

The BULGE BUGLE

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VOLUME XX NUMBER 1

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

FEBRUARY 2001

WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

By Jack Hyland, 84th ID



Among Those Standing L. to R: Former Sen. Bob Dole, President Clinton, Winifred Lancy, age 101, actor Tom Hanks, Stanley Wojtusik, VBOB Vice President for Military Affairs, and South Carolina Senator Strom Thurmond, get ready to break ground for the World War II Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge turned out in full force on Veteran's Day, Saturday, November 11, 2000 for the long-anticipated ground-breaking ceremonies for the World War II Memorial on the National Mall in Washington, DC.

Led by VBOB President John Dunleavy, the contingent included past presidents Darrell Kuhn, George

Chekan, and George Linthicum, while former president Stanley A. Wojtusik was honored to be one of those selected to help turn over the earth for the proposed site.

As the inspiring Washington Monument rose in the background on this sunny, almost springlike

(Continued on Page 7.)

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Fred Whitaker 818-242-6577
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CONNECTICUT YANKEE (XL)
Richard Egan 203-634-0974
79 Alcove St
Meriden, CT 06451

COLORADO
ROCKY MOUNTAIN (XXXIX)
M. Dale McCall 970-926-5072
PO Box 2695
Edwards, CO 81632-9999

FLORIDA
CENTRAL FLORIDA (XVIII)
Robert L. Stevenson 407-644-9997
2133 Lake Dr
Winter Park, FL 32789-2839

FLORIDA CITRUS (XXXII)
Gerald V. Myers 865-686-2121
320 E Palm Dr
Lakeland, FL 33803-2650

INDIAN RIVER FLORIDA (XLI)
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2601 Kingdom Ave
Melbourne, FL 32934

SOUTHEAST FLORIDA (XLII)
George Fisher 561-585-7086
3456 S Ocean Blvd #503
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Samuel Davis 904-343-7975
1104 Todd Way
Tavares, FL 32778

INDIANA
NORTHERN INDIANA (XXX)
War

President's Message

As we start a new year, it is well to contemplate on what our organization tried to accomplish in the past year in order to insure that our future as an organization is stable and in good shape. It is always a source of encouragement to me to know that 97 percent of our members send in their dues on time, meet regularly at chapter meetings and participate in our reunions.

As I stated at our business meeting in Colorado Springs, due to our organizational policy of spending wisely and conserving our resources, I can report to you that our finances are in good shape and we have maintained our membership of approximately 8,400 members. Through our editorial staff, namely George Chekan and his staff, we try to present to you a veterans' publication which in my view is second to none in regard to our readers' interest and it also provides a sounding board for your comments.



John Dunleavy

During the past several years, many WWII outfits have ceased their associations for various reasons. Just recently I learned that the powerful 6th Armored Division Association, which served with General Patton's Third U.S. Army from Normandy to the end of the war, closed operations. This indeed was a proud organization and justly so and accordingly we invite all their members and other members of Bulge outfits which are contemplating closure to join our group.

We certainly hope that around the country, chapter presidents got their members together around December 16th for appropriate ceremonies. We know that the Long Island, New York Chapter, which is ably headed up by David Saltman, gathered his large group together on a bus trip to the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, New York. This is something planned for a long time and good planning and enthusiastic leadership translate into a successful event.

During the second week of December, 2000, my wife, Mary, and I travelled with George Chekan and Mary Jane Bodner to take part in the elaborate and impressive military festivities at the Valley Forge Military Academy in Pennsylvania. The Superintendent of the Academy turned out the entire Corps of Cadets in honor of our attendance at the chapel service and the huge Battle of the Bulge Monument. This was followed by a luncheon at the Eisenhower Hall, attended by approximately 150 people. Our energetic Vice President, Stanley A. Wojtusik, accompanied by his huge Delaware Valley Chapter hosted the entire affair in good fashion.

Later in the month on December 15th, the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation held their commemorative banquet at the Sheraton Hotel in Arlington, Virginia. This is an annual affair and all our members are invited and encouraged to attend. The Color Guard of the 3rd U.S. Infantry (the Old Guard), as usual performed together with members of the Fife and Drum Corps. Among those in attendance, besides Bulge Veterans and their guests were the Ambassador to Luxembourg, the Belgian Military Attache and the President of the Belgian American

Association in addition to Lt. General Kevin Byrnes, Assistance Vice Chief of Staff, U.S. Army.

The next day, December 16th, my wife and I were privileged and honored to lay a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown at Arlington National Cemetery. I wish to state to all of you that as I approached the tomb, I had deep thoughts of my personal friends and all our friends who labored so long and so hard from Normandy to Czechoslovakia. This particular December 16th at the cemetery was a cold and miserable day, raining and overcast—not unlike many days in the Ardennes. This wreath laying ceremony was conducted under the precise military presence of the 3rd U.S. Infantry Color Guard. When the Bugler played *Taps*, I could actually see some of my friends who paid the full price.

Immediately following the ceremony, over 100 veterans and their guests gathered at the VBOB Monument for an additional ceremony to honor veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and then went to the Sheraton Hotel for lunch. At these ceremonies, we were honored by the presence of several out-of-town chapter presidents and members, including Jim Hunt of Columbus, Mississippi, First Infantry Division, and now a trustee of our national organization; John McAuliffe, retired dentist from Massachusetts; George Watson, Rego Park, New York; and Old Reliable Tanker Frank Walsh of Ohio.

Concerning our 2001 Annual Reunion in Orlando, Florida, it is absolutely necessary for us to know in advance if you plan to attend. Elsewhere in this issue, you will find a questionnaire regarding your plans. Please fill it out and return it as soon as possible. This will allow us to do adequate planning. Please do it today before it is forgotten! We need to know your answers. Thank you.

Since I took over this job, it's been a source of great inspiration to me to witness how cooperative, energetic and enthusiastic our members are. Our relationship has been forged by a common experience in the days of our youth from basic training to absolute horror. There can be nothing that will separate us. We act as one because we are one. We also remember the days when all we had was one another. ■

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In the Next Issue . . .

**Complete details of the
VBOB ORLANDO, FL REUNION
September 29 to October 3, 2001**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OUR DEEDS SPOKE FOR THEMSELVES

I wanted to write down some of my thoughts. It probably won't be printed because it might step on somebody's toes.

Looking at the latest (August) *Bulge Bugle*, I see that they plan to spend millions of dollars, after 55 years, on a WWII memorial--after a large number of WWII veterans are gone.

I believe that the money could be much better spent helping disabled veterans, as I believe that we don't need a costly memorial, as our deeds spoke for themselves.

Some time ago, I needed some medical attention badly. (I still do.) I contacted the State DAV department and they told me I didn't qualify for any help! (I have been a life DAV member for about 20 years now.)

Later on, after filling out a six-page life history of myself, I had an interview at one of the largest Veterans Administration Hospitals in New England. At first they didn't even know what I was in there for. They later told me my condition didn't qualify me for any help! I guess they meant I wasn't missing an arm or leg or an eye!

I was thinking after we made our ride from the Saar Basin near Metz and headed for Belgium in the snow and cold, nobody said "you can't go up there--you don't qualify!" It was outside Metz that General Patton came along side the trench I was in and said "give the SOB's hell." He didn't say, "You don't qualify for help to go up there."

To give my opinion on the expensive WWII Memorial, I believe the money could well be spent on a much more worthy cause, as it says about 1,000 vets of WWII die every day and I may be the next.

Just an elderly veteran of General Patton's Third Army heading for the sunset!

I enjoy getting *The Bulge Bugle*.

Unsigned

MORE ON LIEUTENANT WOOD

A friend of mine and a member of your association gave me a copy of your August 2000 edition of *The Bugle* which had letters about Eric Wood. Since I was one of a few who were with Lt. Wood, may I add my recollections of that morning of December 17, 1945.

I wrote of my war time experiences for my grandchildren. Enclosed [excerpts published elsewhere in this issue] please find an excerpt from that narrative. Not listed in this story is the rest of the howitzer section on the truck besides Lt. Eric F. Wood, who escaped to the woods, and Sgt. Scannapico and Cpl. Knoll, who were killed. They were Earl Copenhaver, Taneytown, Maryland; Russell Eakle, Fairmont, West Virginia; Howard Martin, Linarts, Tennessee; William Prelozny, Chicago, Illinois; Nicholas Campagna, Chicago, Illinois; and Phillipe Berube, Providence, Rhode Island. These men were with me when captured and to my knowledge none were killed or wounded in that action.

I was happy to see the letter from then Sgt. Flandreau (who I do remember) and I am sure Gen. Wood was unsuccessful in getting the Medal of Honor for his son. I seem to have misplaced the 1946 letter from Gen. Wood asking for my information on his son.

J. Don Holtzmuller
106 INF 589 FA BN A

TOO MANY HANDS

[Excerpts] This letter was "provoked" by the Bill Mauldin cartoon that appeared in the most recent issue of *The Bulge Bugle*, but I found I had more on my mind than just the cartoon. I will not be offended if you judge it inappropriate for publication.

My father, Robert E. Knauff, fought in the Battle of the Bulge while attached to the 84th Infantry Division and died in battle near Magoster, Belgium on January 4, 1945, during the first stage of the allied counteroffensive. I have no direct recollection of my dad--I was born on September 14, 1944, and he barely had time to get home to see me and my mother before shipping out for Europe. Nonetheless, I cherish his memory and the legacy he left my mother and me. I treasure the stories relatives and family friends have told about him, the artifacts that have come to me (Purple Heart, U.S. flag, and personal effects), and most of all the evidence of his and my mother's love for one another, most notably in the letters he wrote home in December 1944 and the tears that still

come to mother's eyes whenever she speaks of "Robert."

Some time ago, I got the idea that I might like to write a novel of historical fiction based on my father's life, my own as affected by his death, and our family's response to three young men lost to the war. My mother's brother Julius Mielke; her second cousin, William Sili; and my father are buried side-by-side in a special section of the cemetery at Ward's Chapel United Methodist Church in Holbrook, Maryland. What has always amazed me as I got older is that my family, though it thoroughly mourned the loss of those good, young men, never expressed any overt bitterness over their losses, instead electing to take solemn pride in their sacrifices on "the altar of freedom."

I first joined VBOB with my prospective writing goal in mind, so that I might learn more about the sort of experiences my dad must have had before his death. I have also collected many books about the Battle of the Bulge and World War II in general. Among those books is *Up Front* by Bill Mauldin. I have enjoyed seeing Mauldin's cartoons of "Willie & Joe" as they have been reprinted in *The Bulge Bugle*. I thought your readers might enjoy the oddity that is part of Mauldin's cartoon on page 7 of the November issue which is captioned "We're just a couple of red-blooded American boys." The three figures in the cartoon are unusual because they have seven hands among them. I suppose that's what happens with hard drinking under battlefield conditions.

[See invitation extended in the "Members Speak Out" section of this issue.]

Robert E. Knauff, Jr.

CORRECTING A CORRECTION

This is to correct a correction, made by Demetri Paris in the November 2000 issue of *The Bulge Bugle*. Mr. Paris quoted the *World War II Order of Battle* by Shelby L. Stanton. Apparently, Mr. Stanton did no research his material too well. Mr. Stanton did not list a "Ft. Thomas," Kentucky...BUT there was a "Ft. Thomas, Kentucky."

On May 23, 1943, I reported to Ft. Thomas, along with several hundred others. A "train load" of us were sent to Camp Bowie, Texas. I was put in the 771st Field Artillery Battalion.

You have probably had several others write and say that there was a Ft. Thomas and that there still is a Ft. Thomas. It may have been closed in those government closings of several years ago.

Lawrence A. McPherson
771 FA BN

CORRECTION FOR HISTORY'S SAKE

In the November 2000 issue, Mr. Demetri Paris takes Thomas E. Ward to task for claiming he was sent to Ft. Thomas, Kentucky, after being inducted into the U.S. Army. I don't know where Mr. Paris' information came from but he is incorrect. Indeed, there was a Ft. Thomas, Kentucky. It was used as an induction processing center during World War II. Thousands of conscriptees were processed there before being sent to basic training bases. In Mr. Ward's case he was sent to Ft. Knox from there. I know this to be correct for I, too, passed through Ft. Thomas before going to Ft. Knox.

The old fort was the home of the 10th Infantry Regiment prior to the war. That unit was later based in Iceland and then in North Ireland. Where they were next I'm not sure, however, I ran across some of them in England.

I live just 15 minutes away from what remains of Ft. Thomas. Much of the property was turned over to the City of Ft. Thomas, Kentucky, for a park and recreation area. Several of the old structures are now being used for other purposes. There is also a VA convalescent hospital there.

George H. Edmondson
3 ARMDD

THERE WAS AND STILL IS...

In the November 2000 issue of *The Bulge Bugle* under "Letters to the Editor," I refer to Demetri Paris' letter in which he states, "There was no Ft. Thomas, Kentucky." I wish to challenge him on this statement.

Enclosed is a copy of my Honorable Discharge showing that on March 23, 1942 along with 336 other

(Continued on next page)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (Continuation)

draftees, I was inducted into service at Ft. Thomas, Kentucky. And further more, one man from my outfit lives there at the present time.

There was a Fort Thomas, Kentucky, in 1942, and there still is a Fort Thomas, Kentucky today!

Edward H. McClelland
773 TD BN

MORE ON FT. THOMAS

I am enclosing the "Fort Thomas Military Reservation from Campbell County, Kentucky 200 Years 1794-1994" (booklet)

Contrary to Demetri Paris' letter in the November issue of *The Bulge Bugle*, there was a Ft. Thomas. In November, 1940, it became an induction center until November, 1944, when it became a rehabilitation center.

My father, Carl W. Snyder, was inducted there in 1918 and my husband, Charles E. Carson, was inducted there in 1942.

The last soldier went through the induction center in 1964.

Ruth S. Carson

ROCK OF CHICKAMAUGA

In the November issue, Demetri Paris wrote to correct several statements made by Thomas E. Ward in the August issue. He said Mr. Ward was mistaken about being at Ft. Thomas, Kentucky, during WWII because there was no Ft. Thomas. There most certainly was a Ft. Thomas. (It was an old-time Army post, which I believed was named for General George Thomas, "The Rock of Chickamauga.") I was inducted there and after training at another camp I was sent to Europe and served in Patton's Third Army.

I read with interest the article "Fortress Hotel" by Bill Shadell, of the 4th Division. The poor fellows in that division surely were hit hard. I got a chance to see the damage that was done to them. We were down in the Saar Valley when the Bulge started and immediately we were sent over night in trucks to Luxembourg, where we were to relieve the 4th Division. As we went through some of the 4th outposts we saw the frozen bodies of dead Americans. It was a sight I shall never forget. War is an experience just for the young, isn't it?

Bill Hornback
5 INF 10 INF A

WHAT DID HE KNOW AND WHEN?

I am writing in response to "Bradley's Thoughts" which appeared in Volume XIX, Number 3, August 2000. According to the article General Bradley wrote in his papers: "Holding the Ardennes lightly while we attacked elsewhere was a calculated risk. This calculated risk was mine and I never regretted having made it."

While it is noble and perhaps gracious of General Bradley to accept the responsibility of failing to seriously entertain the possibility of a German counter attack, the nature of this "calculated risk" bears examination. The question is "What did General Bradley know and when did he know it?"

1. Since October and November ultra decrypts indicated that the Reichsbahn was shuttling large numbers of trains into the region of the Ardennes.

2. Air reconnaissance reported signs of a build-up in the Ardennes.

3. The allies did not know the whereabouts of the Fifth and Sixth Panzer Armies.

4. Human intelligence (Belgium citizens and POW's) warned the Americans of the presence of large combat formations of German soldiers.

In spite of these ominous signs SHAEF and Twelfth Army Group rated the possibility of a German counter attack as low. In fact General Bradley wished that "the other fellow would attack, so we could finish him off for good."

In the middle of December, the U.S. Army was engaged in two major offensives; spearheaded by the 2nd Infantry Division (Indian Head) and supported by the 99th Infantry Division (Battle Babies), the First Army was preparing to attack the Roer dams; South of the Ardennes the Third Army had just completed conquering the province of Lorraine and was preparing an offensive that would hopefully take them to the banks of the Rhine.

The Ardennes region was defended by four infantry divisions and their assorted support elements, including artillery and engineering units. Two of the infantry divisions, the 106th and the 99th were new and had not been in combat; the other two infantry divisions, the 28th (Bloody Bucket) and the 4th (Ivy) had been severely mauled in the fighting in the Hurtgen Forest in September and October. Both Divisions were deployed to the Ardennes to rest, refit, receive and train replacements. None of the divisions were on alert. After all, no one expected a counter attack.

After the breakout and collapse of France in the summer of 1944 and as the Allies approached the German border, they began to experience a series of problems--logistical, a stiffening all along the front, the lack of replacements. The French railroad system had been almost destroyed and was still not functioning efficiently enough to meet the minimum essential supplies to sustain their forces in the field (POL, ammunition, rations, etc.). Allies had run out their supply line. Although the Allies had captured the Port of Antwerp, the British had neglected to clear the Scheldt Estuary, making the port unusable. Ninety percent of the supplies were trucked from Normandy.

German resolve and resistance had hardened all along the front. The fighting in and around Aachen had been vicious; the fighting in the Hurtgen Forest had mauled several American divisions and Operation Market Garden, designed to "bounce the Rhine" and expose the Ruhr and open the plains of Northern Germany to the Allies had failed. Moreover, the U.S. Army reported in September that it was short 23,000 riflemen and in some quarters it was felt that winter offensives should either be postponed or limited.

General Bradley was aware of all of the conditions mentioned above and in spite of this, he... "never regretted having made it" (his calculated risk).

The Allies sustained 82,000 casualties in the Battle of the Bulge. Over 95% of these casualties were American. It is appalling that General Bradley expresses no remorse or regret for having made such a bad judgment that cost the lives and wounding of so many soldiers under his command.

In his papers, General Bradley wrote: "I rode over the area with Gen. Middleton, the VIII Corps Commander, who commanded the sector, and we decided that if an attack should penetrate all the way to the Meuse River, the enemy would secure nothing worthwhile. We had carefully avoided the placing of any large gasoline or food dumps in the area and the roads are in general not suited for large operations."

There were huge gasoline and food dumps located in Bullingen and the Stavelot-Spa areas. The dump at Bullingen was captured by Kampfgruppe Peiper and he just missed capturing the stores at Stavelot. If Peiper had captured that fuel, he could have reached and possibly breached the Meuse.

