

The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XIX NUMBER 1

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

FEBRUARY 2000

OVER 1,200 ATTEND FLORIDA MEMORIAL DEDICATION



Harry J. Meisel, Chairman of the VBOB Memorial Committee sends us the following information regarding the memorial dedicated on December 16, 1999, in Orlando, Florida:

On this date in Lake Eola Park, in downtown Orlando, a beautiful monument was dedicated to those men and women who fought in the historic Battle of the Bulge and all veterans of World War II.

The monument is designed after the original one in Clervaux, Luxembourg, which honors the GIs who brought 55 years of peace and freedom to the people of the Grand Duchy.

The Orlando monument is only the second such memorial in the world. It features a six foot GI atop a granite pedestal, with the VBOB logo mounted on a bronze plaque which bears the same wording as the VBOB memorial in Arlington Cemetery.

Thirty-three enlarged granite patches, representing the infantry and armored divisions which fought in the battle ring the pedestal. The statue and pedestal are in the center of a large white star with dark gray completing the 36 foot base.

Five lights are set in the stars' points to illuminate the statue at night. The flags of the United States of America, Belgium, and Luxembourg have two lights at the base of each pole which beam upward.

Participants at the dedication included the VBOB Committee, Mayor Glenda Hood, County Chairman Mel Martinez, Medal of Honor recipient Jim Hendrix, Captain Roland Serres representing Belgium, and Colonel John Parker (AAF Retired) representing Luxembourg.

Keynote speaker was Brigadier General William E. Carlson (retired). The monument was unveiled by the committee and four wreaths were laid by the Lyman High School Army ROTC Color Guard. Over 1,200 persons were present including many Battle of the Bulge veterans. (General Carlson's speech elsewhere in this issue.)

Note: Placement of bricks in the "Circle of Honor" will be an ongoing project of the VBOB Committee. It will be the committee's goal to honor as many veterans as possible over the next five years. For information or to purchase a brick please contact: Harry Meisel, VBOB Memorial Committee, Inc., P.O. Box 609119, Orlando, Florida 32860. Telephone or FAX 407-647-4672.

MAKE PLANS NOW TO ATTEND THE COLORADO REUNION

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



**Did you check
to see if your
dues were due?**

President's Message

First of all I want to thank you for the confidence you have demonstrated in me by electing me to serve as president of this fine organization. I want to assure you I will do my best to further the aims and objectives of VBOB.

Those of you who missed our 19th Annual Reunion in Newport News, Virginia, and our "Remembrance and Commemoration" at Fort Meade and the Tomb of the Unknowns at Arlington Cemetery, missed great opportunities for a good time.

A special thank you is in order to George C. Linthicum for his role in the above two events and for his outstanding leadership these past two years. His was not an easy task, however, he performed his duties as our president in a tactful, judicious and gentlemanly way. In addition, our former President Stanley Wojtusik rendered outstanding service in arranging the reunion at Newport News and in dedicating the monument at Fort Monroe. Dorothy S. Davis, a former U.S. Army Nurse during the Bulge, who is always willing to accept any assignment which benefits our organization is highly commended for her valuable work in arranging the events for the December 15-16 commemoration.

Those who attended these outstanding events will long remember the words of our guest speaker John N. Abrams, Commanding General, U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command, who is the son of Creighton Abrams, who in WWII was a colonel who led CCA of the 4th Armored Division from Normandy to the Saar and then to the assault on Bastogne. The present day U.S. Army tank is named for him. Our other guest speaker, General William A. Knowlton, a 1942 graduate of West Point, served in the 7th Armored Division. He later became, amongst other things, superintendent at West Point. Both General Abrams and General Knowlton gave outstanding speeches and expressed the thought that it was an honor to be with us. I can assure you that the admiration was mutual and we were deeply honored to have these two fine gentlemen.

Ours is a proud organization: Bulge veterans should be proud to be associated with it. During the past several months, I have met many of our members and at this time, I would like to cite a few for special mention:

ROGER HARDY--leader of the Belgium Fusiliers, who brought 30 of his fellow Fusiliers to the Newport News Reunion.

WILLIAM PICKETTE--of Scotland Neck, North Carolina, who described himself as a retired 30th Infantry Division infantryman, former inventor and educator, who started the war in Normandy and received four Purple Hearts.

FRANK WALSH--Columbus, Ohio, 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, who amongst other combat service in Europe, served in Bastogne with the 101st Airborne and who attends most reunions.

MILAN ROLIK--Chapter President, Akron Ohio. Akron, Ohio, chemist--K Company, 87th Infantry Division.



John Dunleavy

KEN PRICKETT--5th Armored Engineers, who drove all the way from Oregon to attend the Newport News Reunion.

DANIEL IANNELLI--Ordnance Company. A true gentleman from Pennsylvania.

DARROW JACKSON--Army engineer. Boxer and retired member of the Milwaukee Police Department.

GEORGE WATSON--Rego Park, New York, loyal and dedicated VBOB member.

JAMES THOMPSON--Dayton, Ohio. 10th Armored Division.

BILL MOONEY--from Ohio. 11th Armored infantryman (wounded).

Our organization is growing. In December, 1999, Peter Leslie and David Saltman opened a chapter in Garden City, Long Island, New York, with 35 new members. What a job these two men are doing for our organization! In addition to that, John McAuliffe, President of the very active Central Massachusetts Chapter and former President of the 87th Infantry Division Association, continues to come up with great ideas for our organization to enhance our reputation with other veterans groups and the general public. George Fisher, President of the newly formed Southeast Florida Chapter, recently conducted his chapter's first meeting with a total of 130 present--98 of whom were veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

At the end of the war in Europe, General George S. Patton, Third U.S. Army Commander, in recalling his battle campaigns and the men who served under him, stated to an aide: "God, where did we get such men?"

Today, these men are members of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

Finally, make your reservations now for the national Reunion:

Colorado Springs, Colorado

August 31-September 3, 2000

Holiday Inn-Garden of the Gods

\$70.00 - while they last

\$90.00 - overflow rooms

For reservations call: 1-800-962-5470

Attractions:

United States Air Force Academy

Foothills of the Rocky Mountains

See you in Colorado Springs

Happy New Year!

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DONATIONS

We have been asked by several of our members and families if the Battle of the Bulge will accept donations and/or bequeaths. The organization will be honored to be remembered in this way. Also, be advised that we are tax-deductible.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WHEN DID IT ALL END?

In different issues of your magnificent magazine, I have read articles which question the date the Ardennes offensive came to an end.

In recent months I have repeatedly noticed the date of January 25, 1945, as the closing date of the BoB mentioned in many brochures and leaflets of American origin. Allow me to point out this error.

The 25th of January, 1945, can never be validated as the final day of the BoB, however much I regret it. Because from 25 January to 1 February, 1945, (incl) about 38 towns had yet to be reconquered in the northern part of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg by seven different great U.S. units: 5th, 26th, 80th, 87th and 90th Infantry Divisions; 6th Armored Division, in cooperation with the 134th Infantry, 35th Infantry Division; and finally the 17th Airborne Division. The last village in the Luxembourg Ardennes to be cleared by the 90th Infantry Division on Thursday, 1 February, 1945, was the Village of Leithum, located at the extreme northern point of Luxembourg.

In the Belgian BoB area at least 45 towns, villages or hamlets had to be liberated at the same time (25 January - 1 February, 1945) by 10 different great U.S. units: 1st, 2nd, 4th, 9th, 87th, 90th, 99th, 106th Infantry Divisions; 7th Armored Division; and 82nd Airborne Division. On the 1st of February the 9th Infantry Division cleared the Wahlerscheid crossroad.

All in all, about 83 towns, villages and hamlets, located in the Luxembourg-Belgian Battle of the Bulge areas, had to be reconquered between the 25th of January, 1945, and the 1st of February, 1945, by 17 units (regiments, battalions or companies) included all the many attached units as Tank Battalion, Tank Destroyer Battalion, Artillery Battalion, Engineer Combat Battalion, etc., etc. In order to understand the text better, may I point out that the 87th and 90th Infantry Divisions fought as well in Luxembourg as in Belgium between the 25th of January and the 1st of February, 1945.

This is undisputed and irrefutable history which never can be changed no matter how!

I eagerly would like to join in with James Graff's remark in the February, 1999, issue: "Let us not forget these men, who fell after January 25, 1945...."

Yes, my dear friend, James, you are right, because if we forget (also those who have gone before), we let them die again!!

Best regards to all our beloved VBOB friends.

Camille P. Cohn
President of CEBA

GO WEST YOUNG MAN...

I wish you had more national meetings some where here in the mid-west now and then so that we midwesterners could get to meet some of you old folks from the east. When I think of the VBOB organization now, I think of Washington, D.C. and that "ain't good."

[All you midwesterners will be glad to know that we're headed for Colorado Springs, Colorado, in August for our reunion. We hope you're all making plans to attend.]

[I'm] former CO of F Company, 119th Regiment, 30th Division (the forgotten division of the VBOB but the one that REALLY contained the Krauts along the North Shoulder of the Bulge). Maybe some day historians will give us the credit we deserve.

Edward C. Arn
30 INF 119 INF F

SHAVE TAIL

When a second lieutenant came up through the ranks, he cut the tail off his shirts to make the flaps on his shoulders. (This was a shave tail.)

As for shaving a mule's tail, this was to let you know that the ass in front of you was a mule not a horse. You could smack a horse to move him over, but you sure as --- didn't smack a mule.

I rode the last army mule in camp (HollaBird, Maryland).

Kenneth P. Kralick
99 INF 393 INF CANNON

NEW REGULATIONS FOR FUNERAL HONORS

[JAMES LYNN, 9TH UNITED STATES AIR FORCE, 573RD SAW BATTALION, sends the following article which appeared in THE NINTH FLYER, the 9th's newsletter.]

With an increasing number of veteran deaths, the Department of Defense has made some changes in policy for military funeral honors.

Under the new plan approved by Congress, the military services would be required, upon request of the next of kin, to provide funeral honors at the burial of a veteran.

The honors will consist of a team of at least two persons to conduct a flag folding ceremony and presentation of the flag to the family. At least one member of the uniformed team will represent the veteran's parent service. The plan also required a live or recorded rendering of "Taps."

Current DOD policy only requires the military services to provide appropriate tributes within the constraints of available resources, says Gail McGuinn, acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Personnel Support, Families and Education.

The uniformed presence of military members for the flag presentation is the key difference, McGinn said. The current legislation doesn't require anyone uniformed in the honor guard.

"I think it's a good alternative," she said of the DOD plan. "I think it provides the proper tribute and is supportable within the mission of the DOD."

Though military personnel strength is decreasing, the demand for funeral honors support is increasing. For example, between 1989 and 1997, veteran deaths increased 18 percent. By 2002, veteran deaths are projected to increase another 25 percent, according to the Air Force Services office.

Both a phone line and a web site for easier coordination of funeral honors are expected to be in place by January 1 [2000]. Funeral directors throughout the country will have access and thus be able to facilitate providing military honors.

The new policy will allow the services to work with local organizations, such as veterans' groups and college ROTC units, to identify people willing to help provide funeral honors. The services will also provide training in funeral honors.

--From USAF "Afterburner" and Air Force Print News.■

WHAT'S HAPPENED?

Did you put your pencils away with the holiday name tags? If so, please get back in the attic and dig them out. This "Letters to the Editor" is your column and we need your points of view. So, let us hear from you.

POTEAU MUSEUM

A museum in the Vielsalm-Poteau-St. Vith area is looking for original pictures, stories and materials for display. If you can help contact: Rob deRuyter, Poteauerstrasse 22; 4780 Poteau-St. Vith, Belgium.

"Ardennes Room" Dedicated



"Ardennes Room," dedicated at War College honoring Gen. Collins leadership in Bulge Victory. VBOB national officers invited to the ceremony to talk with Major General Robert H. Scales, Jr., Commandant of the US Army War College in Carlisle, PA, at the ceremony dedicating the dining room in Collins Hall.

L to R: Lou Cunningham (106st ID), Stan Wojtusik (106st ID), Jack Hyland (84th ID), George Linthicum (26th ID), Tom Jones (818th Combat MP Company), Earl Hart (87th ID), and General Scales.

"Lightning Joe's" Bulge Leadership Honored at War College

By Jack Hyland (84 ID)

The leadership of Major General J. Lawton "Lightning Joe" Collins as head of the VIIth Corps in the Battle of the Bulge has been recognized, and honored, with the dedication November 30th, of The Ardennes Room, at the US Army War College in Carlisle, PA.

Major General Robert H. Scales, Jr., Commandant of the War College, cut the ribbon opening the new dining area in Collins Hall, the state-of-the-art facility at the War College. Collins Hall is the headquarters for the Center For Strategic Leadership, a high level conference and war-gaming center.

High military and civilian leaders attended the opening, along with invited representatives of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge who had worked with officials of the War College in the planning of The Ardennes Room.

In his remarks at the dedication, General Scales paid tribute to all those who fought in the battle in the Ardennes, and said that the memory of the battle and the victory, is still fresh in the minds of the soldiers who now serve in the US Army.

The VIIth Corps theme has been carried out by using selected combat photographs of the divisions in the corps. The action photographs from World War II archives were of the 75th, 83rd, and 84th Infantry Divisions, as well as the 2nd and 3rd Armored Divisions.

The VIIth Corps, under Collins leadership, was called on to defend the Meuse River crossings behind the Marche-Hottent-Celles line before going over to the attack, January 3, 1945. Attacking toward Houffalize, the 84th ID and 2nd AD established contact with the 3rd Army's 11th AD on January 16.

This meeting, near the Ourthe River, reunited the 1st and 3rd Armies in the 12th Army Group under General Omar Bradley.

Representing the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge at the dedication were: President George C. Linthicum (26th ID), Vice President, Military Affairs Stan Wojtusik (106th ID), Vice President, Membership Tom Jones (818th Combat MP Co.), Lou Cunningham, Secretary (106th ID), Earle Hart (87th ID), and Vice President, Public Affairs, Jack Hyland (84th ID).

DVC Campaign Helps Add Two Million Dollars to WWII Memorial

Veteran's Day in Pennsylvania was Victory Day for members of VBOB's Delaware Valley Chapter as the Keystone State's Governor Tom Ridge presented former Senator Bob Dole with a check for two million dollars for the World War Two Memorial to be built on the National Mall in Washington.

Vice President for Military Affairs Stan Wojtusik, the chapter president, joined the governor and campaign co-chairman Dole on the reviewing stand at the annual Veteran's Day parade in Media, Delaware County, in the Philadelphia suburbs, for the check presentation.

In presenting the check for two million dollars, Governor Ridge said the total was arrived at by donating one dollar for each Pennsylvanian who served in WWII, plus an extra donation to round off the figure.

Members of the Delaware Valley Chapter had a special committee headed by Dan Iannelli to campaign with local legislators to win approval for Pennsylvania's generous contribution. The WWII Monument Committee has been asking each state to donate one dollar for each man or woman who served in World War II, to help raise funds for the monument.

As part of the celebration, then-national President George C. Linthicum led more than 80 chapter members in the parade, and reported that spectators along the line of march gave the Bulge veterans an enthusiastic reception.



Media, PA, November 11, 1999. Former Senator Bob Dole (left), Stanley A. Wojtusik, Veterans of the Battle of The Bulge National Vice President, Military Affairs, and Pennsylvania Governor Tom Ridge

REMEMBERING HARDSHIPS AND SUFFERING

By Harold G. Barkley
2nd Infantry Division
38th Infantry Regiment
Company G

After 55 years, I still vividly recall the hardship and suffering our outfit endured during what became known as the Battle of the Bulge. I was barely nineteen years old when I joined Company G, 38th Infantry in June, 1944, and was made first scout of our squad. We fought in the bloody hedgerows of Normandy and at Hill 192. I was wounded in the right shoulder by a tank's tracer bullet on July 27 when we were breaking out near St. Lo.

After recuperating in a hospital in England I returned to my company which had, along with the rest of our battalion, been selected for train guard duty in Paris. After that we rejoined the remainder of the 2nd Division which was on the Siegfried Line near St. Vith, Belgium.

We were pulled out of the line in December so that our Division could spearhead an attack to capture the Roer River Dams somewhere to our north in Germany. The attack jumped off on December 13 with out 38th Infantry following the 9th Infantry which advanced through a fir forest along the only road that led to our objective. The snow as deep and it was very cold. The 9th ran into a vast pillbox complex at a crossroads and met fierce resistance. (This was later called the Battle of Heartbreak Crossroads.) After two days of living in the snowy forest and receiving some shelling, our battalion was ordered forward. The fight was pure hell. I witnessed one entire squad being wiped out one by one as they attempted to cut the barbed wire before some pillboxes. Those men were real heroes. They knew they didn't have a chance at survival but did their duty. They each deserved the Silver Star in my opinion, but I'm sure they never got anything more than the Purple Heart.

Once the pillboxes were taken the fighting wasn't as tough and we advanced against lighter resistance. Tree bursts were still a big problem. We bedded down in the snow for the night but I had to go on a patrol to try to get a prisoner. We didn't get one but our own men almost shot us when we returned. I only got a little sleep, curled up in the snow--I hadn't any overshoes so my socks were wet and my clothing froze. Next morning, December 17, we were again ready to attack but by later afternoon we were alerted to be prepared to fall back. The Germans had broken through some green outfit to our rear and we were about to be cut off. Our battalion had been leading the attack and I, as scout, had been on point, leading our company's effort. We were seven miles deep into enemy territory.

