

# The BULGE BUGLE

VOLUME XVI NUMBER 3

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

AUGUST 1997

## Another VBOB Monument ...the First in New York State



Left to Right: Richard Raichlion, Mayor, Village of Camillus; Donald Fittipaldi, Town Supervisor; Stan Wojtusik, National President, VBOB; Bill Lawson, VBOB member Central NY Chapter; Jim DePalma, Chapter President; State Senator John A. DeFrancisco.

*Jack Hyland*

A dream came true for the members of VBOB's Central New York Chapter, Monday, July 7th, providing a fitting close to the July 4th weekend. Led by Chapter President Jim DePalma and Jim Hamlet, and with National VBOB President Stanley Wojtusik, delivering the main address, the chapter dedicated a monument, the first in a new veterans park at Gillies Lake, Camillus, New York.

The monument is dedicated to all who fought in the Ardennes Battle over 52 years ago.

Chapter President DePalma told the large crowd assembled for the ceremony that it is "a dream come true for all of the members of the Central New York Chapter and their families."

Funds for the monument, designed by Charles Hurlbut and James Burke, were raised by contributions from individual members and from various veterans and military organizations.

The site of this VBOB monument, the first in New York State, (Continued on Page 3)

*Last call for...*

### 17<sup>TH</sup> Annual VBOB Reunion

Eisenhower Inn & Conference Center

Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

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**VETERANS OF THE  
BATTLE OF THE BULGE,  
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CONTACT THE CHAPTER IN YOUR AREA. YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID.

**We can help you  
form a chapter  
in your area.**



## PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

I have mentioned before that it is a real honor for anyone to be president of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. I consider it more than an honor, in fact a real privilege, as I consider the great work so many of you do to assure that our battle--our victory--remains a part of our nation's heritage.

I'm thinking of the hard work done by Past President Bill Tayman, and our editor George Chekan to assemble the photos and the stories of the monuments you are placing in prominent locations around the country, and to give it front page coverage in our last *Bulge Bugle*.

And I'm thinking of the hard work being done by the Central New York Chapter and President James DePalma, with James Hamlett and chapter members to place a monument in Syracuse as this edition goes to press. Along with Vice President for Membership Tom Jones, I am happy to dedicate this latest tribute to your heroism those many years ago.

As I have mentioned before, I hope that before our 55th anniversary in 1999, we will have many more of these reminders of those bitter days and nights in the Ardennes Forest placed in many other states and cities.

They have become a significant part of our annual reunions, as those of you know who were with us at Cape Cod last year. The New England Chapters, with Central Massachusetts Chapter. President John McAuliffe, placed a beautiful stone memorial on the Town Greene in Hyannis, and it is already a visitor attraction.

I hope you have looked over the program for our 17th Reunion in Gettysburg, September 15 to 18. A high point of the reunion will be Wednesday, September 17th, when we will gather at the U.S. War College and the U.S. Military History Institute in nearby Carlisle for another memorial ceremony. Charles DeChristopher, who designed and built our International Monument at the Valley Forge Military Academy & College in Wayne, Pennsylvania, has done it again. Charles, you may recall, also donated the monument in Hyannis.

He has designed and crafted a monument that we will dedicate at 11:00 a.m. on the 17th, in a beautiful setting at the War College, in a park-like grove adjacent to the new J. Lawton Collins Building. It is a most appropriate location. General Collins was a graduate of the War College and went on to become Chief of Staff of the Army before he died. As "Lightning Joe," Major General Collins commanded the First Army's VII Corps which drove to Houfalize and that memorable January 16th meeting with the Third Army.

The War College and USMHI at Carlisle Barracks is truly an awesome place with a history going back to the 1750's and the French and Indian Wars. During the Revolutionary War, Washington used it as a forge for artillery shells, and in the Civil War "Jeb" Stuart's cavalry burned the town as he moved toward the fateful battle at Gettysburg. The building and grounds now, as the names imply, are a campus for higher officers from here and abroad to study for top command. And it houses a treasure trove of books on military history, strategy, and tactics, and the personal histories provided by those who fought our wars,



**Stanley Wojtusik**  
**VBOB President**

including many members of VBOB.

To me, that day alone is a strong incentive to act now and make your reservation at the Eisenhower Inn, and to send in your registration for the reunion.

While speaking of our reunion, that reminds me of a reunion of a different sort that VBOB had this Memorial Day.

We were pleased to welcome more than one hundred Belgian Fusiliers to our country, and to have them take part in a wreath-laying ceremony at our International Monument. It was an exciting time for them, and for us.

Prior to our ceremony, the Fusiliers, with VBOB members, marched in the Memorial Day Parade in Wayne (Pennsylvania), and received an outpouring of affection as they passed thousands of spectators. They also were welcomed the following day at Philadelphia's City Hall where Mayor Ed Rendell presented them with a large symbolic Liberty Bell and VBOB presented each of the Fusiliers with a smaller replica of our country's most famous symbol.

The Fusiliers then visited Washington and Arlington, and left for home with many happy memories of their reunion with their American friends from the Ardennes. To those of us who have enjoyed the warm hospitality and friendship of the people of Belgium and Luxembourg during our return visits to their countries, it was a special Memorial Day.

Now--on to Gettysburg--where Chapter President Dave Nichols and the members of VBOB's South Central Pennsylvania Chapter assure you a warm welcome, and special VBOB Days. Hope to see you there.

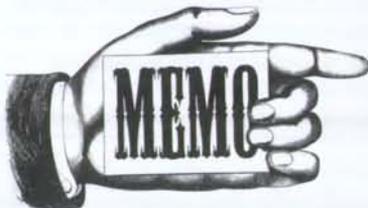
*(Continued from Page 1)*

## VBOB MONUMENT—NEW YORK STATE

is on a 94-acre park donated by a citizen of the county as a veterans memorial park. In congratulating the officers and VBOB members, President Wojtusik noted that the members of the chapter were keeping "alive the heritage of all who fought in the bitter cold, snow, sleet and freezing rain during those dark days of December 16, 1944 to January 25, 1945." National V.P.—Tom Jones, offered his appreciation to Jim DePalma and Jim Hamlett and the Chapter members for a job well done.

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**ARE YOUR  
DUES DUE?**

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## THANKS

Again, thank each of your members for a delightful meeting of the VBOB in December, 1996.

Enroute to Washington, we said, "Why are we making this trip? We do not know any one there!" When we arrived, we did not meet a stranger.

Richard L. Cook  
4 INFD 12 INF 2 BN E

## MISINTERPRETATION

Apparently, Ahren Jacobson has misinterpreted my comments about the action in Bastogne (*The Bulge Bugle*, November 1996). Bastogne was very real, and the men of the 101st Airborne Division and attached units in Bastogne did an heroic job in deterring numerically-superior Nazi units. These men were the real heroes of Bastogne. This is not the myth. The myth is that by relieving the 101st, Patton and "his" Third Army won the Battle of the Bulge.

I have re-read Ahren's letter (*The Bulge Bugle*, August 1995), and concluded that movie films ("The Battle of the Bulge," "Brave Rifles," etc.) produced directly after WWII portrayed the situations more accurately than the current crop of TV and radio commentators, teachers, and historians.

It is not surprising that the Sixth Armored Division did not get the public recognition which it deserved...but neither did other divisions under Patton's command, nor anyone else. It was always "Patton's Third Army this" and "Patton's Third Army that." Undeniably, he made substantial contributions to the war effort, but this egocentric, publicity-hungry general did not win the Battle of the Bulge, or the war in Europe, as some people believe.

Stanley O. Johnson  
3 ARMDD 83 ARB A

## DO THEY OR DON'T THEY?

Regarding the letter about national cemetery burials, February, 1997, issue, by Sinclair F. Cullen, 75th Infantry Division, I fully agree it is a disgrace that a politician will get preference over a combat veteran.

I found another farce in the handling of national cemetery plots when plots are available. I called the Houston National Cemetery to reserve a plot for my wife and me so there would be no problems for our only son when the need arose. I was informed that I should contact a funeral director and he could reserve a plot for me.

The funeral director advised me that he could take care of my plot reservation. However, it would be necessary to come out and select the caskets and arrange for the type of service we would require. The catch is full payment for all of this is required before he could reserve a plot for me.

What blows my mind is how did the funeral director get into this Pre-Payment Act? If plots are available for reservations the national cemetery personnel should make them. They either allow reserved plots or they don't. I fully understand that these expenses are my responsibility, but keep the funeral director out of it until he is requested in by the veteran's family. He will get his in the end anyway. If a veteran wishes to pay for his funeral in advance to lock-in the prices, fine. But, it should be his choice, not a requirement.

The politicians even kick us in the butt all the way to the end.

B. C. Henderson  
99 INFD 394 INF 2 BN B

## CLEARING THE RECORD FOR THE LAST TIME

In my response to Michael Kaidy's article in the November 1996 edition, which was undoubtedly written to laud the actions of the 87th Infantry Division at the expense of the 11th Armored Division, I did not accuse him of making the adverse remarks about the 11th. I stated that we took exception to the remarks made in his article. I care not who made the remarks and, if we have to disagree with Generals Patton and Middleton, so be it.

It is interesting that General Middleton stated that the Thunderbolts saved the critical area in which they were in combat. I also remember that when the 11th Armored Division was de-activated in Austria, kudos

were sent by General Patton for the job we had done.

In addition, the following congratulatory messages were sent to the 11th ARMDD Association in our 1947 reunion:

"It was your splendid fighting qualities which carried the Thunderbolts through Germany and Austria to the eastern-most point reached by our ground units during the late war. I am happy to note that you are attacking present problems with the same determination and esprit that distinguished your accomplishments on the historic battlefields of Europe."--Dwight D. Eisenhower

"Few episodes of World War II match in drama the dash of the 11th Armored Division from the English Channel to Neufschateau at the time of the Bulge, and the immediate attack, barely twenty-four hours after the division landed, which saved the vital highway linking Neufschateau and Bastogne."--Jacob L. Devers

"From the time the 11th Armored Division received its combat baptism in the battle of the Ardennes until V.E. Day, when the outfit was the farthest east ground force of the entire American Army in Europe, the 11th met and defeated the best the enemy could throw against it. I am proud to salute those members of the 11th Armored Division who died in the service of their country and those survivors to uphold the traditions and the glorious records of their division."--Manton S. Eddy

Michael, as far as your reporting more derogatory information about the 11th Armored Division, let me make this comment: Boast all you want about your own outfit's accomplishments but never besmirch the reputation of another outfit which was fighting just as valiantly for the same cause, even by restating comments made by others. That is not the American way.

Edward A. Bergh  
11 ARMDD 55 AIB A

## SHOE PACS WERE A GOD SENT

I have to take exception to the article "Boots--By Any Other Name" which appeared in the February, 1997, issue.

True--we had our jump boots on when we arrived at the Bulge on December 19th. However, we lost a lot of men from frozen feet until we got some over shoes but most didn't have sizes big enough to fit over the jump boots. Later, we got the shoe pacs which, I thought, were a God sent as they kept our feet warm and dry.

Planes only took us to combat and then we were as straight-legged as any other infantry man but a little tougher.

The man from the 84th was a little off on his combat records. The 82nd AA from Sicily (10/43 to 6/45 Central Europe) had a record of 316 days of front line positions and 55 days corps and 51 days army res.

We did not rule the roost, but earned the right to wear jump boots by better and tougher training and five qualifying jumps from an airplane.

Paul G. Sherbak  
82 ABND 508 PIR

## ONE OF THE BEST

I enjoy *The Bulge Bugle*. I enjoy all these great soldiers' stories.

I'm not going to say the 7th Armored was the best, but it was one of the best. We fought along side of the 82nd Airborne, 106th Infantry, 99th Infantry and some more. They were all top notch.

As I was from Gloster, Mississippi, which is very close to Centerville, Mississippi, I got drafted when I became 18 years old. The 99th Division was arriving in Camp Van Dorn and as we were going into the Battle of the Bulge, I got to see the Checkerboard patch. It sorta made me home sick.

All of our divisions did a great job. The good part of all of the fighting is we won the battle. Thank God.

Joseph E. Foreman  
7 ARMDD 434 AFA

## THEY DIDN'T QUIT...THEY WERE DESTROYED

I saw a documentary of the Battle of the Bulge on PBS Television in our area and a statement made by one of the commentators, a U.S. Army officer, irked me. He said: "They (the Germans) got near the Neuse River and they just died. That was the end of it." He gave the impression that the Germans stopped on their

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 4)

own accord. It is apparent that the commentator did not know that the enemy near the Meuse River, the German 2nd Panzer Division, was destroyed by the U.S. 2nd Armored (Hell on Wheels) Division in a five-day battle--December 24-28, 1944. The German 2nd Panzer had spearheaded the enemy's 60-mile westward advance. [Letter enclosed confirming this which was sent by Lt. General Courtney H. Hodges, commanding officer of the First U.S. Army, to Major General Ernest N. Harmon, commanding officer of the 2nd Armored, commending him, his officers and men on their victory. Letter also was signed by Field Marshal Bernard L. Montgomery.]

Our 81mm mortar platoon of Headquarters and Headquarters Company and "B" Company, both of the 1st Battalion, 41st Armored Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Armored Division, were in the thick of it on the second day of the battle, Christmas Day, 1944. We destroyed a German column driving towards Ciney, Belgium. This action was mentioned in a Presidential Citation awarded to our battalion for its action from Ciney to Houffalize, Belgium.

Speaking of Houffalize, no mention was made in the documentary about the individuals and units that met at this strategic town to seal off the entire western half of the enemy's salient. Reference was made to the First U.S. Army closing the gap with General Patton's Third U.S. Army at Houffalize. According to *A History of the Second United States Armored Division*, Lt. Baker, "B" Company, 82nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Armored Division met a patrol of the Third U.S. Army in the area. According to "Second Armored Division History," Lt. Col. Hugh O'Farrell, of CCA, 2nd Armored Division, met Lt. Col. Miles Foy of the 41st Reconnaissance Squadron of the 11th Armored Division on the high ground overlooking Houffalize. But John Toland, author of *Battle--the Story of the Bulge*, gives another version of his book. He wrote that Major Michael Greene, executive officer of the 41st Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, 11th Armored Division, was put in command of a task force to get to Houffalize ten miles away. In command of the supporting infantry was Lt. Ellenson. Their patrol made contact with the 41st Armored Infantry Regiment, 2nd Armored Division, at 0905 on 16 January, 1945. However, the bottom line is that 2nd Armored Division of the First U.S. Army and the 11th Armored Division of the Third U.S. Army sealed off the entire western half of the enemy's salient at Houffalize.

**Russell V. Zeleniak**  
2 ARMDD 41 AIR 1 BN

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### FURTHER ON TASK FORCE EZELL

I write concerning Peter Leslie's review of Jean Millmeister's article on Task Force Ezell in the February issue. I find the review contains several factual errors such as referring to the 101st Airborne Division as the 101st Armored Infantry Division and its G-3 by the rank of Lt. Commander--a naval rank which he would not appreciate at all. Also, the statement that the bulk of the 4th Armored Division was gathered near Arlon. To the best of my recollection, the Division Headquarters was at Arlon but CCA, of which I was the executive Officer, was assembled on the Arlon, Bastogne highway several miles north of Arlon on 20-21 December. CCB was to the northwest assembled on, or near, its jump off point for the advance on Bastogne on the 22nd. CCR would assemble to the southeast of CCA and attack toward Bigonville in the area between CCA and the 26th Infantry Division. When the move started on the 19th, CCB moved out of its "rest" area at 0050 and CCA followed at 0900. CCR moved as soon as it could assemble. It included the 37th Tank Battalion which was in action in support of the 87th Infantry Division attacking to the east near Fenetrage.

The 4th Armored Division spent the 21st in reconnaissance and preparation for the advance to relieve Bastogne at first light on the 22nd (in a snow storm).

The 4th Armored Division had never been near Longway (Longwy) France prior to its move, but much farther south in the general area of Chateau Salins where it had fought for weeks in October and November. It did not have a specific destination when it started north but was given interim march objectives while enroute--CCA had three, one of which was Longwy.

An important factor not mentioned was that the 4th Armored Division was badly under-strength in both personnel and equipment; therefore, any piecemealing of its units would serve to lessen its already lowered combat

efficiency. Leaving TF Ezell in Bastogne would not only have served to further weaken CCB but by itself have added very little to the defensive strength of Bastogne and been an additional drain on its limited logistical support. Furthermore it did not stand the proverbial chance of a snow ball in Hades to keeping the road open by itself and, in my opinion, CCB alone could not have done the job by itself either. If the whole division had been committed on that flank a big hole would have been left between the 26th Infantry Division and the 4th Armored.

Patton had promised a coordinated attack on three divisions against the south flank of the German penetration by the 22nd. If he had permitted the 4th Armored to be used in bits and pieces (in true infantry fashion) its combat effectiveness would have been destroyed for his purpose. Contrary to my good friends Cole and MacDonald to have done so would have been a poor tactical solution.

Leslie raises the question concerning the bridge site at Martelange. He says: "Did anyone know we were there?" My recollection is that Lt. Col. Oden, CO, 35th Tank Battalion, reported that the engineer on the site "took off" when his lead elements approached. We knew engineers had been defending that area but had no knowledge of units or their equipment. Had we known of his bridge equipment we would have been more than happy to have made use of it--it would have saved us nearly a day.

My comments are all from memory. When we moved...there was no room for my library and reference material. And, one thing I would emphasize from my experience, is that rarely do two people who took part in an action remember it the same way--records are essential.

**Hal C. Pattison**  
4 ARMDD CCA HQ

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### COMBAT BOOKS AND RATIONS

Ever since I discovered the existence of the organization called "Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge," and joined the organization, I have been reading the accounts in the *Bulge* of fellow Bulge veterans with great interest.