What is disturbing about General Bradley's apologia is his refusal to admit to any culpability in his decision. Before D-Day General Eisenhower wrote a letter assuming full responsibility in case the assault forces had failed to gain a bridgehead and had to be withdrawn. After the war General Patton admitted that he had made a serious mistake when he sent a task force instead of a combat command to liberate the POW camp in Hammelburg.

Instead Bradley sounds more like General Bernard Montgomery in proffering excuses why operation Market Garden failed and why he did not clear the Scheldt Estuary.

Finally, a thoughtful summary of the Battle of the Bulge is provided by the authors, Williamson Murray and Allen R. Millet in their book *A War To Be Won*: "The defeat of the Germans in the Battle of the Bulge was a victory for the U.S. soldier. He had stood the test of everything the Wehrmacht could throw at him, particularly early in the battle, when he was outnumbered and unprotected by air cover. It was not, however, a victory for American high command. At the start, the strength and ferocity of the Nazi attack caught the Americans completely by surprise, despite plenty of indications that a massive buildup was underway. Thereafter, with the exception of Patton, they reacted as though the balance of the war dramatically changed to favor the Germans. Eisenhower, stunned and disheartened, requested that the Joint Chiefs of Staff send every soldier available in the Continental United States to Europe; he even entertained the idea that 100,000 marines might be put at his disposal--an astonishing admission of pessimism, given his prejudice against the Marine Corps. In a gesture of desperation...allied commanders begged the Soviets to begin their long-awaited offensive in Poland. And, finally, when the Germans had been stopped, the American high command, led by Bradley and

(Continued on next page)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (Continuation)

Hodges, chose merely to drive the enemy out of the Ardennes rather than to destroy him." (page 471)

Prof. Jerome H. Long
Associate Member

EAR PROBLEMS?

Re: "Tank Battle," by Jerry C. Hrbeck, page 3, November 2000, issue.
Mr. Hrbeck said, "I had buzzing in my head for two days and a case of vertigo."

Also re: reprint clipping entitled "Veterans Ear Problems Ignored in Violation of Law," on page 25 of the same issue.

All veterans suffering from deafness, tinnitus and vertigo caused by shell blasts should immediately consult with a national service officer from any one of the national veterans groups and file a claim with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Concussions suffered during the war may have caused inner ear damage which has grown worse over the years.

I had hearing problems including tinnitus and vertigo for many years. I was successful with a disability claim for hearing loss and tinnitus about 20 years ago. I began to have more frequent problems with vertigo but was unable until last year to connect the problem to a concussion cause by a shell blast when I was wounded. My neurologist was able with a battery of recently developed tests to substantiate my claim, which was recently awarded by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Any veteran with hearing loss, tinnitus and vertigo problems should file ASP.

James R. Bird
45 INF 160 FA BN A

MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

I read with interest the article on Sgt. Day G. Turner and the Medal of Honor he received. The article is accurate and I visit his grave on a regular basis, since I, too, served in the 80th Division. The 80th still has over 500 men buried in Hamm Cemetery.

The reason for my writing is that few know that Sgt. Turner was killed in action a month later in Germany. On February 7, 1945, the 80th crossed the Sauer-Our Rivers from Luxembourg into Germany. Sgt. Turner was leading his squad attacking pillboxes. He was always trying to help and protect his men. He was killed attacking a pillbox after he had knocked out many other fortifications. Those who survived this action said his actions deserved another Medal of Honor. He was really a one-man army and a real inspiration to his men. His valor is still one we talk about today. He was the only man to receive the MOH in Luxembourg.

We had one other man who received the MOH fighting in the Bulge. This occurred in Belgium on Christmas Day, 1944. His name was S/Sgt. Paul J. Weidorfer, Company G, 318th Infantry Regiment, and this action occurred near the small Village of Chaumont, Belgium. We were attached to the 4th Armored Division for the attack into Bastogne. [You will find Sergeant Weidorfer's citation in this issue. As his name starts with "W," he was one of the last two to be cited.]

I enjoy the magazine very much. I just wish that many of the guys would not argue about who won the battle. We all were in it together and all suffered the cold and miserable conditions.

Ed Bredbenner, Jr.
80 INF 318 INF B

SUCCESS AT LAST

Just received the November issue of *The Bulge Bugle*.

Read with great personal interest about how long it took for a member of the 28th Division to get his WWII medals. By several coincidences I, too, was a member of the 28th Infantry Division (Cannon Company) and was also unlucky enough to be in the Bulge. I'm afraid that I became too involved as I received multiple wounds and was then imprisoned in lovely Germany—for me it was an especially heart-warming experience as I had the misfortune to be Jewish.

However, I digress. Earlier in the week, I f-i-n-a-l-l-y received my WWII medals—it took more than two years.

Last February I received a letter from the Army telling me I was authorized to receive ten medals and would have them within four months. Six months later I contacted the Illinois Veterans Commission in

Chicago and that turned out to be a waste of time.

After the war I worked for the Federal Government for about 30 years at the Social Security Administration. At that time, if we received what we called a "Congressional Inquiry" everything stopped until that matter was immediately handled. Therefore, I called one of my senators and was told to write a letter. To me that meant I would merely be getting on the un-ending treadmill again. Being a persistent type I called my other Senator. Within a day it was in process and I received all ten medals—with my name engraved on (1) Purple Heart, (2) Bronze Star, and (3) Prisoner of War medals in a month.

Next week I'm driving 100 miles each way to meet the person I spoke with at the Senator's office and my wife and I are taking her to lunch to show our appreciation (Peggy French).

This letter is already too long but I can't resist referring you to the article in your last *Bugle* stating there isn't such a thing as a POW medal. Whoever gave you the information was wrong as I have mine with my name engraved on it.

[See article elsewhere in this issue for more information on this medal.]

Arthur S. Lipski
28 INF 112 INF CAN

CORRECTION ON FT. THOMAS

My letter in the November issue stated Ft. Thomas, Kentucky, was not listed in my reference texts. I have since learned there was a Fort Thomas, located southeast across the river from Cincinnati, near Covington, Kentucky, that served as an induction station. My apology to Thomas E. Ward and lie upon my source.

Demetri Paris
9 ARM 14 TK BN

THE LAST OF FORT THOMAS

[We received many, many letters regarding the existence of Ft. Thomas. Space will not permit us to print all of them. We have printed some. Thanks to all of you who took the time to straighten us out on this matter.]

FORWARD, CENTRAL OR REAR?

This letter is in response and in agreement with the letter of Dale L. Shoop (August issue). At the time of the "break out," I was stationed in Luxembourg City as a member of a 12-man team of the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps. We were attached to the 12th Army Group in an area designated as ADSAZ, Advanced Section Communication Zone. Unlike WWI, the "war zone" was a very fluid area and unless one had access to a "situation map," you could be forward, central or rear. We often encountered this situation in carrying out our mission, which was capture of infiltrating enemy spies, securing areas that we over ran, and, in general, protecting the rear echelon from saboteurs.

On the early morning of the German breakout, a date which is in dispute, we had a forward team of two agents billeted in a farm house near the Mosele River. Alerted by the sound of rifles and the burp of machine guns, they arose to observe German troops moving into the area and being resisted by very light infantry. Their first duty was to mount their jeep and flee to Luxembourg City to alert Eagle Tac, Headquarters. No radios were provided CIC. On the outskirts of the city, they were halted by a MP team inspecting vehicles. It was only by pure insistence and the display of their SHAEF passes that they were able to proceed and make their report. Their report to G-2 was very lightly received and dismissed as a mere skirmish. Within a few days, a passing truck driver asked us where graves registration was located. I went to the 6x6, pulled aside the rear drape, and was confronted by a figurative log pile of GI boots stacked up attached to dead GI's.

Within a short period, we were dispatched to enter Bastogne with Patton's Army. He personally passed our convoy on a heavy snow covered road riding in a very new looking jeep with a 50 caliber machine gun and gunner mounted in the rear seat with fender flags flowing. Knowing that he was going up front and we were stuck in a convoy of tanks made me feel very secure.

(Continued on next page)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (Continuance)

The bottom line is that among America's Greatest Military Blunders should be included the decision of the Allied Command to practically abandon the Ardennes front under the conviction that Hitler or his generals would not mount an attack in the dead of winter. As a consequence, our lines were strung out and thinly held. The high command to defend the Ardennes was badly flawed for two reasons. One was the determination that no winter offensive would take place and two, nevertheless the high command under General Bradley was preparing their own winter attack in another area. I am embittered when I read General Bradley's own statement in his book: "Our casualties were high but the enemy's casualties were higher." I take no consolation in this, other than the bravery of our soldiers who managed to "save the day." High command should have remembered what General George Washington successfully attacked the British on Christmas Eve.

Incidentally, our team enlarged the slogan "Battered Bastards of Bastogne" to "Bitched, Buggered and Bewildered Battered Bastards of the Bastion of Bastogne."

(For those who would like more information re CIC, read "America's Secret Army," published by Franklin Watts, 387 Park Avenue, South, New York, New York 10016.)

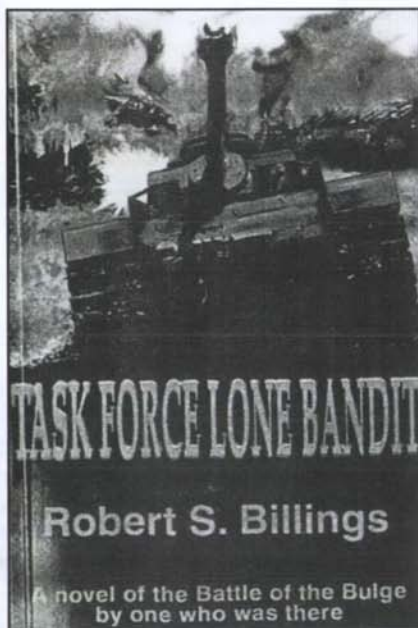
Joseph B. Quatman
Special Agent, Army CIC

PUT IN UNDER YOUR PILLOW

[If you read this newsletter and are inspired to write a derogatory response to something therein--keep it "nice." We're not here to offend our comrades-in-arms. Many times, someone writes something that is wrong, leaves a unit (or something) out, or has a point of view you don't agree with. It's not intentional. It's just an oversight. Write your response in a positive manner. If you're outraged and have to put it to paper--do so, but put it under your pillow and think about it overnight. Get up bright and early, have a cup of coffee, pat the dog on the head, and rewrite it. We've been through too much together to cause hard feelings over something that was unintended.]

A New Book about the "Bulge"

Feel the freezing despair, the cold courage
of infantry, artillery, tankers, tank destroyers



"A novel that makes
you suffer with the
men, agonize over
the officers' hard
tactical choices."

One small, hastily-
assembled unit faces
the challenges of
WWII's most sus-
penseful cliffhanger.

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WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL

...Continued from Page 1.

teers who escorted them to front and second row seats for the festivities.

While some controversy lingers over the site for the memorial, it was not something that worried the guest speakers, including President Clinton, former Senator Bob Dole, Chairman of the World War II Memorial Campaign, nor *Saving Private Ryan* star, Tom Hanks, who added his stature and fame to help raise funds for the memorial.

The theme for the ceremony was honoring the memory of the 16 million American men and women who served in the Armed Forces in World War II, and paying tribute also to the men and women who turned out the tanks, planes, ships, and guns that helped to win the battle against tyranny and oppression.

In his remarks on this historic occasion, President Bill Clinton referred to that debt saying it was one that all Americans owed to the World War II generation, and noted "This memorial will ensure that future generations will know what they endured and what they sacrificed so that right would triumph, freedom survive, and our nation prevail."

The need for such a memorial is long overdue, and the drive to get one built was prompted by Battle of the Bulge veteran, George Durbin, who encouraged Ohio Representative Marcy Kaptur to introduce legislation in the United States Congress to get the ball rolling.

"It hasn't been an easy road," according to Past President Wojtusik, who has testified on behalf of the United States Battle Monuments Commission at numerous public hearings of committees in the Nation's Capital. On several occasions, Wojtusik told these committees that "If this monument doesn't get built soon the only monuments to the Veterans of World War II in the Nation's Capital will be the Crosses and Stars of David in Arlington Cemetery.

As the ceremony drew to a close, hundreds of young Americans formed lines at the front of the stage, carrying American flags, seeming to take pride in just being present for this salute to the veterans and their families.

This symbolic groundbreaking has already started to link the young people, the future of America, with the men and women of World War II, the Americans who made that future possible by their sacrifices 56 years ago.

Target date for completion of the monument is Memorial Day 2003, a long wait for many of us, but the beginning was great.

CHECKED YOUR DUES REMINDER LATELY?

Every issue of *The Bulge Bugle* reminds you when your dues are due. **Where?** Just above your last name on your mailing label. The date which appears there is the date on which your dues were due. **Please check it.** It's very expensive to send out dues reminders. Dues are \$15.00 per year. Life for members over 70 years of age is \$75.00. For others it is \$125.00.

If you are one of those lucky persons who spend your winters in the south, please advise us of each move. The post office will not forward the newsletter.

Thanks for your cooperation. ■

REFLECTIONS

13th Gala VBOBHF, 56th Commemoration
15 December 2000

Good Evening: On this 13th Gala and 56th Commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge, we are here again, another December, as we close out the Year 2000, which by some count, began the 21st Century and the beginning of the Third Millennium.

We now know who our next president will be, to assume awesome office wherein I worked almost 20 years under five presidents, beginning with a year with President Ford through half of President Clinton's first term. We are a witness to how our democracy works, warts and all. Yet we believe no matter what, it is still the best system ever conceived and designed by mortals.

How wise we find our early Founding Fathers...Washington, Jefferson, Adams, Madison, Franklin, and others in crafting our Constitution and our form of government with needed balances of power to bring fairness and power sharing to the workings of our three main branches...the Executive...Legislative...and Judicial. No matter how we feel about our recent election and post-election scenario, it is time for healing and reconciliation in the tradition of our past 225 years as a nation. Maybe Theodore White got it right when he said "There is no excitement anywhere in the world, short of war, to match the excitement of an American Presidential Campaign."

Poor is the nation which has no heroes. Poorer still is the nation which has them but forgets. That is why those of us who were wounded Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge tonight have honored the Battle of the Bulge nurses and veterans who served our country in the Korean War. What a contrast was the work of the Army nurses with that of combat and the killing. The nurses were always attempting to heal, to save lives, rather than taking them. Some 96 percent of we wounded survived, once we left battalion aid stations. Sixty thousand served in the Army in World War II, 16 died as a result of enemy action, 67 were taken prisoner, and 1,600 were decorated for bravery under fire. I know their value after seven months in hospitals after being wounded.

Let future generations be reminded that courage, duty, honor are not lost values, and that America is forever grateful to all of its veterans, both the living and the dead.

We are the ones who meet here under the aegis of our Historical Foundation and speak from the heart about this battle in our young lives. Also, most of us, if not all would feel strongly that serving in the U.S. Army, in the greatest conflict in the history of man, was the best accomplishment of our lifetime...the period of our manhood that mattered the most in molding what we became in our later years.

To our Belgian and Luxembourg friends here tonight, we say respectfully, that before our combat service in your distant countries, they were but colors on a classroom globe or wall map. The guts of any story of our lives...the solid center...would be the narrative of our war years. We five million remaining are leaving every day now, some 1,500 it is said, and soon our children and their children will be all alone in the world we saved for them. Our hope is that the spirit lives on. Life became death, the shatterer of worlds. For us it was the end game of the 20th Century, returning to a different world than the one we left. When we emerged from our battle cauldron, the world never looked quite the same again.

Those of our comrades who were lost were men whose short lives gave fuller meaning to our own. Those of our age have been present, active in, and part of events, large and small...that have given to the 20th Century now closed, its shape and form. Examples: formation of the United Nations, the Berlin Airlift, Marshall Plan, National Highway System, nuclear peace, the suburbs, the Cold War resulting in the demise of the Soviet Union, advances in science, medicine, and technology, to name a few, all leaving a better world and opportunity for those who follow us.

We lived in a time and saw our beloved country knocked down twice, the Depression of the 30s and World War II, but got up again and again. Surely we were young men mostly unformed. As anniversaries passed we slowly were referred to as legends, heroes. Authors Stephen Ambrose, Tom Brokaw, and James Bradley come to mind. Yet we are quite different from most legends because, generally legends are developed by writers who for whatever reason, make up much of what they write about. Not so with us. For the road we traveled was real, genuine, and authentic, there to see for all who took the time to examine its frightening paths and consequences.

We have arrived at a late age when we relish life in new and different ways. The sense of lost youth is gone...our challenge now is to make the most of the time left to us...and we can more deeply appreciate the role World War II played in our lives. This also means that we are not in charge of the drama of our lives. We can no longer write the script. It humbles us to realize that when we come onstage, costuming ourselves in our daily lives, we also must exit eventually. And yet the master plan appears to require that we continue to play our parts. As Virginia Woolf once wrote: "The connection between dress and war is not far; your finest clothes are those you wear as soldiers."

We still have time and maybe some more years ahead for us for giving, sharing, caring, accepting, loving. Let us all live this remaining allotted time in a holiday spirit. What better way to live. I feel instinctively that it is only this which can give our lives fuller meaning and offer us our only touch with immortality.

Godspeed, Happy Holidays, and a bright and healthy New Year in 2001!

By Joe Zimmer, 87th Infantry Division



American Infantrymen of the 87th Division enter the town of St. Hubert, Belgium right after the Germans fled the town 18 January 1945.

U.S. Army Signal, National Archives

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Alice Bamberg is trying to locate her father. Although Alice does not have the name of her father or exactly which unit he served in because her mother will not divulge the information, Alice still would like to know her father. Alice was born August 25, 1945. Her mother's name (in 1944) was Margret Hewer, who was born April 16, 1915 (29 years old at the time). Her mother worked at a lawyer's house. His name was Theisen. If you can help, write to Alice care of her friend: Henry J. Boesen, 15-17 Blvd. Charlotte, L-4070 Esch/Zluzette, Luxembourg.

STANLEY ZACK, 50TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION, would like to know if there is a book collection of "Sad Sack," and where he might obtain one. He has "Up Front With Willie & Joe," but no "Sad Sack." Write to Stanley at: 721 Blaine Street, Iron Mountain, Michigan 49801.

Marianne E. Carr writes that her father, **WAYNE O. SNIDER**, served in **BATTERY C** of the **73RD ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**. She would like information regarding his service or information regarding where she might find reading material regarding the battalion. Write to her at: 405 Main Street, East, Wabasha, Minnesota 55981-1426.

Associate member Robert E. Knauff, Jr., has been instrumental in developing the Haw River Historical Association Museum, (in north central North Carolina) which contains photographs, medals, etc., of six men who lost their lives in WWII. He extends an invitation to any VBOB member who might wish to visit the museum. Robert can be contacted at: 2842 Bason Road, Mebane, North Carolina 27302.

