

The BULGE BUGLE

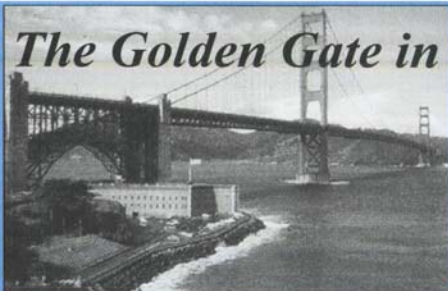
THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION • VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.

VOLUME XVII NUMBER 1

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

FEBRUARY 1998

It's The Golden Gate in '98!



18th Annual VBOB Reunion

San Francisco, CA—Airport Marriott Hotel

September 3 - 7, 1998

Your Host—The Golden Gate Chapter

Complete Details - Pages 8, 9, 10

TWO MORE VBOB MONUMENTS

St. Louis, Missouri — Thomaston, Georgia

See Page 12

This Brings a Total of 11 Monuments

in the USA Dedicated to

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

**VETERANS OF THE
BATTLE OF THE BULGE,
INC.
P.O. Box 11129
Arlington, VA 22210-2129
703-528-4058**

Published quarterly, *THE BULGE BUGLE* is the official publication of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

Publisher/Chief Editor:
George Chekan
9th Infantry Division
Contributing Editors:
Robert F. Phillips
28th Infantry Division
Historical Research:
John D. Bowen
Associate Member

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703-528-4058

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*Deceased

**CHAPTER PRESIDENTS
(Alphabetical by State)**

•ALABAMA•
GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON, JR. (XI)
Wallace A. Swanson 205-785-9542
845 Fairfax Dr
Fairfield, AL 35064

•ARIZONA•
ARIZONA (XXVI)
To be announced

SOUTHERN ARIZONA (LIII)
Vernon L. Bloomer 520-749-1197
1452 Sherwood Dr
Tucson, AZ 85750-9702

•BELGIUM•
5TH FUSILIERS OF BELGIUM (XX XVIII)
Roger Hardy (50) 41 71.13
14, Landdijk
8370 Blanbenberge, Belgium

•CALIFORNIA•
FRESNO (V)
Kenneth Hohmann 209-227-5232
4111 N. Sherman St.
Fresno, CA 93726

GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON, JR. (XIII)
Donald C. Stafford 408-662-0472
101 Via Soderini
Aptos, CA 95003

GOLDEN GATE (X)
John W. Sullivan 415-681-3596
1880 16th Ave
San Francisco, CA 94122-4540

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (XVI)
Philip L. Petersen
411 N Fern Dell Pl
Glendora, CA 91741

SAN DIEGO (LI)
Robert D. Schrell
2530 San Joaquin Ct
San Diego, California 92109

•CONNECTICUT•
CONNECTICUT YANKEE (XL)
Richard Egan 203-634-0974
79 Alcove St
Meriden, CT 06451

•COLORADO•
ROCKY MOUNTAIN (XXXIX)
M. Dale McCall 970-926-5072
PO Box 936
Vail, CO 81658

•FLORIDA•
CENTRAL FLORIDA (XVIII)
Norman W. Schoonover 904-357-5583
2377 Orange Capital Ct
Eustis, FL 32726-5906

FLORIDA CITRUS (XXXII)
Gerald V. Myers 941-686-2121
302 E Palm Dr
Lakeland, FL 33803-2650

INDIAN RIVER FLORIDA (XLI)
Chester Henshaw 407-727-8886
1523 Anglers Dr, NE
Palm Bay, FL 32905

GOLDEN TRIANGLE (XLVIII)
William Patterson 352-383-3410
4100 Dorawood Dr
Mt. Dora, FL 32757

•INDIANA•
NORTHERN INDIANA (XXX)
John E. Delmerico 219-462-9077
1452 Sherwood Dr
Valparaiso, IN 46385

CENTRAL INDIANA (XLVII)
Gordon R. Wire 317-881-1015
7305 S Lindenwood Dr
Indianapolis, IN 46227

•IOWA•
IOWA (XXXIV)
Pius P. Reis 712-368-2335
RR 1, Box 114
Holstein, IA 51025

HAWKEYE STATE (XLIV)
Harold R. Lindstrom 515-278-0081
4105 75th St
Des Moines, IA 50322-2551

•MARYLAND-DC•
MARYLAND/D.C. (III)
Sydney J. Lawrence 301-227-1454
4008 Hamilton St.
Hyattsville, MD 20781-1842

•MASSACHUSETTS•
CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS (XXII)
John E. McAuliffe 508-754-7183
425 Pleasant St.
Worcester, MA 01609

•MICHIGAN•
WEST MICHIGAN (XXIII)
Maurice C. Cole 616-879-4040
P.O. Box 81
Fife Lake, MI 49633

GREAT LAKES (XXI)
(Upper Michigan-Wisconsin)
Gregory C. Walker 715-732-2957
523 Terrace Ave.
Marinette, WI 54143

•MISSISSIPPI•
MISSISSIPPI (XXXIII)
James W. Hunt 601-328-8959
2502 Magnolia Cir
Columbus, MS 39701-1912

•MISSOURI•
GATEWAY (XXV)
W. Kent Stephens 618-344-1616
107 Bluffview Lane
Collinsville, IL 62234

•NEW JERSEY•
NEW JERSEY (XII)
Anthony W. Andriola 201-667-9363
33 Clover St.
Nutley, NJ 07110

•NEW YORK•
CENTRAL NEW YORK (II)
James DePalma 315-457-0599
104 Saslon Park Dr.
Liverpool, NY 13088-6450

MOHAWK VALLEY (XXVIII)
Phillip D. Thron 315-336-0448
4542 Circle Dr
Rome, NY 13440

HUDSON VALLEY (LIX)
Alvin Cohen 518-436-7994
38 JoAnne Ct
Albany, NY 12209

STATEN ISLAND (LII)
John R. Capano 718-948-2615
18 Parkwood Ave
Staten Island, NY 10309

•NORTH CAROLINA•
NORTH CAROLINA (IX)
William R. Strickland 910-897-8295
R.D. #3, Box #514
Dunn, NC 28334

•NORTH DAKOTA•
NORTH DAKOTA (XX)
George K. Peterson 701-363-2488
R.R. 2, Box 107
McClusky, ND 58463-9592

•OHIO•
BLANCHARD VALLEY (XLII)
Marvin A. Russel 419-423-8530
2521 Springmill Rd
Findlay, OH 45840-2861

BUCKEYE (XXIX)
Milan A. Rolik 330-867-2061
1278 Culpepper Dr
Akron, OH 44313-6840

GEN. DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER (XXXV)
Howard W. Spillman, Jr. 419-673-0812
PO Box 143
Kenton, OH 43326

NORTH COAST OHIO (XXXVI)
Edwin J. Stock 216-731-1258
27101 Edgecliff Dr
Euclid, Oh 44132

•PENNSYLVANIA•
DELAWARE VALLEY (IV)
Thomas F. Jones 215-535-4563
1837 E Venango St.
Philadelphia, PA 19134-1521

SUSQUEHANNA (XIX)
Ms. Clara Gustin 717-342-8496
230 Crown Ave.
Scranton, PA 18505-2016

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA (XIV)
Ira Harold Musnug 412-593-2652
RD 4, Box 138
Latrobe, PA 15650

OHIO VALLEY (XXXI)
John V. Miller, Jr. 412-846-9776
20 Old Oak Dr S
Beaver Falls, PA 15010-3022

SOUTHCENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA (XLV)
David F. Nicholas 717-898-2036
843 Hillaire Rd.
Lancaster, PA 17601

•RHODE ISLAND•
RHODE ISLAND (XXIV)
William Gaynor 401-437-1297
PO Box 164
Warren, Rhode Island 02885

•SOUTH CAROLINA•
SOUTH CAROLINA (VII)
Robert J. Mitchell 803-552-5040
7737 Linsley St
Charleston, SC 29418-3229

•TEXAS•
GREATER HOUSTON (XXVII)
James C. Burtner 713-783-6149
10312 Briar Forest Dr.
Houston, TX 77042-2407

EAST TEXAS (XXXVII)
To be announced

ALAMO (XLVI)
John Hamilton (512-696-1904)
9606 Tioga Drive
San Antonio, TX 78269-1904

LONE STAR (L)
Chauncy L. Harris
PO Box 112474
Carrollton, TX 75011-2474

•VERMONT-NEW HAMPSHIRE-MAINE•
TRI-STATE--VERMONT, NEW HAMPSHIRE, MAINE (XVII)
Roger Desjardins 603-532-8420
4 Forest Park Est.
Jaffrey, NH 03452

•VIRGINIA•
NORTHERN VIRGINIA (XV)
Eva M. Popovich 703-521-5793
1600 S Eads St #1218-South
Arlington, VA 22202-2905

CRATER (XLIII)
W. Baxter Perkinson 804-590-1185
9441 W. River Rd.
Matoaca, VA 23803-1019

•WASHINGTON•
NORTHWEST (VI)
Luther S. Winsor 206-857-5050
12705 95th Avenue, NW
Gig Harbor, WA 98239

•WISCONSIN•
NORTHERN WISCONSIN (I)
Bob Holster 715-842-1817
2808 Franklin St.
Wausau, WI 54401

CONTACT THE CHAPTER IN YOUR AREA. YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

First off, let me say how honored I feel to be your president, following on the path set by our distinguished past presidents who have been an inspiration to all of us over the years.

Like so many of you, during the winter of 1944-45, as a non-com with the 26th "Yankee" Division Recon Troop, my only thoughts were surviving the fighting through Luxembourg toward Bastogne.

Now, 53 years after those trying days, I am almost awed by the trust you have given to me by electing me to be your president. Having served as executive vice president, I know what a challenge it is to live up to the goals set by the founders of VBOB. Men like Clyde Boden and Bill Hemphill, a soldier to the last, whose funeral in Arlington Cemetery in early December was attended by a delegation of our members.

And men like my immediate predecessor and good friend, Stan Wojtusik. I think you all know Stan's accomplishments as a leader of VBOB: our International Monument at the Valley Forge Military Academy & College in Wayne, Pennsylvania, and most recently our monument at the U.S. Army War College and Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

I am delighted to announce that at our executive meeting on December 16th, Stan was nominated and accepted election to the new post of Vice President for Public Affairs for VBOB. Stan and I have worked together for many years, both in our local Delaware Valley Chapter and as national officers. I welcome Stan to this new position—one that I know he will fill admirably.

I think that in all of my years as a member of our organization, among the things which have impressed me the most, is your willingness to take on any task, and to give your time and energy to spreading the word about our great battle.

We have come a long way from the days of our founding in the early 1980's, but I feel we still have a long road ahead of us to keep alive the legacy of our fight—and our victory—in the Ardennes. And we still have a way to go to carry the word about our organization to others who fought beside us, but don't know about us. During this year, I urge each present member to enlist a Bulge veteran and to encourage him/her to join us as national members of your local chapters.

I also hope that you will continue to work with your local schools to reach the young people of our country, our grandchildren and great grandchildren. I have seen the interest they have shown in our talks about World War II in general, and our battle in particular.

We have a receptive audience in our schools—students in classrooms where the greatness of America is passed over lightly, or worse yet, is ignored or derided.

I sense that as we move forward the millennium this is starting to change. Just in the past year, groups of our members have been asked to speak at assemblies to talk about the experiences, and have been amazed at the interest, and positive response they



George C. Linthicum

have received. This interest on the part of the students, teachers and administrators convinces me this is an area we must cultivate. We have to pass on to future generations, the legacy of what Winston Churchill called "A great American victory."

In closing, let me urge you also to mark your calendars now for our 18th Annual Reunion, September 3rd to the 7th in San Francisco—one of America's most fascinating cities. John Sullivan, president of the host Golden Gate Chapter, and his committee, have been working hard on plans for the reunion. The Command Post will be at the Airport Marriott, central to the various attractions that we can visit. You'll be reading more about it in future editions of *The Bulge Bugle*, and I hope you will be with us for our get-together.

Remember "The Golden Gate in '98."

Ardennes-Alsace

16 December, 1944—25 January, 1945

In his political testament *Mein Kampf* (*My Struggle*) Adolf Hitler wrote, "Strength lies not in defense but in attack." Throughout World War II, attempts to gain or regain the initiative had characterized Hitler's influence on military operations. Thus, when the military situation in late 1944 looked darkest on the Western Front, an enemy offensive to redress the balance on the battlefield—and thereby cripple or delay the Allied advance—should have come as no surprise.

Hitler's great gamble began during the nights of the 13, 14, and 15 December, 1944, when the initial assault force of German armor, artillery, and infantry gradually staged forward to attack positions along the Belgian-German-Luxembourg border. This mustered force, with more than 200,000 men in 13 infantry and seven *panzer* divisions and with nearly 1,000 tanks and almost 2,000 guns, deployed along a front of 60 miles—its operational armor holdings equaling that on the entire Eastern Front. Five more divisions moved forward in a second wave, while still others, equipped with at least 450 more tanks, followed in reserve.

On the Allied side the threatened American sector appeared quiet. The 15 December daily situation report for the VIII Corps, which lay in the path of two of Hitler's armies, noted: "*There is nothing to report.*" This illusion would soon be shattered.

US Army Center of Military History

by Roger Cirillo

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CHECK MAILING LABEL FOR DUES DATE!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LONG TIME NO SEE

Just wanted to let you know that through your "Letters to the Editor" column, I contacted an Iris Drinkwater from Somerset County in England and she gave me the name and phone number of a member of my old outfit. His name is Joe Barrett and he lives fairly close to Wilmington. I managed to meet Joe, his lovely wife, and another old comrade, John Conboy at the VBOB reunion in Gettysburg. Anyway I had a very enjoyable time and hope I can get to San Francisco next year. Joe presented me with a copy of our battalion history which was fascinating.

Our old outfit stopped having reunions some years back. I am hoping that some of our members will utilize the VBOB as a meeting organization in the near future.

Charles H. Gaffaney
474 AAA AW (SP)

SOME LIKE IT....

The picture of Otto Skorzeny and Hitler on Page 24 of the November *Bulge Bugle* brought back memories of Skorzeny's activities in the Battle of the Bulge.

Skorzeny was a brilliant German Intelligence Officer. He had established this special camp of English-speaking German soldiers where they lived, ate, talked, etc., like American soldiers. They were thoroughly indoctrinated in U.S. Army organization, weapons, unit identification, etc. They were also taught American slang, music, movies and geography. Substantial numbers of these troops were infiltrated through our lines during the initial phases of the German attack. Their mission was made easier by the fact that many American units had been scattered by the attack and unit locations were confused.

The picture refers to those troops as Commandos. This is an incorrect designation! These were German soldiers in American uniforms, carrying American dog tags and identification. They would be properly labelled as spies. Those captured were immediately tried by military courts as spies and were executed by firing squads.

It was established that there was one area in which these troops had not been indoctrinated. That was American sports, especially baseball. So questions would be asked such as "How many home runs did Babe Ruth hit in his best year?", "What team did Lou Gehrig play on?". Occasionally an American soldier who was not sports oriented would have a temporary identification problem.

It was believed that Skorzeny was behind our lines. If so, he escaped back into Germany. I have wondered what ultimately happened to him. I am sure that he was clever enough to have escaped from Germany during the final weeks of the war, had he so desired. The full story of Skorzeny's military career would make fascinating reading and probably would have made an interesting movie.

Hopefully, some VBOB members have additional information on this man.

Don J. Johnson
III Corps HQ

...AND SOME DON'T...

On page 24 of the November issue, there is a photograph of two people who brought death and misery to our troops in the life and death struggle in the Ardennes.

What in hell are you doing? You have no regard for the men who are still alive, and remember the battles that occurred. Have some respect for the dead veterans who served, and knock off any pictures or stories of the Nazis. Are they your heroes in that picture? Who cares what you think. Shame on you!!

Anthony Silva
557 FA BN B

SALZBURG RELOCATED

In the November issue of *The Bugle*, there was a most interesting article submitted by Joseph P. Barrett, entitled "Christmas in the Battle of the Bulge." This was a very moving and wonderful story and I was deeply

moved by it. However, I am taking the liberty to correct one minor mistake in the text. Mr. Barrett describes Salzburg a town in "Germany" where "Silent Night" was written by Reverend Joseph Mohr and a teacher, Franz Gruber. Salzburg is not in Germany. It is in Austria and I lived there for a while immediately after the war ended in Europe as we became Army of Occupation in Austria.

I love reading *The Bugle* and look forward to it every month. Best wishes to all of our members and officers for a wonderful holiday season.

Leon R. Peikin
42 INF D 222 INF C

SUCCESS AT LAST

In an earlier letter, I sent you the address to request WWII medals. I sent a request on July 8, 1997, and finally received a notification in early September, that my request had been received, along with a form indicating which medals I was eligible for and that they were being shipped. I finally received the medals on November 20, 1997. Incidentally, the address on their letterhead is:

Department of the Army
U.S. Army Reserve Personnel Center
9700 Page Avenue
St. Louis, MO 63132-5200
Attn: SFE-B3

When requesting medals, send a copy of your discharge papers.

Clyde Walton
398 ENGR GS H/S

WE SHARED AN HISTORIC TIME

I am proud to salute all of you who were there at the greatest battle ever fought by the U.S. Army. Everyone of you is a hero in my book.

Like you, this anniversary always brings back memories--good and bad. I feel it is most important that we never forget those who gave their lives for us. Many writers would have us believe that we were fighting for "a way of life, to destroy Nazism, to save the world." We know that we really fought for each other. When a comrade will willingly lay down his life to save mine, I can do no less than to do the same for him. "Duty" and "Honor" were our watchwords and each of you showed the world what they mean. You were, and are, Men among Men.

I have always disliked the sobriquet of "Battle Babies." We were well trained soldiers with excellent leadership and were as fine a military unit as any that ever went into battle. All of you are ten feet tall--you were then and you are now.

Many of our friends did not come home; did not have the opportunity to raise a family; were not able to enjoy the fruits of our success. Many have been in pain all these years from wounds suffered then. Many have now passed away from many causes and many are now seriously ill, often the result of that happened in 1944-45. I say a prayer for each of them.

