives. Of the total of 817 men that saw service with the unit, 40 were killed in action, 336 wounded, and 198 decorations were awarded for bravery. What a great outfit!

Looking across the field, you can see that the formation has been completed and the colors have been presented. Here they come! First by us is the post band--borrowed for the occasion since the 86th doesn't have one. They will take their place beyond the reviewing stand and continue to play. Next coming by us is the battalion staff led by Lt. Col. Hamilton. They are a proud bunch and rightly so.

Here come the colors! ...On the left of Old Glory is the battalion's flag of cobalt blue and gold with five battle streamers flying from the staff. Always a beautiful and stirring sight.

Now coming by is Headquarters Company led by Adjutant John Deasy. These are the cooks, bakers, clerks, drivers, mechanics, supply men,

communications men, ammunition men; all necessary to a good operation. The Mortarmen called them the "Rear Echelon Commandos," but not so. Among them are 17 who were wounded in action and ten decorated for bravery. They will never forget a rough night on the grounds of the Chateau Champcey in Normandy where they camped among the long line of trees leading from the road to the Chateau. They were on the move; this was a one night stand; there [was] no apparent action around so no one dug in. German planes found the area during the night, lit it up with flares, and dropped bombs. The ground shook mightily and we shook with it but no one was injured and no damage done.

This is the Medical Detachment passing by led by Captain Gross. Only a few men but very important ones. Some say they carry hypodermic needles as big as rifles. They didn't operate as a unit but were split up among the companies. Their individual courage was outstanding as they continually exposed themselves to enemy fire to help save our wounded and minister to the dying. Fifteen were wounded and twelve decorated for bravery. Thanks, men!

Here comes A Company led by Captains Pitt and Palmer. We called them Pitt's Bad Boys but they really were not that bad. You asked why the blank spaces in the ranks. They are the spaces for those who lost their lives fighting for their country. A Company has nine blank spaces; had 95 wounded; and 51 decorated for bravery. One of their toughest times came in the Hurtgen Forest in Germany when for a period of seven weeks they occupied the same frozen ground mortar positions while infantry divisions came, fought, and were pulled out to rest. The Mortarmen stayed on and distinguished themselves many times over. A great unit.

Passing by is B Company led by Captains Overbeck and Hinchcliffe. They were probably our best garrison soldiers. See their small flag with the crossed retorts and benzene ring of the Chemical Warfare Service and the letter "B" on it. It's called a Guidon and the streamer flying from it is the highest decoration a unit can receive, the Presidential Unit Citation, awarded for exceptional performance in combat. There are twelve blank spaces in B Company's ranks. They also had 83 wounded and 34 decorated for bravery. B Company was the first to suffer combat death and wounded--when enroute from England to France their ship struck a mine and had to be abandoned. They made a name at St. Malo with their white phosphorous barrage which enabled the capture of the fortress there and eventually the surrender of Brest. They too had a very rough time in the Hurtgen Forest. B Company is special!

This is C Company going by; led by Captains Rudd, Lynch, and Dalton. See, their guidon also proudly flies the well deserved Presidential Unit Citation streamer. We called them our "teenagers" as they were always full of fun and into something. The tall lieutenant on this side was known as the "Green Hornet" and was noted for directing fire from church steeples until the Krauts caught on. Six blank spaces are in their ranks and they had 85 wounded and 39 decorated for bravery. One of C Company's toughest times was in the Battle of the Bulge. The situation was so fluid that oft times C was completely cut off from the infantry it was supporting and surrounding units became dependent on them for leadership and security. C Company's morale, efficiency, resourcefulness, and discipline played a large part in holding the very important "Hot Corner" near Rocherath, Belgium. What a great group of courageous, fun-loving soldiers!

D Company is now passing us led by Captains Christiansen and Vigliotti. They were our tough guys, taking nothing from anybody. Thirteen blank spaces appear in their ranks and they had 47 wounded and there were 44 decorations for bravery. See that young lieutenant there! That's Joe Terry, the most decorated man in the 86th. He wears the Distinguished Service Cross, Silver Star, Bronze Star, Purple Heart and received a battlefield promotion from sergeant to lieutenant. D Company will never forget the intensive fighting around Vossenack in the Hurtgen Forest. Many times the mortar positions were heavily shelled but D stayed there and fought back. During the Bulge, their rear echelon was captured and they were released months later when Leipzig was taken. These D tough guys were really tough.

Well, there they go. I've only touched the tip of the iceberg of courageous and meritorious service the 86th performed. What a fine group of men from all walks of life, all doing what they had to do and some a great deal more. Because of this, our wonderful, precious, erring, troublesome, old republic is free to go on being what it might be if given half a chance.



Holiday Remembrances—1944

We thought you would find of interest the experiences of your comrades as they celebrated what was for many their first time away from home during the holiday season of 1944. We asked for stories from all members (catholic, protestant, Jewish, etc.) concerning what they remember of these unusual times.

This was a time when no matter what religion we were, we were all united in one cause--tolerating the hand that had been dealt to us and surviving--so that our future holidays and those of the ones we held dear could be celebrated in peace and harmony.

Thanks to all of you who submitted your stories and thanks to all of you who gave so much to ensure our future happiness and welfare. **MAY YOUR HOLIDAYS BE BRIGHT AND THE COMING YEAR FULL OF CHEER AND GOOD HEALTH.**

CHRISTMAS 1993

T'was days before Christmas in '44
and all through the woods.
Beautiful snow covered the ground,
much like a hood.

The lieutenant and I, and a
couple of other guys.
Were snug in the basement, as
fog filled the skies.

Merry thoughts of Christmas
danced in our head.
Dreams of a time,
when Hitler was dead.

When all of a sudden, there
arose such a clatter.
I rushed outside, to see
what was the matter.

When what to my wondering
eyes did see.
Germans were falling, like
leaves from a tree.

And even then, to my
great surprise.
Artillery shells did fill
the skies.

I hurried back to the basement,
I did run.
To tell the guys, this is no Santa Claus,
this is the Hun.

The gifts they brought,
we did not need.
So we returned them back,
with greatest of glee.

Now years have passed
and memories linger on.
I wish you a Merry Christmas
on the day our Savior was born.



happy
NEW YEAR



Warren B. Wilson
99 INF 395 INF 3 BN I

THERE MUST BE A TREE

It was snowing. Softly, dark. Those sentimental GI's remembered it was Christmas. Remembered; "there ought to be a Christmas tree." There always had been one at home, as far back as they could recall. A Christmas tree; hey, there has to be ornaments. O.K., so the GI's scrounged; they were good at that. Tree cut from the surrounding country side--now, the ornaments. Cellars, attics, produced some tensely things. Christmas Eve, softly snowing. The tree stood straight and green in the dimly lit headquarters--the lobby of Hotel Lebrun. Combat Company B, 10th Armored Division, had its headquarters here, where that "unlimited capabilities" smart...lieutenant of IPW #112 had put them six long days ago. It was M/SGT. Bean, who found the tattered rag doll and ceremoniously hung it on the tree.

The drone. Airplanes. How could they fly tonight? The crunch of the 500-pound bombs exploded across the town, but tonight? They should know it is Christmas Eve and snowing! The bomb-crunch marched closer--eh, one landed very, very near by in the street, sending its shrapnel through the lobby window. One screaming piece went right through the rag doll at abdomen level. Wounded. Perhaps dead.

No, not dead, for in the dim dawn the Sgt. appeared and pinned a Purple Heart on the rag doll. Perhaps the doll would die, but not in SPIRIT.

Lothar H. Miller
10 ARMDD 112 M-I

A TRUCE OF SORTS

Four Americans lost and separated from their units on December 16, 1944, in the bitter cold, on Christmas Eve saw a Belgium farm house with smoking chimney in the distance. Full of terror that it was German occupied, they approached hoping to obtain shelter for their frozen limbs. A Belgium woman with broken English answered the door and welcomed them to the comfort of the home with blazing fireplace and invited them to share the meager food available.

Within an hour a knock came upon the door and this time the Belgium woman welcomed to her home five German soldiers. Sternly, first in German and then English, she proclaimed, "Tonight there be only peace in this home."

Under her guidance, complete confidence, calm, and comradeship took over to replace the initial terror. She created this by leading Christmas carols, first in English, then in German. Finally, a blending of voices occurred as the same carol was sung in English and German.

After a night of warm sleep, the Germans stated they were going to move south and the Americans agreed they would move north.

After the Germans left, the Americans left and in time found their unit. One wrote to tell me of the most treasured memory of his life and how, after the war, he returned with family to find the Belgium family proclaiming it was their most treasured memory.

Ralph G. Hill, Jr.
99 INF 395 INF 3 BN I

MY VERY FIRST WHITE CHRISTMAS

From our foxholes, despite the horrible weather, it was fascinating to gaze at the wintry scenery; the snow was pretty deep and very white. However, being a 19-year-old soldier from southern Mexico who had never seen snow before, I was terrified by the thought of freezing to death!

On Saturday, December 24th, we learned that the enemy had given the division an ultimatum to surrender and that our general had said "Nuts" to them! The 101st Airborne Division and its attached units were making history. This was a Christmas Eve for all times. At this important road junction in Belgium, civilians and fighting men on both sides were destined to have a real White Christmas.

I, indeed, had my very first White Christmas in that small Belgian village, and saw enough lights to last me a life time.

Edward A. Peniche
101 ABND 81 ABN BN C

PARIS HAD TO WAIT

We were in the Reisdorf and Bittendorf area when the Bulge started. We were on line that morning and I was getting ready to go to Paris on R&R. All I had to do was to get back to CO on the chow jeep, but it never got up to us.

We were hit very hard for the next few days until we started to pull back. We had only about six left when we started to pull back. We lost contact with the rest of the company. As we pulled back, we ran into other linemen from the Division. We would stay out of sight during the day and move out at dark. We did this until December 24th.

On Christmas Eve we ran an attack on the enemy. We hit hard for a while and did what damage we could and then got out to some safe ground.

This is what I did on December 24, 1944.

Walter Merena
28 INF 109 INF L

NO CHRISTMAS FEAST

On December 24th, a small group of us were picked to go on reconnaissance. Our mission was to seek out the enemy, discover his strength, and bring the information back to the company. It sounded easy and we were to be back in a short time.

Again, plans didn't go as intended. We got lost in the forest, came front to front with the Germans at the edge of a small Belgian town that was dug in and had a Tiger tank to protect it.

It was already night and they sprayed with rifle and machine gun fire. Luckily, only one of our men was hit and not seriously. We withdrew deeper into the forest, always trying to find a way out and get back to our company. This continued during the night and the next day with other encounters with the Germans.

We had our weapons, ammunition belts, two bandoliers, bayonet, canteen, hand grenades, gas mask, shovel and whatever else a Dog Face might need. The one thing we lacked was food as we were to be back early.

As I was walking up and down the hills and in the snow with all this weight, and I knew it was Christmas Day, I could only think of the folks back home who might be eating goodies and doing the things they like. I was getting hungrier by the minute and could only think, "Boy, what a Christmas."

We found our way back to the American lines Christmas night. Being without food for about 30 hours is certainly no record. But to me it was a new world and each Christmas I think back to those days. I've had many wonderful Christmases since those days and am very thankful.

Harold Harer
75 INF

IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT COUNTS

[Mr. DeNat had been asked to fill in as Rations Sergeant, without the stripe.]

For the next weeks I filled that job, learning by trial and error system.

We were using the kitchen of the school and served about 3,000 meals per day. I should tell you at this time that the Battle of the Bulge was our biggest problem. I should also say that like you said in your box [announcement box in *The Bulge Bugle*], I am not a Christian but am Jewish.

During my job there I became friendly with a catholic chaplain assigned to the post. We were anticipating the coming Christmas holiday of 1944. To the best of my knowledge this was known as "The Black Christmas." The Germans had tried to cut the "Red Ball" and our supply lines. Their army was in Antwerp, Belgium, and dividing our lines into two sectors, north and south.

Christmas Eve the chaplain and I added one stop in our chow line. Whatever he had in the form of GI gifts we gave out to the men who were going down the line. There were gloves, sweaters, scarves and many such items. Each man on the line was thrilled with the thought.

When we finished at about 9:00 p.m., the chaplain invited me to his office. There we had a drink and sat chatting and wishing each other "Happy Holidays." Then as the evening progressed he brought from his supplies a woolen muffler. He told me he knew I was Jewish but he wanted me to have this holiday gift. I was overwhelmed but very thankful with his thoughts.

Ralph DeNat
78 INF 311 INF C

CLOSE CALLS

I was an armored infantryman in the 10th Armored Division, and a member of the 3rd Platoon, Company B, 54th Armored Infantry Battalion.

On December 22 our tankers and armored infantry engaged the German forces, mostly their tanks. This occurred in some open fields that were surrounded by rows of medium-sized spruce trees. I few men from my squad and I jumped into a gully below these trees just as German guns opened up. The enemy machine guns began chopping off the tops of these trees. The tops, as well as the lower branches, began bouncing off our helmets making all sorts of noises. These machine-gun bursts came real close to us. A close call. While jumping into this gully I turned my ankle and also injured my leg. When this vicious tank battle subsided I was sent back to Bastogne along with our other wounded buddies. Why I was spared being hit is a miracle....

We were brought into a dwelling that had been converted into an aid station, and we stayed here the rest of the day. On Christmas Eve about 20 of us were resting in another dwelling close by. We were sprawled out on the kitchen floor throwing "the bull" and roasting some potatoes on the stove. Suddenly, around 1:30 a.m., during a rather quiet evening, all Hell broke loose. Some of us thought it was German artillery, but we were greatly mistaken. It turned out to be German Stuka dive bombers not artillery. Boy, what a pounding they unleashed on this section of Bastogne. It seemed that the Germans knew the 10th Armored tanks were parked in this vicinity, even though the vehicles were covered with white sheets and cloth. One of the bombs landed very close by, and the house we were staying in began to collapse. Fortunately, we got out of this dwelling without further injuries to any of the guys. Another close call.

