

The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XXI NUMBER 3

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

AUGUST 2002

PRELUDE TO THE BULGE



*In December, 1944
a small radio code-
breaking unit
intercepted a
message that
should have
tipped off SHAEF
to the Battle of
the Bulge attack*

See ARNOLD C. FRANCO'S Story on Page 7



Fort McHenry

Make plans NOW!
**VBOB REUNION
BALTIMORE, MD**
AUGUST 29 – *See Page 12*
SEPTEMBER 2, 2003
Be There!

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

IF YOU FIND YOU HAVE A LITTLE TIME,
WRITE TO VBOB AND WE'LL SEND YOU THE
NECESSARY TOOLS TO GET OFF TO A
GOOD START IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A
CHAPTER IN YOUR AREA. YOU'LL FIND
THAT IT'S EASY TO DO AND THE REWARDS
TO ALL OF THOSE YOU BRING TOGETHER
CANNOT BE DUPLICATED.

President's Message

In our efforts to support our troops currently in harm's way, I find a correlation between the situation now and that of 50-odd years ago, when our young men were being asked to give up their lives as civilians in order to protect our country. Information obtained from various media indicates that we now have our fighting men in over 60 countries all over the world acting as "Advisors" to the military of various governments who are fighting against terrorism. These young men are no more trained for this role than we were and are suffering just as we did, but their on-sight training is for real and far more dangerous than maneuvers in Tennessee or Louisiana.

I looked through some material I had been saving and found a small booklet that was written by the minister at the First Church in Malden, Massachusetts, that we eventually joined after being transferred from Maine to Massachusetts. Dr. Minich had been a chaplain in World War I and knew what was ahead for the young men from his church. I am going to quote some passages from it starting with the foreword which explains Dr. Minich's reason for writing it.

He starts by stating, "The purpose of this little pamphlet is to encourage you to make right decisions in the hope that in the end you will make the Great Depression. In writing these brief meditations, I have been thinking of my own sons, one in the army and the other about to enter the navy, together with the large number of splendid young men of this church now serving in our armed forces. It is my hope that these, and perhaps others, may find some help and inspiration in these few pages.

"DECISIONS are important. You can sail a ship without entering a harbor, but you cannot deliver cargo that way. You can drift with the wind, but you are likely to end up in either disaster or uselessness. To never stand out against anything is one of the surest ways of never amounting to anything. When you make up your mind, you are beginning to make up your life.

"You can still be the master of your soul even if you are in the Armed Forces of the country. You may be tempted to believe that the easiest course is to throw your mind into neutral and let someone else push you around. To be sure, you must wear a uniform, follow a prescribed system of training and learn to fit into a military pattern. **But you can still think your own thoughts, cherish your own ideals, dream your own dreams and make your own decisions.**

"The world of the mind is still yours. Only you can decide whether you will walk the high or the low way. You will meet some men of low ideals, but you can keep yours on a high plane. You will hear a great deal of vulgarity, but you can arm yourself with some noble dreams. It has been suggested that what life does to us depends upon what life finds in us. If in you it finds noble decisions, it can never hurt you very much. **Never be afraid or ashamed of that which is high!**

"WHAT DO YOU WANT TO BECOME? Where you want to go determines the road by which you will travel. This is as



Louis Cunningham

true of the journey of life as of any other you will ever take. What you want to become will shape your present choices. If you want to advance in the service, you will keep your record clean and prepare for your next promotion. If you want to be a certain kind of man, you will keep your personal record clean and make choices which lead to that kind of character."

This pamphlet with many more inspirational messages was given to each young person from his church who left to join the various branches of the service. Many of them did **not** return, but many of those who did return thanked Dr. Minich for his pamphlet to which they referred often to get them through a difficult time. These same young men and women returned with honor to civilian life, contributing in many ways to their communities, becoming truly a part of what is now called the *Greatest Generation*. You are these young men and women who returned from war to become the *Greatest Generation*. The generation who is protecting our freedoms now needs your support as they are truly the future *Greatest Generation*.

Now we have an opportunity again to get together to reminisce about those difficult times, and to be thankful for our present lives. Don't miss our Annual Reunion in Baltimore taking place August 29-September 2. Details are in this issue of *The Bulge Bugle*. Make your reservations soon!

OOPS!

Last issue the information on where to write regarding receiving the Purple Heart was omitted due to space limitations. We have called the Military Order of the Purple Heart and they have provided us with a copy of the form which you must fill out. This will save you some time over writing to obtain the form. You will then send that form to the Personnel Records Center in St. Louis. As you know, obtaining something from the Records Center can sometimes take a long time and there is nothing we can do to speed them up.

If you wish to receive a copy of the form, please send a stamped (37 cents), self-addressed envelope to us--put the word "Purple Heart" on the envelope for a quicker response--and mail it to VBOB.■

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...Big plans being made for the Baltimore Reunion. Make your plans to be with us.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BIG CHANGES...

I'm sending this early (dues) so I don't miss a copy of *The Bulge Bugle*. Of the three bulletins I get (VFW and DAV), *The Bugle* is by far the best. So keep up the good work.

Fighting wars sure has changed since WWII. I spent three years overseas. Now it's six months and home again. Mail took two weeks and now e-mail is daily. But we didn't have to know all the technical stuff so maybe it all comes out even.

Arden Gatzke
2 ARMD 66 AIR H

CONCERNING 'LILI MARLENE'

I probably hummed it during the Battle of the Bulge, but didn't know the words.

It was early April 1945 when I had the good fortune to get R&R at the Riviera. Leaving my carbine with the supply sergeant and wearing my Class A uniform, I climbed into the back of a truck and was on my way.

Going down an old dirt road, I observed Germans laying in a ditch. At first I thought they were dead waiting for the graves registration. I was noticing that they all were on their stomachs, in a line, and facing in the same direction. It's when I saw one of them slowly turning his head to watch us pass by that I yelled to the driver to stop.

I jumped out of the back and started yelling "Hande Hoch." To my surprise nine of them jumped up with hands raised—that's when I realized I had no gun. I then screamed in German (my best high school German) to turn around. By this time the truck driver came up and covered me with his rifle. As I patted them down, they asked if I was American or Russian. They were afraid to be captured by the Russians.