We started back down the road that we had advanced over. Tree bursts wreaked havoc above us. By now we were very tired and our overcoats were heavy from melted snow. Despite the cold, Captain Skaggs ordered us to shed our coats so we could move faster since it was urgent that we reach the twin villages of Krinkelt-Rocherath where we had begun our attack on the 13th--the villages were being assaulted by SS troops and tanks and only a thin line of our troops were holding them off. We moved on down a narrow road while explosions crashed in the treetops and streams of tracers lit the evening. We passed a long line of abandoned U.S. vehicles. We rushed on towards the

Village of Rocherath where our company was ordered into the center of town to defend the regimental command post which was under heavy attack. The remainder of the 2nd Battalion fought at the north edge of town.

Late that night we were ushered into a house to grab what little sleep we could get. Being crammed together as tightly as sardines and unable to roll over I developed a painful cramp and got little sleep and I don't think anyone got more than a couple of hours at best.

Early next morning we filed out of the house only to discover the SS troopers had spent their night in adjacent houses. Immediately, a terrific fight broke out. We held some houses while Germans held others--there was no "front line" and the battle was very confusing. German tanks lumbered through the fog with SS men riding them, screaming like madmen. I believe they were doped up. We shot them off of their tanks but the tanks came on, thrusting their long cannon through windows and blasting the houses. We ran up and down stairs to avoid the concussion, then raced back to positions to counter infantry assaults. Eventually, some of our bazooka men and tank destroyers managed to knock out a number of the marauding panzers. After the fighting died down we still held our houses. Destroyed tanks of both sides littered the streets of the burning, ruined village.

After we had driven the Germans out of the center of town, the CP was secure and Company G was ordered to rejoin our battalion which was still under attack on the north side of town. My platoon, however, was detached and sent to assist the 1st Battalion which was in trouble on the east edge of Rocherath. What was left of my squad was ordered to dig in along a brush row about 100 yards in front of a farmhouse. We spent a bitter cold night in those holes, wet and without overcoats, again without sleep.

Just before daybreak the Germans attacked and we had another fierce fight. Still we held. We were low on ammunition, hungry and without sleep. I was miserable since my foxhole was on a down slope and snow began melting during the day and water was filling my hole. I had tried to cut niches in the earth to keep my feet out of the icy water since I didn't have overshoes, but it was too tiring to sit that way with my back wedged against the foxhole wall. I was cold, wet and miserable. I wanted to go up to the farmhouse behind us where other GIs were fighting but was afraid the Germans would see me. To test them, I placed my helmet on a shovel and raised it above my hole and machine gun bullets pulverized the earth around it. I waited longer, then decided the hell with it, I'm going to get killed anyway and I hollered to the next foxhole that I was going to the house. Our holes were spaced pretty far apart and I got no answer and I thought maybe they had pulled out without my knowledge or maybe the next fellow was dead. I jumped up and ran to the house. I made it.

In the house was a lieutenant and about a dozen other GIs, including three tankers whose tank had been knocked out. They were all from some other platoon or company because I didn't recognize them.

The Germans attacked again--tanks and infantry. The house must have been one of their prime objectives for we received a hell of a lot of cannon and machine gunfire. We fought back from windows and doorways, losing men all the time. The tankers ducked out to find their outfit, leaving one of them in the house, dead. German tanks

(Continued on Page 26)

REUNIONS

1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, 26TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, May 23-28, 2000, Hampton, Virginia. Contact: Rudolf H. Egersdorfer, FAX 717-626-5491.

2ND ARMORED DIVISION, 17TH ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION, COMPANY A, May 4-7, 2000, Greentree Holiday Inn, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Contact: John A. Shields, PO Box 106, East Butler, Pennsylvania 16029. Telephone: 724-287-4301.

6TH ARMORED DIVISION, September 12-17, 2000, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact: Edward F. Reed, PO Box 5011, Louisville, Kentucky 40255-0011.

26TH INFANTRY DIVISION (Midwest Reunion), May 21-22, 2000, Springfield, Illinois. Contact: W. Kent Stephens, 107 Bluffview Lane, Collinsville, Illinois 62234-1914. Telephone: 618-344-1616.

30TH INFANTRY DIVISION, September 20-24, 2000, Adams' Mark Winston Plaza, Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Contact: R. M. Mann, Jr., 2417 Biting Road, Winston-Salem, North Carolina 27104-4115. Telephone: 336-724-1472.

78TH INFANTRY DIVISION, September 19-24, 2000, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact: Herman Gonzales, 104 Oak Glen Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15237. Telephone: 412-364-1609.

86TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION, March 15-18, 2000, Jekyll Island, Georgia. Contact: 86th Chemical Mortar Battalion Association, 818 West 62nd Street, Anniston, Alabama 36206.

87TH INFANTRY DIVISION, September 10-17, 2000, Falls Church, Virginia. Contact: Earle Hart, 2756 Earhart Court, Orefield, Pennsylvania 18069-2253. Telephone: 610-366-9079.

95TH INFANTRY DIVISION, August 24-27, 2000, Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. Contact: Lester Wolf, 8032 South 86th Court, Justice, Illinois 60458. Telephone: 708-458-3047.

245TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, June, 2000 in New Orleans, Louisiana. Contact: Charlie Spinner, 300 Sheffield Court, Joppa, Maryland 21085. Telephone: 410-679-7097.

255TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, August 4-6, 2000, National Guard Armory, Iron River, Michigan. Contact: Ed Vickstrom, 2012 Washington Avenue, Ishpeming, Michigan 49849-3237. Telephone: 906-486-4804.

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296TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, June 8-11, 2000, Owensboro, Kentucky. Contact: Hal Miller, 5251 Windy Hollow Road, Owensboro, Kentucky. Telephone: 270-785-4088.

304TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, September 14-17, 2000, Executive Inn, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact: Frank Mucedola, 7-11 East Genessee Street, Auburn, New York 13021. Telephone: 315-252-8180.

526TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, June 28-July 2, 2000, Riverside Doubletree Inn, Boise, Idaho. Contact: Glenn Damron, 533 Richland, Pocatello, Idaho 83201. Telephone: 208-233-0535.

744TH LIGHT TANK BATTALION would like to hear from those who would be interested in a reunion. Contact: Romaine D. Mounts, 7400 North Rowdy Street, Las Vegas, Nevada 89131.

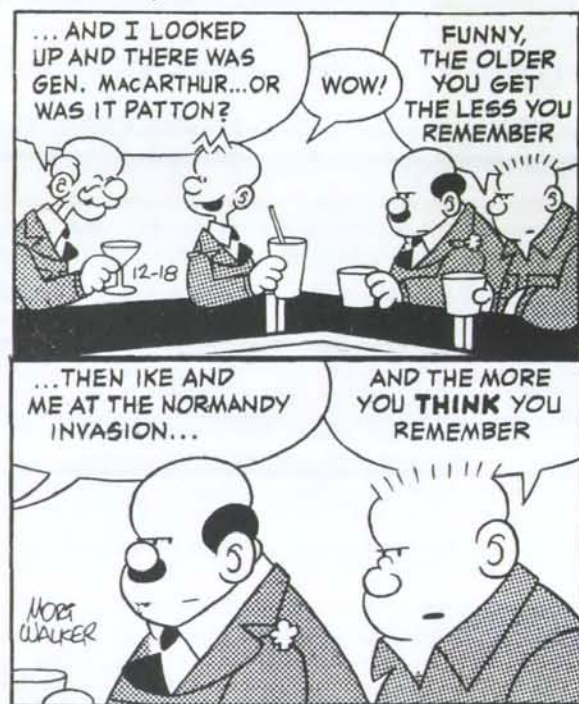
749TH TANK BATTALION, September 21-24, 2000, Fort Knox, Kentucky. Contact: Jack Morris, HC 75 Box 662-B, Locust Grove, Virginia 22508. Telephone: 540-972-1423.

750TH TANK BATTALION, June 6-8, 2000, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact: John R. Walker, 3840 Arroyo Road, Fort Worth, Texas 71609. Telephone: 817-926-0925.

770TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY B, June 22-25, 2000, Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. Contact: Ed Deleka, 124 Cottage Place, Long Beach, New Jersey 07740. Telephone: 732-222-2070.

BEETLE BAILEY MORT WALKER

Reprinted from
The Washington Post
December 18, 1999



"Request for transfer to a frontline combat outfit denied, Captain Glucose—you're not getting out of this assignment that easily—"

THE STORY OF THE 440TH GROUP CARRIER GROUP

[The following story from DZ Europe was sent to us by Ed Zimmer, of the 440th. He tells us that the 440th was stationed at Exeter, England, and Orleans, France.]

The German attack in the Ardennes area started on December 16, 1944, and quickly smashed deep into southern Belgium. The German plan, daring in concept and brilliant in execution, envisioned two main thrusts, one moving west past Malmedy and designed to cross the Meuse west of Leige and a second, further south, striking across northern Luxembourg and intended to cross the Meuse near Namur. Once across the Meuse the two German forces planned to swing northwest across Brussels and Antwerp and isolate the northern half of the Allied front.

By Christmas day Field Marshal von Rundstedt's southern attacking force had made relatively good progress. All of northern Luxembourg above the Saure River was in German hands and forward units had bypassed Bastogne to reach Libramont, 25 miles from Sedan. The main spearheads had reached a point only 5 miles from the Meuse, 15 miles south of Namur.

The key to both the German transport situation and the American defense plan centered on the small Belgian town of Bastogne (normal population 4,500) where the Liege-Arlon highway connected with six other roads. As long as this town was held Rundstedt's columns were confined to secondary roads that, due to the snowy, wet weather, were fast becoming impassable to heavy military transport.

To Bastogne, soon after the German offensive began, hurried parts of the U.S. 9th and 10th Armored divisions and the full strength of the famous 101st Airborne Division, commanded by Brig. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe during the absence of Maj. Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor, who was in Washington for consultation.

Also to Bastogne came straggling groups from outfits that had been ripped to pieces in the German advance until some 10,000 men were gathered to carry out their single order from the U.S. high command, "Hold Bastogne at all costs!"

On Tuesday, December 19th, the Germans had their first collision with the defenders of Bastogne and the fight was on! The main German column swung around the American tanks guarding the eastern approaches and probed at the other entrances. But wherever they probed Americans continued to bar the way. By the 20th the town was completely surrounded and the fighting raged on every side. "We're the hole in the doughnut," radioed Bastogne in response to a message from Headquarters asking for their positions.

On the first night the Germans had captured the complete American surgical unit and on Wednesday and Thursday the wounded, tended only by their own aid men, were huddled in the cellars with some 3,000 civilians.

Food was running low--the Germans had captured the Quartermaster unit. Ammunition was low--gasoline was so scarce that armor moving into action could not afford to warm up their engines in advance and clanked off on cold motors.

On Friday the Germans delivered an ultimatum--two hours to decide upon surrender with the alternative "annihilation by artillery." In reply General McAuliffe shot back one of the classic quotes of the war:

"To the German Commander--NUTS!--
The American Commander."

The defenders of Bastogne prepared to celebrate Christmas by beating back new German attacks that were taking on the fury of desperation.

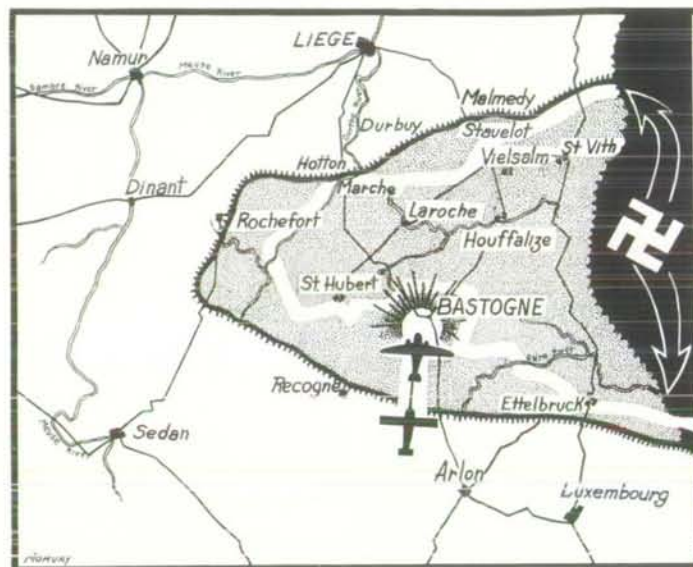
Finally the weather started to lift. The fog and mist that had kept Allied planes grounded for days gradually broke up and crew chiefs hastily pre-flighted ships that had been fully loaded, ready and waiting since the pincers had first closed around Bastogne.

On the morning of December 26th the 440th had its first chance to get in on the show. The job of delivering the first glider to go into

Bastogne was given to the 96th squadron and at 10:25 a C-47 piloted by Capt. Raymond H. Ottoman took off with a glider piloted by Lt. Charlton W. Corwin, Jr., with F/O Benjamin F. Constantino as co-pilot.

At an advance base the glider was loaded with the surgical team and medical supplies so urgently needed at Bastogne and, at 14:00, the run was started.

Apparently the sudden appearance of the glider and its tug out of the overcast was a surprise to the Germans and only scattered and inaccurate small arms fire was encountered. Arriving over the landing zone within American lines at 13:13 the glider cut off at an altitude of only 300 feet and swung in to a perfect landing. The C-47 turned out, headed for home at tree-top level to avoid enemy anti-aircraft fire and made the return trip without further incident.



At the same time that the first lone glider and tug were winging their way towards Bastogne a second group of ten aircraft and ten gliders loaded with 2,975 gallons of 80-octane gas had taken off from Orleans at 15:00 and were on their way in. Taking advantage of the early winter dusk they flew in low over the enemy lines. However, the Germans had been alerted by the earlier plane and glider and threw up a screen of small arms and machine gun fire at the formation from positions along a railroad about two miles from the town.

In spite of the fire the two planes held on course, cutting off the gliders directly over the landing zone at 17:20. The altitude at cut off was approximately 600 feet.

As the glider pilots swung into their patterns and dove for the comparative safety of the ground the two ships pushed their engines to the limit and hedge hopped out of the area, still followed by enemy fire.

During the operation the air crews had been too busy to pay much attention to damage that did not affect the flying ability of their aircraft. However, on landing safely almost all the glider pilots found numerous holes in their ships (one had over 70) and many of the gasoline cans were spouting streams of fuel through jagged bullet holes.

At a later interrogation both power pilots and glider pilots agreed that the air had been full of incendiary bullets streaming from enemy machine gun positions and it was almost miraculous that no fires had been started in the highly inflammable gliders.

The C-47's also showed many small holes but escaped without serious damage to the aircraft or injury to the crews. On this mission the 96th and 98th squadrons each dispatched 3 C-47's and 3 CG4-A gliders while the 95th and 97th squadrons each sent two planes and two gliders to complete the total of ten.

Although the glider-borne gasoline took care of the most urgent need the general supply situation was still inadequate. Troop carrier planes took off from bases in the

(continued on next page)

THE 440TH TROOP CARRIER GROUP

(Continued from Page 8)

United Kingdom and flew on instruments to carry 320 tons of food, clothing and ammunition into Bastogne. This material was dropped by parachute and the greater part of it recovered and put to immediate use by the 101st and other units.

On the morning of December 27th the 440th was given another glider mission and at 10:39 eight C-47s and eight gliders of the 95th squadron and five planes and five gliders of the 96th squadron took off from the airstrip at Chateaudun. These 13 aircraft and gliders formed the last element of a 35-plane serial operated by the 439th Troop Carrier Group. The 440th gliders were loaded to capacity with high explosives.

The weather was good and the run into Bastogne was made without trouble. The job looked easy when, almost without warning, the 440th planes collided with the most withering hail of anti-aircraft fire ever encountered by a 440th formation during the European campaign.

Apparently the German ack-ack gunners had gotten the range as the first elements of the 35-plane formation came over and as the 14, 440th planes and gliders swung over the target the blast hit with unprecedented fury.

Although intensive fire had been observed reaching out at 439th planes at the front of the serial the 440th aircraft held a steady course and cut their gliders as scheduled although explosions were already knocking the tugs from side to side and shells were starting to hit home with disconcerting frequency.

One glider completely disappeared in mid-air as a high explosive shell hit the cargo of TNT. The others cut their approaches as sharply as possible and dived for the ground with their pilots using every form of evasive action to dodge the upcoming stream of fire.

Before cutting off their gliders the two planes held steady courses and were unable to make any attempt at evasive action. Sgt. Robert J. Slaughter, radio operator of a 96th squadron ship, was in the astrodome when the right engine of his ship was hit. At the same time he saw three different planes hit, catch fire and start to fall.

A few moments later there was a tremendous explosion in the tail and fire broke out. The bail-out signal was given but only the crew chief was able to get through the cargo door before fire blocked it.

Their only hope was for a successful crash landing and the pilot, Lt. Billy J. Green, managed to bring the ship down although most of the controls had been shot away. Upon hitting the ground the roof of the cockpit caved in and caught Lt. Green behind the control column. Although expecting an explosion at any moment Sgt. Slaughter battered the canopy hatch open and managed to drag Lt. Green from the burning ship.