When we emerged out on the street after this aerial onslaught, the area looked like Broadway and 42nd Street. The only difference being that these were burning buildings and fires, not electric lights. We struggled and crawled down the cobble-stoned streets in search of a safer place. We entered another dwelling and headed straight for the cellar. While resting here I surprisingly ran into a friend of mine from my home town--Scranton, Pennsylvania. He happened to arrive in this cellar just an hour or so before me. What a coincidence. He was a tanker from the 9th Armored Division and he became separated from his tank when hit by a shell. His name was Lou (Murphy) Raukukas--quite a prize fighter back in northeastern Pennsylvania. The first thing he said to me, "Phil, thank God, all I got is a piece of shrapnel in my foot." For a second, he thought I was my brother Pat, who he also knew back home.

Lou and I then went to a girls' school being used as a hospital. It was called Notre Dame. From here an ambulance convoy was scheduled to head south out of Bastogne. By a strange coincidence a fellow 10th

ARMDD Infantryman, Elturino "Lucky" Loiacono, was one of the wounded in this convoy. I found this out in 1985 when I became a member of the 10th Vets organization. He recognized my name and contacted me. We wrote to each other recalling these experiences. Real goose bump stuff... by the way these ambulances were ambushed by the Germans who had just closed the only road out of Bastogne. Sadly, the first two ambulances were shot up, luckily, the rest of the convoy vehicles returned safely to Bastogne. Another close call... So this was how I spent my Christmas in the dreary days of this December of 1944. However, I do vividly



Phil Genova

recall a thrilling sight, when on Christmas day hundreds of C-47's and gliders flew over and dropped tons of supplies, rations and ammunitions on the outskirts of Bastogne. A couple of us boarded a jeep, thanks to a friendly medic, and set out to retrieve some supplies. We even took a red parachute back with us. I still possess a piece of that chute. Fortunately, the six day fog had lifted that allowed these planes to fly in.

Phil Genova
10 ARMDD 54 AIB B (CCB)

HOW DID WE GET INTO THIS MESS?

The day before Christmas in 1944 was spent reflecting on what had taken place since the crack of dawn on December 16. As my thoughts progressed, there were discussions among the hundred or more POW's with me as we lay on the floor of a barracks previously occupied by German soldiers. We had been in this building for three days with nothing to do except to sweat it out. The consensus of opinion was, "How did we get into this mess?"

Christmas Eve was approaching with the occasional singing of "Silent Night" and other songs. Suddenly a German guard came calling and quickly got our attention. There was an air raid so we immediately fell out to form a group in the open area near the barracks. Soon an American fighter flew low to hit the railroad tracks nearby.

Some quick thinking POW called out, "Let's form the letters PW to let the pilot know that we are American prisoners of war." This we did as the pilot dipped his wings in recognition. It was a very emotional experience for me because seeing that pilot as a free American at less than 200 feet, reminded me of what we as POW's had lost Our Freedom.

Christmas Eve we laid on the floor of a larger building because the guards wanted to consolidate all the POW's together. We sang openly because there was a genuine peace in our hearts even though we were far from home. The one thing I remember most was my foot movement. With my heels close together, I kept swinging my boots in and out as an expression of frustration.

On Christmas Day we were told to board box cars. As we were walking to the train, I saw a small Christmas tree in the window of a German house. In my memory I can still see the tree with all its decorations.

Upon boarding the box cars we learned that a raid had destroyed the tracks to our destination. We returned to our original barracks only to be called out later in the afternoon to resume our walking.

We soon passed through a small village. The streets and store windows were very beautiful with the falling snow. It was approaching midnight and the temperature seemed well below zero as we kept walking. I was wearing a full dress uniform including a necktie, a sweater and field jacket with an overcoat and still shivers ran up and down my back. There were others with only a field jacket. Our walk

that evening ended an hour past midnight with a rest in a farmer's barn several miles down the road.

The specific location of these events has faded with time. However, I well remember passing through such towns in Germany as Prum, Gerolstein, and Mayen on the first day after capture near Shoenberg, Belgium.

Leon J. Setter
106 INF 2 BN HQ

HOSPITAL TREE STIRS MEMORIES

My most memorable moment, profoundly felt and everlastingly remembered, occurred in Christmas Eve, 1944, following the all-day battle engaged in by men of the 317th Infantry, 80th Division, to secure a hill in the vicinity of Niederfelen, Luxembourg, which they would forever after remember as "Bloody Knob."

The 305th Medical Battalion Field Hospital hallway and waiting room was jammed with wounded GIs, seated on chairs and laying on the floor—anywhere room could be found for another litter case. Hours later, after receiving treatment for my frozen toes, I was assigned a cot in the corner of a room facing a little, cheerfully decorated Christmas tree that captivated my emotions completely. One look at that little tree so symbolic of the season, triggered such a flood of tears and emotions I could do nothing but let them flow.

The thought of loved ones back home, recollections of the dead and wounded, assisting two of my closest stateside buddies (Slyvester Perciabosco, from Omaha, Nebraska, and Dick Thorne, from Elizabeth, New Jersey, both badly wounded), off the Hill—through all that I remained rational in control, but the sight of that twinkling little Christmas tree...it was incredible.

Joseph Drasler
80 INF 317 INF

GLOOMY CHRISTMAS

December 24 and 25, 1944, were for me two of the worse days of my life. The 101st Airborne Division had been surrounded at Bastogne, Belgium, since the night of the 20th, was short of ammunition and supplies, had its hospital captured, and was in danger of being overrun. I was an NCO rifle platoon leader in Company C, 401 GIR and my company was manning roadblocks on the western perimeter of the encircled city near Flamierge. We had repulsed attacks in our sector on the 19th, 20th and 22nd. On the 23rd the Germans came again early in the morning out of a heavy fog which hung over the bitter cold, snow covered hills wearing snowsuits and with tanks painted white. They were from the 77th Regiment of the 26th Volksgrenadier Division, 14 tanks with infantry.

Although the roadblock had a Sherman, a TD, a half-track and a 37 mm antitank gun, a combination of misfortunes prevented their being much use. The Sherman was knocked out in the first burst of shelling, the antitank gun was frozen in the ground and couldn't be traversed to fire on the enemy armor and the crew of the half-track vanished. There was little support from division artillery because of an ammunition shortage, but our 88 mm mortars were a big help. The division history devoted two short paragraphs to the action, making it sound no more than a patrol incident: nothing about the desperation, hopelessness and drama of the men who fought and died there that day. I was wounded about 1600 and put in a basement of a house just behind the MLR where the medics had set up an aid station. The roadblock fell just after dark. All the wounded and medics, the crews of the armor and a few men from Company C were captured, all that remained of the reinforced platoon that held the position.

The prisoners were thoroughly searched, threatened with death, and finally marched to trucks which took them into St. Hubert for interrogation. When that was over they were put in the attic of a nearby house under the guard of young gefreiters with itchy trigger fingers.

We were hustled out of the house early the next morning to a captured American weapons carrier with an attached trailer. A biting wind blew over the chilling snow, piercing our inadequate clothing like a knife. We were hungry, cold, and depressed: hungry because we had been living off of one or two K rations a day for nearly a week; cold because many of us did not have overcoats, overshoes, gloves or

mufflers; and depressed because after fighting debilitating campaigns in Normandy and Holland with their high casualty rates, this one in Belgium threatened to be the last straw to push us over the edge.

The medics and wounded were put in the weapons carrier with a guard and driver, the rest some how jammed in the trailer and we started down the main street in a northeasterly direction. The town was flooded with German troops and tanks, all going in the direction of Bastogne. Perhaps they were the same ones which would overrun Company C on that very night, losing all 18 tanks and hundreds of panzer and Volksgrenadiers in a futile attempt to take the city. Once we left the city we could see the carnage left by the German offensive. Burning villages, wrecked and burning tanks, trucks and smaller vehicles. Corpses, American and German, bloody, sprawled grotesquely in many instances on the whipped snow, ignored by small bands of refugees which wandered about like lost children. In the distance toward Bastogne could be heard the dull explosion of crashing shellfire and the rumble of German artillery. As it was still overcast and foggy, as it had been ever since we got to Belgium, there were no planes in this sector. The wretched ride took hours with the driver newly becoming lost despite having a map. The sky began to clear and in the distance could be heard the dull murmur of plane engines.

We came to a small village finally, one that had been recently bombed and strafed by our fighter planes. Houses were ablaze, walls knocked in by bombs, German soldiers with terror-stricken faces still lay in roadside ditches. Rescuers were going through the houses searching for victims.

The wounded were taken from the weapons carrier and into a field hospital just about the time our planes came back. The Germans shouted "Ya-boes! Der Tufel! Der Tufel! Every able man rushed outside, firing every weapon available at the screaming, diving, bullet spitting planes. We in the operating room huddled on the floor as bullets splintered the walls. Happy in one way that the weather had cleared but sad in another that one of those .50 caliber bullets could kill us.

After being treated, the wounded were taken to a nearby barn which held the rest of the POWs plus some other Americans who had been picked up along the way. The floor was ankle deep in wet, urine soaked straw and cow manure. Soon more POWs were brought in, air corps men who had just been shot down in supply runs over Bastogne. Once more everyone was interrogated and returned to the barn which by now was so crowded that it looked like a Tokyo subway train. The guards took several men to a nearby kitchen and they returned with two kettles of steaming noodle soup. As only the airborne guys had any eating utensils, the ever present spoon, these were passed around and everyone got something to eat. Then the guards told us through one of the POWs who spoke a little German that straw was available to put on the floor for sleeping. That was impossible. There was hardly room to stand without bumping into someone. Most of us sat or stood all night.

Christmas Day was dismal for all of us. Cold, tired and hungry we were led from the barn and lined up in a column on the road with five German guards toting machine pistols. We walked all morning on the icy road, frosty breath preceding us. We passed more wrecked vehicles, one an ambulance full of corpses and still on fire. Cars sometimes littered the road and the POWs were made to drag them to the ditches. Feeling quite superior, some of the guards made the prisoners carry their bulky rucksacks.

A stocky, middle aged guard with a broad face walked just by my side. He had gotten a ration of fried chicken and as he walked along he waved pieces under my nose saying: "Das is gut, Ja?" Then he would take a bite. His contemptful conduct didn't last long. Suddenly the sound of plane motors came over nearby trees. "Yarboes," the guards screamed. We dove for the ditches, all but my taunting guard, as the P-47s skimmed the tree tops on the right and came barreling toward us with guns blazing. The ditches were shallow, not deep enough to hide our bodies. Even though I buried myself in the snow, I could follow the paths of the .50 caliber shells as they raced across the field and hit the road, showering us with debris and sparks. The planes were past in an instant, made a wide arc and were back again. A brave medic got to his knees and waved his arms as more bullets tore up the road. It worked. The planes leveled off and left.

I was shaking all over. The bullets had barely missed my head as

they tracked across the road. The taunting guard lay in a widening pool of blood, the chicken leg still grasped in his hand. T/Sgt Bonner, one of the medics who came up to help the wounded at our road block was down, a bullet through his hip. It was serious. The guards reorganized us, threatening us with their machine pistols. Bringing the dead and wounded along, we started off once again, but didn't get far. Another flight of P-47s spotted us and came barreling for the road. We scattered like pins in a bowling alley. The planes made two passes and left. Perhaps they recognized our uniforms or were after better targets. We started off again, more wary than ever. Soon a small village came into sight.

The POWs were taken to a building which must have been the headquarters for a Nazi party unit, it was so filled with photos, flags and other propaganda material. Our medics immediately tended the wounded, but T/Sgt Bonner was beyond their limited facilities. They begged the guards to have him removed to a local hospital. The guards refused at first, but later recanted. We were served a meal, a box of dried up apples, two per man. We sat quietly on the hardwood flooring, nibbling at the apples and watching Bonner in his agony.

It was close to dark when the guards came and took away all the wounded. The hospital was a makeshift affair, a convent which had been converted to handle wounded until they could be moved to the rear. Straw pellets on the floor served as beds and there were gray woolen blankets for covers. I was put in a room with a dozen or so Germans, all of whom had been operated on for frostbite and frozen limbs. Most were in great pain. I was put between two Waffen SS troopers who, at first, eyed me with hatred in their eyes. However, after a while one became friendly and even offered me a stub of a cigarette from a small metal box he carried in a shirt pocket. He spoke no English and I no German so communication was rough. I did learn that he was an antitank gunner and destroyed several Ami tanks before a shell hit his gun and killed everyone but him.

Catholic sisters acted as nurses, helping the doctors and serving meals. On Christmas evening everyone got a bowl of steaming stew and later the sister gave everyone a piece of chocolate. Somewhere down the hall, I could hear feminine voices singing Christmas carols. Even though they were in German, the music was familiar. While they sang the beautiful songs, T/Sgt Bonner died. He came to save us at the road block. He died in the effort. Perhaps there was some correlation between his death and the Christmas story.

Robert M. Bowen
101 ABND 401 GLDR INF C

READY TO ROLL

Some of us attended midnight mass Christmas Eve in a wrecked building in Saar—not sure if it was a church. In the morning we loaded up to move out. The combat troops had been moving. Perhaps all night? About 11:00 a.m. on Christmas Day, the recovery wrecker had brought in a jeep and unloaded it near another motor sergeant (Miller, I think). He looked at it a few seconds and said, "If we could cut those two wrecks apart, we could make another jeep." The CO said "No, we didn't have time. We have to pull out any time." Sgt Miller said, "We don't have to unload anything. We'll work from the back of the tools truck and we can leave any time." In about one hour they had a jeep ready to roll.

James A. Anderson
787 ORD

A LOVELY SHADE OF GRAY

[We arrived] at St. Vith, Belgium about the first week of December, 1944, and our outfit took up position in the Ardennes between St. Vith and Malmady.

The Battle of the Bulge started on the 16th of December, and a book could be written on those few days prior to December 19th when I was struck in the back of the head by an exploding hand grenade (while wearing my steel helmet and helmet liner) which saved my life, but rendered me unconscious and totally blind.

The medic must have kept me pretty well sedated, I remember very little until I was in Paris, France, on Christmas Eve. I remember being on a stretcher most of the time, but I was now in a bed.

Being totally blind I asked for a chaplain to visit me, which he did (he leaned over and allowed me to feel the cross on his color) and I remember asking him to verify that all my parts such as the arms and legs worked, as they (doctors assumed) were testing my system out. The chaplain assured me that everything responded properly, so I figured the Lord had blessed me again.

I discovered Christmas morning that the Lord really had blessed me again, when I was able to see gray on one side of the room instead of total darkness (thereby indicating windows and daylight).

Forty-eight years has not diminished that feeling of seeing the gray that morning, after seven days of total darkness.