To those of you who read this, I say "Thank you." Thank you for being the men you are and for all that you did for all of us. Thank you for letting me be a part of a truly outstanding group of men and sharing that historic time with you.

May God bless us all!

Thor Ronningen
99 INF D 395 INF I

REMEMBER X-COMPANIES?

I am pleased that Mr. Tucket shared his experiences at Camp Abbot, Oregon, with us. As we were both there at almost the same time, I imagine we could sit down together and share many experiences we had while we were in Camp Abbot. I know that I would enjoy reminiscing about all the bridges that were built across both the Big and Little Deschutes Rivers, the night exercises, and the marches through the pine trees of Oregon.

I arrived at Camp Abbot around June 1, 1943. When we arrived we were assigned to brand new barracks. The first night in those barracks the improperly hung wall cabinet came crashing to the floor.

After reading about Mr. Tucker's experiences at Camp Abbot I believe he is more correct than I concerning when we were issued combat boots. It was most likely later when I was

(Continued on Page 5)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (Continued from Page 4)

a member of the Cadre that we were issued the boots rather than when I was a trainee.

After completing my basic training I became a member of the permanent cadre. I was a DI, training recruits for several months, when in May of 1944 I became disenchanted with Hup-Hup-Hip-Four and signed up for overseas duty. By the end of May I was on the way to Camp Shenango in Pennsylvania.

Incidentally, my wife and I revisited Camp Shenango on our way to Gettysburg for the VBOB reunion this September. We found some of the old barracks still there. They now are being used as low-cost housing. We also found a sign saying "To Camp Shenango," but the camp itself is gone.

Now to the point of my letter. How many of the veterans remember the X-Companies? When I arrived at Camp Shenango I was placed in a company called X-43. I was a Platoon Sergeant in that company.

The X-Companies were filled with replacement soldiers who were destined to replace front line soldiers in Europe, the number of days, according to the number assigned to the company, after D-Day. Our company was scheduled to replace front line soldiers 43 days after D-Day, hence the name X-43.

We left New York for England on the 19th of June, 1944, however, the war progressed better than expected and it was December before I found myself in the front lines and then I was in the middle of the Battle of the Bulge which is another long story that I would like to share with you at a later time.

Kenneth G. Prickett
5 ARMDD 22 ARMED ENGR BN B

DOG TAGS TRADED?

I have written to Mr. Jean-Michel Piette with information on one of the dog tags belonging to a man who was in our outfit--Sgt. George Ehresmann, of B Battery, 258th Field Artillery Battalion. I am forced to wonder under what circumstances all those dog tags were found. I got the impression from Mr. Piette that it was given to him by another Belgian, which leads me to believe these items are "traded," not unlike our baseball cards. I had always assumed the tags remained with the body until interment.

I have not attempted to contact the family of this particular GI, but intend to place queries in the American Legion and VFW Magazines to that end.

After writing Mr. Piette, he sent me a list with at least 48 new names, so it made me wonder!

Has anyone else information on any others?

Lou Testa
991 FA BN C

RACISM AND/OR BIGOTRY

Mr. Hugh F. Semple, Sr., was definitely out of line in his letter published in the November issue of *The Bulge Bugle*. I've been reading *The Bugle* since I joined and have never seen anything that indicated the white soldiers won World War II. Also have never seen anything racist or bigoted in any of the issues. Hugh, evidently, wasn't feeling well the day he wrote that letter and had a chip on his soldier. He probably should have held that letter one more day before mailing it and then destroyed it. Hugh, we are real sorry about your illness and will include you in our prayers.

I really think you do a great job publishing *The Bugle* and getting it out to our members. Thanks for your time and efforts.

I appreciate your hearing me out. I believe anyone in uniform that was in the Bulge helped in their way win this terrible battle and World War II.

B. V. Guess
78 INF 310 INF B

BLACK SOLDIERS CONTRIBUTED

I am a subscriber to *The Bulge Bugle* and look forward to reading every issue. Two of my brothers participated in the Battle of the Bulge, one served with the 761st Tank Battalion and the other with a Quartermaster unit.

For several years now, I have been gathering research about the battle, more specifically, the participation of African American soldiers in that

conflict. Therefore, I can appreciate and understand the frustration expressed by Mr. Hugh F. Semple, Sr., at the omission of the achievements and contributions of African American soldiers and soldiers who served in the Service of Supply to the resolution of that battle.

Early on in the battle, when General Eisenhower figured out the strategic goal of the German attack, it is reported that he turned to General Bradley and remarked, "We have a secret weapon too--mobility." Without the efficient and timely movement of men, equipment and supplies to critical areas early in the battle, the Ardennes Campaign would have been prolonged, costing many more lives. A sizeable portion of those supplies delivered to the front was the responsibility of the service of supply, units where the bulk of the personnel were African American soldiers.

In spite of the spate of volumes dealing with the Battle of the Bulge, scant attention is given to this vital contribution.

Popular and serious literature dealing with the battle seldom mention the participation of all black combat units who were involved in the struggle, for example the 969th Field Artillery Battalion was in Bastogne, supporting the 101st Airborne Division, the 333rd Field Artillery supported the 2nd and later the 106th Infantry Divisions. There were also several all black engineer units that fought during the battle.

In the course of my research, I have interviewed several score of African American veterans who participated in the Battle of the Bulge. Very, very few of them had heard of *The Bulge Bugle*. In order to present a more balanced view of the battle, I suggest that the editors contact the veteran associations of these outfits and solicit their memories and reminiscences of that memorable battle. If I can be of any assistance in this matter, please let me know.

Jerome H. Long
Associate Member

BRONZE STAR AND THE AIR MEDAL

I think I can help a little with the inquiry about the Bronze Star and CIB/CMB. In the early stages of WWII the Bronze Star and the Air Medal were designed to be given with roughly the same frequency for battlefield/air time and quality of service. The Bronze Star was also designed with the "V" device for Valor when valor was specifically mentioned in the citation.

After WWII someone (purportedly General Eisenhower) asked about the number of Air Medals vs the number of Bronze Stars for service. He was told that about 20 times the number of Air Medals had been given. He then asked how that could be corrected and was told that if every holder of the CIB or CMB were given a Bronze Star, the numbers would balance. Since the infantry had taken the great bulk of the casualties, it seemed fair. So word went out about 1947 that everyone who had a CIB or CMB should submit a copy of the order and get a Bronze Star (not with "V") for service.

That applied only to that war. I see ads occaaasionally that say that any holder of the CIB from any war gets a free Bronze Star. Not so! Only the WWII situation counts.

There is always a problem when one medal is give both for valor and not for valor. The Navy ran into this when they decided that anyone on a ship in a combat area should get a "V" on whatever decoration he got. That led to the suicide of the CNO when it was revealed that he was wearing at least one "V" when he had not been in the area. It has also led to vast numbers of "V's" appearing on Navy and Marine chests. Do not confuse it with the "V" for Valor!! In their case it normally means only that they had been in a combat area of the sea. On the other hand in today's Army the "V" is given for other than the Bronze Star. You will see Air Medals and Commendation medals with a "V" meaning that it was given for Valor if on the chest of an Army or USAF type.

Hope this is useful.

W. A. Knowlton
87 CAV B

DUCHESS' CHATEAU

The item in the August *Bugle* about the Duchess of Luxembourg's chateau reminded me of our experience

(Continued on Page 6)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (Continued from Page 5)

there. However, I have no information about the picture shown as it came later.

When it was decided that the Third Army was to move to Luxembourg, the 1303rd Engineer G.S. Regiment along with an armored cavalry regiment and two engineer combat battalions were to take over the XII Corps front. However, Patton would not move without his engineers and so troops were moved up from the Seventh Army. The first elements of the 1303rd arrived in Luxembourg on December 21.

Many units are to be commended, particularly those at Bastogne, but it should be realized that Bastogne could not have been relieved without the cooperation of all of the units of the Third Army under Patton's direction.

In addition to their regular engineer duties the 1303rd was given the mission of providing a defense line along the Moselle River. When asked where our "main line of resistance" was, we had to reply that there was none because with about 1,500 men only barriers and strong points could be provided over the 20 mile sector.

When visiting Col. Pearson (CO of the 1303rd when activated) at XII Army Group Headquarters a situation map was observed which showed four engineer combat battalions in this sector. An inquiry as to where they were elicited the information that two were still in Normandy and two were in the States--"but that they had to show something more there."

The Headquarters of the 1303rd occupied the chateau of the duchess from January 2 to January 24 when the 5th Division medics took it over as an aid station. The Headquarters did not mind moving after they moved to a brewery on the outskirts of Luxembourg City.

Casey Deveikis in the *The Eager Beaver Regiment* tells of the chateau--"They were the first troops to enter the lovely, richly furnished chateau since its conversion into an historical monument. Most of the luxurious appointments and art treasures were covered or packed away and were left untouched; but the steam heat was turned on and the men were comfortable." The chateau had originally been a hunting lodge, and, unfortunately, some of the deer around did not know the password and were shot.

Dwight Gowdey
1303 ENGR GS REGT

VBOBer NOW A WORKHORSE

My name is 1st Lt John D. Nawoichyk. I am the Civil Affairs Officer and Assistant Operations Officer in the 127th Aviation Support Battalion, 1st Armored Division. I am a 1993 graduate of the United States Military Academy, where I majored in history, specifically military history. I am currently stationed in Hanau, Germany (December, 1996) on Fliegerhorst Kasserne. My battalion supports the 4th Air Cavalry Brigade, which served as the helicopter support for the division, and the 1st Cavalry Squadron. The 1st Cavalry Squadron serves as the ground cavalry for the division. We support the AH-64 Apache, the UH-60 Blackhawk, OH-48D Kiowa Warrior, the M-1 Abrams Main Battle Tank and the M-3A2 Bradley Scout Vehicle, as well as numerous other pieces of equipment. We just finished redeploying from Operation Joint Endeavor. It was during this tie that I had the honor to correspond with one of your veterans. His name is Mr. J. William Goodwin.

Mr. J. William Goodwin represented you all extremely well. He wrote an "Any Soldier" letter that I answered. Mr. Goodwin then continued to write to me for the entire year. I would tell him some of the stories that were happening to me, and he would tell me some really interesting experiences that he had. When I, or any of my soldiers were feeling down or tired, I would take out his letters and read certain parts to them for motivation. I can tell you that his letters and support of the soldiers truly helped the soldiers in my section and company. As if the moral support was not enough, I received "care packages" at least three times a month from him for my soldiers. As veterans, you all know the effect of care packages on morale! I cannot explain in words what William Goodwin did for my unit. Even when the interest of our Operation wained in the United States, he always was there with a kind word and a "listening ear" for myself and my soldiers. Although your war was over 50 years ago, Mr. Goodwin is still representing the United States Army well. In fact, my battalion commander was so impressed with his support that he made him an honorary member of the 127th ASB "Workhorse"!

I have been here for three years and have had numerous opportunities to travel. Of course, my favorite areas have always been those related to military history. I have been lucky enough to see Normandy, Verdun,

Auschwitz, Remagan, Berchtesgaden (where the Eagle's Nest is--Hitler's Southern Headquarters), numerous areas in the former Yugoslavia and Hungary to name a few. On two occasions I had the chance to visit the Ardennes Region. I have seen the area and better understand the situation after being there. It is one thing to study a battle or war from the books, but seeing it and walking the terrain, as well as training and working in the same exact environment makes you understand all the more. I do, as do many of the fellow historian colleagues. The Ardennes region is definitely one of the hardest areas to conduct an operation. After seeing the area, I am even more impressed by your accomplishments there.

My grandfather, whom I never had the honor to meet, fought in WWII with the 79th Infantry Division. Although, I never met him, I am proud of his, as well as all of your, accomplishments. It takes a special type of person to be a soldier, but it takes even a better one to complete the great tasks that you all did during the war.

I know that this letter is lengthy, but I wanted to write and tell you, the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, the great accomplishments of a fellow veteran. Again, you should all be very proud of Mr. William Goodwin. After 50 years, he is still showing that fighting spirit that won the war for you all and he has instilled some of it into us. He truly had a profound effect on the ability of my company to accomplish its mission.

I thank you for the opportunity to address the veterans in this environment.

John D. Nawoichyk
HSC, 127 ASB, CMR 477

DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR AWARDS

In the last issue of *The Bulge Bugle* some questions about Combat Awards were raised, especially the Combat Infantryman's Badge and the Bronze Star.

To the best of my recollection, there is no basis to assume they went together. The Badge was awarded to individuals (not entire units) who served in direct contact with the enemy. Bronze Stars were given to units involved with the war effort in specific phases of the war. Looking at my discharge paper, I notice that section 31 "Military Qualification and Data" lists "Combat Infantryman's Badge 4 May 45". (I had 57 days of combat duty.) Apparently there was a review someplace shortly after the end of ETO hostilities.

In area 33 of my discharge paper "Decorations and Citations" among other details there appears "EAME Campaign Medal with 2 Bronze Stars." In addition, I found a small card signed by an army officer that lists "Ribbons, Medals, Decorations, Citations and Service Stars."

If anybody believes they are entitled to certain awards, they should look at their discharge and other papers to see what is listed. If they feel they are entitled to an award they didn't receive, they could contact their local VA office but at this late date it would be doubtful if anything could be done to rectify a mistake made over 50 years ago.

We are all aware of the desire to ex-GI's to be in the position of having earned the Combat Infantryman's Badge. All the Armed Forces has special prestigious "combat" awards. In 1996 you may recall that Admiral Jeremy Boorda, the highest ranking Navy Officer, committed suicide when he learned that a magazine was going to publish an article that disputed his right to wear two combat decorations. But it seems the Army "brass" has a high regard for the Badge and it seems virtually every be-medalled officer from the WW II period wore one. In some cases, such as an airborne general that jumped from the first plane it was well-deserved. In many other cases, it wasn't earned but "rank has its privileges."

Russell E. Kuehn
28 INF 110 INF I

FROST BITE AND OTHER INJURIES

Local newspaper article (enclosed) is so very important to the heroes of the Bulge. [It advises that the] VA will pay for frost bite wounds.

[The] article covers so very many VBOBers--please use the article date/information to inform all in the Bulge. ...especially the toll free help line for veterans or their survivors who wish to file claims can contact the VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000 for information and assistance.

[Excerpted from article which appeared in *Middlesex News*, Saturday, December 13, 1997, written by Lucas Mearian.] "The VA pays benefits to veterans or their survivors"

(Continued on Page 7)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (Continued from Page 6)

for injuries or illnesses veterans incur as a result of their military service. Monthly compensation rates currently range from \$94 for a 10 percent disability to \$1,924 for a disability rated at 100 percent. Veterans with service-connected disabilities also are entitled to health care at VA medical centers and outpatient facilities.

"Veterans or their survivors who wish to file claims can contact the VA regional office at 1-800-827-1000 for information and assistance."

One service officer said "There may be people who came in 10, 15, 20 years ago. I would urge any veteran to contact their local veterans agent because it may be worth looking at every case again."

John F. True, Jr.
Associate Member

246TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

You guys are doing a great job. When I get *The Bulge Bugle*, I don't put it down until I read it all.

I was a member of the 246th Engineer Combat Battalion, XIX Corps, in the Battle of the Bulge. Since we were a small outfit, we didn't get mention. We were one of the hundreds of small battalions and companies in the Ardennes Campaign. We laid down mines and picked up others. We laid barbed wire and blew up obstacles on the way and fought as infantry when needed—which was many times.

We will never forget the miserable weather and our movement in Stolberg Valley on the St. Vith Road and those many villages in the area. From February 15, 1944, until January, 1945, until we went to the Roer River area where we prepared for the Roer River crossing which came February 23, 1945. At this time I transferred to "B" Company, 116th Infantry, 29th Infantry Division, at Koslar at the Roer River. This same 246th Combat Engineer Battalion ferried the 29th Division across the Roer River and built many bridges so the infantry and tanks and other equipment could get across and on to the Rhine River. We were attached to the 29th and 30th Infantry Divisions, the 2nd Armored, the 113th Cavalry and many others and suffered many casualties long the way.

Leo Hernandez
246 ENGR CMBT BN

Reprinted from *The Washington Post*, December 11, 1997

Questionable Criteria

Until 1967 all honorably discharged veterans were entitled to burial at Arlington National Cemetery. In that year new criteria were put in place.

Today most burials at Arlington are those of career officers and their families. Combat veterans of World War II, Korea and Vietnam are ineligible unless they were wounded or won a Silver Star or higher award.

By these standards, nurses who served in Vietnam combat areas, most of whom were not wounded nor received a high decoration, are not eligible for interment at Arlington, while a 20-year careerist who never heard a shot fired in anger makes the mark.

JAMES G. WHITTAKER
Camp Hill, Pa.

SAVING YOU SOME MONEY

We have secured copies of the favorably reviewed *Citizen Soldiers* by Stephen E. Ambrose. This 512 page illustrated work covers the U.S. Army from Normandy to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany. Published by Simon and Schuster, it can be bought at your local book store for \$27.50, or you can order it from us for \$22.00, postage and handling included. Please use the Quartermaster order form in the back of this newsletter to place your order.

GERMAN GENERALS

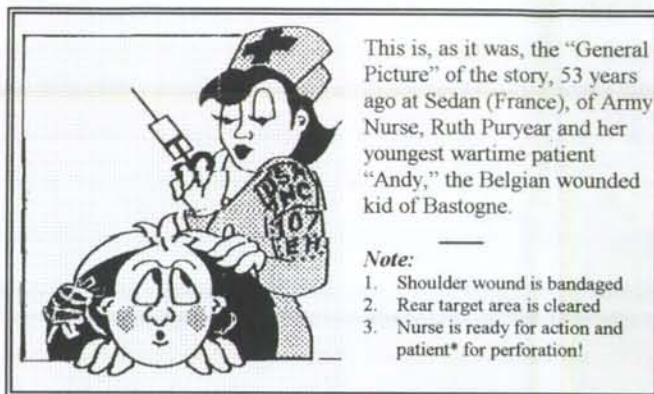
[The following was excerpted from the newsletter of *GOLDEN GATE CHAPTER*, dated June, 1997.]