John A. Shaffer, is interested in learning more about his father's unit and his experiences. His father, **FRED L. SHAFFER, 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 12TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY E**, never talked about his war time. He was a POW in Stammlager XII A in Limburg, Germany. Papers indicate that he was captured in Echternach on December 20, 1944. If you can suggest reading materials for John or knew his father, please write to him at: 204 Norman Avenue, Pleasant Gap, Pennsylvania 16823.

MATT BRITTEN, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 2ND INFANTRY REGIMENT, would be most grateful to hear from anyone who can advise him about the process used in retrieving and/or burying the German soldiers who were killed. If you know, drop him a note: 7948 County Road H, Marshfield, Wisconsin 54449.

Robert A. Schwehr is trying to help **VICTOR DiRUGGIERO, 343RD MEDICAL BATTALION**, in verifying a claim with the government. Victor was a first lieutenant and was officer in charge of a hospital train of wounded in late December 1944 or early 1945 when German aircraft strafed his train of wounded which were being evacuated from the Bulge. If you are aware of this incident, Victor, or can provide information regarding the 343rd, please contact Robert at: 17 Grant Avenue, Carteret, New Jersey 07008-3105.

Andrew Paspalas writes to see if anyone can provide information regarding two of his father's close friends who were killed in the Bulge. These men are: **JOHN A. MILLER, 76TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 417TH INFANTRY REGIMENT** (sergeant, killed February 8, 1945) and **EPAMINONDAS ZAHARIADES, 75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 290TH INFANTRY REGIMENT** (private, killed December 24, 1944). Any information you can provide should be sent to Andrew at: 83 12th Street, Cresskill, New Jersey 07626.

Does anyone know who originated the term "**THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE**"? **WILLIAM U. SAVAGE, 244TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION** is trying to find the answer to this question. If you can help, write to him at: 10124 Keuka Road, Richmond, Virginia 23235-1123.

(WILLIAM) JOHN HAYES writes to thank those who served with him on a combat team known as "Killer Six" which eradicated an 88 on cleat tracks which parked underground. John can be contacted at: 3 Lester Street L-R, Ansonia, Connecticut 06401.

JACK FREEDMAN, 8TH INFANTRY DIVISION, would appreciate hearing from anyone who may have served with him. He remembers: **SGT DIXON** (from Virginia), **ALBA BARRETT** (squad leader), and **BEN LUCAS, 325TH REGIMENT** (Chicago), and **SGT. KEITH** (Chicago). Write to Jack in care of his daughter, Rita Loyd at: 13003 Percivale Drive, Huntsville, Alabama 35803.

DONALD OWEN DORE, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION, 52ND ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, would like to know if there is anyone who served with him. If so, write to him at: PO Box 561, Bangor, Maine 04402.

Karen Taylor writes on see if anyone remembers her father, **PETER THOMAS ANDON, 6TH ARMORED DIVISION, 68TH TANK BATTALION and 434TH ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY C**. She has pictures of him standing by tanks which say "BKLYN ACE" and the other says "BLUE EYES." Can you help? Write to her at: 3797 Jerusalem Avenue, Seaford, New York 11783.

Associate member Michel Lorquet is very interested in corresponding with medical troops who served in the Battle of the Bulge. His address is: rue Graesborn 2, B-4608 Warsage, Belgium.

The family of **ISAAC WILMER JUMPER, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, 16TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY F**, who was killed in the BoB on January 17, 1945, has had great success in locating a "boy" who was 12 years old (now 66) who remembered Isaac. Other information brought much comfort to them.

EDGAR S. KIRK, 146TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, COMPANY A, would like to hear from anyone who was in his battalion. Address: 350 Davisville Road, North Kingstown, Rhode Island 02852.

(Continued on next page)

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

JOHN P. MURPHY, 460TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY AUTOMATIC WEAPONS BATTALION, BATTERY C, would like to learn the whereabouts of **LT. WILLIAM A. BEACH** and **SGT. JOHN A. SMITH**, of Texas. If you can help, write to John at: 531 West 135th Street, New York, New York 10031.

RONALD K. OSTROM, 87TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION, is interested in locating anyone who may have served in the **1106TH ENGINEER GROUP** in Aachen in September or October of 1944. His address is: 2931 Burton Avenue, Erie, Pennsylvania 16504-1443.

CARL J. MORANO, 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, after five years of effort, finally received the Purple Heart to which he was entitled.

Iris Knight (formerly Iris Drinkwater) was instrumental in setting up a Military Museum in Somerset, England. Due to circumstances, this museum was forced to close. The items which were donated will be moved to a museum in Liskeard, England. The museum would like to have information, photos, etc. of American soldiers who were encamped in that vicinity. They would also appreciate hearing from anyone who was involved in hosting (an Ordnance Company) a Christmas party before D-day. One of the soldiers gave a beautiful rendition of *Silent Night*. If you can help write to Iris at: 4 Tom Lyon Road, Liskeard, Cornwall PL14 3UJ, England.

Ronald E. Olsen writes to see if anyone can remember his brother, **EMIL OLSEN, JR.** (no further information). If you can help write to Ronald at: 1201 Varnum Street, N.E., Washington, DC 20017.

ROBERT R. FORD, 2ND EVACUATION HOSPITAL, needs your help in his efforts to qualify for VA benefits. He has about exhausted all efforts to find someone who will remember him. It's up to you now. Do you remember any of the following incidents?: (1) Someone throwing acid in a captain's eyes, (2) saving Mickey Rooney's life, (3) the mess sergeant in France who refused to let someone eat in the mess hall, (4) the captain who refused to eat rat, (5) a leg being amputated by someone other than a doctor. If you think you remember any of these incidents, write to Robert at: 409 Woodland Villa, Arnold, Missouri 63010-2015.