Robert L. Stevenson
106 INF 81 ENGR CMBT BN HQ

THE PLANE RIDERS

Christmas was never the same after the one we experienced in Coe, Belgium in 1944. You would think everybody would take this day off from the war, but no such luck. That morning our platoon was ordered to run a combat patrol on the side of the mountain between our company and an adjacent one. Nothing eventful happened so we were looking forward to our Christmas dinner which we had planned for that afternoon. We had "liberated" a couple of Belgian chickens and Ernie King was appointed the cook. He had made the necessary preparations to get the chickens into the pot and they were simmering while we were out on the morning's business. We were in the safest part of the house we had commandeered, the basement, and were just about to sit down to our Christmas chicken dinner when our dear friends in the Air Corps arrived to join us in our celebration.

Since this was to be called "The Battle of the Bulge" there was much confusion as to where the friendly lines ended and where the enemy was located. Of all of the combat units in this fracas the most confused was the Air Corps. A flight of two P-38's had spotted a couple of our tanks parked on the only street of this town. The tanks were plainly marked with orange panels, but this didn't seem to register on the minds of our steak eating comrades. Both fighter pilots decided to "kill" our Sherman tanks with 500 pound bombs. Fortunately for the tankers, "buttoned-up" in their armored boxes, our plane riding heroes missed their intended targets. Unfortunately for our platoon the concussion of the bombs shattered the chandelier above the dining table where our Christmas dinner awaited, scattering shards of glass into our anticipated feast.

When we finally crawled out from under the table, and other furniture that we thought would help protect us from the blast, for an instant we couldn't perceive what had happened to us. We sensed that no one had been hurt, but when we looked at our Christmas dinner we saw the awful truth. Blasphemy burst forth, a chorus of oaths appeared that had been polished and refined over the course of many months and days of ground combat. If those P-38's had returned for another pass at that moment we would have run outside and shot at them with our M-1 rifles.

...After almost 50 years I still do a "slow burn" when I remember Christmas 1944. We ate out K-rations again that day as our visitors from the sky rode their planes back to their base somewhere in France. We were certain when they returned, instead of the monotony of a steak dinner, they would dine on turkey before going to the party at the officers club.

John M. Nolan
30 INF 119 INF 1 PLTN G

...HOT UP THERE, SOLDIER?

I don't remember the 24th, but I do remember Christmas, 1944, very well.

It was the morning. I was knocked out of my second of three tanks in the Ardennes.

We were at the point of the only five Shermans left in B Company, 31st Tank Battalion, in an ill-fated attack on Manhay, Belgium.

All five were promptly knocked out. Our driver George Hawkins was killed; the rest of us were burned, etc., but got to a ditch before the turret blew off. After we lay in the ditch for a while, we could hear Jerry infantry coming our way, so it was time to leave.

I was the first one up and dove through a hedge and proceeded toward the rear alone. The only person I encountered along the way was Gen. Bruce Clarke, CCB Commander. He said, "Pretty hot up there, soldier?" To which I replied, "Your damned right, sir," and kept on going. I never saw the rest of the crew again (Lt. H. Clark, Sgt. V Gugliotta).

Finally got back to the point where 1st Sgt Al Spinazzola was picking up survivors for transport to an aid station.

John P. Naulty
7 ARMDD 31 TK BN B

DESTINATION UNKNOWN

We arrived in Haguenau on the afternoon of December 23, 1944, and remained in place straddling a railroad track until the late evening of December 24th. It was Christmas eve and the weather was severe...lots of snow hanging from the trees and buildings and cold!

Well after dark, we were told to quickly mount up and join other convoys of vehicles that to me seemed to be heading west...the direction that we had come from two days before. We were soon on the move, joining hundreds of vehicles of all types and were soon passing through the Vosges Mountains with their conifers and steep mountain sides so reminiscent of home.

The mountain roads and passes were filled with vehicles of every description and men on foot, all moving slowly in the darkness with only the "cats eyes" on the vehicles showing any light. I had no idea where we were headed and more importantly...why?

Sitting in the back of a GMC 6x6 truck, I saw an Army sedan backed up a side road with a Brigadier General's star uncovered on the front bumper and then realized that something big was under way. For us, it was the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, not knowing that it had actually started several days prior. (I didn't know this until 50 years later, I read it in *The Bulge Bugle*.)

We traveled all night and as I recall all of the next day, half frozen to death, still not knowing or having the slightest idea as to where we were going or why.

After 50 years, I still don't know exactly where we ended up. I do recall the days and nights that followed; the snow and the terrible cold. I remember stuffing old newspapers into my ragged overcoat for warmth; the German infiltrators in GI uniforms, the spruce forests and constantly being on the move, often with people and units other than our own. I froze my feet, my hands and parts of my face but escaped more serious injury.

I will never forget Christmas Eve of 1944 and the weeks that followed. That period of time is etched in my soul and I will carry it to the end of my days where hopefully I will enter a heavenly place where there is no war or pain or tears.

Randy Kerr
353 AAA BN C BTRY

CHRISTMAS IN ESCHDORF

I was just outside Eschdorf the morning of December 24, 1944--about 1/4 of a mile from town, I guess--dug in in a field.

I spent the night there, and on the 25th of December, the cooks brought us a hot turkey dinner and served.

We left after dinner and went around through the woods coming up on the Town of Eschdorf Christmas night. There were Jerrys still shelling us with machine gun and mortar fire in the night, but we got to the town the night of the 25th.

I was told that Capt. White, our Commanding Officer, was shot in the face that night but he kept on operating the radio. I did not see him after he was hit.

I left the morning of the 26th of December with trench foot and back through the hospitals.

Frank J. Herndon
26 INF 104 INF A

FRUSTRATIONS RELEASED

I was a medic (surgical technician) during the Battle of the Bulge, a member of the 647th Medical Clearing Company, attached to the 65th

Medical Regiment Evacuation Hospital. [Metz, France]...On Christmas Eve, a few of my close buddies and I found out about a Christmas Eve church service being held on the other side of town. It was a bitterly cold night. When we got back to our building, the fellows that stayed behind had been drinking and got into fights, making a terrible mess of the place. There wasn't much sleeping done as their party continued into the late night. The sad part was that this was Christmas Eve, and their thoughts were not on Jesus' birth, but on wine. I will mention, though, that all though the war we had a super-behaving bunch of buddies. This was the only time I could remember a group of them getting out of control.

Arthur Laehn
65 EVAC HOSP 647 MED CLRNG

I HAD IT BETTER THAN MY BUDDIES

I was in a hospital in Paris, France on December 24-25, 1944. I had lost my right limb above the knee and had numerous wounds in the left leg from a German Tiger tank 88 mm direct hit to our NE-37 TD. This happened on December 19(?), 1944. They were trying to build me up enough to stand the trip back to the USA.

I was in so much pain I do not know if the hospital had a special meal for Christmas. What I do remember is a patient came by my bed from Columbia, Missouri (my home town) named Samuel Grant. After returning home I learned he had to go back up on the front line and was killed.

Reading in my 610 Tank Destroyer book, we were attacked to the 328th Infantry, 80th Infantry, Third Army. On December 25, 1944, our outfit was at Boeranze(?), Luxembourg, where two men were killed and eleven were wounded in the midst of the Battle of the Bulge. I am sure I had a better Christmas Day than my buddies. I will always be grateful that I came home alive. That is one Christmas I received no gifts.

William D. Powell, Jr.
610 TD BN

A DESPERATE GAMBLE

An incident at Martelange is typical of the many crucial assignments the engineer units were given.... This particular event was recalled recently by five members of the 299th Combat Engineer Battalion from the State of New York.



(Left to right: Clarence Krausnick, Syracuse; Tom Netti, Auburn; Jim Oliva, Binghamton; Paul Pirro, Syracuse; and Frank Morabito, Auburn)

Although these men had survived the D-Day landings and months of continuous action in France, they all agreed that their mission at Martelange was one of their most harrowing and challenging experiences.

The 299th received word that a German spearhead was advancing toward Martelange and would probably attempt to cross the Sure River there. Headquarters ordered Co. A to respond and they sent the 1st Platoon's 3rd Squad, which included the five New Yorkers, to the scene.

Upon their arrival the Squad made a quick survey of the area and then undertook the task of wiring the bridge for demolition. They then

withdrew to a concealed vantage point and evaluated the situation. It was determined that the bridge could easily accommodate three tanks at one time. Therefore, in the event the bridge had to be blown, every effort would be made to take at least three tanks down with it! It was a desperate gamble," Oliva admitted, "but we all agreed it was a chance worth taking. The worst part was waiting for the Germans to show up!" Their wait was soon over. They had heard the approaching tanks for some time and then suddenly the lead one broke over the hill in front of them. It was a Mark IV and its deadly 88 was pointed directly at the bridge. Following were several more with foot soldiers alongside. "We knew we didn't have the guns or enough men to take them on," Netti stated. "Our only choice was to blow the bridge and, if luck was with us, maybe get some tanks." Morabito nodded in agreement and added, "To get the tanks would be great but, in any case, we were determined to slow them down!"

As the first tank neared the bridge it stopped and its turret cover sprang open. A figure emerged and looked intently at the bridge and then signaled the others to follow him. His tank rumbled on to the bridge and slowly started across. The others moved in close behind. Their infantry didn't accompany them but fanned out along the river banks. The 299ers watched in silent amazement as the tanks proceeded over the bridge. Shaking with excitement, Pirro clasped the Hell Box and gingerly placed his hand on the plunger. "If we were going to get the tanks I had to time the firing exactly," he said. "I just hoped that our wiring was O.K.!" The men kept their eyes glued on the leading tank and just as it reached the end of the bridge they yelled in unison, "NOW!!" Pirro rammed the plunger down. A thunderous explosion rocked the area, debris flew everywhere and huge clouds of dust filled the air. The bridge was demolished and three badly damaged tanks lay hopelessly submerged in the river with their occupants struggling amidst the wreckage.

The Germans had definitely been surprised! Taking advantage of the enemy's utter confusion, the exhilarated engineers raced for their trucks. Krausnick remembers that he was the last one on. "I just had to get another look at those tanks," he explained. "Boy, how I wished I'd had a camera!"

Under the cover of darkness the trucks sped southward to the Battalion CP at Hachy. The men were elated with the results they had achieved and were enthusiastically discussing them when someone suddenly proclaimed: "Do you guys know that this is Christmas Eve?" Everyone immediately stopped talking and there was complete silence for the rest of the trip. All were in deep and private thought and the excitement they had just expressed was overcome by their memories of Christmas Eves past. They fervently prayed that they might be permitted to spend the next Christmas Eve back home, safe with their loved ones.

Charles Hurlbut
299 CMBT ENGR BN

...THE COLD NEVER QUIT

I was a driver for the S-2 section of CCA. My vehicle was a half track, which became my home for about eight or nine months. There was a jeep, and a crew of eight men.

After a whirl wind ride across France with Patton's 3rd Army, some 600 miles in 21 days (as I read later in books and material I have collected).

This came to a sudden halt near the Moselle River. As I understand, the Germans were stiffening resistance on all fronts. It was decided that we were needed to support the British Army to the north. We changed our direction and moved north. We do know that we were in Holland. After some tough campaigns in this sector, things seemed to quiet down for awhile. From what I have read, it seemed the allied armies were preparing for a push into the heart of Germany. But the Germans had other ideas about the deal. We were alerted to be prepared to move about 8:00 o'clock one night. We didn't know where, but I could sense that something was going on. We moved most of the night, it was stop and go all night. I found out later that we had to fight our way into place which was now becoming the well known "Battle of the Bulge."

One thing we did know, that the weather was changing. Winter was on us, and I don't think everyone had expected a winter campaign. We had training in Louisiana, the California desert, and Ft. Benning, Georgia, but not what we were about to face. I think my feet became

cold that night and stayed that way for the next two months. Being from Texas, we don't have too much snow, but I saw enough to do me a life time.

We pulled into a small village that night and with a lot of confusion, we set up guard. A few hours later we were on the move again. We were traveling down a narrow road, with fir trees on each side, and we couldn't see more than 20 feet. This might have been a pretty sight with the snow, but this was scary. Someone said they heard tanks, and the major said "What kind". Then he said have your bazooka ready. We had seen lots of action across France, blown out equipment, cities, dead animals, and all that goes with combat, but never anything compared to this suspense.

The time, sometime in December and it was cold. I think Christmas was probably the last thing on our mind at this time. A few days elapsed and I don't think anyone was getting too much sleep and the cold never quit. I remember pulling into this small village early one morning, which was December 24th--Christmas Eve. One of the natives told us we could use one of his buildings to warm in. It had a stove, and was a welcomed sight. This was not exactly the type of Christmas I was dreaming of. But it was snowing, and we knew it would be white.

A word about our half-track and crew. Before we left England we had modified the inside. We were equipped with lots of radios, one 50 caliber, one 30 caliber machine gun, bazooka, grenades and everyone's personal weapon. This was for our own protection as S-2 had other purposes such as interrogating prisoners and obtaining information. We had installed our own box that we called our ice box. We put all our rations, goodies or anything we had in this box. The radio operator was the keeper of this box. We had a major, head of this section, and he shared everything just as same as his men. I can't say enough for the officers and men of this outfit. They were the kind you wanted around you in a situation like we were in.

About two hours later we mounted up to move. It was slow, but we came into another small village--Manhay, Belgium, I think. We spread out, parked our vehicles, based up, which always came first no matter what. Take care of your vehicle and yourself later. This always paid off. Never head in, always back in. Never be where you can't move out. As night came on I remember it being very bright and visibility was good. The moon had come through. I always think about this place--all those pretty dairy cows. We had noticed them when we came in the barns were full.

We waited for more orders, and we noticed it was deathly quiet--only the distant sound of a German machine gun, better known as "Ripshaw." I later learned that we were to attack the next morning. There was a ridge out there a ways, where the enemy was, but until this day I believe they were closer. We began looking around for a place to bed down, and settled on a building close by.