There were approximately 2,500 generals in the German military, 786 of whom died in WW II. Of these:

- 253 were killed in action
- 44 died of wounds
- 81 committed suicide
- 23 were executed by Hitler
- 41 were executed by the Allies
- 326 died of other causes.

(Pupent Facts WW II)

Then and . . .



This is, as it was, the "General Picture" of the story, 53 years ago at Sedan (France), of Army Nurse, Ruth Puryear and her youngest wartime patient "Andy," the Belgian wounded kid of Bastogne.

Note:

1. Shoulder wound is bandaged
2. Rear target area is cleared
3. Nurse is ready for action and patient* for perforation!

NOW!



US Embassy, Belgium, June 10, 1997: the American Ambassador A.J. Blinken (L) presents the DCS Medal and Citation to Belgian Citizen Andre "Andy" R. Meurisse. In 1944, Meurisse was Ruth Puryear's youngest patient. (Photo credit US Embassy, Belgium)

MEMORIAL SERVICE AVAILABLE

The Maryland/DC Chapter of VBOB has developed a "Memorial Service for a Veteran of the Battle of the Bulge." If you would like to receive a copy, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to: VBOB, PO Box 11129, Arlington, VA 22210. If you will put "Memorial Service" on the outside envelope, it will speed delivery to you.

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC

Reunion at Airport Marriott Hotel

San Francisco, California

September 3-7, 1998

Mail Before
July 15, 1998

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Wife/Guest Name: _____

Division: _____ Regiment: _____ Unit or Company _____

Signature _____

		Number of Persons	Cost per Person	Total
Thursday, September 3, 1998				
Registration Fee (All attendees must register)		_____	\$28.00	\$ _____
Friday, September 4, 1998				
City Tour and Golden Gate Bridge	8:30 am - 12:30 pm	_____	\$18.00	\$ _____
	1:00 pm - 5:00 pm	_____	\$18.00	\$ _____
Saturday, September 5, 1998				
VBOB Trail Dedication At Memorial Site	12:30 pm - 4:30 pm	_____	\$ 9.00	\$ _____
Sunday, September 6, 1998				
Ladies Continental Breakfast and Fashion	8:30 am - 12:00 noon	_____	No Charge	
(Transportation \$1.00 each way payable upon boarding)*				
Banquet and Dinner Dance	7:00 pm - 11:00 pm	_____	\$35.00	\$ _____
(Please indicate how many prefer: Top Sirloin Steak _____ or Swordfish _____)				
Total Amount Enclosed:				\$ _____

Mail this 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 arrangements have been made with transit authorities for bus service from hotel to Nordstrom's. First articulated bus arrives 8:30 am across from hotel.

**VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.
REUNION PROGRAM
Airport Marriott Hotel, San Francisco, California
September 3-7, 1998**

Thursday , September 3, 1998

12:00 noon - 5:00 p.m.	Registration - The registration desk will be open the majority of the day.
7:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.	Welcome, Wine & Cheese Reception

Friday, September 4, 1998

Registration	As needed - The registration desk will be open the majority of the day.
Breakfast	On your own.
8:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.	Tour #1 - City tour and Golden Gate Bridge. Approaching San Francisco, a sweeping vista of the skyline will be seen before dropping to ground level at the Embarcadero where we will stop at Pier 32 to view the last of the Liberty ships the Jeremiah O'Brien and the San Francisco/Oakland Bay Bridge. We will proceed along the waterfront by Pier 39, Fisherman's Wharf, Coit Tower and cross the Golden Gate Bridge to Vista Point. From there we will proceed to other points of interest.
1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Tour #2 - Same as above (Because of traffic congestion, the tour is planned as two sections.)
Lunch and Dinner	On your own. As people will be coming and going all day, no other functions are planned. Suggest review brochures on independent tours available that you may wish to use during Saturday/Sunday free time periods.

Saturday, September 5, 1998

Breakfast	On your own.
11:30 a.m. - 12:30 pm	Early lunch. If you are going on the tour for the VBOB Memorial services
12:30 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Tour enroute to VBOB Memorial. VBOB Trail dedication ceremonies scheduled to begin at 2:00 p.m. Time is being allowed before and after for the taking of photos. Route to and from the Memorial includes sightseeing.
Dinner	On your own. Suggest review independent tour brochures for Saturday evening or Sunday afternoon events.

Sunday, September 6, 1998

8:30 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Shopping Tour at Nordstrom's. Nordstrom (an upscale department store) will furnish a complementary continental breakfast and a ladies fashion show. Public transportation specially arranged from in front of hotel direct to Nordstrom's. One dollar each way.
10:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Annual Membership Meeting. All are welcome to attend.
Lunch	On your own. Free time until start of evening festivities.
7:00 p.m. - 11:00 p.m.	Annual Banquet with speaker followed by dancing. Cash bar. Dinner consists of soup, choice of salad, choice of top sirloin steak or swordfish, dinner rolls, choice of desert and tea or coffee.

SPECIAL AIR FARES FOR ATTENDEES TO "GOLDEN GATE IN 98" VBOB REUNION.

We have arranged for special discount fares via Delta Air Lines for attendees to the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge reunion in San Francisco September 3-7, 1998. Delta Air Lines has therefore been designated our OFFICIAL AIRLINE for this reunion.

If your ticket is based on a restricted excursion fare you are entitled to a 5% discount. If you book on the basis of an unrestricted fare your discount is 10%. These discounts are valid for travel between August 31 and September 10, 1998.

In the event you are ticketed 60 days or more in advance of your departure date you will get an additional 5% percent discount on either fare. This means you will get 10% total discount on a restricted fare ticket or a 15% discount on a non-restricted fare ticket.

In addition, Delta will furnish VBOB one award good for one free ticket usable anywhere within the Continental U.S. for every 40 tickets issued to attendees of this reunion. We won't know how many awards will be furnished until Delta Air Lines audit their records after September 10, 1998.

Our intention is to raffle these ticket awards only to those who have used Delta's service. Save your boarding pass stubs! When you check in at the VBOB registration desk, turn in your boarding pass stub for the drawing.

Reservations and schedule information may be obtained by calling Delta Meeting Network Sales and Service at 1-800-241-6760 Monday-Friday between 7:30 am until 11:00 pm Eastern Time or between 8:30 am until 11:00 pm Eastern Time Saturday and Sunday and referencing **File Number 111103A**. Or, have your travel agent call Delta's toll free number to obtain these same advantages for you. Remember, this file number must appear in the code box of your ticket for VBOB to get credit towards meeting the quota required to obtain an award for a free ticket.

While the free tickets will be good only within the Continental United States, these discount rates apply on points of origin within the Continental U.S., Hawaii, Alaska, Canada, Mexico, Bermuda, San Juan, Nassau and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Seats are limited. No discounts apply on Delta Express.

HOTEL INFORMATION

The San Francisco Airport Marriott Hotel located at 1800 Old Bayshore Highway, Burlingame is approximately three miles south of the San Francisco Airport and is directly on the San Francisco Bay. Twenty minutes from San Francisco and 25 minutes from Silicon Valley. For reservations call 1-800-831-4004 and identify yourself as an attendee for the VBOB Reunion. Rate per room is \$98.00 plus local taxes. There is a two day window on arrival and departure. The hotel provides their own free shuttle between the airport and hotel on a 24 hour basis.

For those arriving by auto or RV use Highway 101 and take the Millbrae Ave exit to the East. Proceed to Old Bayshore Highway and turn right at the signal. Parking is free for both autos and RVs. Pet owners will be pleased to know that the hotel permits dogs not exceeding 30 pounds to accompany guests.

GOOD TO KNOW

After you have registered with the hotel, proceed to the VBOB registration desk managed by our Nancy Monson. There you will receive your envelope with your ID card, tour and banquet tickets and additional information. At the Golden Gate Hospitality desk you will receive an additional envelope with brochures, maps and other local information. There are over twenty restaurants in immediate proximity to the hotel.

For those who like to walk, there is a walking path along the bay that provides 26 miles of safe exercise and fresh air.

There is a shuttle service appropriately named FreeBee Shuttle available to guests of Marriott Hotel that provides free transportation to Burlingame shopping malls and restaurants. Hotel guests may phone 516-1110 and be picked up within 10 - 30 minutes of your call.



A RUSTIC VACATION FROM WAR

While German armies were preparing for their attack into the Ardennes, Americans stationed there were enjoying themselves greatly. All through the autumn of 1944, a halcyon mood pervaded the region: The GIs on combat duty spent much of their time playing poker, ogling pinup girls in *Yank* magazine, building dugouts or log cabins for their winter quarters and looking forward to a visit to a rest center. Periodically, the soldiers were given a pass to one of the Army's dozen-odd rest areas in Luxembourg and Belgium, where they could enjoy three days of sport, relaxation, and dates with the local women.

In each rest area, the Army maintained a recreation center amply equipped for fun and games. For example, the Vielsalm center—located in an old Belgian Army barracks—included a Red Cross club, an indoor rifle range, a GI barber shop that gave free shaves and haircuts, a movie theater, and a gymnasium that went by the name of "Madison Square Garden." The big attractions, of course, were the neatly uniformed American Red Cross hostesses and the touring USO entertainers who put on shows in the gym.

Venturing out of the centers, GIs discovered pleasant pastimes everywhere. They meandered through the quaint towns and fashionable resorts of the region, buying souvenirs, and consuming great quantities of beer, ice cream, and apple pie. "We were like kids," recalled a company commander, "excited with the slightest luxury." The Americans roamed the deep forests hunting deer and wild boar. (To the distress of the Luxembourg forest warden, some of the hunters took to shooting boar with submachine guns from low-flying observation planes.)

The Ardennes was, in short, a soldier's dream come true. Its peace and rustic delights blotted out the War, which seemed to be nearly over anyway. Like almost every GI in the Ardennes, Private Joe Schectman was content and optimistic. "We are billeted as comfortably and safely as we were in England," he wrote his parents on December 15. "Of course there's no telling how long I'll be in this paradise. But as long as I am, I'll be safe."

Reprinted from TIME-LIFE Books

YOU'RE CORDIALLY INVITED...

..to hold your unit's reunion in conjunction with the VBOB Reunion.

As time passes, we are aware of more and more units who no longer are able to hold their own reunions. Therefore, we would like to invite you to join with us. Your unit can plan to be together at the VBOB Reunion and, if it is felt you would like something special just for your unit, you can contact the hotel to arrange this. The special room rates for the hotel are available two days before and two days after the VBOB meeting dates. This will afford you the opportunity to have a day just for your unit's own planned activities.

We all share a common bond that few have ever known or can understand and we welcome the opportunity for as many of us as possible to be together.

GOLDEN GATE IN 98

Golden Gate Chapter is proud to be the Host Chapter for the 1998 National Reunion, September 3-7, 1998. The various committees are expending every effort to assure that this will be the most memorable of reunions.

Headquarters will be the elegant San Francisco Airport Marriott at the gateway to the San Francisco Peninsula. Located only five minutes from the airport, regularly scheduled, complimentary shuttles will reduce your waiting time to the bare minimum. At the reception in the large hospitality room, local dignitaries will attend informally at the mixer. There will also be available a video-memorabilia room for the use of those attending. Free shuttles will also be available to local shopping and dining facilities. Over 20 restaurants of all varieties are in the immediate proximity to the hotel. In addition a "Ladies Shopping Spree" with either a complimentary continental breakfast or brunch is being sponsored by Nordstroms, an upscale department store, will be held during the business meeting.

Planned for your enjoyment Friday, September 4th, are tours of San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge to Vista Point which offers a panoramic view of the city and the Marin Headlands. After the rededication of our monument on Saturday, the return trip will also provide an opportunity to view other sections of the city. When you have leisure time for sightseeing on your own, you may wish to schedule a tour to the famous Filoli Gardens, a magnificent mansion—the setting of the television series "Dynasty" where different flowers bloom year around.

Your registration packet will also include information regarding "on your own" tours, restaurant and car rental discounts and nearby points of interest. Thanks to the inspired efforts of Ernie Figueira and his Tours and Transportation Committee, special rates have been obtained through Delta Airlines, the details of which appear elsewhere in this issue. Also, for those of you who choose to arrive early or depart late, the discount rates will apply two days preceding and following the reunion. Should that be the case, an events coordinator from the hotel will be available to assist you with any chosen individual activities.

Regarding the Banquet on Sunday evening, the host chapter is very carefully taking into account the meaning and spirit of this reunion. Therefore, the keynote speaker and guests of honor will be senior survivors of the Ardennes campaign and hopefully, the direct descendants of army or division commanders. We are presently in the final stages of confirming their presence and specific information will be available in the next issue.

The room rates of \$98.00 (plus local taxes) are extremely low for this area, and we are thankful to the Marriott for the numerous concessions they have made on our behalf. The cooperation of remaining local military units in view of massive local base closures has been outstanding and their participation in our events is extremely gratifying.

This reunion should provide a unique and memorable experience to those attending, and the Golden Gate Chapter guarantees you a moving and **fantastic** experience. Remember, "Golden Gate in '98" and the more the merrier.

John W. Sullivan, President, GGC
and Reunion Chairman

TWO BATTLE OF THE BULGE MONUMENTS DEDICATED

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

On October 12, 1997, at historic Jefferson Barracks, nearly 2,000 persons gathered for the dedication of a monument which will stand forever as a tribute to the fallen comrades who made the supreme sacrifice for their country and to honor the returning GI's who had served their country in World War II.

The over 7 feet tall monument stands majestically on high ground overlooking the Mississippi River as if saying to the GI's: "Only one more river to cross."

Members of the Gateway Chapter met with Jefferson Barracks officers in 1995, seeking permission to erect the monument. Jefferson barracks was a large and important induction center during WWII. Two-thirds of the members of the chapter had been inducted there. Of the total inductees, 150 of them never returned home. Most were listed as having been killed in the Battle of the Bulge. The monument was approved with the proviso that the chapter provide the necessary funds projected to be \$20,000.



THOMASTON, GEORGIA

A large crowd turned out for the dedication of a Battle of the Bulge Monument in Thomaston, Georgia, on December 16, 1997.

The unveiling of the monument took place at the Northside Shopping Center in Thomaston with approximately 50 World War II veterans and their families present. Many of the veterans had served in the Battle of the Bulge.

James C. Franklin, 35th Infantry Division, 216th Field Artillery Battalion, took it upon himself to see that a monument was built in his home town honoring those who served in the Bulge. He approached the town commissioners for permission to erect a monument on the Courthouse lawn and, although they approved the idea, the American Legion and VFW, who had final say on such monuments, took no approving action.

James was not to be dissuaded. As he was anxious to have the unveiling on December 16th, he decided to erect the monument with his own funds on his own shopping center grounds.



Participating in the ceremonies were VBOB President Stan Wojtusik, who was the keynote speaker, VBOB Vice President for Membership Tom Jones, as well as present and past officers of the Gateway Chapter.

As the total costs have not yet been met, donations are still being accepted. Make your check payable to: VBOB Gateway Chapter Monument Fund and mail to Pete Lauman, Treasurer, 6399 Smiley Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri 63139. Those donating \$25.00 or more will have their name placed in the Monument Book of Honor which will be displayed in a nearby museum to be viewed by the public.

James invites all of you who may be in the neighborhood to stop by to see the monument. As it is in the Northside Shopping Center, it is accessible day and night. It is lit by flood lights every night.

The monument honors all who served and lists the various divisions serving in the Ardennes Campaign.

Benjamin S. Franklin, who is cited on the monument, was James' younger brother. He was killed in the Bulge on December 25, 1944, while serving with the 101st Airborne Division.

THE MEN OF THE 398TH GENERAL SERVICE ENGINEER REGIMENT

By Walter R. Christopher

Field Marshall Von Rundstedt's December 16th breakthrough into the Ardennes gave the European War picture a new significance. What had begun as just as another counterattack was developing into threatening proportions. The Nazi Army was staking all in an apparent gamble and it was up to the Allies to match their stakes...or lose. What followed is best told by Colonel Detzer--an excerpt from his *The Mightiest Army*.

"On the morning of the 18th General Hodges had ordered his headquarters staff to remove all documents and to start north. He kept with him only his ranking officers and some service troops attached to headquarters. Between him and the Germans remained one badly battered infantry regiment which was falling back, taking severe losses and which in the end would seem to disintegrate, leaving an open gate and a broad smooth road to Spa and Liege. Once there, fueled up and equipped with new American guns, the Germans could have raised hell.

"Brigadier General Eddie Plank, a plump, puckish little regular with a shrill, contagious laugh, was commanding the advance sector of communications zone, back here in the Valley of the Meuse. In this sector we had built great supply installations, at the back door of our armies, where they could pick up what they needed of munitions, food and supplies. Northwest of the advance sector lay what was known as Oise Section, another area dedicated to logistics and supply under command of slim, gray little Brigadier General Charles O. Thrasher. For soldiers they had service troops...quartermaster and ordnance men, engineer general service regiments, adjutant general detachments, judge advocates, bakers, truck companies, salvage crews. There were military police and medical corpsmen, and chemical warfare depot operators, railroaders and cooks and clerks and telephone linemen.

"Generals Thrasher and Plank had no big guns, nor any units trained to operate them. They had no tanks, no infantry. They had rifles, carbines, pistols, a few machine guns, a few anticraft(?) pieces. And the Germans were rolling forward, only a few miles away. As the situation on the front became more desperate, General Eisenhower called General Lee and asked whether he had any units or any men he could spare. General Lee called General Plank and General Thrasher, did they have anyone they could throw into the lines to back up the infantry? Anyone? Hell, yes! They had thousands of the best damned soldiers in the world. Maybe they weren't all you could ask for physically and they hadn't trained for combat but 'by damned', you could count on them to stand up and fight! So they formed battalions and companies of this collection of pen pushers and truck drivers, of grocers and laundry operators and shoemakers and sent them forward toward the approaching battle line...the German Army swept forward. The service troops along the Meuse could hear the rattle of rifle fire only a little ways ahead. Ordnance companies had moved up and the infantry fell back on them. A battalion of military police had shed its brassards, and looked very tall and trim, as it marched with long, anxious strides, over a little bridge and went exploring for the front. The men of an engineer regiment with honest road building mud on their faces, moved off into a southeasterly direction toward the place where the gunfire seemed the loudest.