Luckily, they were also unarmed. They had deserted the army and were trying to get home. They were herded into the truck. The driver and I were now perplexed—we had never captured anyone. We decided we'd just drive until we found the MP's.

I climbed back into the back with the prisoners. We drove a long time which gave me the opportunity to talk with them. Their gripes were identical to mine. One of them had relatives who ran a coffee shop in my neighborhood (New York City).

I started to hum the tune of "Lili Marlene." After a minute, they joined in, singing the German words. Can you picture a GI truck rolling along with a bunch of guys singing "Lili Marlene." One fellow wrote the German words for me (which are still in my scrapbook) and I learned them by heart.

We finally found an MP up to his ears in traffic. It was a small crossroad in the middle of a small town. We finally inched up to him, opened the tailgate and presented this poor, befuddled MP with nine prisoners standing around him while he's trying to handle not only the traffic, lookie-loos, and the many women who ran up to the prisoners with sandwiches and soup.

We left the scene watching the MP shaking his fist at us in the middle of all this activity.

When I came home, I went to the coffee shop to tell the owners that their nephew was okay. If I had continued to live in New York City, I would have had free dinners for life.

Since then at every dance or restaurant I've gone to with my wife rolling her eyes toward the ceiling, I would request "Lili Marlene" and sing along in German. I've had it played by strolling Mexican musicians, big bands, karioke, etc.

It's in my will that at my funeral "Lili Marlene" must be played.

Oh yes, I did get to the Riviera where I spent one evening in jail for getting caught in an "off limits" establishment.

Haskel Heimlick
551 FA BN B

"LILI" ON THE INTERNET

I noticed the article in the latest issue about "Lili Marlene" and thought the enclosed pages might serve to extend the information a little. I do not remember where I picked up these pages, however.

"Surely the favorite song of soldiers during World War II, 'Lili Marlene' became the unofficial anthem of the foot soldiers of both forces in the war.

"Original German lyrics from a poem *The Song of a Young Sentry* by World War I German soldier, Hans Leip #22.9.1893 in Hamburg, 6.6.1983 in Fruthwilen, near Frauenfeld (Thurgau), Switzerland, who wrote these verses before going to the Russian front in 1915, combining the name of his girlfriend, Lili (the daughter of a grocer), with that of a friend's girlfriend or by a wave given to Leip, while he was on sentry duty, by a young nurse named 'Marleen' as she disappeared into the evening fog.

"His poem was later published in a collection of his poetry in 1937. The poem caught the attention of Norbert Schultze (born 1911 in Braunschweig), who set the poem to music in 1938. Schultze was already rich and famous before the success of *The Girl Under the Lantern*, who awaited her lover by the barracks gate. His operas, film scores, marches and tunes for politically inspired lyrics were successful. In 1945 the Allies told Schultze to forget about composing but he got back to it in 1948.

"The tune had a rocky road. The propaganda secretary of the Nationalist-Socialist party, Joseph Goebbels didn't like the song. He wanted a march. Lale Andersen didn't want to sing it and the DJ who was supposed to get it on the charts also gave it two thumbs down.

"Recorded just before the war by Lale Anderson (Eulalia Bunnenberg), the song sold just 700 copies, until German Forces Radio began broadcasting it to the Afrika Korps in 1941.

"The song was immediately banned in Germany, for its "portentous character," which did nothing to slow its spread in popularity.

"After the German occupation of Yugoslavia, a radio station was established in Belgrade and beamed news, and all the propaganda fit to air, to the Africa Corps. Lieutenant Karl-Heinz Reitgen, the director of Radio Belgrade, had a friend in the Africa Corps who liked the tune. He aired Lale Anderson's version for the first time on 18 August 1941. General Feldmarschall Rommel liked the song and asked Radio Belgrade to incorporate the song into their broadcasts, which they did. The song soon became the signature of the broadcast and was played at 9:55 p.m., just before sign-off.

"After the song was broadcast, there was no holding it back. The Allies listened to it and *Lili Marleen* became the favorite tune of soldiers in both sides, regardless of language.

"The immense popularity of the German version spawned a hurried English version, supposedly when a British song publisher named J. J. Phillips reprimanded a group of British soldiers for singing the verses—in German. One irate soldier shouted back, 'Why don't you write us some English words?' Phillips and a British songwriter Tommie Connor soon had an English version in 1944. Anne Sheldon's English hit record started the song's popularity with the Allied countries. Vera Lynn sang it over the BBC to the Allied troops. The British Eighth Army adopted the song.

"It was sung in military hospitals and blasted over huge speakers, along with propaganda nuggets, across the front lines, in both directions.

"Marlene Dietrich featured *The Girl Under the Lantern* in public appearances, on radio and 'three long years in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, in Alaska, Greenland, Iceland, in England,' as she later recalled.

"An RCA US recording, by an anonymous chorus in June, made it to No. 13 in 1944. It hit the US charts again in 68, the German charts again in 1981 and the Japanese charts in 1986.

"The song is said to have been translated into more than 48 languages, including French, Russian, Italian, and Hebrew. Tito in Yugoslavia greatly enjoyed the song.

"*Lili Marlene* is easily the most popular war song ever. Its theme of dreaming for one's lover is universal. Why is the song so popular? The last word goes to Lale Andersen: 'Can the wind explain why it became a storm?'"

R. Keith Ostrum
87 CHEM MTR BN

"WIE EINST LILI MARLENE"

[William True sends us the following account from his soon to be published book. We will advise you when the book is ready for sale.]

We've been in Munich, Germany, a couple of days now, and to steal a line from an old George Gershwin song, "the livin' is easy." Nice house the squad's in, with the whole company spread throughout an upscale neighborhood.

(Continued)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continuation)

Not much real action of late, but we don't know what we might run into as we drive further south in Bavaria. Possibly the last hold out of Adolph and some of his SS Storm Troops. "Eat, drink and be merry" is the story today and tomorrow could be another tale.

I've decided it was a good idea after all to let the German family stay in their home with us. Ike's "no fraternization" policy might make sense to some, but it's sure not natural around women and kids and I'll bet the rule is being at least bent if not fractured all over the place.