No sooner than we lay down all Hell broke loose. Big shells started falling everywhere. Someone said, "What is that." We knew it wasn't us, because it was incoming "mail." About this time we were alerted to be ready to move as quickly as possible. We rushed to our half-track which was facing the road. By this time it seemed the whole town was on fire with bursting shells. Then we heard a terrible noise to our right, and knew it was a big tank at full throttle. In the turmoil, vehicles were gathering on the road about 50 yards away. This was our escape route. There was a big flash and collision and the largest tank I think I had ever seen, and the gun, I presume an 88 mm as long as a telegraph pole. A jeep had pulled up with two people, and it vanished under this monster. The collision and flash was the monster crashing into a light American tank. I didn't know the sergeant that came running out of there. But he was frantically saying Tiger Royal. On our drive across France I don't remember tanks this large. I had heard they weighed around 70 tons--not all that fast, but a lot of crushing power. I had the opportunity to examine one later on. The Germans were good with the 88 mm. They could bounce it off the road into the bottom of a vehicle. I did venture to take a look for the men in the jeep. Luckily they had jumped out. The order came to move out on to this road. So we did slowly. It was stop and go the rest of the night with a killer crew of suicidal Germans out there. We seemed like sitting ducks. There was something burning ahead. It was one of our jeeps that was a victim of that 88. There was confusion on that road that night and a good many were killed or wounded. We lost a major from the S-3 section, and a man or two, that I never heard of again. We pulled back to the same

area that we were at that morning. We knew it would be warm, if it were still empty. To our surprise, there was some one in it. After exchange of passwords it turned out to be an artillery unit. This was their kitchen crew, set up, preparing Christmas dinner. They made us feel at home with hot coffee. To me this was Christmas--smelling that turkey and all those goodies cooking.

We grabbed maybe an hour or so of sleep and waited to see what Christmas Day would be. It was an exciting day. The artillery had set up and those guns must have been hub to hub, and it was a deafening roar for several hours. Our kitchen truck came up, and everyone had a turkey dinner. The air force did it's thing in the suicide tanks, I understand, and I heard they leveled Manhay. I always think about those pretty cows, because I know they had no place to go.

This was my Christmas, 1944, but am thankful for surviving it. It is hard to believe the things that night. Men a long way from home on a cold night, combat, cooking turkey, and every one doing his little part. I am proud to have been a part of it and a part of the unit I served with.

Morris W. Powell
7 ARMDD HQ (CCA)

SUDDENLY, ...I WAS NO SPECTATOR

About 10:00 p.m., Christmas Eve, we were marching across a long gentle, treeless hill in front of Grandmanil. I will call it a slope. I was the 60 mm mortar assistant gunner in the 4th Platoon. I think it was the entire F Company--marching single file on a narrow road. We knew we were getting close to combat as during the day we had met jeeps with wounded and had passed an area where another 289th Company had met a column of German tanks. By the looks of things many must have been killed or wounded. There were jeeps on the road that had been crushed to a flat metal scrap pile from being run over by the tanks, there were burning trucks in a clump of trees along side the road, and much equipment laying around such as helmets, rifles, canteens, and what not.

Until now we had not been fired upon--I didn't think we would be this time. The night was beautiful. A bright moon glistened off the white clean snow. I was very tired so just kind of shuffled along behind the guy ahead of me. Surprisingly, I wasn't frightened by what I saw. There were many burning buildings in the small Village of Grandmanil about 1/2 mile ahead and down the slope. What's more there was fighting going on down there! I heard the rapid fire of German machine guns in the village. Their tracer streaks went out toward an area on our side of the village but further down the slope. Slower firing American machine guns were firing back. Their tracer streaks went into the village. The whole thing fascinated me. I seemed to be a ringside spectator. I learned later the Americans were K Company, 289th, who had taken the village and then were driven out by a German counter attack.

Suddenly, my unrealistic thinking that I was a spectator was shattered. A machine gun of a German tank fired at us! I heard the sharp crack of the gun being fired directly at me and saw tracers streak cross the road just ahead of me. Instantly I awoke from my dull dream, world and looked for cover. There was no ditch or protection by the road. I spotted a slight terrace like surface to my right and up the slope--slightly ahead of me. There was a fence next to the road but I went through it as though it didn't exist. I hit the ground on top of the terrace just as the Germans fired again. They swept the area from right to left with a long burst. They seemed to know approximately where we were but I do not think could make out individuals. I was very much afraid. I had never been so frightened before or have never been since. I was sure they could see me--dressed in dark clothes laying on the gleaming white snow. The German bullets plowed into the ground ahead of me spattering pieces of frozen dirt on me. Some were very close. I found a bullet hole in my shovel carrier flap the next day! One of the burst hit the 60 mm mortar base plate in front of Ralph Logan's head (the mortar gunner). When they hit the base plate the bullets made a ringing sound, made orange and red sparks, whistled and made tracer streaks as they flew over him. Someone squirmed and moaned to my left indicating he had been hit. I froze in fright--didn't move a muscle. I decided to move though. I was laying on top of my ammunition pack which positioned me above ground surface. If I had

my say I would be laying under the ground! We laid there some time. I began feeling cold as the snow under me began to melt and come through.

Finally, our platoon sergeant, Laverne Ives, said, "Men, we can't lay here all night and wait to get hit. Immediately after a burst sweeps by you, start crawling up the slope toward that clump of trees." Boy! That was comforting to receive some directions. Up to now, I just laid there not knowing what to do. I waited for that next machine gun sweep. They hadn't fired for a while. I heard the tank engine start, run a little and then stop. Someone yelled something in German and laughed. I don't understand German. I hoped they wouldn't decide to drive up the slope and crush us. I decided to start crawling up the slope. I was afraid to make a broad side target as I turned around to crawl up so crawled backward. It was pretty difficult. My belt and equipment would catch on the ground under me. My coat wanted to slide over my head. When far enough up the slope I turned around and crawled faster head first. Farther up the slope I got up and ran the rest of the way. When near the trees I was stopped by one of us. He asked for the pass word. I was so frightened I couldn't remember it at first but finally did about when I heard him cock his rifle.

He told me the guys were in the woods. I was surprised to see so many. I thought I was the only one out. Only two men in our platoon had been hit. Many of us were to be hit later.

I think of that night during every Christmas Eve since.

Harold Lindstrom
75 INF 289 INF F

WELCOME TO THE WAR ZONE

On Christmas Eve, 1944, about 7,500 of us IRTC arrived in Ginet, France, on our way to the Bulge area as infantry replacements. A German plane got through that night and destroyed the kitchen in the depot. Christmas morning we were awakened by a whistle with a greeting of Merry Christmas for what the H--- it is worth. The Sergeant then told us that the German tanks had been as close as 15 miles during the night and had been stopped. "So fella's you are now in a war zone." We still had our M1's in Cozmoine. Christmas breakfast--not coffee; Noon--hot coffee and cold bread; Supper--the best hot coffee, cold break, turkey and cranberry sauce. Probably not too bad considering the situation.

Clifford E. Fluck
2 INF 38 INF

FRENCH BREAD AND K RATIONS

...We knew where we were headed. It wouldn't take long. The Bulge had started.

...Then we began to see long trains pulling into the camp bearing wounded men. It was unsettling until we finally marched to a long string of boxcars and were jammed into them for a long journey to nowhere, or so we thought. Oddly, my car was American made if no more comfortable than the others.

That was about December 20 and the train slowly crossed snow-covered farm land, went through the outskirts of Paris in the night hours as temperatures dipped below zero and the snow kept falling. On the 24th we still had not reached our destination and it was truly bitterly cold. Ingenious GI's had scrounged old discarded oil drums into which whatever wood they could find was stuffed to provide some heat while perched in the open doorways of the [box]cars. It was quite a sight to watch as the train rounded bends and 50 or more cars could be seen, each with black smoke belching from the makeshift stoves.

That lasted until early afternoon when by-passed resistance from the spectacular dash across France began stitching holes in the cars from machine guns emplaced along the right of way. In no time there were no stoves visible anywhere except beside the tracks. It seemed right at the time. Each of us carried duffel bags loaded with clothing, but there wasn't one rifle among us.

The old French engine coughed its way east, stopping only for more wood and water. It backed up faster than it moved forward and all of us wondered what was ahead. On Christmas Day the train eased its way into a French town of World War I fame, Bar le Duc. Snow continued to fall as it groaned to a stop in town.

It was midday and women in heavy clothing materialized along the train carrying long loaves of fresh French bread. They were offered for sale provided they received American money. Whoever had any contributed it to a common pool and the bread changed hands quickly. To us it tasted like nothing we'd ever eaten before. It was especially good since we knew our Christmas dinner would be K rations again, and cold at that.

We had almost finished dipping our mess kits in drops of boiling water when a shout came from the rear to take cover. There were no delays in seeking ditches or diving under cars. Out of the sky had come a lone German fighter plane bent on strafing us from stem to stern. He made two passes at us, leaving a trail of wounded each time. We had nothing with us to fire back. We didn't even have rocks. Fortunately, there were medics not far off and then came in a hurry to do what they could. The train continued with too many less than just a few hours earlier.

It was Nieuw Chateau next day and a full turkey dinner. Each man was allowed up to two pounds and it was probably the finest Christmas dinner I'd ever had before or since. Our final stop was Metz where all of us received final assignments and went to our units in which we served until it was all over, over there. There's more to this story.

George M. Eilig
80 INF 317 INF B

A MIXED CHORUS

If this story is to be complete it should start with the morning of 16 December 1944. That was a Saturday and we (1st Battalion, 109th) were scheduled for an awards parade/review in the Diekirch town square. We were in Luxembourg and in the reserve of a very thin line. Of course at company level we had no idea of just how thin that line was!

We did know that there had been rumblings of enemy artillery and that our battalion motor pool had been hit some time in the wee hours of the morning. Nevertheless Company B fell out for the parade about 0800. I was in charge since the company commanding officer had been called to report to Battalion Headquarters. We soon got the word to forget the parade and get ready for action with full combat gear. I was lounging on the steps of the Hotel Europa (our billets) when a jeep pulled up and a 1st Lt., Medical Administrative Corps, jumped out. He said to me, "I am responsible for the medical evacuation hospital down the road here in Ettelbruch and want to know whether or not we should prepare to evacuate in view of the enemy fire." I replied from the depths of my ignorance, "Stand fast! We can handle anything they throw at us." He said, "Thanks a lot! You are the first person I talked to today who said anything positive!"

Three days or nights later my company would be withdrawing through Ettelbruch with the Germans hot on our heels. Afterward I often thought that if that MAC Lieutenant had ever seen me again he had a perfect right to hit me up side the head!

Of course we at the lower levels had no idea that we were being hit by all that Hitler had left. Our immediate action was to fight back hard and that is what we did. The 109th folded slowly to the south. The 110th, in the center of the division was penetrated and overrun. Their remnants wound up in Bastogne. The 112th Infantry Regiment was peeled to the north and found themselves fighting with the 424th Infantry Regiment, the only unit of the 106th Division to survive the battle.

But what was I doing on 24 and 25 December? The 109th under LTC J. E. Rudder (later Colonel and finally Major General) withdrew fighting and in good order. We held the south flank of the main German penetration until 23 December when a unit of the 80th Division (I think the 318th Infantry) relieved us and moved through to attack Ettelbruch. We got some much needed rest in the castle at Colmar-Berg, but were called out almost immediately for a counterattack on 24 December to seize the Town of Gilsdorf. The scratch outfit that was to do this was called Task Force Rudder.

With the assistance of a tank platoon from the 9th or 10th Armored we cleared Gilsdorf. In this particular action we had a number of Luxemburgers with German weapons and Free French arm bands who wanted to go in on the tanks but would not do so without an American leader. Guess who! I rode the lead tank and had no trouble getting

the Luxemburgers to follow. The American soldiers were glad to let the Luxemburgers ride the tanks!

By this time the Germans must have been getting as big a bellyful as we had since they seemed to give up rather easily. With Gilsdorf secured we found ourselves looking across the Sure River into Diekirch, where we had been on 16 December when it all started. We established a CP in the basement of a house and spent Christmas Eve and most of Christmas Day there. Besides our Company CP personnel we had about four German prisoners who could not be sent immediately to the rear. They spoke no English, but I spoke enough German to communicate. That night we got a hot meal packed in Marmite cans. It was turkey, gravy and mashed potatoes and almost cold, but we loved it. We have the prisoners some K rations and they loved that too!—especially the cigarettes.

After eating I remember very well everyone singing *Silent Night* with the Germans joining in with their own version of *Stille Nacht*. We were relieved Christmas night but I will never forget how I spent Christmas Eve and Christmas Day of 1944.

James V. Christy
28 INF 109 INF B

MY LUCKY FOUR LEAF CLOVER

I was wounded and captured the evening of the 19th of December, 1944. Several days later, on the 24th of December, I found myself in a barn-like structure awaiting my turn to go into a little room where a German medic, or doctor, was. I had a wound just above my ankle; my left hand was hit with shrapnel; I also had stinging in my left rear. A piece of steel had gone through my billfold, cutting my four leaf clover in two. I had been carrying it for "good luck"! This happened during the Battle of the Bulge.

There were both German and American wounded in this barn-like structure. I assume it was meant to be a field hospital. I watched Germans and Americans come and go from a smaller room. Many of them looked worse after they came out than when they went in. When it came my turn I did not much want to go in, but the German guard poked me with his rifle, so I thought he meant business; I went hopping into the room. I saw two people next to a table. I don't know whether they were doctors, or just medics, but they gave me an order to get up on the table. Thoughts ran through my mind like, "Will I still have two legs if I get out of this, or will I be leaving them here?" They ordered me to lie down on the table; I did, but I sat up immediately to see what they were going to do. They pushed me back down again, and I sat up again. I decided I was going to kick them with my good leg if they tried anything funny. One of them hit me across the nose with a medical instrument. Thank God, it was the blunt side of the instrument that hit me. I decided I was the loser, so I laid back and cocked my head so I could watch. They immediately opened up my wounds with a sharp instrument to allow them to bleed, and then wrapped my leg and hand with paper bandages. They did not put any medication on my wounds. They then ordered me out into the bigger room again. I hopped out on my good leg and took my place on the floor.

In a few hours I was ordered to hop outside and was then put in the back of a truck with several other wounded. We did not know where we were going, but we were headed somewhere. Several times the truck stopped; the driver and his partner would dive for the ditch as our planes strafed us. We were not allowed to take cover. This happened a few times, but we lucked out. We thought we saw Red Cross trucks headed toward the front with supplies. Our truck did not have a red cross on it. We finally came to a railroad yard; here we were placed in a boxcar that had wooden bunks in it. I suppose this was a "hospital train." At one end of the car above the door was a big picture of Hitler. Our guard, or medic, was older than the average. He looked both ways before he pointed to the picture and said, "Him no good, him no good." There were Germans in the car behind us, so the guard was careful when he said this about Hitler.