"Then a laundry company with suds hardly dry on their hands and, a salvage company, and a bakery company, a little thick around the midriff, and a company of telephone linemen...all moving up...all going to war! Everywhere along that cold and bloody front, service troops stood shoulder to shoulder with the weary infantry. Everywhere the enemy surged forward and broke against the stubborn lines of bakers and shoemakers, road builders and clerks and military police. Many of them died in the snow with their boots on and the guns hot in their hands."

The 398th Engineers were alerted at 1500 hours, December 22. Two hours later our Verdun construction projects had been shelved...our tools

put away. By 1800 hours our advance party left Verdun by motor convoy to its unknown destination in Luxembourg. At 2000 hours, 1st Battalion followed in all available regimental vehicles. Upon arrival in Luxembourg City, XII Corps Headquarters was consulted and learned that the 398th had been attached to Task Force Reed, XII Corps, Third Army, and received orders to proceed, with 1st Battalion to an assembly point in the vicinity of Sandweiler. On the 23rd, Company B moved to outrange and Company A to Schressig. Second Battalion and H&S Company left Verdun at 2000 hours, December 23rd by motor convoy provided by the 12th Army Group. At Luxembourg City the convoy was reformed and guided to an assembly point near Moutfort. Although considerable enemy activity was observed during the moves, no enemy fire was directed at the convoy. Task Force Reed was composed of the 2nd Cavalry Group, 2nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, 808th Tank Destroyer Battalion (less one company), 276th Field Artillery Battalion (105s), 398th Engineer GS Regiment and 372nd Engineer GS Regiment. This task force was divided into two units: Combat Team Costello and Combat Team Hargis. The 398th was attached to the former team which included 2nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, Company A of the 808th Tank Destroyer Battalion. The mission of Combat Team Costello was to relieve elements of the 4th Infantry Division in sector extending from Ihnen to Mertert, and to defend and repel any crossing of the Moselle River, attempted by the enemy, and to prepare alternate delaying positions.

The sector of Combat Team Costello was further divided into two sub-sectors with a troop and one platoon of C Troop of the 2nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and our own 1st Battalion. These troops occupied the southern subsector between Ihnen and northern Wormeldange, a total front along the Moselle of 9.6 km. The northern sector extended for 15 km from Grevenmacher to Mertert inclusive, and was occupied by Troop B of 2nd Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron and 398th's 2nd Battalion. Immediately following a reconnaissance made by battalion and company commanders in conjunction with 2nd Cavalry Troop commander, defensive positions were agreed upon and we began digging in. By 1800 hours on December 24th (Christmas Eve), the 4th Division was relieved. Practically all of our positions were under direct observation of the enemy making it necessary for reliefs to change after dark. Nights when there was a full moon it was impossible not to be detected, consequently we received frequent mortar and artillery shellings. Also, the Town of Matchum within the 1st Battalion sector was occupied by an enemy force of unknown strength at the time we moved on the line.

Weapons? Another matter! We had carbines and 1903 Springfield Rifles. Our 30 DNd 50 caliber machine guns and rocket launchers had been taken away from us by Normandy base section while we were rebuilding Cherbourg's harbor. About all we had for defense were the guns 4th Infantry left in established positions. A few days later requisitions for additional machine guns were filled and we felt more secure. Ten days later we were issued M-1's in place of our O-3's.

Her is a list of locations set up as headquarters on the 24th of December: Regimental headquarters was located near Biwer. First Battalion Headquarters at Niederdonven, 2nd Battalion Headquarters at Manternach. Company A's Headquarters was Atlenningen, while it's platoon headquarters and positions were: First at Ihnen, Second at Lenningen, Third at Oberwormeldange. Company B was held in reserve at Gostingen. Company C at Oberdonven, Companies D, E, and F were located at Manternach. Christmas Day found us improving our first line of defense between Ihnen and Ahn, shifting some OPs (Observation Posts) because of heavy artillery fire. CPs (command posts) were set up at Munschecker and Syre. On the 398th's first patrolling mission, one engineer was wounded by an exploding booby trap near Syre. December 26 was another day of improving and shifting...always closer to the Moselle with an eye toward clearing its west shore of enemy troops. Flaxweiler was chosen for Company B where it could undergo special combat training. Costingen was under 88mm artillery fire from 0600 to 0900 hours, without casualties.

(Continued on Page 14)

398TH GS ENGINEER

(Continued from Page 13)

Oberdonven was also subjected to 88's from 0400 to 0630 hours, also without casualties. Enemy mortar and artillery fire continued intermittently along our regimental line. Each night patrols operated out of Mertert. On the 27th, a night patrol into Machtum was pinned down by enemy fire, but managed to escape during a brief lull, without casualties. Another 398th company was assigned the task of booby trapping an area over which enemy patrols operated out of Grevenmacher "Moselle Ghost Town."

During the early hours of the 28th, German night patrols out of Mertert, Machtum and Grevenmacher as well as positions on the east bank of the Moselle, operated within our lines...obviously in search for information. In retaliation, joint 398th and 2nd Cavalry Reconnaissance patrols invaded German held positions on the 29th at 1900 hours and returned at 2345 hours with necessary information pertaining to enemy positions on the Moselle's east side, vicinity of Wincheringen. At 1900 hours on the 31st, a 12-man patrol crossed the thinly iced Moselle and penetrated three miles into enemy territory, again in the Wincheringen area. Here they encountered a nest of five enemy machine guns. Four men of the patrol (three from the 398th) were cut down by a lethal spray of lead. Remainder of the patrol dispersed and upon completion of the mission, returned to friendly areas. The four who had been shot down were beyond reach and evacuation was impossible. Later we learned only one man had survived. Earlier in the day, efforts were begun to dislodge enemy holdings within Machtum. Friendly artillery laid down a moving barrage on the town and followed with 2nd Cavalry light tanks. A 398th Platoon occupied a hill overlooking Machtum at 1630 hours where a Jerry prisoner was taken for interrogation. Meanwhile the 2nd Cavalry forces withdrew from the town. A 398th squad attacked an adjacent hill overlooking Machtum and removed an enemy strongpoint.

The Germans laid down a 3-hour 88mm and mortar barrage, pinning down the squad, and followed up with attacks by three patrols. At 1300 hours on the 1st of January, our squad withdrew because of lack of sufficient tank support. The tanks were unable to maneuver steep slopes near town and had to be withdrawn. However, the 398th suffered no casualties during the operations. At 1140 hours began a 10-minute air attack on Wecker, a nearby road intersection and an open area immediately north. About 30 500-pound bombs and numerous incendiaries were dropped, setting fire and demolishing buildings within Wecker. The road intersection and adjacent area were heavily cratered, temporarily delaying road travel, and several telephone lines disrupted communications for a period of not exceeding an hour. Road repair was easily and rapidly accomplished by dozers, and 398th personnel repaired the telephone lines.

Because of low clouds with few breaks, identification of the planes was difficult. However, from evidence left by fragments and unexploded shells, and collected observations, the general belief was that the aircraft was B-17s who were confused as to target. We suffered no casualties. But, this was beginning to be a nasty habit. At 1020 hours on the 1st, a squadron of the P-38 fighter bombers taking advantage of the bright clear weather, again attacked Wecker and vicinity. They made two runs, the first a dive bombing mission upon the western portion of the town. The second consisted of 50 caliber machine gun strafing of the same area, including an outlying portion of regimental headquarters area. Fortunately, there were no casualties.

At 1100 hours, two 398th platoons, supported by a platoon of 2nd Cavalry light tanks again attacked the enemy's hill position outside Machtum. An undisclosed number of Germans were killed and wounded. The position was overtaken and the 398th personnel manned former Jerry installations from that time onward. Our casualties during the mission numbered nine wounded, seven seriously. During patrol operations across the Moselle on the night of January 2nd, another 398th man was wounded and listed as "missing in action." About the same time this was taking place on German soil (2300), a Nazi patrol attacked one of our outposts and wounded two 398ers while they were in their

foxholes. However, one Jerry was wounded then the patrol dispersed without any further action.

On January 3rd, regimental headquarters moved from Biwer to a position atop a hill near Bucholz. Because of icy conditions, Colonel Douglass received internal leg injuries and was hospitalized. Lt. Colonel William S. Kingsbury assumed command. During our entire Luxembourg Campaign, our popular chaplain conducted services whenever and wherever possible. Barns, factories, cellars and deserted houses were locales for numerous worship services. We shall never forget the portable organ which accompanied the chaplain and his assistant wherever they went. On this day, services had begun and the assistant was leading the singing of "The Old Rugged Cross" which carried well across the river. With a sideward glance the organist looked toward and beyond the Moselle only to see a Nazi prying around a building corner to learn where the music and singing was coming from. Possibly he respected the Christian service for instead of firing (which would have been easy as not), he lingered a while and then returned to whatever he was doing on the building's other side.

Another German patrol operated within our lines on January 6th and attacked one of our company's machine gun positions, killing two 398th men and seriously wounding another. With the ground now completely covered with snow, detection of white-clad German patrols became more difficult...snow on the ground measured from 14 to 18 inches our men were requisitioning curtains, tablecloths and sheets to compare with German snow-suits. For camouflage, 398ers were utilizing white cloth to conceal the dirt of foxhole parapets... "any damned thing, just as long as we can remain unseen"! On January 9th, another attack was made on Machtum by 2nd Cavalry and a platoon of 398th men. Beginning at 0200 hours, a marching barrage was laid down by friendly artillery. One attacking force entered the town from the east and established outposts in cellars and were pinned down by heavy mortar fire at daybreak. The remaining force set up positions between the hill and the river, south of the town, to intercept possible retreating enemy. At daylight, all our positions were under direct German observation and fire from nittel. Consequently, our forces were compelled to move out only to resume the attack on the 10th which resulted in Machtum's fall!

During the next two weeks, many small skirmishes were encountered. Many memories never to be forgotten. Many memories have come out of Luxembourg. The cold snowy nights of guard duty; patrols into Germany across the Moselle; shellings and bombings; inadequate food, munitions and clothing; church services in cellars and barns; actions caused by fear and courage; and many, many more! Until we were relieved by the 1252nd and 1258th Engineer Combat Battalions on January 23rd, after 31 successive days on the line, activities were becoming compared with what had already gone before. No longer were we "green" for which tutelage we have the 2nd Cavalry to thank.

During the period January 20th to the 23rd our activity along the Moselle and beyond was intense. Targets on the east side of the Moselle from positions opposite Ahn to Wesserbiling and eastward toward Saarburg were repeatedly bombed and strafed, all in connection with a drive northward by the adjacent 42nd Division. Elements of the 398th participated in creating a diversion in the vicinity of Ahn to Ihnen to assist in simulating preparations for crossing the Moselle River. This sham was aimed at diverting the 11th Panzer Division which was somewhere in the Saarburg locality, to this area. And away from the drive being prepared for the north front at Echternach various amplified sounds of starting tank motors, grinding gears, running vehicles recorded on records were thrown across the river. Our attempts to manufacture a "dry run" assault were successful and the 42nd Division made its northward drive.

Our combat mission in Luxembourg completed, the entire regiment was moved by motor convoy and train by 0600 hours on January 24th. Our new mission in construction was again in the rear--at Sissone, France, with our work orders beginning in Oise base section, Reims.

Thus the 398th Engineer General Service Regiment did become a part of the greatest battle of all time... "The Battle of the Bulge." ■

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

PAUL ALEXA, 127TH AAA GUN BATTALION, would like to hear from anyone who knew **CAPT. TOMMY MANVILLE**. Tommy was stationed in Dover in 1944, went to France in '44. He has a son who is an Anglican priest. He wants to know about his father. Write to Paul at: 8144 Stockbridge Road, Mentor, Ohio 44060.

Alfred Kohler writes to see if anyone remembers **RICHARD BURNS CAMPBELL, 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 422ND INFANTRY, 2ND BATTALION, COMPANY F**. Richard was captured and spent months in a POW camp. Write to Alfred at: 100 Remsen Street 3-K, Brooklyn, New York 11201.

ALFRED V. MOORMANN, 462ND AAA BATTALION, wants to know if there's anyone out there from his unit. If so, write to him at: 3870 South Camino Del Golfista, Green Valley, Arizona 85614-5719.

Patricia Hardy is trying to trace her husband's path during the war. His name was **LLOYD E. HARDY, 404TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS BATTERY**. If you can help Patricia write to her at: 1104 Northeast 5th Street, Washington, Indiana 47501.

Associate member Hans Wijers would like to hear from anyone who saw action during the battle at Parkers Crossroads: **COMPANY F, 2ND BATTALION, 325TH GLIDER INFANTRY, 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION; 589 FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION; 87TH RECONNAISSANCE, 7TH ARMORED DIVISION; 203RD AAA, 7TH ARMORED DIVISION; (TASK FORCE KANE/MANHAY), 3RD ARMORED DIVISION**, etc. Write to Hans at: Zegerijstraat 27, NL-6971 ZN Brummen (GLD), Netherlands. Hans would also like to secure old issues of *The Bulge Bugle*.

TOM LEAMON and AL ROXBURGH, 75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 289TH INFANTRY, would like to hear from any veteran who was in **B COMPANY, 290TH INFANTRY** during the last week of December, 1944. Contact: Tom, PO Box 58, Whately, Massachusetts 01093 or Al, 2719 Laurel Drive, Sacramento, California 95864.

Associate member Jean-Jacques Derycke has found a M3 trench knife. On the sheath it reads **RICHARD VARGO 0-1566183 New York T44**. If anyone can provide information about Vargo, please contact him at: 135 Rue Grimord, 6061 Montigniev su Sambre, Belgium.

Antoine Nouens would like to gather personal remembrances of those who served in the BoB to publish in a "Book of Remembrances." Contact him at: Vredestraat 173; 6511 AD Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

ROBERT N. BEE is trying to locate some buddies from **75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 291ST INFANTRY, COMPANY L**, and would appreciate any help you can give in locating the following: **ALLEN D. BUCKLEW, ROY DOMANKE,**

ARCHIE LUSTBERG, BILL NELSON, and FOREST I. PETERS. He's also interested in locating a 291st publication called, "A Combat Diary of the 291st Infantry Regiment." If you can give him a lead on obtaining a copy, he would be most grateful. Write to Bob at: 1940 Vallejo Street, San Francisco, CA 94123.

Associate member Emile Pirard would like to hear from someone with the 1501st Engineer Water Purification group who were in Verviers. These men were in his home and he would like to correspond with them. Write to Emile at: rue de la Motte Chalancon, 21; 4801 Stembert; Verviers; Belgium.

Anyone who knew or was stationed with Army Nurse **FRANCES CONRAD** or X-Ray Technician **WESLEY (LEE) BLOUGH, 28TH GENERAL HOSPITAL**, in Liege, Belgium, during the BoB, please contact Don Rose Adams: 3137 Cofer Road, Falls Church, Virginia 22042.

Gary Torfin writes to see if anyone can provide information about his uncle, **PFC IVAN TORFIN, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 110TH INFANTRY, 3RD MEDICAL BATTALION, COMPANY L**. Ivan was reported to have been surrounded and captured on December 20, 1944, near the Clerf River. Gary will appreciate any information and you can write to him at: 3133 88th Street, NE, Monticello, Minnesota 55362.

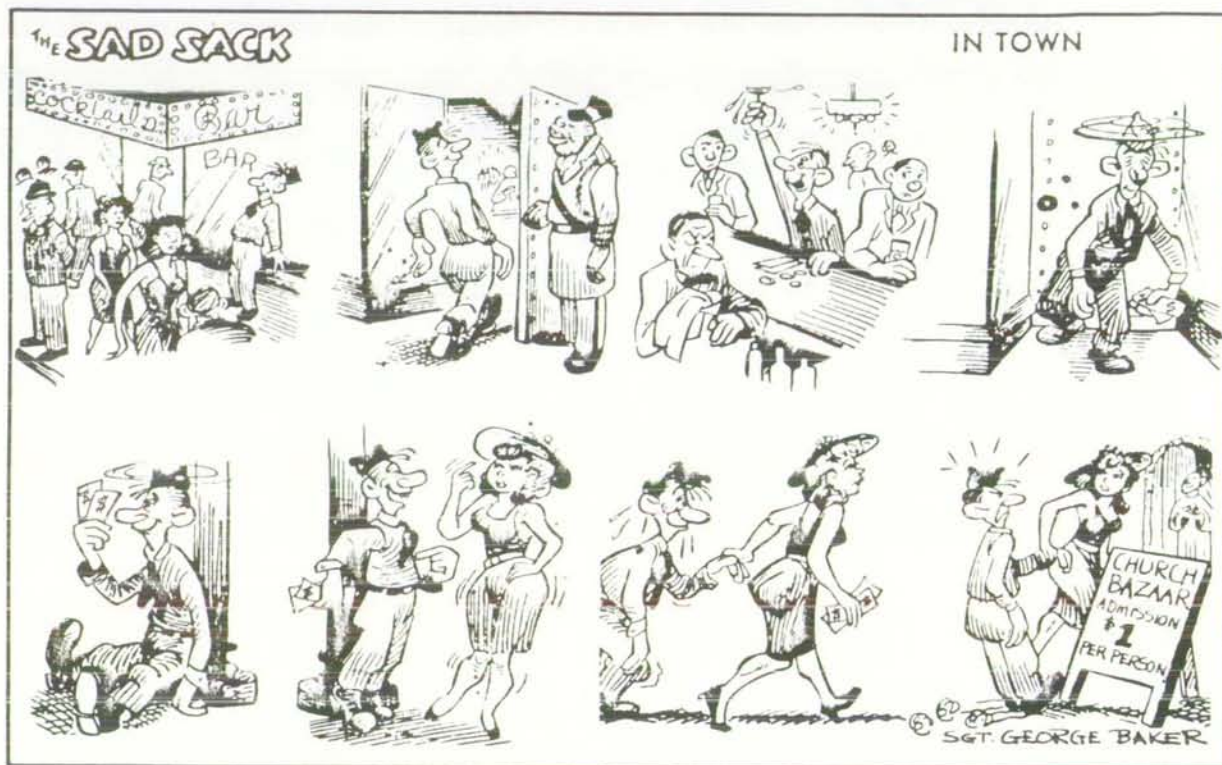
WILFRED L. MCCARTHY, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, wrote us quite some time ago and asked that we ask members of the 11th Armored to write to Roger Marquet, who is very interested in that division and the possibility of writing a history regarding the 11th. Write to Roger at: Fonds de Foret 67, 4870 Trooz, Belgium.