A couple of items that have appeared in different articles have especially interested me. They are combat boots and rations.

I do not know when others received combat boots, but I received them very early in 1943. I was stationed at Camp Abbot, Oregon, as a drill instructor. Everyone at Camp Abbot (a combat engineer training camp) received them during their training increment. I received mine while I was a trainee. We didn't use "leggings" for very long. Soon after we arrived we were issued boots with high leather tops which had straps. I wore the same style boot all through my army life.

While I was at Camp Abbot the army ran some tests on how efficient the "D" ration candy bar was. We camped out for three days with nothing but water and a "D" ration candy bar for each meal.

The first day everything went fine. On the second day many of the trainees were reporting for sick call. By the third day they had to call the test off and everyone was sent back to their barracks. This test was run with the trainee doing full duty each day. Hardly anyone could work by the third day.

After the Battle of the Bulge incident, I was transferred to Company B, 22nd Armored Engineer Battalion, 5th Armored Division, under General Oliver. There we had "C," "K," and "10 in 1" rations. We had single burner sterno stoves to heat our food. Many times I came back to camp, after building a bridge or repairing the many roads, so tired I could hardly move. A good hot cup of Nescafe or bouillon would restore me.

There is another item, which I have not seen mentioned by anyone. That is the hold-down straps on the helmets we wore during World War II. We had strict orders not to use them in our outfit. We had too many head and neck injuries and the cause of the injury was directly connected to the use of the straps on the helmet while being shelled (or any other close explosion).

Anyone who has seen any of the Hollywood war movies made after the war about WWII, should note that the movies clearly show the straps across the back of the helmet. That is the way we wore them in combat.

Today, however, I see all our soldiers wearing the straps under their chins. Perhaps we didn't learn anything from the experiences of WWII. If anyone has any idea on this I would like to hear from them.

**Kenneth G. Prickett**  
5 ARMDD 22 AEB B

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(Continued on Page 6)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 5)

### MEMORIES...AS CLEAR AS YESTERDAY

[The picture of the gasoline dump on page 27 of the May issue] brings back memories, some of the flash back scenes are as clear as yesterday.

We, the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion, were the only GIs left in Stavelot and we were the last to leave. We got permission to withdraw and Capt. Charles Mitchell (Company A) and Lt. Wheelwright drove from Stavelot up the hill to the gas dump and told the two Belgian soldiers. (They were dressed in English uniforms.) When the last half track passed them to burn the gasoline.

Capt. Mitchell, Wheelwright and I went back down into Stavelot and told the men and tracks to move out on the road to Spa, Belgium, but most of the company (as usual) took the road to Malmédy.

Capt. Mitchell and I tried to make sure that all the 526th were out of Stavelot. We zigzagged out of Stavelot up the hill across a railroad track and came upon a 526th half track with a 57mm anti-tank gun. They were firing 30 calibre and 50 calibre into the gasoline but it wouldn't light up. Some of the men had dismounted the tracks and were running up the road opening gas cans until we finally got the gas dump to burn. When Capt. Mitchell was satisfied that the gas dump was burning, we drove on up the road until we met Maj. Solis. We established a road block. Weapons: one 57mm anti-tank gun, one bazooka, one 30 calibre MG and our personal weapons.

I was told by Maj. Solis to park the jeep (peep) on down the road to Spa, and when the road block was penetrated, I was to get to Spa and warn them that the krauts were coming. After about 15 or 20 minutes, Maj. Solis ordered Lt. Wheelwright and me to go back toward Stavelot and see what was happening. After our recon we reported back to Maj. Solis the 117th Regiment of 30th Infantry Division arrived and Capt. Mitchell took the men he had and headed back into Stavelot.

There were 27 men and 3 officers. That's all we had. I don't care what you have heard about the gas dump, this is what happened. The half track with the 57mm trying to start the dump burning. This scene will live in my mind until I die. I will never forget.

I think the reason they were having trouble getting the dump burning is the first tiers of gas cans could possibly been filled with dieseil.

Jack J. Mocnik  
526 AIB A

## BOOKS YOU MAY ENJOY

Thanks go to the following authors/publishers for donating to our library/archives:

*Gare la Bete: A History of the 814th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 1942-1945:* This hard cover, 300 page, book is a unit history of a self-propelled tank destroyer battalion attached to the 7th Armored Division. The battalion served with the 7th Armored from 13 August 1944 through 8 May 1945 through four ETO campaigns. Included are maps, photographs and biographies. Includes discussions of actual use of the tank destroyer in combat as compared with the doctrines envisioned by planners at the inception of this new branch of the army for countering the German panzer offensives: To order contact: C&R Publications, 8407 Shadow Oaks, College Station, TX 77845. With shipping and handling cost is \$51.00 (Texas residents add sales tax of \$3.88).

*Hitler's Ardennes Offensive: The German View of the Battle of the Bulge,* edited by Danny S. Parker. This book offers unparalleled insight into the German's view of the Battle of the Bulge and explains how Hitler and his generals perceived the final great assault and their understanding of why it all went wrong. Numerous previous accounts of the battle have tended toward the perspective of the Allied victors, lacking firsthand detail about German intentions and operations. This book brings together many rare documents representing the views of all the major personalities within the German headquarters and covers everything from preparations and the actual attack to attitudes about the campaign before it started and after it was brought to a close. It is available at local book stores or from Stackpole Books (1-800-732-3669). Cost is \$34.95.

*The Desert Fox in Normandy: Rommel's Defense of Fortress Europe,* by Samuel W. Mitcham, Jr. Covering the Battle of Normandy from the point of view of Field Marshal Erwin Rommel from December 1943 until he was critically wounded on July 17, 1944, this 264-page book examines the impact the "Desert Fox" had on the strengthening of German defenses in Normandy and elsewhere. Although Rommel's absence on D-Day significantly weakened the German reaction to the Allied landings, his preparations for the impending invasion temporarily checked, but could not repulse, the Allies and ultimate victory. Mitcham uses a number of little-known primary sources which contradict previously published accounts of Rommel, his officers, and the last days of the Third Reich. Available at your local book store or from Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc. 1-800-225-5800. (Price \$26.95)

The February issue of the *Bulge Bugle*, in article entitled "Tough Memories of WWII," announced the availability of Dan Bied's book *1945, a Remembrance*. Dan's correct address is 108 Leffler Street, West Burlington, Iowa 52655. Dan advises there are about 40 copies of the book left.

**R. L. BUCY, 70TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 274TH INFANTRY, 1ST BATTALION, COMPANY A,** writes to let you know that the book mentioned in the May, 1997, *Bugle* was probably *A Night Before Christmas*. He mentions that he found one at the book store Books-A-Million. He also sent the following information on the publisher: Buccaneer Books, Inc., PO Box 168, Cutchogue, New York 11935 (Telephone: 516-734-5724).

It's very gratifying to be able to preserve these books in one place. One day they will provide a very valuable reference for interested persons.

## DON'T DELAY!

### WERE YOU A PRISONER OF WAR IN A GERMAN CONCENTRATION CAMP?

If so, you may be interested in the following information sent to us by **JAMES R. BIRD, 45TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 160TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY A.**

"Attorney General Janet Reno, with the cooperation of the State Department, is collecting data on American citizens who were mistreated in German concentration camps during WWII. The German government has agreed that compensation should be paid to survivors who were American citizens at the time of Nazi persecutions. A Foreign Claims Settlement Commission (FSCS) was established to implement this agreement. The German government deadline for submitting claims is September, 1997. The process is long and arduous, but a precedent has now been established. If you are, or know of any American citizen(s) who were placed in German concentration camps, they can be helped. They should call the FSCS office for information and details: 202-616-6984.

## CALL TODAY!!

## WILTZ, LUXEMBOURG THE "MARTYR CITY"

[The following was submitted by **RICHARD W. BROOKINS, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 28TH SIGNAL COMPANY**]

The August, 1996 edition of *The Bulge Bugle* contained an interesting article entitled "In Front of Patton, A Battle of the Bulge Diary," by Denis Bergeron, 50th Signal Company, 80th Infantry Division.

In the article he highlighted the "Martyr City" of Wiltz, Luxembourg. Wiltz was taken by the Germans in 1940, not 1939, just a slight correction. Hitler's troops attacked through the Ardennes in 1940 and took Luxembourg, Belgium, Holland, and France in its Blitzkrieg of that year. Wiltz came by its name of "Martyr City" by virtue of staging a strike against conscription of its youth and citizenry into the German army and into the German government. Five heroic school teachers were executed publicly because they refused to teach German philosophy. To break the strike, some parents of conscriptable young men were shot and killed for refusing to cooperate. The German's methods worked and, to save lives of parents and loved ones, the strikers had to give in. Some 40-46 young men were conscripted and were sent to the Russian front and were never heard from again.

There is a shrine high on a serene hill overlooking the city dedicated to "Our Lady of Fatima." The pictures of these lost heroes are mounted on the memorial and they are revered and mourned daily. Other young men were taken by the Germans and survived to return to Wiltz. Other citizens of Wiltz were sent to labor camps in Germany and many perished. I mention this only to add to Denis' article. Also, he probably did not know that in the weeks before the beginning of the Bulge Battle, Wiltz was the headquarters of the 28th "Keystone" Division.

I was a T/5 cryptographer in the message center section of the 28th Signal Company. The division had been severely battered in the Hurtgen Forest debacle in October and part of November, 1944. Along with the 4th Division, the 8th and 9th Divisions, the 28th suffered extreme loss of manpower and equipment. Finally relieved, the division was sent into the Ardennes in Luxembourg for rest and replenishing of men and equipment. The division elements were spread thinly over approximately 25 miles of front along the Our River, bordering Germany. The Village of Clervaux was set up as a rest camp for R&R for the GI's to see a movie, be properly fed and clothed, and to regain their spirits after a devastating ordeal in Hurtgen.

To finish my wartime vignette and as a piece de resistance to Denis' article, let me relate my personal experience in Wiltz:

While there we became aware that December 6th was "St. Nicholas Day" throughout most of Europe. St. Nicholas is similar to what we know as Santa Claus. A Wiltz citizen in the company of his 8 year old niece confided to my buddy, Harry Stutz, that the people were happy to be liberated but they had nothing to give the children for St. Nicholas Day. Harry, with others of us, organized what became a town-side party for the children. GI's chipped in their gum and candy rations, cooks and bakers made cookies and donuts, and the Brass endorsed the event.

I was asked to dress as St. Nick. With the local priest's surplice, a bishop's mitre head dress, a shepherd's crook and a rope beard, I rode through the town dispensing the goodies to

every kid in town. We ended up at the castle in Wiltz where the kids sang and recited for St. Nick and we all had a great time. Sadly, 10 days later, the Bulge Battle started and, ultimately, 80% of the town was damaged or destroyed, most as a result of being retaken from the Germans in January, 1945. We lost 23 men from the 28th Signal Company and many civilians, including some of the children were killed and wounded.

Wiltz, as well as all of Luxembourg, honor all ex-GI's to this day. Memorials to all the units which made them free are dedicated to all of us. The American Flag flies every day in Wiltz, and in front of the castle is a memorial to the 28th Division and its men.

Each year a St. Nicholas Festival is played out in honor of and in memory of all of us who made the Luxembourgers of Wiltz free. I have had the honor of portraying St. Nicholas at the invitation of The Society of St. Nicholas of Wiltz in 1977, 1984, and in 1994, the special 50th year celebration of the little effort that a small group of signal guys put on in 1944 to make children happy in a terrible time. In 1994 I took my entire family to Wiltz to see for themselves what had only been my description to them over the years. I have all of the occasions on video tape, including the Signal Corps film taken in 1944. Though there is personal satisfaction in all of this, I feel I am representing all GI's who took part in that terrible battle to bring freedom to those who had none.

My thanks to Denis for recounting his story.



German soldiers who were captured wearing American uniforms were treated as spies and executed by firing squad, as their *ruse de guerre* denied them the protection of the German Convention on POWs.

### OFFICE CLOSED SEPTEMBER 12 THRU 28, 1997

The VBOB office will be closed the above dates for the Reunion and a week of vacation. ...remember this will put us a little behind in processing your inquiries so we ask your indulgence.

We'll be back on the 29th and will probably be opening mail until Wednesday or Thursday.

**Nancy Monson  
Lynne Eldridge**

# 957TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION The Ardennes

[The following was sent to us by **SHELTON EDWARDS, 957TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY A.**]

Reports of the all-out German counter-offensive in the Belgian Ardennes increased the tense atmosphere and by midnight 20 December higher headquarters had assigned Jealous to the 188th Field Artillery Group and relayed orders for the battalion to speed southward into the "fluid" enemy situation in an effort to stem the almost overwhelming tide of the enemy.

By noon next day all was in readiness and the 957th started into the Bulge. Back the convoy went--through scenes of earlier victories--Aachen--the Siegfried Line--Verviers--Liege and then Marche, Belgium, where instructions were received to go into position at Noiseux.

It was a bitter march, with cold, rain and high winds causing much discomfort--but the morale was good, because there was a definite feeling that the Jerries finally were coming out to throw what probably would be their last offensive punch of the war.

Training received in the mountains of Yakima, Washington, stood the men in good stead as they plunged through blinding, cutting blizzards to blast out enemy armor. Left behind were last-minute preparations for a front-line observance of Christmas and the few combat comforts which had been prepared on the western approaches of the Roer.

The march into Belgium was the longest, most uncomfortable combat march the battalion ever had experienced--91 miles through sleet, snow, pitch darkness and irritating cold.

Numbed, aching hands and cold-paralyzed bodies obeyed the dogged determination of weary men as the convoy crept into the district where vicious suicide stabs by German armor were slashing America lines. Huddled atop heavily-loaded vehicles the convoy finally arrived and encamped in the snow-swept fields--and the hope of warm billets vanished in the brisk December air.

After a few hours of rest in the barren fields near Noiseux, Jealous went into support of the Second Armored Division to which had been assigned the vital task of seeking out and destroying the rampaging, forward enemy elements.

A series of rapid, short, undercover moves followed as the armored outfit probed here and there in the twin-pronged Nazi salient, always with the 95th Howitzers close at hand, ready to fire on targets of opportunity.

The enemy was everywhere and anywhere--no one was sure exactly where--and there was a constant danger of being overrun before the enemy could be discovered. As a defense against such a possibility, one platoon of M-5 light tanks of D Troop, 82nd Armored Recon Battalion was attached to the 957th for close-in protection--an attachment which was gratefully accepted.

Enemy aircraft became a real problem, with flares guiding the harassing bombers over the battalion positions. Glistening snow aided the raiders, but always they were driven off by attached ack ack and friendly "night-fighters."

Christmas approached--but what a Christmas! There was snow, mud, ice and freezing weather. Christmas Eve marked the conclusion of a march to the front lines--but there were no organized front-lines. The situation was described as "fluid"--a description used continuously during the early "Bulge" days. It meant only one thing--"the enemy is here, there and everywhere"--but there are no tightly drawn lines."

Christmas Day started at 0005 hours when word was received another move was anticipated. The "forward parties" set out in the teeth of a blizzard in darkness as black as the inside of a hat to find that new area.

By 0730 hours the battalion had moved into position near Ciney and the Howitzers were firing "like mad." Enemy armor was racing furiously despite elaborate precautions and there were no festive preparations for the Yuletide--except that road-weary cooks were doing their best to

prepare some semblance of a meal for the evening...including turkey.



*"TO ADOLPH"--50,000--  
The happy gun crew that  
fired the historic round.*

Jealous moved into another position near Ciney during the late afternoon and again the turkey was in the oven--just in the hope that it could be served. It was served late that evening under blackout conditions--in weather so cold that the gravy congealed before the men could leave the chow line. It was the "blackest" day of the entire campaign!!

Next day Jerry planes furnished plenty of excitement--one plane strafed the Battery "A" position, but did no damage, while its mate dropped a light bomb in the CP area, which likewise had no effect other than to "put

everyone's nerves on edge."

On 27 December the battalion entered Chevetegne to support a 2nd Armored drive on Rochefort--which was taken during the same assault. More than 1,000 rounds were fired in a 24-hour period as the division swept into a wooded sector near Humain. Within two hours and 15 minutes the Howitzers fired a total of 718 projectiles--an average of more than one round every one and a half minutes.

Battery "B" took one prisoner in its area during the evening and Battery "C's" advance party engaged in a fire fight with seven Germans in their area. There were no casualties on either side, but when last seen the Germans were beating a hasty retreat out of the sector.

Responding to effective Jealous firing in the Humain area, Capt James E. Mahon, 2nd Armored liaison observer reported: "It's the finest, most accurate shooting I've ever seen from a 155 mm Howitzer battalion. It's right on the money!!"

While the big guns were tearing at the elements of the German 10th Panzer Grenadier Regiment, word was received that Capt Stanford W. Fennemore, the battalion surgeon, was transferred to the 50th General Hospital, near Carentan, France. He left 28 December and was replaced immediately by Capt Raymond P. Welbourne (then 1st lieutenant).

As the month ended, Jealous moved into Evelette, Belgium, for maintenance and servicing, with the British XXX Corps relieving the 957th and other units. Much difficulty was encountered along the route as the tractors were unable to secure sufficient traction on the snow and ice to tow the Howitzers and on numerous occasions the "cats" and towed pieces slipped from highway into ditches.

The projected maintenance period did not come off. On 2 January the battle front beckoned again and Soy was the next stop. Enroute the convoy passed a blownup tractor of a sister battalion. It was learned that the 951st FA Battalion piece had slipped from the highway into a "daisy chain" of mines in the ditch. Fourteen of the mines exploded, killing one man and wounding five others.

On 4 January T/5 Clinton Bjork of Battery "A" won a battalion-wide lottery and became the first man in the organization to get a furlough to the United States. He visited his parents in Dassel, Minnesota. The same day a 75 mm armor piercing shell, believed to have been a wild round from an enemy tank, crushed into the building occupied by fire direction center. T/4 James Baumgardner, of Headquarters Battery, was slightly wounded by falling debris.