LESLIE "LES" SMITH, 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 333 INFANTRY REGIMENT, ANTI-TANK COMPANY, would like to hear from anyone he served with. Write to him at: 1510 Willodene Drive, Longmont, Colorado 80501.

~~~~~

Let me have war, say I; it exceeds peace as far as day does night; it's spritely, waking, audible, and full of vent. Peace is a very apoplexy, lethargy; mulled, deaf, sleepy, insensible; a getter of more bastard children than war's a destroyer of men.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE, *Coriolanus*

## CHAPTER REPORT

Office of the National Vice President

Chapters and Regions

Report of 13 November 2000

### Organizing

Comrade Peter Leslie has obtained membership lists of two BOB Divisions and has passed on 300 prospects to 11 of our chapters and names for possible new chapters in Wilmington, DE, Williamsport, PA, and Albuquerque, NM.

Two more division lists are expected.

New chapters in Reading and Carlisle are progressing nicely.

Active recruiting is taking place in Citrus Springs, FL.

### Chapters

Since the Executive Council meeting of 13 August 2000, reports have been received from the following chapters: 5, 6, 17, 18 (2), 19 (2), 32 (2), 33, 44 (7), 51, 52, 53, 59 (4), 62, 63, and 65. Fifteen chapters, 27 reports.

19 Susquehanna has added 1,068 more hours of VA Hospital time;

33 Mississippi holds annual reunion on 16 December 2000;

52 Staten Island building a monument with street stones from Luxembourg and Bastogne;

53 S. Arizona does school programs and plans statewide reunion on 16 December 2000;

58 Cape Cod has project to assist all local towns with BOB monuments. Harwick has agreed, others pending. Barnstable moving all veteran memorials from town green to Kennedy Memorial Park.

17 Northeast and 44 Hawkeye sent new rosters and necrology.

6 Northwest, 54 Picatinny, 55 Lehigh Valley, and 65 Cumberland Valley send in outstanding newsletters.

Respectfully submitted,  
**Richard C. Schlenker**  
VP, Chapters and Regions



"I want a complete investigation. Slade. Find out whether it was an accident or if he did it on purpose."



# 112TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

*[The following was sent to us by VBOB Charter Member, RAYMOND G. CARPENTER, who served as historian for the 112th for 27 years.]*

## EXTRACT

GENERAL ORDERS  
No. 63

War Department  
Washington 25, D.C.  
11 July 1947

\*\*\*\*\*

BATTLE HONORS - Citation of unit ..... VI

\*\*\*\*\*

VI - BATTLE HONORS - As authorized by Executive Order 9396 (sec. I, WD Bul. 22, 1943), superseding Executive Order 9075 (sec. III, WD Bul. 11, 1942), the following unit is cited by the War Department under the provisions of AR 260-15, in the name of the President of the United States as public evidence of deserved honor and distinction. The citation reads as follows:

The 112th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, consisting of the 112th Infantry Regiment with the 229th Field Artillery Battalion, Company C, 103rd Engineer Battalion, Battery C, 447th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, and Company C, 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, is cited for extraordinary heroism, efficiency, and achievement in action against the enemy during the Battle of the Ardennes from 16 to 24 December 1944. On 16 December 1944 the 112th Infantry Regimental Combat Team from Lutz Kampen, German, to Leiler, Luxembourg, was holding six and one-half miles of the front line sector assigned to the 28th Infantry Division. During the period 16 to 18 December 1944, despite repeated enemy infantry and tank attacks involving the elements of nine enemy divisions, the 112th Infantry Regimental Combat Team held its ground. In this period it inflicted estimated casualties on the enemy of 1,600, including over 200 prisoners taken and successfully evacuated. All elements of the 112th Infantry Regimental Combat Team were involved in this action. The 229th Field Artillery Battalion was engaged in direct fire on the enemy at a range of 150 yards. The Cannon Company of the 112th Infantry Regiment and Company C, 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion, by direct fire, succeeded in disabling 18 enemy tanks. Company C, 103rd Engineer Battalion together with the 2nd Battalion, 112th Infantry Regiment repeatedly counter-attacked enemy penetrations. The Headquarters, Headquarters Company, and Service Company manned the lines and drove off by fire a number of groups of the enemy which had infiltrated into the rear areas. The kitchens, being overrun on night of 16-17 December 1944, the kitchen personnel fought with rifles to recover the positions. All this was done under withering small-arms and artillery fire from enemy positions through the entire front. On the night of 17-18 December 1944 until orders from higher headquarters, the 112th Infantry Regimental Combat Team was withdrawn to the high ground west of the Our River. This withdrawal was accomplished successfully in spite of strong enemy infiltrations throughout the entire sector. From 18 until 23 December 1944, the 112th Infantry Regimental Combat Team was continually engaged in rear action covering the withdrawal of the right flank of the First American Army. On the night of 23-24 December 1944 the action of the 112th Infantry Regimental Combat Team was especially notable. Being ordered by higher headquarters to act as a covering force for units withdrawing to the American lines it held its position under furious enemy infantry and tank attacks until the Regimental Headquarters and 1st Battalion, 112th Infantry were surrounded. The 1st Battalion then fought its way clear to friendly lines bringing with it a number of vehicles and personnel of other units. The gallantry under extremely hazardous and physically trying conditions, the stubborn defense of the

sectors assigned them, and the heroic conduct of all personnel of the 112th Infantry Regimental Combat Team, in 9 days of continuous fighting, exemplify the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF WAR:

OFFICIAL:

EDWARD F. WITSELL  
Major General  
The Adjutant General

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER  
Chief of Staff

\*\*\*\*\*

*The following is from the history of the 112th Regimental Combat Team:*

The 112th Combat Team breathed more freely as it moved to an assembly area near Werbomont as XVII Airborne Corps reserve. Supplies were brought up to replace those lost. Reorganization and training was begun. 3rd Battalion returned to regimental control on December 25.

Numerous shifts were made in the attachment of the 112th to higher units. On December 24 the regiment was attached to Combat Command "B" of the 9th Armored Division; the next day it joined with the 106th Infantry Division. The 2nd Battalion for several days operated with the 75th Infantry Division near Manhay were the men of Lieutenant Colonel MacSalka succeeded in driving the Germans from a salient in the line by marching fire in dense woods. The 3rd Battalion for a short while was attached to the 3rd Armored Division. The 299th Field Artillery Battalion worked under XVIII Airborne Corps Artillery control.

After short periods of time in regimental bivouac areas near Mormont and Aywaille, the 11th Combat Team on January 5 moved south to Stavelot to a new assembly area near Trois Ponts. The regiment was ordered to attack to the south across the L'Ambleve River to straighten the line between the 82nd Airborne Division and the 30th Infantry Division.

January 6, 1945: After bridgeheads had been secured across the river the regiment jumped off at 0800 hours with two battalions abreast.

1st Battalion on the right made slow progress initially due to rugged terrain. Trois Ponts was cleared by Company C at 1605 hours. 3rd Battalion pushed ahead to the left against slight resistance to capture Aisomont by 1400 hours. Opposition mounted in the way of small arms and machine gun fire and the attack was held up.

Terrain and weather restricted the progress of attached armor, although both a Bailey and treadway bridge were constructed across the L'Ambleve by 1600 hours.

January 7: Aided by a platoon of medium tanks, 3rd Battalion continued the attack shortly after dawn. Against mounting resistance the men under Major (later Lieutenant Colonel) Walden F. Woodward cleared the towns of Wanneranval and Wanne. At the later place an enemy counterattack with infantry and tanks was repulsed.

1st Battalion seized Spineaux by late afternoon. 200 Prisoners of War were taken in a daring bayonet assault directed by the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Bill Allen, 2nd Battalion, in regimental reserve, conducted vigorous patrolling to clear up enemy pockets of resistance.

After accomplishing its attack mission the 112th was relieved of the defenses in its new sector on the night of January 8-9 by the 424th Infantry. The regiment then assembled in an area east of Spa.

The much-shifting around of the entire regimental combat team continued when a front-line relief of the 117th Infantry of the 30th Infantry Division was made on the night of January 10-11. The Keystone regiment was relieved from these positions by the 517th Parachute Infantry the next day.

At 0930 hours on January 12, the entire 112th Combat Team began a motor movement from Francorchamps to join the 28th Division in the Meuse River sector....■



# Memorial Service Marks 56<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Start of The Battle of the Bulge

by Jack Hyland, 84<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division

"In 44 days of ferocious fighting under horrible weather conditions, the American soldier in the Battle of the Bulge left a lasting legacy of courage and trustworthiness." That was the message delivered Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>, to cadets at Valley Forge Military Academy & College in Wayne, PA, by Gen. Fred F. Woerner, USA (Ret), Chairman of the American Battle Monuments Commission. Gen. Woerner, a 1955 West Point graduate, retired from the Army in 1989 as Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Southern Command, and is currently Professor of International Relations at Boston University, as well as chairman of the commission which oversees U.S. Military Cemeteries, and the work on the proposed World War II Memorial.

A long-time student of the Battle in the Ardennes, General Woerner was the guest speaker in the chapel at the Academy marking the 56<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle fought in Belgium and Luxembourg, December 16, 1944 to January 25, 1945. His words made a deep impression on the 900 Valley Forge Academy cadets, and some 100 Bulge Veterans and their families present at the non-denominational service in the impressive Chapel of St. Cornelius the Centurion.

The cadets listened attentively as General Woerner told them, "We are all challenged constantly, and in many different ways. Hopefully," he continued, "these challenges will not be like those facing American soldiers in the Battle of the Bulge, where they overcame three powerful German armies despite many casualties and having to fight in sleet, snow, and freezing rain before the battle was won. The young cadets, mostly in their teens, were urged to develop values that made America great, to draw on them in their future lives.

As part of the chapel service, President John Dunleavy and Past President George Chekan, representing the national organization, presented a floral wreath at the Table of Remembrance which contains a folio that lists VFMA&C graduates who died in past wars.

Following the service VBOB members, led by VBOB Vice President for Military Affairs Stan Wojtusik, and Delaware Valley Chapter President David Wolf, assembled at the International Battle of the Bulge Monument by the academy parade ground, where a wreath was presented in honor of all of our departed veterans. This monument is the only one in the United States where the flags of Belgium and Luxembourg fly together with the Stars and Stripes 24 hours a day, illuminated at night in accord with regulations.

To close out this memorable day, the veterans and their families moved to Eisenhower Hall on the campus for the chapter's 10th Annual Banquet. Guest speaker at the dinner was the noted historian Dr. Russell F. Weigley, professor at Temple University, and the author of the monumental history of the war in Europe *Eisenhower's Lieutenants*. Dr. Weigley praised the heroism of the American soldier in the Bulge, citing the courageous delaying actions fought by individuals and small groups, that held up the German Panzer attacks until reinforcements could arrive.

Following the day's events, VBOB President Dunleavy said this 56<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the start of the battle was a fitting tribute to the nearly 20,000 G.I.'s who gave their lives in the Ardennes to help turn defeat into victory.



As Past President George Chekan and President John Dunleavy, escorted by Cadet First Captain John D. Scott presented the VBOB wreath at the Table of Remembrance during the Memorial Service December 10, Chaplain BG Alfred A. Sanelli offered this moving prayer:

*Let us pray,*

Almighty and eternal God, we stand before Thee as loyal sons and daughters of our country, grateful for her great heritage.

In this tender hour of memorial, we remember with love and reverence those valiant men who served in the Battle of the Bulge with fidelity and honor, with enduring courage, invincible determinations, and unyielding fortitude to safeguard the priceless heritage of a free people. They are deserving of a special place in our hearts.

To those who made the supreme sacrifice, we pray that Thou wilt enfold in Thy loving arms these noble Americans to whom we owe our everlasting gratitude.

We ask this in Thy Holy Name.





# 49TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION

*[The following was sent to us by VICTOR K. OLIZAROWICZ, 49TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, COMPANY C.]*

## December, 1944--Narrative of After Action Report

The 49th Engineer Combat Battalion was engaged in logging and sawmill operation in the First Army area at the beginning of the month of December 1944. The Battalion Command Post was located in the Abbaye du Val-Dieu, (VK6534) 1-1/2 miles north of Charneaux, Belgium, and the line companies were located as follows:

Company "A"--2 mi S of Aubel, Belgium

Company "B"--Verviers, Belgium

Company "C"--Micheroux, Belgium

The Battalion was attached to the 1105th Engineer Combat Group at the time of the German breakthrough attempt, but on 18 December 1944, the Battalion ceased all logging operations and was alerted for possible movement. On 18 December 1944 the Battalion was relieved from the 1105th Engineer Combat Group and attached to the 1120th Engineer Combat Group in VII Corps. That day a forward Command Post and Company "A" moved into Germany to (VK9635) 1 mile SE Zweifall. On 20 December the remainder of the Battalion moved to Zweifall and immediately started doing road work in the 1120th Engineer Combat Group zone of responsibility. On the 22nd of December all work was stopped and the Battalion again alerted for movement. When the VII Corps moved back into Belgium to take up a position against the German attack, the 49th Engineer Combat Battalion moved with them, accomplishing the major part of a move from Zweifall to vicinity of Stree, Belgium (VK3312), a total of 70 miles, in darkness. Before work could be started in that area, the Battalion was attached to 1106th Engineer Combat Group, then in XVIII Corps (Airborne), and on 24 December moved again to an area 6 miles southeast of Hamoir, Belgium (K4803). Immediately on closing into the area that night, the line Companies were assigned minefields and bridge demolitions to prepare forming a barrier line across the areas of the 82nd Airborne Division and the 7th Armored Division. The majority of the minefields in the primary barrier was installed under sporadic shell fire, but only two casualties were suffered, one of which was evacuated, the other returning to duty. As the barrier lines were completed, the Companies took defensive positions guarding them until relieved by infantry troops. The barrier operations were strengthened and continued until the 29th of December when sufficient troops had been relieved to enable the Companies to do other jobs. On 30 December 1944 Company "C" constructed a 70 foot, triple-single, class 70, Bailey Bridge at (K470107). All companies were performing road work consisting mainly of cindering icy roads and construction of by-passes.

At the end of the month the Battalion was still attached to the 1106th Engineer Combat Group, XVIII Corps, (Airborne) and had a Command Post 1 mile north of Hamoir, Belgium (VK4307), having moved to that location 28 December 1944. The situation in our area had become fairly stable and our work consisted of maintaining guards on barrier lines and road maintenance.

## January, 1945--Narrative of Action Report

At the beginning of this period the Battalion Headquarters was at Chateau Odeigne, one mile north of Hamoir, Belgium. The line Companies were engaged in patrolling minefield barrier lines laid along the north flank of the German Salient and patrolling roads in the XVIII Corps area. As the First Army attack into the German bulge started, this Battalion removed friendly and enemy minefields and road blocks in the way of the attacking troops. As the attack gained momentum, the 49th Engineer Combat Battalion reverted to VII Corps control and went into close support of the 83rd Infantry Division. On 12 January 1945, Company "B" and the forward Command Post moved to area at P601898. "B" Company was assigned the job of constructing a 60 foot, two-way, class 40, timber trestle bridge near Petite Langlir at P651834. The reconnaissance for this job was carried on under small arms fire while the infantry was still fighting for the ground and as the area was cleared, the construction parties moved in under mortar and shellfire to prepare the abutments.

Harassing interdictory fire was kept up on the bridge site during the entire period of construction, however, the bridge was completed in two days despite enemy interference.

Company "C" furnished one platoon to repair the Jayhawk Forward Command Post in Lierneux, Belgium. Their work was commented on favorably by the Corps Engineer.

From the 19th until the 21st of the month, severe blizzards made operations exceedingly difficult. All available men and machines were kept working day and night in order to keep the roads open. The operators of the patrol grader attached from the 612th Engineer Light Equipment Company were recommended for a Certificate of Merit for their excellent and tireless work in keeping the roads cleared.

The most outstanding job of the period was performed by Company "C," north of Bavigny on N33 (P700850) on the 21st of January. It was necessary to construct a two-way timber trestle bridge at the site occupied by the two-way trestle supported treadway bridge. It was deemed advisable under the circumstances to build the timber bridge under the existing treadway without interrupting the flow of traffic. This unique engineering feat was performed under the most difficult weather conditions, by jacking up the existing treadways and building ramps up to the approaches in order to give the working parties space under the bridge. The abutments were constructed and the bents placed with both treadways still carrying traffic. One pair of treadways were then removed and the timber stringers put in place. It is interesting to note that the timber was frozen so completely that it was necessary to pour gasoline on the stringers and ignite it to thaw them sufficiently so the decking could be nailed on. When one side of the bridge was able to carry traffic, the other pair of treadways were removed and the bridge was completed, again using the gasoline treatment to advantage.

On the 21st of January this Battalion was relieved of support of the 83rd Infantry Division and supported the 84th Infantry Division. The work with this Division consisted mainly of roadwork and bridge maintenance. On the 24th of January the Battalion was relieved of all commitments with the exception of one bridge being constructed by a platoon of Company "C." The Battalion moved back to a rest area in the vicinity of Vierset-Barse, Belgium, and at the close of the period was engaged in training and maintaining equipment. ■



## LT. ERIC F. WOOD AND THE

### 589TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

*[The following excerpted article was submitted by J. DON HOLTZMULLER, 589TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION.]*

The next three days we traveled by truck through France and into Belgium, arriving in the vicinity of St. Vith, Belgium on the 8th of December. We passed through the towns of Amiens, Cambrai, and Maubeuge and saw a lot of bomb craters and German equipment which had been destroyed and even some of the trenches remaining from the First World War. We went into bivouac near the village of Wallarode, Belgium. On December 9th we moved into line about 1.5 miles south of Auw, Germany. We replaced a battery of the 2nd Infantry Division, gun for gun, as the 106th was relieving this division in the line. We were later told that when we had registered our gun (this is when the guns were aligned and coordinated for battle) our gun had fired the first round for our division. The days between December 10th and 15th were spent in getting used to living in the field and firing missions at targets in Germany. The men we relieved had built a hut, so we didn't have to live in tents. Everything was peaceful. We were told that this was a quiet sector and that we were just to get used to combat. We fired a lot of harassing missions at night, mostly aimed at sounds heard by our forward observers. The weather during this period was cloudy, with fog lasting for most of the daylight hours. We saw a lot of German V1 rockets (more commonly known as Buzz Bombs) fly over our position. We were positioned under the path of their targets in Leige, Belgium, and the English mainland.

I will include excerpts from the 589th Field Artillery Battalion history to relate what happened to our battery and battalion on the 16th of December 1944--the day the Battle of the Bulge started. ...

Our first day of real battle was very harrowing. Our gun was unable to fire on the tanks which appeared in front of our position since a log fence had been built around our gun and one of the upright posts of the fence was right in line with the tank. Also, a German artillery shell had buried itself in the mud about 20 feet in front of our gun, but luckily it was a dud and didn't explode. That night, as we were loading up to move back to a new position, machine gun fire with tracers continually flew over our heads. We were on the edge of a wooded area and the Germans were firing just above the tops of the trees. The enemy must have mistaken the tree tops for the ground.

We left the position and it took us all night to travel only a few miles back toward the little Village of Schonberg, Belgium, to the location that had been picked for our new position. As soon as our section was told where to go into position, we got busy and unhooked the gun from our 6x6 truck and unloaded all our ammunition. The other three gun sections seemed to be distracted and hadn't unhooked their guns or done anything to get ready to fire. No sooner had we made everything ready than someone came running down through the position yelling "March Order! Get out of here, the Germans are coming!" A weapons carrier then pulled into the lane between where our truck had parked and the howitzer and the weapons carrier got stuck in the mud. We closed trails on the gun and were able to roll the gun out by hand. We were then able to push the weapons carrier out and finally were able to move our truck down to the ammunition so that it could be reloaded onto the truck. We hooked up the gun to the truck and drove out to the road with the hope that we were on our way to safety in St. Vith. The other three sections had driven off at the first shout.

We had driven just a short distance down the road and started down the hill into the little Village of Schonberg when we suddenly saw a German armored vehicle parked in the middle of the road. We subsequently found out that the machine we had through was a tank was really a self-propelled gun. Our driver stopped at once. None of us fired our small arms, nor did the German fire at us as he was parked so that his gun was aimed down the hill and not directed toward our truck.

The German then drove off down the hill and around a curve, where we lost sight of him. Immediately thereafter a jeep pulled up behind us and our Executive Officer, Lt. Eric Wood, jumped out and asked us why we had stopped. We told him we had just seen a German tank. He said, "It couldn't be. It was probably an American tank." He climbed into the cab of our truck along with Cpl. Knoll, our driver, and Sgt. Scannapico, our section leader, and said, "Let's go."