Tim Sorenson would like to hear from anyone who may remember or who may have served with his father: **OLE R. SORENSON, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION, 52ND ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION**. Write to Tim at: 903 Green Street, Hudson, Wisconsin 54016.

DAVID C. REVIER, 799TH ORDNANCE (LM) COMPANY, 99TH INFANTRY DIVISION, reports one afternoon in the Bulge a young soldier came in. He only had the clothes he was wearing. He stated he was a member of the engineer company of the 99th Division and his unit had been hit very hard. He asked to be reequipped so he could get back up to his unit as he said "They need me." Do you have any idea who this might have been? David would like to hear from you if you can help. Write: 14191 Pennock Avenue Apt 115, Apple Valley, Minnesota 55124.

LOWELL P. JOHNSTON, 288TH FIELD ARTILLERY OBSERVATION BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS, plans a trip back to the Bulge area. He would like to know if anyone is interested or if they have information to share. Write to Lowell at: 6412 South Hudson Avenue, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74136.

ROBERT C. MAIN, 10TH ARMORED DIVISION, 419TH ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY wants to hear from some one with whom he served. Write to him at: 410 Ferncrest Court, Three Bridges, New Jersey 08887. ■



CHRISTMAS EVE TRIP TO THE CONTINENT

By Col. Merrill Scharmen (Ret.)
(35th Aircraft Delivery Group
Alconbury Station)

After completing a combat tour in B-24s and B-17s with the 487 and 34th Bomb Groups, I was assigned to an Air Service Command detachment attached to the Air Depot at Alconbury. My duties were as pilot ferrying aircraft, air lifting personnel and delivering special and classified cargo. I was soon qualified not only in bombers, but in the C-47, UC-61, UC-64, and UC-78.

For a week or so, the Battle of the Bulge was not going well and foul weather prevented air support. On the 24th of December the weather improved. This was obvious as, before daylight, one could almost feel the vibrations from the sounds of the 1,000 plus bombers assembling over our head. Our day started with Christmas decorating at the club. We were preparing for a party that night which would include special guests from nearby communities. Anticipation was great as most of us had not attended such an event during our stay in England.

Around mid-morning I was called to operations for a briefing. The mission was to fly to an airfield close to the Bulge battle area, pick up highly important cargo and return to the base. Instructions were to call a mission code name on a special frequency when 30 miles east of the field. The assigned aircraft was a striped B-17 with the bomb bay modified for cargo; the crew consisted of two pilots and a flight engineer.

We took off and flew in the designated corridor for channel crossing, remaining below 3,000 feet, and navigating visually by the use of roads, railroads, towns, etc. When we arrived and made

the radio call, there came an immediate response: We were abruptly told to hold our position and to call back in ten minutes. The second call was equally abrupt and we were cleared to land to the east on the east/west runway.

Approaching the airfield we were informed that the runway was damaged and to avoid certain areas. As it came into view, we saw numerous fires and wrecked aircraft and vehicles. There was no control tower and many buildings appeared to be demolished. A radio voice said we were in sight. Our landing was made safely and as we were ending the roll, we were told to turn right at the first taxi way and stop. We were met by a jeep and truck. An army NCO approached and signaled that he wanted to come aboard; the bomb bay doors were opened and the engineer escorted him to the flight deck.

We learned that the airfield had been under attack when we made our first call. Throughout the day German fighters had been strafing the field approximately every 30 minutes. We realized we had only about 20 minutes to get back into the air.

The inboard engines were shut down and the cargo loading began. I asked the NCO where the radio was located and he pointed to a wooded area and said there was a tank there which had a compatible radio. He advised us that after loading we should continue on the taxiway, turning right and back to the runway. Shortly, the engineer came to the flight deck and informed us the boxes were on board.

We wished the NCO luck and a Merry Christmas and quickly closed the bomb bay doors when we were certain he was safely on the ground. As the engineer went to secure the cargo we started the inboard engines. With about 10 minutes left until the enemy fighters were expected to return, we taxied to an apparent engine check pad and then on the access to the runway.

(Continued on Page 26)

ARTIFACTS FOUND

Pierre Godeau, of Vaux-sur-Sure, Belgium, has found many items over the years in the battle fields. Many families he has found, some he has not. He has asked for our help in locating the families of any of the following:

Clifford Rowland
Otis Rowell
T/S Eugene A. Curtis
Harry Von Dreau
Paul H. Pekin
Thomas Morrow
William Chidester
J. B. Sigers
Calvin L. Sego
John L. Ferretti
Lt. Wilbur F. Jones
Major John C. Wilson
Lt. Lavelle Smith
Douglas Gile
James F. Hilton
Thomas F. Powers

Lt. Philip J. Booker
Reuben Gilbert
Herbert H. Harris
Walter Kissling
William P. Malpass
Captain Karl Meehan
Roy Rake
Mitchell C. Reed
Paul Sacco
Russell W. Stahl
Bob Radner
Joseph Ameno
James F. Archer
Edgard Bolging
Laurence Enos

If you can provide any information regarding any of these men, please let Pierre know. Pierre advises that none of these people were KIA. Write to Pierre at: Bois de Waffe, 1; B-6640 Vaux-sur-Sure; Belgium.

DID I HEAR YOU RIGHT??

[BILL GREENVILLE, 86TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION, sent us the following for your enjoyment. Bill is a Past President of VBOB.]

CHAIN OF COMMAND

A Colonel issued the following directive to his Executive Officers:

"Tomorrow evening at approximately 1900 hours, Hailey's Comet will be visible to this area--an event which occurs only once every 75 years. Have the men fall out in the battalion area in fatigues, and I will explain this rare phenomenon to them. In case of rain, we will not be able to see anything, so assemble the men in the theater and I will show them films of it."

Executive Officer to Company Commander:

"By order of the Colonel, tomorrow at 1900 hours, Hailey's Comet will appear above the battalion area. If it rains, fall the men out in fatigues, then march to the theater where this rare phenomenon will take place, something which occurs only once every 75 years."

Company Commander to Lieutenant:

"By order of the Colonel in fatigues at 1900 hours tomorrow evening, the phenomenal Hailey's Comet will appear in the theater. In case of rain, in the battalion area, the Colonel will give another order, something which occurs once every 75 years."

Lieutenant to Sergeant:

"Tomorrow at 1900 hours, the Colonel will appear in the theater with Hailey's Comet, something which happens every 75 years. If it rains, the Colonel will order the comet into the battalion area."

Sergeant to Squad:

"When it rains tomorrow at 1900 hours, the phenomenal 75-year-old General Hailey, accompanied by the Colonel will drive his jeep through the battalion area in fatigues.■

CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL!!

Please read this carefully!!

Take a look at the mailing label which is affixed to this newsletter to determine when your dues will be due. The numbers directly above your last name reflect the date on which your dues are payable. (If the word "life" appears, no dues are due.)

If you have submitted your dues recently, please disregard this notice. If you feel our records are in error, please advise us. A copy of your canceled check, along with your explanatory note, will be most helpful.

Dues are \$15.00 per year.

By complying with this reminder, you will save us the expense of a dues reminder and it will be very much appreciated.

Make your check payable to: VBOB. Mail to: VBOB, PO Box 11129, Arlington, VA 22210.

Battle of the BULGE

as reported in
THE STARS AND STRIPES

Front page STARS AND STRIPES reproductions cover the brutal BULGE action in the frozen Ardennes, Dec. 16, '44 - Jan. 25, '45. "The most terribly costly battle in US History". From London, Paris and Rome editions. Rare WWII battle action reports to be treasured, and shared. **25 large tabloid-size reproductions in 1st class mailing tube, \$20 ppd.**

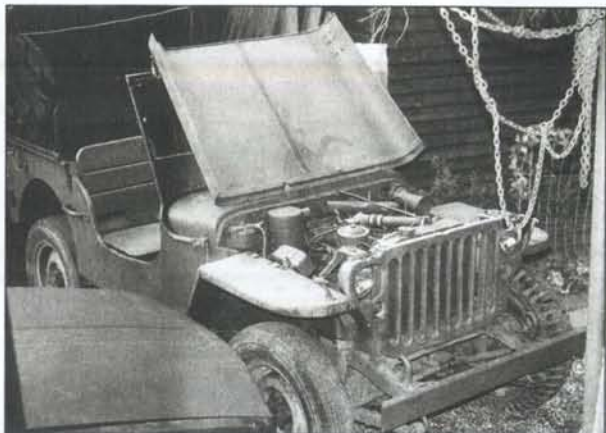
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"Nothing in life is so exhilarating," wrote the 24-year-old Winston Churchill, recounting his Boer War experiences, "as to be shot at without result."

JEEPERS

Quite some time ago we received a lovely story from William R. and Oralee Patterson. Some where along the way, the pictures for the story were lost and the story was never used. At the recent reunion Bill and Oralee graciously replaced the pictures.

Bill and Oralee have a friend in Belgium--Eric Delcommenne. Eric, it seems, had an overwhelming desire to have his own American jeep. So he set out to build one. Along with his studies for a journalism degree at the University in Brussels, he worked weekends as a waiter to gain the money necessary to buy the bits and pieces he needed and found in antique shops (known as army surplus stores here). He was never able to secure front seat cushions so Oralee and Bill sent him some.



During his rummaging through the shops, Eric found a packet of World War II GI stationery. The name of the GI was William R. Patterson. Oralee advises us that the next time she is in this area, she and Bill plan to donate his "wonder of wonders" to the VBOB Museum.



Eric and many of his young, Belgian friends really enjoy the jeep. They go on trips and participate in parades. Eric also said:

"It will be my greatest passion to drive and own my Jeep. ...to drive our American friends anywhere in Belgium they want to go--battle fields, villages, anywhere they desire. This I want to do for them."



Eric and the fruit of his labors--his very own Jeep.

Report from the VBOB Chapter XXXVIII 5th Fusiliers of Belgium

December 4, 1997

The 53rd anniversary of the 5th Belgian Battalion of Fusiliers was celebrated in Charleroi on Sunday, 19 October first by a meeting in the Tresignies Barracks at 11 a.m. in front of the plate memorial which reminds that the unit was trained in this area before the departure on 13 December, 1944 to the Ardennes where the 5th Belgian Fusiliers Battalion was attached to the 1st US Army and engaged in the defensive operations against the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge.

Many war veterans of the 5th Fusiliers Battalion were present and wreaths were laid at the plate by Marcel D'Haese, Chairman, 5th Fusiliers Association accompanied by our guest, Col (US) Louis Taylor, CO 80th Area Support Group (NATO) followed by the Last Post and the American and Belgian Anthems. Also present were delegations from the Regiments de Chasseurs a Pied (Belgian Infantry Veterans Association) and old comrades of the 1st Belgian Battalion of Fusiliers.

This ceremony was followed by a banquet in the restaurant "La Fermette" in Couillet, with a large number of 5th Fusilier veterans and their ladies, Col. and Mrs. Louis Taylor, Mrs. Marie-Lise Baneton (Public Affairs, 80th ASG) and her husband, Mr. Fourneau, Vice President of the National Federation of Belgian War Volunteers and his wife, and last but not least, the 1st Fusiliers and Chasseurs a Pied veterans.

The atmosphere was very pleasant, created by the nice and well-decorated restaurant, the excellent food, and the musical environment of old songs of our young years.

At the place of honour were the 5th Fusiliers flag with the US Stars and Stripes, and the VBOB Chapter (5th Fusiliers of Belgium) banners.

Our 53rd anniversary has been a great success due to the devotion and efforts of our Charleroi section.

*Roger Hardy, President
VBOB Chapter, 5th Fusiliers, Belgium*

A GERMAN DIARY

of Lt Behmen, OC 2 Troop,
1818 Artillery Regt, 18 VG Div

16 December - First day of Atk. The sky was lit up along the whole front. A terrific barrage is laid on the whole line. By noon reports of the first successes come in. The population of Duppen is very enthusiastic. At 2 o'clock the Inf is in Bleiaf. Casualties are not light. It was there that the Americans were echeloned in depth.

17 December - Our fighter planes still control the air in the morning and afternoon.

18 December - The Inf is before St Vith. The men hear the wildest rumors of successes, but the official notices are very laconic about the attack.

19 December - Endless columns of prisoners pass; at first, about a hundred, half of them negroes, later another thousand. Our car gets stuck on the road. I get out and walk. Generalfieldmarshall Model himself directs traffic. (He's a little, undistinguished looking man with a monocle). Now the thing is going. The roads are littered with destroyed American vehicles, cars and tanks. Another column of prisoners passes. I count over a thousand men. In Andler there is a column of 1,500 men with about 50 officers, and a Lt Colonel who had asked to surrender.

December 20 - According to statements of the civilians, the American soldiers did not conduct themselves badly at all. Mostly they slept apart from the civilians, and since they had enough to eat, they were able to give some to the civilians. Only the "White Army" (revenge) was at its worst. Many persons were taken away from their homes. Civilians too tell us that the American soldiers have shown little spirit for fighting. Most of them often said, "What do we want here? At home we can do everything much better." That was the spirit of the common soldier. If the officers thought that way???...A rumor was set going that Eisenhower was taken prisoner. It will probably prove to be only a rumor.

22 December - After St Vith is taken, traffic flows continuously. If enemy planes had appeared it would have been a terrible disaster. An Inf Div, and an Inf Regt Hq are set up in town. Also our Arty Bn Hq. We went to tank up at a large gasoline and food supply depot which the Americans had near a monastery, but all the stuff was already gone, except for half a can of petrol.

25 December - We are ordered to proceed to Hinderhausen. Over us circle enemy planes. All along the road, there are tremendous bomb craters, but it seems that very little was hit. Shortly before reaching Hinderhausen, we see a dive bomber start for us. We are able to stop the truck in time to get off the road as the bullets start flying about us. Nothing is to be seen of our air force; where is it? The heavy bombers fly toward the Reich, quiet and undisturbed. The AA is getting heavier but it doesn't seem to bother them. Only two bombers are knocked down. The pilots "hit the silk" but the dogs are lucky, and the wind drives them toward the West. They actually regain enemy territory. If they had landed in our lines we'd slay them! In the evening, we see the fires in St Vith. I could cry from rage and tear the prisoners apart.

16 January - Four weeks ago, our attack started. How quickly everything has changed! Here, again, we receive continuous fire from the enemy. During the day Recht is under heavy fire. Around noon, an order comes through to withdraw, one gun at a time, and to assemble at new positions. Dive bombers are active again. Because of this, the guns are forced to withdraw slowly. I wonder

if we'll ever see the field kitchen again. We have only one two-wheeled cart left for transport, and no horses. I hope the horse will show up some day.

20 January - I am ordered to organise anti-tank defense in St Vith. For the first time since Christmas, I am in St Vith again. The town is in ruins, but we will defend the ruins. I am sending the Signal Platoon back to Andler. We expect the attack on St Vith. Only small forces are available for the defense. The "8-balls" in the unit speak of a little Stalingrad.

21 January - There are no new messages. The battle-noises come closer to the town. We can already see the Inf on some of the heights. I am organising everything for a last defense. Rumor has it that the Tommies have surrounded the town. Some even believe it. At higher commands they believe that we will be forced to yield. These rear-echelon men!! I am neither optimistic nor pessimistic, and, I don't give up hope. When the kitchen goes back I will send all personnel not immediately needed back with it. During the day it is unnaturally quiet. Will the enemy surround the town? I'm sending back all of my personal belongings. One never knows. I wonder what Heide is doing? The news from the E (Eastern) front is very serious. There must be a decisive change very soon; What we need is submarines and airplanes. Only these things can help us.

22 January - Nothing new during the night. At eight o'clock, the enemy recommences his saturation fire from the direction of Neider Emel. Exactly one year ago, on 22 January I was in the same fix. At that time, as a non-com, I was involved in the retreat N of Gahelina; now, as a battery commander of a battery used as anti-tank security. The front lines are just as hazy now as they were then. Exactly one month ago, we took St Vith...

(Source: SHAEF 4 Feb 45)(Editor: This diary gives an account of one German's experience during the Bulge. Obviously it was captured by the Americans and though great for history points out why the American Army forbade one to keep diaries.)

BOOKS YOU MAY ENJOY

We received no books from authors/publishers during this quarter. We did, however, receive a very generous gift.

The family of WILLIAM R. HEMPHILL, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION, 36TH ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT, HEADQUARTERS AND G COMPANIES, donated many of the World War II books in his collection to our library. Bill, who was one of the five founding members of VBOB, passed away in November after having tirelessly served VBOB in many capacities since its inception. He was an avid student of WWII and particularly the Battle of the Bulge and the many books donated in his name will always be treasured.

OBITUARIES

Quite some time ago it was decided that *The Bulge Bugle* would not carry obituaries. Since that time, we have made only one exception to this rule and that was an obituary for our founder, Daniel Clyde Boden. He wouldn't have wanted us to make an exception for it was he who said, "If we publish obituaries, one of these days that will be all *The Bulge* contains."

The atom bomb is a paper tiger with which the Americans try to frighten people.
Mao Tse-Tung

Fighting Units Should Write

Their Own History

As the 87th (Golden Acorn) Division Did

By Mitchell Kaidy

87th Infantry Division

Every military unit has the right—no the duty—to correct history, to be faithful not only to their living members, but to those who sacrificed in blood to forge that history. At long last, that's what the 87th Infantry Division accomplished last spring, and that's what, even at this long remove, I recommend to all other fighting outfits.

While commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium in 1994, this conviction began percolating in my mind. I had read a number of World War II histories, some of which, like *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*, were slightly inaccurate; others, like *Monty*, by Nigel Hamilton, more outrageously so. But then books like *Liberators*, a shamefully revisionist tract, began appearing, and I realized that something had to be done.

I wrote an article for the Golden Acorn News suggesting the erection of a plaque where we fought in the Ardennes Forest. Division members responded with moral and monetary support, and I was drafted without my knowledge to chair the effort.

At first, I assured my wife that I had no time to do it and would have to decline. Then, reflecting on the great honor that was implied, I resolved to find the time, and accepted. But it was a two-continent, two-language task that took many more hours and much more emotional input than I had imagined. At a meeting shortly after being drafted as chair, my committee voted to broaden the commemoration to four plaques.

In order to solicit bids for casting and to meet Belgian military Reservists, I made a week long visit to Belgium in March 1996. Introduced to the mayors and provincial governors of the municipalities, Pironpre, Moiricy, Tillet, and St. Hubert, I found the officials by no means sold on either the plaques or the ceremonies. In St. Hubert, the mayor initially refused to meet on our proposal to bolt a plaque to the City Hall wall.

I'm proud that as a journalist, by on-the-spot rewriting and explaining the significance of the plaque, I was able to address that mayor's refusal. After I rewrote the text, he and the city council, whom we met with, agreed to participate in the ceremony—on condition that the plaque text be fully translated into French.

Despite the Belgian Reservists' assurances that plaque-casting would be cheaper in Belgium, bids in Belgium proved to be almost twice as expensive as the US. Ultimately, the plaques were cast in the US at a Cincinnati foundry—a fount of illiteracy in both English and French. After type was set, it had to be corrected and re-corrected numerous times—especially the French text.

Once cast, we confronted the challenge of transporting bronze tablets without paying duty. After scores of phone calls, faxes, and correspondence, it was accomplished through the Belgian Reservists' intervention. They slid in under an antiques classification.

The culmination came on June 8, while thousands of Belgians cheered, on a bright, warm, spring day that stood in striking contrast to the bitter winter of 1944-45. Twenty-six 87th Division veterans, plus their relatives and friends, totaling over 50, were bussed to the ceremonies at Pironpre, Moiricy, Tillet, and St.

Hubert. This chairman, however, continued until the last minute to work on arrangements, and never was able to accompany the tour. As chairman, I had written all the texts, three speeches (two were delivered), ironed out translations from French, solicited and received a congratulatory, telephoned, written, and faxed voluminously, executed the installation and ceremonies surrounding the plaques, and carried out my self-imposed mission—to indelibly correct history for at least a century.

Despite the tremendous amount of time and energy invested, I remain convinced that history should not be left to the self-serving promoters and professional historians. Those who have lived that history know from experience of the myths and errors contained in professionally-written as well as biased, self-serving accounts. They should follow the 87th Divisions lead and write—and indelibly cast—their own history. It's not too late.

(In half a century as a journalist, Mitchell Kaidy has won three awards, including contributing to a series which won a special citation from the Pulitzer Prize Committee. Three years ago he won a Project Censored Award. He has also written television news and been a weekly commentator on public radio)

CENSORED

It's very hard to write interesting letters if you are in the infantry. About the only things you can talk about are what you are doing and where you are and that's cut out by the censor. It's very hard to compose a letter that will pass the censors when you are tired and scared and disgusted with everything that's happening.

A lot of people aren't very smart when they write to a soldier. They complain about the gasoline shortage or worry him or anger him in a hundred different ways which directly affect his efficiency and morale. Your feelings get touchy and explosive at the front. A man feels very fine fighting a war when his girl has just written that she is thinking that perhaps they made a mistake. He might figure: What the hell, the only thing I was living for was that I knew she would wait for me. He's going to feel pretty low and he might get a little careless because of it, at a place where he can't afford to be careless.

But considerate women have done far more to help their men than they may realize. A soldier's life revolves around his mail. Like many others, I've been able to follow my kid's progress from the day he was born until now—he is able to walk and talk a little, and although I have never seen him I know him very well. Jean has sent dozens of snapshots of herself and the little guy at different intervals, and it makes all the difference in the world.

Soldiers at the front read K-ration labels when the contents are listed on the package, just to be reading *something*. God knows they are familiar enough with the contents—right down to the last dextrose tablet. That puts *Stars and Stripes*, the only daily newspaper that reaches them with any regularity, in a pretty good spot.

From UP FRONT - Bill Mauldin

Combat Look

"A soldier who has been a long time in the line does have a 'look' in his eyes that anyone who knows about it can discern. It's a look of dullness, eyes that look without seeing, eyes that see without conveying any image to the mind. . . (A look of) exhaustion, lack of sleep, tension for too long, wariness that is too great, fear beyond fear, misery to the point of numbness, a look of surpassing indifference to anything anyone can do. It's a look I dread to see on men."

Ernie Pyle

REUNIONS

4TH ARMORED DIVISION, September 21-27, 1998, Holiday Inn, Hampton, Virginia. Contact: Samuel A. Schenker, Sr., 1823 Shady Drive, Farrell, Pennsylvania 16121.

6TH ARMORED DIVISION, September 15-20, 1998, Colorado Springs, Colorado. Contact: 6th Armored Division Association, PO Box 5011, Louisville, Kentucky 40255-0011.

11TH ARMORED DIVISION, September 6-13, 1998, Drawbridge Inn, Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky. Contact: Joseph Civitano 561-498-2814.

30TH INFANTRY DIVISION, June 10-14, 1998, The Pines Resort Hotel, South Fallsburg, New York. Contact: Frank W. Towers, 2915 W SR #235, Brooker, Florida 32622-9010. Contact: 352-485-1173.

75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, July 15-19, 1998, Double Tree Hotel, 322 North Spokane Falls Court, Spokane, Washington 99204. Contact: Angelo Barrachinni, 617 South Nevada Street, Seattle, Washington 98118. Telephone: 206-682-1590.

84TH INFANTRY DIVISION, August 22-26, 1998, Omni Albany Hotel, Albany, New York. Contact: Ivan Beams, PO Box B, Hobart, New York 13788-0402. Telephone: 607-538-9255.

86TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION, April 29-May 3, 1998, Springfield, Missouri. Contact: George L. Murray, 818 West 62nd Street, Anniston, Alabama 36206. Telephone: 205-820-4415.

110TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY 90MM GUN BATTALION, 1ST BATTALION, May 13-15, 1998, Holiday (Patriot) Hotel, Williamsburg, Virginia. Contact: Howard W. Mueller, 9505 Sequoia Drive, St. Louis, Missouri 63123. Telephone: 314-631-5350.

150TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, May 13-15, 1998, Falmouth, Massachusetts. Contact: Curtis Shaw, 25 Sagamore Road, West Yarmouth, Massachusetts 02673. Telephone: 508-771-1270.

297TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, June 4-6, Owensboro, Kentucky. Contact: Hal Willis, 5251 Windy Hollow Road, Owensboro Kentucky 42301. Telephone: 502-785-4088.

300TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, June 4-7, 1998, LaQuinta Inn, 8303 East 130, Dallas, Texas. Contact: Frank Neuhauser, 1002 Valencia Street, Dallas, Texas 75223.

561ST FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, April 30-May 2, 1998, Sheraton West Port Inn, St. Louis, Missouri. Contact: Richard P. Zwisler, 2810 Heidelberg Drive, Boulder, Colorado 80303. Telephone: 303-494-6284.

687TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, October 6-8, 1998, Ameristar Casino Hotel, Council Bluffs, Iowa. Contact: Nels Block, Jr., 2306 - 9th Street, Harlan, Iowa 51537. Telephone: 712-755-5510.

749TH TANK BATTALION, April 6-9, 1998, Regency Plaza Hotel, San Diego, California. Contact: James Bobbett, 6780 Olivet Drive, Salt Lake City, Utah 84121.

773RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, September 8-10, 1998, Cleveland Airport Marriott Hotel, Cleveland, Ohio. Contact: Edward McClelland, 4384 West 182nd Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44135-3862. Telephone: 216-251-0445.

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

"WILLY"

Master of All He Surveys

[The following picture and information was taken from June, 1997, issue of The Pekar, newsletter of The 526TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION ASSOCIATION.]

At noon on November 7, 1944, General Patton arrived at Eagle Tac for a 12th AMG staff meeting. PFC Frank Friesen, while on post was asked by Patton to walk his dog, Willy. Friesen told the general that he was sorry, but he could not leave his post. Patton relieved the guard and Friesen took the dog out for a few minutes walk. The Third Army Commander stood guard for only a few minutes and was promptly relieved when Friesen returned with the dog. Pictured are PFC Friesen of Company C and Willy.



Former National President of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Stan Wojtusik, presenting a \$10,000 check to Senator Robert Dole, the first contribution from a National Veterans organization for the WWII Memorial Campaign.

The atom bomb will never go off, and I speak as an expert on explosives
Admiral William Leahy

STAVELOT, BELGIUM

17 December 1944-14 January 1945

By John E. Kent

30th Infantry Division, 117th Infantry, 1st Battalion

17 December 1944: 1st Battalion, 117th Infantry Regiment, 30th Infantry Division at Warden, Germany. Alerted at Noon for possible move. At 1500 hours received orders to move to Eupen, Belgium. At this time we thought some new division commander needed to have his nerves soothed, or appeased. At 1900 hours the motorized move started.

During the trip, word of a large-scale breakthrough was heard over civilian radio: "Axis Sallie"--English speaking German Radio Broadcaster, who always tried to cause trouble. The U.S. troops thought she was funny and a joke. This was the time when she stated, "The Fanatical 30th Division, Roosevelt's SS Troops," are enough to the rescue, but this time it will be completely annihilated." The column stopped at Hauset, Belgium. Convoy confused regarding the increased German advance and activity, a real threat. We moved on through Eupen while the Luftwaffe was bombing and strafing and dropping flares on our motor convoy, and on to Malmedy, Belgium.

18 December 1944: 1st Battalion, 117th Regiment, detrucked at dawn of 18th. Orders, Company A to protect bridge approaches to Malmedy from the SE direction. Company C to hill on left flank (south of Company A). Orders quickly changed, 1st Battalion changed, now to go to Stavelot to relieve Company A, 526th Armored Infantry Battalion, which had not seen much action prior to this time. The road from Malmedy to Stavelot had been cut by the Germans.

The 1st Battalion moved by convoy to Francorchamps, then south toward Stavelot. Detrucked 2+ miles north (northwest?) of town. Found armored infantry personnel eating K-rations. "The Germans ran us out of town," the men said simply. Mission abruptly changed from relief to assault. Units jockeyed into tactical formation and advanced. Company A to right or south of road and Company B, to north or left of road leading into Stavelot.

Along the road to south (right) side was a large number of gasoline drums, some had been set on fire to prevent the Germans from using this as a supply. I met some civilians who were very helpful, and knowledgeable about the whereabouts of the German troops. These men may have given their names, but I have forgotten, but they did mention "Belgique Resistance," and thusly I have remembered them. Also I felt that they were the ones that set the drums afire rather than the men of Company A, 526th Armored Infantry Battalion. This act took tactical foresight, which did not come through to me in my contact with the young soldiers.

As our leading echelons moved through the fields and woods toward the town, a Royal Tiger Mark IV tank moved up the hill, our leading men were not infiltrating into town square. First Platoon, Company A, and 1st Platoon, Company B, moved in on their share. While this was happening the house located right across 71.5/up 03.6, where my Company CP, also battalion artillery observer, mortar observer, radio operator, company, battalion, artillery, all at the vantage point in the 2nd floor and 3rd floor/attic windows for observing to direct the fire of units mentioned above; a LMG squadron from Company B, unknown to me or anyone else, they were 300-500 meters out of place.

No one even considered that such would happen! They opened fire on the German tanks! Stupid they could only give away their own positions. The German tank returned fire as expected, aiming for the upper floors, to remove observation.

This column of tanks was from the unit commanded by Col. Joachim Peiper (our unit had met his unit in Normandy, and defeated him there). All were looking for gasoline (petrol). As the tanks moved slowly, they had no infantry to protect them. Our men got several drums of fuel and rolled them to the road, started them down. Wherever they crashed, tracer ammunition was used to set the fuel on fire. We were lucky, and one tank was set afire. The others withdrew.

The tank which shot into our headquarters and OP killed three men. I was wounded. I ran around as if I were a banshee, yelling loudly, "I'm dead, I'm dead." My company runner told me to shut up, if I was dead I couldn't yell that loud. A shell fragment hit me in the right chest, over a Parker 51 fountain pen (life-time guarantee) bending it double, glancing across my pocket Bible, and into my jacket pocket. The blow to my chest was so hard, my breath was knocked out. And when I came to, I was very upset. We contacted battalion headquarters and advised them of the situation with the attached personnel. The battle continued to progress.

The 1st Platoons of Companies A and B, took the town square in Stavelot, but due to the fire power of the German tanks, could no more. The tanks were kept at bay by the actions of the two platoons under the direction of Lt. Murray. Firing grenades and bazookas, they kept the tanks from being too aggressive. One tank even backed into a burning building, hot bricks covered the tank and caused a fire, killing the crew. First Lt. Murray, CO, 1st Platoon, had been A Company CO in Normandy and was wounded; I became Company A CO later--18 August 1944. Lt. Murray was a most capable leader and tactician. I feel that is to be praised greatly for the supreme effort and success in Stavelot.

The Germans, under Lt. Col. Otto Skorzeny, dressed in American uniforms, riding in American vehicles, jeeps, command cars, 6x6 trucks, etc., drove rapidly into the square, where the ruse was detected soon enough to prevent problems. The attempt was repulsed, smashed in its early stages. This group, what was left of them, returned to the east side of the river. Particularly outstanding in this effort were Staff Sgt. Wm. A. Pearce, Carl H. Haynes, Sgt. Chas. F. Martin, PFC Earl T. Mead, and Pvt. August B. Westberg. We were ordered to hold our position. Under Lt. Murray's direction and organization, with the cooperation of Lt. Foster, Company B, the area was tactically snug, also helped by mortar observers, LMG, HMG, tank support and tank destroyer. Again, Jerries in American clothing tried to break through our lines. The GI's were not to be fooled--we killed most and destroyed or captured the vehicles.

19 December 1944: Midnight to dawn: orders--shoot anything and everything that moves. Not much action.

Morning: orders to push forward to the river, specific objectives were to push forward to the Ambleve River and set up defenses along the east side of the river, and to blow the bridge. The river bank objective was reached by 1000. The Germans had withdrawn during the night. Over the single bridge across the Ambleve River, the Germans tried to trick us again. In American uniforms and vehicles, they roared across the bridge into the western part of Stavelot, but, again, A & B Companies immediately opened up full force knocking out jeeps and killing almost all of the occupants.

(Continued on Page 23)

STAVELOT, BELGIUM

(Continued from Page 22)

Only one jeep returned to the western side of the river. Action settled down. B Company to the north of the bridge, A Company to the south of the bridge and very stretched out to Parfondrury. Company C in reserve. First Battalion Headquarters, CO. Company D Headquarters and its 81 mm mortar platoon all back on the hill overlooking Stavelot from the east. (Erlinchamps?)

Mid afternoon: Capt. Kent was going to the chateau at the southeast of Stavelot on the bluff above the river, saw seven German tanks approaching the bridge from the east--Nazi infantry, armored vehicles, all congregated near a small square on the east side of the river. A call was made for artillery and mortar fire trained on the area. This strong action caused the German tanks to weaken, not wanting to channel themselves in such a poor position. They only tried to run the gauntlet one at a time. One of our tank destroyer units was in position to fire each time a German tank attempted to charge to the bridge. The tank destroyer unit finally, after several hits, managed to cause one tank to be disabled, knocked out and blocked the bridge. The others withdrew late in the afternoon.

Meanwhile during some of the action above, my company's left flank was attacked by a company of Germans. They attempted to cut off the forward elements of the 1st Battalion, namely Company A, by this maneuver. They were on the hill to the west-by-north direction from Parfondrury. They were in perfect battle attack formation.

This action was seen both by Capt. Kent and Lt. Col. Franklin, Battalion CO Artillery fire and mortar fire, slaughtered them. We even called on our artillery to shoot over our positions. This artillery barrage along with the mortar fire controlled and ended this attempt. Proximity fuses were used for the first time during the ETO Combat. They worked well.

Night: During the night, two men in the 1st Platoon were asked if they wanted coffee. They replied "Yes"! The reply "Heil Hitler" was shouted, and our men were taken prisoners. In the 2nd Platoon, also in A Company, another two men approached in the dark, speaking in English, stating they were Belgian officers trying to get back behind Allied lines. During this exchange another German sneaked around behind the Americans and shot the awake soldier in the back of his head, then killed the one asleep in the fox hole. These Germans made a fast get away.

20 December 1944: Morning: Rough, German infantry made repeated counterattacks in a desperate effort to recapture Stavelot. The men of the 1st Battalion were again pitting themselves against the 1st SS Panzer Division Libstrandarte Adolph Hitler which it came to grips with first and defeated at Mortain, France. Stavelot was the key to the first SS drive, the main effort of I SS Corp which was spearheading for the VI SS Panzer Army.

Details of the day's first attack early in a.m., from river in the vicinity of the bridge. Drove of brave but foolish SS infantry attempted to assault the first platoons of A and B Companies by swimming the Ambleve River. As expected, the exposed Germans proved ideal targets and were literally slaughtered.

While the attempts at the river were active, a German company of SS men, accompanied by tanks, attacked and advanced against Company A's 3rd Platoon on the right flank again. The single American tank supporting this platoon withdrew at the first sign

of trouble. With the loss of its only tank support, the 3rd Platoon withdrew 50 meters and set up a new defense line. A lull in the conflict occurred. The river attack renewed, and Companies A & B, 1st Platoons, slaughtered the German troops again. Again Company A's right flank was attacked. The artillery again came to the rescue, also over our own positions. This stopped the attack. Again an attempt for the bridge, infantry, several tanks from the southeast side of the bridge and the west side of Stavelot. Intense barrages of American artillery, and our own 81mm mortars helped tremendously and most importantly. HMG from the Chateau area also helped to control this effort. All together five counterattacks had been thrown back this day. The artillery had to cool their barrels with water so they could keep firing for our support.