The mother is probably about 40 years old, friendly, and a very good cook. The daughter appears to be less than 20, with long dark hair, beautiful features, and a Betty Grable figure. She is likely aware of her extreme good luck that it's American troops occupying her town rather than the Russians. The remaining member of the family is a boy of nine or ten who is well mannered, obviously impressed with soldiers and their weapons, and speaks English almost as well as his mother and sister. It's difficult to think of the three of them as anything other than a typical American family with only the father missing.

Between the family's cellar-store of food supplies, and our K and C Rations, the mother and daughter have been putting some first-rate meals together. We're enjoying a bit of real home cooking, and this morning we even had fresh eggs--"medium over" for me. Wow! I can't even remember the last time I had eggs like that.

There's a lovely, large upright piano in the living room, and both the mother and daughter play quite well. They've entertained us a couple of times, and we've joined in some singing with them when they played some American standards. Alan Summers in our squad plays some piano, too. This afternoon he's playing and all of us are sitting or standing around listening and singing along on occasion. I came across the lyrics to the German song *Lili Marlene* recently, maybe it was in our army newspaper *The Stars and Stripes*, including a verse in German. Alan knows the song and we sing:

Underneath the lamplight, by the barracks gate,
Darling I remember, the way you used to wait,
There where you told me tenderly,
That you loved me, you'd always be,
My Lili of the lamplight,
My own Lili Marlene.
*Vor der Kaserne, vor dem grossen Tur,
Stand eine Laterne, und steht sie noch davor,
So wollen wir uns da wieder sehn,
Bei der Laterne wollen wir stehn,
Wie einst Lili Marlene,
Wie einst Lili Marlene.*

As we finish the song the daughter, tears streaming, rises from the sofa, covers her face, and hurriedly leaves the room. We all turn to the mother, unspoken questions in our eyes, and she, too, stands and says, "I'll be right back." She returns shortly holding a large, framed studio photo. It is her daughter and a handsome German soldier in uniform, looking at each other with obvious adoration. "He was her fiance," she explains, "they often sang that song. He was killed in Normandy."

Is it possible that we, by some strange chance of fate, faced the fiance's unit among Normandy's hedgerows? Might one of us have ended his life? Surely no group of soldiers ever felt the humanity of their enemy more than my squad on this occasion.

William True
101 ABND 506 PIR F

...THEY GET NO RESPECT

Thanks for a great organization! I would like to make a further comment on R. Keith Ostrum's letter in "The Letter to the Editor" column in the May, 2002, issue. He commented on the still current practice in Germany of the disrespect of the German culture for their veterans by not allowing any graveside military ceremonies when a veteran dies, because they feel that they were the ones who lost the war. I wonder if this is true throughout Germany. I saw it first-hand in Bavaria at the time of VE Day.

I was in the field artillery and firing over the Inn River in support of the 65th Infantry division near Passau, Germany, on May 3, 1945. I was with 17 others sent into Passau to "regulate traffic," apparently checking ID's of those boarding river passenger boats at a small park to cross the Danube River into Austria. Of course we were never shown what an ID looked like.

We were housed in the Burgermeister (Mayor) office on the second floor of a building facing the Danube River which joined the Inn at the park. Adjoining our building to the west was a small German army hospital. It apparently was furnished with American supplies and allowed to continue in operation.

On our first morning, we were idly watching the engineers preparing the piers of a destroyed highway bridge across from us and saw an oxcart pull up in front of the hospital. Out of the hospital came two German orderlies carrying a dead soldier, and with the aid of the farmer, took hold of the body and threw it up over the cart's side. More bodies were brought out and laid alongside. The civilian women passing, spat on them in disgust! All were tossed in like so many logs.

The next day when the scene was repeated, we asked the German unarmed guard at the hospital entrance what was going on. He was visibly angry and said it was because they blamed the soldiers for letting their glorious Hitler down and losing the war. I did learn many years later that Passau was a hotbed of the Nazi Party in its early days.

On May 7th, we were in the local movie theater next to the hospital watching a Special Services stage show, when an officer ran on stage and announced that effective 0001 on May 8th, VE Day was official. Since everyone was still combat armed, rapid firing into the ceiling was started until more commotion on the stage brought us the news that the theater owner's family living quarters were directly above and to cease firing. A few more rounds were fired for spite, then we all poured out into the street and yelled the news to the engineers on the pier.

On VE Day, we were watching the engineers, when out of the east came two German fighters, flying low, strafing the piers, knocking the engineers off into the water--after the end of the war! The anti-aircraft unit across the river had already done what we had and had their guns ready to travel. We saw that they were rapidly getting into firing status and, sure enough, were ready for them when they came back from the west. I was told they were both destroyed after passing out of our sight.

Later as German POW's were being trucked to various holding points, I repeatedly saw German civilians either turning their backs to them, cursing or spitting at them. What a worthless bunch!

William R. Strader
736 FA BN C

87TH INFANTRY DIVISION

The May 1999 cover story of *The Bulge Bugle* featured Tilly Kimes Hansen (The Sweetheart of the Liberators of Luxembourg). I was privileged to write that story at the request of Editor George Cheken. Not since that issue has a cover featured one of the liberators until the recent story told of Msgr. William F. O'Donnell ("Chronicles of a Military Career," August, 2001.) It related the war time experiences of Lt. Bill O'Donnell, platoon leader, 87th Infantry Division, 346th Infantry, Company L.

Acclaimed one of the better stories ever printed in *The Bugle*, it is O'Donnell's personal story. (O'Donnell is now chaplain of the parent VBOB organization.) His story does not begin to tell of the battle feats of this modest man. As he said, "There are many things I could have written about my military service." ...like the time he mounted a German tank and directed fire on the enemy, being awarded the Silver Star Medal in the Battle of Tillet and his narrow escapes while leader of the tiger patrol going out after prisoners.