So off we went, down the hill, around the curve and on toward a little stone bridge, which crossed the Our River into the middle of the little Village of Schonberg. The Lieutenant then saw a tank parked to the side of a house and said, "See, it's an American tank." Then he looked again and said, "No, it isn't! It's a German tank! Pour on the gas!" As we passed the tank the German fired at us and missed. Pvt. Campagna, who was manning a bazooka, fired at the German and also missed but he hit a house and blew a hole in the side of it. We then thought we were home free and on the road to St. Vith but when we went around a curve we faced another self-propelled gun with its cannon pointed right at us. We also saw about three or four German soldiers with automatic weapons beside the gun. Cpl. Knoll stopped the truck and we enlisted men jumped off the truck to the left into a ditch. Lt. Wood jumped out the right side and ran up the hill into the woods. ... Immediately after we had left the truck the German's self-propelled gun fired a round into the motor of our truck, blowing metal and shrapnel all around.

One American truck had been stopped before ours and when we escaped from the truck to the ditch, we found that we had joined a lieutenant colonel and four black soldiers from an American 155mm artillery battalion. After discussing the situation, and realizing that there was no cover to run to and that our few carbines would be almost useless against a bunch of automatic weapons, we decided that to do anything other than surrender would be automatic suicide. We walked out of the ditch with our hands in the air. Once out of the ditch, we found the truck driver, Cpl. Knoll, lying in the road, shot through both ankles and also wounded with shrapnel from the artillery round which had been fired into the motor. The Germans searched us, taking food, cigarettes, watches, etc.--items that they thought might be useful to them. They subsequently indicated we should start back up the road towards Germany.

By this time many other trucks from the 589th Artillery Battalion had come down the hill, been stopped and had their occupants captured by the enemy. These prisoners, too, were making their way back up the road to Germany toward the POW camps. I indicated that I would like to stay with the wounded Cpl. Knoll and they seemed to give me the okay. He wasn't bleeding badly, but I am sure he was in shock. The German infantry started coming by and every so often I would be called back to the road to be searched again until I had nothing left of value. There was really nothing I could do for the wounded man except keep him company and hope a German medic would soon come to his aid. Shortly thereafter, an officer came along, and with his pistol, let me know I had better start up the road into Germany. Unfortunately, I had to leave Cpl. Knoll to his fate, which was, I found out later from his parents, that he was killed in action.

I started up the road and noticed Sgt. Scannapico's body lying by the side of the road. At which point he had left the truck I never found out, but he had probably left the cab to shoot at some infantry soldiers he had seen and was shot down. By this time, American artillery shells being fired from somewhere near St. Vith were falling on the road which we had come down from the second position. I did not want to walk through this barrage. I soon noticed a lane taking off to the left. Since there was no one to tell me which way to go, I started up this lane. I noticed other Americans following me. Since there was no guard with me, I supposed that there was a guard somewhere in the back of our little column. I kept walking up the lane. The lane turned into a path and then finally ended up in a clearing in a wood. About 20 or so Americans followed me into the clearing. I asked, "Where is the guard?" They answered,

*(continued on next page)*



## LT. ERIC F. WOOD (Continued from Page 14)

"We thought he was in the front." Not knowing where we were or which way we should go, we started walking north away from Schonberg. We walked until we came to another small village, which I think was Herresbach, which is located about two miles north of Schonberg. Seeing no enemy, we went to the village. Thinking that this was just a small battle, and that the Americans would be back through on the morrow, we decided to hold up in the basement of one of the houses for the night. The owners of the house we chose seemed to be friendly and even cooked some potatoes for us. In the middle of the night we heard lots of stamping upstairs followed by a voice calling down the basement stairs, "You are prisoners of the Germany Army!" We had inadvertently crossed the border into Germany during our walk through the forest and someone from the village had turned us in.

My memory of the journey from the front to the prison camp is rather sketchy. ...■

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

[The following was received from J. ROBERT HOVENSTINE, 10TH ARMORED DIVISION, 150TH ARMORED SIGNAL COMPANY.]

Several of us WWI veterans, including four VBOBers spoke to students and teachers of the Hollidaysburg (Pennsylvania) School District during special observances on Veterans Day. We spoke to individual classes, including two days in senior high and two days in junior high and two afternoons in two elementary schools. Teachers had prepared students for our presentations with computer print-outs about the Battle of the Bulge, maps, etc. We had very interesting conversations with many of the students and with some teachers. School principals and the superintendent expressed a desire for us to return for more of the same.

One of the teachers asked the students to write to us and tell us what our presentations meant to them. One wrote that he now had a different perspective on WWII. I would encourage fellow VBOBers to be in touch with their respective schools and offer to share with them some of our experiences.■

## ARMY ADMITS BULGE INTELLIGENCE FAILURE

By Demetri Paris  
9th Armored Division  
14th Tank Battalion

It is now well accepted that U.S. Army intelligence failed to anticipate the December 16, 1945, attack by the Germans. This view is upheld in:

United States Army in World War II  
The European Theater of Operations  
The Ardennes:  
Battle of the Bulge  
By Hugh M. Cole  
Pages 57-58

"There no longer is point of such intensely personal examination for the failure by American and Allied intelligence

to give warning of the Ardennes counteroffensive preparation. The failure was general and cannot be attributed to any person or group of persons.

"The Allied intelligence staffs figured German Field Marshal von Rundstedt would husband his dwindling resources, at an appropriate time he would counterattack in accordance with available means, and ultimately he would fall back to the Rhine for the major defensive battle. Had Rundstedt actually commanded in the west, as the Allies believed, this analysis would have been correct.

"But Hitler alone commanded. Intuition, not conventional professional judgment, would determine German action."

"If the thought ever occurred to an Allied intelligence officer that Germany would gamble on one last great effort west of the Rhine, staking everything on a single throw of the dice, this idea disappeared in the aura of high professional military competence which attached to Rundstedt. In a way, this may have been the field marshal's greatest personal contribution to the American counteroffensive."■

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ORSON WELLES, as Harry Lime in *The Third Man*



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### A REPLACEMENT IN THE BULGE

January 1, 1945

**Robert C. Lawrence**  
84th Infantry Division  
333rd Infantry Regiment  
Company B

Richmond Heights, Ohio 44143

I joined the 84th Infantry Division as a replacement in Company B on December 18, 1944.

On the night of December 25, morning of December 26, Company B attacked at night through heavy woods, firing as they advanced, toward a "few" German infantry and tanks. When they finally reached the enemy, many were out of ammo and faced overwhelming infantry, tanks and 88's. They lost 75% of the men to wounds or death. I and other replacements came in, inexperienced and fearful. Learning the password, which changed daily, was MOST important, since enemy soldiers had infiltrated in American uniforms.

We celebrated the new year, January 1, 1945, at front lines under a terrific midnight barrage, being unaware if it was out going or German in-coming! Either way, we were scared. We spent January 1 in foxholes ducking 88 tree bursts, many were wounded, a few were killed.

We came in wearing leather combat boots, soon replaced by rubber soled, fabric top goulashes, NOT waterproof. Frozen feet caused more casualties than enemy action. Then we got leather topped rubber bottomed shoe pacs with felt liners which solved the problem--too late in many cases. We slept in Belgian barns, and had a leave to Verviers (Liege) Belgium for a shower in coal mines, clean clothes issue, etc.

We slipped and slid on icy roads in 2-1/2 ton trucks pursuing the Germans, and rode with a partner on top of weasels loaded with gas cans, taking it to Patton's tanks. My buddy was wounded slightly by mortar shrapnel while sitting by me. We "fixed bayonets" in the Ardennes forest, and were told to expect hand-to-hand combat in the towns we attacked. We were hit by a mortar barrage as we attacked across open fields. Fortunately, the hand-to-hand did not happen as the enemy was eager to surrender or retreat. Dead, frozen German soldiers were stacked like cordwood, and our dead were immediately taken back for burial. Through all this, with the luck of the Irish, or God's help, I was unscathed! We proceeded into Germany, to Aachen, back to Holland, then to Beeck, Germany, in January and February.

### THERE WAS NO ESCAPE

January, 1945

**Ken Sperry**  
87th Infantry Division  
346th Infantry Regiment  
2nd Battalion  
Headquarters Company  
Kindred, North Dakota

While we were in a reserve situation, near the end of the BoB, I was with a detail from our A&P platoon called out to pick up some equipment. We were driven a few miles to a wooded area and instructed as what we were to do. Snow was pretty well gone at that time. The equipment to recover was mostly rifle parts from rifles that had been disassembled and parts scattered all over the area. It was a company-sized area where slit trenches had been in the process of being dug, but none were completed. Entrenching tools lay in the trenches or on the dirt piles beside the trenches.

Apparently this company had been surrounded and there was no escape. Obviously orders were given to destroy equipment and surrender. The stocks of all rifles were broken. Most were M1's and a few carbines. Some smashed binoculars were found. To one side, in a small area, lay the steel helmets of the captives.

I do not know just where this was, but probably not far from Malmedy. Perhaps there is some one out there who was involved in this happening. I have tried placing myself in such a situation and wondered about the horror of it. These captives may have been marched to the site of the Malmedy massacre and there they remain. Hopefully not that but in due time were liberated and some are still around to tell about it.

### HE CALLED ME "JUNIOR"!!

December 1944-January 1945

**Randolph "Randy" Kerr**  
353rd Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion  
Greig, New York

Being just a young snot and forever hungry, I always tried to be friendly with the cooks!



My good friend, Clifford McNeely, from Jeff, Illinois, was one of our cooks during our sojourn northerly across France and during the winter of 1944-45.

He was cooking salmon patties (remember the little chalky bones) on the second floor of an old abandoned building--I don't remember where--when a terrific explosion knocked him down a stairwell along with an old stove.

Cliff had cut the leather flap off his pistol holster and while cooking had laid his pistol on a nearby table.

He always called me either "Kerr" or "Junior." Cliff was probably a couple of years older which I presume brought this on.

After the dust settled he told me, "Junior, when I got up off the floor, I had a salmon patty stuck right in my pistol holster."

Events such as this I remember.

.....

#### WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW...

December 1944-January 1945

C. A. "Doc" Brumley  
2nd Armored Division  
41st Armored Infantry Regiment  
3rd Armored Infantry Battalion  
Company H  
Grovettown, Georgia

During the BoB, the company mess kitchen was set up in a horse-cow barn. It was well known that a hay loft was an ideal place for a tired soldier to get some much-needed sleep, if the situation permitted.

The next morning after the breakfast, the mess sergeant asked how everyone liked the coffee. After everyone had finished eating, he informed us that someone sleeping in the hay loft had relieved himself (#1) and the contents had dripped down through the hay and landed into the container that was brewing the coffee.

Due to the shortage of food supplies he could not afford to throw away the coffee. The old story goes, "What you don't know in most cases don't hurt." No ill effects were noted afterwards.

.....

#### TURKEY DINNER

December 25, 1944

George R. Kester  
527th Engineer Light Ponton Company  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

I wound up in the 103rd Evacuation Hospital on December 24th. I had surgery that evening. It had been decreed that every GI in the ETO would have a hot turkey dinner with all the trimmings for Christmas if at all possible. Under ordinary circumstances, this would have been a real treat for me, as I had been on K Rations for several days.

I was nauseous from the anesthetic, and when this meal was brought to me on the 25th, I had to pass it up and look the other way.

P.S. When I came to the ETO in October, 1944, I was on a British ship--*The Tamard*--and it was filled with frozen turkeys for the holidays.

.....

#### THE FLIGHT NOT TAKEN

December 15, 1944

Edward A. Connors  
28th Infantry Division  
108th Field Artillery Battalion  
Battery B  
Hamburg, New York

In December 1944 the 28th Division was in a rest area stretching from Wiltz to Eupen in Luxembourg, a distance of 25 miles. We had suffered heavy losses in the Hurtgen Forest on October 26 and 27 after

having relieved the 9th and 47th Infantry Divisions and we were in this rest area awaiting the replacements that would bring us up to battle strength.

I was a machine gunner positioned in front of the 155 Howitzers. The weather was bitter cold and we were constantly looking through binoculars for any type of movement. The First Sergeant sent for me one day and said, "I'm sending you to guard the airstrip at Wiltz. There will be other gunners there, too." He told me that I would stand guard duty only at night and that during the day I would be on my own. This assignment was to be for just one week. One gunner from each of the other batteries was to go with me. I told the sergeant that I didn't like leaving the battery but he said it was only for a week, it would be a nice break and besides he said it was an order.

The next morning I was on my way to Wiltz with four other GI's. The airstrip was on a plateau half way up a large hill. Wiltz was down in the valley below and over the hill was a no man's land thick with trees. The machine guns were set up on raised tripods so that you had to stand up in order to fire them. This, I thought, is not a good situation. No gunners during the day, only at night and no protection, not even a foxhole. When I questioned this, I was told, "This is a rest area, no action here."

The fog was too thick for any of the planes to use the strip but one of the pilots offered to give anyone a plane ride if the fog lifted before we moved out. The fog cleared in the afternoon of December 15, our last day there, so one other guy and I got our airplane ride. The other fellow went first and came back in a short time because he got air sick. The pilot wanted to know if I'd get sick too and I told him no I wouldn't. I didn't know for sure but I really wanted that plane ride.

The pilot showed me where to place my feet so that they wouldn't interfere with the control cables and told me I could remove my helmet and set it on my knees just in case I got sick. Well, we taxied down to the end of the uneven field turned around, gunned the engine and took off down the airstrip and we were quickly in the air. What a thrill. We turned to the right and flew over the Town of Wiltz. I could see the GI's below me grow smaller, what a different world it was from up in the sky. I was doing okay so the pilot asked if I'd like to fly over the so-called front lines. At the moment my mother's image flashed before and as much as I wanted to fly over the lines, I said, "No thanks, my mother would kill me if we got shot down." He laughed and we circled around Wiltz a few more times. I really enjoyed that plane ride.

Well, the next morning, December 16, we left to return to our outfits. Half way back to the outfit we ran into heavy shell fire but what happened on our way back is another story. We later learned that a half hour after leaving the air strip at Wiltz, the Germans came over the hill area where we had been; it was the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge. We also found out that three of the four aircraft made it out safely. Sadly though the 28th Division Headquarters personnel stationed in Wiltz suffered heavy losses.

To this day I regret the decision I made not to fly over the front lines that day for surely we would have seen the Germans prepping to attack the next day and maybe, just maybe, we could have made a difference.

.....

#### THE ADRENALIN WAS FLOWING

January 7, 1945

Louis H. Brill  
2nd Armored Division  
66th Armored Regiment  
Company I  
Boynton Beach, Florida

I was with the 2nd Armored Division and was wounded on January 7, 1945.

We had reached Aachen, in Germany, when we were pulled back to help in the Battle of the Bulge. I really do not know what town we were near when the following events happened.



I was assigned to Lt. Brown's tank, which always was the 2nd tank when going into battle. As it was very snowy, and the first tank bogged down in the heavy snow, Lt. Brown got out to continue in the 2nd tank, and we became the lead tank. Unfortunately, our tank commander was new and was the one to make decisions. The Germans had laid a minefield right on top of the snow, in plain vision for all to see. Our tank commander proceeded to get off the road to skirt the minefield. As soon as we came around the laid mines, and back on to the road, the German's had a tank destroyer zeroed in on that spot. We were easy pickings for them, and two shells ripped into our tank. I don't know how I was able to get out of the tank, as I was the radio operator, and assistant gunner, as my leg was shattered. However, the adrenalin was probably flowing very strong, and being only 19 years old, I managed to get out and jump off the tank, as the ammunition started to explode inside the tank. I hit the ground, and some other tank men pulled me into a ditch. After a while I was put on the back of a light tank, and taken to an aid station.

I truly don't know what happened to the other crew members, except I know that one member was killed instantly. It's strange, but his is the only name I can remember. He was Gary Fagnani, from White Plains, New York.

As I was being loaded to be taken to the aid station, Lt. Brown, got out of his tank to express his sorrow to me.

I've never been able to contact anyone who knew of this incident and would appreciate it if someone reading this story could provide more details. [Louis' address is 10026B Andrea Lane, Boynton Beach, Florida 33437-3448.]

.....

#### IN A SMALL CHURCH

December, 1944

Michael V. Altamura  
750 Tank Battalion  
ATT: 75th Infantry division  
Glendale, Arizona

We were in a picturesque, snow-covered valley in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge in December of 1944. It was Sunday morning. A small Catholic church stood on a slight slope overlooking the snow-covered fir trees. At the other end of the valley was a coal-fueled electric power plant. Every once in a while a German buzz bomb came over attempting to knock out the power plant. A group of tankers and infantrymen decided to attend church that Sunday morning. We stood in the back of the church with our guns slung over our shoulders as the priest gave the mass in Latin. The congregation was kneeling in prayer.

We heard the "put-put" of a buzz bomb overhead, and then the sound cut off. When the sound ceased, we knew the rocket engine had stopped propelling the airborne buzz bomb, and it would fall, exploding when it hit the ground. The congregation looked upwards as if to accept their fate. The priest's intonations stopped. We stood in the rear as if accepting our fate. The bomb hit pretty close to the church. The ground shook; a few of the stained glass windows cracked. No one moved or said a word. the priest resumed his mass in Latin. I thank God for sparing us that Sunday morning in a small Belgium church during the Ardennes battle.

.....

#### WE HAD A GOOD LAUGH

December 30, 1944

Wilfred "Mac" McCarty  
11th Armored Division  
21st Armored Infantry Battalion

#### Company B

##### Washington, DC

On December 30, 1944, my company made contact with the enemy near Jodenville, Belgium, and forced them to withdraw to the high ground southwest of Chenogne.

During our battle outside Jodenville, a German 88 shell and I tried to share the same space (the Germans thought that I was a tank). The shell landed next to me and while most of the shrapnel fell over me, I was knocked silly and sprayed with shrapnel. It was like 15 people had kicked me in sensitive parts of my body with heavy GI shoes. I thought that I was going to die and I did not know for sure what country I was in--Belgium or Luxembourg (it was Belgium).

I was suddenly surprised to see a GI that I did not know standing near me. He had been hit in the face with shrapnel--probably from the same 88 shell that hit me. He seemed to be in shock and for some strange reason, I thought that his gloves were bloodier than mine. So as not to cause him any more anxiety, I suggested that we exchange gloves--which we did without a word. I then remembered that we were supposed to take eight tablets with water if we were hit. I counted out the tablets one-by-one and gave them to the other GI, but I forgot to take any tablets myself. I did, however, give myself a shot of morphine.

Someone in the tank that the Germans had missed then threw me a blanket and moved on. I was now a foot soldier laying in the snow with what felt like frozen legs. Then a jeep came out with bullets still firing, and I was taken to a tent field hospital where I was operated on. Before the operation, I kept passing out and each time I regained consciousness, I saw a German soldier standing nearby. I thought that I had been captured! It turned out that the German had been brought into the hospital to be treated. They eventually moved him out of my line of vision.

After my operation, I saw the soldier who had been hit in the face with shrapnel. He was not badly wounded but the blood on his face had made his injury look worse. We laughed when we saw each other. (We had been two scared GIs.)

I was then sent back to England for further operations. When I was better, I was sent back to the front a second time via box cars that were used in World War I. The sign on the box car read: "Hommes 40, Chevaux 8" (40 men or 8 horses).

.....

#### ALL IN THE LINE OF DUTY

December 1944

Jesse H. Roberson  
750th Tank Battalion  
Headquarters Company  
Churubusco, Indiana

During the Battle of the Bulge, a few days after Christmas, the 750th Tank Battalion was in the Reforest Woods and the Germans kept sending in tree bursts and the shrapnel kept flying all around.

I got an urge to go to a house-barn that was in a valley with a mountain between the Germans and us. There was 42 inches of snow on the ground. I had to make a snow-packed strip in the forest in order to get the speed up so I could bust out of the woods and made the dash to the house-barn. After several runs to the edge of the woods and back to the other end to make the strip, I finally had a strip about 1/4 mile long of hard packed snow. On my final run I had the 1/2 track going as fast as it



would go.

When I got to the new snow at the end of my strip, snow was flying everywhere. In close pursuit were the others in the battalion with the lieutenant bringing up the rear in his jeep. Of course, the German spotters saw this and shells started lobbing in on us but we were moving fast and the snow was flying so they couldn't actually see us and they never found their mark. We all made it to the house-barn out of the Germans' sights.

When I arrived at the house-barn, two Belgium ladies came running out of the house in a panic. I was almost dragged into the barn portion of the house. I saw a cow trying to deliver a calf and not being able.

Before I was drafted I was a farmer and could the cow was in trouble. I spoke no Flemish but acted like I was washing my hands and the ladies brought me a pail of water. I washed my hands and removed my coat and shirt in spite of the cold. After an examination I found that the calf had one leg bent backwards and this prevented a normal delivery. With my bare arm, I pushed the calf back up in the birth canal and straightened out the leg. I attached a small rope to each leg and asked my dumbfounded fellow GIs to help me pull the leg. The U.S. Army, at no charge, delivered that calf. I cleaned up and put my uniform shirt and coat back on and the two ladies gave me a hug. As a side note, my fellow GIs, who were mostly from large cities, never called me a dumb farmer again.