Dark: Renewed attack on 3rd Platoon, Company A's right flank, caused the unit to pull back 100 meters. Company A's Headquarters was exposed, Capt. Kent hid all overlays, maps, and other papers on the smoke ledge in the large fireplace, so if captured no written information would be available. Combat lines readjusted and held. Lt. O'Neal and three men from the A & P Platoon placed antitank mines in front of the 3rd Platoon line and across the N/S highway, close to a big tiger Royal tank. The tank soon started forward and blew a tread/track off the right side. The tank pulled back turning to its left rear, hiding behind a building. The 3rd Platoon pushed forward, killed the tank crew, and regained their lost ground. During this activity, division engineers sneaked across the bridge over Ambleve River and planted a 100 pound (455kg) bomb and blew the bridge. Thus the threat of enemy crossing with their vehicles was eliminated.

21 December 1944: Things quieted down this morning. Company A's 3rd Platoon pushed forward, and after several lively scraps, recaptured its original position at Parfondrury. Lt. Frank Warnock, HMG Platoon, aided the 3rd Platoon throughout the operation to make the efforts successful. A dozen SS men were captured. It was difficult to get our soldiers to send them back, for they had found the worst atrocities on the western front to civilians. One hundred twenty-three dead civilians found--old men, babies, children and women. The captured SS soldiers confessed openly that these people had bothered them and they shot them. (They were later hanged.)

During this period, Task Force Harrison (brigadier general of our division) 30th Division troops, infantry, attached tanks, antitanks mobile, armored infantry, HMG's, 81mm mortars were all mobilized. This task force pushed on to Stoumont, Trois Ponts, LaGleize to engage Peiper and his command. Units of the 119th, 120th, and 117th Regiments, attached armor, CCB 3rd Armored Division, joined by the 82nd Airborne Division fought at these areas and caused Peiper and his units to withdraw, leaving their equipment behind because of lack of fuel.

Except for occasional small arms fire exchange across Ambleve River, no significant engagements occurred around Stavelot.

22 December 1944: A holding period for the next three weeks. Christmas hot turkey dinner with all the fixings was served. Still had to sneak past an open forward area, along the street close to the river because of small arms fire from the west. A nuisance when moving about. Gordon Frazier, a news reporter, interviewed me at Stavelot, broadcast back to the States on a Sunday--my wife and mother were at the church so did not hear his broadcast. Many friends called and told them about the broadcast.■

LIFE AND WORK OF ARTILLERY MEN IN THE BULGE

By Ralph Storm

[Ralph served in the 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 21ST ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY B. He currently lives in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.]

The writer believed that in order to do a story on the life and work of artillerymen in the Bulge, one should seek out former artillerymen who served in that battle. After advertising in *The Bulge Bugle*, a number of Bulge veterans responded with their stories. The writer was more than pleased with these responses and is most grateful to the artillery men who shared their memories and made this writing possible.

The Battle of the Bulge was different from other campaigns in Western Europe in that it was fought during a particularly cold winter in which the troops were not adequately equipped with cold weather clothing and boots. Second, in contrast to the summer and fall campaigns, when America units were continually on offensive, GIs in the Ardennes were on the defensive much of December 1944 and, in some areas, the Germans continued their offensive into January, 1945.

American artillery battalions played a major role in squelching the German offensive of December 1944. Compared to the great masses of German troops collected behind the Ardennes front in November, the American front lines were relatively thinly manned. However, behind the front were an impressive number of artillery battalions. Backing up the Losheim Gap, for instance, were at least eight battalions of artillery. General Gerow, of V Corps, could depend on more than 500 artillery pieces which could be directed at some point in the Ardennes.

One of the most deadly tactics used by American artillery was the time-on-target concentration, which involved combining the gunpowder from several batteries or battalions onto a single target on which the shells were timed at nearly the same moment.

As a result of the employment of many guns, the time-on-target technique, the proximity fuse, the American artillery was a fearsome weapon which had an immense psychological effect upon Wehrmacht troops.

Charles MacDonald, in his *Time for Trumpets*, described the effect that massed artillery fire had on some young German soldiers in the Bulge: "Inside Bullingen before daylight the next day, December 21, twenty some young SS troops of the 12th SS Panzer Division, quartered in a house belonging to a farmer, Albert Kohnenberger, were sleeping in the cellar. Most were boys, 15 to 17 years old and had already participated in the attacks on Dom Butgenbach and experienced the wrath of America artillery. Kohnenberger was with them in the cellar when noncommissioned officers arrived to order them back to the attack. The Belgian farmer watched in silent pity as the boys began to weep. As they gathered their gear to move out into the cold night, tears streaked down their faces."

Stephen Fritz, in his study of German soldiers' letters and diaries in World War II, had this quote in regard to the German soldiers' fear of U.S. artillery: "We're all sick to death of it and scared to death of it, all of us. Our fear reached grandiose proportions, and urine poured down our legs. Our fear was so great that we lost all thought of controlling ourselves."

Another opinion on the effect of American artillery is Francis Balace, a specialist on World War II history at the University of Liege, Belgium. Balace concluded that "It was American artillery which definitely won the battle." With American air power largely neutralized by clouds and fog, what could keep the panzer forces from seizing the Meuse bridges? An incredible number of U.S. artillery shells were fired in the Ardennes. For the period December 16 to 31, 1,250,000 shells were fired by U.S. artillery battalions in the Ardennes.

A much remembered feature of the Battle of the Bulge was the unusually cold Ardennes winter and Mike O'Connor, of the 965th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm, howitzer) recalled the dark, cloudy weather: "The weather was terrible from the 26th to the 31st of December, 1944. We had only one clear day where our forward observers could adjust their fires, six days with haze or light fog, and nine days with snow, rain or fog. Many missions were fired unobserved because of the weather, some of these were very successful allowing our infantry to gain ground that had been captured."

Mike also wrote of how the cold had a "telling effect on the men, frost bite on hands and feet, exhaustion in deep snow, (poor) visibility in snowstorms, and cold food. The equipment would not function properly due to the congealing of the lubricant in the guns and vehicles."

Mike served as a T/5 jeep driver and radio operator in the 965th first at Weweler, Belgium, on December 16, and later as the battalion was ordered westward to the "Fortified Goose Egg" near St. Vith, and again to Heyd, Belgium. At Weweler, the 965th supported the 106th Division, later they supported a number of units including the 7th Armored, 82nd Airborne, and 75th Division.

John Kalagidis served as a truck and vehicle mechanic with 552nd Field Artillery Battalion (240mm howitzers). The 240mm guns were heavy artillery and were the army's largest field pieces. The gun would fire a 365 pound shell a distance of 15 miles. John wrote of the effects of the cold: "Very cold: but we managed. I had every bit of clothing on that I was able to wear. Some GIs were crying, it was so cold. On top of that I had the GIs. ... We had to dig spade pits and recoil pits to put our guns into position. It was hard digging in the ground.(1)

The 552nd was not attached to any division or corps but was used wherever needed. During the Bulge, the battalion moved from Stolberg, Germany, to Jalhay, Belgium, near Eupen.

John Grant was a front rodman with the 16th Field Artillery Observation Battalion which on December 16, 1944, was at Binsfeld, Luxembourg. Binsfeld is east of Trois Vierges, which is roughly east of Bastogne. John recalled the cold days in the Bulge: "One man had bad trenchfoot in my section. Learned later that he lost both feet. I had minor frost bite in my feet.... We were always cold and never did receive the new "Shoe Pac" for cold."

GIs familiar with Bulge events will recall the Malmedy massacre in which nearly 100 members of the ill-fated 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion were executed by a German SS unit. These sound and flash men did not come to shoot, but rather to locate enemy guns. John Grant recalled: "We had sound and flash OPs out front. Many times ahead of or with infantry outposts. I only pulled OP duty a few times since I primarily was the jeep driver for the lieutenant in charge of our sound survey section."

Leonard Schafenberg served as message center chief with the 174th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm self-propelled M-12). Leonard recalled the snow covered, icy roads, "how guns skidded on roads, breaking tracks. Men seemed to take the cold pretty [well], lots of shoveling snow from vehicles stuck."

The 174th was at such Luxembourg towns as Lauterborn, and Bergdorf, and also at Neufchateau, Belgium.

Bud Lauer was a driver and gunner with the 907th Glider Field Artillery Battalion at Bastogne. Bud recalled much snow and cold temperatures: "Some places 4 feet of snow and down to 6 below zero, and never was in a building for our 42 days in Bastogne."

The 907th supported the 501st Parachute Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division, and their guns were sited roughly where the Bastogne Museum stands today.

Leonard Kyle served as executive officer of the 490th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (105mm, self-propelled), 11th Armored Division which first saw action west of Bastogne. Leonard recalled his frost bitten hands and feet and also how a cook in his outfit suffered from frozen feet after standing in a steel bedded truck frying pancakes for two hours.

Ralph Balestieri was also

(Continued on Page 25)

ARTILLERY MEN

(Continued from Page 24)

with an M-7 unit, the 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, which when the Bulge began, was located east of Bastogne. Ralph remembered how the extreme cold "froze the dead like cordwood like logs.... After Logvilly there was a shortage of blankets. I made a special run with a 2-1/2 ton full, some donated by service battery men."

Jerry Eades served with the 62nd Armored Field Artillery Battalion in North Africa, Sicily, and the Normandy Campaigns. During the Bulge, the unit was located one mile east of Roetgan, Germany, supporting such units as the 102nd Cavalry Group and 78th Infantry Division. Jerry recalls some of the effects of snow and cold on men and equipment: "Recoil slow on guns for first few rounds, men reacted slow, due to snow and ice covered ground and equipment."

Al Alvarez, of the 7th Field Artillery Battalion, had served with the 1st Infantry Division through the Mediterranean and Normandy Campaigns. During the Ardennes Campaign, the battalion was on the northern shoulder of the Bulge at such places as Sourbrodt and Hosfeld, Belgium. Al recalled, "We wore layers of clothing, and many of us had foul-weather gear from U.S. Navy at Normandy Beach." Lacking shoe pacs or overshoes, his "FO party used straw, wrapped with blankets over the boots and wrapped with common wire for traction on snowy trails."

The nearness of an artillery unit to the front varied with the situation. The artillerymen's responses to this question ranged from 300 yards behind the front to as much as 9,000 yards. Leonard Kyle, of the 490th Field Artillery Battalion, recalled that as part of a marching column, the distance behind the moving units would be about 1,500 yards, but in fixed positions, the range would be about 2,500-3,000 yards. Leonard Schaffenberg recalled that his unit's M-12, self-propelled guns would "on special jobs be located forward with the infantry."

Counter battery fire was a hazard to be avoided, and John Kalagidis wrote how on one occasion the 552nd's 240 mm howitzers were forced to displace when the German artillery had them "zeroed in." On the other hand, Mike O'Connor remembered how in the fall of 1944 in Belgium, his commanding officer selected a site behind a steep hill which shielded the guns from enemy observation and the unit received no counter battery fire while at that position.(2)

Most of the artillerymen in this survey said that their unit forward observers remained at the front with their radios and phones until relieved. One officer would serve in an OP and all battery NCOs were required to take their turn. Leonard Schaffenberg, of the 174th Field Artillery Battalion, reported that his unit's FOs would return each night.



Pictured at left: Al Alvarez

Forward observers needed to carry sufficient supplies for several days in forward positions. Al Alvarez recalled that he typically carried: "Foreign legion neckcape, and white camouflage sheet over my radio, extra batteries, 1/4 mile reel of wire, #10 can of blackened grease (for frying), hunks of cow meat (to cook), bottles of wine, all suspended from my web equipment, with submachine gun with many clips, grenades, 1/4 hunk of dynamite (to blow open foxholes)."

In the event of enemy breakthroughs, forward observers were in vulnerable positions. One artillery battalion supporting the 106th Infantry Division in December (the 333rd) lost nine of its twelve howitzers, all of its forward observers, and about 250 men including the battalion commander as a result of the breakthrough.

Ralph Balestrieri whose 58th Armored Field Artillery Battalion also lost substantial amounts of equipment, recalled the move back from the front: "From Longvilly to Bastogne, lost about half of everything in firing batteries and HQ battery. When ordered in new position by 9th Armored Division elements, lost rest of equipment in tank battle...the men escaped in small controlled groups."

There were a number of massacres or prisoner-shootings inflicted upon American artillerymen in the Bulge. The largest number of victims were from the 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion at Baugnez, but another eleven men of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion were executed at Wereth, Belgium. Mike O'Connor of the 965th recalled how two missing men of his unit were later found to have been executed during the December breakthrough.

There was much back-straining work for members of a gun crew. The 155mm shells weighed 95 pounds and each shell had to be hand carried to the gun pits. The 105mm shells weighed 33 pounds each, and came in 120 pound boxes. Bud Lauer wrote that once at Bastogne, his battery was "down to 83 rounds and had only one "K" ration each day for 3 days. That didn't go far handling 120 lb ammo boxes. I lost 25 lbs in those 42 days."



Pictured above: Bud Lauer

In such extreme weather conditions, the human body burns more calories than is being replaced, and the body literally feeds on itself. The result is weight loss, fatigue, and more vulnerability to frost bite and disease.

One of the chief worries felt by artillerymen was incoming artillery or counter battery fire. During the Bulge, the Germans located American battery positions with patrols, sound and flash methods, and particularly in German-speaking eastern Belgium, with information from civilian spies.

There were other serious concerns on the minds of artillerymen. Leonard Kyle recalled the thought of "being maimed. Death is final. To have lived without legs, hands, eyesight, or brain damage, would have been difficult."

Bud Lauer recalled, "Not seeing the end of this great war. I am one of the so-called lucky ones.... Our wire man was from Wisconsin...a close friend. He got killed Christmas Eve, splicing a phone wire. He was married and had two small girls."

Leonard Schaffenberg wrote of the respect he had for the "German 88mm gun with its very high muzzle velocity, when you heard it fire it was already on top of you, a very distinctive sound, never forgotten by me."

John Grant spoke of "incoming artillery and screaming meemies. Also because we had a lot of cross country survey work, we were always fearing mines, while carrying survey control."

As a section chief, Jerry Eades was concerned about how his men thought of him as a combat leader:

"My greatest fear was being caught being afraid by the men in the gun crew. I was afraid of losing my cool while under fire, and I had a fear of being hit in the stomach."

Pictured at right: Jerry W. Eades

A number of artillerymen who responded remained in the army after World War II. Al Alvarez did tours of duty in Korea, Vietnam, and elsewhere before retiring with the rank of Lt. Colonel. Jerry Eades had served in the pre-war army horse artillery as early as 1936. Jerry was seriously wounded in both legs in March, 1945, and this ended his 10-1/2 years of army service. John Grant served another 16 years in counter intelligence before retiring. Ralph Ballestriero was called back to a tour of duty in the Korean War.

Among the various branches of service in the European theatre, artillery casualties were third highest with 5.4% of the Bulge casualties, behind air forces' with 9.36% and infantry with 75%. On the other hand, the greatest majority of decorations, some 82.32% were awarded to army air corps personnel in the ETO while only 3.5% were awarded to men in field artillery. Another 9.3% went to infantrymen.



CHRISTMAS EVE TRIP

(Continued from Page 16)

Suddenly the left landing gear began to sink and before we could react, the number one engine propeller was digging into the ground. We were unable to move. Shutting down number one engine, we radioed the tower with our problem and asked if they could pull us back to the engine check area and swing us around; this could be done by using a rope or a chain attached to the tail wheel. Then it occurred to us that we might have to evacuate the aircraft if German fighters returned; and if one did our plane was certain to be destroyed. I had no desire to spend Christmas with the army—in the cold, in a fox hole, under fire. But ground personnel were already solving our dilemma and it was only a few minutes before we felt a tug and the movement of the aircraft. Quickly the plane was returned to the engine check area and swung around. The NCO ran into view of the cockpit, frantically pointing at his watch and signaling that we were cleared to go. I knew he was just as anxious as we were to leave the area. I signaled a thumbs up and started to taxi while the co-pilot and engineer started number one.

We were airborne in seconds; hugging the ground, barely clearing the treetops until we were well west of the area. Then with a sigh of relief we noted that our thirty minutes had lapsed. We entered the channel crossing area and arrived at home base. The cargo was removed even before we left the aircraft. We were never told what the boxes contained.

By the time we debriefed, returned to our quarters and dressed, the party was well underway. The guests had arrived and were absorbed into the throng of lonesome Yanks. We were late but were able to cut in for a few dances.

The Magic Continues

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"Fire
two
more
for
effect,
Joe,
I'm
makin'
a
stovepipe."

Footnotes

(1) Moving a 240mm howitzer outfit was no small task, as the complete unit (gun and carriage) weighed 19 tons and required the use of a crane. The 240mm shell weighed 365 pounds.

(2) Counter battery fire was a common hazard in WWI, and a future U.S. President, Harry Truman, experienced this in August, 1918, in Alsace, France. Truman was a battery commander of a 75mm horse drawn howitzer unit of the Missouri National Guard. The outfit had recently arrived overseas, and was about to have its first combat experience. It was a pitch dark, rainy night when incoming enemy shells began landing in the battery position, terrifying many of the men and causing them to panic and run. Truman was on horseback when a near miss knocked his horse into a shell hole with Truman pinned underneath. He was able to squirm out from under his mount, and with blasts of profanity was able to get things under control. In later years, this incident came to be known as the "Battle of Who Run."

The writer can be contacted at 2840 Starr Ave, Eau Claire, WI 54703. ■



"Don't look now,
but there's old
'coushay awvec'
back in town."

NOSTALGIC JOURNEYS

By Louis Cunningham, 106th Inf. Div.