The 87th Division, 11th Armored Division, and 17th Airborne Division of Middleton's VIII Corps were involved in the so-called "relief of Bastogne"; the 87th attacking at Moiricy, the 11th Armored Division towards Houffalize at Acul, and the 17th Airborne in the area of Neufchateau on December 30, 1944. In the May 2002 *Bugle* Gen. Charles S. Kilburn, Division Commander, 11th Armored Division, *Preparation for Combat*, states: "Actually the 87th had already seen combat since December 8 at Metz and left Oberailbrach, Germany, on December 18 suffering many casualties. The mission of the combined divisions was to assure American retention of the vital road--center of Bastogne. The town itself now being held by the stalwart efforts of the 101st Airborne Division.

For their part the 87th Division faced the Panzer Lehr Division and the 26th Volksgrenadier Division in the battles at Moiricy, Bonerue, Pironpre (Bloody Crossroads), St. Hubert and Tillet from December 30 to January 10, which resulted in destruction of a great part of VonRunstedt's force.

In June 1996, the 87th Division placed four plaques at St. Hubert, Moiricy, Pironpre and Tillet which all attention to the division stopping the German hordes at these places.

(Continued)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continuation)

The text was written by Mitchell Kaidy, D-345, a noted journalist with the *Rochester Chronicle*, of New York, with the approval of the mayors of the respective communes after much scrutiny. The plaque at Tillet posthumously honors S/Sgt. Curtis F. Shoup, I-346, the 87th's only Medal of Honor recipient. The plaque was placed on the church's bell tower, a fitting place for a man who wanted to be a minister like his father. The very emotional speech was given by Bob Watson, who was a high school classmate and boyhood friend and was his commanding officer. Inspired by his sacrifice the company finally captured Tillet. The five-day siege started with 90 enlisted men and five officers. At the end 35 enlisted and one officer remained--Bob Watson.

Other courageous Americans played key roles in overcoming the tenacious enemy in the battle of Tillet. They included but were not limited to 1st Lt. Glen Doman, a fine officer from "K" Company, who was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross for exceptional bravery in the battle. Lt. Bill O'Donnell, now a Monsignor of the Catholic Church, who jumped on a disabled German tank and directed fire at the enemy was awarded the nation's third highest award--the Silver Star. Erasmus Pistone, of the 3rd Battalion, Medical Detachment, was posthumously awarded the Silver Star for administering first aid under fire.

In his voluminous text *Order of Battle WWII*, Shelby L. Stanton, under the narration of the 87th Infantry Division, states: "The division fought the battle of Tillet 6-10 January, 1945, which ended as it crossed the Ronce River east of Petit Langlir."

Maj Troy H. Middleton was Commanding General of the VIII Corps during the Battle of the Bulge. On April 20, 1945, he was interviewed by Capt L. B. Clark, at Zeulenroda, Germany. The record was found among the notes and comments entitled the Siege of Bastogne National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, Maryland. After much discussion, Middleton concludes: "Since the hardest fighting at Bastogne came after December 26, and involved the 11th Armored Division, the 17th Airborne Division and the 87th Infantry Division and elements of the III Corps, I feel that this history should not be given the title *The Siege of Bastogne*. In fact what has been written covers only part of the siege and only one of the several divisions which took part."

John E. McAuliffe
87 INF 347 INF 3 BN

THANKS FOR THE HELP

[Summary of letter received from Clayton S. Quimbach]

...you wrote me a letter and had directed my first letter to Leland E. Andrew of Cranston, Rhode Island. Mr. Andrew forwarded my request to Joseph T. Layne, of Timonium, Maryland, and to Peter Basha of Zachary, Louisiana. The only man I knew personally was Pete Basha as he was the second platoon squad leader of Company C. Mr. Andrew was with Company A and Mr. Layne was with H&S. Joe Layne I learned was the battalion historian and he had all the records from activation to landing, BOB and finally the occupation of Kassel, Germany. So, he had all the records.

We were attached to many different divisions. I only knew we had landed on Utah Beach D+45 with H&S Company and had lost B and A Companies to the unknown. They finally landed in LeHarve a month later and joined up in northern France.

You helped me to put to rest my aid man who rests in Margraten Cemetery in The Netherlands and Peter Basha, of Company C, has been to his grave site. I remember the night he was hit--I knew the man he saved along with myself. I was evacuated to the 76th General Hospital in Liege, Belgium.

I returned to my company through the repel depot system just in time for the last big push into Germany.

Thanks again for going above and beyond the call of duty--you put one old soldier to rest. That's what it is all about!! Each one helping the other--it's true now as it was then.

Clayton S. Quimbach
172 ENGR CMBT BN

NOMINATIONS FOR EXECUTIVE COUNCIL--2002-03

On behalf of the Nominating Committee, I, John J. Dunleavy, Chairman, announce the following slate for Executive Council members for the year 2002-03.

President

Louis Cunningham
106th Infantry Division

Executive Vice President

George Chekan
9th Infantry Division

Vice President, Military Affairs

Stanley Wojtusik
106th Infantry Division

Vice President, Chapters

George Fisher
26th Infantry Division

Vice President, Public Affairs

Jack Hyland
84th Infantry Division

Vice President, Membership

Harry J. Meisel
565th AAA AW Battalion

Treasurer

William P. Tayman
87th Infantry Division

Corresponding Secretary

Dorothy S. Davis
57th Field Hospital

Recording Secretary

John Bowen
Associate Member

Trustees: Three Year Term

Richard G. Guenter
511 Engineer Light Ponton Company
Neil B. Thompson
740th Tank Battalion
Joseph F. Zimmer
87th Infantry Division

Trustees: Two Year Term

Peter F. Dounis
75th Infantry Division
Frederick R. Carmichael
87th Infantry Division

The above nominees have been unanimously approved by the Nominating Committee which consists of all Past Presidents.

This slate will be presented to the General Membership at its business meeting in Baltimore, Maryland. ■

PRELUDE TO THE BULGE

[ARNOLD C. FRANCO, sent us the following article which he wrote and which was published in the August, 2000, issue of *Military Heritage*.]

World War II, being far more fluid than World War I, marked the advent of the mobile radio intercept unit whose task was to pick up, decrypt if possible, and pinpoint enemy units sending their messages through the airways. The U.S. Navy set up intelligence teams on various carriers and command ships soon after the Battle of Midway. The British Army, followed by the U.S. Army, put together similar groups in the North African campaigns. They were called "Wireless Units" by the English, "Signal Radio Intelligence Companies" or "Signal Service Companies" by the U.S. Army, and "Mobile Radio Squadrons" by the U.S. Army Air Force.