I remember, even though we were all wounded, we sang Christmas songs since it was Christmas Eve. I couldn't help wondering what my family was doing at home. I doubt that they were enjoying the Christmas of 1944 anymore than I was. I spent Christmas Day in the boxcar and then we were at Stalag G for a few days.

After having our paper bandages changed (no medication) we were

loaded into boxcars for a six-day stop-and-go trip to Stalag 2A, north of Berlin. I consider myself darned lucky to be alive today.

James W. Gardner
106 INF 422 INF 2 BN HQ

GRATEFUL FOR THE SMALL THINGS

Although my Christmas Day, 1944, was not unusual in either a good or a bad sense, I still remember most of it vividly.

Our unit was moved a day or two earlier from one position on Elsenborn Ridge to another. I had started to dig a new fighting and sleeping hole, and as I awoke I knew I would have a day of work ahead. I remember watching, from the heights of the ridge, a pale sun rising over the battered steeple of the church in Krinkelt. In spite of the circumstances, that sight gave me a feeling of comfort and peace. I was grateful also that this morning German artillery was silent and that I had survived the fighting of the past week.

It was not very cold, the dark brown earth fairly soft, and my digging was progressing well. Suddenly, as I looked up, I saw two GI's, tense and with blood-shot eyes, carrying two cans. One of them thrust a small, almost-cold turkey leg into my hand, the other handed me two slices of white bread and a couple of pieces of hard candy. This was my Christmas dinner. As I crouched in my still fairly shallow hole and started to eat the turkey before it turned stone cold, 88-mm shells began falling around us. Almost choking on that first bite, I realized that the Germans were watching those two poor soldiers and harassing them with artillery fire as they delivered our meals. The barrage was short.

When the shelling stopped I looked up and the men were gone. A few minutes later I heard shells exploding perhaps 50 yards away; undoubtedly, the German gunners were zeroing in on the two men as they moved from position to position. It seemed almost criminal to me that the lives of soldiers could be jeopardized for such an almost meaningless gesture, perhaps so that some quartermaster officer could report to his superior that every man in his sector had turkey on Christmas Day. (I would have preferred one of my K rations anyway.)

I remained concerned about protecting myself from artillery, so I worked on my position all day. A few days later, with the help of a sergeant, I was able to salvage a door from the only nearby building. I covered the sleeping portion of my hole with it and then piled dirt on top of it. Shortly thereafter, as I was asleep, a shell struck a corner of the hole, the explosion splitting the door and partially collapsing the cover. My ears rang for a week, but the cover probably saved me from serious injury or worse.

That night, as I saw and heard the signs of battle raging miles to our rear, I again felt a sense of gratitude. At least on this day, Christmas Day, the war had passed us by.

Lionel P. Adda
99 INF 393 INF D

OUR SITUATION WAS CRITICAL

[In Bastogne] Our situation was critical. In addition to being surrounded and outnumbered, there were 18,000 mouths to be fed. Carbine and M1 ammo was in short supply, as were bazooka and artillery shells. The harsh weather was yet another enemy, against whom we had little defense, and frostbitten feet were not altogether uncommon.

On the morning of December 23rd, all lookouts were ordered to watch for the first aircraft. The weather, which had been hazy, was finally clearing. At 0935 hours an MP rushed into 101st Airborne Headquarters to tell Colonel Kohls that several allied aircraft were circling the sector. By 1150 hours, 16 more aircraft appeared, and parachutes were dropping desperately needed supplies northwest of Bastogne at San-Souci Lane and the Marche Road. We felt a renewed sense of hope that enabled us to continue our fight.

By afternoon of the 23rd, the sky filled with 241 Dakotas and P47's. The air support offered by these was a significant factor in turning the battle in our favor during the next few days. They were dropping 75 lb. bombs in an effort to reduce our enemy's numbers. However, battle lines were still very ill defined, and German and American troops were in close proximity on the ground below. Consequently, our own troops

had to hit the ground when we heard the roar of the plane and the distinctive whistling sound of the bombs, even though it was "friendly fire."

The fighting continued the December 24th and 25th, and throughout the remaining days of December. There was no opportunity for communication with the outside world. No letters were coming in or out—we were lucky to have received supplies of food and ammunition. That didn't stop us, though, from being aware that back home it was Christmas. I wondered about my family and whether they were concerned about me. This was my third Christmas away from home, and I hoped I would be alive to be there for the next one.

James Herrington
101 ABND 327 REG

A MIGHTY WELCOME SIGHT

It was Christmas Day in the Battle of the Bulge, 1944. Our planes had been fogged in for days. All of a sudden the fog cleared and our planes came over by the thousands. They bombed the Germans for hours.

Everyone was crying or shouting.

Rodney J. Hesterman
5 INF 50 FA BN A

...JUST LIKE LAST CHRISTMAS

We were dug in around this small town. I cannot remember any town names.

It was a nice, sunny, cold day. Snow covered the ground. We had no rubbers or overcoats. No blankets. We were to get them that night—as they were at the C-P.

All day it was quiet—very little movement. But come night, all Hell broke loose. A German tank came into town—set every building on fire with plenty of small arms fire. [It] was a bright town for some time.

Our blankets, rubbers, overcoats were in this fire. Also, the company jeep. Supper was also waiting until it got dark. [We] had some pork hanging in the barn. No hot meal that night.

Back to K rations and cold for Christmas day.

It was quite some time before we got warm clothing.

Richard Kakes
101 ABND

BACK TO K RATIONS

At 0730 on 23 December, we were ordered to attack Wahl. At 1145 my company entered Wahl and, meeting no enemy resistance, we continued the attack toward Neuhausen and Insming. We made excellent progress and on 24 December, in spite of small arms resistance and intermittent artillery fire, by 2000, we advanced to the high ground just south of the Sure River in the vicinity of Dotzenberg Woods. Our Battalion CP was in Heunhausen after we captured Kuborn and Neuhausen.

On 25 December, our battalion cleared the towns of Insborn, Bonnal and Lutshausen along the Sure River. We attempted a crossing but to no avail.

At 2200 on 26 December, we were relieved by elements of the 101st Infantry, 26th Division, and went into reserve after having established a CP at Brattert—and a hot meal, the first in a week. (Our Christmas dinner consisted of K and C Rations.)

Hugh F. Fenzel
26 INF 328 INF 3 BN K

A CHICKEN IS A CHICKEN

[Eschdorf, Luxembourg] During Christmas Eve day, I decided that no matter where we would wind up that night, we were going to have a Christmas tree! So some place along the road, ...I jumped off the back [squad truck] and cut a small evergreen tree. Couldn't have been more than two feet tall, if that. I stuck it on the 57mm gun that we towed, and it rode with us the rest of the day.

That night our 3rd squad was fortunate enough to have a roof over our heads. We set up the gun across the street from an abandoned way side in. It was small, the Germans called it a Gast Haus. We parked the truck behind the small building, the only one on this road, but I recall there were farm buildings close by, and near by a chicken

house. (I'm getting ahead of myself.)

We went inside. There were kerosene lights that we lit after making sure all the windows were light tight. There were no civilians and very little food, but the place had not been hit by shell fire and it was dry! We looked around and found the accommodations well suited to our tastes. Large table with plenty of chairs, cupboards, small kitchen, bedrooms and all the comforts of home.

The fellows brought in their gear after posting a guard on the gun and outside the door. I brought in our little evergreen and I think it was Jim Treadway, who had the reputation of finding anything, found a box of Christmas tree ornaments—a box of small silver balls. He either found a stand or he fashioned one out of something. So, we set up our little tree, decorated with silver balls. Now, Treadway was a coal miner from, I believe, West Virginia. He said he was also a farmer and he said that there were chickens across the road in that chicken coop. From somewhere he produced an empty potato sack, volunteered me as his helper and the two of us headed out the door in quest of Christmas dinner.

Well, we silently made our way to the chicken coop, and as I stood outside "holding the bag" so to speak, Treadway disappeared into the hen house. Nothing but silence for what seemed to be an hour. ...Visualize, if you will, me standing in the snow on a cold, foggy night, no weapon, holding an empty potato sack.

Suddenly, I heard a racket that would have alerted anyone for miles! A lot of squawking and flapping! Treadway had made contact!! Out the door flew something—I quickly grabbed it and pushed it in the bag. Then another one!—in the bag with that one too. And then Treadway made his appearance. "Let's get out of here before we wake up Hitler!", he said. Back to the Gast Haus with our dinner.

What he had done was grope around in the dark and when he found what he thought was a chicken, grabbed it by the neck, give it a few sharp spins to break it's neck and fling it out the door to my waiting arms and potato sack. What he didn't discover until we got back was that he had captured what looked like two roosters!!

But we were hungry and although some of the guys had gone to sleep, we boiled those birds for hours and found some canned green peas and that was our dinner.

Later that night a tank parked along side the building and we listened to some Christmas music on the tank radio courtesy of the Germans. That was our Christmas Eve night as I remember it.

Roswell N. Wert
26 INF 104 INF 1 BN HQ

WELCOME TO F COMPANY

I recall December 25, 1944, as a chilly, clear day as I was standing with my sergeant looking across the Rhine river at the German troops on the other side. ...We were bivouacked in a mansion along the Rhine River and war seemed like a very far off place to this naive 18-year-old kid from Worcester, Massachusetts.

...As we were standing and watching the Germans, I asked the sergeant why we did not shoot at them and he said, "If we shoot at them...they would shoot at us!" So both sides left each other alone! The sergeant then told me that I would not be able to look at a German soldier and shoot to kill him. He said I would be too scared! I think because I wore eyeglasses the sergeant was fooled by my looks but I told him he had nothing to worry about, when the time came, my rifle would be fired, and it was.

In the evening we were served the customary Christmas dinner of roast turkey, cranberry sauce and the rest of the trimmings. It was very nice because there was a fireplace lit up in the mansion and it was all very warm and cozy. We then went off to bed ready for the unknown.

Some time after midnight several of us were awakened and told to gather our things and move outside. We were then advised that we were being transferred to the 90th Division up north as replacements. (We found out later that heavy losses were incurred at the Saar River.) We rode in the dark and on into morning and I can still remember how beautiful it was as we rode through Nancy, all the trees lined up along both sides of the highway, as we headed for Luxembourg riding in back of the truck. As we rode further north it became much colder and snow covered the ground everywhere.

We arrived in late afternoon dusk and were lined up along the road waiting for instructions. As we waited we then heard an enormous explosion and hit the ground as fast as we could wondering what had hit us. We looked up and saw our new sergeant standing there and he

told us that our own 240mm cannons across the street had fired a salvo at the Germans! I'm sure we all had red faces as we were welcomed to F Company of the 359th Regiment of the 90th Division.

We would all see much worse in the coming days as combat infantrymen, but to this young kid these two particular days stick in my memory. In the combat days ahead the occurrences are still vivid, but the actual date is not even in my memory.

Harvey S. Meltzer
42 INF D

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY BIRTHDAY

I was born three days after Christmas and most of my life my gifts came "Merry Christmas and Happy Birthday"! Well, the "presents" in 1944 will forever color the Christmas season for me.

December 24, 1944, was my first day in combat and my first experience in seeing comrades killed and wounded. My unit, Company A, 290th Infantry, 75th Infantry Division, arrived in Hoeselt, Belgium, about 1:30 a.m. on December 21 and shortly after midnight on December 22 were trucked about 60 miles to the bulge area and took up defensive positions at Septon on the L'Ourthe River. The 1st Battalion, 290th Infantry, was attached to the 3rd Armored Division on December 23 and during that night marched to an assembly area east of Erezee.

Early on the morning of December 24 Company A was picked up by 3rd Armored Division half-tracks and taken east to Manhay, which was being shelled (Christmas fireworks?) and then back west to Grandmenil and then south to Oster. We mounted an attack to clear the high ground east and south of Oster and encountered small groups of panzer-grenadiers from the 2nd SS Panzer Division who managed to disorganize our attack so that about two platoons were left with the Company Commander who ordered us to dig-in over the objections of the two platoon sergeants. The captain then wanted two men to return to Oster and I was volunteered--my one true "Christmas gift"--although I was not too happy at the time. After we left, the Germans surprised the group and killed three men including one digging in the hole I had started since it was deeper than his.

At this point, the CO pulled the company off of the hill and we started to march out when the Battalion Commander (or Exec.) ordered us to return to the hill. At this point the captain had to be evacuated and 1st Lt. Giles Jenerette, the company exec., took command and we returned to Oster where we spent the night in houses and barns taking turns on watch and seeing fires burn to the north where the 2nd SS Panzers were taking Manhay and Grandmenil.

Christmas Day dawned bright and clear and we saw the contrails of bombers flying east. P-47's were attacking south of us and one came back over the ridge trailing smoke. When the pilot parachuted south of us he came toward Oster with his .45 drawn and was quite relieved to find that we were Americans.

We moved up to the tree line and dug in where we enjoyed our Christmas dinner consisting of some stale bread and a C ration shared with two other men. How I berated my stupidity in leaving a fruit cake my mother had sent me in my duffel bag in Hoeselt for some rear echelon commando to enjoy.

In late afternoon, Lt. Jenerette led a large patrol around the edge of the woods to a crossroads where we observed the Germans walking up and down the road in their long overcoats which I always envied since they seemed so much more practical than our short ones.

About dark, the Lt. sent some of the patrol back and continued on with the rest of us and eventually attacked Odeigne where more men were killed, wounded or captured. Lt. Jenerette was among the wounded suffering a severe chest wound. For this action he received several decorations including a DSC.

When the patrol returned to Oster, we found that the rest of the company had come down off the hill. Late on the 26th, we were issued our first rations--our squad got a ten-in-one box but before we could eat it we were ordered to move out. We moved by foot until after dark when we were picked up by trucks and taken to Blier.

The next day, the 27th, we had our "Christmas Dinner"--turkey, dressing and all the trimmings. Our enjoyment of the meal and our relief of being out was colored by the realization that the company had over 30 casualties--killed, wounded, captured, missing and sick. The next day was my 22nd birthday.

Charles R. Miller
75 INF D 290 INF A

CHURCH BECKONS...