## REUNIONS

**4TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, July, 2001, Washington, DC area. Contact: Roger S. Barton, 2 Spring Drive, Walkersville, Maryland 21793. Telephone: 301-845-4168.

**11TH ARMORED DIVISION**, August 12-18, 2001, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Kalamazoo Center, 100 West Michigan Avenue, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49007. Contact: Vera Zanardelli, 7632 Crauns Beach Road, Quincy, Michigan 49082-9545.

**35TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 216TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**, September 27-29, 2001, Drury Inn Nashville South, Nashville, Tennessee. Contact: James Franklin, 229 Bonds Road, Thomaston, Georgia 30286. Telephone: 706-648-2837.

**80TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, August 22-25, 2001, Holiday Inn, Hampton, Virginia. Contact: Clarence H. Brockman, 334 Fannie Street, McDonald, Pennsylvania 15057-1273. Telephone: 724-926-2044.

**86TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION**, May 6-9, 2001, San Antonio, Texas. Contact: George L. Murray, 818 West 62nd Street, Anniston, Alabama 36206. Telephone: 256-820-4415.

**150TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, May 16-18, 2001, Shoreway Acres, Falmouth, Massachusetts. Contact: Curtis F. Shaw, 25 Sagamore Road, West Yarmouth, Massachusetts 02673. Telephone: 503-771-1270.

**254TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, July 27-29, 2001, National Guard Armory, Ishpeming, Michigan. Contact: Ed Vickstrom, 2012 Washington Avenue, Ishpeming, Michigan 49849-3237. Telephone: 906-486-4804.

**297TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, June 7-9, 2001, Washington, DC. Contact: Adele dePolo, 6040 Richmond Highway #713, Alexandria, Virginia 22301. Telephone: 703-329-0279.

**555TH, 563RD, 564TH, 566TH & 573RD SIGNAL AIR WARNING BATTALIONS (RADAR) WWII ETO**, September 13-16, 2001, Midland, Michigan. Contact: Don Hawkins, 504 West Chapel Lane, Midland, Michigan 48640-7328. Telephone: 517-631-2283.

**965TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**, September 29-October 3, 2001, Orlando, Florida. Contact: Joseph Padgett, 6 Par Drive, New Smyrna Beach, Florida 32168. Telephone: 904-427-1763.

Received too late for last issue:

**179TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**--Contact: Martha R. Perry, 1718 Barrington Circle, Marietta, Georgia 30061. Telephone: 770-971-5694.

**193RD FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**--Contact: Bob Lyons, 14929 North 9th Avenue, Effingham, Illinois 62401. Telephone: 217-868-5627.

**987TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**--Contact: W. D. Crawford, 13331 Camp Joy Road, Ore City, Texas 75683-5685. Telephone: 903-968-6350.

## URGENT... WE NEED YOUR HELP RIGHT AWAY!!

We are currently making plans for the September reunion in Orlando, Florida, and your input will be of great assistance. This reunion should be a really big one and we are anxious to make our plans to please as many as possible.

Response to this questionnaire will in no way bind you to attend; however, we are anxious to accommodate those who will attend. If, at this time, you are making tentative plans to attend any portion of the September 2001 reunion, we would appreciate your response to these questions.

### Number of Persons

I/We plan to attend the entire reunion.....  
(We would thus require hotel accommodations)

OR

We would NOT require hotel accommodations, but...

I/We plan to attend the memorial ceremonies.....  
I/We plan to attend the banquet.....

**PLEASE ALSO BE ADVISED THAT THE REUNION DATES HAVE BEEN CHANGED FROM THOSE PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED. CHECK IN/REGISTRATION DATE WILL BE SEPTEMBER 29<sup>TH</sup> AND DEPARTURE DATE WILL BE OCTOBER 3<sup>RD</sup>.**



## THE REPPLE DEPPE

[This article was sent to us by HOWARD PETERSON, 4TH ARMORED DIVISION, 51ST ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, CCA. The article dealt with a replacement infantry man in the 28th Infantry Division and Sergeant Paul McLain, who served with the 3rd Reinforcement Depot. Following is McLain's story regarding the Battle of the Bulge.]

The worst time was in October, November, and December of 1944. Calls for replacements were tremendous. That was when the line divisions were all taking big casualties every day, especially in the rifle platoons. The infantry, which always gets the bulk of battle losses, was taking practically all of them then, not only from battle but also from exposure, frostbite, and trenchfoot.

Men were rushed to Europe from the States. All Service of Supply units were being combed out for rifleman replacements. Even the Air Corps had to turn over more than 10,000 men to become infantry rifleman. General Eisenhower himself said, "As the infantry replacement problem became acute, we resorted to every kind of expedient to keep units up to strength."

The morale problem was rough in the Repple Depples. Eisenhower later said, "When the need for replacements is acute, efficiency demands that all men available in depots be dispatched promptly to the place where they are most needed. Individual assignment according to personal preference is well-nigh impossible."

But veterans (casuals) always want to return to their own divisions. "In the fall of 1944 all such purposes had to be thrown overboard in the effort to supply men to the areas of most critical need." Eisenhower said that, and ordered that. But the men didn't know it, and blamed the Repple Depples.

Many a time we "station complement" men shared our rations with the replacements we were handling. It wasn't enough to help much, with 20,000 men to feed. and We got no thanks for it.

The big clutch came in December, with "the Bulge." We were near Huy, at a village called Banneux, in Belgium, in the Argennes Forest--right in the path of the German attack. Everybody knows how the 101st Airborne, and the 28th Infantry and other divisions fought in that big battle. But few know what the 3rd Repple Depple did there.

Our scouts and forward depots were surrounded and overrun by the swarming Nazi Divisions. We lost almost 20 men, killed and captured, and got plenty of wounded. But we were "non-combat," according to T.O. and E.

Day and night our men ran trucks, jeeps, or anything that would move, evacuating the almost helpless replacements. We moved then under fire, and through artillery barrages. And we got them all out, to St. Trond. We had to keep them just beyond the battle line, ready to refill shattered divisions that needed replacements desperately.

That was when Jack Oleck, the scout-communications man I mentioned before, really showed what Repple Depple men could do. If a man in a line division had done it, he would have gotten the Medal of Honor for it.

Jack was sent up to a field phone hidden in the cellar of a bombed out house, right in the line, when the Kraut attack began. That wire was the only communication left with the battle line. 1st Lt. James Johnes, our company commander, told Jack to "keep that line open as long as you can. Stay with it until I tell you to pull back. That line is the only one to the forward depot. Hundreds of replacements may be killed or captured if we lost contact."

Jack kept the line open for three days and nights all by himself. With German patrols passing right by the cellar, he stayed with it. Attacks and counterattacks swirled up and back around him, in a crazy welter of confusion. By some miracle the wires remained uncut, and open.

Catching snatches of sleep when he could, Oleck stayed by the field phone, keeping the connections to the surrounded line outfits open. He had only two C Rations with him, for the three day ordeal.

Twice he fought solo rifle duels with German patrols that discovered his position. Every time the muffled field phone-bell rang it was a dead

give away to any Krauts who might be near. In the second duel he fired his last bullet, and stopped charging Nazis just ten feet from his shattered cellar window.

On the third day, half-frozen, starving, and out of ammo for his M-1, Oleck had great difficulty keeping awake. The numbing cold made him terribly sleepy. But he knew that if he gave way to sleep then, he never would wake up.

By that time all the replacements in the forward depot area had been evacuated. The solitary field phone in the icy cellar served only as a crude switchboard for the last, rear-guard infantry units in the area. Toward the end of the third day, they too had ceased to answer calls.

Talking softly in the eerie, ominous fog, Oleck called Lt. Lohnes, back at the main depot near Huy. The wire line had served its purpose, "What Now?"

Lt. Lohnes swore in baffled frustration and rage. He had thought that surely the last infantry unit to leave would take his solitary GI out with them. But no--Oleck was a Repple Depple man--and they hadn't remembered him, even though he had saved their hides.

That's how it was with the Repple Depple men. They served, faithfully and to the bitter end--and were forgotten, or cursed out for their pains.

All alone in the heart of the advancing Nazi hordes, the lonely GI shook his head philosophically, and started back towards the American lines. The 3rd Reinforcement Depot would not help him. Almost weeping with chagrin and pity for his scout, Lt. Johnes too had to abandon him. The whole depot had to pull out as the Panzer Divisions smashed into Banneux. There were thousands of bewildered men to care for. One lost GI was insignificant, then.

How PFC Jack Oleck got back to the American lines (and he did) is an epic in itself. For three more days and nights he dodged and crept through the heart of the German army. Traveling only at night, or when fog or snow blinded the enemy sentries, he moved steadily east, over ice and snow, carefully avoiding enemy patrols.

From the dead men scattered all over the vast battleground he borrowed rations and bullets for his rifle. With stubborn determination, he worked his way back. Three days later, he reached the retreating American lines, and reported back to his unit for duty.

The final irony though, was yet to come. When his name was put in for a decoration, by his C.O., the citation was buried in the files. It was never answered.

What must have happened is easy to guess. Some officer back in a cozy Headquarters Office must have pigeonholed it. "Imagine a Repple Depple man carrying through a combat job like that! Impossible! Repple Depple men have an easy job. Everybody knows that!"

But the real cream of the jest was this. The rifle platoons and companies that Oleck saved were 28th Infantry outfits. The very same ones in which Corporal Dave Akers was. And Akers still is cussing out the men of the 3rd Repple Depple--sublimely unaware that he owes his life to it.

That was the story of the Repple Depples--the much cursed, the much misunderstood. ...The Repple Depples are gone, probably never to appear again. But it is unfair to curse their memory. Their men did the job that was asked of them. Considering all of the difficulties, they did it very well--with self-sacrifice and devotion. No one can ask for more.■

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

ALISTAIR COOKE



ARE YOUR  
DUES DUE?



## OH, MY ACHING HEAD

By Mike Klemich  
7th Armored Division  
87th Reconnaissance SP

I just can't help but tell my story of my experience with the dentist in the field shortly after the Bulge. I had a toothache that was second to none. The only remedy was to see a dentist. This I dreaded, because some of the stories I heard about our field dental equipment.

I believe we were still in Belgium but I don't remember exactly where in Belgium. I was driven by a medic in a jeep to a field hospital. This place was kind of a holding pen, a temporary aid station that was recently set up to treat frost bite and trench foot.

Every time the medic looked at me he did so with a kind of "army style" grin. This guy knew something that I didn't...why the sneaky grin. I did realize why a short while later.

After reaching the hospital tent, we were greeted by a little, skinny nurse. She was blond and beautiful. She also gave me that "Boy, are you in for it" look. I knew I was dirty, but so was everyone else there.

The nurse escorted me to a corner of the tent where the dentist had his crude equipment set up. She pointed me to a folding chair and told me to sit down. Now I was really scared. Sitting in the dentist chair was a staff sergeant. He was cleanly shaven but otherwise dirty. Oh!! How well, I remember this day. He was soaked with sweat, and his face was the color gray. The guy was in great pain and my toothache was no longer. I was ready to leave. I knew now why all the grinning.

Behind the dentist chair was a corporal sitting on a stool-like chair peddling what looked like the bottom part of a Singer sewing machine. The type like my mom had. The dentist was a captain, short and stocky and his white coat hung down to his ankles. The doc kept repeating "faster, corporal."

The sergeant was done, now it was my turn. I remember the sergeant looking at me and just shaking his head. The nurse helped me to the dentist chair. Kind of a bucket seat with a head rest, a metal one at that, covered with a towel. This is what I remember anyway.

Next step the nurse placed a towel across my chest and shoulders. She asked when I had my last bath. I believe my answer was "It's been a while." It had been a while believe me. That much I truly remember.

"Open wide, soldier," were the next words I heard. This I remember quite well. The probing began, after which the needle, that really hurt. Now the ever-present sweating began. It was only a few minutes when the side of my face became numb. I had one cavity. Was I ever glad. His next words were, "Full speed ahead, corporal." That I'll never forget. I don't recall the corporal ever speaking a single word.

To my surprise I didn't feel anything. The nurse held a small rubber-like suction tube and used it to drain my mouth from time to time. She asked me how I felt, I mumbled, "How much longer?" At least that's what I think in my mind today.

While I tried hard to relax, the Doc and his nurse began mixing a batch of filling. This I remember quite clearly as the color of this was gray, not white. Regardless of the color, that stuff lasted over a year until I saw my dentist back home.

When I told my dentist back home as to the type equipment used by the military in the field, he couldn't believe it and said that's what they used during the first world war. Never the less it was quite an experience. Just another, I'll never forget.

The contraption the corporal was peddling supplied the power needed to a gear box that turned the cable through a flexible kind of tube to the drill the dentist held. All this was done by belts. One thing I remember is that there wasn't any sound like a drill in today's modern equipment.

Would like to mention that I received a letter from my friend Charles Whiting recently, telling me that there's not much left to see of the Bulge battle any more as they are now filling in the foxholes. Get your stories in, fellows, as we're fading at the fast rate of about a thousand each day. Not much time left. ■

## WHAT A RELIEF!

By Anthony F. Supkowski  
200th Field Artillery Battalion  
A Battery

This story began when we moved into a firing position outside the Town of Eupen, Belgium.

After the Battle of the Bulge started, the weather went bad and the air force was grounded. The Army now depended a lot on the artillery for support of our front line troops.

The tubes on our Long Toms were beginning to wear a lot with all the firing we were doing. All the wear, and the fact that the tubes were torn out at the muzzle, created quite a problem.

When the guns were fired, the copper rotating bands would loosen up and when the shell left the gun the noise it made was nerve wracking. These howlers, as we called them, actually scared us so I am sure the enemy troops who heard these ungodly screaming missiles of death must have been paralyzed with fear.

Sometimes a rotating band would come off of a shell. That was real weird and dangerous. Luckily, no one was injured by wandering rotating bands. We contacted V Corps and told them about the condition of our tubes and the problem with the rotating bands. We were told to continue firing, no matter what. The person we were in touch with laughingly said, "Keep firing even if the shells come out end over end. We need you."

Another reason why we called V Corps was because we had word from the front that some artillery shells were falling short of their target. V Corps said that they had word that our fire was accurate so we went right on firing.

When the weather cleared and the air force went back to work, we got our chance to have all four tubes replaced. What a relief! ■

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## HELP WANTED IN BELGIUM!

Associate member **ROGER MARQUET** would like some help in locating information/family members of the following:

**OLIVER SIMMERS, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 21ST ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION**--Oliver was killed in action on January 2, 1945 at Monty (close to Mande-Saint-Etienne). On that day, 16 men from his battalion were killed in action but Oliver is not listed on any Roll of Honor or roster. Before being assigned to the 11th, Oliver was in the 8th Armored Division.

**HOMER D. RICKER, JR., 35TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 134TH INFANTRY REGIMENT**--Homer was killed in action December 31, 1944 in an unknown village where he saved three children from a perilous situation.

**EDWARD RAINS**, unit unknown--was bitleted in Banneux Notre-Dame, Belgium in January 1945 at Gustin's. He died of non-battle injuries in March or April of 1945. One friend of his gave his ring to the Gustin family and they would like to return the ring to Edward's family.

**MAX DELMER MEAD**, unit unknown--Max's dog tag was recently found on the battle fields by Eric Robert. Eric would like to sent the dog tags to his family.

If you can help with any of these requests, write to Roger at: Fonds de Foret, 67-B-4870 Trooz, Belgium. ■



## WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER ON PARADE

Every 4th of July for the past 5-6 years, the Western Pennsylvania Chapter has participated in the Latrobe, Pennsylvania, Independence Day Parade. Company B, 110th Infantry Regiment of the Pennsylvania National Guard always provides transportation for the Chapter.



President John DiBattista sent us the above picture which shows the truck proceeding in route to march in a torrential downpour.

Their participation always evokes cheers, friendly banter, and tremendous applause. The rain did not deter the crowd, it was the usual attendance. They are definitely a crowd favorite. ■

## 153RD FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION IN THE BULGE

*[The following excerpt is from information sent to us by Associate member Arthur D. Batten, whose father, FRANCES J. BATTEN served with the 153rd.]*

The period 12 to 26 December, Headquarters and Charley, with two batteries of the 266th Field Artillery Battalion, took charge of captured German 105mm Howitzers and moved to positions in the Hurtgen Forest near Hurtgen. For two weeks these batteries supported the fires of the 8th Infantry Division in their drive to clear the forest of the enemy. 5,344 rounds of German ammunition were expended. We cannot report the reactions of the Germans who were getting a taste of their own guns and ammunition. During this same period Able moved to positions near Mausbach, Germany, and Baker remained in the same position it had occupied for nearly three months, firing into the Belgian Bulge's main supply routes in Germany.

It was in the Schmidthof position that the Battalion published its first daily newspaper, "Caisson Comments." On 26 December 1944, the German Howitzers were turned over to the 269th FA Bn, and our battalion assembled around Walheim, Germany, in preparation to eliminate the Belgian Bulge--the German's desperate counter-offensive. On 27 December, the battalion moved to Tohogne, Belgium, on the north flank of the breakthrough. In the next succeeding five weeks, despite heavy snowfalls and below zero weather, the battalion continued to play

its part in eliminating the Bulge, occupying positions near Werbomont, Rahier, Trois Ponts, Sourbrodt and Eisenborn, Belgium.

On 25 January 1945 our commanding officer, Lt. Col. Strickler left us to command the 79th FA Group and Major Bowen Campbell assumed command of the 153rd FA Bn. During the last week in January and the first week in February, the battalion received new tubes for the 8" guns, the old tubes having approximately the required number of service rounds for replacement. ■

## NOT A PLEASANT SUBJECT, BUT....

We have an information check list which might be helpful to your family in the event something should happen to you. If you would like one, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and write on the outside "checklist." ■

## MORE ON POW MEDAL

By the time you receive this newsletter, we should have in our possession, a questionnaire with which you can apply for the Prisoner of War medal. If you would like one, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope and write on the outside "POW medal." We'll be happy to send you one. ■

## SOME INTERESTING QUOTES...

"All I had to do was to cross the river, capture Brussels, and then go on to take the port of Antwerp. The snow was waist deep and there wasn't room to deploy four tanks abreast, let alone six armoured divisions. It didn't get light till eight and was dark again at four, and my tanks can't fight at night. And all this at Christmas time."

Gen Sepp Dietrich  
VI Panzer Army

"We pulled up along the road with 60 Panthers. Then came the endless convoy driving in two columns, side by side, hub on hub, filled to the brim with American soldiers. And then a concentrated fire from 60 guns and 120 machine-guns. It was a glorious bloodbath, vengeance for our destroyed homeland. The snow must turn red with American blood."

Lt. Rockhammer,  
Wehrmacht Officer

"If this proposal should be rejected, one German artillery corps and six heavy anti-aircraft battalions are ready to annihilate the U.S. troops in and near Bastogne. All the civilian losses caused by this artillery fire would not correspond with the well-known American humanity."

Gen Von Luttwitz  
XLVII Panzer Corps

"The Ardennes battle drives home the lesson that a large-scale offensive by massed armour has no hope of success against an enemy who enjoys supreme command of the air. Our precious reserves had been expended, and nothing was available to ward off the impending catastrophe in the East."

Gen von Mellenthin ■



## 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION

Sam B. Peters  
26th Infantry Division  
328th Infantry Regiment  
2nd Battalion, Company F

On being relieved from the line, we were trucked to Metz, France, where we moved into some very ancient French Army barracks. Being near the border with Germany, Metz had always had a strong military base. In addition, to the base there was a string of caves where the soldiers could entrench themselves when attacked. The Germans used these caves very effectively when they were defending the attacking Americans. There was a very long siege before they could be dislodged.

The barracks we were to occupy were filthy and the mattresses the Germans left were infected with lice. Most of the American soldiers pitched the mattresses outside to be destroyed and then slept in their bed rolls on the floor. For us, this would be heaven.

Our superior officers had told us that we would be in rest until after the holidays. This seemed logical since we needed the rest. Many of us needed some new equipment and we were expected to get a large number of new recruits from the States. It was felt that we could use time to give the recruits some combat training. We were settling in pretty well. On December 16th, I received a cake from Alline which all of the guys in my platoon thought was delicious. The Army Postal Service was great for getting it to me on my birthday.

On my birthday we began to hear rumors about the German breakthrough in Luxembourg and Belgium. The III Corps, composed of the 80th Division, the 26th Division, and the 4th Armored Division were alerted for an immediate move, possibly beginning on the morning of the 18th. According to the plans, the 4th Armored would depart first and would have priority on roadways and equipment since their mission called for a dash up the Arlon Highway to attempt a breakthrough to the besieged 101st Airborne in Bastogne.

The 26th Division was scheduled to follow at 0830 on the 20th, using a different road network, mostly secondary roads. There was some delay due to road congestion and the lack of bridges across the Moselle River at Metz. All but one of the bridges had been destroyed during the long battle for the city. However, all of the 26th Division units were in place in or around the assembly area at Eishen by 2300 hours. All of the infantry troops slept in foxholes in the freezing cold forest.