In England, late in March 1944 while the English and American armies were feverishly preparing for the invasion of Normandy only two months away, the U.S. Ninth Air Force, whose assignment it was to conduct the tactical Air War over the Continent, ordered a Major Harry Turkel to form and train a new unit in time for the invasion.

The new unit's task was to monitor and intercept German Air Force radio traffic while operating out of mobile caravans designed to keep pace with advancing armies. This new unit was to be aptly named the 3rd Radio Squadron Mobile ("G," for German).

In order to perform the nearly impossible in so short a time, Turkel was given extraordinary powers to co-opt men from any U.S. unit in the United Kingdom. His long arm even reached back to the States.

I was a produce of this levy. In late April 1944 I was among 10 who had trained in German at Michigan State College and were then in a code-breaking class at Vint Hill Farms Station, Warrenton, Virginia. We were suddenly ordered to prepare to leave, within 24 hours, by plane for London to join the 3rd Radio Squadron Mobile (R.S.M.).

In order to form the voice-intercept detachments, Major Turkel sought fluent German speakers. Fortunately there were a number of candidates from among the GIs who were recent refugees from Nazi Germany. The major personally interviewed most of the candidates and was able to select among those with Berlin, Hamburg or Bavarian accents.

For Detachment "A," the code-breakers, he was able to find two young and intelligent lieutenants, Mortimer Proctor, Jr. of Proctor, Vermont (son of the governor); and Hugh Davidson, a University of Chicago graduate. They were the only ones in the squadron with previous code-breaking experience, as civilians

with the Signal Corps in Washington.

With experienced British officers as teachers, we received hands-on training with real-time German messages at various places throughout southern England. The British proved to be excellent instructors and apparently we were apt pupils. By the end of October 1944 our chief Royal Air Force instructor, Group Captain Rowley Scott Farnie, wrote an appraisal to Supreme Headquarters (SHAEF) claiming that we were "the most successful mobile field unit on the Continent and that squadrons [of fighter planes] were often held at the ready for our intercepts."

On D-Day, a 20-man echelon of Detachment "B" led by Lieutenant Gottlieb was off Omaha Beach and landed on June 9, during which two trucks sank. Their voice-intercept operation started on June 11 at Cricqueville-in-Bessin two miles south of Pointe de Hoc. By the end of the month the balance of Det. "B," all of Det. "A," and the nucleus of "C" were all dug-in in adjoining fields. "C" was awaiting the organizing of the XIX Tactical Air Command, to take place when Lt. Gen. George S. Patton's Third Army went into action. This was the only period until the war ended that all detachments were "together." After the breakout from Normandy, "B" and "C" went with the First and Third Armies respectively and "A" served both 8th Air Force Headquarters and SHAEF.

On the night of July 21 my squadron had a weird experience. The usual German night intruders were overhead trying to drop their mines to interfere with our unloading operations at Omaha Beach, and our usual anti-aircraft "Fourth of July" show was in full visual and sonic bloom when suddenly, Corporal Albert Gruber, monitoring his Hallicrafter intercept set, heard a panic-stricken German pilot announce, "I've been hit--am losing altitude--must get rid of my load." Before Gruber had finished writing this down on his message pad he saw a blinding flash in the field adjoining his and seconds later a blast wave knocked him off his chair.

My detachment ("A") was in the adjoining field and I was hunkered down in my foxhole watching this Heinkel 111, tail aflame, coming in ever lower and suddenly, in the light of our exploding ack-ack fire, seeing several parachutes drop from the stricken aircraft. These were concussion mines. Some exploded setting off our own thermite grenades, kept on or in the vans to destroy them in case of imminent capture. The pressure wave from the grenades pressed me down in my hole as if an elephant were standing on my back.

After it passed I staggered to my feet and followed the path of the stricken plane as it dove toward the sea. At that moment a fragment of shrapnel hit my left eye and I spent a miserable night until it was removed the following day. The two guards on perimeter patrol were both flung into a hedgerow. Lieutenant Davidson, on duty in the intelligence van, had just settled down on his recently acquired cot, when he was thrown to the floor and was puzzled to find himself covered with sand, until he recalled that our English caravans had previously seen service in the Libyan desert campaign of '41-'43.

There were many cases of scratches and tears but no serious injuries. It was really good fortune, but a lot of men were very busy the following morning deepening their foxholes and dugouts.

About a week later the Allies broke out of their beachhead, and within a few days Det. "A" left Normandy via Avranches and set

(Continued on next page)

up operations at the small village of Parne-sur-Roc near Laval. Our stay there was marked by a flood of activity because many German units, in retreat, were sending panic messages, some poorly enciphered, a few even "en clair."

Some of these messages put a sword in our hand, as we were to learn from a surprise inspection-visit by our new chief, Maj. Gen. Joyt Vandenberg. I can still see him, tall and handsome, standing in the doorway of our intelligence van and congratulating us on the fine job we did intercepting messages from and to the H.Q. of the German 19th Army that resulted in U.S. Fighters shooting down 9 JU-52 transports. These were bearing on many army staff personnel trying to take off from airfields in Cognac and Bourges. General Vandenberg promised to recommend us for a Presidential Unit Citation, which we duly received in March 1945.

It was at Parne on August 13 or 14 that we intercepted a message that I recall playing an important part in breaking. Traffic analysis identified the call sign as being that of a German reconnaissance squadron. Direction finding added that the flight originated from La Spezia in Northern Italy and that the aircraft was flying westerly along the Mediterranean littoral. Armed with this information and the fact that the previous duty shift had already postulated the letter "J," I stared at the message with my mind on idle, until, suddenly, in an intuitive spurt the name of the Corsican port of Ajaccio came to me.

This helped break the entire message and we found that the German plane was reporting on a concentration of Allied landing craft in the harbor of Ajaccio. (They were to be used one or two days later for the landings in Southern France.) Ninth Air Force H.Q. became very excited when they received our break. They bombarded us with all sorts of questions. To this day I am not certain about their reasons: whether they hadn't been previously informed about the new landings or whether they wanted to know more about what the Germans had observed.