Sgt. Slaughter then located a road and, half carrying Lt. Green, started out to seek medical aid. Within a few minutes they encountered Tech. Sgt. Sabon, the crew chief, who had jumped before flames blocked the cargo door. Sgt. Sabon's parachute had barely opened when he hit the ground and had sustained back injuries in addition to burns on the face and hands.

Sgt. Sabon had been found by two Belgian children who were taking him to their village. Several more Belgian civilians appeared and helped the crew to a house where they rendered such first aid as they could and sent for a Belgian doctor and also for the nearest Americans, who were about four kilometers distant. After an anxious hour an ambulance from the 610th Tank Destroyer Battalion arrived and evacuated the crew to an American hospital.

Tech. Sgt. Robert Londo, a 96th squadron crew chief, was standing directly behind his pilot when the glider was cut off and reached forward to help the pilot adjust the prop pitch and throttles. A high explosive shell hit in the fire extinguisher box between the pilot and copilot, knocking Sgt. Londo back against the door. A fraction of a second later a burst of 50-caliber bullets came up through the floor in the exact spot on which he had been standing before the explosion.

With the cockpit aflame the pilot gave the order to bail out and Sgt. Londo kicked out the cargo door and jumped. Landing safely, he

headed back in the direction of the American lines, using the compass and map from his escape kit.

After 24 hours working his way back he was picked up by the 206th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron, sent to various headquarters for intelligence interrogations and returned to the 400th. Sgt. Londo was the first 440th man shot down on the Bastogne mission to return to the group.

In the air over Bastogne other 440th aircraft were taking equally severe treatment. As the leading part of the serial pulled away all of the German fire was concentrated on the 440th ships as they cut their gliders and turned back. It was all over in a few short moments but in those moments the 440th sustained 42 percent of its combat losses during the entire period of the European campaign.

Of the eight ships from the 95th squadron five were shot down with every member of their crews either killed or captured by the Germans. One managed to get back over friendly territory before making an emergency landing and only two made their way back to the home base at Orleans. Both of these planes were so badly damaged that ground crews found it hard to understand how they had remained airborne.

Of the five 96th planes three were shot down with seven crew members killed and two taken prisoner. Both of the 96th planes that managed to get back to Orleans were also severely damaged. The pilots of both of these ships attributed their safe return to their split-second decision to turn right out of the landing zone instead of left as briefed.



Crash Landings at Bastogne

Although only four of the 13 C-47s had managed to return it was believed that the mission had been unsuccessful and a different light was placed on the situation with the return of the glider pilots several days later.

They reported that they had started to take evasive action while still on tow and as soon as they arrived over the landing zone had cut off, dodged and dropped too low for the German gun crews to draw an accurate bead on them. Therefore all the fire had been directed at the C-47s after the first furious blast as the formation appeared.

Most of the gliders had managed to land with their cargoes relatively undamaged and the ammunition and explosives were immediately put to use by the hard-pressed defenders fighting on the perimeter around the town.

Later evidence showed that the action on December 25-26 had seen the halting of the German offensive and the beginning of the American counter-offensive.

Any further development of the salient by the Germans was out of the question because, lacking roadways, they were unable to supply their divisions already engaged at the tip of the salient. With the Americans in control of the skies they were unable to use aerial resupply for their own units.

The 101st Airborne and other units had done their job superlatively well. The 440th and other Troop Carrier units had clearly established the fact that aerial resupply of units of division strength, isolated in enemy territory within a reasonable distance of friendly lines, can be effectively accomplished. Rundstedt's last push had been stopped and the long march toward Berlin was ready to begin again! ■

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Since 1997, **PATRICK J. KEARNEY, 55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION**, has asked the VFW to commemorate December 16 as the date of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge in its yearly calendars. He notes that the Battle of Iowa Jima has been listed on the VFW's calendar for several years, but that the VFW seems reluctant to include mention of the Bulge on their calendars. Patrick feels that we owe it to our buddies who died in the Bulge to make sure that their sacrifices are remembered in a special way on December 16. If you are a member of the VFW, Patrick urges you to write to them and ask that the Bulge appear on the December 16 date in their 2001 calendar. Write to John J. Senk, Jr., Adjutant General, VFW National Headquarters, 406 West 34th Street, Kansas City, MO 64111.

DON ABBOTT, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION, would appreciate hearing from any of the men with whom he served in **HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, 2ND BATTALION, 36TH ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT**. Write to Don at: 183 Elm Street, Mechanic Falls, Maine 04256.

Elizabeth Terrones would like to know if anyone can provide information regarding friends **PHILLIP TRACEY** and **BILL KOWALSKI**, who were stationed at Ballywillwill Clough, Northern Ireland. Tracey was from Chicago and Kowalski was from Montana. Write to Elizabeth at: 910 East Adams Street #4A, Washington, Iowa 52353.

JAMES KIRK, 4TH ARMORED DIVISION, 51ST ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY C, would like to hear from anyone who may have served with him. Write to John at: 41B Hazen Court, Wayne, New Jersey 04770-3213.

Marney Zambrano would appreciate hearing from anyone who may have known her brother--**ROBERT (BOB) HILTON, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, 327TH GLIDER INFANTRY**. He was killed in action on January 4, 1945. If you have any information write to her at: 137 East Parkway Avenue, Tooele, Utah 84074.

WILLIAM LEHNDORF, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION, 36TH ARMORED INFANTRY, COMPANY H, MORTAR SQUAD, would like to hear from anyone who may have served with him. Write to him at: 7182 Southeast Sweetwood Terrace, Stuart, Florida 34997.

CHARLES McPHERSON, 630TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, would like to hear from anyone in his group or anyone from the old **611TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, COMPANY C**. Write to him at: 58 Old Tennessee Road, N.E., Cantersville, Georgia 30121.

Jacqueline M. Schrantz has written to see if we can help provide information about her great-uncle--**S/SGT FRANCIS LEWIS JACOBS**. He died November 8, 1944, in Eupen, Belgium. He was from Victor, New York. She is unable to provide the unit he was with. If you can help, write to her at: 5256 Route 14

South, Sodus, New York 14551.

Pauline H. Reinhardt writes trying to find information regarding **GORDON V. BEAL, 579TH QUARTERMASTER LAUNDRY COMPANY**. She also understands that he may have been associated with the **101ST AIRBORNE or 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION**. She indicates that he wore airborne clothes and jump boots. If you can help write to her at: Highway 1003, 3614 Buffalo Shoals Road, Newton, North Carolina 28658.

Melle Devillet Laurence is looking for someone who might be able to provide her with information about her grandfather--**HARRY SMITH**. She believes he may have served in the **28TH INFANTRY DIVISION**. Harry met her grandmother in the Town of Selange, south of Arlon, Belgium, near the end of 1944. If you know anything, write to Melle at: Rue de la Caserne, 63; B-6700 Arlon; Belgium.

THAINE HIGH, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION and 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, would like to hear from anyone who may have served with him. He was in Graves Registration. Write to Thaine: c/o Robert D. Schrell, 2530 San Joaquin Court, San Diego, California 92109-2316.

CLARK TRAILER, 75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, sends us a request from a cast member of the USO show "Panama Hattie," which toured France and Germany during 1945-46. She would appreciate hearing from anyone who remembers seeing the show. Write to her: Connie Desmond, 2680 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, New Jersey 08648.

SYDNEY O. JOHNSON, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION, 83RD ARMORED RECONNAISSANCE BATTALION, visited the Ardennes last summer with his son. They located two small memorials in the Hotton-Soy-Beffe area--one honoring Col. Howze, commander of the 36th AIR and an enlisted man from the 23rd AEB (the first American killed in Melines). They also came upon a M-4 Sherman tank in a hilly area east of Hotton with a bronze plaque recounting Col. Hogan's 400-man task force escape. Sydney's camera had failed and he was crushed when he found he had no pictures of these findings. Can you help by providing photos of these items and provide him with further information? Write to Sydney at: 20209 Kirmont Drive, Saratoga, California 95070.

RAYMOND J. ROCHELEAU, 78TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 310TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, ANTI-TANK COMPANY, would like to hear from someone with his group. Write to him at: 10872 Townline Road, Cheboygan, Michigan 49721.

Mary Ann Prothe Green writes on behalf of her father, **FREDERICK F. PROTHE, 602ND TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, 602ND RECONNAISSANCE COMPANY**. He lost his duffle bag on the ship coming home. It had 10 rolls of film that were lost forever. Would you have any photos which would be of interest to Fred which you could send? It would be very important to him. Write: 6009 East 261st Street, Cleveland, Missouri 64734.

(continued on next page)

DONALD "PAT" DORE, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION, 52ND ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION--ATTACHED TO 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, would like to hear from anyone with whom he may have served. Write to him at: PO Box 561, Bangor, Maine 04402-0561.

Associate member Jean-Jacques Derycke is trying to locate members of the **30TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE TROOP, 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION**. Write to him at: 135 Rue Grimard, 6061 Montignies-sur-Sambre, Belgium.

THOMAS (TOM) F. BAILEY, 143RD AAA GUN BATTALION, would like to hear from anyone who served with him regarding information on activities and locations of batteries and individuals. Please write to him at: 667 Union #104, Ionia, Michigan 48846.

PATRICK J. KEARNEY, 55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, would like to advise all members of his battalion that a memorial plaque dedication ceremony will be held on May 29, 2000, in Tillet (Sainte-Ode), Belgium, to honor the men of the 55th AIB who were killed in action/died of wounds received at Tillet and Acul on December 31, 1944, and at Bois de Nom de Falize on January 14, 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge. The ceremony will be attended by Belgian authorities on the national, provincial and local level, and by representatives of the American Embassy in Brussels. For more information contact Patrick at: 33-21 172 Street, Bayside, New York 11358.

ROBERT C. CATLIN, 90TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 359TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY L, still maintains close contact with his old foxhole buddy **LYLE McROBERTS**, but he would like to hear from any of the other guys--like **LT. FRIEDMAN, SGT WOOD** and **JOE, THE MEDIC**. Write to Bob at: 4310 North Bearsdale Road, Decatur, Illinois 62526-9739.

413TH AAA BN BATTERY B

By Kenneth L. Reiter

Staff Sergeant Reiter (90mm gun commander) and Sergeant Lashley Martin would like to share our experiences endured while in the Battle of the Bulge.

Our battery was stationed 1-1/2 miles east of Bullingen several days before the Bulge attack. Our main mission at that time was to shoot down incoming buzz bombs and missiles. This was supposed to be a stalling front and sort of a rest area for our unit and all of our extra trucks for hauling supplies were loaned out to other units to help bring up the line of defense.

So we were left as sitting ducks, to march and retreat. So in the overall deal, we had to leave all our personal belongings, such as duffel bags and some supplies, for the Germans.

At 5:30 a.m., the Germans opened up with search lights and artillery and we had about 16" of snow on the ground. I called it a wake up call. My outfit was alerted to retreat to a safe area, in Stenbach and Sourbrodt. There was three 90 mm crews that had ammunition and left with me and my gun crew to fire armor

piercing and air bursts on incoming tanks at a road intersection, one machine gun crew and one 90mm crew were left behind to cover our main retreat and hold back the incoming German tanks and infantry. As day break appeared, we spotted eight or ten German troops with white uniforms crossing the terrain about 3/4 of a mile behind our firing line and between them and our retreat unit. The Germans directed fire on the retreat convoy. Several of the unit were injured, also Major McGain. At the same time we were in hot action with incoming infantry and tanks. My 90 crew and machine gun crew held off the Germans some seven hours. We piled up six tanks blocking the roads and Martin and his machine crew killed 21 out of 25. They took four prisoners (one SS officer). I disarmed them, finished firing all the 90 ammo and somehow escaped capture and made it back to our unit about 3:30 p.m.

Now I'm 85 years old and thank the good Lord for his protection.

[The following is from the progress report of Battery B (during the Battle of the Bulge period.)]

TD

Dec. 16	1-1/2 mi. East of Bullingen
Dec. 17	Biv. at Steinbach & Sourbrodt
Dec. 19	Elsborn
Dec. 20	2 mi. So. West of Monchau

AA

Dec. 25	4 mi West of Eupen (Xmas)
Jan. 3	2-1/2 mi No. of Verviers, Belgium

A GREAT BIG "THANK YOU" TO AN UNSUNG HERO

Some times the contributions of certain members go "unthanked." It's not intentional and their efforts are very much appreciated. Such is the case of **EDWARD R. RADZWICH, 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 101ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, 3RD BATTALION, COMPANY I**, of Bowie, Maryland.

Before his death, our founder, Clyde D. Boden, contemplated the preparation of a VBOB Certificate. (As a matter of fact I still have his rough draft on my computer). After he passed, Ed pursued the matter and he (ably assisted by **JOHN BOWEN**) finalized the certificate which we now sell.

We have sold over 4,000 of these certificates, enabling us to continue offering membership in VBOB at the old rate of \$15.00 for about 10 years. While the cost of paper, postage, printing, and everyday expenses have gone up, we have still been able to operate in the black, thanks to Ed and John.

Thank you, Ed and John, for a job well done.

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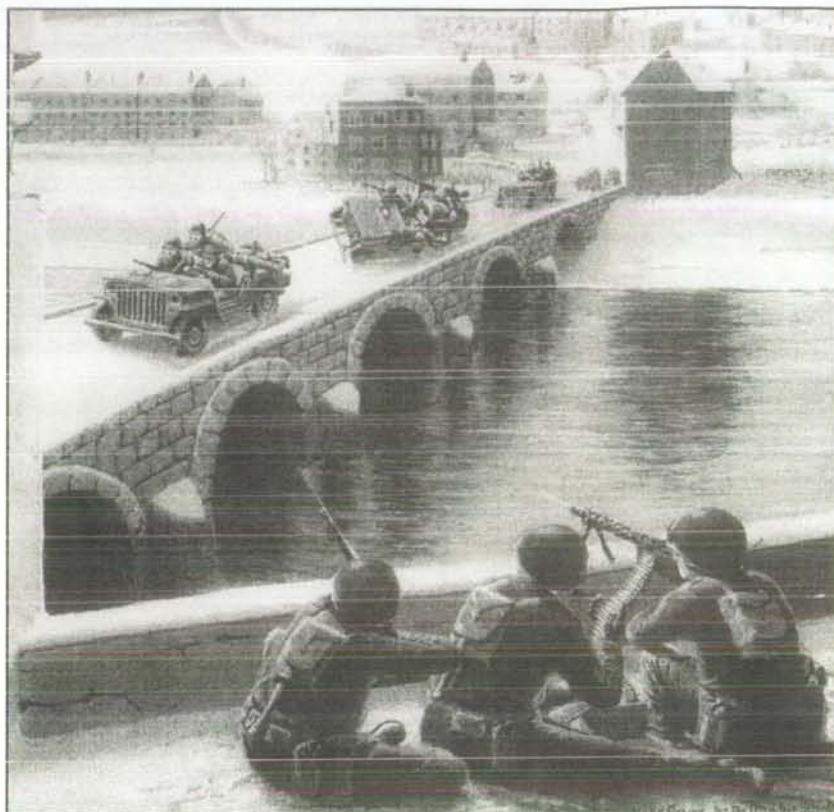
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Complete details will be in the May issue, but we urge you to make your reservations early. Rooms at the Holiday Inn will go for \$70.00 while they last. Overflow rooms at other hotels will be around \$90.00.

THE BRIDGE AT STAVELOT

The following painting and stories were contained in the
30th Division News.



The beautiful painting of the bridge above was painted by HENRY M. STAIRS, JR., 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 117TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 2ND BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS. Stavelot, Belgium, December 19, 1944--"Five American Jeeps filled with Germans in GI uniforms made a wild dash to cross the bridge."

Editor's Overview:

[The Editor of the 30th Division newsletter is George F. Kennedy.]

For several weeks, our sector North of Aachen and West of the Roer River had been static. During that time, Lt. Col. Steward L. Hall, the Division G-2, had been carefully analyzing Period Intelligence Reports, Annexes and Summaries routinely exchanged with several corps and other divisions scattered along the front. He was aware through his Order of Battle specialists that an impressive number of powerful German divisions were absent from contact, possibly rebuilding. For quite some time units south of The Ardennes had reported mostly northerly enemy movement. Units north of the Ardennes had reported mostly southerly movement to their fronts. His conclusion was that the enemy was preparing for a major offensive attack in the Ardennes.

It was not a surprise to him when that front which had been quiet, exploded at about 0530 on 16 December when a massive German artillery preparation announced a major attack. That attack began mid-morning when a major enemy force of several newly strengthened divisions of armor and of infantry struck and quickly engulfed the four U.S. divisions thinly defending that front. Armored columns bypassed American pockets of resistance and forged ahead. Vast numbers of U.S. soldiers were taken prisoner. It is at this point that we go to Stairs' and Cofer's stories.