[Krefeld, Germany] We had been there for about two days when Col. Merriam was called to Division Headquarters. When he returned, we were told that due to the breakthrough in Belgium, the 82nd Reconnaissance would be used to direct the division column south to an assembly area near Houffalize, Belgium. After spreading our men out from Krefeld to Houffalize, we set up our Headquarters Command Post in a store front in the center of Houffalize directly across the street from a beautiful church. It was after midnight and it was Christmas.

The Sergeant Major and I were the only ones in the Command Post and I think we were looking across the street at the church. We could see the altar with its cross and candles burning through the door.

A little later we found time to go to the church. I believe there were some silent prayers said. Maybe you can guess what we prayed for.

Tom Leonard
2 ARMDD 82 RECON BTRY HQ

AWARD OF SILVER STAR

"...the Silver Star is awarded to the following:

"Private First Class James F. Gregory, 39 561 748, Company 3, 290th Infantry for gallantry in action in connection with military operations against the enemy on 25 December 1944, in Belgium. Advancing alone against heavy machine gun and sniper fire, Private First Class Gregory, a messenger, was fired upon from an enemy occupied building near by. In returning the fire this gallant soldier killed one of the snipers then firing several more shots in front of the building he ran to the back repeating this action preventing the entrapped Germans from escaping and led them to believe they were surrounded. He killed two more Germans as they attempted to escape when they heard the burst of their own mortars. Two other soldiers came to his aid and guarded the exits of the building as he fearlessly entered the house alone to bring out nine German prisoners. The cool courage and personal bravery displayed by Private First Class Gregory reflects great credit upon himself and his unit."

James F. Gregory
75 INF D 290 INF 1 BN E

THERE WAS FOOD IN THE INN

...We stayed in the house with the infantry and lived in the cellar overlooking the valley below which was still occupied by the Germans. We noticed that Germans kept entering and leaving a big Bavarian Inn taking out food and wine. On Christmas Eve some of the 30th Infantry doughs said they were going to send a patrol down to the Inn and drive the Germans out and bring back some cheese, bread, wine, etc., to our position so we could celebrate Christmas. My Sherman's 75mm and my 30 cal. machine gun was set up to control the narrow pathway into the valley below. The doughs and I made sure we were aware of the correct password for the night so they could come safely back through our check point. As I remember, it was about two hours before the doughs came back from the valley. They not only came back with all kinds of food and drinks, but also brought up the Inn Keeper and his small daughter. The Inn Keeper had been shot in both feet to prevent his escape and his small daughter had been shot in the hip. The doughs took him to our medics for treatment and transport to a hospital in Malmedy.

That is how I spend the cold but beautiful Christmas in Stavelot, December 25, 1944. I looked up into the clear, cold sky and thought that my wife and 7-year-old daughter were able to see the same sky in Virginia. I said a Christmas prayer that I, too, would be allowed to live through all of this and be able to return soon to Virginia to be with them once more.

Raymond W. Locke
30 INF D 743 TK BN a

CHRISTMAS IN BASTOGNE

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For several days after we entered Bastogne, the weather was overcast--too "thick" to permit any air activity. The good news was that the Germans couldn't bomb and strafe us; the bad news was that our supplies of food, fuel and ammo were dwindling. Our Recon platoon

was comfy, dry and warm in the home of the mayor, M. Jacomin. We "suffered" from the elements, such as they were, only when we went out on our various patrols and guard mounts.

Whatever thoughts or hopes we had for Christmas were subordinated to the realities of our defensive routines; but Christmas spirits certainly soared with the break in the clouds on December 23rd, with the sight of American fighters wheeling over enemy positions, and C-47's dropping all manner of supplies. Although that also meant that "German air" could have its way with us, we allowed ourselves to think that Christmas might be somehow bright and happy after all, in some yet-to-be discovered way. I had no inkling yet, of how special mine was going to be. Unknown to me, my father and sister had begun my Christmas preparations months before.

He can set the stage, himself, from a retrospective he wrote in 1954:

This Christmas season will be the tenth anniversary of the siege of Bastogne, and I've come across a pertinent letter from my son, who was one of the "Battling Bastards" in that historic episode, which seems at this particular time to have an added bit of poignant interest.

For the purpose of scene setting, we can go back to the fall of 1944, when my son was with the 10th Armored Division in Western France. Along about mid-September, when we were beset with urges to "ship early for Christmas," we busied ourselves making up yuletide packages for him. Without any real consideration of where he might be three months hence, we conceived what we thought would be a pleasant, unusual gesture, an extra box of inexpensive toys that he could pass around to little French Jacques and Jeannes who would enjoy a bit of Christmas cheer from overseas. So we made up a box of 5 and 10 cent store trifles—a wooden tank, some small games, beads, dolls, crayons and a miscellany of other odds and ends, and sent it along.

December came and the days passed, with no definite word about his whereabouts. Over the breakfast table I had a war map, and by means of pins and news reports, I tried to keep track of the 10th Armored's movements. With Christmas week, came news that advanced units of the Division had entered Germany at Merzig. My son was in reconnaissance—about as advanced as one can get—so, to my sad satisfaction, a pin placed him at Merzig. Then came word of the Bulge and the encirclement of the 101st Airborne at Bastogne. And a single line in the dispatches—"Advanced units of Patton's 10th Armored Division have been diverted to Bastogne"—convinced me that my boy was one of the beleaguered. Like many another parent, I sweated it out, hoping with painful anxiety for a letter postmarked after January 1. It came—but not until March—from a hospital in England where he was thawing out his frozen feet. Eventually, when censorship was relaxed, came the story of the Christmas box:

Saw a 10th Armored patch yesterday, a kid from our doughfoot support, an ex-POW. Seems he was at the head of our column, behind which the Krauts made miserable music. I went to Bastogne, he went to Deutschland.

And that's where I was on December 25 and 26—Bastogne, I mean. Christmas Eve we got our first bombing, which kind of messed up our meager plans for a celebration. The 24 civilians and our platoon were going to have a midnight mass in the cellar. There was a little manger all set up, with an Eveready Star of Bethlehem. The mayor (it was his house we were using) was going to break out the wine, and it would have been a memorable occasion.

Of course, it developed into a memorable occasion, anyway. At 0300, my troop mates and I were hauling 80 octane gasoline out of a burning building.

The 27th, you'll recall, was the date the ring was broken. Immediately behind the tanks came our "A" trains, with fuel, food, ammo and mail. And in that mail was the box of trinkets! I asked the mayor's sister to help me with the distribution, sharing our thoughts about the situation in English, French, Deutsch, Flemish and gestures. She took a toy tank and a couple of knickknacks for the kids in the cellar, then led me through the rubble to the home of her sister—a house well filled with graduated youngsters.

One of them lay in bed, under the watchful eye of a civilian nurse. The others were in the kitchen, with mom and pop. Madame Jacomin ushered me in, made the necessary explanations, and we proceeded to distribute the marbles and bracelets and kaleidoscopes and what

have you, among those exceptionally appreciative hands.

I'm sure you'll never see such emotion on a woman's face—and the little tykes went wild! I was soundly and sincerely kissed by a multitude of grimy little faces, while "Vive L'Amérique" rang from wall-to-wall with as much enthusiasm and vigor as it has at any time in this war.

I could appreciate, and sympathize—but I couldn't possibly fathom the feelings in that mother's heart. It was on her face, such a mingling of emotion that is impossible to describe. One of her kids was sick, her home was damaged by a week of shelling, God only knows how much food they had, and all the darkness of Hell was held a scant mile away from her door, by a thin line of determined GI angels. And out of the bleakness and misery comes the very spirit of St. Nick, personified, no less, by a soldier—the sort of being from which they had cringed for four long and hideous years.

If you can draw a line and take a sum from that...

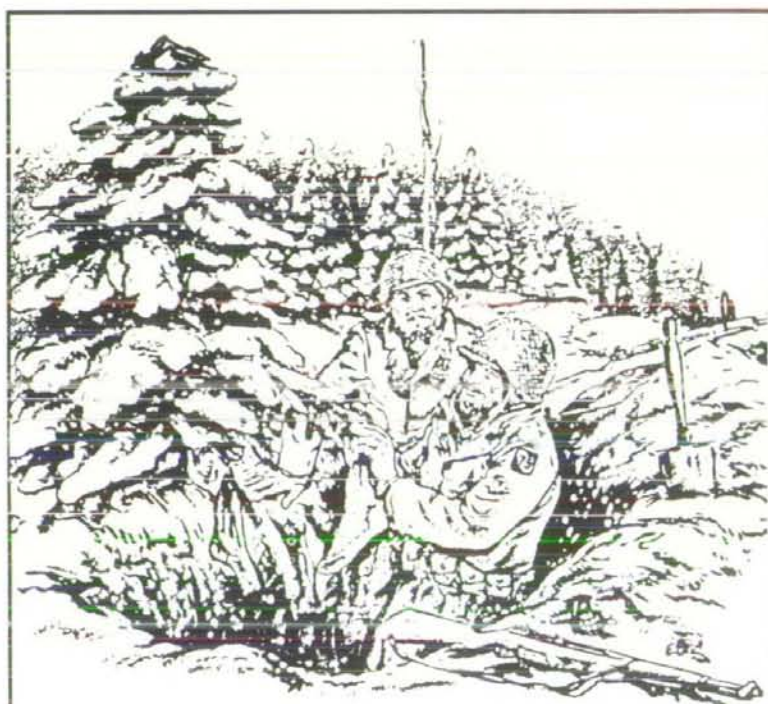
Little Louis, one of our "cellar kids," four years old and chubby, got the tank and most of the lollipops and gum. He shadowed me for the remaining three and a half days, before we left, and would have pulled my guard with me, if I'd awakened him. (He actually did wake up once while I was putting on my boots, and came upstairs to stand my watch at the front door.) Forty times an hour, he'd shove his little biscuit hook in mine, and lean against my leg, like a devoted pet. The wooden tank went with him, wherever he went.

I can't help but feel that along with many other stories, there will spring from the Siege of Bastogne a tale of international goodwill that will live a long time.

Someday, I'd like to go back and see.

Unless I'm mistaken, the venture was more successful than your fondest hopes could have imagined. Sleep well on it!

M. N. Heyman
10 ARMDD 3 TK BN



Their stockings were hung on the branches to dry
in the hopes that the Supply Sgt. soon would be by -

Reprinted from *BULGEBUSTERS*
75th Division Assn. Newsletter
Submitted by Emery B. Antonucci - 75th Div

WE NEED YOUR STORY!!

We are fast running out of stories for this column and we need your help. Won't you send us your story? You've got a group of guys just waiting to hear from YOU.

SOLDIER OF THE YEAR--1993 16TH INFANTRY REGIMENT FORT RILEY, KANSAS



Earlier this year Carl F. "Frenchy" LeMier was named "Soldier of The Year" by the 16th Infantry Regiment at Fort Riley, Kansas

"Frenchy" LeMier, left, pictured with a gentleman who was a veteran of the infantry in World War I and a paratrooper in World War II.

"Frenchy" was inducted in the army in March, 1942, went through basic training in Spartanburg, South Carolina, and on to the 1st Division in Indiantown Gap. From there he went to England to be shipped to the North African invasion of Oran. He received his first Purple Heart there when he was blinded for three weeks by gasoline. He thought he would get to go back home but the Division had other plans.

From there he went to Rome (Arno) where he was trained by the airborne. As a paratrooper (82ND AIRBORNE, 325TH GLIDER INFANTRY, COMPANY B) he was a part of the Battle of the Bulge. The number of times he was wounded and the number of awards he received are too numerous to mention. He has some real stories to tell. [Send them to us, "Frenchy." We'll try to use them.]



106th Infantry Division

By C. W. "Pete" Laumann

GOLDEN LIONS

I have read many articles about units that were active in the Battle of the Bulge, but not many about the division that bore the brunt of the German attack, the 106th Infantry Division.

We were, as Drew Pearson wrote, a very green unit that left the States in November of 1944 and moved into the front lines on December 10th around St. Vith. This unit replaced the 2nd Division, in some instances by signing over gun emplacement rather than pull them out.

The division was overrun by the German offensive December 16th through 19th. Two regiments, the 422nd Infantry and the 423 Infantry were surrounded and captured,

only after they used all available ammunition. Approximately 8,500 men were killed, wounded or captured. Today the division has reunions every year and, naturally, most of the members were Prisoners of War.

On December 15, 1944, the division pilots flew into St. Vith, only to leave on the 17th because of the German offensive. As we all know, the weather was terrible, with only a 500-600 foot ceiling.

The 592nd Field Artillery Battalion, a 155 MM unit was in division support and lost only one gun when a German 88 landed in one gun section on the 16th, killing the officer and entire gun crew. Their liaison pilots, along with the other assigned pilots, flew over 45 missions along the front lines. When the German offense was halted, an air section consisting of 10 planes and pilots, operated as a unit with scheduled flights of two hours along the front lines every day from sunrise to sunset.

Very little is mentioned about liaison pilots and sections because we very seldom came into contact with the enemy. However, we were available to adjust fire on the enemy when called upon to do so. We didn't see the enemy personally but were sitting ducks with no ditch, no hill, no tree or building to hide behind. We were all shot at and luckily not in a vulnerable spot. However, not all made it. The 106th did lose four or five planes, but no pilots, because of the weather between the 15th and 19th of December, 1944. I am sure that every liaison pilot was proud of the job they were assigned to do.



Picture of 106th Division Pilots and Observers, taken at Namur, Belgium around December 20, 1944. Pictured are: Front row--Lts. Gray (P), McKensie (P) and Scott (P). Middle Row--Lts. Neese (O), Stafford (P), Lang (P), Crawford (O), Elliott (P). Back Row--Maj. (unidentified) (P), Lts. McClure (P), Lauman (P), Cefaretti (P), and Cassibry (O). Should any reader know the whereabouts of any of these men, please contact: C. W. "Pete" Lauman, 6399 Smiley Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63139.