A few days later, as Paris was being liberated, we hastily packed up and raced to Chateau Beaumont, the recently evacuated headquarters of the Luft Funkhorch Regiment West, our counterparts, located in La Celle St. Cloud just west of Paris.

The heated barracks with beds and both were a far cry from the foxholes of Normandy. And in the Chateau proper the code-breakers occupied the tower rooms with a fireplace and a superb view of Paris down the silver lane of the Seine while the intercept operators set up their equipment in the Grand Ballroom.

During the tumultuous week of the Liberation of Paris (August 25-September 1) Det. "B" lodged themselves at the City Universitaire and somehow got permission to take over the Eiffel Tower, which turned out to be the best antenna they ever had. They had some difficulty with the family that had the traditional right to run the elevators but finally convinced them that since the Germans had used the Tower, certainly their "great liberators," the Americans, should at least have equal rights. They typed up passes (in French) to keep out the inquisitive. Some veterans have sworn that Eisenhower himself had to be issued a "laissez passer" before he was permitted entry.

In any case, we stayed at La Celle St. Cloud while our "voice" detachments went on to the Ardennes in Belgium ("B"), East of Nancy ("C"), and the newly formed ("D") at Fron St. Pierre on the Belgo-Dutch border.

During the next several months Det. "A," still at Chateau

Beaumont, monitored and decoded messages as usual. We had many adventures during this time, but at 0415--it was December 16--out of the silence of the night, the radios of Det. "A" came alive with a short but hastily sent message. It was unusual to get such traffic at night. The intercept operator took the message up the stairs to the Tower, where in front of a crackling fire, the midnight-to-0800 shift of code-breakers was on duty.

The cryptanalysts had barely started to work on the message, when, at 0419, a second message, exactly repeating the first, was brought in. Eyebrows were raised. Most unusual. This was the first time in their experience that a message had ever been duplicated. It eliminated the possibility of corruption in the code groups or a decryption error.

We quickly identified the German encryption. It was one of a family of codes we had named after musical composers, and "ELGAR" used by the Germans to contact their anti-aircraft units. It was quickly broken, and we read "...90 JU 52s and 15 JU 88s going from Paderborn area to area 6°-6° 30', E to 50° 31'-50° 45' and returning by same route." We plotted the co-ordinates on our maps as between Hofen and Monschau on the Belgo-German border. In the dim light of the tower room, eyebrows went up even higher. JU 52s were transports. JU 88s were versatile aircraft used as bombers, night fighters and occasionally as transports; we thought they would be used as transports. Never had the Germans used 105 transport planes at night.

The consensus was that so many aircraft flying into allied airspace had to be an airborne-operations parachute drop. Our usual addresses--9th Air Force H.Q. in Luxembourg City, IXth TAC in Verviers, SHAEF at Versailles and A14F (Air Ministry Intelligence, London) were promptly notified, and in traditional fashion we received the standard "QRV"--message received.

At 0549 that morning we received a third message. It canceled the operation. This we also sent on to the higher headquarters.

Whatever use the Allied commanders made of our decodes remains a matter of conjecture. The fact is that the Germans did make the parachute attack early on the following morning, December 17--instead of the 16th--along the Eupen-Malmedy road having flown over the frontier between Hofen and Monschau. It was the early strike of the massive morning attack of three German armies to turn the tide of the war in the West, and launched what we call the Battle of the Bulge. Fortunately for the Allies, the delays, confusions and outright incompetence connected with German "Operation AUK" (also known as Operation STOSSER) resulted in a catastrophic drop for 1,200 Fallschirmjäger that on a smaller scale was worse than the fate they had suffered in Crete in May of 1941.

Records show that American anti-aircraft battalions (possibly informed by 3rd R.S.M.'s alert) took a heavy toll on the German transports that morning. To add insult to injury, many German anti-aircraft units, apparently never received the messages sent by Lieutenant Colonel Friedrich von Der Heydte, the paratroop commander, shot up and shot down many of their own planes.

The cryptanalysts of detachment "A" as well as various RAF Wireless Units and Hut 3 at Bletchley Park, which apparently also took down some or all of the messages, had to wait until mid-1996, when our National Security Agency finally declassified all the documents. They then learned, "The only advance intelligence of the German offensive received in low-grade air codes was the warning of the parachute landings."

It is obvious that two hours' warning is not very much but certainly higher

headquarters should have been alerted by this unique message that meant that something more than a local counterattack was afoot.

For the 3rd R.S.M. there was another, even more bizarre aspect to the confusion. Our venerable detachment "B" was encamped astride the Eupen-Malmedy road. Headquarters and the voice interceptors were lodged in the town of Jalhay west of the road but the Direction Finding Vans were located at Baraque Michel and Mt. Rigi, the highest points in Belgium, east of the road. The remnants of von Der Heydte's parachute force (less than a hundred men) landed right between them.



[American soldiers examine remains of a Junker-52 paratroop transport shot down early on December 17. Radio messages about the transports should have tipped commanders to the attack.]

Major Silverstein, Det. "B"'s commander, had been alerted to "A"'s break of the paratroop message, but only knew what direction the Germans were taking, not how deep into Allied territory they were flying. He was rudely shocked when men of the morning duty shift on December 17 ran in, carrying empty German parachutes they had picked up in the woods near town. When Sergeant Bob Siefert led his crew out to relieve the D/F operators he noticed some men filtering through the trees, but it was the guard in front of one van who cautioned him, whispering that he suspected they were Germans.

A Mexican standoff developed. The Germans were too weak to provoke a battle, and our men, armed only with carbines, were certainly not going to take them on. Major Silverstein, fearing capture and the compromise of our secret operations, contacted IXth TAC in nearby Verviers requesting permission to move out immediately. But IXth TAC as well as 9th Air Force H.Q., were still completely unaware of the extent of the attack and advised him to wait. By day's end, however, Silverstein took matters into his own hands and ordered "B" to move north and join Det. "D" at Fouron St. Pierre on the Dutch border. It was good that

he did so because by that time a German battle group under Joachim Peiper was already threatening to capture Malmedy.