Painting of the Stavelot Bridge

Cpl Henry M. Stairs, Jr.
30th Infantry Division
117th Infantry Regiment
2nd Battalion
Headquarters Company

The beautiful painting of the bridge was painted by Hank Stairs. His assignment in communications gave him a certain amount of mobility. While he was not witness to the incident depicted in the painting, he had become very familiar with what happened by means of personal accounts. Also he had made sketches of the bridge. Heavily armed German soldiers in U.S. uniforms driving American jeeps attempted a dash northward across the bridge. Members of A Company, 117th Infantry under orders to kill any who crossed the bridge, stopped the surprised Germans. Later, Lt. Leland Cofer, assigned to blow the bridge, took out the span at the near end of the bridge thus denying its use to the enemy.

Hank originally prepared the painting for the Camp Blanding Museum. However, he later made a copy for the museum so that the original could be presented to the Town of Stavelot. The original was presented



Cpl. Henry M. Stairs, Jr.

(Continued on next page)

THE BRIDGE AT STAVELOT

(Continued from Page 12)

to J. Monville, Le Bourgmestre of Stavelot, in a ceremony on 15 September 1999. In that ceremony, Hank surprised everyone present by making the presentation in rather excellent French, thus turning the tables on Denise Oger, interpreter for CRIBA, who then had to translate to English for the benefit of Old Hickory persons on the European Tour.

HE BLEW THE BRIDGE!

Lt. Leland E. Cofer
30th Infantry Division
105th Engineer Battalion
Company A

As platoon leader, Cofer tells his story of the blowing of the bridge at Stavelot.

On 17 December, our division was detached from 9th Army near Aachen and reassigned to 1st Army near Malmedy. We moved out in late afternoon and spent all of that night inching our way south in vehicles on a crowded road. We were harassed a good part of the night by German aircraft who dropped lots of flares and flew back and forth over our column, but dropped very few bombs. Several other divisions, both infantry and armored, were also headed for the Ardennes to counter the German offensive.

By the end of 18 December, the 117th Infantry Regiment, to which our engineer company was attached in support, had attacked the Town of Stavelot, Belgium, and pushed the enemy back across the Ambleve River.

A multi arch stone bridge across the river in the town was still intact. It was the only bridge for several miles--a bridge the Germans needed to continue their offensive.

If the Germans could capture the bridge intact at Stavelot and hold it, their tanks and other armored units could cross and run through the hastily defended areas north of the Ambleve River. This, in turn, could result in the capture of Liege and Antwerp, their initial objectives.

About noon on 19 December, I received orders to go to Stavelot to destroy the bridge. Reconnaissance was the first thing to be done.

I took off in a jeep with my driver, T/5 John Barone. We drove as close to the river as I dared, then proceeded on foot to near the bridge. This was the front line of the 177th Infantry who were "holed up" in houses and basements along this line. Jerry held all the ground south of the river and had at least one tank and infantry with other weapons, covering the bridge. The bridge was in "no man's land."

In the daytime it would have been instant suicide to approach the bridge in the open. It was completely exposed to German fire. We had to get a good look at the bridge so we could decide how to destroy it and how much explosive would be needed.

By crawling from one house to the next I arrived at an upper story window which gave me an oblique view of the bridge. While standing back from the window to remain unseen, I sketched a rough drawing of the bridge and estimated the length

of the spans and thickness of the deck. There was a wrecked U.S. jeep on the bridge and the body of an American soldier lying near our end.

While at my position overlooking the bridge, I was witness to a duel between one of our TD's and the Kraut tank on the south side of the river. After some maneuvering by both combatants, the TD got a couple of rounds into the side of the tank. A few seconds later a smoke grenade was tossed out of the tank hatch and soon followed by the surviving members of the crew who ran into a nearby building. They came out so quickly there was no time to get a shot at them.

After returning to my jeep, we drove back up the hill to our Company CP to plan and to organize a demolition crew. We estimated an excessive amount of TNT to be certain, because the charge would just be placed on the top of the deck, nothing like the engineer school solution. We decided on 1,000 lbs. That was 20 fifty-pound boxes of TNT. We placed caps at random in various boxes to insure that all would explode. TNT needs a good shock to set it off. We also built three slow burning fuses, long enough to burn about one minute with detonators and fuse lighters, two more than necessary to guarantee detonation.

We planned to approach after dark, but didn't want to delay too long because the Germans might be planning an assault to recapture the bridge that night.

We requested artillery fire, through 117th Infantry Headquarters, to be fired at a regular rate mixed with smoke shells into the enemy positions close to the south end of the bridge beginning at the hour we planned to move to the bridge. The firing was necessary to cover our noise, and the smoke to obscure our movement to the bridge. There was glass from shattered windows and doors on the cobblestone streets, making it impossible to walk quietly, especially when carrying 50 lbs. of TNT.

The TNT and the men were loaded into a couple of 6x6 trucks and driven down the hill. When the artillery fire started, we moved to within 3 or 4 blocks of the bridge. We unloaded the trucks, passing out the TNT, one box per man and everybody headed for the bridge on foot. A French speaking soldier was sent to check the houses and basements near the bridge to advise anyone in them to leave. I do not recall that we found anyone. They had probably left due to the earlier fighting. Our infantry had also been moved back from the bridge.

Staff Sgt. James McKeon, who was killed about a month later and Sgt. Lowell Richardson, who later received a battlefield commission, accompanied me with the rest of the men following.

We set all the TNT in one stack directly over the thinnest part of the deck in the first span. Having delivered their boxes, the men quickly returned to the trucks. This took 3 or 4 minutes, McKeon, Richardson and myself, on signal, pulled all three fuse lighters simultaneously. We took off disregarding any noise we might make, then a couple of short blocks away, "KA-BOOM!!!" It was a terrific explosion. Stone masonry houses close to the ends of the bridge collapsed. It must have been some shock to any Krauts, exposed or not, on the south side. Our artillery stopped. We were standing along a sidewalk just north of the bridge when Jerry machine gun fire came up the street from the south side. We fell to the ground or jumped through doors or windows into houses until the firing stopped. Luckily, no one was hurt.

It was then necessary to check the bridge to see if the job had been accomplished.

(continued on next page)



Lt. Leland E. Cofer

THE BRIDGE AT STAVELOT

(Continued from Page 13)

Sgt. Richardson and I stole back to the river as quietly as possible and looked over the edge of the hole in the bridge. The first span had disappeared--it was a good gap. As our company commander, Captain James Rice, told Hal Boyle, an AP War Correspondent, "No German tank can broad-jump that."

This stalled the German advance at Stavelot. In succeeding nights they attacked our infantry by wading the river in an attempt to drive our troops back, rebridge the gap and use it for their Panzer units. The attacks were unsuccessful. ■

COMMEMORATIVE BANQUET

15 December 1999
Ft. Meade, Maryland

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, I am Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Pierlot, Assistant Defense Attache at the Embassy of Belgium.

It is truly a real honor and a great privilege for me to represent this evening our Ambassador, his Excellency Alex REYN, at this commemoration banquet.

Tomorrow, exactly 55 years ago, on Saturday the 16th of December 1944, the German offensive started. It was the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge and the turning point in Europe in the War. You Americans fought for the soil of the Ardennes, as if it had been your homeland.

I would like to cite a couple of figures: by the eve of January 25, 1945, US casualties reached 75,255 men, including 8,407 killed, more than 46,000 wounded and 20,000 missing in action, most of them prisoners. The Germans lost 67,000 men, including 17,200 killed, 34,000 wounded and 16,000 prisoners.

Amongst the civilian population, 200 people were shot by the SS or the Gestapo. A total of 2,500 civilians were killed, more than 500 of them in Saint Vith and about 200 in Malmedy and Houffalize by air bombing, 11,000 houses, more than 40 percent, were destroyed during the battle.

It was undoubtedly the greatest battle of the War, which will remain an ever-famous American victory.

The world has changed dramatically in the past 50 years. So have the wars. No soldier leaves home for five years anymore; now there are precision guided ammunitions, nobody gets lost due to mistakes of map reading or false road signs, thanks to the global positioning system, and moreover, there are almost no fatal casualties any more.

Still, and almost every week, our Office of the Defense Attache in Washington receives letters and even e-mails from US veterans of the Second World War, more precisely, veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, or from their families, requesting for some information, for a fourragere, a medal... We always do our very best to help, because what hasn't changed, is the genuine appreciation and affection we Belgians hold in our hearts for your veterans, our liberators.

A lot of memorials that have been erected in Belgium are dedicated to the enduring friendship of both our countries, and every single day, the US colors, the Stars and Stripes is raised in the

morning above the graves of the 13,308 Americans that are buried in Belgium in the three United States cemeteries, representing a token of respect of the Belgian Nation to the United States Army for the decisive part they played in the liberation of Europe.

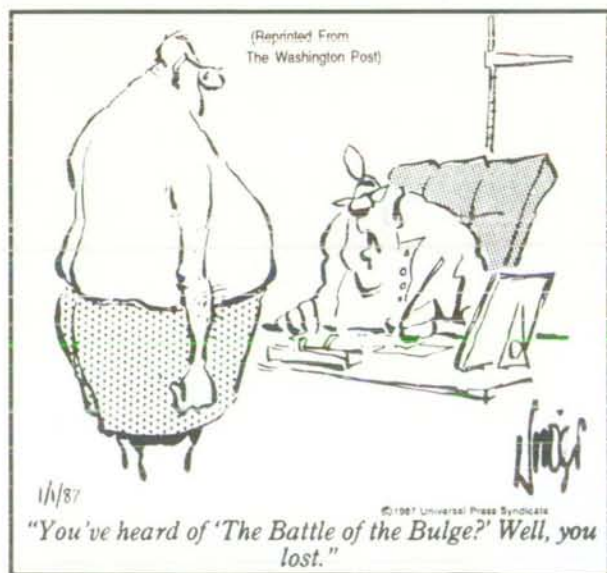
I have been here in the United States for almost three years now, so the time has come for me to go back to Belgium next year, and please notice, I did not say "back home," because it feels like being at home here. Indeed, my wife and I love your country. We really do.

I will certainly miss the way you honor the Star and Stripes, the many events and ceremonies starting with the invocation, and the pledge of the allegiance. This beautiful tradition we do not know in Europe.

A little bit more than a week ago, as you know, our crown Prince Philippe took a beautiful bride, Matilde, who most probably will become our future queen when he will inherit the throne from our King Albert, II. This reminds me of another celebration I attended in September of this year in Champaign, IL, commemorating the liberation by the 106th Cavalry Group of our King Leopold and the Royal Family at Strobl, Austria, on May 7, 1945. No need to convince all of you of the true and long friendship our Royal Family of Belgium has with the Veterans of the United States.

Like I said many times, we owe You, Americans, and your Nation great thanks for what you and your fathers did for us in time of need. We profoundly recognize the crucial contributions you made as guardians of the world freedom. May the memory of your heroism be perpetuated in many years to come.

"We will never forget. Thank You."



BOOKS YOU MAY ENJOY

The 'Sherman' at McAuliffe Square in Bastogne. The True Story. by Jacques DeGivie, Robert Ferlout and Roger Marquet. This book tells more than just the tank's history the authors also recounted the lives of the crew members. There have been many mistakes and inaccuracies concerning this tank and this book attempts to tell "the true story." The book can be ordered by sending a \$16.00 check payable to Murielle Inman at the following address: 8146 East Fairfield, Mesa, Arizona 85207.

BULGE MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

PAUL L. BOLDEN

30th Infantry Division

Rank and organization: Staff Sergeant, United States Army, Company I, 120th Infantry, 30th Infantry Division.

Place and date: Petit-Coo, Belgium, 23 December 1944.

Citation: He voluntarily attacked a formidable enemy strong point in Petit-Coo, Belgium, 23 December, 1944, when his company was pinned down by extremely heavy automatic and small-arms fire coming from a house 200 yards to the front. Mortar and tank artillery shells pounded the unit, when Sergeant Bolden and a comrade, on their own initiative, moved forward into a hail of bullets to eliminate the ever-increasing fire from the German position. Crawling ahead to close with what they knew was a powerfully armed, vastly superior force, the pair reached the house and took up assault positions, Sergeant Bolden under a window, his comrade across the street where he could deliver covering fire. In rapid succession, Sergeant Bolden hurled a fragmentation grenade and a white phosphorous grenade into the building; and then, fully realizing that he faced tremendous odds, rushed to the door, threw it open and fired into 35 SS troopers who were trying to reorganize themselves after the havoc wrought by the grenades. Twenty Germans died under the fire of his submachinegun before he was struck in the shoulder, chest and stomach by part of a burst which killed his comrade across the street. He withdrew from the house, waiting for the surviving Germans to come out and surrender. When none appeared in the doorway, he summoned his ebbing strength, overcame the extreme pain he suffered and boldly walked back into the house, firing as he went. He had killed the remaining 15 enemy soldiers when his ammunition ran out. Sergeant Bolden's heroic advance against great odds, his fearless assault, and his magnificent display of courage in reentering the building where he had been severely wounded cleared the path for his company and insured the success of its mission.

★★★

FRANCIS S. CURREY

30th Infantry Division

Rank and organization: Sergeant, United States Army, Company K, 120th Infantry, 30th Infantry Division

Place and date: Near Malmedy, Belgium, 21 December 1944.

Citation: He was an automatic rifleman with the 3d Platoon defending a strong point near Malmedy, Belgium, on 21 December, 1944, when the enemy launched a powerful attack. Overrunning tank destroyers and antitank guns located near the strong point, German tanks advanced to the 3d Platoon's position, and, after prolonged fighting, forced the withdrawal of this group to a nearby factory. Sergeant Currey found a bazooka in the building and crossed the street to secure rockets, meanwhile enduring intense fire from enemy tanks and hostile infantrymen who had taken up a position at a house a short distance away. In the face of small-arms, machinegun, and artillery fire, he, with a companion, knocked out a tank with one shot. Moving to another position, he observed three Germans in the doorway of an enemy-held house. He killed or wounded all three with his automatic rifle. He emerged from cover and advanced alone to

within 50 yards of the house, intent on wrecking it with rockets. Covered by friendly fire, he stood erect and fired a shot which knocked down half of one wall. While in this forward position, he observed five Americans who had been pinned down for hours by fire from the house and three tanks. Realizing that they could not escape until the enemy tank and infantry guns had been silenced, Sergeant Currey crossed the street to a vehicle, where he procured an armful of antitank grenades. These he launched while under heavy enemy fire, driving the tankmen from the vehicles into the house. He then climbed onto a halftrack in full view of the Germans and fired a machine gun at the house. Once again, changing his position, he manned another machinegun whose crew had been killed; under his covering fire the five soldiers were able to retire to safety. Deprived of tanks and with heavy infantry casualties, the enemy was forced to withdraw. Through his extensive knowledge of weapons and by his heroic and repeated braving of murderous enemy fire, Sergeant Currey was greatly responsible for inflicting heavy losses in men and material on the enemy, for rescuing five comrades, two of whom were wounded, and for stemming an attack which threatened to flank his battalion's position.

★★★

PETER J. DALESSONDRO

9th Infantry Division

Rank and organization: Technical Sergeant, United States Army, Company E, 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division

Place and date: Near Kalterherberg, Germany, 22 December 1944.

Citation: He was with the 1st Platoon holding an important road junction on high ground near Kalterherberg, Germany, on 22 December 1944. In the early morning hours, the enemy after laying down an intense artillery and mortar barrage, followed through with an all-out attack that threatened to overwhelm the position. Sergeant Dalessondro, seeing that his men were becoming disorganized, braved the intense fire to move among them with words of encouragement. Advancing to a fully exposed observation post, he adjusted mortar fire upon the attackers, meanwhile firing upon them with his rifle and encouraging his men in halting and repulsing the attack. Later in the day the enemy launched a second determined attack. Once again, Sergeant Dalessondro, in the face of imminent death, rushed to his forward position and immediately called for mortar fire. After exhausting his rifle ammunition, he crawled 30 yards over exposed ground to secure a light machinegun, returned to his position, and fired upon the enemy at almost pointblank range until the gun jammed. He managed to get the gun to fire one more burst, which used up his last round, but with these bullets he killed four German soldiers who were on the verge of murdering an aid man and two wounded soldiers in a nearby foxhole. When the enemy had almost surrounded him, he remained alone, steadfastly facing almost certain death or capture, hurling grenades and calling for mortar fire closer and closer to his outpost as he covered the withdrawal of his platoon to a second line of defense. As the German hordes swarmed about him, he was last heard calling for a barrage, saying, "OK, mortars, let me have it—right on this position!" The gallantry and intrepidity shown by Sergeant Dalessondro against an overwhelming enemy attack saved his company from complete rout.■

LIVING LEGENDS



MEMORABLE

BULGE INCIDENTS

UNEDITED AND HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED

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

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

DEADLY NOTHUM, LUXEMBOURG

January, 1945

Carl J. Morano
26th Infantry Division
328th Infantry Regiment
Company D
McLean, Virginia

Our company arrived in Nothum, Luxembourg, in the first week of January, 1945. The town had been badly damaged by shell fire. Our squad used a cellar as sleeping quarters. Our 81mm mortar position was very close to the building. During the nights, we took turns on guard duty.

About midnight on the 6th of January, PFC William E. Barr was on guard duty. German shell fire became extremely heavy. Some of the shells hit our building. Since I was about to relieve Barr, I went up the cellar steps to look for him. I found him lying on the ground. I realized that he was not moving or talking. I saw that he had been hit around the neck. There was quite a bit of blood around his neck.