*(Continued on Page 9)*

## 957TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

(Continued from Page 8)

Fortunately the shell did not explode or the casualties would have been heavy. During the afternoon beer was served to the men of all sections—in some instances it was the first beer the men had tasted since they left England in June 1944.

Day after day the "cat and mouse" tactics continued with officers and men never knowing the exact location of the enemy, so "fluid" was the situation. Suddenly recon elements discovered the enemy tank columns much further west than anticipated—to the rear of artillery positions!!!

As if in proof of the fact, Jerry shells began to bounce into the battalion area on 5 January. Three of them landed in the vicinity of the CP and one struck a building near a number of 75th Division infantrymen. Two were so seriously injured that they died in the 957th aid station within a few minutes. A third was evacuated. [There is more to the story, but the pages are missing.]



### VICTORY IN EUROPE VICTORY ORDER OF THE DAY 5 MAY 1945

Men and Women of the Allied Expeditionary Force:

The crusade on which we embarked in the early summer of 1944 has reached its glorious conclusion. It is my especial privilege in the name of all nations represented in this theater of war to commend each of you for valiant performance of duty. Though these words are feeble, they come from the bottom of a heart overflowing with pride in your loyal service, and admiration for you as warriors.

Your accomplishments at sea, in the air, on the ground and in the field of supply, have astonished the world. Even before the final week of conflict, you had put 5,000,000 of the enemy permanently out of the war. You have taken in stride military tasks so difficult as to be classed by many doubters as impossible. You have confused, defeated, and destroyed your savagely fighting foe.

On the road to victory, you have endured every discomfort and privation, and have surmounted every obstacle, ingenuity and desperation could throw in your path. You did not pause until our front was firmly joined up with the great Red Army coming from the East, and other Allied Forces coming from the South.

FULL VICTORY IN EUROPE HAS BEEN ATTAINED.

Working and fighting together in a single and indestructible partnership, you have achieved a perfection in unification of air, ground and naval power that will stand as a model in our time.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower

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In recognition of the unconditional and abject surrender of the Nazi barbarians please accept the fervent congratulations and appreciation of myself and of the American people for the heroic achievements of your Allied Army, Navy and Air Forces by their sacrifices, skill and courage. They have saved and exalted the cause of freedom throughout the world. All of us owe to you and to your men of many nations a debt beyond appraisal for their high contribution to the conquest of Nazism.

I send also my personal appreciation of the superb leadership shown by you and your commanders in directing the valiant legions of our country and of our Allies to this historic victory.

Please transmit this message to the appropriate officers of your command and publish it to all Allied Forces in your theaters of operation.

Harry S. Truman, President

### WHO RECOGNIZES THIS WWII GI?

The Royal Castle of Fischbach/Luxembourg/Europe was the summer residence (property) of H.R.H. Grand Duchess Charlotte and Her Consort Prince Felix. After their deaths the castle was occupied in 1985 by Prince Henri, our beloved hereditary prince and his family. He is married to Princess Maria Teresa and have five children.

During the month of February 1945, the castle of Fischbach was at the full disposal of the US Army with the kind consent of the Royal family. There, a temporary hospital for the US Army was set up and surgeries were done there as well. At the same time, it was a convalescent home for GIs recovering from their wounds. An old gardener, employed at the castle, had seen an amputated leg of a wounded GI when it was brought out of the castle and buried in the woods behind the building. The gardener never forgot the exact spot where the GI's leg had been buried, but meanwhile, passed away. Several veterans of the Battle of the Bulge remembered being at the castle and remembered that it had a ballroom with grand chandeliers.

A few years after the war a sublime color photograph was found somewhere in the roofing, which showed a young GI—of course unknown to me—with a girl who seems to be his sweetheart or possibly his wife. On the front is engraved "Biddle, New Albany/IND." The GI was most likely living there at the time or possibly in the surrounding area. On the back of the picture, written pencil, and very difficult to read, but might be the word or name, "Catschfole." The GI is in a US Army dress uniform without a badge showing his rank and also without a unit badge. So I guess this photograph was taken in 1942-43 or, at the latest in 1944.

Dear VBOBs, I know it would be just a lucky chance if there was one among you who could remember or recognize the guy in the picture, but if someone may know who might be, please let me know. It is possible that one, or both are still alive.

Warm regards to all of you, dear VBOBs, our very dear friends!! Affectionately, Camille P. Kohn, President, CEBA 1, rue Principale, L.7430 Fischbach, Luxembourg, Europe.

(Note from John Bowen: The collar insignia is infantry.)

# REUNIONS

**1ST INFANTRY DIVISION**, August 6-10, 1997, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Alexandria, Virginia. Contact: Bert H. Morphis, 4230 East 84th Place, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74137-1817.

**2ND CAVALRY DIVISION**, October 21-26, 1997, Norfolk Airport Hilton, Norfolk, Virginia. Contact: 2nd Cavalry Association, % Veterans Center (Attention: L. T. Holz), Box 915, Southeastern, Pennsylvania 19399-0915.

**4TH ARMORED DIVISION**, September 1-7, 1997, Harrisburg Marriott Hotel, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Contact: Samuel Schenker, 1823 Shady Drive, Farrell, Pennsylvania 16121. Telephone: 412-342-6058.

**8TH FIELD ARTILLERY OBSERVATION BATTALION**, September 12-14, 1997, Holiday Inn Holidome, Stevens Point, Wisconsin. Contact: James O. Lipman, PO Box 3339, Arlington, Virginia 22203-3339.

**9TH ARMORED DIVISION, 2ND TANK BATTALION**, September 18-21, 1997, Shreveport, Louisiana. Contact: John Terral, 206 North Hood Street, Lake Providence, Louisiana 71254. Telephone: 318-559-1603.

**75TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, August 20-24-1997, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri. Contact: James E. Warmouth, 6545 West 11th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46214. Telephone: 317-241-3730.

**179TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**, October 15-19, 1997, Holiday Inn-Midtown, Savannah, Georgia. Contact: Robert Butler, 3635 Schofield Road, Gainesville, Georgia 30506. Telephone: 770-535-7055.

**246TH ENGINEERS COMBAT BATTALION**, September 9-11, 1997, Holiday Inn, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Contact: Howard Shelp, 9151 Vanderbilt, Portage, Michigan 49002. Telephone: 6161-327-3605.

**264TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**, September 4-6, 1997, Dayton, Ohio. Contact: Bob Latz, PO Box 654, Racine, Wisconsin 53401. Telephone: 414-681-1998.

**482ND ANTI-AIRCRAFT AUTOMATIC WEAPONS BATTALION (SP)**, September 14-18, 1997, Branson, Missouri. Contact: Chuck Gregorovich, 908 Williams Street, St. Marys, Ohio 45885-1562. Telephone: 419-394-3548.

**486TH ORDNANCE EVACUATION COMPANY**, September 30-October 2, 1997, Hertiander Hotel, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Contact: Steve Kazmir, 3526 Town Overlook Street, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee 37863. Telephone: 423-908-4525.

**644TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION**, September 16-18, 1997, Fort Knox, Kentucky. Contact: William T. Walker II, 120 Azalea Street, Lakeland, Florida 33803-4802. Telephone: 941-646-6324.

**745TH TANK BATTALION (WWII)**, September 13-15, 1997, Drake Oakbrook Hotel, Oakbrook, Illinois. Contact: A. G. Spencer, 760 Glen Avenue, Marseilles, Illinois 61341. Telephone: 815-795-4838.

**750TH TANK BATTALION, COMPANY D**, October 16-18, 1997, Days Inn Airport, Opryland Area, Nashville, Tennessee. Contact: Harold Brown, 32 Ben Navis Drive, Mountain Home, Arkansas 72651. Telephone: 501-491-5937.

**808TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION**, September 14-18, 1997, Quality New Tower Inn, Omaha, Nebraska. Contact: Chet Norwin, 32991 Pineview Court, Warren, Michigan 48093-1135. Telephone: 810-979-8958.

**987TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**, October 7-9, 1997, Vacation Place Resort, Branson, Missouri. Contact: W. D. Crawford, Route 1, Box 526A, Ore City, Texas 75683. Telephone: 903-968-6350.

**SHAEF/ETOUSA**, October 10-14, 1997, Embassy Suites Plaza, Kansas City, Kansas. Contact: Donald A. Triffley, 730 Dundee Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70126. Telephone: 504-241-3065.

## COULDN'T PASS IT UP!

*[The following is from a collection of tales by BG Norman Spencer, Class of '36 West Point. Although it has nothing to do with the Bulge, it was too funny to not share it with you.]*

When MacArthur returned home after WWI, he went directly to West Point as Superintendent.

MacArthur was a brigadier general, while many of his 1903 classmates were captains or majors. He invited them to dinner at his quarters and gave them a good show, including a guided tour. He took them to the attic, explaining how he reproduced a room there just as his cadets lived in. He stated he slept in this room in order to keep in harmony with his young cadets.

The next day, after the guests had departed, the general's aide reported news from the kitchen: one dinner plate was missing. This was serious, because it was one of a set of elegantly decorated Spode china; not only a gift, but public property.

Realizing a class mate had pinched it, he wrote a friendly letter to each guest, suggesting that the plate be returned quickly, and nothing more would be said.

He got no response, then sent a second letter stressing the seriousness of the matter. Still no response. His third letter left no doubt. His next move would be to refer the matter to the Inspector General, and each of the guests would be subjected to an embarrassing investigation.

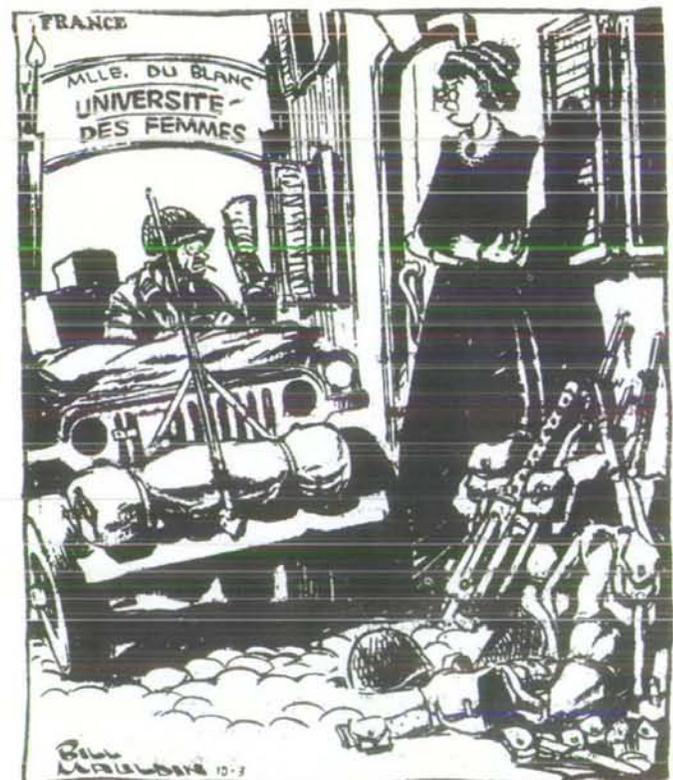
This soon brought an unsigned postcard that read, "Dear General Mac: Look between the top and bottom sheets on that bed where you 'sleep' every night."

\*\*\*\*\*

### Up Front

### with Willie & Joe

© by Bill Mauldin.



"Are you seeking a company of infantry, mon capitaine?"

## A TOAST TO THOSE WHO FOUGHT BATTLE OF THE BULGE

[The following article was written by **ELI J. WARACH**,  
**11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 42ND TANK BATTALION,**  
**COMPANY D**, for the Bergen County (New Jersey) *Record*.]

For me and countless tens of thousands of others, this New Year's Day is an especially pensive and poignant one. Many of us who served in the European Theater in World War II recognized that 1945 would be a watershed year. Few of us, however, knew at the time just how great yet horrible, how gallant yet costly, January 1, 1945, would be. For us it turned out to be a crucial--a make-or-break--day in the Battle of the Bulge.

Our unit, the 42nd Tank Battalion of the 11th Armored Division, part of Patton's Third Army, was in Belgium and was about to start the drive to clear the road to Bastogne. The cold, the snow, the atmosphere all contributed to an eerie foreboding on New Year's Eve. Suffice to say, none of us were exactly in a festive mood. I recall breaking out a bottle of Scotch that I had stashed away in the tank. We each had one drink and for a number of tankers, that was the last drink they ever had.

To this day, few of our survivors have big celebrations on New Year's Eve. Our thoughts occupy us, namely the bloody reality of New Year's Day. The acts of bravery and gallantry performed that day may not be recorded in history books or records--but they live with me forever. I don't think it is an exaggeration to say that the impact of those days will affect me and my tank company for as long as we live--or in far too many cases, as long as they lived. Let it also be noted that we did take our objective.

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**"New Year's Day 1945  
lives with all of us  
who survived that battle."**

**--Eli J. Warach**

---

Company D was a light tank unit. Simply put, our tanks were comparatively light, with minimal armor shielding and our largest weapon was a 37mm gun. In today's armies, armored cars carry bigger and more effective weapons.

Often, when I think about that gigantic tank battle on New Year's Day 51 years ago, I think of Tennyson's *Charge of the Light Brigade*. How fitting. Despite the best laid plans, war never runs according to expectation.

Early morning, January 1, 1945, I was given orders to lead the attack with my platoon of light tanks, with two other light-tank platoons following. When I asked what our intelligence reported ahead of us, I was told: "Just enemy infantry with machine guns." Well, that was true as we began rolling down a slope toward a tree line. There indeed was infantry. We disposed of that obstacle and then came through a tree line.

Then the sight that I'll never forget. As far as the eye could see to the right of us, to the left of us, and in depth in front of

us were enemy tanks--big enemy tanks. Later we were told they were Tiger tanks--but no difference, Tigers, Panthers, or any other variety, many of them carried the infamous 88--the scourge of even big tanks.

It was so bad that I knew, absolutely knew, we were dead. As our light tanks were methodically being knocked out and burning, my tank lost half a track to an 88 shell, but managed, slipping and sliding on snow and ice, to knock out a Tiger tank putting our last round into the engine compartment at the rear of the enemy tank, setting it on fire.

Meanwhile, the next platoons were rolling forward only to be mowed down in flaming pyres. We managed to pick up two badly wounded men, as they were struggling to get away from intense enemy fire. One, Murray Kaye (of Paramus), who died a few years back, was carrying his tank commander over his shoulder--through the hail of bullets. Kaye's legs were shattered at the time.

For years, I thought they both were dead--and they thought that I was dead. No one believed that that inferno could be avoided.

I remember that after we got the wounded to the aid station, our crew looked at the track--almost torn in half--and unanimously decided to go back into the battle even though our colonel told us to stay put. There was a feeling of: What the hell, we're going to die anyway. And so we went back to fight.

I'll never forget that tank crew; my gunner, Joe Crooks; the driver, Refugio Hinoyas, whom I can't locate; and Bill "Tex" Phelps, a lanky newcomer. He went on to remain in the service, served in Korea and Vietnam, and retired as a colonel. Yes, we lived through that. I don't know how.

New Year's Day 1945 lives with all of us who survived that battle. Sure we went on [to] re-form and fight our way in the heart of Germany and wound up in Austria--where we liberated the Mauthausen death camp.

I recall how when we first went into combat, I knew that I would survive the war. During the Battle of the Bulge, I knew just as assuredly that it was impossible to survive. The odds were so badly stacked against it.

Finally, I recall the *Charge of the Light Brigade*. Our light tanks were not supposed to lead that attack. The orders somehow got twisted and misinterpreted.

So today, I'll drink a toast to honor the warriors who fell and to those who are still with us. There never were more magnificent fighting troops. And perhaps I'll have a second drink to those P-47 pilots who came out when the skies cleared and blasted those big enemy tanks.

And yes, we did clear the road to Bastogne.

.....

*This New Year's Day let's all of us stop whatever we're doing at 12 o'clock noon and drink a toast (even if it has to be water) to all who were involved in the Battle of the Bulge. Not many of us stay up until 12:00 midnight so noon time might be more appropriate. As we do this, let us think of the fact that thousands of us throughout the United States will be joining us in this toast. We can be together again for one brief moment remembering each other and those we lost so many, many years ago.*

.....

# 11TH ARMORED DIVISION VERSUS FUHRER BEGLEIT BRIGADE

## Well known tank looking for its courageous crew

If tourists enjoy taking pictures of a Sherman tank, it is without any doubt the one located on McAuliffe Square at Bastogne, Belgium. The tank's number and its seven victory bars seem to be genuine. This tank wears the 4th Armored Division colors and signs. This glorious division made a break into Bastogne encirclement on December 26, 1944. But, in fact, this Sherman was part of the 11th Armored Division. Here is its story...

After the war ended, some scrap merchants began to cut out the tank wrecks which lay strewn about the Bastogne area battlefields. Everyone of them, except one! The one located in Mr. Denis' meadow at Hubermont. The meadow's owner was firmly opposed to cutting it with the blowlamp on site, because he was afraid of a probable pollution of a close spring. So, this wrecked vehicle remained there for several months until someone decided to bring it to McAuliffe Square at Bastogne, as a commemorating monument of the Battle of the Bulge.

### Mr. Reisen's Story

A direct witness of what happened to that Sherman, Mr. Reisen, who is still living in the Village of Hubermont, told us:

"One day around 3:00 p.m., a U.S. tank coming from Rechrival direction, appeared at the Hubermont crossroads; it went down the road's banking and into a field and drove towards Renuamont. We suddenly heard a big noise. (It could have been an explosion.) After that, the tank came back by the same way. When it arrived close to the brook, its wheels began to spin and it got stuck in the mud.