The big mission of the regiment was to cross the Sure River and capture Wiltz which had a road network helping to supply German troops attacking Bastogne. The first action was by the 1st Battalion which attacked and captured Hostert which would later become the jumping off point for Task Force Hamilton.

The battle plan for the 328th Regiment, Col. Ben Jacobs commanding, called for the three battalions to position themselves on the right flank of the attacking 4th Armored Division. The Germans in this area were attacking in a southwesterly direction. The 1st Battalion was ordered to attack Arsdorf with the 3rd Battalion.

The 2nd Battalion, under Maj. Albert Friedman, was organized into a task force with ack-ack, engineers, TD units and tanks attached. The task force would be commanded by Lt. Col. Paul Hamilton and would have the dirtiest job of all, the capture of Eschdorf which was heavily fortified with both troops and armor.

"E" Company, commanded by Capt. Vaught Swift, who was later awarded the D.S.C., went out in front north of Grosbus and ran into strong German forces dug in on the high ground in front of Hierheck, a small village at crossroads leading into Eschdorf. They were pinned down for the rest of the day--December 23.

The next morning, Company "F," commanded by Capt. Reed Seeley, replaced "E" Company. When we tried to advance, we met a large German force on the reverse slope less than 100 yards away. The Germans were well camouflaged in the snow with white capes. They opened up with a murderous rifle and automatic weapons fire. Capt.

Seeley and I were directing troops and a tank along the road. The tank was hit by 88 fire knocking Capt. Seeley to the ground, but not seriously hurting him. He was later killed in action. The 88 was destroyed by bazooka man, PFC D. Giouanazoo. When the smoke cleared, a previously unseen Tiger Tank trembled nervously for a moment and waddled off down the slope toward Eschdorf and safety. Had he stood in place and fought, we would have been in serious trouble.

S/Sgt. Joseph Mackin was directing 2nd Platoon troops out of our west flank when he was hit in the head by rifle fire and was killed instantly. He was greatly admired and respected by his superior officers and loved by his platoon. He was greatly missed during later operations.

It took "F" Company all that day to get over the ridge and into Hierheck. "E" Company was having much the same problem along a parallel road to our left. They were held up by German troops firing from a house on the outskirts of the village. The mortar squad under T/Sgt. Bruce Mannwiller was able to get heavy fire on the house and the Germans surrendered. Except for patrols and perimeter defense, our troops spent the early part of Christmas Eve in houses at Hierheck. However, about midnight we received orders to prepare for a night attack on Eschdorf departing at 0100 on Christmas morning. This would be done with troops who had been on the move since leaving Metz five days before with very little sleep and no hot food. Many of these men were new replacements received at Metz and were unfamiliar to infantry operations. However, we did have all of the officers and non-coms and, as a whole, the troops performed very well, some exceptional.

The fighting in Eschdorf was confused and jumbled. For two days and nights, there were both Americans and Germans dodging each other in the streets, buildings, barns and basements. Enemy tanks were racing up and down the town square. Our artillery and mortar fire was knocking down walls and filling the barnyards with rubble. Some of the things that happened in Eschdorf were strictly from Hollywood.

One platoon from "F" Company commanded by Lt. Myles Gentzkow went in with the first wave of the attack. The men found themselves surrounded by German troops and tanks. They found sanctuary in the basement of a house with a connecting barn. The farmer kept them posted on the movement of the Germans and brought each man a fresh egg and some soup. They remained in hiding for 30 hours. Capt. Seeley did not know where they were until S/Sgt. Joseph Feily was able to escape back to the Company CP later Christmas night.

My 2nd Platoon, accompanied by Capt. Seeley, crossed a small stream and moved into Eschdorf from the west. We were close enough to touch Germans during much of the night. One of the problems of night attacks with infantry troops is the inability to distinguish between friend and foe in the dark. Bumping into people with semi-automatic weapons with drawn bayonets is not a fun way to spend an evening. This became so desperate that Capt. Seeley gave the command to withdraw to a house on the road leading into Hierheck. This move was made without casualty even though we had to cross an open field. The house we occupied was solid masonry, two story with a basement. There was an American tank by the side of the house but it had been hit and was not mobile but still occupied. Our men took up position at all the windows, doors, and corners of the house. The Germans finally realized that the house was occupied and began shelling us from Eschdorf, very heavily, and the men eventually found it advisable to retreat to the basement.

After sustained shelling for several hours, the house caught fire and began to burn from the top. It eventually burned to the basement level which was saved by a heavy concrete ceiling. None of the men were burned in the fire nor did the basement get very hot. Late in the day, Capt. Seeley began to send men back to the battalion headquarters one by one. This necessitated the crossing of the road in front of the house which was under fire and also crawling along the road ditch back to Hierheck. Several men were hit during the process including me. One of the sergeants was critically

(continued on next page)



## 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION

(Continued from Page 23)

hurt and was lying in the ditch where he spent most of the day. We could not move him until dark. PFC Paul Hauck, our company runner, crawled out to the wounded man several times giving him encouragement and refreshment.

"E" Company made their attack on Eschdorf from the east and had much the same problem as "F" Company. Its platoons were cut off and disorganized by German troops and tanks. Capt. Swift crawled and ran through machine gun fire back to the rear to seek tanks. He brought back two, one of which was immediately destroyed at the crossroads east of town. The other tank disappeared in the conflict. Capt. Swift rejoined his troops in houses on the edge of town where they stayed Christmas day and night. They were relieved the next morning.

The 1st Battalion of the 104th Infantry Regiment came in late Christmas Day and joined Task Force Hamilton in the capture of Eschdorf. They were lined up in front of the task force headquarters at Hierheck as I was placed on a stretcher, strapped to a jeep and sent back to an unknown field hospital.

On arriving at the hospital, the nurses dressed my wound and said they had some good news for me. "You will be flying back to the States tomorrow." What wonderful news, but alas, luck failed me. The next morning I was driven to a general hospital in Paris. On arrival, I was examined by a surgeon who advised I would have surgery the next morning. They sedated me heavily for a good night's sleep. The next thing I heard was a loud scream. A soldier across the hall was having a leg amputated.

The next morning they operated on my leg. Actually, it was what they call in the army, a million dollar wound, not too bad but bad enough to keep you out of combat. During the next few weeks, I would spend time in three hospitals in France and one in England.

During the Battle of the Bulge, the 26th Division had 360 men buried in six cemeteries including 324 who were buried in the Luxembourg Cemetery which is located just a few miles outside of Luxembourg City. ■

## BULGE MONUMENT DEDICATED IN CITY OF FAIRFAX, VIRGINIA

The Virginia Chapter dedicated a monument to those who served in the Battle of the Bulge on September 14, 2000, in Veterans Park, in the City of Fairfax, Virginia.



[Pictured above left to right are: James Merck (who built the monument) and VBOB Past President Robert Van Houten.]

## THE JOHN WAYNE THING

[The following excerpt was sent to us by JOSEPH W. BULKELEY, 10TH ARMORED DIVISION, 61ST ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY B.]

[As a POW.] I was never in a Staalag. Some 20 of us American prisoners were hitched to German wagons which we were told contained hospital supplies and we drew wagons from the area hospital of Darmstadt to the Rhine and a few miles across the river. When I returned to the American lines on Easter Sunday, 1945, I tipped the scale at some 85 pounds--but this is about the John Wayne thing.

As far as I know, John Wayne never wore the uniform, never fired an M-1 rifle in anger, was never in the lines for days at a time. But as the hero that the moving pictures created, John Wayne was the one who stopped the Germans in the Ardennes and then turned around and beat the bad, bad Japanese at Iwo Jima. ....

He did such a magnificent job of portraying the American who stopped the Germans cold on the road to Bastogne and then still had enough moxie to turn the tide at Iwo Jima, that I find it very hard to forget this man. He portrayed the American hero so convincingly that I am sure all of us who wore the uniform and faced Von Runstedt at the doorstep to Bastogne and "did in" the Japs at a place called Iwo Jima, loved this John Wayne--who was a product of Hollywood and the motion pictures. He did his job so convincingly that I, for one, never missed a John Wayne movie. ■

## FLY THE FLAG

[The following was sent in by EDMOND A. PORTER, 7TH ARMORED DIVISION, 23RD ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY B.]

I wrote the following article for *The Tacoma News Tribune*. It came about when I went out on the porch to put our flag out and saw only one or two flags. So, I came up with this short article and to my surprise, they published it word-for-word. We see lots more flags flying now and are happy to see them.

"I am nearly 83 years old. I was in World War II and was captured by the Germans in the Belgium Bulge."

"As we watched the Memorial Day services in Washington, DC, and on TV, I thought back as you did too. I said I must put the American Flag out on the front porch today. I looked up and down the street and saw only one other flag flying."

"I'm sure we just forget to put the flag out on all major holidays. Let's make the difference and have Tacoma be the first city in the U.S. to all fly our American flags. It will surely make us all feel better to fly our flag in remembrance and gratitude for our beloved country."

In the August issue, Steve Cowan, Sr., of Company A, 23rd AIB, wrote about the St. Vith, Luxembourg ordeal with the Germans. I was there too and on the afternoon of the 15th of December, I heard a whistle out toward the enemy lines and then another whistle from the opposite direction.

I called in on the radio and told the Command Post what I had heard--I understand the 7th Armored was moving back to dig in to hold the line against the Germans.

Seems as though (as Steve said), the Jerrys had walked right through the 106th Division.

When I woke up on the morning of December 16th, I saw soldiers walking and behold, they were Germans and had passed our front lines as of the night before.

It wasn't long until I was captured by the Germans but not before I had dismantled my M1 and threw the parts in the snow. The first thing the Germans took was our candy and cigarettes. The ordeal lasted until the end of the war when General Patton liberated some 7,500 of us prisoners. What a day that was. Thank the Lord. ■



## THE KUTZTOWN SURPRISE

The Lehigh Valley Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge has pioneered in innovative ways to present veterans to children. While the programs have always started out as planned, they are always subject to innovation on the spot. No where was this more evident than at 1:30 p.m. at the Kutztown, Pennsylvania, Elementary School, grades three to six on December 13, 2000.

The principal was the daughter of Lehigh Valley Bulge member Mariotti of the 28th Infantry Division. She had contacted Mrs. Greenhalgh, a former German teacher, and the Lehigh Valley Vice president and the leader of its education project. Judy (Mrs. Greenhalgh) is the daughter of a Pacific veteran, the step-daughter of a Bulge veteran, and the niece of a WWII infantry man killed in action in Europe in 1945.

Peter Leslie, President of the Lehigh Valley Chapter (511th Engineers), and Morris Metz (94th Infantry Division) were scheduled to address the children with the purpose of showing them that "Freedom is Not Free." Through a series of circumstances, Mrs. Greenhalgh and Leslie ended up as the Battle of the Bulge participants in the program. The principal had notified Mrs. Greenhalgh that part of the program would include a tribute to the sailors killed on the destroyer *USS Cole* and all proceeded as previously planned.

At the start of the program, Mrs. Greenhalgh immediately involved the children with a series of questions. As is usual there was a quick response from which she was able to judge at what level she would make her presentation. She ended by reading the last V-Mail letter sent home from her uncle followed by a reading of the poem *Freedom is Not Free*. Peter Leslie followed with a description of an incident when an overturned boat at a river crossing had dumped its infantrymen in a river and how two privates, a captain and a major rowed out to save them. This was the end of the veteran participation in the program.

The principal then took over. A group of 16 sixth graders came forward each carrying a placard. On the placards were inscribed the names of the dead of the *Destroyer Cole*. Boys carried male sailors' names and ranks, girls carried female sailors' names and ranks. As the principal read the names the children turned their backs to the audience. Not a sound was heard. A young bugler from the local high school then faultlessly blew taps. The principal's daughter then sang *The Star Spangled Banner* a cappella and the program ended.

Nothing can describe how everyone was affected by the school's own presentation. They had entered the room with the usual childhood noises. They left quietly and in order. It was beautifully done and must have left a tremendous impression on the children. For the rest of their lives, they will realize that freedom requires sacrifice.

The Lehigh Valley Chapter has written the principal expressing appreciation for her efforts. It is through cooperation such as this that veterans can achieve their goals of making children realize that our country must be defended no matter the cost.

The days of preaching to the kids are over. They have proven further advanced in knowledge via television and the web than is assumed by the greatest number of veterans of World War II. Involving the children in the dialogue comes first when the veterans give very short presentations and answer the students' questions. Almost any vet can and should participate. Success is assured. Why wait for a tomb stone, plant a marker in a child's mind. ■

## 773RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

By Edward McClelland

I was the supply sergeant for "C" Company of the 773rd Tank Destroyer Battalion and according to our T of E, I had my supplies backed in a 1/2 ton trailer, which was towed behind our 6x6 maintenance truck (the Oiley Bucket).

Each man had two duffle bags of clothing that they carried on their vehicles. After the first engagement in combat, the M10 crews found they were in the way and it was decided that they would carry one bag of their vehicle and the other bag would be carried in the maintenance truck. This arrangement gave the M10 crews more room, but created a problem for the mechanics and myself.

When the maintenance truck was needed, my trailer was dropped off and the duffle bags were tossed out next to my trailer. I had a couple of buddies in the first platoon so I asked them to capture a truck which they did a short time later. It was a 1-1/2 ton Ford truck made in Coblenz for the German Army. It was almost new and in excellent condition. With the help of the mechanics and cooks, we gave this truck a coat of "GI" paint and applied white stars. The motor sergeant got a trailer hitch welded on and a battalion vehicle number applied. Meanwhile, I had sorted the duffle bags by platoons and loaded the bags on the truck. The trailer was hooked on as darkness fell and I was ready by the time we moved out that night.

On the 6th of January, the battalion received the alert for movement from the Saar-Moselle Triangle, north to the Ardennes sector. After a very hazardous day and night march over iced roads to Luxembourg, "C" Company was billeted in homes in the City of Luxembourg, where we managed to get a few hours sleep. After a warm breakfast the next morning, we led the battalion convoy on the road to Bastogne. We were told that the road was clear all the way to Bastogne. But, about half way there, the First Platoon out on point, was fired on by two enemy tanks on a hill. The enemy tanks missed their targets and our M10's returned the fire, knocking out one tank and the other one withdrew in a big hurry.

We arrived in Bastogne at about 2000 hours on January 7th in a blizzard. There was about 15 inches of snow on the ground and it was zero degrees. Most of the company parked on the square in town. Our 1st Sergeant Harry Davis sent me to Battalion Headquarters, a couple blocks away, to pick up our mail. We had not received any mail for a couple of weeks. Meanwhile, our vehicles were being refueled and our kitchen truck (The Greasy Spoon), made some hot coffee and the mail was handed out as the men got their coffee.

We crowded into rooms of the nearest buildings to get a few hours of sleep. The next morning, battalion supply trucks replenished all vehicles with ammunition. After a warm breakfast, the 3rd Platoon was sent a few miles out of town (I think it was east), where they set up to fire as artillery that night. The next day just before dawn, the lieutenant in command of this platoon, attempted to return to town for more ammo, but discovered that they had been surrounded by enemy infantry during the night. He ordered one of the M10's to come back up the road and fire on the enemy, enabling him to get through. Sgt. Blase returned with the lieutenant and when they got back to Bastogne, he came to me and asked for some socks to take back to our infantry. He said that they had not had their shoes off in over three weeks. From my supplies, I dug out 36 pairs of socks and two pairs of shoes for him to take back to them. The wet socks that they took off were hung on the radiators of the M10's to dry them out.

A short time later, as our line companies were supporting the 90th Division push the enemy back, the weather warmed up a little and melting snow made the roads almost impassable for anything but tracked vehicles. So I was ordered to stay back with battalion headquarters, which had moved up on some high ground on the east edge of St. Vith. My driver and I found shelter in a farm house nearby. This family had three children.

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# IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME...

## 398TH ENGINEER GENERAL SERVICE REGIMENT COMPANY F

By John M. Payne

On December 11, 1944, we were in Verdun, France. We had been transferred there from Charbourg where we had helped rebuilt the harbor.

In Verdun we were repairing a hospital to take care of the wounded from the front line which was about 50 miles away.

On December 16, 1944 (my birthday and I turned 20 years old) the Germans counter attacked through the Ardennes. Seven days later on the 23rd, we had our orders to move out and hold the southern flank of the attack.

After a cold night of traveling, we arrived at Moutfort, Luxembourg. There we were attached to Task Force Reed, Combat Team Costello.

Lieutenant Bogart asked for volunteers. For some strange reason I raised my hand, along with my buddy, Bill Blucher.

That night a truck from Troop "B" of the 2nd Cavalry picked us up and took us to a forward observation and listening post on the top floor of a champagne factory, right on the bank of the Moselle River in the deserted Town of Grevenmacher. Across the river was a small village, one of the houses had Venetian blinds, about eye high one of the slats had been removed. It stuck out like a sore thumb. We knew that house was their observation post.

After I had been there two or three days, Bill woke me up one night. "Shush," he said, "there is some one walking around down stairs." I got up off the floor where I was curled up sleeping and we went to the head of the broad winding stair.

The 2nd Cavalry Troopers, who were a lot more experienced than Bill or I, had scattered broken glass on the ground floor in front of the stairs, that is what we were hearing, the crunching of glass on the tile floor as the Germans walked around. While the cavalry men got their gear together, Bill and I stood guard at the top of the stairs.

The next day, they started shelling the factory. That night we moved to a 2-story house that was also on the river. A 2nd Cavalry man told me about what he called a Gestapo concentration camp. He showed me where it was. The yard looked like where you would keep chickens--that's the only way I can describe it.

It was built on a slope with a fence around it, topped with barbed wire, the ground was absolutely bare with a couple of scrawny trees.

The building had chicken wire on the front about three-quarters of the way up. Inside was a stack of shelves about four or five shelves high. This is where the prisoners slept.

I went down into the basement and saw a door on the far side. I opened it and looked inside. On the far wall up against the ceiling was a clear story window that ran the width of the room and allowed light in.

What I saw made me realize that this was a crematorium room. There were two stainless steel trays side-by-side. They were

slightly curved about 7 feet long, just perfect to hold a body. The trays rode on rails that ran into the brick ovens. I touched one and it slid silently into the oven.

In the corner was a pile of shoes that went from floor to ceiling--it was shaped like a pile of sand. there must have been hundreds of shoes in that pile, each pair representing a life long past.

This crematorium must have worked a long time to accumulate this huge pile of shoes.

I've often wondered about this place, but I've never read anything about this camp in Grevenmacher.

While I was in this 2-story house, I heard the 2nd Cavalry was going to send a patrol across the river right in front of our OP. I asked if I could tag along. They said okay and they would pick me up that night. But Bill talked me out of it, so I backed out.

That night the patrol checked in, then hauled their rubber boat to the bank of the river.

I was on duty that night. Suddenly machine gun fire with tracers erupted from across the river. We grabbed our 30 caliber machine gun and raced to the river to protect and back up the patrol.

One man was killed and several wounded the dead cavalry man fell into the boat which in turn started drifting down the river. The next day we went looking for the boat. From a low hill we could see the boat with the body, frozen on the shore, the cavalry retrieved their buddy that night.

I had often wondered about that incident, because it was incredible shooting, moonlight, across the river, and right into the patrol.

The next day with the field glasses I looked across the river where I saw the tracers coming from, searching for the machine gun. I saw nothing, it was that well camouflaged. In fact in the week we were in this OP, neither I nor any one else had any inkling this machine gun was there on the river bank opposite us.

The Germans had occupied it at night and we heard nary a sound.

After some years of researching, I found out that it was the 1st Company, 44th Fortress Machine Gun Battalion, commanded by 1st Lt. Rinhold, which accounted for the accurate fire that fateful night.

It was often crossed my mind over the years, that if Bill hadn't talked me out of going on that patrol, I could very well have been that soldier in that boat drifting down the river that night. ■

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## 773RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION

(Continued from page )

The oldest was a 13 year old boy named Alfred Reich, who spoke very good English. He told us that his parents had a herd of 36 cows. The German soldiers butchered most of the cows for meat and they were left with only three cows for milking. Alfred also told us that the Germans had registered him for the Army. He would be called up for service on his 16th birthday. Meanwhile, they had him attending a special school to learn English and also the geography of England. They gave him maps of London and he was instructed to memorize all the streets and buildings in a ten block section of London. They told him that when the Germans occupied England, he would be sent to this section of London with their troops as part of the military government.

I corresponded with Alfred after the war, when I got home. He moved to Brussels and worked as a mailman and got married there. In 1965 I received a letter from his widow, advising that Alfred had passed away. ■



**11TH ARMORED DIVISION**  
**575TH AAA BN**  
**D BATTERY**  
By Warren Luft