Medic Paul Yee came and looked at Barr's wounds. Yee told me that Barr was dead from the neck wounds. He had been hit by the shell fire. I helped the medic carry Barr into a nearby barn. We placed his body next to two other men from our company.

The other two men were T/Sgt Marino D. Bilfolchini and PFC Clyde E. Campbell. They also had been killed by shell fire. There were several other men laid out in the barn. Blankets had been thrown over them. I did not look to see who they were. We had more casualties in Nothum than any other place.

I replaced Barr on guard duty. The shelling continued through the night. It was too dangerous to stand upright. I spent the entire guard time on my knees.

As for PFC Barr, he was from Baltimore. He was in his early thirties and had three children. He had been drafted in the fall of 1944. He was sent to our company in December. He was

only in the military for about three months.

.....

CAUGHT IN THE WOODS

December 16, 1944

Charles H. McPherson
630th Tank Destroyer Battalion
Company A
Cartersville, Georgia

I was with Headquarters Company of the 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion on the 16th day of December 1944. I was a member of A Company but had been sent back to Headquarters Company to help in doing "6,000 mile checks" on half-tracks. A company had gone out on the 15th preparing positions for a "training exercise." When they got there on the 16th, the Germans were in them with small arms. The first we knew of the "Bulge", a jeep came back to headquarters with a spring shot loose. I was called out and told that a man who was supposed to man a .50 caliber gun was ill, and I would take his place. The gun was mounted on an M20. They parked me at one end of the village. I could see a section of the highway to my right. Before mid-morning, German armor began to pass continuously. I could hear them to the left.

About 2:30 p.m. it was decided we would try to get out but I knew it was too late. When all the vehicles were in line, the motor officer climbed up beside the driver and told him to pull around the others. We led the convoy. The first village we came to, the people ran out crying, "Bosche up there." The motor officer could speak German, he was told two light tanks had a road block set up just up the road. The CO called for the bazooka teams to see if they could make their way up there and knock them out. We happened to be by an opening between two buildings. The motor officer told our driver to back in there.

About that time we heard one of the tanks coming and everyone scattered.

I had my leg over the ring mount to go with them and a man going under a fence looked back and said, "Stay with the gun." I thought I might as well get it here as get out there and get shot like a rabbit. When the tank came in view, I opened up and jammed his turret, then lowered the gun to where I thought his armor was lighter while emptying a belt of 150 rounds. He fired one shot, missing me by 10 or 12 feet. I didn't try to reload. I just fell down and got my "grease gun." The next thing I knew the CO was calling for medics saying we had a wounded man. I stood up and asked, "Who's hurt?" He said, "Aren't you hurt?" I said I was only scared. We tried to take a field road but didn't get far until there was firing up ahead. Three men in a jeep went up to check but didn't come back. We abandoned our vehicles and started out on foot. It began to get dark. We were told if those in front of us stopped to lie down. We came into the edge of some woods and those in front of us stopped.

It sounded like a company of Germans were coming down a road close by. Instead of passing, they came into the woods, put out a sentry, and began to bed down. With the noise they made, we didn't hear those in front of us move out.

When we knew we were left behind, Willis Johnson and myself began to crawl until we were some distance from the Germans. We were out in the woods for five days. We couldn't find food and went into a village hoping to get food but we were caught by a squad of German soldiers. We had to walk from place to place as they moved us back from the front. I can't remember the names of places or dates. The most time we spent in one place was at Wittlich. We rode trucks to Coblenz, then a train to Limburg and the first POW camp 11B I believe it was. A short time there, then walked for 3 days to Bad Orb and 12A from which we were liberated on April 2, 1945.

HANDE HO!

December 1944

Arnold L. Brown
90 Infantry Division
358 Infantry Regiment
Owensboro, Kentucky

My first operation in the Battle of the Bulge was in the Town of Niederwampach, in Luxembourg. A and B Companies had attacked Niederwampach and they were held up, so they asked me to go around the left flank and attack from the rear.

In an attack position such as this, I always attacked with two platoons forward and one in support, and my position is always in between and slightly to the rear of the two attacking platoons, so I can keep abreast of what's going on and if I need to commit my support platoon, I'll know where to do it.

In approaching Niederwampach, the two platoons split up a little bit, so the village in my immediate front had not been cleared. I entered this building with my command group. When I say command group, that was just myself, my communications sergeant, the radio operator and my messenger.

We entered the barn part of this building, and when I first entered, I turned around and started to say, "I don't believe there's anything in here." There was a platform of hay on the

right side, the platform was about waist high, and the hay was a littler higher than that, and this hay started to move. So we squared off toward that hay with our weapons, and a German said, "Nicht Schiessen! Nicht Schiessen!" Which meant, "Don't Shoot."

I said, "Hande ho! Hande ho!" (Put your hands up.) So they put their hands up and came out and surrendered, there must have been ten or twelve Germans.

When they surrendered, there was another group of four or five men who came out from the stall behind us, and they surrendered. I heard a commotion over my head and I looked up and there's a German descending from his rafter up there, and I noticed that he had hand grenades around his waist belt, and he came down and surrendered.

To this day we don't know why they did this. I bring it out just to show you how lucky I was all through this combat over there. Then, I had my other platoons clear out the other buildings, and we captured Niederwampach.

THE WRONG THING TO DO

December 1944

Ralph Burns
551 Parachute Infantry Battalion
Company A
Pasadena, California

One night, about the middle of December, I was in charge of quarters and the phone rang. It said, "Get ready to move out at five o'clock in the morning. The Germans have broken through." I thought, "Now we are really going to get some good combat." It had really been easy up to this point. The next morning we all got into trucks and started toward the front. As I remember, a lot of bridges had been bombed out so that we had to go down and around them. Finally, we got to the front where the so-called real combat was. The weather was very cold, five or ten degrees above zero.

It didn't take us too long to get behind the lines. On one occasion, there was a German soldier walking his dog. We were in the woods and it did not take long for our guys to start firing at him. It could have been the wrong thing to do since it gave away our position. I was in the point when we crossed that field. When the main body started crossing, I looked around and could see bodies flying as a result of a German tank firing directly into the group. When we got almost to the woods on the other side, I threw a smoke grenade out in front so, I thought, the Germans could not see me. This was a mistake, too. All I did was to give my position away. After dark, when we had more freedom to move around, the major asked me to take Higgins back to the aid station. He had a hole in his chest from shrapnel wound and was complaining a lot. I told him not to complain because in a few hours, he would be between white sheets while the rest of us had to stay out in this bitter cold and fight. On the way back, we ran into one of our guys wheeling a wounded soldier in a wheelbarrow. It made enough noise so that it could be heard for a mile. Only sometimes can you get by with that sort of thing.

December, 1944

Randy Kerr

353rd Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion
Greig, New York

We passed through Corsica and in August of 1944 entered southern France. We were going continually northward, and eventually reached Hagenau, Alsace, on December 23, 1944. Suddenly, the following day (actually Christmas Eve of that day) we were loaded into those old 6 x 6's travelling all night back over the same roads we had traveled earlier. I saw a brigadier general's car backed into a side road with it's "cat's eyes" watching us. Something I had never seen before...then I began to realize that something very unusual was going on!

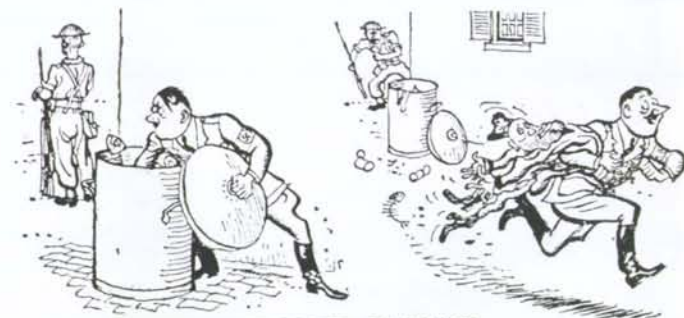
WHAT ABOUT YOU?

We would love to have your story for this series. If you submitted one and it was not used, take a good look at it. It should be about **one incident which happened to you or someone else**. Make it as brief as possible. Many times a little background is necessary but if it tracks you and/or your unit for days and days, it does not apply to this series. It can be humorous or serious, but it must be about **one incident**.

So, come on. Send us your story. Many tell us: "I can't write that well." We're not giving out a Pulitzer Prize--we're only interested in sharing Bulge stories and experiences and your buddies are anxious to read your remembrances. Thanks.



"Look, Elmo, there goes another one of our fringe benefits."



RECONDITIONED CAESAR ...



... ALMOST AS GOOD AS NEW



Reprinted from *Twenty Tremendous Years*

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PRESIDENTIAL MEMORIAL CERTIFICATES

This is a parchment certificate with a calligraphic inscription expressing the Nation's grateful recognition of the vet's service. The vet's name is inscribed and the certificate bears the signature of the President with the Presidential Seal in gold foil. To obtain the certificate, contact the VA Regional Office at 1-800-827-1000. The VA employee will in turn contact the Washington, DC office which issues the Certificate.

SOUP'S ON...

ROBERT MADSON, 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 328TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY I, sent us a copy of a 10 in 1 Ration menu. We print it herewith for your enjoyment.

MENU No. 1

For 5 complete rations use contents of this box together with canned goods in box marked "2nd Half of 5 Rations"

BREAKFAST

Cereal	Pork Sausage
Biscuits and Jam	
Coffee and Milk	

DINNER

1 K Ration unit per man
1 Can K Ration
Egg Product per man

SUPPER

Baked Beans	Tomatoes
Pineapple Rice	Coffee
Biscuits and Butter	
Pudding	

Look for a can opener in a small envelope in this box

Halazone tablets are included to purify drinking water

To use: Put two tablets in canteen full of water (approx. 1 QT.) and shake briskly. Wait 30 minutes before drinking water. If water is dirty or discolored use 4 tablets.

There now. Did it make your mouth water?

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

SENATE RESOLUTION

No. 123

Session of 1999

Introduced by O'Pake, Mellow, Kasunic, Tartaglione, Wagner, Schwartz, Brightbill, Stapleton, Robbins, Costa, Hart, Salvatore, Tomlinson, Helfrick, Hughes, Earll, Rhoades, Lemmon, Tilghman, Thompson, Wenger, Dent, Murphy, Greenleaf, Slocum and Belan, December 7, 1999. Introduced and adopted, December 7, 1999.

A resolution

Commending the veterans of the United States Army, the British Army and other Allied Forces and honoring the men and women of the armed forces who lost their lives during World War II.

WHEREAS, the Senate desires to commend all the veterans of World War II and in particular those veterans who bravely

fought in the Battle of the Bulge and to recognize their valiant efforts on behalf of the United States during the war; and

WHEREAS, this year marks the 55th anniversary of the battle of the European theater of operations known as the Battle of the Bulge, which was fought from December 16, 1944, to January 25, 1945; and

WHEREAS, this long-fought battle was a major German offensive in the Ardennes forest region of Belgium and Luxembourg which took Allied forces by surprise and was intended to split and disrupt the Allied forces in Europe by breaking through the Allied lines, crippling the fuel supply and exacerbating tensions within the alliance; and

WHEREAS, Allied forces participating in the Battle of the Bulge included 600,000 American troops and 55,000 British soldiers; and

WHEREAS, the Battle of the Bulge resulted in 81,000 American and 1,400 British casualties, with approximately 19,000 Americans and 200 British soldiers killed and thousands wounded, captured or listed as missing in action; and

WHEREAS, the Malmedy Massacre, considered the worst atrocity in the European theater during World War II, occurred on December 17, 1944, when 86 unarmed American prisoners of war were gunned down by the German 1st SS Panzer Division; and

WHEREAS, the courageous efforts of the American, British and other Allied forces overcame great odds throughout the Battle of the Bulge and were a key part of the success in defeating Nazi Germany in April 1945; therefore be it

RESOLVED, that the Senate offers its highest commendation to all the veterans of World War II, the British Army and the veterans who participated in the Battle of the Bulge and honors the brave men and women of the armed forces who made the ultimate sacrifice of their lives during World War II. ■

WAL-MART HONORS VETERANS

PAUL A. CAMPBELL, 611TH ORDNANCE BASE ARMORED MAINTENANCE BATTALION, sent us a clipping from the Scranton Tribune regarding Wal-Mart's nationwide campaign to honor America's World War II veterans.

As you are aware there is currently a fund raising to obtain the \$100 million needed for erection of the World War II Monument. [At last report over \$70 million had been raised.] Wal-Mart has pledged the support of stores throughout the nation to raise the additional money needed for the memorial.

[Thanks for the information, Paul, we need more such good neighbors.]

303RD COMBAT ENGINEERS JOIN VBOB REUNION

Several members of the 303rd Combat Engineers met in conjunction with the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge at its meeting in September in Newport News, Virginia. Needless to say, we were delighted to have them. These men took part in the normal activities and also took some time off to be by themselves and enjoy each other. The reunion had a few glitches due to the recent flooding in the area, but all seemed willing to make the necessary adjustments. ■

OPEN WIDE...

Remember the November, 1999, issue asked for stories about your encounters with dentists? Well, we heard from the gentleman who prompted the inquiry. He's **ROBERT C. PRYOR, 2ND ARMORED DIVISION** and here is his story and others we received in response to the question:

I REMEMBER WHEN

I do not have a great action story but something happened that was quite an experience for me.

A few days after landing at Omaha Beach, I developed a tooth ache. I went to our medic and he sent me to headquarters of the battalion. The dentist had not arrived and they said I would have to go to the beach where he was at this time. Three more men were also having dental problems so we were given a jeep and directions to the beach area.

The four of us located the dentist. He explained that he could only do extractions due to his not having the equipment. He had a small metal case with some instruments in it. There was no dental chair, only a Jerry can to sit on. I decided to go first. I sat on the can and a young soldier (his assistant) held my head back. This dentist has the largest wrists and arms I had ever seen. While telling this story to Skip Skibniewski, of the 48th Medics, he said he knew this dentist and remembers his large arms and wrists.

There was a crunching sound and the dentist looked at me. He said he had some "bad luck." The tooth was broken off at the gum and the pieces had to come out.

I sat there while he took a pick and hammer and started working. Every few minutes I would push his hand away for a breather. After what seemed like an eternity, I felt I had enough of this. He looked around and brought out a bottle of cognac. I took a swig and he did the same. And he continued on with his work. He would rest and me too and then each of us took another swig and he would start back up again. He finally got all the pieces out and the bottle was empty. It was a good thing.

So the Doc said, "Next" and none of the soldiers volunteered. We all went back to our units. Seems like only yesterday.

Robert C. Pryor
2 ARMDD

MORE TRIPS TO THE DENTIST

Upon reading "A Trip to the Dentist" in the November, 1999, issue, it reminded me of an experience I had somewhere in Belgium during WWII.

A dentist came to our unit and we all had to line up and he checked our teeth. I and several others had a cavity. The dentist said he was going to fill our teeth right then. We had no electricity so we wondered how he was going to power the drill.

A corporal, assisting the dentist, went to their jeep and returned with what looked like the back half of a bicycle with a flexible metal cord and drills attached to it. The corporal sat on the seat and peddled which in turn provided the speed for the drill. The dentist would call out faster, slower, stop, or go and the corporal would adjust accordingly. We laughed a lot at each other, but it got the job done.

Travers E. Dowling
XVI CORPS

A FILLING OR A COURT MARSHAL?

January 1945 after coming out of the final Bulge battle, we got the opportunity to go to the rear for much needed medical checkups, dental work, etc. As I had a tooth that was bothering

me, I took advantage of the opportunity. We climbed into the back of a 6 x 6 GI truck and rode about two hours to reach the compound. I then sat a couple of hours waiting for my turn to see the dentist. As usual, the army went in alphabetical order and as my name started with "T," I was nearly always near the end of the list and it was nearly lunch time when I was called in. I crawled into the chair and the dentist, a recent graduate I presumed, with polished 2nd lieutenant bars, took a look at my tooth and said, "That tooth needs a pretty good-sized filling so you'll have to come back after lunch." I told him that the truck was leaving right after lunch and that if I was going to get that tooth fixed that he would have to do it now. He still drug his feet and tried to get out of it. I argued some more and finally it came to a point that I got a little insulting, reminding him that I had missed a few lunches in the past month plus a few more things, better unsaid. He threatened me with court marshal. I said, "Go ahead, that might [small portion missing due to tearing in the mail]. He finally cooled off and agreed to fill the tooth, but while doing it he mumbled, "You'll probably only get back up there and get shot anyhow." I could have bit off his finger about then, but thought better of the idea. I got the satisfaction of getting the tooth filled, but he didn't spare the horses getting it done, nor was he very careful or gentle doing it.

O. Tveit
7 ARMDD 40 TK BN HQ

WALNETTO ANYONE?

The second night after we left Metz to go "north," I had two long-lasting experiences:

1. About 10 to 11 p.m., we were passed by a red 1940 Nash convertible--the exact type car my older brother had and used to let me borrow to go to high school football and basketball games in my senior high school year--1942-43. It really made me homesick.

2. Same night, I was chewing on a piece of caramel from our ration can, when the candy pulled a side filling out of one of my 12 year molars. Had to wait weeks until I was finally sent to the army dentist. He had a foot-powered grinding unit. He must have known what he was doing--I still have the filling he put in.