"A German tank had located it and was following it. This German tank stopped right in front of my home, shot one shell and the American tank was hit in its left flank. The German crew got out of their tank and ran towards the Sherman which was 200 yards away.

"An EM, probably badly injured, was immediately finished off by the Germans. A second one was carried out in a blanket into the closest bushes and also finished off with a hand gun. The third one, who seemed to be fine, was taken as a prisoner. The last two crew members, who tried to hide themselves in the water of a pond, were taken off towards Hubermont crossroads, along with the first prisoner."

Mr. Reisen does not remember anymore what day it occurred but he is sure of one thing: it happened before January 1, 1945, because on that day his home burned to the ground.

We know that the 42nd Tank Battalion of the 11th Armored Division attacked that area on January 1, but we do not know who was the Sherman's crew. That event probably occurred on December 30, 1944.

### Otto Reimer's Testimony-- Fuhrer Begleit Brigade's Commander-- December 30, 1944

...As I noticed an enemy task force progressing north through Laveselle towards Rechrival, that meant in the direction of our poor defensive security line, I immediately ran into my personal command car, and I drove through the "Bois des Valets" towards Renuamont where my staff brigade moved in that morning. As I was talking with my chief of staff about the engagement, the first enemy tank had already driven by the staff building and the second one was close to the Hubermont church. This first tank was destroyed by an antitank grenade and the second one was obliged to withdraw. An assault guns

company--still available--was sent from Millomont to southwest to make a blockroad on the south of Rechrival and to hold the area on between that road and "Bois des Valets."

### Suppositions

These two witnesses are undoubtedly describing the same scene, but seen from both sides. The tank on the hill of Renuamont (close to the Fuhrer Begleit Brigade Staff) was hit the first time by a Panzerfaust. With or without engine, it managed to drive down the hill where it got stuck in the mud. At that moment, it was hit a second time by a German "Hetzer" nestling against Mr Reisen's front house.

### Questions

1. It seems that there were two men killed and three survivors. These three survivors were probably taken as POW's. Who were they? Are they still alive today? (We would be pleased if some one would advise us about them.)
2. What were the original signs on that tank? Maybe it belonged to the 41st Tank Battalion, 11th Armored Division? Not sure! But, if it is, the two victims could be Hansen and Spero from Company D. Who were the three others? It could also belong to the 42nd Tank Battalion. We can still discern a round shield above the left track. With a magnifying glass, it seems to be the letters T and H...for Thunderbolts?
3. That tank has seven victory bars in its White Star. We know the 11th Armored jumped off on December 30. Do we have to conclude that the tank got seven victories in one day?
4. The serial number on the tank is still the same as in 1944: 3081532.

Anybody who has information about this event is asked to write to: Roger Marquet - Fonds de Foret 67, 4870 Trooz, Belgium.

Submitted by:  
Jacques DeGrive & Roger Marquet  
CRIBA - Belgium

*[Our members would also be interested in following up on this matter. So, if you write to Roger with any details, make a copy for us. Thanks.]*

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## COULD YOU FIND JUST ONE... ...veteran of the Battle of the Bulge?

**If every one of our members found just one new member, we'd be in good shape.**

**Please make the effort to find a new member...we need to increase our membership so that we can finish the work we have begun and educate the public regarding the Battle of the Bulge.**

**There's so much left to be done and we can do it with your help.**

**If you need membership applications or copies of the newsletter, just let us know.**

**VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.**  
**REUNION PROGRAM**  
**Gettysburg, Pennsylvania**  
**September 15-18, 1997**

• **MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 1997** •

**12:00 Noon - 5:00 p.m.**     **Registration, Eisenhower Inn and Conference Center, Gettysburg**  
The registration desk will be open the majority of the day.  
**7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.**     **Welcome Wine & Cheese Reception**  
Crackers and cheese compliments of the Eisenhower Inn

• **TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1997** •

**As needed**     **Registration, Eisenhower Inn and Conference Center, Gettysburg**  
The registration desk will be open the majority of the day.  
**8:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m.**     **Breakfast.** Hotel will set up breakfast buffet. Please allow those who are on the first departures access from 8:00 to 8:30. Cost is \$6.50.  
**9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.**     **Tour of Eisenhower Farm**  
Buses will begin to depart at 9:00 a.m. Times for departure will be assigned as registration forms are received--your ticket for this function will advise you of your departure time. Buses will depart the Eisenhower Inn for shuttle to the Motor Coach on the hour. No more than 360 people can be accommodated.  
**Lunch and Dinner**     **On your own.** As people will be coming and going all day, no other functions are planned.

• **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 1997** •

**As needed**     **Registration Desk**  
**6:30 a.m. - 8:30 a.m.**     **Breakfast.** Hotel will set up breakfast buffet. Cost is \$6.50.  
**8:00 a.m.- 4:00 p.m.**     **Monument Dedication and Tour of War College**  
Buses will depart at 8:00 a.m. Not all participants will take the same route during the day. Some will tour the institute, while others will avail themselves of research materials, as still others will have lunch at the college cafeteria. (Please note: Lunch is included in the cost of the trip. This change was made only on the Registration form in the last issue.) All will assemble at the appropriate time for the Monument Dedication.  
**Dinner**     **On your own.**

• **THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 1997** •

**As needed**     **Registration Desk**  
**8:00 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.**     **Breakfast.** Hotel will set up breakfast buffet. If you are not taking the tour, please wait until after 9:00 a.m. to have breakfast. Cost is \$6.50.  
**9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.**     **Tour of Civil War Battle Fields**  
Guided tour of land marks and monuments of the Civil War Battlefields.  
**12:00 Noon**     **Lunch on your own**  
**Time to be announced**     **Membership Meeting at Eisenhower Inn**  
Annual membership meeting. All are welcome to attend.  
**7:00 p.m.**     **Annual Banquet** with guest speaker followed by dancing. Cash bar. Dinner includes choice of prime beef OR baked, stuffed flounder; soup du jour, tossed salad; baked stuffed potatoes; whole green beans almondine; German chocolate cake; and tea/coffee.

**Hospitality Room:** Location and times will be posted in the lobby.

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania  
September 15-18, 1997

MAIL BEFORE  
SEPTEMBER 1, 1997

REGISTRATION FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Wife/Guest Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Division: \_\_\_\_\_ Regiment: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit or Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the name of the hotel where you have made reservations \_\_\_\_\_

	Number of Persons	Cost per Person	Total
<b>Registration Fee</b> (All attendees must register)	_____	\$25.00	_____
<b>Tuesday, September 16, 1997:</b>			
Eisenhower Farm Tour	_____	\$12.00	_____
<b>Wednesday, September 17, 1997:</b>			
Tour of War College and Monument Dedication (includes lunch)	_____	\$23.00	_____
<b>Thursday, September 18, 1997:</b>			
Tour of Civil War Battlefields	_____	\$ 8.00	_____
Banquet	_____	\$27.00	_____
Please indicate whether you prefer: Beef #___ OR Flounder #___			

**Total Amount Enclosed** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail registration form and check payable to "VBOB" to:  
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge • P.O. Box 11129 • Arlington, VA 22210-2129  
(Refunds for cancellations, will be honored in whole or in part, depending on availability of funds.)

## SPECIAL NOTES AND DIRECTIONS TO GETTYSBURG

**VBBOB:** Return your registration form as early as possible but no later than August 15 to guarantee participation in your desired activities. Of course, we can take your registration after that date, but you probably will be unable to get seating on the tours. Don't plan to just register and pick up your tickets when you get there. We must give guarantees early to the buses, etc. Do not mail a registration fee after September 1, 1997. Mail delivery has been so poor that we may not receive it prior to our departure.

You will be assigned buses for certain of the tours. Changing to another bus will be entirely your responsibility.

**Hotel:** The headquarters hotel is:

Eisenhower Inn & Conference Center  
U.S. Business Route 15, South  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325  
Telephone: 1-800-776-8349

Make your reservations **early**.

**Directions to Eisenhower Inn:**

**Driving:**

**From Harrisburg:** 15 south to Steinwehr Avenue Exit. Turn right off ramp onto Business 15 north. Inn is located 3 miles on right.

**From Washington, DC (Frederick):** 270 to 15 north to Steinwehr Avenue exit. Left off ramp onto Business 15 north. Inn is located 3 miles on right.

**From Philadelphia:** PA Turnpike west to exit 17 (Gettysburg Exit). 15 south to Steinwehr exit. Right off ramp onto Business 15 north. Inn is located 3 miles on right.

**From Pittsburgh:** PA Turnpike east to exit 15 (Blue Mt. Exit). 997 south to 30 east. Will come to circle in Gettysburg. Bear to the right and take Business 15 south. Inn is located 5 miles south of town on left.

**From Lancaster (York):** 30 west to 15 south. Take Steinwehr exit. Right off ramp onto Business 15 north. Inn is located 3 miles on right.

**From Baltimore (Westminster):**

695 to 795 to 140 west to 15 north. Take Steinwehr exit. Left off ramp onto Business 15 north. Inn is located 3 miles on right.

**From New York City:** 80 west to 81 south to 83 south to 15 south. Take Steinwehr exit. Right off ramp onto Business 15 north. Inn is located 3 miles on right.

**From Hagerstown:** 81 north to Waynesboro exit. 16 east to 15 north to Steinwehr exit. Left off ramp onto Business 15 north. Inn is located 3 miles on right.

**Flying:**

**Harrisburg Airport:** Follow directions from Philadelphia.

**BWI Airport:** Follow directions from Baltimore.

**Dulles Airport:** Follow directions from Washington, DC.

**Recreation Vehicle Parking:**

There is a recreation vehicle parking facility very near the headquarters hotel:

Battle Field Heritage Resorts  
U.S. Business Route 15, South  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania 17325

**Shopping:**

There are several outlet shopping centers near the area. We will obtain further information and have it available at the reunion.

This is also a wonderful area for antique shopping. The town area (about 5 miles away) has many shops which have antiques.

**Again, make your plans early. Send your registration form and call the hotel as soon as you decide.**

### The Times--They are A' Changing

The VBBOB Office has begun to receive notices that many of the smaller units have reached the place where they are unable to obtain satisfactory hotel room rates and availability (because of small numbers) or lack sufficient capability or volunteers to plan reunions and are considering not having future reunions.

We would like to invite all such units to become a part of our annual reunions. You do not have to be a member of VBBOB to come to our reunion. You will find that you are always very welcome whether you are a VBBOB member or not.

Your group can take part in any and/or all of the planned activities: the tours, banquet, hotel accommodations, etc.

If you feel that you would like a day of your own, you can plan a day before or after with activities you have planned. Such activities will be entirely your responsibility, i.e., contacting the hotel, restaurant, tour company, etc. However, you will find that there will be many opportunities for your group to have their time together, plus the added advantage of not having to fool with hotel locating, arrangements, etc. You will also have the opportunity to find out where others were during that time we spent together so many years ago.

Next year we will begin to announce this a little earlier. This decision was recently made and time did not permit us to make this announcement in previous editions of the newsletter.

We hope you will consider sharing this reunion or a reunion in the future with us.

George C. Linthicum  
VBBOB Executive Vice President



**MEMORABLE**

**BULGE  
INCIDENTS**

UNEDITED AND HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED

Accounts of events and experiences in the Battle of the Bulge as recalled and expressed by veterans of the greatest battle ever fought by the U.S. Army in the greatest war ever fought are of much historical significance. These "close-up" combatant accounts are a complement to the study of strategy and logistics and are a legacy of an important battle and victory in the U.S. military annals.

These are priceless first-person recollections by living legends in what General Dwight D. Eisenhower foresaw as our greatest victory and Prime Minister Winston Churchill, in speaking before the House of Commons, characterized as an ever-famous American victory.

**I WAS A REPLACEMENT**

January, 1945

**Earl Huckriede  
26th Infantry Division  
328th Regiment  
Company L  
St. Mary's, Ohio**

I was a replacement. We left New York on the day after Christmas in 1944 on the *Queen Mary* with 22,000 men on board. It took seven days to cross the Atlantic and then we landed in Glasgow, Scotland. We boarded a box car called a 40 and 8 and after traveling one day and one night arrived in Southampton, England. Next day we crossed the English Channel and landed in France and then another day by truck took us to Metz, France. We were assigned to the 26th Infantry Division and during the night relieved, I believe, the 90th Infantry Division. As two soldiers got out of their foxholes, we took their places. That was the beginning for me. I had no idea where we were, or what was going on. I knew it was cold, probably below zero degrees. From that day on my feet and fingers were frozen and I never seen a fire to get warm for two months. The only fire we were allowed was when we burned a "K" ration box to heat a cup of coffee. Thank God for all the clothes we had on and that great wool OD overcoat. The worst part was those combat boots with no galoshes. We didn't get shoe packs until March when we holed up in Saarlauten for two weeks in a basement and a medic came to check our feet. This was the first chance we had to take our shoes off. The medic would hold a lighted cigarette on our big toe. If we couldn't feel any pain we were sent to the rear for treatment. One person I know was sent back.

Well, back to when we were in Luxembourg. I think we were close to Wiltz. We were mostly in the forest and the snow was deep. We moved quite a bit and attacked each morning at 0600. We had three tanks with us, I believe they were part of the 11th Armored Division and when they started up in the mornings I'm sure every "Heinie" in the area knew exactly where we were. We moved until we run into some kind of resistance and then dug in. We had those small trench shovels. I remember digging one when I hit those phosphorus roots that

glowed in the dark like fluorescent lights. I covered them up in a hurry. Most of the time we would just brush the snow away and lay down. One night I laid under a tree and fell asleep. When I awoke later I was covered with a thick layer of snow. When I got up a shell hit a pine tree close to me and didn't explode but knocked all the snow off the limbs.

.....

**A TRUSTY 75MM**

December 22-23, 1944

**Elton R. Sebaugh  
635 Tank Destroyer Battalion  
Oberlin, Kansas**

December 22 the battalion got orders to move out at dusk as we were under observation in open area and should get back behind the lines. We drove all night behind the lines to get to Haversen Bldg.(?). The morning of December 23 we had our first hot meal in several days--oatmeal and coffee. At 8:00 a.m. we were put in various positions. Our gun section was to cover an open field and a road. We got our toed gun in position but didn't have time to dig holes so the only protection we had was the half track. A few minutes after getting our gun in position, one of the crew spotted what was the observer behind a bush on the railroad. I radioed the situation to Headquarters. They said take 50 cal. mg. and try to get him. My response, "If we don't get him with the first burst, he will still be able to direct the mortar fire." Headquarters replied: "Load a round of HE and fire direct to the observer." This we did.

But, by that time, the shelling was taking its casualties. Four of our 10 men were hit. When the medic got to us, he made quick patch work and told us to try and make it back to the rear area--approximately 1,000 yards. All four of us made it back to duty approximately five weeks later. Our sergeant said he pulled a part of the firing pin and had another drive in the half track while he used 50 mg. to cover withdrawal. He said later a small tank and some volunteers went back and recovered the anti-tank 75 mm gun, and we finished the war with the same gun. The rest of the battalion suffered several casualties during the BoB.

FLASHBACKS

December, 1944

Wendell C. Obermeier  
75th Infantry Division  
899th Field Artillery Battalion  
Charles City, Iowa

This scene flashed back to me recently as I was attending a gun show at the mall. One of the display booths had a collection of wartime memorabilia from United States and foreign countries. My eyes fell on two mannequins of major generals--one Russian and one American. They were dazzling in their natty uniforms, ... and ribbons and decorations, topped by a billed hat. Displayed on the table beside them were three head-shaped wig mountings, each one covered with a dark German helmet. After more than 50 years, those three helmeted faces reappeared to me as vivid as the first encounter.

Nervously we drove toward the grade-crossing of the narrow-gauge railway. It was eerie--deathly quiet--no one spoke. We realized we were in-between our forces and the enemy. On my left, I could see three helmeted German soldiers crouched in a make-shift bunker. On closer observation, I realized they were all dead. A single rifle bullet had pierced the front and came out the back of each helmet. Blood still trickled down their faces from beneath their black helmets.

Accompanied by two members of my survey crew, we were attempting to deliver an artillery fire plan overlay to the infantry battalion commander whose unit was making the main attack.

It was a fluid operation and our forces had been able to advance more rapidly than anticipated. German troops had retreated from previous strong points, leaving only a small rear guard to insure a safe withdrawal. Three of that rear guard were the soldiers in the bunker--evidently taken by surprise, ambush or sniper fire.

We quickly crossed the railroad tracks and as we moved through the little village that had been motionless a few moments before, suddenly changed into a circus atmosphere of white waving flags of surrender from every window and doorstep. We returned to our unit as our overlay fire plan was useless. Our infantry had moved swiftly to seize all their objectives.

Later that evening it was difficult to think of any thing else besides the faces of those three young soldiers. Pink-faced, never shaven teenagers was the way they appeared to me. Although they were enemy, I felt deep remorse thinking of the way they must have awakened that morning and saw the sunrise the same as I did. Probably joking amongst themselves, griping about the cold rations and talking excitedly about family and girlfriends. I also thought that, but for the grace of God, that could have been my survey crew and myself. It was that close. Visuals of the distraught parents of these kids came to mind and I could see someone delivering the sad news.

Standing in the mall, looking at the three helmeted figurines, tears filled my eyes and my throat was so dry I could not explain my difficulty to a young lady who was concerned about my actions.

Verlan P. Gunnell  
1st Infantry Division  
Preston, Idaho

...In France we were put on flat bed railroad trains, open air in terribly cold weather. Off to Belgium we went on these open air trains freezing stiff. We were so crowded we had to stand up all the way. This was a blessing in one way--it helped keep us a little warmer in this terribly cold weather.