Representatives of various military units who participated in action in Germany during World War II, and in post-war occupation duties, travel editors, and travel agencies, took part in a memorable "Nostalgic Journey" to Germany from November 16 to 24, 1996. Sponsored by the German Government, the National Tourist Office, the Federal Railways, and Lufthansa, the trip was organized and very well conducted by Galaxy Tours and its president, Col. Hal Ryder, of Wayne, PA. It was an opportunity for the German government and people to say "Thank You and Welcome Back" to American troops who kept freedom alive in their country during the years of the "Cold War."

For the VBOB members on the tour it was an awesome experience, contrasting those days of 52 years ago to the new Germany of the 1990s. From the time we left JFK until our return nine days later, we were given the red-carpet treatment, and a heartfelt welcome everywhere we went.

Our first stop was a two day visit in the new Berlin where we received an enthusiastic welcome, and a sightseeing tour that included "Check Point Charlie" and the sites of the former Berlin Wall. We had a gala reception at Tempelhof Airport, the home of the famed Berlin Airlift in 1948, when American transport planes broke the Russian blockade, and kept Berliners alive with food and fuel. Berlin's Lord Mayor told us that his people will never forget our aid in those difficult days. This was a theme we heard everywhere as our journey continued via high-speed rail lines to major cities on our itinerary.

After leaving Berlin, we headed for Frankfurt and a tour of that historic city, and a visit to the RheinMain airport, no longer a US base, but the takeoff point for the Berlin Airlift. There, we toured an impressive Allied Museum, operated by German civilians, as a tribute to the men and women who flew in the airlift. We were feted by the Mayor of Frankfurt before we departed for the beautiful city of Würzburg, and the Rhine wine center of Heimbach.

It was a short trip to Baumholder and the home of the First Armored Division's 2nd Brigade. With 12,000 American families there, it was like an American town in Germany having schools, churches, supermarkets for the GIs who make up the largest concentration of Army combat troops outside the US. The museum there has an impressive collection of WW II armored equipment, and a history of the First Armored.

Kaiserslautern, with 12 major US installations, including Ramstein AFB, was our next tour stop, followed by a stay in the fabled university city of Heidelberg. A highlight there was a visit to US Army Headquarters Europe, and a briefing on the US mission in Europe. Then back on the super-train to Munich and the beautiful Bavarian Alps, including Garmisch Partenkirchen, site of the '36 Winter Olympics, and Oberammergau, where the world-famed Passion Play is put on by the townspeople every ten years. Munich was our last stop before heading home, after an exhilarating "Nostalgic Journey." We all left with a feeling of warmth for the German people, and their sincere gratitude for what our GIs and the American people have done to preserve their freedom.

We appreciated the hospitality of the officials in the cities we visited, and the courtesy and help of the German Tourist Bureau.

This was the first "Nostalgic Journey," but there are others planned for the coming years. This trip was very worthwhile. If you are planning on a return visit, Colonel Hal Ryder at Galaxy Tours can fill you in. Don't hesitate to contact him at Galaxy Tours, by telephone, 800-523-7287 or fax, 610-964-8220.

HISTORIAN AMBROSE PRAISES VETERANS

By Dee Paris

Historian Stephen E. Ambrose has shown his interest in soldiers in his books which include *D-Day*, *Crazy Horse and Custer*, *Upton and the Army*, *Duty, Honor, Country: A History of West Point*, and six books about General Dwight D. Eisenhower. His 19th published book, *Citizen Soldiers*, is the GI's view of World War II in Europe from D-Day to the surrender of Germany.

In an interview by *Washington Post* staff writer, Ren Ringle (December 20, 1997 pF1), Ambrose is quoted, "The men I admire most are soldiers, sailors, professional military. Way more than politicians." Continuing, "I come away from those career military guys feeling great about our country and the world. I come away from interviewing politicians and it's all down. It's all lies, fabrications, spin, and self-serving. The military is very different and very special—the best of America."

The title page of *Citizen Soldiers* explains the coverage is "The US Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany, June 7, 1944-May 7, 1945." Ambrose devotes one chapter to Metz and the Hurtgen Forest—November 1-December 15, 1944," and follows with three chapters on the Battle of the Bulge: The Ardennes-December 16-19, 1944, [pg. 180]; The Ardennes-December 20-23, 1944, [pg. 210]; and The Holiday Season-December 24-31, 1944, [pg. 228].

The book has three maps covering the Ardennes Campaign and about 10 excellent, black and white photographs of individual soldiers. *Citizen Soldiers* was one of two Ambrose books on the best seller list in November 1997, which, considering both are histories, is most unusual. His story of the Lewis and Clark expedition, *Undaunted Courage*, had been on the best seller list for more than a year.

In his Introduction, Ambrose cites *The Men of Company K* by VBOB members Harold Linebaugh and John Campbell, as one of the seven best reference sources. It is believed that both authors are deceased. A detailed index provides a ready reference for those readers interested in specific combat actions, military units and individuals.

The bibliography has 80 publications as historical references and identifies 132 US and German veterans as sources for Oral Histories, Memoirs and Letters. Ambrose is founder of the Eisenhower Center, cited as a source for information, and is president of the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans. An Epilogue contains his view of "GIs and Modern America."

Citizen Soldiers by Stephen E. Ambrose,
Simon and Schuster, 1997, Hardbound, 512 pages \$27.50

These doomsday warriors look no more like soldiers than the soldiers of the Second World War looked like conquistadors. The more expert they become, the more they look like lab assistants at a small college.

Alistair Cooke

TANK...FOUND!

[We received the following from IVAN L. GOLDSTEIN, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, in response to the article "11th Armored Division versus Fuhrer Begleit Brigadem," article which appeared in the August, 1997, issue of The Bulge Bugle.]

Letter to VBOB:

[Edited] Regarding your article...I was contacted and given a copy of the article by my cousin and the details, place, time and description matched perfectly with our capture.

I called Roger Marquet (who co-authored the August article) in Belgium. We talked for close to 40 minutes and he became convinced that we were the lost crew and that our tank was the one on display in McAuliffe Square in Bastogne.

To me the most amazing coincidence and probability is this occurrence of events is that after 53 years, our tank is found (the only one not destroyed because of environmental opposition) and that I not being a member of any veterans organization was somehow found.

Letter from Roger Marquet to Goldstein

[Edited] I was completely overwhelmed when you called. It was a great honor and privilege for me to hear from you.

I want to thank you so much, not only for your September 1997 call, but also and above all for coming in 1944-45 to my country to liberate us from the Nazis. Thanks to you and your thousands of comrades who gave their all, I was born free. I will never forget it. Thank you, folks!!

About the subject which concerns us--that is your tank. I am enclosing some pictures and a map to help your recollection.

Letter to Roger Marquet

[Edited] I just received your very welcome letter with pictures and map. Thank you for your thoughtfulness and kindness. In answer to your questions: our tank became separated from the others and Urda stated that we seemed to be lost just before we were hit. I do not recall whether our tank was hit once or twice. Since I have never heard from either Alexander or Hebert I have always assumed that they did not survive. I also assumed that Peterman was killed, but several years after the war I received a call from Peterman. I will have to check this out because I don't remember it too well. He may still be alive. I will now make every effort to contact him.

My name is Ivan Goldstein and I am 72 years old. I live in Jerusalem, Israel, and spend the summer months in Denver, Colorado, in the USA.

This summer, the end of August while in Denver, I received a call from my first cousin, Howard Greinetz, who was a member of the 11th Armored and a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge, as am I. Howard, an active member in the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge organization, had just received the August *Bulge Bugle*, after reading the article entitled "11th Armored Division versus Fuhrer Begleit Brigade," called me to say, "They have found your tank. It's in McAuliffe Square, Bastogne, Belgium." Howard knew the details of our tank being knocked out and our capture. The witnesses in the article are an almost exact description of the time, place and details of our tank's destruction and my being taken a prisoner of war.

Our tank crew belonged to the 11th Armored Division, 41st Tank Battalion, Company B. The crew was: Tank commander--S/Sgt Wallace Alexander; Driver--T/4 Andrew Urda; Gunner--Cpl. Cecil Peterman; Loader--PFC Dage Hebert; and Bow

gunner--Pvt. Ivan Goldstein.

We jumped off December 30, 1944. We started the offense just before dawn and had a number of victories in a non-stop day. By late afternoon we had progressed to Rechrial. Our tank came over a hill and into a valley. We ran into a small lake or pond and became bogged down. We were hit by the German guns and the tank was on fire. We were sitting ducks. The escape hatch under the tank was blocked with boxes and any way was under water.

I climbed out of the bow gunner's hatch from above, ran to the rear of the tank and jumped into the icy water. When I came up there were German soldiers around the tank. I surrendered. I had a leg wound. Urda was also there but unwounded. As we were led from the burning tank I saw Peterman lying on his face in the snow with a large, gaping wound in his back. Peterman had a large, beautiful hunting knife he had made. I remember a German soldier rolling him over on the wound and removing the knife. I did not see Alexander or Hebert.

I noticed that the Germans had carried Alexander a distance from the tank. He was lying in the snow with bad wounds on both legs. I never saw Hebert.

Urda and I helped carry Alexander up the hill. The three of us were left sitting in the snow. I treated my leg wound with my personal first aid pack. Alexander was in great pain and was losing the circulation in his legs. Urda and I tried to rub his legs and keep him warm. But he cried about the pain and cold. After what seemed like hours, we carried Alexander to a first aid station. The German doctor said gangrene had set in and the legs would have to be amputated.

Urda and I were taken to a small barn where four or five other prisoners were sitting. I never saw Alexander again. It was now night time and we were taken one at a time to another building and interrogated. When it was my turn I faced a German major who spoke perfect English and he told me he had lived in Forest Hills, New York, prior to the war. When he discovered that I was Jewish, he became mean and belligerent and told the guard to take me out in the morning and shoot me, along with my Jewish companion. He was referring to Urda, whom he also believed to be Jewish. I tried to tell the guard, who also spoke some English, that Urda was a Catholic of Polish-American background and that if he would just look at his ID tags it was stamped on them.

Before dawn the American forces attacked and the German command evacuated in great haste. The prisoners were left with a German guard and force marched in retreat. Urda and I remained together the entire time we were POW's and helped keep each other alive. We stayed very close until Urda's death about 13 years ago.

One of the questions asked at the end of the article was in regard to the markings on the tank. I had painted the name of the tank on the side, "Barracuda," however I doubt that the paint would have survived this many years. The article also mentioned the word "Thunderbolts." This was the nickname for the 11th Armored. As for the serial number, that should be able to be verified by the 11th Armored records. There are some records of the battles and locations of the date of December 30, 1944, which appear in the company and also battalion histories....

The article also mentioned the names Hansen and Spero and listed them as members of Company D. They were Lewis Hansen and John Spero, both of Company B. Their tank was destroyed and I believe everyone in their tank was killed....■

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10/14/97

CHRISTMAS REVERIE IN A GERMAN PRISON CAMP

By Robert A. Grimes, *Stalag Luft IV, 1944*

Silvery moonbeams infiltrate
The boarded windows of my prison room,
Falling gently across the faces
Of my slumbering comrades,
Like ghostly fingers of an Omnipresent God
Splashing His love and benediction
Across the barren walls
And into each sad and hurting heart.

The freshly fallen snow
Lies softly on the ground,
Reflecting the watch-tower lights,
And muffling the distant sound
Of Russian guns.

The night is dark; the cold intense,
And interspersed between the cannon fire,
The soundless silence is profound.

On such a night as this, O God,
Thy Almighty Word leapt down
From heavens height
And made Himself, for us a Royal Pawn.
Tonight we celebrate His wondrous birth,
(Though little celebrating there will be.)

I sit and shiver in my dismal room
And think about my family—worlds away,
And how I miss not being there tonight.

I think about a stable cold and damp
Where long ago a Mother birthed her Son,
Then suddenly I feel a flood of warmth,
A flow that emanates from deep within,
And I am filled with love and heavenly peace,
The love and peace that only He can give.

I make my way back to my lonely bed
And realize that Christmas is not "things",
Not tinsel, toys or trinkets we can buy,
It is a spirit and an attitude of love.

His Love became the primal stone
Cast into the sea of human love,
And we are ripples
Going outward endlessly.

Nor all the tyrant's hate
And deeds of war
Can stop this gentle force,
Nor take away or change
What I believe.
Though I have naught—yet I have all,
His Love this Christmas Eve.

GOLDEN GATE IN '98

Make plans now to attend
the convention in
San Francisco

425TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON

By Sam Pinder

[The following was sent to us by GEORGE R. LUDLOW.]

On the night of 22-23 December, the ground elements of the squadron lived through the first "shot" fired at them in anger. The "shot" was a 500 pound bomb dropped on the field by a lone Jerry fighter bomber. Some of us were in the mess hall having a 233'd hour snack, and feeling very secure in the knowledge that several P-61's were overhead. We heard it coming in, but "think nothing of it," we said to ourselves. "It is only a P-61 buzz job." Then, bang! We stared at one another for a second of utter disbelief, and hit the floor...hard! Shouts of "Douse the lights," and "Shut the Goddamned door," and then the Skipper, crawling from beneath an oak table, calmly addressed the men. "What's the matter with you guys?" That settled it. Who were we to argue with the Skipper. We got up off the floor but we were still scared.

Over at operations, pilots and RO's flattened themselves against the frozen ground and waited, knowing from experience that the move following a bombing run is a tight banking turn followed by a strafing run. It didn't come off, though, and we all stood outside in the cold, gazed into the clear night sky and wondered if this were only the beginning.

It was during this same period that we got used to the sound of the GAF overhead; when we were alerted for paratroopers; when it was worth your life to ignore a sentry's challenge; then passwords at last became serious business; and when guards would shoot at the drop of a snowball. It was also during this same period that the 425th lost its "virginity."

The famous "Bulge" was still expanding and on the night of 23-24 December, our planes were covering that general area in an attempt to check the Luftwaffe which was up in strength. Lts. William A. (Andy) Andrews and James E. (The Kid) Kleinheinz were on the prowl near Oberstein. The target was picked up by OCI on heading of 250 degrees, altitude 11,000 feet, speed 190 MPH. "We made positive visual identification at 1000 feet," related Andrews. "It was a JU 188 flying straight and level and apparently unaware that we were there. We closed in and could see the Nazi markings very clearly in the moonlight. We approached from below and slightly to port." "I fired a burst into the fuselage from a range of 300 feet. The '188 went into a steep turn to port which gave us a good opening for a deflection shot. We could see the shells exploding between the port engine and the fuselage. The kraut went into a steep dive with engine and nacelle burning. We followed it to 5000 feet, at which point the '188 was still in a dive with fire increasing all along the left wing. We saw a fire on the ground." It was a "story book" interception according to the victor. "Lieutenant Kleinheinz did a bang-up job of keeping on the target."

The war tempo increased for the Night Fighters. The weather was ideal, clear as a bell from dusk to dawn with a silver dollar moon. The hitch was it also provided ideal conditions for Jerry operations. Not only had the "Ghost of '41" risen to haunt us and smash our lines in Belgium and Luxembourg, but at night he rattled his skeleton at us and we didn't get much sack time.

On the night following Andrew's success, the two little Lts.

Ormsby and Howerton walked into the S-2 tent to be briefed before a mission. Lt. Eels was on duty. The kids had a great sense of humor, so when Lt. Eels asked if they wanted his 35 cent briefing or the \$5.00 briefing, they said, they had just gotten back from Paris and were broke and besides they were late for take-off so they guessed they'd take the 35 cent briefing. Here is the result of their night's operations. "The Mighty Mites," brought down a DO217 ten miles west of Kaiserslautern. The pattern for the rest of the squadron's kills remained pretty much the same as the first kill of Andy's.

Squadron S-2 office was becoming the social center of the outfit, not only from an operational standpoint, but from one of grim entertainment. Capt. Bradley's big map of the west and east fronts, previously a scramble of red, blue and yellow lines, became one of the most fascinating things in our lives. We watched the "Bulge" increase, reach for Liegen, blunt itself and then flow around Bastogne: the questions on everybody's lips were "Are we stopping them?" "How far have they advanced today?" and "Will they start another drive in our direction?" Third Army moved up from the south and started to pound the Bulge southern hinge. We breathed easier--"our" army was in there punching. Soon Jerry stopped having it his own way.

And we continued to knock down his aircraft.

On the night of 25-26 December, Lts. Jack Slayton and Arthur Ferris, brought down an ME 110 20 miles east of Metz. Lts. Stacey and Mason got a JU 188 southwest of Trier the following night. The same night Andrews and "The Kid" got a JU 188 to bring their victories to two. On the 30th, the "Mighty Mites" scored again getting a JU 188 and damaging another. In what proved to be a big night, Lts. Dick Gray and Robbie Robinson got a '188 south of Bingen; Captain Glasser and Lt. Tripp probably destroyed one, and Lts. "Whiskey" Sartanowicz and Van Sickle damaged another.

On midnight on the 31st, just as the New Year was coming in, the Mighty Mites shot down their third Jerry, an ME 110. They now lead the squadron in destruction with three. During the period from 16 December thru 27 December, members of the 425th Night Fighter Squadron shot down five twin engine aircraft, destroyed 58 trucks, three locomotives, and 16 rail cars.

Shortly after Christmas, Pilot Lt. High Byars and RO Lt. Emil Brolick, two of the best loved men in the squadron, met their end by friendly flak while coming in for a landing at the wrong field, A-94. Byars was last heard on the R/T saying, "Call this flack off." The P-61 crashed and burned.■

MEDAL AVAILABLE

[Provided by JOSEPH P. BARRETT, 474TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY BATTALION, in Delaware Valley newsletter.]

Many men have asked me about a beautiful medal which I wear on a ribbon around my neck. This medal is very easy to receive if the veteran served in the invasion of Normandy. The GI must have set foot on Norman soil between June 6, 1944, and July 26th which is the day following the big bombing along the St. Lo Road and the beginning of Operation Cobra, the outbreak from Normandy. To obtain medal write: American Order of the French Croix De Guerre, Inc., 141 East 44th Street, Suite 604, New York, New York 10017. An application will be sent to you along with an explanation of the medal. When you answer, be sure to enclose a photocopy of your discharge which will state under battles and campaigns the word "Normandy."■

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February 1998

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