Many issues ago, you asked about pay incidents. My second pay day, while in basic, I had an experience that I have never forgotten. Our company commander was what appeared to an 18-year-old to be a mean, nasty, no non-sense captain. I went in, saluted, gave my serial number and name. he counted out my month's pay, which with deductions, came to about \$44. I saluted, and walked outside. Upon getting outside, I counted my money. I was \$20 short. What to do? I bravely held the money in my hand and waited for the line to go down. I marched back in, saluted, and gave my serial number and name and reported, "Sir, I am \$20 short." The captain and the 1st sergeant with him glared at me. He grabbed the money out of my hand, counted it, and then gave me another \$20 bill with the comment, "Soldier, this payroll better balance out!" Evidently it did but from then on, every time he saw me he seemed to glare at me.

George C. Hofstadter
26 INF 104 INF 1 AT BN HQ

ARE YOUR DUES CURRENT?
CHECK THE MAILING LABEL USED TO ADDRESS THIS NEWSLETTER TO YOU. THE DATE ON THE FIRST LINE ON THE FAR RIGHT IS THE DATE YOUR DUES WERE DUE.

NEW CHAPTER IN FLORIDA OFF TO A BOOMING START

Guess who's coming to dinner...George Fisher, of Palm Beach, signed a contract with a local restaurant guaranteeing 25 people for the purpose of discussing organizing a VBOB chapter...130 showed up. Thanks to cooperation from local newspapers and other media, George was inundated with telephone calls from veterans who wanted to take part.

George and his valuable assistant (his wife, Annette) got busy and turned the "little affair" into a gala, complete with color guard and a guest speaker--Clay Shaw, Member of Congress from the Southeast Florida legislative district. Retired General Al Irzyk (a major at the time with the 4th Armored Division, 8th Tank Battalion, Headquarters) also was a featured speaker, relating his experiences in the Battle of the Bulge in Bastogne. George introduced Irzyk by stating, "This could never happen in 1944--Al Irzyk had one star...I had one stripe...and we are having lunch together."



George Fisher, left, accepting a letter of recognition on behalf of the Florida Southeast Chapter, from Clay Shaw, Member of Congress.

The Palm Beach Post reported in a January 7, 2000, article by Douglas Kalajian: "In a battle-themed dining room at the 391st Bomb Squadron restaurant, they shook hands, introduced their wives, ate steak and chicken, showed off pictures of their grandchildren and compared golf scores.

"And they cried a bit.

"Tough as these guys still are, they couldn't help it. All around the room, conversations ended abruptly with the name of a lost pal, or the town where he fell. Voices cracked. Arms reached swiftly to brace shuddering shoulders."

Fisher circled the room "to rally the conversation back to full force. 'We've got to talk about this,' he said over and over. 'that's why we're here.'"

STATEN ISLAND CHAPTER PLANS BULGE MONUMENT

Over 200 veterans and members of their families met at Wolfe's Pond Park (New York) to commemorate the 55th Anniversary of

the onset of the Battle of the Bulge and to observe the site of the future Battle of the Bulge monument.

New York City Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern conducted the ceremony, stating that Wolfe's Pond Park, "overlooking the Atlantic Ocean, on the other side of which the battle was fought--was a fitting site for the commemoration and dedication of a monument that is to be built to honor Bulge veterans.

A sketch and model of the monument, designed by battle veteran Anthony Moody, was unveiled. City Councilman Stephen Fiala has pledged a total of \$275,00 for creation of the memorial.

The monument will consist of a circular plaza of paving stones collected from the battle site, with a polished black granite sculpture at its center. The triangular sculpture will be divided into 45 spaces, each inscribed with the logo or shoulder patch of each of the 45 military units that fought in the battle.

The plaza will be surrounded by a berm covered with white flowers emulating the snow-covered battleground. Evergreen trees, perhaps from the Ardennes, will surround the berm.

Many other dignitaries attended the ceremonies. ■

LAST HURRAH 745TH TANK BATTALION ASSOCIATION

We recently received the "Final Edition" of the 745th Tank Battalion newsletter. We will miss receipt of this informative newsletter and want to wish the members of that organization well.

Following is an excerpt from a chronology of the history of the 745th:

The battalion thought it might get a rest break when the Germans, in their last big gamble of the war, counterattacked through the Ardennes Forest with 24 divisions--10 of them tank divisions. The 745th rushed to setup defensive lines stretching east to west from Butgenbach to Weismes, Belgium, as part of the Big Red One. The German high command was betting on being able to capture our huge supply base to our rear in Liege, Belgium, and drive on to Antwerp--splitting the Allied front in two. The stubborn and remarkable defense put up by the vastly outnumbered 745th, along with the infantry regiments of the Big Red One, was key in stopping the entire German onslaught. By mid-January, 1945--the battalion had stubbornly held its ground and began destroying the remaining, retreating enemy forces. This battle was clearly the turning point in the war. The battle for Germany proper was now underway. The Nazis had gambled on surprise, better equipment, bad weather as cover, and superior numbers to throw the Allied back into France and possibly even off the continent. They had risked everything but had not counted on the fighting spirit of the Americans. Germany's military leaders began to realize all was lost and it was now merely a matter of time. We wish the members of the 745th God speed.

The more horrible a depersonalized scientific mass war becomes, the more necessary it is to find universal ideal motives to justify it.

JOHN DEWEY

HOW BELGIAN YOUNG MEN ARRIVED AND SUFFERED IN NORDHAUSEN CONCENTRATION CAMP

by Roger Hardy

When I was a boy some years before WWII, I had a school-mate called Rene Desmulliez. We were good friends sharing the same sport activities and attending the same reunions, etc. We lived in Templeuve, a village in the West of Belgium close to the French border.

We were invaded by the Germans on the 10th of May 1940. As they advanced in our country, all young men between 16 and 35 years old, received an order from our government to leave Belgium at once by any means and find our way to Belgian military camps that had been organized in the South of France. The reason for this is that we could have been taken as hostages by the Germans as had been the case in 1914-1918. The idea of the Belgian government was excellent. We would become the Belgian Army reserves and as it was believed the Germans would be stopped in the north of France as had happened in 1914 during the Battle of the Marne.

Unfortunately, the German thrust was not stopped. Belgium and France capitulated and we had no other resort than to return to Belgium where some of us succeeded in embarking to England. Rene and I returned home in the summer of 1940. We were 17 years old.

From mid-1942 onwards it became dangerous for young men of our age and older to attend public reunions and spectacles, movies, go to town, etc., because the Germans were starting to round up Belgian and French youth and in other occupied territories of Belgium. The German's recruiting campaign had failed and they needed workers badly for their armament factories in Germany and also for the construction of their *Atlantik Mauer* (Atlantic Wall) along the coast of Normandy.

I became a Resistance fighter in May 1942. I was under 18 years old. My friend Rene joined us a bit later. He got married in 1943. Many of us were summoned by the German Werbestelle to work in Germany. Rene and I did not obey such an order and from the summer of 1943 till the liberation of our country in September 1944, we were forced to find a refuge on isolated farms, trying not to be detected by the German patrols or Belgian traitors in the enemy's pay.

I was lucky enough to stay free and hidden during these long months. My friend Rene and his comrade Jean Coudou were reported to the Gestapo by a Belgian woman who did it for money. They both were captured by the Gestapo who came directly to the small hamlet of Templeuve where they had found shelter. They were imprisoned a few days in Tournai and sent to Germany along with others. Thanks to a Belgian young girl spying for the Resistance on the German Kommandantur in Tournai, it was rapidly made known the name of the woman informer who had denounced our two friends. The woman was captured and after a short trial, was sentenced to death by the Resistance.

Templeuve was liberated on the 3rd of September 1944 by a British regiment of reconnaissance called the Inns of Court of London. Tournai was liberated at the same time by the 30th US Infan-

try Division. Two or three days later the Belgian government arrived from London and one of their first decisions was to call the young men of Belgium to continue to fight with the Allies against the Nazis. Being an ex-resistance fighter I could have been exempt along with many of my comrades. However, I immediately enlisted as a war volunteer. I was then called to the colours and joined the 5th Belgian Battalion of Fusiliers who were just organizing in Charleroi on the 9th of October 1944. After a short but extensive training period, we were then sent to the Ardennes in the 1st US Army sector on the 13th of December. Three days later our battalion was engaged as a fighting unit in the operations against the Nazis in the Battle of the Bulge in the Stavelot and Malmedy areas.

We crossed the Rhine on a boat bridge in Koenigswinter between Bonn and Remagen at the end of March 1945. We were protecting the communication lines of the 1st US Army. On 8 May 1945, when the war in Europe ended, our battalion was spread along the Fulda and Werra Rivers in the southeast of Kassel. The Russians had arrived on the other side of the Werra river. As a Sergeant, I was in charge of the food supply and equipment for the security guardposts of my company in that area.

My assignment was to go each morning to our battalion HQ where I was given what I needed to perform my duty. This HQ was located in a castle in the town of Actenburg-an-der-Fulda about fifty miles from my company CP. While there, I heard that one of our companies attached to an American unit had discovered the horrors and atrocities at Buchenwald.

A few days later when I arrived in Rotenburg, I came across a friend of mine also from Templeuve named Albert Commine who was a member of our battalion HQ. He said, "Roger, guess who was brought here yesterday evening by one of our patrols." He then took me to a room where I found my friend Rene Desmulliez with his comrade, Jean Coudau. We all burst into tears.

After a while Rene and Jean who were lying on mattresses, started to tell me what had happened to them after their capture in our village. They had been sent to Nordhausen and made to work as slaves in Dora where they had suffered a lot but survived. When the Americans arrived in Nordhausen they both were very weak but so happy to be free. The Americans took good care of them and when they heard that they were Belgian soldiers they arranged transportation for them to be sent to Rotenburg.

While Rene was talking, I could not detach my eyes from his face, a face so hollow with eyes so deep in their sockets, in a skinny body. He was so happy to know that in a couple of hours he would return to Belgium with Jean in one of our battalion trucks. He said that after he arrived in Templeuve and after seeing his wife and little daughter who had been born after his capture, he would visit my parents.

Before returning to my company. I talked to Albert Commine insisting that Rene be examined by the Battalion doctor. Albert told me that Rene had said he would see a doctor when he arrived in Templeuve. Later, we understood why he had refused to see the HQ doctor. He feared that he would be sent to a hospital before he could see his family. Before being admitted to a hospital he wanted so much to see his family and in particular, his little daughter whom he did not know yet.

Two days later Rene Desmulliez and Jean Coudou arrived in Templeuve. Unfortunately two weeks later Rene died after suffering terribly. He had exanthematic typhus. (Continued on Page 29)

FOX HOLES AND CHRISTMAS OF LONG AGO REMEMBERED...

By Phillip A. Stark
84th Infantry Division
334th Infantry Regiment
Company A

[The following article appeared in The Railsplitter--newsletter of the 80th Infantry Division. It is an abbreviated version of an account first written by Phillip Stark in 1948.]

It was Christmas Eve, 1944, and our Company held a position just west of the Belgium town of Verdennes. As Wib Theuerkauf (my 2nd gunner on our 30 caliber light machine gun) and I sat huddled in our fox hole listening to the sounds of German soldiers singing and celebrating in the town, a runner informed us that we would be attacking at about midnight to take the hill 300 or 400 yards directly in front of us. My machine gun squad was to go with the 1st rifle platoon and Howard Shore's squad (the other machine gun) was to go with the 2nd.

While the heavy pounding of the enemy by our artillery was still going on, we took off, running blindly (as usual) and trying to dodge the German machine gun tracers we could see, yet knowing there were others we couldn't see. We reached the top of the hill too soon and sustained casualties from our own artillery.

We had been told that we would find fox holes at the top of the hill because the position had been previously occupied by our troops. We found them but unfortunately there were dead GIs in each one. So we moved back a bit and dug furiously for the safety that a hole can give. Because we immediately ran into shale rock, we dug till dawn and, even then, we were only just barely able to get my 6'6" frame below the surface (an then only in a tangled position).

Christmas morning was beautiful, clear and crisp. We persuaded ourselves that this day would be different, that war might be set aside in honor of the birth of the Prince of Peace. And so I walked down to the holes of the dead GIs in front of us to pick up useful items strewn around their holes. As I bent to pick up an unused aid packet, my hair literally stood on end--I saw movement in the hole. I had been trying not to look at the mutilated bodies but here was what I thought was a dead body, turning his head to look up at me. He must have been lying in that position ever since the Germans overran this position a couple of days before. He pulled himself out from under another (really) dead body and asked me what outfit I was from. He ignored the obvious hole in his leg and struggled out of the hole. I quickly knew that he was not wholly "with it."

At this precise moment a German armored car, escaping from the town on our left, drove right across our front and opened fire on me and my new friend. Howard Shore, who had been watching my little drama, was walking down to join me when he was hit in the leg (literally somersaulting him in the air). When the aid man came to help Howard, I send the other wounded GI with him (still ignoring the hole in his leg).

For the rest of the day the Germans blasted our position and the spirit of Christmas. Their purpose was clear--Germans retreating from Verdennes and crossing our front had to have cover. As each German vehicle was hit by our anti-tank guns, the riders in it jumped out and ran for the woods far to our front. I fired (with tracers) till the rifleman in the next hole (with an 0-

3 rifle and telescopic sights) told me they were not moving. It was a bloody Christmas for us in 1944.

The only good news for us that day was that a rifleman nearby had somehow come across a pick ax and gave it to us so that we were able to penetrate the rock to the extent that we could kneel in our hole.

Just before sun-up the next morning, at a time when the front had suddenly become very quiet. Wib (who was on guard) anxiously whispered "Phil." It was just getting light and we could see many silent figures coming up the slope toward us. They had traversed the field in front of us in total darkness and were not more than 100 yards away. I slammed my gun in full cock and opened fire, pinning them down quickly.

I had to fire and then duck to avoid the return fire that my muzzle flashes drew. Once when I was up, a bullet pierced the ammunition box to the left of my gun and continued through the material of my overcoat shoulder, but didn't touch me. Wib could not keep down and as the duel continued, a bullet went through his helmet, his wool knit cap and out again, only pulling his hair out through the holes.

We had been so completely absorbed by our continual fire fight that we had failed to see three German tanks heading right for our hole. We yelled frantically that tanks were coming but there was probably nobody there to hear, our troops were either dead or had retreated.

We had no choice but to keep on firing, the enemy was too close and we would have been cut down in an instant had we attempted to run. We heard tank sounds to our rear and, for a fleeting moment, thought that friendly tanks were coming to our rescue.

I was firing when Wib came up to take his last look at what was happening. A bullet hit him in the middle of the forehead. I was now alone and knew that I too was going to die. Wib had been there to help reload after the first "ammo" belt was gone, but now I was almost at the end of the second belt and I knew that it would take too long to reload alone. If I stopped firing for only a moment, the enemy would overrun me.

I was firing the last of that second belt when I felt that my head had been torn from my shoulders. I now know that a bullet had ricocheted off the left side of my gun, had broken up and smashed into the left side of my face. I found myself in the bottom of the hole, my head in bloodied hands. This had to be the end.

I lifted up to look out and saw an explosion on, or in front of, the middle tank. It must have been our own artillery. Whatever it was, it saved my life. There was a lot of smoke and almost instinctively I scrambled out of the hole and ran for the rear. I ran right into a burning German tank--the tank we had heard and thought might be coming to save us.

I continued to run almost blindly over the hill and found two GIs who bandaged my head. Then we all took off across the open flat terrain toward the woods from which we had attacked on Christmas Eve. By this time, the German tanks had reached the top of the hill and were firing at us as we ran. I believe that one of the other fellows was hit, but to stop was to die.

Needless to say, I reached the woods and our troops. My memory from here on is dim--my head was "splitting." Aid men picked me up and sent me off to what proved to be six hospitals in two and one-half months and full recovery (except for my permanently blind left eye). I have always wondered what miracle, what twist of fate, allowed me to survive in face of such odds, when so many others died. ■

I&R PLATOON

394TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

99TH INFANTRY DIVISION

by B. Merrell Frazer, Jr., J.D.

[The following article appeared in the 6th issue, 1999, of the Checkerboard, the newsletter of the 99th Infantry Division Association. It is an excerpt of a manuscript about the I&R Platoon's valorous firefight at Lanzerath, tentatively titled "Hold at All Costs."]

It was Lyle Bouck's I&R Platoon that met Hitler's first intrusive strike in the early morning hours of December 16, 1944. Fighting against overwhelming odds at better than 50 to one (the odds at the Alamo were only 32 to one!) Bouck and his 17 platoon soldiers on line, joined by four members of the 371st Field Artillery forward observation team under Lt. Warren Springer, threw a block into advancing Falschirmjäger (parachute) troopers, repulsing attack after attack. Bouck pleaded for artillery support but none came.

The big guns of regimental and division artillery were busy trying to put out brushfires up and down the 99th Division's assigned terrain which ran from Hofen in the north, a small village adjacent to Monschau, all the way south to the Losheim Gap, a distance of more than 35 kilometers. The fighting 99th was given an area over which three divisions should have been assigned.