We arrived in Belgium about the 10th or 11th and were issued supplies, guns, and ammunition and sent to the front lines of the battle. I was put in the 1st Infantry Division.

We would advance through the deep snow through the heavy trees and hilly territory with enemy shells mostly going over our heads and exploding behind us all day long. Sometimes we would pass dead soldiers lying frozen stiff in the deep snow. I think we were closer to the enemy than they thought, hence the reason for most of all their mortar and 88 shells going over our heads and exploding behind us. It didn't take long to know how close a shell was--you could tell by the sound. If you could hear it, you were okay. But, if you didn't hear it, it was right by you--exploding and wounding or killing you and those close by. The nights were the worst of all, just trying to keep from freezing to death.

We had one blanket. I would still be awake until 12:00 or 1:00 a.m. and then being so tired and exhausted I would crouch down in the snow and put my blanket over me trying to keep as warm as I could. Digging a fox hole was impossible in the frozen ground and frozen branches buried in the snow. About 4:30 a.m. I would wake up, my feet and legs were frozen stiff up to my knees. To try and save my feet I would lay my blanket on the snow, sit on it, take off my leggings and my shoes (we had no boots) and I would rub and rub very hard my legs and feet for about 30 minutes on each one trying my best to get the circulation going and unfreeze them.

Each day we would advance about 1,000 yards through the trees and deep snow.

On the 19th of January about 4:00 p.m. in the afternoon we came to a big clearing in the hills. We were in the trees on one side of this small hill, then this big opening with nothing but deep snow and about 100 yards over the opening in the trees on the other side in the trees was the German Army.

We got orders from the rear command to take that position where the Germans were before night fall.

Our squad leader picked 20 men--mostly we newer soldiers--to spread out about 20 yards apart, cross this opening and capture this German-held position before night fall.

I was one of the 20 men picked to cross this opening and secure this German-held position. I was about in the center of our group with men on both sides of me as we trudged through the deep snow--about knee deep--to capture the position. Needless to say, we were sitting ducks and the Germans could have killed us all very easily.

When we were about 30 yards from the Germans in the trees, about 3 German soldiers came out of the trees waving a white flag of surrender. They were right in front of me so I told my fellow soldiers on my right and my left that I had them covered with my M-1 and for them to frisk and disarm them--which they did. We radioed back for the rest of our company to come and join us. We had this position secured.

I knew what was up--the Germans had this position zeroed in with their heavy artillery and they wanted more than just a few casualties. They waited until our whole company was there--then they would really shell us with all they had.

About 8 o'clock that night they shelled us with all they had. The very first mortar shell which came in landed right next to me as I was trying to dig a fox hole--mainly trying to keep warm. I was knocked down by the blast and wounded in my right shoulder. I was lucky, all the other shells landed in front of me. I was protected by a large tree in front of me.

After the shelling stopped those of us wounded who could walk, grouped together and made our way to the rear where some trucks were and was loaded and transported to the hospital in Liege, Belgium. The reason I remember the dates of all this is because my wife has a birthday on the 20th of January and I was trying to remember her birthday. She could have had a very sad and bad birthday but I was one of the lucky ones, only wounded, not killed as so many others I had seen.

One more thing as a testimony of how terribly cold and bad the weather was in the BoB: A couple of days after I was wounded, I was flown with other wounded soldiers to a hospital in Paris, France. One day shortly after, I was standing in the doorway of a large room, like a large basketball court. In this room was row after row of beds with soldiers lying in them--a blanket covering them except for their feet. I noticed their feet didn't look very good--some of them quite dark in color.

I asked the nurse standing next to me: what is going to happen to all these American soldiers lying in these beds? There must have been close to a hundred of them in this big room. The nurse told me they were all waiting to have their feet amputated. They were so bad they could not be saved. I could easily see why this was. Had I been on the front lines much longer, I would have been in the same fix as these soldiers waiting to have their feet amputated. The casualties from the weather were terrible. As for me it was worse than the enemy we were fighting.

.....

#### ANOTHER DULL DAY

December, 1944

**Robert Way**

**1st Infantry Division**

**32nd Field Artillery Battalion**

**Henneker, New Hampshire**

On about December 13, we were notified we were to go back for some R&R in the Hauset-La Calamine area in Belgium. We had been in the "line" for about 90 days and sure needed some rest. As we were getting ready to move out, and we stood around waiting for the orders, along the dirt road and mud, came a column of about 15-20 GI's all dressed up with overcoats and scarves around their necks. They passed us not saying a word but just nodding their heads to us. The last one in the line was about 10 yards behind the rest, and as he passed by, one of our men lit a cigarette, and that last man in the line put a cigarette into his mouth and asked for a light, then moved on.

The kid who was driving the truck in front of ours, came back and the talk now centered on how fast and quiet they had moved by us. When the kid told us that the fellow that he had

given the light to said "Danka," I told the kid to run up to the head of our line of trucks and tell the first officer he met what had happened. The kid returned in a few minutes and said when he told the captain, he almost fell out of his jeep. He said the captain was using the radio when he left.

I heard later that our 18th Infantry took care of them. Oh, well, just another dull day in the army!

.....

#### PINNED DOWN WITH THE PRESS

December, 1944

**Alfred Fruhwirth**

**4th Armored Division**

**10th Armored Infantry Battalion**

**Company C**

**Carrington, North Dakota**

My most memorable incident was getting pinned down in a hole by machine gun fire and sharing that hole with Bob Capa from *Life* magazine and a reporter from *Yank* magazine.

.....

#### NEVER HEARD OF BREMERTON??

December, 1944

**Vergil A. Vant**

**7th Armored Division**

**40th Tank Battalion**

**Company A**

**Bremerton, Washington**

...I was a tank driver from Paris to Lubeck, Germany, and was in Holland when we pulled back to go to Ardennes breakthrough. We ended up in and around St. Vith holding it as long as we could without much ammunition, gas, or food. We saw plenty of fighting in the Ardennes area.

In had been knocked out of a 7th Armored Division tank and was replaced in a 31st Tank Battalion tank. We then lost our second tank and with the help from our good Lord, two of us got out again. We wandered around several days--getting help from the local people who hid us and gave us some food.

One morning we walked up a snow drift at the edge of the forest and we were ordered to halt. We were staring down the barrel of a 45 caliber pistol held by a paratrooper. He started questioning us--and we were not too sharp on the answers, so they brought us back to their command post for interrogation. They asked me the standard questions and when they finally asked about my home town (I'm from Washington State--and Seattle is the largest city, so I thought if I said Seattle, Washington, everyone would know that--even the Germans), I said Bremerton. The officer answered me and said, "I never heard of it!" Luck was with me as a corps man in the command post was from Portland, Oregon. He said it was a naval base across the Puget Sound from Seattle. After a few more questions, they decided we were not the infiltrators they thought we might be. We were shaking, dirty, hungry, and cold, so the captain sent us to medics to recuperate.

We were there about four days when I heard that my old outfit, "A" Company of the 40th Tank Battalion, had been annihilated! I couldn't believe it! I was then put in the infantry company and was marching down the road to the front with an M-1 rifle. I heard a voice say, "What the hell are you

doing in that outfit, Vant?" I turned to look and it was a fellow driver from another tank of the 40th Tank Battalion. I said, "What's going on with the old outfit?" He said we'd lost a couple of tanks, that's all. So I got permission from the infantry officer I was with to rejoin my old outfit. I was so damned happy, I just about cried! THANK GOD.

I found most of my old tank crew and we drew another tank and continued to make war again. I will never forget those poor people, mostly old men and women, who helped us out--hiding us and feeding us in and around St. Vith and vicinity during the Bulge. I can still taste that wonderful barley soup and bread!

\*\*\*\*\*

December 26/27, 1944

**Edward Carvalho**  
**244th Engineer Combat Battalion**  
**Fall River, Massachusetts**

About the 26th or 27th of December, we were told the Germans were coming to reinforce and attack the 101st Airborne in Bastogne.

We were to stop them by laying thousands of mines. So, at 8:00 a.m. one morning we were assigned sections and had to pick away to make holes to bury the mines. After a couple of hours, German piper cubs (observation planes) flew 3,000 feet high circling our area. Then all hell broke loose. German 88's and mortars also (the mid-air burst types). We were laying in our fox holes and shrapnel was melting the snow around us.

The temperature was about 15° and there was about 15 inches of snow. We suffered several casualties including our first lieutenant getting his arm blown away by 88's.

Our mine field was ruined by heavy artillery, so we moved to night duty. We laid mines from 9:00 p.m. to 3:00 a.m.--suffering bitter cold and drowsy all night from lack of sleep. Because of this, three men were killed from our own mines.

I found myself stranded in the middle of the mine field. I froze with panic and my second lieutenant came out to rescue me. I followed his footsteps out. Thank God.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### DAYS NOT FORGOTTEN

December, 1944

**Wilbur (Web) Halvorsen**  
**6th Armored Division**  
**50th Armored Infantry Battalion**  
**Company A**  
**Freeland, Washington**

*[The story in the February issue by Benjamin A. Goodin, "Time on Target," Les Bois Jacques, Bastogne, was of great interest to me.] ...I had tied in with the 101st Airborne Division. At that time we were spread out mighty thin. We lost more than half the men in our company, including all of our officers. First Sergeant Remmer was acting company commander. All the men in the outfit were being pushed to the limit. We were cold, tired, and hungry. For eight days, our half track with our sleeping bags couldn't reach us forcing us to take shelter at night in a snowdrift. If we were lucky, we could find a deep-dug German foxhole with logs over the top.*

*While we held this line, I could hear German activity in the*

wooded area 400 yards out in front. The sound of tank engines turning over increased as the day wore on. We sent the word back and hoped for some TD help, but nothing happened. I made the rounds of the men as they huddled in their slit trenches, encouraging them to move to induce some circulation, or at least to work their feet against the side of the trench to keep them from freezing. Many developed frozen feet. I kept a pair of socks in my helmet liner, and changed whenever I had the opportunity. I saw men with frozen feet. It was terrible.

We were told to hold the line at all costs, so we waited it out. Night came. We were exhausted, and tension kept building up, knowing that we could be hit at any moment, surely at daybreak. At night the Germans sent up flares that turned the darkness to day. Artillery fire was heard off and on. Each time we knew the attack was on, but nothing happened. I was one of the few left of those who disembarked from the LST's at Utah Beach, so I had some battle experience. Some of the new replacements were only there a few days. I can remember to this moment the look of fear and anxiety in their eyes. A young replacement that I put on guard duty could stand it no longer. Thinking he would be sent to the rear, he shot at the tip of his finger. The rifle blast and velocity took most of three fingers. So it was as as we waited it out.

Sergeant Remmer came by with orders for everybody to stay put in their holes. He had heard that something was afoot, and would let me know. It wasn't long in coming. The sound of artillery firing behind us was something I never will forget. The shells from the 105's and 155's kept coming and coming, whistling over our heads. I thought it would never stop and it was like music to our ears. All were on target to the wooded area in front of us. No one could survive the intensity of the blasts. That TOT that Benjamin Goodin wrote about saved the day for us. We were lucky.

Shortly after, a patrol was sent to view the damage. I am happy to this day I wasn't on that patrol. The slaughter was indescribable. It was a massacre, littered with broken bodies and random wreckage. Many bodies were hanging from tree branches. It was utter and absolute devastation. Those still living would have minds shattered beyond repair. Men returning from the patrol were speechless. They were sick; I felt sorry for them.

The following incident happened a few days later. The Germans were still probing for an opening along the entire front. We found ourselves again on line at the edge of a wooded area. The Germans had their tanks lined up opposite us. We could see them through the trees in the woods across from us. I saw one of our own tanks lined up with them. Sergeant Remmer sent back for firing power but it wasn't promising, so we just waited. Then something very strange happened. A GI came running out of the woods from the German side, waving his arms in desperation, telling us that we should get out of there as we didn't have a chance. He said that he was released by the Germans to warn us to move out or we would be annihilated.

His uniform was a mess. He wore no helmet, and his hair was down in front of his face. He spoke good English, and loud enough for every one to hear. Some of our new men did make steps to the rear before they were halted. It didn't take long for me to figure it out. After calming him down, I backed him against a tree and started asking him questions.

*With the tip of my bayonet under his chin, it didn't take long*

for him to admit he was German. I sent him to the rear, but not before a couple of our men ordered him to exchange uniforms with a dead German.

He was correct in saying that we were about to be attacked. It wasn't long before a Tiger tank came moving slowly across the frozen ground in our direction. We had only our M1 rifles. It was strange that only one tank came forward. But, one or ten were at its mercy. However, the good Lord was with us. From the rear we heard a tank destroyer, crashing through the pine trees, dashing in front of us. It stopped, whirled, and fired at the Tiger. He then pulled back after one shot and repeated the operation down the line. The tank with its heavy armor wasn't knocked out. It went into reverse and made it back to where it started. The attack was called off. After dark we pulled back to a better defensive position. It didn't allow us any rest or ease the tension.

The next day we were again on the attack.

## DID YOU ENJOY THESE STORIES??

**Our members would like to  
read your story too!!**

These stories are still coming in, but they are rapidly being used up. So, get your story into the mail soon. Be as brief as possible, and confine the contents to **one incident which happened to you during the Bulge.**

## DOG TAGS FOUND IN THE ARDENNES

The following list was sent to us by **GLENN R. FACKLER, SR., 7TH ARMORED DIVISION**, in the hope that it may be helpful to one of you who might have wondered what happened to someone you knew in the Bulge. Jean-Michel Piette forwarded the list to Glenn informing him that this was a list of the names and numbers on dog tags which he had found in and around the Ardennes. Jean-Michael would like to hear from anyone who might have more information on these men, i.e., units, regiments, family, etc. You can write to Jean-Michel at: 26, Petit-Halleux, 6698 Grand-Halleux, Belgium.

Anderson, James--34092950  
Arcand, Joseph--32663092  
Augustine, Samuel A.--33028869  
(628th Tank Destroyer Bn)  
Bailey, Curlie R.--34660054  
Banowetz, Leonard F.--2079674  
Barks, Alver C.--35712242  
Basile, Joseph A.--33317539  
Beach, Roscoe H.--37419297  
Benn, Richard C.--32831494  
Bixby, Donald T.--2113390  
Bobert, Julius--37319584  
Bramowski, I.J.--33052870  
Browning, Dudley F.--0782150  
Bugoski, Joseph J.--12133755  
Campbell, Geo. W.--0474045  
Carlson, Clarence--37337563  
Castadoro, Alexander V.--31026362  
Cleland, Chester C.--39464870  
Climie, Daniel--38346068  
Conkle, Charles--36078457  
Corner, John--38173419  
Cotton, Harry--33145933  
Craven, Woodrow W.--636840  
Culp, Leon F.--37138641  
Cunningham, John S.--01013939  
Dekens, Michael L.--19000697  
Donnellan, Charles--31426358  
Donovan, Ralph R.--17074693  
Dotson, Herbert A.--6631815  
Dowe, Fred--32635498  
Edwards, R. D.--38218898

Ehresmann, George--20248162  
Fauls, Elwood S.--12098996  
Fazekas, Michael E.--33115170  
Galbraith, Alexander--32449082  
Giordano, Daniel--3170488  
Giordano, Dominic J.--31422605  
Gist, Jesse O.--37181846  
Greenstone, Murray--31092837  
Hawk, Jerrold C.--35335700  
Henderson, W. O.--37007612  
Hoar, Francis T.--38083800  
Hough, Gilbert E.--32372979  
Howanich, Mike--33055877  
Howard, James C.--34586582  
Jackson, John J.--36074363  
Kelley, Toby--38097204  
Kiely, Leroy J.--35065291  
Klonaski, Walter  
Kwasniewski, John J.--36019057  
Latham, Edward--31077104  
Lotz, Clayton D.--15087358  
Lowe, Sam H.--33218402  
Maier, Robert D.  
McMannus, Charles E.--39603508  
Mersky, Franck J.--01307443  
Mikulik, Miche--6575155  
Morris, Randall D.--66576798  
Nathan, John--35010050  
Noecker, Ralph F.--17027080  
Palmisano, John A.--32253115  
Petrovich, George E.--42041338  
Piper, Clyde E.--33765515

Pligza, Stephen--31181815  
Poliseno, Guy G.--35623632  
Ranchil, Kenneth--01588823  
Ratcliff, Paul E.--35159803  
Ravalles, A--5656  
Rich, Paul W.--39389549  
Ricketts, John B.--19144190  
Rimback, Jimmy  
Ruble, Herbert L.--35521919  
Saul, Charles C.--36078457  
Saunders, Willie P.--34667167  
Schmitz, Fred W., Jr.--32563522  
Shreves, Otto C.--17078554  
Siciliano, Frank--31063305  
Singleton, Ollie--35798779  
Smith, Jimmie D.--6272158  
Stevenson, Tivis  
Still, Roscoe H.--3010057  
Strazzanti, John A.--35273825  
Switzer, Myron N., Jr.--35300375  
Thomas, Joseph H.--32552596  
Tilton, Donald W.--35539380  
Tovar, Leo--39564912  
Uel, Tucker W.--6820951  
Verdon, Nicholas M.--31132675  
Zahachevski, Joseph--35593932  
Zool, Albert J.--33834132  
Zukowski, Walter E.--36555832

Our thanks to both Glenn and Jean-Michael for providing this information.

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# UNCERTAIN SPRING

by Robert Dettor  
99th Infantry Division

There were many "travelers" abroad in Germany in April of 1945. The mountains cast a long shadow over men of all nations. Men--American POW's--seemed to have no heart for a weary journey, although the Bavarian countryside was clothed in a mantle of soft green which foretold a summer of lush crops ripening into abundant harvest. From the tops of the mountains, the villages huddled at their feet looking like busy anthills. As the travelers thronged across the countryside, their passage caused an eddy in the tranquil stream of slow-flowing time. Dust from tramping feet would settle, and the sight and sound of the journeyers would recede in the distance. The villagers would shake their heads, mutter, and go their accustomed ways where prisoners passed under guard, line upon line, until the next group invaded. Though the sky was blue and cloudless, the days endlessly sunny, a thunder of foreboding rumbled on the horizon of the future.