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE DECEASED

Notification Received

October 2, 1992 through September 7, 1993

A. Z. ADKINS, JR., Gainesville, FL, 80 INF 317 INF H
ROBERT ANDERSON, Wakefield, MI, 94 INF 301 INF 1 BN
WADE ARNOLD, Wausau, WI, 9 ARMD 2 TK BN B
EDWARD E. ASHLEY, Lynn, MA, 26 INF MP
JON G. BABYAK, JR., McKeesport, PA, 1 INF 26 INF C
CHARLES F. BAKER, Baton Rouge, LA, 28 INF 229 FA BN HQ
EDWARD L. BEATTY, Prescott Valley, AZ, 743 RWY OP BN C
ALVIN P. BECKER, Ridgewood, NJ, 9 INF 39 INF B
CLYDE BEERS, Springfield, PA, 179 FA GP
WALTER J. BERTEL, San Lorenzo, CA, 87 INF 345 INF A
LEO G. BISSONNETTE, Fort Wayne, IN, 28 INF 28 QM CO
STANLEY D. BLACKHURST, Salt Lake City, UT, 17 ABND 513 PIR 1 BN
IRVING D. BLADEN, Homosassa, FL, 99 INF 393 INF HQ
RAMON O. BOMGARDNER, Lewisport, KY, 101 ABND 401 GIR C
JOHN R. BOTTGER, Philadelphia, PA, 427 COLLECTING CO
LEE BRAKE, Massillon, OH, 101 ABND 907 FA BN
WILLIAM F. BRANDLE, Johnstown, PA, 603 ENGR CMFLG BN
MARINA STANO BROOKS, Houston, TX, 101 EVAC HOSP
HARGUS T. BROWN, Cocoa, FL, 5 INF 10 INF H
JOHN H. BROWN, Gadsden, AL, 16TH FA BN
JOHN R. BROWN, Bronx, NY, 44 INF 191 MP BN
HAROLD BURNS, Hiawatha, KS, 26 INF 735 TK BN
ARMONDO D. CARBONI, St. Petersburg, FL, 28 INF 110 INF B
EUGENE J. CARPENTER, Shakopee, MN, 90 INF 358 INF HQ
BERNARD P. CARRIGAN, Rutland, VT, 106 INF 422 INF 3 BN L
JOHN L. CASE, Madeira Beach, FL, 16 FA OBSN BN A BTRY
JOHN S. CASTAGNOZZI, Stratford, CT, 150 ENGR CMBT BN H&S
CHARLES CARLTON, Tucson, AZ, 663 FA BN A
IVAN CARPENTER, Butler, PA, 771 FA BN
FRANCIS P. CHURGA, Royersford, PA, 28 INF 107 FA BN C BTRY
BERNARD S. CLAPPER, Mt. Holly, NJ, 509 MP BN B
ELI COLE, Fresno, CA, 101 ABND 502 PIR HQ
WALTER L. CONNELL, JR., Trinity, TX, 825 TD BN
ALLEN L. CONRAD, Harrisburg, PA, 28 INF 112 INF E
HARRY E. COOPER, Toledo, OH, 304 INF 2 QM
FRANKLIN H. COPP, Falls Church, VA, 5 ARMD
EDWARD C. CORNELL, Savannah, GA, 28 INF 630 TD BN B
WILLIAM B. COUNSELMAN, Houston, DE, 75 INF 291 INF H
BEN N. CRISWELL, Miami, FL, 42 INF 232 INF
NORMAN CUNZENHEIM, Platteville, WI, 3 ARMD 67 FA BN
EVERETT M. DAUGHTERY, Beaver, OH, 101 ABND 501 PIR I
JAMES E. DAVIDSON, Oldsmar, FL, 78 INF 303 ENGR CMBT BN C
NORMAN H. DAVIES, Cleveland, OH, 28 INF 103 ENGR CMBT BN SVC
GEZA ANDREW DENNIS, Irving, TX, 26 INF 104 INF A&T
JOHN S. DESIMONE, Salina, PA, 7 ARMD 31 TK BN HQ
ALBERT D. DIAN, Orlando, FL, 80 INF 318 INF C
WARREN E. DIEFFENDERFER, Nisbet, PA, 4 INF 8 INF 1 BN HQ
BEN C. ERICKSON, Modesto, CA, 80 INF 347 INF
DENNIS J. ERTEL, Wyomissing, PA, 87 INF 346 INF 2 BN F
DONALD A. EWING, New Kensington, PA, 1303 ENGR GS REGT
MILTON FEIR, Santa Monica, CA, 2 ARMD 48 MD BN HQ
CHARLES A. FOREMAN, McLean, VA, 84 INF 333 INF M
P. V. FURGASON, Littleton, CO, 87 INF 347 INF 1 BN A
JAMES GENTILE, Auburn, NY, 28 INF BAND
CHARLES S. GLISSON, JR., Decatur, GA, 67 EVAC HOSP
CHARLES P. GRACE, Deltona, FL, 9 ARMD 19 TK BN
BERNARD J. GRANT, JR., Indianapolis, IN, 2 ARMD 92 FA BN
ARTHUR T. GREGORY, Brentwood, NY, 28 INF 112 INF M
JAMES M. GRIFFIN, Mayhill, NM, 8 FA OBN BN XIX CO
ARTHUR W. HAMALAINEN, Rutland, MA, 35 INF 134 INF I
HENRY T. HARALDSON, Greeley, CO, VII CORPS 981 FA BN C
JAMES HARDY, Dunbar, PA, 702 TK BN B
FRANK P. HEBBLETHWAITE, Cheverly, MD, 457 AAA AW BN
ROBERT HEISLEMAN, Auburn, CA, 50 FA BN HQ

CLYDE G. HEITSMAN, Topeka, KS, 17 ABND 194 GIB 1 BN HQ
ROBERT M. HELMS, Effingham, SC, 49 CMBT ENGR BN 3 PLTN C
WILLIAM HENRY, Huntington Beach, CA, 28 INF 112 INF
GEORGE W. HLAD, Cambridge, OH, 331 CANNON CO
EDWARD P. HOLUB, Albertson, NY, 28 INF 28 SIGNAL CO
HOBART F. HOPKINS, Carlisle, PA, 28 INF
M. E. HUBACH, Collinsville, IL, 7 ARMD 23 AIB A
ROBERT I. HUGHES, JR., Homosassa, FL, 99 INF 393 INF C
THOMAS E. HUNNEMANN, Chicago, IL, 5 INF 10 INF B
ROSS A. HUNTER, Burke, NY, 99 INF 394 INF HQ
DEWEY ADDISON ISOM, Cambridge City, IN, 28 INF 714 TD
CLINTON C. JOHNSON, Lockport, NY, 28 INF 112 INF H
CYRIL JOHNSON, Granite City, IL, 11 ARMD 55 AIB A
NEIL O. JOHNSON, Aiken, SC, 740 FA BN
WILLIAM T. JOHNSON, Charlotte, NC, 26 INF 102 FA BN C
F. JOE JOY, Batavia, NY, 8 INF 28 FA BN B
JOHN M. KEHOE, Mountain Top, PA, 11 CAV GP 44 CAV RECON SQN
CHARLES KOVACH, Central City, PA, 142 AAA BN
CHESTER KUCIAPINSKI, Forestville, NY, 35 INF 320 INF H
PATRICK LaFORTE, Kenmore, NY, 18 INF 1 INF B
EDWARD LAMB, Valley Stream, NY, 106 INF 422 INF I
ALFRED J. LAMMON, Montgomery, AL, 159 ENGR CMBT BN
R. NOLAN LANGLEY, Eugene, OR, 11 ARMD 575 AAA AW BN C
FRAY LANN, Birmingham, AL, 159 ENGR CMBT BN
MARTIN LENNON, W. Rosbury, MA, 80 INF 610 TD BN
ROY LEDIG, Little Silver, NJ, 275 AFA B
SEVERN O. LONGSTRETH, Charleston, WV, 78 INF 78 SIGNAL CO
RUDY N. LORIN, Walterboro, SC, 28 INF 103 ENGR CMBT BN B
GLENN H. LOTTNER, St. Petersburg, FL, 76 INF 385 INF H
RICHARD LUND, Plainfield, IL, 87 INF 346 INF C
JAMES B. MAIDEN, Morehead City, NC, 78 INF 309 INF 1 BN C
ANGELO M. MARCANTONIO, New Kensington, PA, 28 INF 28 QM
NICHOLAS J. MARTIN, Canton, OH, 6 ARMD 9 AIB B
FRANK MASSENA, Philadelphia, PA, 75 INF 289 INF H
FRANK J. MAY, JR., Dunkirk, NY, 9 ARMD 360 QM TRK CO
JAMES D. McARTHUR, Murrell's Inlet, SC, 75 INF 289 INF 1 BN B
ROY D. McKILLOP, Maynard, PA, 654 ENGR TOPO BN
GEORGE S. McLAUGHLIN, Butler, PA, 3696 QM TK CO
JOHN McLAUGHLIN, Holden, MA, 294 ENGR CMBT BN A
WILLIAM McMASTER, Glendora, NJ, 9 ARMD 27 AIB B
KENNETH W. MILLER, Alton, IL, 7 ARMD 440 AFA BN SVC CO
RICHARD J. MILLER, North Olmsted, OH, 99 INF 372 FA BN B
ALPHONSO MURPHY, Hanover, IN, 5 INF 2 INF L
JUSTICE R. NEALE, Lawton, OK, 324 ENGR CMBT BN HQ
REGINALD G. NOLTE, San Antonio, TX, 405 FG HQ
WILLIAM C. O'DONNELL, Cincinnati, OH, 1278 ENGR CMBT BN A
JOSEPH E. PACZKOWSKI, Germantown, MD, 76 INF 417 INF HQ
JACK E. PALSGROVE, Cape Girardeau, MO, 7 ARMD 814 TD BN
JOSEPH W. PAONESSA, Sanborn, NY, 135 ENGR CMBT BN
WORTH F. PARRISH, Maitland, FL, 60 ARMD 60 AIB A
WILLIAM PARTRIDGE, Philadelphia, PA, 99 INF 99 SIGL
LEONARD G. PEASE, Buchanan, MI, 7 ARMD ARTY
JOHN B. PERNICE, Columbia, MD, 1 ARMY 7 CORP 172 FA BN HQ
EARL B. PETERS, Corona, SD, 2 INF 23 INF H
PETER G. POLETS, JR., Bradford, PA, 2 INF 23 INF C
GEORGE R. POWELL, St. Mary's, WV, 80 INF 318 INF HQ
RAUL G. PRIETO, El Paso, TX, 28 INF HQ
LOREN W. PURDY, Sardis, B.C., Canada, 419 ENGR DT
ROSCOE S. PUTNAM, Antrim, NH, 80 INF 318 INF G
CHARLES B. REDMOND, Kent, CT, 28 INF 103 CMBT ENGR BN HQ
CONKLIN M. REINHARDT, Syracuse, NY, 452 AAA AW BN
ROBERT RIDER, Chestertown, MD, 159 ENGR CMBT BN
BENJAMIN J. RIGAUD, East Berne, NY, 99 INF 801 TD BN
WRIGHT C. ROBINSON, Kill Devil Hills, NC, 1 INF 18 INF A
HARRY ROSENBERGER, Brackenridge, PA, ASSOCIATE
LON R. ROSS, Okolona, MS, 5 INF 11 INF H
ISAAC SALTZ, Pembroke Pines, FL, 87 INF 364 INF L
ALLEN K. SAUNDERS, St. Louis, MO, 738 TK BN
ROBERT D. SCHEFFLER, Slatington, PA, 84 INF 557 AAA AW BN
MARK W. SCHMOYER, Allentown, PA, 26 INF 328 INF D

(Continued on Page 32)

List of Deceased

(Continued from Page 31)

EDWIN SCHWIEGER, Grand Island, NE, 99 INFD 393 INF D
DAVID E. SHERRARD, Des Moines, IA, 87 INFD 347 INF C
ROBERT N. SIMMONS, Millsboro, DE, 83 INFD 329 INF
ARNOLD M. SNYDER, Randallstown, MD, 740 TK BN
HOWARD L. SPADE, South Greensburg, PA, 82 ABND 348 ENGR BN
BENNIE SPAMPINATO, Lake Worth, FL, 1 INFD 18 INF 1 BN A
ROY STAHL, Tucson, AZ, 99 INFD 394 INF K
ROBERT STEGGERDA, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 4TH ARMDD 10 AIB HQ
ARNE W. STOOLE, Baltimore, MD, 11 ARMDD H&HQ
VINCENT KEITH SUTTON, Honesdale, PA, 10 ARMDD 798 AAA AW
BN D BTRY
EDWARD J. SVIRBELY, Bethlehem, PA, 289 ENGR CMBT BN
GERALD S. TEACHOUT, Orange, CA, 9 INFD 60 INF F
HOWARD F. THOMAS, Troy, OH, 789 AAA BN
LESLIE W. THOMAS, Lansing, IL, 7 ARMDD 557 ORD HM 86 ORD
BN
STEVE THOMPSON, Brooklyn, NY, 2 ARMDD 41 AIR F
LEE H. TIMMER, Mount Morris, IL, 26 INFD BAND HQ
ORRIN TOFTOY, Aurora, IL, 36 CAV RECON SQ, 11 CAV GP, TRC
H. A. TURNER, Blue Ridge Summit, PA, 926 SIGL BN (SEP) TAC
HOWARD TURNER, Magnolia, NJ, 106 INFD 423 INF K
WARDEN W. TURRILL, Belpre, OH, 784 AAA AW BN
GEORGE E. TUTWILER, Harrisonburg, VA, 29 INFD 116 INF C
RAYMOND VASCONCELLOS, Capitola, CA, 965 FA BN C
JULIUS MORRIS WADE, Dunn, NC, 101 ABND HQ
BERT JAMES WARNER, Tucson, AZ, 9 ARMDD MAINT BN C
JAMES M. WEBER, Streetsboro, OH, 396 ARMD FA BN
HARRY E. WELSH, Lake Elsinore, CA, 99 INFD 324 MED BN A
BOBBY L. WHEELER, Houston, TX, 17 ABND 513 PIR d
HENRY W. WICE, Franklin, PA, 11 ARMDD 705 TD BN
THOMAS E. WILLIAMS, Jackson, TN, 11 ARMDD 21 AIB HQ & B
EARL WILLIAM YATES, Battle Creek, MI, 87 INFD 346 INF C
OZRO L. YENNE, Sterling, CO, 10 ARMDD 132 ORD MNT BN

LUXEMBOURG REMEMBERS

In February of this year, MAYNARD H. COLMARK, 14TH FIELD ARTILLERY OBSERVATION BATTALION, visited Ettelbruck, Luxembourg. He reports he and members of his family were warmly welcomed and entertained by the people there. He wanted to share with you a portion of a letter he received from Jean-Pierre Kremer:

"...Here in Luxembourg we are still remembering the landing of the Allied Forces in Normandy on June 6, 1944. At that moment there was again a spark of hope that the German tyranny would soon come to an end. Five years ago, my wife and I visited the landing site. For me it was overwhelming and I guess it was the biggest, vastest and riskiest (Americans, Canadians, etc.). Our country would now be incorporated in the "Great German Reich." Impossible to figure out the consequences of a German victory in 1945. Therefore, Luxembourg can not stop bending our heads with respect and dignity to our American liberators and to thank God that he protected so well our small Luxembourg."