German Wehrmacht and Waffen SS Armies poured through thinly spread American troops, their weakened and badly confused American pockets of resistance melting away before the Nazi juggernaut. Many soldiers fled, abandoning guns, artillery, piles of ammunition and petrol, even their own platoon buddies.

But others, like Bouck's men, fought a tenacious holding action. German dead were piling up in ghastly accumulation across the snow-covered slope, attesting to superior firepower of the well-camouflaged platoon's guns.

According to one German sergeant major, Hans Brodt, who met with I&R Platoon Sergeant Bill Slake after the war, the I&R defenders at Lanzerath had surprised the young Falschirmjäger troops with both a deadly and accurate aegis of fire. Slipping and sliding on the snowy hillside slopes, thwarted by an invidious barbed wire fence partially hidden and thus almost impenetrable, German soldiers wearing winter long coats and laden with an assortment of military accoutrements, were easy targets for Bouck's sharp-shooting I&R Platoon.

The I&R Platoon sergeant at Lanzerath, William Slake, remained in the army after the war and visited Hans Brodt at a small German village near Nuremberg where Brodt was then a bartender at a small bierstube. Brodt had captured Slake when the I&R position was overrun at twilight and the Americans had exhausted their ammunition. Brodt told Slake that on the morning after the battle at Lanzerath and after Bouck, Slake, and the other captured platoon members with their wounded had been marched away to German Stalags, he had walked back to the American position on the hillock to view the carnage of his young soldiers.

At the barbed wire fence in front of the foxhole where Slake and Risto Milosovich had fought, Brodt told Slake he counted nine bodies over, under, and alongside the restraining barbed

wire. Then slowly walking up the hill to the bunker where Slake and Milosovich had emerged, Brodt said he counted 95 bodies sprawled grotesquely in the snow.

This meant a total of 104 German troopers had fallen before the guns of Slake, "Tsak" James, and Milosovich.

Indeed, slain German Falschirmjäger bodies lay in great heaps before the I&R position. Milosovich had poured a deadly stream of fire from his .30 caliber machine gun. Slake, carrying a carbine, had manned the jeep-mounted .50 caliber weapon from time to time, changing places with Tsakanikas (Bill James). Slake and Risto Milosovich shared a foxhole on the left flank of the platoon's defensive perimeter with an almost unobstructed view of the road in Lanzerath upon which the German troopers marched and sang. Suddenly, the German column was struck by a hail of bullets. It was a calamity for the young, untrained German boys, many of whom were only 17 years of age.

From their vantage point, Milosovich and Slake had an almost perfect view down the hill to the Belgian country road that passed through Lanzerath toward Losheimergraben, a small hamlet just a few hundred yards inside the Belgian frontier and about three kilometers to the north.

Lanzerath was a tiny hamlet of less than a dozen houses, some attached barns, two small cafes, the Scholzen and the Palm, and the omnipresent German Lutheran church with its ubiquitous steeple.

Before World War I this area had been part of the German Reich. The Treaty of Versailles awarded the area to Belgium as reparations but Hitler took it all back again when the Wehrmacht overran Belgium in 1940.

On the northern periphery of Lanzerath--yet still visible from the I&R defensive position--at a distance of about 175 to 200 yards to the east of the Americans--were two German customs houses on the east side of the road which led through the thick Ardennes Forest to Losheimergraben. About 200 yards north of the customs houses, a road turned westward toward Buchholz Station and Honsfeld.

Bouck's platoon occupied a hillock, well chosen by the U.S. 2nd Infantry Division which had occupied the area when the Germans were pushed back across the Siegfried Line in September, 1944. Second Division cadres had erected a formidable perimeter of comfortable bunkers, well camouflaged, just inside the timberline of a tall Belgian fir forest. The bunker firing embrasures faced eastward toward Lanzerath. In the distance and beyond the dragon-teeth west wall, the Siegfried Line, was Germany itself, about three to five kilometers away.

Bouck and his men immediately set to, improving the defenses of the I&R position by cutting timber and placing heavy 10-inch fir logs interlaced atop the foxholes for added protection against overhead bursting artillery and mortar shells.

The overlay of fir logs was designed to protect the young American soldiers against powerful German artillery shells that sprayed deadly bits of jagged, twisted steel more than 40 yards from point of explosion.

Unaware were members of Bouck's I&R Platoon, the date was December 10 and they had less than a week to complete their defenses before Hitler's great western counter-offensive--"Autumn Mist"--would change both history and their lives forever.■

Make your reservation for Colorado Springs.

COLIN POWELL'S TRIBUTE TO THE AMERICAN G.I.

[The following article appeared in the newsletter "The Flash" of the 78th (Lightning) Infantry Division Veterans Association.]

Time Magazine prepared a list of the ten most influential people of the century in each field to mark the end of the century. The ten most influential scientists, politicians, entertainers, sports figures, musicians, artists and industrialists. This month they published the ten most influential people (overall) of the century. They named "the American GI" as the most influential person of the century. It is the only one that is not a single individual. General Powell wrote the introduction to the award.

As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I referred to the men and women of the armed forces as "G.I.s." It got me in trouble with some of my colleagues at the time. Some several years earlier, the Army had officially excised the term as an unfavorable characterization derived from the designation "government issue." Sailors and Marines wanted to be known as Sailors and Marines. Airmen, notwithstanding their origins as a rib of the Army, they wished to be called simply airmen. Collectively, they were blandly referred to as "service members."

I persisted in using G.I.s and found I was in good company. Newspapers and television shows used it all the time. The most famous and successful government education program was known as the G.I. Bill, and it still uses that title for a newer generation of veterans. When you added one of the most common boy's names to it, you got G.I. Joe and the name of the most popular boy's toy ever, the G.I. Joe Action Figure. And let's not forget G.I. Jane.

G.I. is a World War II term that two generations later continues to conjure up the warmest and proudest memories of a noble war that pitted pure good against pure evil and good triumphed. The victors in that war were the American G.I.s, the Willies and the Joes, the farmer from Iowa and the steelworker from Pittsburgh who stepped off a landing craft into the hell of Omaha Beach. The G.I. was the wisecracking kid Marine from Brooklyn who clawed his way up a deadly hill on a Pacific Island. He was a black fighter pilot escorting white bomber pilots over Italy and Germany, proving that skin color had nothing to do with skill or courage. He was native Japanese-American infantryman released from his own country's concentration camp to join the fight. He was a nurse relieving the agony of a dying teenager. He was a petty officer standing on the edge of a heaving aircraft carrier with two signal paddles in his hands, helping guide a dive-bomber pilot back onto the deck. They were Americans. They reflected our diverse origins. They were the embodiment of the American spirit of courage and dedication. They were truly "a people's army," going forth on a crusade to save democracy and freedom to defeat tyrants,



to save oppressed peoples and to make their families proud of them. They were the Private Ryans, and they stood firm in the Thin Red Line.

For most of those G.I.s, World War II was the adventure of their lifetime. Nothing they would ever do in the future would match their experiences as the warriors of democracy, saving the world from its own insanity. You can still see them in every Fourth of July color guard, their fait faltering but ever proud. Their forebears went by other names: doughboys, Yanks, buffalo soldiers, Johnny Reb, Rough Riders, But "G.I." will be forever lodged in the consciousness of our nation to apply to them all.

The G.I. carried the value system of the American people. The G.I.s were the surest guarantee of America's commitment. For more than 200 years, they answered the call to fight the nation's battles. They never went forth as mercenaries on the road to conquest. They went forth as reluctant warriors, as citizen soldiers. They were as gentle as they were vicious in battle. I've had survivors of Nazi concentration camps tell me the joy they experienced as the G.I.s liberated them...America had arrived! I've had a wealthy Japanese businessman come into my office and tell me what it was like for him as a child in 1945 to await the arrival of the dreaded American beasts, and instead meet a smiling G.I. who gave him a Hershey bar. And in thanks, the businessman was donating a large sum of money to the USO. After thanking him, I gave him a souvenir, a Hershey bar I had autographed. He took it and began to cry.

The 20th century can be called many things, but it was most certainly a century of war. The American G.I.s helped defeat Fascism and Communism. They came home in triumph from the ferocious battlefields of World Wars I and II. In Korea and Vietnam they fought just as bravely as any of their predecessor, but no triumph receptions awaited them at home. They soldiered on through the twilight struggles of the cold war and showed what they were capable of in Desert Storm. The American people took them into their hearts again.

In this century hundreds of thousands of G.I.s died to bring to the beginning of the 21st Century the victory of democracy as the ascendant political system on the face of the earth. The G.I.s were willing to travel far away and give their lives, if necessary, to secure the rights and freedoms of others. Only a nation such as ours, based on a firm moral foundation, could make such a request of its citizens. And the G.I.s wanted nothing more than to get the job done and then return home safely. All they asked for in repayment from those they freed was the opportunity to help them become part of the world of democracy...and just enough land to bury their fallen comrades, beneath simple white crosses and Stars of Davids.

The volunteer G.I.s of today stand watch in Korea, the Persian Gulf, Europe and the dangerous terrain of the Balkans. We must never see them as mere hirelings, off in a corner of our society. They are our best, and we owe them our full support and our sincerest thanks.

As this century closes, we look back to identify the great leaders and personalities of the past one hundred years. We do so in a world still troubled. But full of promise. That promise was gained by the young men and women of America who fought and died for freedom. Near the top of any listing of the most important people of the 20th Century must stand, in singular honor, "The American G.I." ■

DARK DECEMBER: A MEMOIR OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

**By Charles E. Mills
7th Armored Division
Headquarters, G-2**

Do you remember, veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, the Belgian Ardennes and how cold it was that December of 1944? Did you remember how our teeth chattered almost in rhythm with the chatter of machine guns that inscribed with tracers, a hyphenated red line across the blackness of the winter night?

Do you remember the deep snow and spongy ground that made almost impossible the movement of tanks and artillery and trucks as we sought to place them and men into positions to stop the enemy's drive to the Meuse and the encirclement which threatened us?

Do you remember the overcast skies that prohibited aircraft from flying in our support, until, finally, on December 23rd the clouds parted and Allied fighters and bombers joined the fray to our shouts and cheers as we saw their white vapor trails in the blue sky?

Of course you remember! The Germans called the operation "Watch on the Rhine," we called it the Battle of the Bulge, and how can anyone who was there at the onset or was eventually sucked into the maelstrom, forget the agony brought on by the pressures of the enemy whose sudden counter-attack into the Ardennes had breached the thin line of defenders facing them on the Schnee Eifel?

We were ignorant of the massing of enemy armor that had taken place weeks before, of the twelve panzer and eighteen infantry divisions comprising two panzer and one infantry armies Hitler relied upon to re-establish his position on the western front. We had stretched too thin the divisions in the line in what we called the "Quiet Sector," suited for acclimatizing to the rigors of war, units just arrived and not yet in active combat and units sent there to rest and refit. We were totally unprepared for what happened on December 16th.

This is not an historical document. It is a tribute and a call to remembrance. It would be unfair to try and list here all the units which fought in the Battle of the Bulge lest even one worthy of mention should be inadvertently omitted. Histories have named them and we, who were there, remember them well. Some 45 units in their entirety or in part participated in this the greatest land battle ever fought by American forces. And it is on this 55th anniversary of the Battle that we pause to remember the significance of that winter's actions and the valor and sacrifices made by those who withstood the cold and misery and peril to blunt the thrust of enemy armor and restore the line.

Names of places that Americans seldom heard before World War II are now commonplace in our memories, having been indelibly imprinted on our minds by the heroic action of selfless and devoted soldiers and airmen who were there: Malmedy, Bastogne, St. Vith, Houffalize, Manhay, Marche, Clervoux to mention only a few. The gallantry of Allied arms reached its loftiest heights in the Battle of the Bulge and with its momentum, carried the Allies on to ultimate victory.

Each veteran of the Battle has his own memories of that Dark December and tells his personal stories which immortalize the valor of those who died there. We would be an ungrateful

nation if we did not recognize the deeds of bravery and sacrifice made in the Battle of the Bulge, as well as in all the other battles where of necessity sacrifices were made.

Do you remember the Miracle of the Ardennes, that freezing blast of Siberian air that swept the battlefield December 22nd? Only because of that miracle were many of us able to withdraw with our tanks and guns and half-tracks over now frozen ground which but hours before were impassable quagmires. But having withdrawn, the fighting was not yet over, and the battle raged on into the new year, 1945. Cities and towns once lost were eventually retaken, the battle front was restored to its original contour and tired units were at last able to lick their wounds and enjoy a deserved respite from the grueling month-long fighting.

Today there stand in the Ardennes many monuments erected in honor and in memory of the valiant Allied warriors who fought there. And there, too, are still the indentations in the earth that mark the foxholes of more than half a century ago, once used to protect the men who crouched there in defiance of Hitler's bid for victory. Those remnants of the past are also monuments of their own, memorials to the valor of the men who used them.

Do we remember? Of course we do, because it was an epic moment in our lives. America must remember also, for the Ardennes Campaign, known best as the Battle of the Bulge, helped preserve democracy for our nation and the rest of the world!■

HARDSHIPS AND SUFFERING

(Continued from Page 6)

ran right by the house, firing into it as they passed. We desperately needed anti-tank weapons, but had none. When we asked if anyone had any rifle grenades I realized that I had had the launching attachment for them in my overcoat pocket; the coat was now in the snowy forest where we had discarded them. The lieutenant said, "I'll give the Silver Star to anyone who knocks out a tank." I tried dropping grenades from the second story as tanks passed beneath the windows, but they only exploded harmlessly and did no damage.

In time there were only four of us left unwounded, including the lieutenant. We knew that the SS were not taking any prisoners so we gave what ammo we could to the wounded manning the windows and we prepared to break out of the house. As we started out the door a machine gun riddled it, killing one man. The three of us were forced back inside. The lieutenant decided to try a different door and said, "Fix bayonets!" I thought he was crazy since there were tanks and machine guns out there but snapped the blade onto my rifle just the same. We ran out the door. A shell exploded just then, tossing me against a wall as well as the other GI who slumped to the floor, dead. My right hand was nailed to the stock of my rifle by a long sliver of shrapnel. Another piece entered just below my left knee. I let go of my rifle, allowing the shrapnel to pull through, then plucked the other piece from my knee and ran like the devil.

Only the lieutenant and I made it out of the house. We came across another group of GIs and their medic bandaged my hand and sent me on to a casualty collection station which sent me to a field hospital where I met my friend, Joe Guajardo, who had been evacuated with frozen feet. He and what was left of my squad thought I had been killed. Although I didn't know it, the war was over for me. I was still nineteen.■

REFLECTIONS

55th Anniversary Remembrance

BATTLE OF THE BULGE

15 December 1999

by Joseph F. Zimmer

Good evening: On this 12th Gala for the VBOBHF, here we are again; another December is upon us. Autumn has faded and the cold winter days are ahead. Frank Sinatra introduced a song on his 50th birthday, *It was a very good year*. In its singing, he phrases the words "in the autumn of our years." We have been in that juncture of our lives for sometime now. As we walk in our final years our voices are lost in the quiet of the land we will leave behind. It is a land we helped make free 55 years ago.

We veterans know that December brings winter, snow, Christmas, and Hanukkah. December has many meanings and memories galore for us. This is our last meeting of this Twentieth Century, closing out a millennium and thinking ahead to the Third millennium, a new century, and our destiny.

It was Homer who said, *Men grow tired of sleep, love, singing and dancing, sooner than war*. Every soldier, sailor, airman, or marine thinks God is on his side, particularly when they survive.

Historians with their research and fact-digging hopefully use the pen as the envoy of the heart. The war artist washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life. Most combat men's memory is their library. Historians have labeled WWII as the Good War. We veterans know better. There is no good war. There are good reasons to fight, causes worth dying for. But again, there are no good wars. All wars are lethal folly.

It was Homer who said: "Men grow tired of sleep, love, singing and dancing, sooner than war."

There is no doubt we have furnished a large part of the genetic pool of the last two thirds of this closing century. Think of that in these times of cloning, genetic engineering, and science's tinkering with Mother Nature. We are legend—yet we are quite different from most legends, because generally, legends are developed by writers who, for whatever reason, often make up much of what they write about. Not so with us, however, for the road we traveled was real, profound, genuine, and authentic, and did not need any embellishment, for it was there to see for all who took the time to examine its frightening paths and consequences. It is the end game of this Twentieth Century.

Many years ago, *White Christmas*, a song written by Irving Berlin, and *I'll Be Home for Christmas*, by Walter Kent, Kim Gannon, and Buck Ram, were sung or heard by Americans around the world. The season has never been the same since to us and our families because of the Battle of the Bulge. The beautiful winter whitewashed landscape of the Ardennes Forest saw bravery, courage, men at our best. Certainly there were five or six things we did better than the enemy we faced, and used that horizontal strength to accomplish our victory.

Like a ritual, we often turn to times that were better because of what we became. Our reunions, our chapter meetings, help us

focus again and heighten our desire, to the best of our abilities, to assure the preservation of the distinctive valor and sacrifice, ever present, on the battlefield of this pivotal World War II battle. What a debt we owe to our organizational leaders; our ten national presidents, one, a principal founder Clyde Boden and William Hemphill both now deceased; our chapter presidents throughout this great land, and other officials; our historical foundation, all of whom since 1981, have dedicated themselves to the noble task of this remarkable leadership. We wish our new National President, John Dunleavy, well in his new role.