Some of the travelers walked alone, or in groups of two and three. These wanderers shunned the towns and main roads, choosing the solitude of the forests and fields out of necessity fearing detection. Their footfalls were nearly silent, and their presence did not disturb the villagers, in that their presence was not known. A twosome had broken away from the main body of prisoners of war which the Germans were marching across Bavaria, keeping just one jump ahead of the advancing American lines. With no possibility of rejoining their own forces, these escapees realized the inevitability of their return to a prison camp, but for a few days they wanted to enjoy the luscious taste of freedom after being hemmed in by barbed wire and filthy cells.

The Battle of the Bulge still clouded their minds and gave an added tinge of bitterness to the drab hopelessness of their months in prison. So it was, that the march through Bavaria, apart from the closely regimented mass of prisoners, had all the aspects of a holiday spree. This borrowed time was their own. Their ultimate destination was the prison camp at Moosburg, which differed from camps to their previous experience in one important respect, it was the camp from which they hoped to be liberated. News through the grapevine indicated that the Germans could not hold out against the allied forces longer than two or three weeks.

Approaching a small town called Neustadt was a winding dirt road, flanked by fields and wooded patches. At the side of this road, screened by a thicket of new-leaved bushes, two young men basked in the sun and watched the road. They were talking in low tones.

"This doll's legs can't compare with those we saw in the last town."  
"Yeah, but we're six hours hungrier now, and this kid has eggs, a whole basket of them."

The conversationalists were sprawled full-length, watching the progress of a peasant girl, clad in many skirts and a white blouse, carrying a basket. The girl walked along the road briskly, her blond braids bouncing against her shoulder in an animated dance. As though warned by some telepathic instinct, she turned her head and scanned the thicket. The men behind it ducked their heads, and then bobbed up again as the sound of her footsteps receded.

"Well, another meal passed up," one of them remarked as he rolled over on his back and gazed up at the soft blue of the Bavarian sky. "I'd give a hundred bucks cash for a steak."

His companion settled himself on the ground and gazed into space. After a moment or two, he exclaimed, "You know, I can't figure these Bavarian dolls out. They have fifty beautiful costumes, fifty, and they wear them all at once. Did you notice the number of petticoats she had on under her skirt?"

"I was too busy looking at the eggs, kid. Besides, her father's probably a wheel in the village. The more petticoats, the more drag. It's simple. I'm simple. Hell, I'm hungry."

"I just happen to have a dish of spaghetti and meatballs in my pocket," his friend announced, dragging out a battered piece of black bread. He

broke off a tiny piece, handed it to the other man, and carefully stuffed the rest back in his jacket.

The two were no addition to the picturesque landscape. At the moment, both had a two week accumulation of beard and dirt, and were clothed in what looked like rag-picker's rejects. A scant diet of several months duration had given them a pinched and drawn look about the eyes and nose, and their clothing hung on them in El drapo fashion.

They were American infantry officers, wearing Serbian uniforms taken from fellow-prisoners whose clothes had outlasted their owners. The Americans had appropriated them when their own clothes, what clothes the Germans left to them, finally fell apart.

"We could probably hire out to scare the hell out of kids on Halloween," Chapman, the sturdy gent remarked. He was a Bostonian, and possessed a certain correctness of speech and bearing which clung to him even in his present bedraggled state. In more civilized circumstances, he would have appeared to be the typical well-turned-out insurance salesman, which he was. Right now, he was obsessed with his stomach, and nothing but food was on his mind.

"You know, it's too bad we're not in Italy. I might be able to scare up a few relatives who would give us a terrific Italian meal. I'll just tell them I'm Troy D'Ettore's boy and we're in." As he spoke, D'Ettore rubbed his hand reflectively over his black beard, and thought wistfully of the razor blade he had finally abandoned after it became completely useless for shaving with cold water, no soap, also no razor. The combination of sun, dirt, and his natural blackness made his a striking contrast to his companion.

Chapman grinned appreciatively, and stretched. "You know, if I weren't so hungry, I'd feel marvelous. This country is really something! Wait 'til I tell my family I took a walking tour through Bavaria in the springtime."

D'Ettore looked around. "Have you noticed the color of the countryside? A soft green, good enough to eat...like lettuce."

"Let's get going," Chapman said suddenly. "The sun's going down, and if we keep to the fields, we ought not to meet anybody. As long as they don't keep any dogs around here, we shouldn't run into too much trouble."

The pair rose and started off along the edge of a large field which bordered the road. There was a grove of trees which stretched along the field, a thicket, then the road. By keeping the trees between them and the field, and with the thicket as a shelter from the road, they screened themselves from any possible observer. It was dusk, and no one had come along the road for nearly an hour. The men were walking up an incline, and as they came to the top of the rise, a valley spread itself before them. It looked as neat and cozy as a toy landscape, and the two paused involuntarily.

To the left of them, at the end of the field, stood a farmhouse and a few outbuildings. Lights glimmered from the windows of the house and a haystack rose dimly from the gathering shadows. The land sloped away from the buildings to a small creek which wound along the bottom of the valley in an aimless fashion; its silver surface catching the last tints of purple and blue from the fading sky.

"I hate to seem practical in the face of all this beauty," Chapman murmured after a minute. "But, that haystack would make a good spot to sleep, and there may be some food around that we can steal."

His friend had wandered into the field, and suddenly called to him. "Hey, Chapman...this is a POTATO field. We eat! We can dig up a few now and take them with us. Then, if we can't find anything around the farmhouse, we'll have something to fall back on."

"What'll we dig them with, our fingernails?! Chapman asked morosely.

"Get a sharp stick, a pointed rock might do it. We can kick the top dirt loose, then dig."

The two set to work, and managed to pry several small potatoes from the grudging earth.

"This reducing diet we're on doesn't help my strength any," D'Ettore remarked, and sat down, rubbing

(Continued on Page 22)

## UNCERTAIN SPRING

(Continued from Page 21)

the dirt off the potatoes on his jacket sleeve. After they had rested a moment, they set off in the direction of the farmhouse. The field was rough and several times one or the other of the men stumbled. Finally, Chapman fell heavily, and swore.

"Twisted the damn thing," he explained, rubbing his ankle. His friend gave him a hand, and they went on; Chapman treading warily, complaining whenever he came down hard on the bad ankle. They reached the farmyard and began reconnoitering--dogs especially in mind.

"If there's a dog here, I hope it's well-fed and friendly," Chapman said, eyeing the farmhouse. It was a low, rambling building, with a thatched roof and whitewashed walls. A light breeze had come up, and the shadows of the trees with their spring foliage danced on the palely glimmering walls. The scent of young grass came on the wind, and the noises of the small night creatures filled the air.

"This reminds me of a spring night at home," D'Ettorre whispered. "Only there, every kid in the neighborhood would be raising hell."

"Come on," Chapman said. "Let's get to the haystack. We can see if there's anything to eat on the way." They walked along carefully, keeping in the shadows when nearing the farmhouse windows. Passing under a low-hanging tree, D'Ettorre muttered a muffled exclamation, and reaching up, pulled at a blob that had bumped him on the head.

"It's some kind of fruit," he remarked, and bit into one. Hastily he spit out the mouthful, which was tough and bitter. "Even the trees are against us," he announced bitterly.

The route to the haystack led past the barnyard, which assailed them with an overpowering fragrance. Automatically, the men cut out in a wide detour, and with a suddenness which left him surprised, D'Ettorre came face-to-face with the motionless figure of a girl, who stared at him silently. Chapman joined D'Ettorre and the three stood transfixed, until the girl said something quietly. Her voice was low, and she spoke swiftly. The two men looked at each other helplessly, and she repeated what she had said, slowly and urgently. Finally Chapman said, "We can't understand you...." and subsided.

"Sounds like Russian," D'Ettorre muttered. "Must be one of the slave workers the Germans have moved in here." He racked his brain for a Russian phrase which he dimly remembered seeing in one of the Army language pamphlets. After making several weak attempts to mumble a salutation in Russian, he fell silent.

The girl's face changed, and she looked at their clothing questioningly. As she studied their faces, understanding seemed to grow in her, and she spoke haltingly in English.

"You are prisoners?" she asked.

"Yes, we're starved. We hoped to sleep in that haystack."...D'Ettorre paused.

"You go there. I will bring you some food." She turned toward the farm house and vanished in the shadows.

The two men looked at each other, and without a word started for the haystack. Then D'Ettorre said, "Either we're in luck or she's going to turn us in."

"We might as well do what she says," Chapman replied. "No matter how you look at it, we can't do much now. Besides, I'm beat."

They walked on, and threw themselves down on the edge of the hay.

"Wonder if she'll come back with food or the farmer," D'Ettorre speculated. He had just finished speaking when the girl appeared as quietly and suddenly as she had before. Under her arm was half a loaf of black bread and a head of red cabbage. Silently she handed it to them, and stood watching as they started to divide the food. D'Ettorre reflected that back home it would have been garbage; here it was a banquet.

Embarrassed, Chapman made a gesture to offer her some of the food, but she shook her head and turned away. She had only taken a few steps when she came back and said, "You have been walking long?"

"Three days," D'Ettorre answered. "Tomorrow we are going to get back on the main road and join the rest of the Kriegies. We have met a lot of your people." He said this last experimentally, hoping to feel

her out and set his mind at rest as to her identity.

"Things are changing," Chapman added. "We won't be doing this much longer." He too was feeling skeptical about the girl.

"I am glad," she said simply. "Do not worry about tonight. The family is away. Besides, this farmer was in the last war, and he is not as bad as some of the Germans." She spit out the last word with a loathing which made D'Ettorre sigh with relief, and then slipped off into the darkness.

"Wonder what the family will do when they find she took this food," Chapman said, chewing on a hunk of bread.

"She probably doesn't give a damn at this point," D'Ettorre answered. "What I'd like to know is how long she's been here, and where she learned to speak English."

When they had finished eating they dug into the hay, and lay there, gazing up at the sky. Stars were out, and a new moon rode at anchor. Only the night noises of the country disturbed the peace around them.

"I feel so far away from everything," D'Ettorre murmured. "It's like being in another world."

"I know," Chapman replied. "For the past three days I've been afraid I'd wake up and find the sun, and the green countryside were just a dream."

"I wonder how the rest of them are making out," D'Ettorre said meditatively. "Lancaster's leg was in bad shape, and Devitt couldn't use his right arm at all. When I think how that lousy Kraut swung on him with his gun...." he broke off, and felt the familiar tide of hate and anger rising in him, as memories of the past months came back to him. His thoughts swung to the countryside through which he had just passed. The neat little towns with the prosperous farms on their outskirts, all clothed in the pale hues of spring. The road they had skirted ran along orchards just bursting into bloom, and fields showing the first evidence of the crops to come. At every crossroad was a shrine, bestowing a blessing on the passersby. It was a world fashioned for operettas, festivals, and ancient wood-carvers working on toys for the world's children. It was an enchanted world which had come under an evil spell, marked with the twisted cross which warped and brutalized everything that fell under its shadow. D'Ettorre shook himself, and concentrated on the moon.

As though he had divined D'Ettorre's thoughts, Chapman said slowly, "A lot of things don't match up. These people build shrines at every crossroad, and appear to be wrapped up in their religion, and still they go right along with the Nazis. About the only thing to do is take what comes along, we'll find out if these local characters are as quaint as the look. I figure it ought to take us about a day to get back with the other prisoners..." he broke off as shouting and the tramp of heavy boots came on the breeze from the direction of the farmhouse. A door banged, and the heavy voices of men shouting guttural commands mingled with the sound of smashing wood and crockery. If the girl who had fed them was in the farmhouse, she made no sound.

The two men burrowed in the haystack had stiffened at the first noise, and now were laying motionless, sweat running down their chests and foreheads. D'Ettorre felt frozen. His body seemed to have no connection with his mind. He felt as though he were floating, and for a moment forgot the men at the farmhouse in his contemplation of this sensation. Then he felt Chapman's hand on his arm, and he froze again, trying to stifle the very breath of his body in his effort to be silent. The sky had descended on his chest in a crushing weight, and a pulse beat in his ears until he felt he would go deaf from the clamor. The heavy-booted steps and guttural voices of the men were coming toward the haystack. As they drew nearer, one of the men laughed. The swish of a club as its owner swung at the high grass tore the delicate tissue of the night's fabric of sound.

The footsteps stopped as the men reached the hay. Now that they were there, they didn't seem to know what to do next. For a second only, and as though it were a signal, the group began beating the hay, using their clubs as flails and cursing and shouting at each other. They were not systematic in their attack,

(Continued on Page 23)

## UNCERTAIN SPRING

(Continued from Page 22)

and rather half-heartedly pursued it until one, apparently the leader, shouted a command. Evidently, this was the signal to stop, for several of them started to walk away from the group gathered at the haystack. D'Ettorre caught a glimpse of light reflected from the SS insignia on one of the uniforms.

A brief discussion ensued, and then the men started back toward the farm house, one of them stopping to relieve himself on the way, while another shouted an obscene remark to him.

Neither of the men in the hay stirred. The clubs had not touched them. They had been spared a miracle which did not preclude a return visit by the searchers. So they lay there, in a half world between fear and relief. Suddenly, D'Ettorre began to move, and he felt his whole body begin to shake uncontrollably. Chapman was in the same state, and the two lay there silent, while nervous exhaustion took its toll on their bodies. Gritting his teeth to keep from crying out, D'Ettorre closed his eyes and started to repeat the "Our Father" to himself, the words meaningless and running through his mind like the waters of a brook over stones.

Chapman spoke: "They've left the farmhouse. They're going down the road." He clamped his mouth shut over the faint note of hysteria in his voice, and once more lay silent.

"The girl," D'Ettorre said slowly. "Did she tell them?" When Chapman made no reply, he continued, "We've got to get out of here before it gets light. Just before sunrise we'll leave. We can cut across the field to that other road and get back in the main group of prisoners. One more day and we should reach the camp."

Chapman still didn't answer, and leaning over him, D'Ettorre saw that he was asleep, his hands still clenched at his sides.

While Chapman slept, D'Ettorre lay and watched the stars fade and the first glow of the dawn spread in an ever-widening expanse of pearl tints, taking on an opalescent hue as the night receded. He was dead tired, and watched the world lighten with an impassiveness that would not give way to their urgent need to be off. Finally he roused himself, and woke Chapman. The birds had long been stirring, and the farmhouse was clearly outlined in the grey morning light.

The two men crawled out of the hay, and as of one accord, started for the farmhouse. No smoke came from the chimney and the place appeared deserted. As they came to the door they saw that it hung open. The girl was crumpled up on the floor, her clothes torn and pulled half off her, her hair matted with clots of blood. She was stiff, and while D'Ettorre straightened her clothes in an awkward attempt to lend dignity to her death, Chapman took a loaf of bread and a cow turnip from the storeroom, and stuffed them into a bundle. Then the two walked out, closing the door on the room's silent inmate.

"She would have gotten it sooner or later, anyway," Chapman said desperately as they walked along the road, making no attempt to avoid being seen.

"Yeah," D'Ettorre answered, his eyes on some far off object. After a while he spoke again, his words coming slowly. "You can't escape it, can you? I mean, even when you think you're way from it, like we've been the last couple of days, it's still all around you. It's them against us, and if one of us escapes, another one gets caught, like her."

"Look, kid," Chapman warned sternly. "Don't start thinking, or you'll go batty. This whole force is collapsing around them right now, and all we have to do is hang on a while longer."

The sun was up now, and as they walked along they saw farmers going to their barns, and cattle being driven to the pastures. No one paid any attention to them as they sopped to get some water from a well and eat part of their food.

When they finished eating, they resumed their walk, moving at a leisurely pace, watching the countryside and its inhabitants.

"Funny," Chapman observed at length. "Here we've been slinking around and trying to keep out of sight...now we walk along in plain view and nobody even notices us. And if they did, I wouldn't give a damn."

"Yeah, I think they've changed their tune since they've heard the artillery rolling in," D'Ettorre said heavily. "They'll probably start tossing bouquets instead of rocks before this thing is over. Those guys last night must have been having themselves a final fling."

They puffed up a steep slope. The country road they were on ran down on the other side of the hill to a crossroads, where a broad paved highway, part of the far-flung German autobahn, intersected it. The highway struck an alien note in the provincial scene. They turned to look back down their road, and then started down the hill to the highway.

It stretched ahead of them in a broad ribbon, and the reflection of the sun on its surface made D'Ettorre squint. Abruptly he caught Chapman's arm, and halting him, pointed up the road, which ran level for a considerable distance. Dimly visible ahead of them was a group of men. It was impossible to tell whether they were walking or standing still at that distance. Chapman followed D'Ettorre's gaze for a few seconds, then sat down at the side of the road. At last they had caught up with the main body of prisoners.

"Well, kid, there they are. I can see them now, five abreast, twelve to the column. Myself, I'd rather trail them and keep this little twosome of ours." Chapman watched for his friend's reaction as he spoke.

"O.K.," D'Ettorre said slowly. "Let's keep moving though. Our guys may be moving in faster than we think, and I don't want to get caught on the loose in these clothes. We'd have a helluva time convincing anyone we weren't a couple of krauts who switched uniforms."

Chapman reluctantly moved from his seat at roadside and the two set off. They spoke infrequently now, and didn't appear to notice it when a sudden spring shower drenched them. Turning up their coat collars, they walked along steadily, suiting their pace to the group ahead of them, and gazing straight ahead. Finally, D'Ettorre said, "There it is."