In the spring of 1945 the 3rd Radio moved into Germany with the various Allied armies. Det. "A" took over a "Kurhaus" and a school (used as barracks) in the little village of Bad Vilbel near Frankfurt-am-Main presumably to be nearer to SHAEF. When the war ended in May the other detachments eventually all moved in with us. Once the war with Japan was over, the majority of the squadron was sent home. I was discharged the day before Christmas 1945. A skeleton unit, called the 2nd-Radio Squadron under ex-Lt. Maj. Mortimer Proctor stayed on until the spring of 1946, and then it also faded into history. Interestingly, during the Korean War, the 3rd Radio was reconstituted and served for over a year in Alaska monitoring Korean and presumably Russian transmissions. ■

[Arnold Franco is the author, with Paula Aselin Spellman, of Code to Victory (Sunflower University Press, 1998, 1-800-258-1232, \$21.95), a recounting of his activities as a code-breaker in the European Theatre of Operations. He resides in New York City.]

Up Front With Mauldin



"This is the town my pappy told me about."

NATIONAL D-DAY MEMORIAL

James H. Burke contacted us on behalf of the National D-Day Memorial Foundation located in Bedford, Virginia. The foundation has encountered extreme financial problems. The memorial is not to be confused with the World War II Monument which will be built in Washington, D.C. The monument in Bedford is in honor of the assault troops who landed on the beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944. If you wish to make a contribution, send it to: The D-Day Memorial Foundation, P.O. Box 77, Bedford, Virginia 24523. ■

DEFENSE OF MONSCHAU

38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (Mecz)

[The following was extracted from a history of the 38th which was submitted by DAVID A. LEVINE]

On 16 December 1944, the German Army in the West opened its great winter offensive. The battle later became known as The Ardennes, but it could very easily have been The Battle of Liege were it not for the defense about to be narrated.

At 0535 a tremendously heavy artillery and rocket barrage hit the "C" Troop positions and the Squadron CP area, and then rolled back to pound "B" Troop and "F" Company on the Mutzenich Hill. This barrage was followed at 0600 by the attack of the 1st Battalion, 751st Regiment, 326th VG Division on "C" Troops' right and the 2nd platoon, "F" Company, S/Sgt. Bielicki commanding, defending the Roer Valley in Monschau. The spearhead of the attack was completely smashed by canister fire of the tank platoon delivered at a range of 50 yards. A "C" Troop patrol under Tech 5 VanOrder broke up other attacking elements as they emerged from Menzerath, with artillery and mortar fire which he called for and adjusted by radio. When "F" Company's mortar illuminating flares revealed more enemy approaching up the valley, Sgt Bielicki requested artillery defensive concentrations which broke up this attack. However the enemy reorganized and attempted to infiltrate into the tank positions. Sgt Messano seized an anti-aircraft light machine gun and placed it in position dismounted to block for good this attempt. Continued "C" Troop mortar fire and artillery fire finally broke up concerted enemy activity in the valley, except for sniper fire all day.

Meanwhile the enemy launched another attack at 0830 down the winding road which led from Imgenbroich to the north end of Monschau, known as the "snake road." This attack was first brought to a halt by machine gun fire from "C" Troop's 2nd and 3rd platoons, and then smashed by fire from the 62nd FA Battalion and "E" Troop. German patrols were observed and fired on all parts of the Squadron line during the rest of the day. When an observer reported that all of the enemy pill boxes were being loaded with extra men, it was plain that another and heavier attack was due to come. Reinforcements were requested of Group Headquarters, which procured Company "A", 146th Combat Engineer Battalion, Captain Ball commanding. One platoon was given to each of "B" and "C" Troops to bolster their line, while the third platoon was dug in on the hill behind Monschau to cover the front line positions with overhead fire and to protect our right flank. Six machine gun crews from the 186th FA Battalion, and attached TDs were also put into the line with "F" Company's hard pressed 2nd platoon.

The night of the 16th-17th was marked by much activity. As many as five enemy searchlights lit up the Mutzenich Hill and a score or more large flow flying planes flew westward over the Squadron line. These were the planes which dropped Lt Col Von der Heydte's parachute battalion behind the Squadron line. At 0400, a "C" Troop listening post under Tec 5 Allen Anderson on the Menzerath Hill detected a force of 60 or 70 enemy approaching their post. They called for and received fire from "E" Troop within two minutes, which broke up the enemy endeavor.

At 0615 another heavy barrage struck the Squadron line, even

reaching back to the "C" Troop mortars this time. At 0630 the enemy launched his initial attack to pierce the line on "C" Troop's left. The enemy, having assembled in the draw east of Mutzenich during the night, attacked "F" Company's 1st platoon at the railroad track, but were finally driven off with machine gun fire, and punished severely by artillery fire as they retired into the draw. At 0800 the full weight of the entire 751st Regiment struck the Squadron, as one attack coordinated with the initial attack just mentioned was made down the "snake road" while the main effort was made in an all-out assault on the Mutzenich Hill. The attack down the "snake road" was met by machine gun fire from "C" Troop's 3rd platoon, but kept coming. It was finally stopped by tank and TD fire from "F" Company's 3rd platoon whose weapons over looked the "C" Troop position. Artillery fire further broke up this attack.

Meanwhile by 0900 the pressure on "B" Troop was becoming heavier. The enemy threw his whole strength against the "B" Troop line, and managed to break through a gap of 200 yards between the 2nd and 1st platoons, not covered by fire and observation. The attackers continued west to overrun three artillery observation posts and to establish themselves in the woods to "B" Troop's rear. Other elements broke through the 2nd platoon's right to attack the troop CP which was defended by Troop Headquarters men. When the "B" Troop commander, Capt. Joseph R. Sain, reported this situation, the reserve platoon of the Engineer Company was sent to his aid under Captain Meyer of the Squadron staff. When Captain Sain received these reinforcements plus two "F" Company tanks he directed a counterattack with his reinforcements and his own 2nd platoon. The counterattack, personally led by Lt. Yontz and Sgt Oxenham, swept forward down the road towards Staffelsbusch where the penetration had been made. In a viscous small arms fight, the enemy was routed from his penetration area, and the line was restored. As the enemy retreated, "E" Troop's observers, S/Sgt Fisher and Sgt Sullivan, who had partaken in the counter attack, ceased their rifle fire to set up their radio and bring down "E" Troop's fire on the retreating enemy.