At the close of this U.N. Year of the Elderly, as the calendar slips into the last days of 1999 and the Twentieth Century ends, many of us have an obsession of what we experienced—a reenactment of events and happenings. It nurtures our strength. How many times, even unconsciously, did we use our experience to overcome some trial, pain, agony, and thus find success, solace, and comfort? What a year for us at this 55th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, the year of our monument at Ft. Meade, Maryland, Ft. Monroe, Virginia, for example and other monuments such as the latest one at Orlando, Florida, and others throughout our country and overseas.

Let us never forget the rows of crosses and Stars of David. We have the continuing gift of life. Let us treasure it in its present quality. When our honored dead made the supreme sacrifice, they each carried in their clutched hand only what they had given away—a valuable and splendid life, *unfulfilled*. The French have a saying "la creme de la creme." That is what all of us are, especially those who gave their last full measure of devotion.

Every year the sea, winds, rains, and nature continue to model and remodel the areas we fought through. The profiles are at the mercy of the waves, tides, and weather. The cliffs erode, the trees fall, bringing with them clay, rocks, and timber; all that is permanent and remains are the legends of bravery, courage and sacrifice. This is why we have come here in order to foster the idea that honor is more important than death itself. All wars are a military problem; a political problem, and as war goes on, it becomes clearly a moral problem. Some of the strongest currents of American history and yes, Western Civilization, came together on the battleground of the Battle of the Bulge. We who were witnesses to all of this will never think the same nor be the same. Let us continue to be strengthened by our presence here. Godspeed to us all and Happy Holidays. May those who died in battle, and those who survived, and are now deceased find that peace which this world cannot give. In this new century and new millenium shortly upon us, may their memory and ours, and what we all did, never be extinguished so that future generations hold us in awe and reverence.

IT'S A SMALL WORLD

ALBERT A. MALLIS, 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION, 505TH REGIMENT, COMPANY B, visited the Bastogne Monument last fall and witnessed five buses filled with 101st Airborne troopers and guests. Would you believe that among them was a buddy from his home town (Tucson)—JOHNNY GIBSON.

War makes strange giant creatures out of us little routine men who inhabit the earth.

ERNIE PYLE

KEY NOTE SPEECH

Brig. Gen. William E. Carlson, USA (Ret)

Dedication

Battle of Bulge Monument

December 16, 1999

Lake Eola Park, Florida

It was the 16th of September, 1944, Adolf Hitler had summoned a group of his senior officers to his study in the huge, underground bunker in the Wolf's Lair, Hitler's field headquarters, located deep in a pine forest in East Prussia.

Those summoned were his closest and most trusted military advisors. Among them was only one who wore the red stripes of the German General Staff. He was the head of the Operations Staff of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, General Alfred Jodl.

The officers were waiting when Hitler entered. Taking a seat, Hitler instructed Jodl to sum up the situation on the Western Front.

During the briefing, Jodl noted that there was one area of particular concern where the Americans were attacking and where the Germans had almost no troops. That area was the region of Belgium and Luxembourg called the Ardennes.

At the word "Ardennes," Hitler suddenly ordered Jodl to stop the briefing. There was a long pause. Then with firmness in his voice, Hitler said, "I shall go on the offensive here!" and he slapped his hand down on the map--"Here, out of the Ardennes! The objective is Antwerp!"

With those words Hitler set in motion preparations for a battle that was to assume epic proportions; the greatest German attack in the West since the campaign of 1940.

Hitler named this Operations Plan "Wacht am Rhein." He personally selected this name to imply a defensive operation, rather than an offensive operation, in order to deceive the Allies.

During the planning, the German General Staff made numerous changes to Hitler's original concept for the operation. When the battle began, the German code name for the operation was "Autumn Mist."

A split second after 5:30 a.m. on Saturday, December the 16th, an American soldier manning an observation post high on top of a water tower in the Village of Hosingen telephoned his company commander. He reported that in the distance on the German side he could see a strange phenomenon: countless flickering pinpoints of light. Within a few seconds both he and his company commander had an explanation. They were the muzzle flashes of over 2,000 German artillery pieces.

The early morning stillness of the fog-shrouded forest was suddenly shattered with the thunderclap of a massive artillery barrage landing on the Americans.

Operation Autumn Mist was underway. The onslaught had begun. The Americans called it the "Battle of the Bulge."

The Battle of the Bulge lasted from the 16th of December, 1944, until the 25th of January, 1945. It was the greatest battle ever fought by the United States Army.

More than a million men participated in this battle including 600,000 American soldiers, 500,000 Germans, and 55,000 British. The American military force consisted of a total of three Armies with 33 divisions. While the German military force consisted to two Panzer Armies with 29 divisions. More than 120,000 Germans were killed, wounded or captured during the battle. Each side lost over 800 tanks.

Wars are planned by old men in council rooms far from the battlefield. But at the end of the most grandiose plans of the highest-ranking generals is the soldier walking the point or manning the outposts. The monument we dedicate today is a monument to those soldiers.

The real story of the Battle of the Bulge is the story of those soldiers and the intense combat action of the small units--the squads, the platoons and the companies--and the soldiers who filled their ranks.

These are the men who make up the fighting strength of the divisions, engaged the Germans in combat and suffered the casualties.

Battalion commanders and company commanders--young men, tough, battle-wise and toil worn. Fuzzy-cheeked lieutenants, grizzly NCO's, and seasoned troopers; battle-hardened and disciplined in automatic habits of combat never learned in school. And green replacements, fresh off the ships from home, marched off into battle for the first time and in their hearts was fear of the unknown. Around their necks hung their dog tags and rosaries. On their heads was the steel pot and in their pocket was a picture of the girl back home.

Surprised, stunned and not understanding what was happening to him, the American soldier nevertheless held fast--he was as tenacious as the old junkyard dog until he was overwhelmed by the German onslaught, or until his commanders ordered him to withdraw.

The battle was a very personal fight for them. Concerned with the fearful and consuming task of fighting and staying alive, those men did not think of the battle in terms of the big picture represented on the situation maps at higher headquarters. They knew only what they could see and hear in the chaos of the battle around them. They knew and understood the earth for which they fought, the advantage of holding the high ground and the protection of the trench or foxhole.

They could distinguish the sounds of the German weffers and the screaming sound of incoming German 88s. And they knew the fear of German artillery rounds falling around them without pattern in the snow. They knew the satisfying sound of friendly artillery shells passing overhead. They were reassured by the sudden stabs of flame in the night as friendly artillery belched bullets into the air, spreading a glow of flickering light above the blackened trees of the snow-covered forest.

They knew the overwhelming loneliness of the battlefield, the feeling of despair, confusion and the uncertainty that prevails in units in retreat.

They knew first-hand the violent pounding of the heart, the cold sweat, the trembling of the body and the stark terror that mortal combat brings. Even Mother Nature was their enemy with bitterly cold weather and over-cast skies. The days were short--daylight at 8 and darkness by 4. The nights were long and bitterly cold. Snow, knee-deep, covered the battleground. Overcast skies and heavy fog shrouded the snow-covered limbs of the fir trees in the dark forest. GIs, their bodies numb, were blue-lipped and chilled to the bone.

At night, the German ground assault was assisted by artificial moonlight, created by giant German searchlights bouncing their light off the low-hanging clouds casting an eerie, ghostly light in the fog, over the snow-covered field of battle. Other nights were ablaze with more flame and noise than one thought possible for man to create.

For a brief moment in history, those men held their nation's destiny in their hands. In the end they did not fail us. They prevailed and the fires of hell were extinguished. They blew the trumpets that tumbled the walls. Their's was the face of victory. Super heroes--super patriots. Their legacy--victory in the greatest battle ever fought by the United States Army.

But the cost of victory was high. Young Americans answered the angel's trumpet call and were sacrificed on the altar of the god of war--brave heroes whose valor in many cases died unrecognized with them on the battlefield. Young warriors whose names the grim reaper carved on marble tombstones across our land. It was a time of great sacrifice and in most cases the dead were hardly more than boys.

Nineteen thousand new Gold Stars were hung in the windows back home.

Mothers who lost their sons.

Wives who lost their husbands.

And children who lost their fathers.

Over 23,000 American soldiers were captured during the heat of battle. Prisoners of war who were forced to serve behind barbed wire, in silence and with courage, each in his own way, until the war ended.

Purple Hearts were awarded by the thousands. The snows turned red with American blood.

(continued on next page)

COLEMAN KEY NOTE ADDRESS

(Continued from Page 28)

The wounds of 81,000 young Americans in that battle left the "red badge of courage" on the battlefield of the Ardennes.

We are reminded of what their journey though life has left behind for us; a great nation, a great state and a city beautiful with freedom and prosperity unknown in the annals of history.

Today, in the quiet of an autumn breeze blowing across Lake Eola, we are gathered here to dedicate a monument and pay tribute to the men this monument represents.

As you look at the monument placed in this beautiful park, also look around you. Look at the old warriors gathered here--they were the vibrant youth of that time--men who were there on that battlefield 55 years ago today. Men like:

Bob Stevenson (one of those damned engineers), an accolade from the German SS Colonel Peiper, about our engineers for blowing bridges and building obstacles at every turn and bend in the road, obstacles that slowed the advance of his SS Panzer column. Bob has with him today his WWII helmet that he wore during that battle, a helmet with a jagged shrapnel hole in the back of it, a helmet that probably saved him from the scythe of the grim reaper.

And Jim McKeanney, a mortar platoon sergeant in the 101st Airborne Division who just days before had received a battlefield commission while fighting in Holland. As a new lieutenant leading a platoon in the defense of Bastogne, he and his platoon stood as firm as the solid granite pedestal of the monument we dedicate today. To this day, he bears the scars of the wounds he received in that battle.

Young American men, hardly more than boys, men such as Harry Meisel and Earl K. Wood, our Orange County Tax Collector, men who wear an Ardennes Battle Star on their European Campaign ribbon for their participation in the battle.

And Angels of Mercy, such as Lieutenant Evelyn Gilbery, an Army Nurse, who went to sleep at night sobbing, thinking about the mangled bodies of the young American soldiers in the field hospital that she had cared for that day.

Men like the lone soldier in Chet Morgan's outfit, digging a foxhole atop a small knoll beside a road. A vehicle loaded with fleeing American soldiers came speeding down the road heading for the rear. The vehicle stopped and the soldiers hollered to him, "The Germans are coming! Come on we have room for you!" He looked up and in the words his mother never taught him replied, "You can stop now because the Germans aren't going pass this position while I'm alive! This is the 82nd Airborne Division area."

These soldiers, and the thousands of others like them, are the soldiers who stood their ground in the days when the heavens were falling and the battlefield was in flames with all the fire and noise humanly possible for over a million warriors to create. These are the men who in the hours when the earth's foundation shook like an earthquake, stood their ground.

These are the men who followed duty's call and lived the code of the soldier. They sacrificed and paid the price for freedom. They stayed--and the earth became their's again. They defended and what was abandoned--they recaptured. They saved the sum of all things we hold dear--and all this for love of their country--and the meager pay of a soldier.

Ask yourselves now--with head bowed--From where, Oh, God, came such men as these? Our country is truly blessed.

Today we gather here to dedicate a monument. A monument that stands as a legacy to the Greatest Battle Ever Fought by the United States Army and to those veterans who fought and won that battle with their blood and their courage.

But it let also stand as a reminder to future generations of the high cost of freedom.

God bless the United States of America. I thank you. ■

NORDHAUSEN (Continued from Page 22)

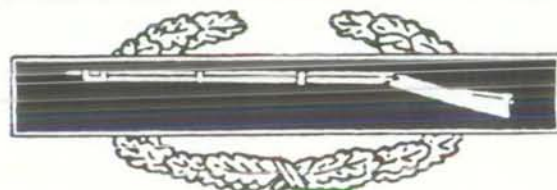
Another comrade from Templeuve, Maurice Fournier, with whom I attended high school in Tournai, was also captured by the Gestapo in 1943 in Brussels where he had found a job. When the war was over his parents and sister were expecting his return from Germany, but he never came back. It was said that he had been seen sometimes in Buchenwald but nobody has ever known how and when he died. Perhaps he was among the corpses carried between the camp and the burial trenches as mentioned by Capt (ret) David A Wolf (3rd Armored Division), unless previously buried in a common grave as *Nacht und Nebel* by the SS.

The names of Rene Desmulliez and Maurice Fournier are engraved on the war memorial at Templeuve with many others including that of my grandfather, Basile Vanden Avanne, who died of exhaustion during the exodus of civilians to France in May 1940.

My direct chief in the Resistance, Louis Blaton, left us in the summer of 1942. He wanted to reach England through France or Spain. Two Italian young men whose fathers had worked in Belgium coal mines before the war had remained in Belgium along with Louis. They were later called up by the Italian Fascist army. However, they did not want to fight for the Germans or Mussolini. Unfortunately the three of them were captured later on by the German railway police in Saone-et-Loire (France). They survived and were liberated by the Americans in Dachau concentration camp in April 1945. Louis Blaton was never again the same. He was very ill when released from Dachau and died a few months later.

Roger Hardy (LTC) Ret.
Chairman VBOB Chapter XXXVIII
(5th Fusiliers of Belgium)

The RIFLEMAN



The rifleman fights without promise of either reward or relief. Behind every river there's another hill--and behind that hill, another river. After weeks or months in the line only a wound can offer him the comfort of safety, shelter, and a bed.

Those who are left to fight, fight on, evading death but knowing that with each day of evasion they have exhausted one more chance for survival. Sooner or later, unless victory comes this chase must end on the litter or in the grave.

General Omar Bradley

General Dwight D. Eisenhower was telling Prime Minister Winston Churchill that British Tommies were having a good influence toning down GI exuberance. As Churchill beamed, a GI rushed in. "General, can I borrow your jeep?" Eisenhower calmed Churchill's agitation by saying, "See what I mean? A year ago he wouldn't have asked."

--AP

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE CERTIFICATE



The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Assn is proud to offer a full color 11" by 17" certificate, which may be ordered by any veteran who received credit for the Ardennes Campaign. It attests that you participated in, endured and survived the greatest land battle ever fought by the US Army. You do not have to be a member of the VBOB Assn in order to order one but you must have received the Ardennes credit. This beautiful certificate is produced on parchment-like stock and is outlined by the full color WWII insignias of the major units that fought in the Battle of the Bulge starting with the 12th Army Group followed numerically with Armies, Corps and Divisions and the two Army Air Forces. We wished that each unit insignia could have been shown but with approximately 2000

units that participated in the Bulge it was impossible. However any unit which served in the Bulge would have been attached to or reported through one of the unit insignias depicted. You may want to add one of your original patches to the certificate, when you receive it. Units were researched in the Official General Order No. 114 for Units Entitled to the ARDENNES Battle Credit and will be the basis for sale of this certificate. The unit insignias shown are also those used in the design of the Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Table dedicated and on view in the Garrison Library at Ft Meade, MD (open Mon & Wed 12:30-3:00 PM). The requests to date have been overwhelming, therefore we would request that you allow approximately 3-4 weeks for delivery.

A Special Certificate is available to spouses or children of those who made the Supreme Sacrifice in the Battle of the Bulge or who died of wounds received in the Battle of the Bulge. The individual request should have the date and place of death and be certified by the family requestor or by a buddy who was present. Multiple copies of the same certificate may be ordered if you have a number of children/grandchildren. Rank or command during the Bulge is preferred. It will be abbreviated to the WWII or three character standard. The certificate will be shipped rolled in a protective mailing tube. Please be sure to **place your name, service number and unit as you would like it to appear on the certificate**. The unit name should as full as possible as you want someone reading it to understand what unit you were in. We will abbreviate it as necessary. It is important that you type or print this information. The unit must be one of the 2000 units authorized for the Ardennes Campaign credit. **The cost of the certificate is \$15.00 postpaid.**

Unfortunately we do not have any more frames available at this time. John Bowen is presently trying to arrange with other suppliers who will produce these special sizes in quantities of 100. This may result in a higher frame cost. Our previous order had to be for 500 frames which took over three years to sell and resulted in the non use of a garage where they were stored. We will keep you posted.

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE CERTIFICATE ORDER BLANK

I request an 11" x 17" Certificate and certify that I received credit for the Ardennes Campaign during my military service. I have enclosed a check for \$15.00 for the Certificate. Please include the following information that I would like on the certificate:

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<input type="checkbox"/> POW	dates _____	Camp _____			

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February, 2000

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Windbreaker w/4" VBOB Logo Patch (Navy only) Please circle size (they run a little snug): S M L XL XXL XXXL (XXL and XXXL - see prices)	\$ 25.00 (S, M, L & XL) \$ 26.00 for XXL \$ 27.00 for XXXL		\$
VBOB Logo Lapel Pin - 1/2"	\$ 5.00		\$
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VBOB License Plate Frame w/Logos - White plastic w/Black printing	\$ 5.00		\$
VBOB 100 Sheet Notepad w/Logo - "This Note Is From... A Veteran of the Battle of the Bulge" - White paper with Blue printing	\$ 3.00		\$
VBOB Tote Bag - 18" x 15" natural (off-white) color tote bag with navy handles and large navy VBOB logo	\$ 8.00		\$
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