Along the skyline rose the dim outline of what appeared to be an enormous enclosure. As viewed through the threadlike rain, it was only a vague mass, covering acres. Low hanging clouds framed a black canopy over it.

Chapman merely nodded his recognition of D'Ettorre's words, and digging his hands in his pockets strode along. Both he and D'Ettorre were thoroughly soaked now, and the rain was running in rivulets from the edge of their borrowed Serbian caps. The shower had settled into a steady rain.

The structure ahead loomed ever larger as the two men slogged along. Shrouded in mist-like rain, it resembled some enormous monster, reaching out to devour the country around it. The group ahead was nearly upon it, and as D'Ettorre and Chapman watched, disappeared within its confines. Now the road reeled out in front of them in an unbroken line to the barbed-wire fence that rose before them. The heavy clouds and towering mountains in the background brooded over the scene.

"It's big," Chapman said lamely.

D'Ettorre snorted. "Yeah, a German's dream. The prison camp to end all prison camps. They've herded thousands of us across Bavaria to get us behind these fences, but it won't do any good. They're licked, and this is the end of the line."

They were at the gate now. At the top of it, towering over them, was a huge sign, the wood carving on its surface standing out in relief. It was the work of an expert craftsman, illustrated with figures of weary, dejected men, ill-clothed, ill-fed, and bowed over with their woes. Beneath these figures, in German script, was written, "Welcome, to the unconquerable Allied soldiers!" In the distance the ominous rumble of artillery on the horizon grew louder, as the American liberating forces moved steadily forward through Bavaria, toward the sign.

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**CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL TO  
SEE IF YOUR DUES ARE DUE.**

**BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**  
*Invites You to Attend*  
**"EVENTS OF REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"**  
**ON THE 53<sup>RD</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE**  
**December 15 and 16, 1997**  
**Washington, DC**

The Sheraton National Hotel (Columbia Pike and Washington Boulevard), Arlington, VA, has been selected as the site for activities commemorating the 53<sup>rd</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, December 15 and 16, 1997. This hotel is located only a few minutes from Arlington Cemetery and Fort Myer, and will provide accommodations for a reduced room rate of \$69, single or double occupancy. This rate is available for any night(s) between December 13 and December 17. **For room reservations, please call the Sheraton National Hotel of Arlington (1-800-468-9090) by December 1, 1997.** Mention that you are attending the Battle of the Bulge Banquet and events.

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1997**

2:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Registration/receive name badges (hotel lobby)  
 3:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m. Hospitality Room/Exhibits, scrapbooks. John Bowen and Earle Hart, Battle of the Bulge Historians, will be the hosts. A private room in the Cafe Brasserie has been reserved for dinner for the Battle of the Bulge Veterans (payment is on your own).

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1997**

7:45 a.m. - 8:45 a.m. Registration/receive name badges (hotel lobby)  
 8:45 a.m. Chartered buses depart hotel for Fort Meade, MD (\$12 per person/round trip)  
 10:00 a.m. Movie, "The Code Breakers"  
 11:15 a.m. Tour of the National Cryptologic Museum (special guides)  
 12:30 p.m. Buffet luncheon at the Fort Meade Golf Club Dining Room  
 1:45 p.m. Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Room; history of room and the dedication of the miniature dioramas developed by the Washington Model Club from original Signal Corps photographs. Visit to Fort Meade Museum  
 3:30 p.m. Return by bus to the Sheraton National Hotel  
**BANQUET AT HOTEL GALAXY ROOM** (Beautiful view of city lights)  
 6:00 p.m. Social Hour/Cash Bar  
 7:00 p.m. Color Guard/Drummer and Fifers/Ceremonies  
 7:15 p.m. Dinner served  
 Program, including speaker on the Battle of the Bulge Military Intelligence  
 After the Banquet Hospitality Room open

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1997**

11:00 a.m. Impressive ceremony and placing of wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington National Cemetery  
 11:30 a.m. Ceremony of Remembrance, Battle of the Bulge Memorial  
 12:15 p.m. Buffet Luncheon, hosted by VBOB, at the NCO Club Dining Room, Fort Myer, VA.  
 Swearing in of new VBOB officers. Comments by Stanley Wojtusik, President, VBOB.  
 2:00 p.m. Farewell

*National Salad/Choice of Dressing*  
*Chicken Roulade with Apricot Amaretto Glaze*  
*Twice Baked Potatoes*  
**BANQUET MENU**      *Stir Fried Fresh Vegetables*  
*Mini-Baguettes and Butter*  
*Black Forest Cheesecake with Cherry Rum Sauce*  
*Coffee/Selection of Teas*  
*Glass of Blush Wine with Dinner*

**RESERVATION FORM**  
**"EVENTS OF REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"**  
**ON THE 53RD ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE**  
**December 15 and 16, 1997**  
**Washington, DC**

Return form by December 3, 1997, to:

**BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**  
**P.O. Box 2516, Kensington, MD 20891-0818**

Telephone: **301-881-0356**

Please make checks payable to BoBHF Commemoration

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City

State

(Zip)

Battle of Bulge Unit: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse/Guest: \_\_\_\_\_

I/we will attend the following activities (please complete):

Number Attending:

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 1997**

6:30 p.m. Dinner, Cafe Brassarie (payment is on your own) \_\_\_\_\_

**MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1997**

10:00 a.m. Movie/Cryptologic Museum Tour \_\_\_\_\_

1:45 p.m. Tour of Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Room \_\_\_\_\_

Dedication of Miniature Dioramas \_\_\_\_\_

**TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1997**

11:00 a.m. Ceremonies: Tomb of the Unknown Soldier/VBOB Monument \_\_\_\_\_

12:00 N Reception/Bufferet hosted by VBOB, NCO Club, Fort Myer, Virginia \_\_\_\_\_

**PAYMENTS FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 15<sup>th</sup> EVENTS**

	<i>No. Persons</i>	<i>Cost/Person</i>		<i>Total</i>
Chartered Bus (Round Trip), Sheraton Hotel to Fort Meade	_____	\$ _____		\$ _____
Luncheon, Fort Meade Golf Course Dining Room	_____	\$ 9.00		\$ _____
Commemorative Banquet, Galaxy Room, Sheraton Hotel	_____	\$ 42.00		\$ _____

**TOTAL AMOUNT** (Enclose check made out to BoBHF Commemoration): \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Banquet Dress: Business suit/black tie/military dress uniform (miniature medals encouraged)*

Table assignments for the Banquet will be on your name badge. If you wish to be seated with friends, please list their names:

**REMINDERS:**

*Room reservations must be made by December 1 (Telephone: 1-800-468-9090).*

*Return completed Reservation Form by December 3 (Telephone: 301-881-0356).*

*No cancellation refunds after December 5, 1997.*

## WHERE WOULD YOU HAVE BEEN WITHOUT ORDNANCE?

[As you well know, the many support units were very instrumental in providing the support needed to have victory in the Ardennes. **WILLIAM B. HOAG, 293RD ORDNANCE MM COMPANY**, sent us the attached.]

HEADQUARTERS SECOND INFANTRY DIVISION  
Office of the Ordnance Officer  
APO #2, U.S. Army

7 March, 1945

Subject: Recommendation of the 293rd Ordnance Company  
(MM) for the Meritorious Service Plaque

To: Commanding Officer  
177th Ordnance Battalion  
APO #230, U.S. Army

The 293rd Ordnance Company was designated to support the 2nd Infantry Division 21 August 1944 during the early part of the siege of Brest. This was the 293rd Ordnance Company's first assignment in combat and it's first experience in supporting an Infantry Division. However, the personnel displayed calmness, willingness, and ability to work, and rendered valuable service to the Division and attached troops. It managed, in addition to routine work, to modify all of the M-3 Sub-Machine Guns in the Division, and to modify approximately five hundred carbines for automatic fire, while at the same time improving the modification.

When the Division moved to Southeast Belgium, the 293rd Ordnance Company practically rebuilt a railroad round house so that they could have a location far enough forward to be conveniently located to the troops they were assigned to service. The closest similar company in the 9th Army was thirty miles to the rear. Due to the convenience of the location, units officially supported by other companies far in the rear came to the 293rd and received superior service considering the tremendous load. At one time, in addition to the unusually large load of fourteen units including the 2nd Division, the 293rd Ordnance Company was unofficially servicing fourteen additional companies.

Up until the middle of December, the 293rd Ordnance Company had changed armies twice and Ordnance battalions five times in a period of four months. This situation placed on them an unusually large administrative load and was not at all conducive to good coordination and assistance in operations normally received from battalion headquarters. However, in spite of these difficulties, the 293rd Ordnance Company furnished service in a meritorious manner.

In view of the outstanding work of this organization, I recommend that the 293rd Ordnance Company (MM) be considered for the award of the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque.

A CERTIFIED TRUE COPY: /s/ A. J. Stuart, Jr.,  
/t/ A. J. STUART, JR.,  
Lt. Col., Ordnance Dept.  
Ordnance Officer.

R. B. SAX  
Capt. o-258349  
293rd Ord. MM Co.

## 159TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

[Taken from the Broad Mountain Chapter--159th Combat Engineer Battalion newsletter of February, 1997.]

By the 4th of January, the rest of the battalion had moved north. Headquarters were in Hebay Neuve, Belgium, and the rest of the companies were in towns in the vicinity. Our mission was to clear the debris in Bastogne, to remove the many minefields in the area and to keep the roads open for the tanks. The latter proved most difficult, for that winter was very bitter and the snow and ice piled high.

By January 9th we were also placed in support of the 4th Armored Division and we had plenty of work to do so we moved north again in order to be closer to our work area. The Battalion Headquarters was now in Bodange, Belgium.

We moved hundreds of mines and worked day and night on the roads; we were in a hurry because it was our turn to drive on the Germans. They still were partly around Bastogne, from the northeast to the southeast, but our big stuff was coming in and they were commencing to crack.

On January 10, the entire battalion moved into Bastogne and vicinity and later headquarters moved up to a chateau in Rolle, just out of town.

We kept at our assigned mission, and sometimes that road clearance job took our dozers right out in front of the tanks over mined roads and into the enemy sector, but we got the stuff through. By this time, the 4th Armored Division and the 101st Airborne Division pulled back and we were placed in support of the 11th Armored Division. The work was the same. [Editor's note: *I'm sure the pay was the same, too.*]

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## DOG TAGS MADE SORTING EASY

The "H" (indicating Hebrew) on the dog tags made determining who was Jewish easy for the Germans. Jewish prisoners were quickly picked out and given "special" treatment.

Thousands of Americans, military and civilian, were sent to German concentration camps during World War II.

One such prisoner was **SYDNEY GOODMAN, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 110TH INFANTRY, COMPANY M**. Sid was captured on December 17, 1944, in Luxembourg and sent to Berga (part of the Buchenwald Camp complex).

"It was very, very bad," Goodman said. "We dug tunnels in the mountain to hide their war machinery. The days were long, and guys were hurt by falling rocks and explosions." Goodman considered himself lucky because he lost "only" 45 pounds.

Near the end the prisoners in Sid's group were marched for two weeks to escape the Russians. Finally being liberated by American tankers.

Sid says that he kept a diary, but hadn't looked at it for a long time because the remembrances are so terrible.

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**MAKE YOUR RESERVATIONS FOR  
GETTYSBURG...YOU'LL BE GLAD YOU DID.**

## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Mortar squad alumnus **TOM LEAMON, 75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 289TH INFANTRY, A COMPANY**, is trying to find information regarding former First Lieutenant **HERMAN AARON JACOBSON** from his unit (Weapons Platoon). Write to Tom at: 744 Knollwood Terrace, Westfield, New Jersey.

Associate member Faye Christian Perry would like to hear from anyone who served with **LEMUEL E. (RED) CHRISTIAN, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 21ST ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY C**, who was killed December 30, 1944, in the Bulge. Write to Faye at: RR 2, Box 3, Oquawka, Illinois 61469.

The **28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 112TH REGIMENT**, is looking for you if you served in that group. Write to: Lamoine F. Olsen, 350 East Street, Erie, Pennsylvania 16507-1695.

**JOHN E. WRIGHT, 482ND ENGINEER MAINTENANCE COMPANY**, was stationed at Looz, Belgium, at the beginning of the BoB. About 20-25 enlisted men were transferred to a replacement depot and assigned front line duty. He would like to hear from any of them who survived the remainder of the war. Write to John at: 44 Circle Avenue, Indian Head, Maryland 20640.

**WALTER N. GATERMAN, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 112TH INFANTRY, COMPANY C**, is looking for soldiers who were captured with him while in a barn in the village of Rogery, Belgium. Walter was a POW in the British Compound of Stalag IVB. Write to Walter at: 6415 Center Court, St. Louis, Missouri 63116-1105.

Elaine B. Stock has written to us hoping to locate **WILLIAM COLEMAN, 86TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 343RD INFANTRY, COMPANY F or K**. If you can help her write to her at: 45 Alston Avenue, New Haven, Connecticut 06515.

Marnix Versteegh, a student in The Netherlands, is searching for information concerning the battle in Lutrebois/Lutremange area. He would also like information regarding **JOHN McGETTIGAN, JR.**, a chaplain with the **101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION** and **CHAPLAIN M. UTTER, 48TH ARMORED INFANTRY**. Write to Marnix at: Vredestraat 87, 6511 AD Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

Roger Rahier is trying to find information regarding **MYLO (MIKE) L. JOHNSON** from Omaha, Nebraska. Mike stayed in a house near the bridge of Fétinne in Liege in November and December of 1944. He drove a half track equipped with a quadruple 50 calibre machine gun. Write to Roger, c/o Stan C. Bellens, 4 Rue de la Trompette, B4680 Herme, Belgium.

**MARSHALL (MARK) BAIRD** writes us the following: My bazooka team and another one had just been relieved after having spent a couple days and nights on the edge of Tres Pons at a road block. After the **2ND BATTALION, 517TH PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM**, had liberated Tres Pons, I was catching some badly needed sack time on a street of this little town where the Company A CP was when a unit(?) came through. My buddies must have been asleep too, because some joker traded his new "cosmolined" M1 carbine for my much used one. This little act damned near got me killed that night before I noticed the switch. So after 50 odd years, I am asking for an apology from this obvious replacement, who must have known what he was doing. Moral: Not all the enemy was on the German side.... Marshall's address is: PO Box 887, Oracle, Arizona 85623.

Iris Drinkwater, Trustee of "The Bunker" Underground Military Museum, Highbridge, Somerset, England, would like to hear from

anyone who was stationed in the Somerset-Bristol areas to help in writing up a GI wartime history. She would like to learn about details of your conditions in England. She would also like to know the whereabouts of Sgt. **CHESTER**, who was at Norton Manor Camp, Taunton, and **JOSEPH BIANCHI, 3937 QM GASOLINE SUPPLY COMPANY** (Burnham on Sea). Write to Iris at: 55, Adam Street; Burnham on Sea; Somerset TA8 1PQ, England.

W. S. (Bill) Rushton writes to see if anyone was in Herfordshire in England or if there are nurses who were at Bason's (Bacon's) Cross in Leominster which he believes was the 138th Base Hospital. Write to Bill at: 93 Sycamore Road, Tipton, West Midlands DY4, 9RW, England. [If your letter comes back it's because we couldn't read the address. We hope the address is correct.]

**ROBERT WAY, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, 32ND FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**, would like to hear from any one from his unit. He's very anxious to hear from **RAY BOMBOWSKI** and **JERRY WRIGHT**. Write to Robert at: 146 Western Avenue, Henneker, New Hampshire 03242.

Bernd Schmidt would like to hear from anyone who was in Weimar, Germany, especially Buchenwald Concentration Camp. He and several of his friends are interested in learning the role of U.S. forces in their area. Write to Bernd at: Warschauer Str. 10, 99427 Weimar, Germany.

**JAMES STAMPER, 293RD ORDNANCE MM COMPANY**, wrote to learn more about "jeeps" and "peeps" so we forward him the previous articles about that. However, he wanted to know if there was radar on the B-17s during WWII. Do you know? Write to Jim at: 5533 Weiss Street, Saginaw, Michigan 48603-3760.

**AARON G. GILLESPIE, 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 120TH INFANTRY, COMPANY E**, writes to learn if anyone knew his brother who was a replacement and was missing in action December 18, 1944, in the BoB. His brother's name was **DANA D. GILLESPIE, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, 23RD INFANTRY, COMPANY K**. Write to Aaron at: Route 3, Box 67-b, Clarksburg, West Virginia 26301.

Associate member Paul Killerlain writes to learn if anyone knew his brother: **LEO E. KILLERLAIN, 6TH ARMORED DIVISION, 69TH TANK BATTALION, COMPANY C**. Leo was killed in action 16 January 1945, when the tanks of **LT. MANDELL** and **SGT. PAGE** were hit and destroyed. **SGT. PAGE** and **PFC PAVLOVEK** were wounded and evacuated. If anyone knows the addresses of Page and Pavlovek please contact Paul at: 6008 Merrill Street, McFarland, Wisconsin 53558.

**RALPH STORM, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 21ST ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY B**, plans to write an article on "Medics in the Battle of the Bulge." If you are a former medic Ralph would appreciate your sharing your memories with him. Send him a self-addressed, stamped envelope and he will forward a questionnaire to you. Write to Ralph at: 2840 Starr Avenue, Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54703.

The **EIGHTH AIR FORCE** has a heritage museum in Savannah, Georgia. Write for a brochure at PO Box 1992, Savannah, Georgia 31402: open seven days a week from 10:00 a.m. until 6:00 p.m.

**MAURICE WOLFSON, 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 333RD INFANTRY, F&K COMPANIES**, writes to advise you of the names of four persons who would be happy to escort you when you return to Belgium. They are: Andre Hubert, Dahin-Jean-Francois, Regis Henry and Mme. Denise Oger. If you are interested, please contact Mme. Oger and she will coordinate

(Continued on Page 28)

## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

(Continued from Page 27)

your travel with one of these gracious volunteers. Her address is: Rue du Village 103; 4000 Rocourt (Liege); Belgium.