LETTER TO MEMBERS:

In the last issue of *The Bulge Bugle* we included a letter from William R. Hemphill, VBOB President, regarding the Battle of the Bulge 50th Anniversary Book to be published by Turner Publishing Company. Many, many members have written to us concerning the omission of their unit. We had hoped that the article would suffice as our apology and, in the interest of saving some very scarce time, relieve us of answering individual letters. If your unit was omitted, please refer to the August issue for an explanation of the circumstances involved in this matter. We did not compose nor did we see the list of units before it was printed in the flyer.

IN MEMORY AND RECOGNITION OF LT. FRANCES SLANGER AND THE NURSES OF WWII

[The following was sent to us by John B. Savard, 2nd Infantry Division, 38th Infantry, 2nd Battery, Company G. John sends us many articles for *The Bugle*. You may remember some of his poetry. John tells us this story was written in 1945 by Alton Smally, staff writer and war correspondent for the *St. Paul Dispatch*.]

Army Nurse

I received a note from an Army nurse Thursday. She complained that nurses haven't been given a fair share of publicity recognition.

"It's largely our own fault," she admitted. "The girls who have served overseas have adopted a policy of praising the fighting man and minimizing their own activities. That is entirely laudable. But it is not very smart."

"I happen to be the daughter of an advertising man. I have been taught that modesty can be overdone. I believe in giving full credit to the men in the front lines. But a bit of honor should be accorded the Nurses' Corps that helps keep them there."

Hospital Ship

Her point is well taken.

Not long ago I interviewed a nurse just back from the European theater. I couldn't get her to say anything about herself.

Then there's the case of Lt. Frances Slanger, the first American nurse killed in action in Europe. Chances are you never heard of her—even though her work was so outstanding the Army has named a new hospital ship in her honor.

Even among the men she cared for in field hospitals just behind the front she is known more for a letter she wrote to *Stars and Stripes*, the Army paper, than for the fact she gave her life for the boys in uniform.

Hi Ya, Babe!

Here's what she wrote:

"The GIs say we rough it. ...True, we are set up in tents, sleep on cots and are subject to the weather. We wade ankle-deep in mud.

"But you soldiers have to LIE in it.

"Sure, we rough it. But in comparison to the way you men are taking it we can't complain nor do we feel bouquets are due us. It is to you—the men behind the guns, the men driving our tanks, flying our planes, sailing our ships, building our bridges—that we doff our helmets.

"...Your wounded do not cry. Your buddies always come first. The patience and determination you show, the courage and fortitude you have, all this is something awesome to behold! It is we who are proud to be here. Rough it? No, it is a privilege to see you open your eyes and with that swell American grin say: 'Hi ya, Babe!'"

Shell-Fire

So Lt. Frances Slanger became the nurse who wrote "that" letter!

And not very many people know her real story. They don't know she waded ashore to a Normandy beach almost in the shadow of the troops. Shells were bursting on all sides. After that she pushed forward, carrying her own bedroll and helping pack the field equipment. During the Bastogne offensive steady rains turned the pasture land into a sea of yellow-sticky mud. Four-buckle arctics donned over combat boots never came off until bedtime.

There were thousands of wounded. She worked to the point of exhaustion.

Finally a chief surgeon ordered her to take a rest. And on the first day in weeks she hadn't had to labor eighteen hours a day an 88-millimeter shell burst above her tent....

Eternal Guard

They buried her in her green fatigues because that was the uniform in which she had toiled since Invasion Day. In the military cemetery she is flanked by rows of white crosses that mark the graves of her loved fighting men. The GIs like to say these soldiers surround her as an eternal guard of honor....

So I'm glad to agree with the girl who wrote me that nurses aren't sufficiently recognized. I'm happy to give them publicity. Their own modesty is responsible for the fact they're not mentioned oftener.

[As Frances was killed in Bastogne, John wonders if anyone might remember her and he offers "a salute to all the nurses who served in World War II, especially those wonderful girls we wounded GI's first saw after being evacuated from the lines."]

ST. LOUIS GATEWAY CHAPTER CONDUCTS FLOOD RELIEF FUND

During the month of September, the St. Louis Gateway Chapter kicked off a fund to help VBOB members who are flood victims in the Midwest.

A letter was written to all members in the states affected. The letter asked those who needed help to contact the Gateway Chapter and those who could contribute to the fund to assist those in need, please send donations. This letter served as a "stop-gap" to get the ball rolling on this project until the announcement could be made in this issue of *The Bulge Bugle*.

It was felt that losing all worldly possessions at the age of 65+ would be particularly devastating and anything that could be done to assist those with whom we fought side-by-side would be well worth the efforts expended.

The MD/DC and Delaware Valley Chapters were quick to help with each making a sizeable contribution. Members who received the September letter were also quick to respond.

If you need assistance as a result of the flood:

Please send your name, address and telephone number, indicating your needs to Kent Stephens at the address below. Please make your request as brief as possible. Also bear in mind that funds may be very limited--but our hearts are big.

If you would like to help:

Please send your donation to:

Gateway Chapter--Flood Fund
c/o W. Kent Stephens
107 Bluffview Lane
Collinsville, Illinois 62234



This picture shows the officers of the MD/DC Chapter as Neil B. Thompson, Treasurer, writes checks for donations to the Gateway Chapter of Missouri for flood relief; Charlotte Hall Veterans Home; Fort Howard VA Medical Center; Perry Point VA Medical Center; Baltimore VA Medical Center; and the Delaware Valley Chapter of VBOB for the monument at Valley Forge Military Academy. Officers are left to right: Neil Thompson, Henry Rehn, Ed Tooma, Ed Radzwich (President) John Bowen and Ben Layton

EDUCATION KIT NOW AVAILABLE

VBOB has prepared an "Education Kit" for your use in telling the story of the Battle of the Bulge to your local schools. It contains: (1) list of the units involved; (2) map of the area affected; (3) fact sheet on the battle and VBOB; (4) brief history of the battle; (5) sample stories from VBOB members; (6) list of videos and books that may be of interest.

This is an opportunity for you to help ensure that the Battle of the Bulge is never forgotten. If you would like a copy, please write and ask for the "Education Kit."

FROM SIX TO 200 IN LESS THAN A YEAR

On December 17, 1992, six WWII veterans from the 26th Infantry Division met for lunch in St. Louis. Kent Stephens had received a list of St. Louis area VBOB veterans from the National Office. These men had been invited to the luncheon to discuss the possibility and steps needed to form a VBOB chapter.

After much newspaper and radio publicity, 102 WWII veterans attended and the St. Louis Chapter was off and running. They now have nearly 200 members and over 500 names on their active mailing list.



Officers of the Gateway Chapter, left to right: Steward Piper, Vice President; Harold Mueller, Treasurer; Bob Ward, Secretary; Dick Cotter, Sergeant-at-Arms; and President Kent Stephens after a parade in St. Louis on September 18, 1993.

Now, they happily announce the formation of a Ladies Auxiliary. Millie Knize is president of "The St. Louis Gateway Chapter of the VBOB Auxiliary." The ladies of this organization stand ready to see that the Battle of the Bulge is never forgotten.

CBS NEWS REQUEST ASSISTANCE WITH DOCUMENTARY

CBS news is in the midst of preparing a documentary for the 50th Anniversary of the D-Day landings and the subsequent drive to the Rhine. The two-hour special will be hosted by General H. Norman Schwarzkopf and Charles Kuralt and will air sometime in early June. They are looking for veterans of D-Day who may also have taken part in the Battle of the Bulge as possible interview subjects. Please write to: Deirdre Naphin; CBS Reports; 555 West 57th Street, 8th Floor; New York, New York 10019.



Dixon Poole, National Quartermaster
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge

Notice: Normandy Invasion 50th Anniversary Pin now
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Special ... **\$25.00 ea.**
7. VBOB T-Shirts: M, L, XL, XXL \$13.00 ea.
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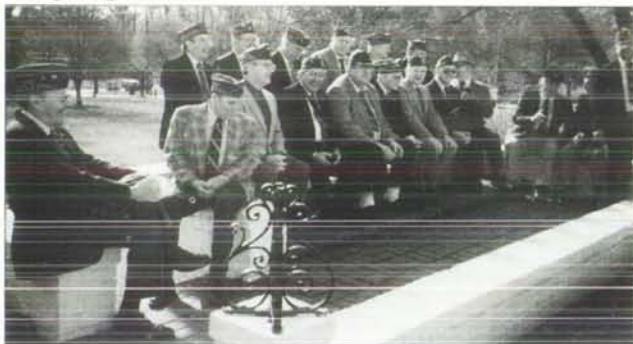
The American G.I., the Greatest Soldier the World Has Ever Seen

By Joseph P. Barrett

There was a sense of joy at the Valley Forge Military Academy when a group of men got together recently. One would of thought it was a college or high school reunion. They all wore army overseas caps, except that they jazzed them up with all sorts of memorabilia. All earned by the way. Earned the hard way.

On the hats they had sewed on the First, Third and Ninth Army insignia. Most of the hats had the European Theater of Operations ribbon with several battle stars, silver and bronze stars as well as purple heart insignias were in abundance as well as the Combat Infantry Badge. Many of the men wore ties with the colors of the ETO or the silver or bronze star crossing them.

They are members of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge organization.



Members of Delaware Valley Chapter at Valley Forge Military Academy and College, in Wayne, Pennsylvania, December, 1992.

Listen to some of the stories:

There was a big discussion of Lugers and P-38's, German hand guns, when one guy spoke up. "I had a P-38 and the guys said if you got captured with one, the Krauts would execute you. Well I was missing for five days and finally when I caught up with my outfit, I thought they would have missed me, instead, they said: 'We thought by now they would have shoved that P-38 up your a--.'"

Another fellow remembered back in Normandy he was assigned to guard the CP of a general. It was about 2:00 a.m. when he heard a voice call out: "M.P., M.P., I want to go to the latrine. Can I come out without getting shot?" So out he comes, our guy remembers, and he is wearing pajamas and on the shoulders he was wearing two gold stars.

"How do you catch spies?" This little old guy asked. Then he answered his own question. "Check their underwear."

As fellow members of the Battle of the Bulge waited with deep interest, he explained.

"Well, the Germans were dropping these spies, German soldiers who spoke English like a guy from Brooklyn and they were dressed like G.I.'s. So we figure, how can we check these bastards? We didn't hear about asking them 'Is Notre Dame in the American or League?' So we figured, let's check their drawers, sure as shit, a G.I. wore G.I. issue

long johns. A kraut wore kraut underwear made in Hamburg or some where in Germany. Fruit of the Loom it was not."

Then a veteran spoke up: "Remember that sign they used to have, it said, 'If you're drippin' you're not shippin'."

Then from another corner: "Remember that sign over the latrines: 'She may be beautiful--but is she clean?'" At that point someone shouted out: "Short Arm Inspection."

all the old men laughed.

Jack Hyland and Stan Wojtusik were trying to get the men posed around a mock-up of the Battle of the Bulge Monument which will be built at the Valley Forge Military Academy as soon as enough funds are collected. But with everyone exchanging stories it was more difficult than going through the manual of arms.

These are the most lovable fighting men the world has ever seen. They marched across Europe liberating one country after another, all the while tossing candy and chewing gum to the kids.

When our minds go back to those days of World War II, it's not to relive the hard times, the cold, tiredness, lonesomeness, fear, anger, hunger, despair, plain and simple misery, it's just to stand around and shoot the shit.

Remember a bad day. A long convoy. Or an armor column after a long day's march. And everyone was tired and hungry and someone would call out in a perfect imitation of President Roosevelt: "I hate waahr. My wife Eleanor hates waahr. My dog Fala hates waahr."

And everyone would laugh. The tension was broken.

[Joseph P. Barrett was a reporter for the Philadelphia Evening Bulletin. He was a member of the 474 AAA which landed on D-Day and fought through five battles of the European Theater of Operations.]

BULGE REENACTMENT JANUARY 1994

Mark your calendar now for the last weekend of January 1994 to attend the Bulge Reenactment at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania. The reenactment group met with officials at the Gap to reserve the refurbished World War II Barracks in Area 12 for the Friday and Saturday evenings of the 28th and 29th of January 1994, with checkout on Sunday morning and religious services at the chapels for those who want to attend.

Approximately 1,000 reenactors are expected to participate. A Sherman and a Stuart Tank as well as a large contingent of allied and German vehicles will be used and also on display. A large contingent of veterans is also expected. Maybe some of the chapters would want to arrange for a bus or car pools to come to the Gap. Those who have attended in past years will attest to the truly delightful weekend to relive those days nearly 50 years ago. Within five minutes of arriving it is like you have served with all these guys before. The last issue of The Bugle has a good description of the immediate past reenactment. The reenactors really enjoy talking to you and it is inspirational to see the positiveness of these young reenactors.

Though the final price has not been worked out it is expected to be in the \$25-\$30 range for two nights lodging in the barracks on genuine GI bunks, brand new latrines and Saturday breakfast and dinner. Lunch on Saturday and supper on Friday are on our own and generally are eaten at the wonderful restaurant just outside the gate. The actual reenactment takes place Saturday during the day. A "USO" show Saturday night is anticipated but has not been firmed up as we go to press. For those interested in this fun weekend, please send John Bowen a stamped, self-addressed envelope at 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring, Maryland 20904-3331 (Telephone: 301-384-6533) and he will provide you with the final details, costs and registration form when they become available about mid-December. Bring a pillow, sleeping bag, or blankets. Unfortunately the barracks do not lend themselves to co-ed sleeping; however, there are motels in the area for those wanting to bring spouses. Come enjoy a FUN WEEKEND.



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Make check or money order payable to VBOB
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Applicants Signature _____

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