My story is about our 2nd Platoon which was attached to a Tank Battalion. We took the Towns of Fay and Novel, just north of Bastogne. We then moved to a wooded area between Fay and Bourcy, two small towns.

Being attached to the tank battalion, my job was a runner to deliver verbal messages to and from our 575th Battalion, D Battery, 2nd Platoon to the tank battalion. We parked our half-tracks along the woods on a high ridge. I had orders to deliver the verbal message to the tank battalion. This was through an open field and to another wooded area where the tanks were in position. As I walked by two German soldiers that were wounded from the day's battle (they were older men), the two German soldiers were hugging each other and were crying in pain. This crying and moaning could be heard into the night.

When I got to the tanks I gave them the message. Then I started to dig a fox hole. Lots of tree roots and frost, so I didn't get too deep a hole dug.

The next morning while it was still very dark, I took a message from the tank battalion to our platoon. I gave the message to the sergeant and he gave me one to return.

In the dark one of the fellows lit the burner to heat up his C ration, forgetting to close the shutters for driving. The Germans who were across the road saw the light and zeroed in on it. First firing some rounds of rockets called screaming meemies. They were mostly tree bursts. The only place I could go was to lie on the ground and cover my neck with my hands. I was starting to return when another valley of rockets hit, also tree bursts with shrapnel all around. There was lots of yelling and crying from the woods. McGinnis came out and pulled his pants down. A large piece of shrapnel went through the upper leg. Part of it was sticking out of the other side of his leg. He was in great pain. I tried to help him. Sergeant Davis also came. Merlin Reiter also was hit very bad. Nearly lost his arm and a piece lodged into his body and into his heart. He was in great pain. Grothy and others were also hit. Some of the fellows had been in an old German foxhole which was covered with logs. The shrapnel went through the logs and hit some of the fellows.

The Sergeant called the medics and they arrived in about 45 minutes. The jeeps had stretchers mounted on them and they took the wounded to the hospital.

I started to return to the tank battalion about 3/4 mile away. As I walked past the two Germans that were hit the day before, I found that they were now dead. Their heads were slouched over and they were still holding and hugging each other.

The previous day when they were still alive, I told the Sergeant that we should call the medics, but they never came. These two soldiers were of the German Army and lost from their unit, but as I see it, they were still human beings. It was very sad.

As I got to the tanks, I gave them the message. The Germans fired some heavy shells at us (88mm possibly) to knock out the tanks in the woods. I hit for my fox hole, the one I dug the previous night. When it was over, the trees next to my fox hole were cut off from the shells.

On a trip back to those woods in 1995, I found that the fox holes and the large German fox hole was still there. ■

**HEADQUARTERS, V CORPS**  
**APO 305**

13 March 1945

**UNIT CITATION**

Under the provisions of Section IV, War Department Circular No. 33, 22 December 1943, and Section VII, Circular No. 2, Headquarters, First United States Army, 4 January 1945, citation of the following units, as approved by the Commanding General, First United States Army, is announced. The citation reads as follows:

**38TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON**  
**(MECHANIZED),**

**3RD PLATOON, COMPANY "A"**  
**112TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION,**  
**COMPANY "A"**

**146TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**

The 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized) with attached units consisting of the 3rd platoon, Company "A," 112th Engineer Combat Battalion and Company "A," 146th Engineer Combat Battalion, are cited for outstanding performance of duty in action against the enemy during the period 16-18 December 1944, in Germany. During the major counter-offensive staged by the German 6th Panzer Army, the squadron and attached units displayed extraordinary heroism and outstanding combat proficiency in repelling for three successive days the desperate attempts by the 326th Volks Grenadier Division to open the Monschau sector for exploitation by the 2nd Panzer Division. Defending a front of 9,000 yards and standing alone between the full scale German attack and vital road nets leading to Eupen and Liege, this thinly spread force held its ground in the face of five attacks ranging in strength from a reinforced battalion to the combined elements of two infantry regiments. Three of these assaults were supported by direct self-propelled artillery and rocket fire which preceded the attacking infantry. The battalion of German paratroopers which had been dropped behind the lines on the first night of the engagement seriously harassed frontline elements as well as the force's rear areas. Despite the fact that the numerically superior enemy made several penetrations, one of which was in battalion strength, isolated outposts and platoons held their lines with grim determination. Although artillery observation posts were overrun, the personnel fought with small arms to maintain their positions and adjusted devastating fire upon waves of German infantry. All enemy infiltrations were thwarted by determined fighting and close hand-to-hand combat. When the battle was most intense every available man, including personnel of rear echelon maintenance and supply sections and soldiers being treated in the squadron infirmary, were employed to drive back the advancing forces. The gallantry and combined skill of this force resulted in 200 enemy killed, thirty-one prisoners taken, and countless casualties inflicted upon the enemy ranks. The strength, courage, and determination exhibited by the personnel of the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mechanized), 3rd Platoon, Company "A", 112th Engineer Combat Battalion, and Company "A", 146th Engineer Combat Battalion in denying the Germans access to the vital road net contributed largely to the ultimate defeat of the German offensive in the Ardennes.

By command of Major General HUEBNER:

Official

EDWARD W. SKELLY,  
Lt. Colonel, A.G.D.  
Adjutant General

S.B. Mason,  
Colonel, G.S.C.,  
Chief of Staff

*[The above was sent to us by ARTHUR V. WHITELEY, 38TH CAVALRY GROUP, 38TH CAVALRY SQUADRON (MECHANIZED), COMPANY "A".]*



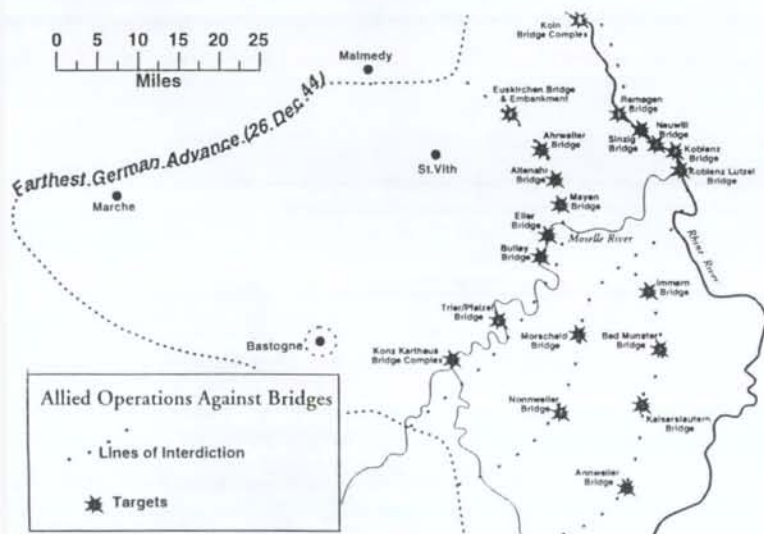
## THE ELDER BRIDGE MISSION

[The following is the text of an interview conducted May 26, 2000, by Associate Member Paul Van Doren with Albert R. Ridenour, of Apple Valley, California.]

The 397th Bombardment Group (Bridge Busters) received the Distinguished Unit Citation for the successful December 23, 1944, raid on the Ellers railway bridge over the Moselle River. This raid was an important part of the Allied air assault on German logistics feeding the German offensive. The Group paid a high price for success that day.

Have no doubts, all of us in the 397th Bombardment Group (Bridge Busters) wanted to go to the aid of the GI's fighting in the Ardennes ASAP. We were anxious to give the German's hell. Needless to say, we had heard the rumors of the Malmedy Massacre and knew also how grave the fighting was.

We had already been grounded several days due to weather even before the Germans attacked. And once we learned of the attack there were too many days of false starts sitting on the taxi ways again and again. We were discouraged and wondering if we would even have to go back to Normandy and start over.



[The above illustration of the "Allied Operations Against Bridges," was published in *To Win the Winter Sky: Air War Over the Ardennes, 1944-45*, by Danny S. Parker.

I was a 24 year old 1st Lt. and pilot with the 596th Squadron, 397th Bombardment Group. The Group, and I along with it, started combat operations in April 1944. When not grounded the Group flew 1-2 missions most days, until April 1945. December 1944 we were flying our twin engine B-26's from Peronne, France, approximately 45 miles from Bastogne near the Luxembourg border. Normally, the squadron had about 12 aircraft on hand from which 9 were provided on each mission.

December 23rd began with a briefing for the Ellers Bridge mission some time after 4:30 a.m. We received our target, the times, and the weather. I recall takeoff starting out mid or late

morning. We took the usual 20 minutes or so to get to the altitude of 12,500 feet; formed up; and headed out over our own airfield. The Group flew only 33 aircraft this day in the standard two boxes of 18 each normally totalling 36 aircraft. Perhaps an hour passed by as we got around to our target.

I was flying as co-pilot in the lead ship of the second box with the squadron operations officer, Maj. Dick Weltzen, the boss leader pilot. He could see the low flight of 6 aircraft to his left and below. I could see our right higher wingman in our center flight, flown by Charlie Estes, pilot, and Bill Collins, co-pilot. Visible to our right and above as well, was the 6 aircraft of our top flight led by Captain Stevens. Ahead and below I could see two window dropping ships (aluminum foil packages that saturated radar pictures) alone beneath us.

The first Messerschmitts we saw suddenly appeared behind the window ships. They got both of them. I saw one of them destroyed by an ME that came up behind it, throttled back to the speed of the B-26 aircraft, and just sprayed fire from wing tip to wing tip yawing back and forth. The tail gunner never returned fire as they went down.

Then our top gunner reported that flak broke the tail off of Charlie and Bill's aircraft and they had plunged downward!

We made our bomb run and turned to go home. We were jumped by multiple ME's that swept Captain Stevens' high right flight out of the left turn of the whole box with a wall of fire like sheep dogs controlling their charges.

I looked out the window in time to see enemy fighters flash by and saw that our aircraft, not to mention our center flight was now, on the right side, naked as a jay bird. In an instant, as if we had one mind, Maj. Weltzen responded without question to my shout and my sweep of the fuel mixture controls to the maximum by pushing the throttles completely forward. The other aircraft of the flight and the lower left flight of six followed suit and we closed up to the first box for the greater protection of the combined fire power.

Back at the airfield we found out that all six air craft of our high right flight plus our right wing man were lost. Altogether 10 aircraft and crews had been destroyed. There were about 6-8 men in each. The next day--Christmas Day--we carried out our sad duties packing up the belongings of our lost friends. That day was made all the worse as we lost three more aircraft and crews that day.

The deep ironic sadness of these huge losses (the biggest ever) was the fact that almost all the lost crews were close to having flown 60 missions since the previous April. As soon as they would have completed their 65th mission, they would have been released to go home! So close!■

## WOW, WHAT A RESPONSE...

...to our request that you check your dues date on the mailing label used to mail the last newsletter to you. If we can get the same response to this request for you to check to see if your dues are due, it will save us a lot of money on a dues reminder.

The date your dues were due is above your last name on the label which is used to address the newsletter to you. Please check it and respond if your dues are past due or will be due soon.

Postage rates, copying costs--they're outrageous. Thanks.



# LONE PROPHET

By George Nicklin  
9th Infantry Division

## 47th Infantry Regiment, Company K, Medic

*[George writes: I was preparing this short story about Lone Prophet for a book I am writing entitled War Stories. As I finished writing the story, it struck me that since Prophet was killed during the Battle of the Bulge, it might be of interest for your publication.... It is unfortunately about one of the gorier parts of the war which do not tend to surface and from which we turn our face. What especially amazed me was the name--Lone Prophet.... Unfortunately, he was indeed a "lone prophet" when death came calling.]*

No one has haunted me more during my lifetime than my friend Lone Prophet. He is indeed a man with a bizarre name. When you hear this name, you would assume in our financially-burdened world that the spelling should be "Loan Profit." Lone Prophet is, however, decidedly the real name of a real man, who lived in the United States and Europe during the 1940s.

How did I become to be so haunted by him? Where has this led me? It has led me into the unexpectedness of life with which all of us must struggle. I met Lone Prophet just before New Year's Day in 1944. It was a very cold late December. We were in beautiful, picturesque Kalterherberg, a village of about 200 to 300 pastel-painted houses in the German Ardennes Forest. The houses were amazing in that they had three feet thick concrete walls. In the middle of the town was a beautiful Catholic church, whose doors stood wide open with the snow streaming in and forming drifts on the floor of the sanctuary. A hallowedness pervaded me as alone I explored the empty church.

I was coming back to a group of men with whom I had entered combat on October 22, 1944, in the intense fighting centered on Aachen. I had been with them until December 18th, a week earlier when I had left for an intense course in emergency first aid treatment. Previously in the U.S., I had had a term of pre-med education. I had discovered from experience on the front lines that medics were at a high premium. They had an amazingly short life expectancy. When the Army notified me that they wanted to use my medical expertise as a medical corpsman, I was horrified or--perhaps more accurately--mortified. I realized that the risks were considerably higher than my previous job of being a regular infantryman.

I had the good luck to be reassigned as a medic to my former company--"K" Company, 2nd Platoon. The company had four platoons but only three medics--weapons platoon did not have a medic. Members of that platoon were taken care of by the three other platoons' medics.

Shortly after my return to "K" Company, I ran into Lone Prophet. When he told me his name, I was astonished. I asked him about the origins of his name. Prophet said that his mother liked the name Lone Prophet. He replied that he viewed the name as indicative of the family he came from. Prophet revealed that he came from a small village in the hills of Kentucky, near the Tennessee border. Time has dimmed my memory as to the name of that village. His family and their neighbors were characterized as hillbillies. He was very reticent about addressing this but there was a hint of the hillbilly evident in his accent. The accent was a throwback to spoken English of the 16th or 17th century.

As the days and weeks wore on during the winter of 1944-45 in that snow in Kalterherberg, I saw Lone Prophet at least every two or three days. He was a medic for the 3rd Platoon and I for the 2nd Platoon. I do not recall the name of the medic for the 1st Platoon though perhaps the shortened life expectancy of medics had left the 1st without one. When we met we were always very pleased to see one another. After reassuring each other as to our respective health, we would discuss the state of our platoons' medical supplies. Usually one, if not both of us, had been to the battalion aide station the previous day to stock up on medical supplies. We would exchange bandages, adhesive tape, syrettes of morphine, etc., so that our medical kits would be adequately supplied.

Prophet and I developed a strong sense of affection for one another. We were both very pleased with our continued mutual well being.

We were on the northern hinge of the Bulge. How many wounded did we have to treat? It did not seem that we had many wounded. The fighting was very desultory though there were spurts of extreme fighting followed by quiet accentuated by the snow. The snow was very deep. Our foxholes, previously occupied by the Germans, were very comfortable. We emerged from the foxholes several times a day to assess the situation. Occasionally, we would have combat sorties into the German lines, where we would capture prisoners and kill some Germans. As we got farther beyond January 1st, the German ability to attack diminished. By the end of January we had advanced several miles within the Huertgen Forest, part of the Ardennes.

Toward the end of January my supplies were low and I thought it might be easier to secure them from Prophet, who was in a neighboring dugout. I arrived at the dugout within a few minutes. Prophet's dugout had the advantage of being in a well-forested area. The dugout's undesirable characteristic was that the German built dugout's entrance was open to the German lines. The entrance was capacious, two door-widths wide, as was the interior of the dugout which included several stoves for heat. The dugout was reasonably well lit with candles.

As I moved through this dugout's entrance, Prophet and I discussed our need for medical supplies. After separating our pooled bandages and morphine, we exchanged different widths of gauze. We had iodine and mercurochrome for the wounds, a morphine derivative for diarrhea, which was quite prevalent among the soldiers. Many of the soldiers had problems not only with their bowels but with their urinary control. At times it was said jokingly, "It was quite clear. We are trickling across Europe." I had to evacuate some military personnel because their skin was constantly wet from urinary incontinence. The skin would begin to deteriorate necessitating hospitalization.

I then returned to my dugout which I shared with two or three other members of the headquarters staff of my platoon. Soon after I heard heavy shelling originating on the German side and directed at us. One of the shells seemed to land in the area of Prophet's dugout. I did not dwell on the proximity of the shelling. Prophet's dugout appeared capable of withstanding any kind of fire short of a direct shell hit.

After the artillery barrage quieted, I decided to check on Prophet, who was located two to three hundred yards away through the forest. I could smell the artillery explosions as I approached Prophet's dugout. Two or three men, whom I had seen earlier in the dugout, were standing outside. Some smoke was emerging through the dugout's entrance.

As I walked forward, a soldier cried out, "Don't go in!" I explained that I was the medic from the 2nd Platoon and had come to see their medic. Again the soldier caution me about entering. He told me that I couldn't see Prophet. Surprised by his comment, I said, "Why?" He replied, "Prophet is dead!" I asked if he could share with me what had happened. The soldier responded that he would do so reluctantly.

Prophet's death was described as a terrible experience though the actual death was quick. Prophet had been standing just inside the doorway when a shell exploded directly upon his waistline and blew him in half. The soldier was very upset by the recitation of this series of events. He had seen Prophet while the upper part of his torso was still alive. Prophet had continued to speak, oblivious to his own separated body. Within 60 seconds, Prophet was unconscious and dead. It was a terrible experience for the soldier and me. A terrible way for Prophet to die! Blessed only in its speed.

As I walked away, I was assaulted by many emotions. I thought this death was paradoxical, incredibly brave and concurrently awful. The memories surrounding this death exist as vividly for me today, years later, as they did immediately after the actual occurrence. Those memories haunt me. I thought I should have written a letter to his mother but I don't know her address nor how to find it. I only knew that he was from the Appalachian area of Kentucky. As a product of this environment, Prophet had led a hard but an interesting life. He was a fascinating man with an amazing name. Such are the fortunes of War!



## BULGE MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

*[This will conclude the articles regarding those who received the Medal of Honor while serving in the Battle of the Bulge. These are the final two.]*

### Henry F. Warner

#### 1st Infantry Division

Rank and organization: Corporal, 26th Infantry, 1st Infantry Division.

Place and date: Near Dom Butgenbach, Belgium, 20-21 December, 1944.

Citation: Serving as 57-mm. antitank gunner with the Second Battalion, he was a major factor in stopping enemy tanks during heavy attacks against the battalion position near Dom Butgenbach, Belgium, on 20-21 December 1944. In the first attack, launched in the early morning of the 20th, enemy tanks succeeded in penetrating parts of the line. Corporal Warner, disregarding the concentrated cannon and machine-gun fire from two tanks bearing down on him, and ignoring the imminent danger of being overrun by the infantry moving under tank cover, destroyed the first tank and scored a direct and deadly hit upon the second. A third tank approached to within 5 yards of his position while he was attempting to clear a jammed breach lock. Jumping from his gun pit, he engaged in a pistol duel with the tank commander standing in the turret, killing him and forcing the tank to withdraw. Following a day and night during which our forces were subjected to constant shelling, mortar barrages, and numerous unsuccessful infantry attacks, the enemy struck in great force on the early morning of the 21st. Seeing a Mark IV tank looming out of the mist and heading toward his position, Corporal Warner scored a direct hit. Disregarding his injuries, he endeavored to finish the loading and again fire at the tank, whose motor was not aflame, when a second machine-gun burst killed him. Corporal Warner's gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty contributed materially to the successful defense against the enemy attacks.

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### Paul J. Wiedorfer

#### 80th Infantry Division

Rank and organization: Staff Sergeant, United States Army, Company G, 318th Infantry, 80th Infantry Division.

Place and date: Near Chaumont, Belgium, 25 December, 1944.

Citation: He alone made it possible for his company to advance until its objective was seized. Company G had cleared a wooded area of snipers, and one platoon was advancing across an open clearing toward another wood when it was met by heavy machinegun fire from two German positions dug in at the edge of the second wood. These positions were flanked by enemy riflemen. The platoon took cover behind a small ridge approximately 40 yards from the enemy position. There was no other available protection and the entire platoon was pinned down by the German fire. It was about noon and the day was clear, but the terrain extremely difficult due to a 3-inch snowfall the night before over ice-covered ground. Private Wiedorfer, realizing that the platoon advance would not continue until the two enemy machinegun nests were destroyed, voluntarily charged

alone across the slippery open ground with no protecting cover of any kind. Running in a crouched position, under a hail of enemy fire, he slipped and fell in the snow, but quickly rose and continued forward with the enemy concentrating automatic and small arms fire on him as he advanced. Miraculously escaping injury, Private Wiedorfer reached a point some 10 yards from the first machinegun emplacement and hurled a hand grenade into it. With his rifle he killed the remaining Germans, and, without hesitation, wheeled to the right and attacked the second emplacement. One of the enemy was wounded by his fire and the other six immediately surrendered. This heroic action by one man enabled the platoon to advance from behind its protecting ridge and continue successfully to reach its objective. A few minutes later, when both the platoon leader and the platoon sergeant were wounded, Private Wiedorfer assumed command of the platoon, leading it forward with inspired energy until the mission was accomplished.

★★★

To quote LOU VARRONE, 87TH AIRBORNE DIVISION, who in each issue of the 87th newsletter, "The Static Line," draws a portrait and prepares an article on those who received the Medal of Honor: "Of the 17 Medals of Honor in the Ardennes Campaign the majority were earned during the early stages when our men were far out-numbered in personnel and armor. They brought honor to us all."

## WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA CHAPTER DEDICATES MONUMENT

Approximately 125 veterans, family, friends and members of the 110th Infantry attended the dedication of a Battle of the Bulge memorial built by the Western Pennsylvania Chapter of VBOB (pictured below).



Past President Robert VanHouten was keynote speaker. Chapter President John DiBattista, declared that "some members are still fighting that battle, through physical impairments they received then and still carry 56 years later." He added, "We want to honor these men here today." ■



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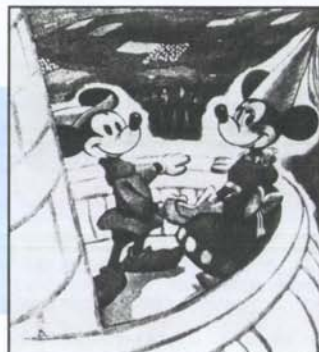
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