**MAURICE** also sent us a letter from Henry Regis which reads in part: "I would like to say thank you to you who gave your blood, your courage, your youth in the Ardennes in December, 1944. The Belgium people live in peace because you fought for our freedom. I am 30 years old and for the rest of my life, I will never forget you. God bless you all and America. A young Belgian friend. Thank you for helping me realize my dream. With my eternal recognition."

**JOHN E. McAULIFFE, 87TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 347TH INFANTRY**, needs your help! John lost a set of photos which were very valuable to him during the Cape Cod Reunion last year. These were photos John had taken of the monument stone on a flat bed truck and being lowered to its permanent site on the town green. As there was no identification on the photo packets, anyone who found them would not know to whom they belonged. Please send them to: John E. McAuliffe, 425 Pleasant Street #1410, Worcester, Massachusetts 01609.

Associate member Phil Bussey writes to obtain information on **STANLEY H. TUCKER, 90TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 357TH INFANTRY**, who was killed in action on 19 December 1944 and is buried in the Ardennes American Cemetery. Phil found a message on the internet from a fellow in Belgium who cares for Stan's grave and Phil would like to provide him with information. This is Phil's way of saying "thanks" to the fellow and to all the others who take the time to care for the graves of American soldiers. Any information you can provide will be very helpful. Contact Phil at: 346 Dubois Road, Annapolis, Maryland 21401.

**EARL RENTSCHLER, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 112TH INFANTRY, COMPANY H**, would like to know if anyone can tell him what happened to **2ND LT. ALLEN G. CUTLER** of his unit. Allen was hit by shrapnel in the Hurtgen Forest. Earl has always wondered what happened to him. Can you shed any light on this? Write to Earl at: Box 111, 173 North Center Avenue, Leesport, Pennsylvania 19533.

**EDWIN A. CALFEE, 6TH ARMORED DIVISION, 50TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY B**, writes to tell us that **M/SGT JOHN SHINKO**, of his unit, remained in Europe after the war. He is now suffering from the early stages of Alzheimers and would like to hear from you. He would also like to hear from **FRANK CIPPERLY** (formerly from New York). Write to John at: M. Et. Shinko John; 28 Rue de Solferino; 51100; Reims, France.

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## REAL VICTORY BELONGED TO THE AMERICAN SOLDIERS

Charles B. MacDonald, author of *A Time for Trumpets: The Untold Story of the Battle of the Bulge*, wrote that if Patton and McAuliffe emerged as the best-known military figures of the Bulge, "the real victory in the Ardennes belonged to the American soldier, for he provided time to enable his commanders--for all their intelligence failure--to bring their mobility and their airpower into play. At that point the American soldier stopped everything the German Army threw at him."

## CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM HEADQUARTERS 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION

### MERRY CHRISTMAS Headquarters 101st Airborne Division Office of the Division Commander

24 December 1944

What's Merry about all this, you ask? We're fighting--it's cold--we aren't home. All true but what has the proud Eagle Division accomplished per Battalion and all the rest? Just this: We have stopped cold everything that has been thrown at us from the North, East, South and West. We have identifications from four German Panzer Divisions, two German Infantry Divisions and one German Parachute Division. These units, spearheading the last desperate German lunge, were headed straight west for key points when the Eagle Division was hurriedly ordered to stem the advance. How effectively this was done will be written in history; not alone in our Division's glorious history, but in world history. The Germans actually did surround us, their radios blared our doom. Their Commander demanded our surrender in the following impudent arrogance.

December 22, 1944

"To the USA Commander of the encircled town of Bastogne, The fortunes of war is changing. This time, the USA forces in and near Bastogne have been encircled by strong German armored units. These German armored units have crossed the river Ourthe near Ortheuville, have taken Marche and reached St. Hubert by passing through Hombres-Sibret-Tillet. Libramont is in German hands.

There is only one possibility to save the encircled USA Troops from total annihilation: that is the honorable surrender of the encircled town. In order to think it over a term of two hours will be granted beginning with the presentation of this note.

If this proposal should be rejected, one German Artillery Corps and six heavy A.A. Battalions are ready to annihilate the USA Troops in and near Bastogne. The order for firing will be given immediately after this two hours' term.

All the serious civilian losses caused by this artillery fire would not correspond with the well known American humanity.

The German Commander"

The German Commander received the following reply:

22 December 1944

"To the German Commander

N U T S!

The American Commander"

Allied Troops are counterattacking in force. We continue holding Bastogne. By holding Bastogne, we assure the success of the Allied Armies. We know that our Division Commander, General Taylor, will say: "Well Done!"

We are giving our country and our loved ones at home a worthy Christmas present and being privileged to take part in this gallant feat of arms making for ourselves a Merry Christmas.

/s/McAuliffe.

□□□□□

# PATTON'S FIRST COMBAT UNIT ON THE BASTOGNE SCENE

By Raymond J. Young  
Company A

## 602nd Tank Destroyer Battalion



After a five-hour alert, the 602nd Tank Destroyer Battalion was rushed with great secrecy beginning at 2300 hours 20 December, 1944, on a 150-mile overnight march to the Bastogne, Belgium, area. Unlike many similar battalions, the 602nd with its highly mobile M-18 Hellcat vehicles and 76mm guns was unassigned to any one division, corps, or group. From its landing on Omaha Beach until war's end on

the Czech border, the battalion was attached for combat to 28 different infantry, armored, airborne divisions, corps, groups, and task forces. Sub-units of the battalion (e.g., company, platoons, or section) were often attached to one or more different larger units. Company C had been assigned late in November to the 6th Cavalry Group and was under their control. Reconnaissance Company was split among the firing companies, including Company C. On 15 December, after 113 consecutive days of combat with no rest or maintenance time, Companies A & B were relieved from successive attachments to the 26th and 87th Infantry Divisions. With the 87th Infantry, they had crossed the German border vicinity of Obergaibach Woods about 13 km northeast of Sarreguemines, France. Rumor of a rest and maintenance period materialized 16 December. All elements of the battalion, except Company C and reconnaissance unit with them, reverted to battalion control near the areas of previous tank battles around Conthill, Lidrezing, and Zarbeling, France.

At 1300 hours 21 December, 1944, the battalion less Company C reached Neufchateau, Belgium, where it was attached to VIII Corps. Companies were immediately deployed to assist small units of Corps engineers in covering road blocks, and platoons of Reconnaissance Company were split among the firing companies and corps reconnaissance missions. Company B was assigned to the Recogne-Libramont crossroads and set up a CP in a Libramont school house with 7th TD Group personnel. Company A was ordered to proceed to Bastogne, if possible, and to report to VIII Corps Headquarters which was found in Neufchateau where a radio equipped jeep was left to maintain communications. The 2nd platoon of A Company was held in reserve at Straimont about 7 km southwest of Neufchateau. The 3rd platoon of A Company assumed defensive positions astride the Neufchateau/Martelange highway in the vicinity of Witry. Without any situational intelligence information, the 1st platoon of A Company moved along the Neufchateau/Bastogne highway northeast of Vaux-les-Rosieres to the vicinity of Sibret. Near Sibret, about 7 km southwest of Bastogne, the 1st platoon encountered stragglers from the over-run 28th Infantry Division and the 110th Infantry. Stragglers indicated the Germans were just over the next ridge, so the 1st platoon took defensive positions where the stragglers were digging in. What the 1st platoon didn't know was that at approximately 0900 hours that day Sibret had been captured by elements of the 26th Volksgrenadiers as General Cota, 28th Infantry Division, and a handful of his provisional battalion (clerks, mechanics, cooks, etc.) barely escaped capture after an all-night fight at Sibret as they strategically withdrew to Vaux-les-Rosieres. Neither did they know that with roads south of Bastogne open, the 5th Parachute Division was rushing in the direction of Sibret.

**The Slugging Begins.** Vision was good, so firing began late in the afternoon at targets of opportunity. James McCarthy (Albany, New York), commander of the lead, M-18 said, "I guess we did pretty good, because the infantry guys, made up of anything but infantry, told us to keep it up; you know you're knocking them down up there." He stated

further, "That night, 21 December, it was kind of quiet. The next morning 22 December was when everything started when it got foggy, dark, dreary-lousy!" In the early morning blizzard 22 December, 1944, German military units attempting to move southwest from the vicinity of Bastogne approached the Company A, 1st Platoon, positions. Shortly the Germans lost 30 men killed, one tank, two American trucks and one American half-track driven by and carrying German soldiers. A few German soldiers got away out of sight. A gunner, Paul White, of Grover Hill, Ohio, on one of the M-18 76mm guns recalled, "I remember firing at one of the trucks which had a canvas cover like our 6 x 6's, and it burst into flames. The Germans began firing mortars and our M-18 commander got hit and had to leave. I felt something hit me in the chest and found tiny holes in my combat jacket. I didn't feel pain but got a little worried until I peeled off my clothes and found only five tiny punctures just above my left nipple. My notes say we knocked out all the vehicles and that later in the day we withdrew from that area after German tanks and infantry began moving in." The wounded TD commander, Reuben Simpson (New York Mills, Minnesota), recalls, "An infantryman and I were by my TD, and we were both hit by shrapnel at the same time. I didn't get back to the 602nd until late March or early April, 1945, after spending Christmas in a field hospital and several months in a hospital in England." During the day many stragglers having found their way from the Wiltz area and some survivors of the 110th Infantry were hastily gathered up and thrown into defensive positions. The 602nd Tank Destroyer Battalion was the only intact combat military American unit on the entire corps front. The VIII Corps Field Headquarters withdrew and left General Cota, 28th Infantry Division, in charge of the sector on this day.

Later in the day, 22 December, five or six German tanks and infantry, some from the 5th Parachute Division again approached the 1st Platoon position. After two German tanks were heavily damaged, they moved out of sight. Four 1st Platoon men were wounded from 20mm cannon shells bursting overhead as they exploded in the surrounding trees. Around 1830 hours General Norman Cota approached the 1st Platoon position and was shown the German vehicles and German-driven American vehicles and soldiers wearing American uniforms that had been destroyed earlier that day. Until 2130 hours, repeated attempts of the German military units to come down that road toward Neufchateau were repeatedly repulsed. In the vicinity of Libramont, Company B took control of an abandoned U.S. supply dump with American equipment in good condition estimated to be valued at \$200,000.

**The Thinly Manned Line.** The days of 23-28 December, with M-18s strategically placed in defensive positions and other weapons deployed for maximum effectiveness on a crescent from Hatrival, Recogne, Neufchateau, and Witry were devoted to vigorous reconnaissances throughout the territory southwest of Bastogne. On 24 December, the battalion minus Companies B and C were attached to the 28th Infantry Division. Company B was attached to the 7th Tank Destroyer Group. Enemy personnel and equipment located throughout the area were destroyed or captured each day and night. Company B positions vicinity of Recogne/Libramont were strafed at 2300 hours 23 December. One bomb was dropped from each of two planes over their position at 2255 hours on 25 December, but on the 26th four enemy planes dropped one bomb each killing one officer and two enlisted men and wounding four others. On the 27th, eight bombs total were dropped at 0830 and 1205 on Neufchateau with damage to one 602nd vehicle. On the night of 26 December, the 9th Armored Division moved through 602nd Tank Destroyer positions; after heavy fighting they retook Sibret the night of 27 December and moved on to Villeroux. This day Company C arrived with the 6th Cavalry near the B Company position and destroyed 1 armored car, 2 machine guns, 1 truck, killed 60

(Continued on Page 30)



## PATTON'S FIRST COMBAT UNIT

(Continued from Page 29)

enemy personnel and took 5 prisoners. On 29 December, eight long days after 602nd arrival, the 11th Armored Division arrival was a welcome sight, and the 602nd Tank Destroyer Battalion, minus Company C, was attached to them until they were relieved by General Patton 3 January, 1945. For the push through the north side of Bastogne, the battalion was successively attached to the 101st and the 17th Airborne Divisions until 14 January, 1945.

**Bittersweet Aftermath.** Some historians have written falsely that the Germans held Libramont, and erroneous maps have been produced to show that. Men of Company B of the 602nd know that no living German in uniform, American or German, was allowed in the city. For only 7 of the 25 days beginning 21 December, 1944, was the 602nd Tank Destroyer Battalion attached to the 11th Armored Division. The misleading and partially correct official military Order of Battle showing the 602nd with the 11th Armored has led historians to make false conclusions about the contributions of this battalion. German 7th Army Commanding General Hasso Von Manteuffel, wrote about activities on 22 December, 1944, that, "In the course of the afternoon individual vehicles moving along the Remichampagne-Morhet road were shot at and set on fire by tank and antitank guns firing from the south near the point where the road crosses the Bastogne to Vaux-les-Rosieres road.<sup>(1)</sup> It transpired that a small enemy force had broken through from the south and was firing on the crossroads from a position a few hundred yards north of Petite Rosiere." (Only the 1st Platoon M-18's were there.) The general spoke of the lively enemy fire which was being put down southwest of Bastogne as he drove through the area then said, "From the evening of December 22nd the situation at Bastogne was reversed: henceforth the investing forces were to be on the defensive." American historians have largely ignored our presence and combat contributions at a crucial moment in history, because we were only a battalion in strength with no public relations officer or part of a larger unit.

<sup>(1)</sup>"The Ardennes," *The Fatal Decisions*, Part 6, William Sloane Associates, New York, 1956, pp 281-282.

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## WWII MEDALS AVAILABLE

*[The Golden Acorn News, the newsletter of the 87TH INFANTRY DIVISION, recently ran an article on how to procure service medals for World War II. We have excerpted from that article herewith.]*

If you do not have World War II medals which you earned, you can receive a set from the National Personnel Records Center, Entitlement to Awards Division.

Service from December 7, 1941, to September 2, 1945, entitled you to them. There is no charge. If you earned a Combat Infantryman's Badge or a Combat Medic's Badge you are also entitled to a Bronze Star. Your discharge papers will show whether or not you have the CIB or CMB. These medals come inscribed with your name on the back.

**What do you get?** If you earned it, the Good Conduct Badge, American Campaign, Victory Medal, European Theater of Operations with up to three battle stars, German Occupation and the Combat Infantryman's Badge or Combat Medic's Badge and the Bronze Star. If your unit earned a Unit Citation, you will also get this along with the Ruptured Duck. You can also receive any other medal which you earned such as the Purple Heart.

**How do you get them?** Make copies of both sides of your Honorable Discharge Certificate and forward it with the list mentioned above (as it applied to your particular case) to National Personnel Records Center, Entitlement to Awards Division, 9700 Page Boulevard, St. Louis, Missouri 63132.

**Important:** Keep a copy of your letter. You may have to contact them a second time if your medals do not arrive.

## DECEMBER, 1944 MEMORIES FROM DIFFERDANGE

*[Associate Member Viviane Demasi, widow of DOMINIC DEMASI, 35TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 137TH INFANTRY, COMPANY A, wanted to share the following letter she received from Gilbert Schmidt.]*  
Dear Viviane,  
December 1996

Snow if falling outside. It's getting cold. And my memories go back to that awful winter of the year 1944.

Combustible to feed our stoves was rare. Coal had been put on short allowance. A wheelbarrow of coal every three or four months, when you had a good connection to the coal-dealer. Firewood was also not easy to get. So my father and I fetched dead branches in the nearby forests and took them home on a hand-drawn wagon.

We had no school. All the buildings were full of American soldiers searching for protection from the terrible cold.

There was not enough room for all of them. The crews of the M-26 Dragon wagons stationed in our street--one of them just before our house--were supposed to sleep in those ice-cold metal monsters. But the people invited them--as far as it was possible to do so--into their houses for eating and sleeping. So did we. Only some guards remained outside to watch over the trucks and the equipment.

At noon, they ate in the installed field kitchens. So did we children, when the soldiers had finished their meal.

Our steel mills were protected by large AAA units positioned on the hills around our town. Maybe I told you already that those factories made and still make the biggest steel beams in the world. Those beams were used by your engineers to rebuild the bridges blown up by the Germans. For weeks and weeks, I stayed with the soldiers of these units. At noon they shared their meal with us children. I remember very well my surprise to discover food sometimes quite different from ours (peanut butter for instance).

And, of course, chewing gum. I remember the very place in our town where I was talking for the first time to one of your soldiers. A jeep driver. He had only one piece of chewing gum left. There were two of us kids. So, he gave each of us one-half of the gum. I kept my half a whole week, putting it for the night in a small metallic Panflavin-box. Not without adding some crystal sugar in order to revive the smell of the gum, a useless undertaking.

The food and room situation became critical when all the people running away from the Battle of the Bulge arrived in the south of our country. Those people, too, found shelter in our houses.

Very often a German Bed Check Charley flew over our town. We never found out why. And to our great surprise, the AA units never succeeded in shooting down that plane. Maybe they didn't want to hurt that lonely guy high up in the sky. With all the soldiers and military equipment in our town, people were dying of fright thinking of the possibility that this reconnaissance plane might be followed one day by bomber units.

It seems that the steel mills were never bombed because the Germans didn't believe in their defeat.

You see my 1944-45 memories are pleasant ones. That surely can't be said of the veterans' memories. More than once I drove them to places, where they tried to bring to life again very special situations they lived some 50 years ago.

More than once I heard awful details of inhuman fights and reports of men losing their best friends and buddies just one one second to the other.

There is no doubt, that they lived in those times also pleasant memories. May they prevail after so many years over the other ones.

We have not forgotten that they brought freedom back to us. We have not forgotten that they made it possible for us to live for more than 50 years in peace.

Let these two facts be part of the good memories of those times.

The veterans may be proud about what they did for us. ....

Gilbert Schmit

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