While this activity was taking place the remainder of the line was busy. "F" Company's 2nd platoon and a patrol of "C" Troop on the right of the line each observed and broke up with artillery fire small (60 or 70 man) enemy attacks coming from Menzerath. At 1200 S/Sgt Zuckoff, "E" Troop FO in the trenches observed four enemy tanks on the Menzerath Hill. He destroyed one with fire from "E" Troop, and two with the 186th FA Battalion. The fourth one withdrew. "B" Troop's 1st platoon was protecting its exposed right flank with a combat patrol with the FO from the 62nd FA stationed with this platoon brought down a heavy concentration on two companies of infantry attempting to cross the railroad to the front, thus stopping this attack. "F" Company's 1st and 3rd platoons were busy firing on supporting waves attacking "B" Troop. At 1000 the enemy continued his efforts on the "C" Troop trenches, and in the draw north of the "hair pin turn." At this time, when one German machine gun crew managed to set up their gun on the "hairpin turn," Sgt. Martin and three men left their tanks to destroy the enemy crew with a hand grenade attack. When one company made another attempt on the "C" Troop trenches, this attack was brought under artillery fire, which stopped it. However one enemy observer managed to reach the house 70 yards in front of the trenches, only to be blown out of it by the TD attached to the

(Continued on next page)

DEFENSE OF MONSCHAU *(Continued from Page 10)*

3rd platoon of "F" Company. This action exemplified the coordination made possible by efficient communications. Antiaircraft gunner fired on a 20 plane German strafing attack at 1200. One plane was brought down with the credit going to Cpl Fitzpatrick of "B" Troop's Headquarters Platoon. "B" Troop's 3rd platoon under Lt Shehab and S/Sgt MacDonald was under heavy artillery during much of the action, but was never attacked. However, a patrol from this platoon, under Sgt Becker intercepted a 17-man German paratrooper patrol in the woods behind the platoon, and drove it off after taking one PW.



Captain William J. Buenzle in the white jacket in the Monschau area. The men with him are all from A Troop, 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron.

During the height of the action with "B" Troop's line had been penetrated, the Squadron Commander had requested reinforcement of Group Headquarters. This request was caused by a PW report that a "main attack" was to be made in the afternoon. At 1100 the Commanding Officer of Company "A", 47th Armored Infantry Battalion reported and received orders to patrol the woods to "B" Troop's rear and then to support the "B" Troop line. When this officer's company arrived an hour later, the penetration had been sealed off, but the company completed its mission. At 1130 the Commanding Officer of Company "A", 10th Tank Battalion arrived with one platoon of his tanks. He was met by the Squadron Commander who ordered the tanks into reserve since by now the penetration had been sealed off.

At 1700 in the gathering dusk, the enemy made his final daylight effort when he came in battalion strength out of Imgenbroich through the hedgerows which did not quite conceal what he thought was a covered approach. An FO of the 186th FA Battalion saw the target and brought down the full power of his 155mm battalion on it. The attack was completely broken up.

The enemy tried again. At 2200 a "C" Troop advanced listening post picked up a large force advancing down the snake road. Illuminating shells were thrown up by "C" Troop's 60 mm mortars and the attacking force of an estimated 200 was cut to pieces by machine gun fire and artillery fire of "E" Troop and the 62nd FA Battalion. A half hour later Troop "B's" outposts heard movement in the Stillbusch draw. Illuminating shells were again fired, and 100 enemy were estimated to be in this force. This time fire from "E" Troop broke up the attack.

Meanwhile the 47th Infantry Regiment of the 9th Division had come into assembly area west of Mutzenich at 1700, thus assuring the stabilization of the situation.

The next day the enemy struck in regimental strength against the 3rd Battalion, 395th Infantry, 99th Division, defending the Hofen Hill on the right. The attack almost succeeded, but was beaten off when the infantry called down artillery fire on their own positions. Sgt Poll, "C" Troop, distinguished himself in this defense by holding a sector of the infantry line with his liaison armored car and by bringing down artillery on targets to his front. Other assistance was rendered the hard pressed infantry by our FO's in the "C" Troop trenches who brought down concentrations from the supporting artillery and "E" Troop on the attacking



Monschau

With the arrival of the 47th Infantry the situation became stabilized. The front of the Squadron was cut down when the 47th Infantry relieved "C" Troop and that part of "F" Company in Monchau. With the shortened front the Squadron spent the remainder of the month and up until 26 January, attached to the 60th Infantry perfecting the defenses in its sector. Seventy truck loads of concertina wire were put out, and defensive fires were registered that covered the entire front. However, the new line was never attacked, the enemy being given a sound beating in the Ardennes.

This vitally important defensive engagement was successful due to the coolness, devotion to duty, and teamwork of a large number. This fact was recognized by the Army Commander when he approved the issuance of the Distinguished Unit Citation.■



BWI AIRPORT MARRIOTT

1743 West Nursery Road
Baltimore Maryland 21240
410-859-8300 FAX 410-691-4515
800-228-9290
www.marriott hotels.com
Welcomes

**Deadline for
Hotel
Reservations
August 14th**

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

29 August – 2 September 2002

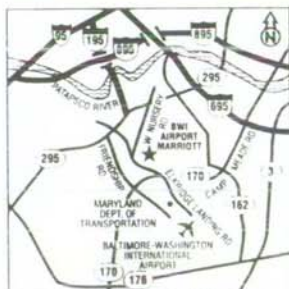
Special Room Rate of \$87 plus taxes per night, single/double beds

This beautiful hotel, located just 5 minutes from BWI Airport and 12 minutes from downtown Baltimore is a ten story hotel with individual climate control rooms, cable TV, in-room coffee and tea, hair dryer, iron and ironing board. Parking is free. There is a courtesy shuttle to BWI Airport and the Amtrak MARC station located at the airport. The courtesy shuttle will also deliver you to the light rail that travels between the airport and Baltimore City. Included is a beautiful Indoor Pool, Fitness Center, Whirlpool, and Massage Therapist and there is Golf nearby.

For your eating pleasure the hotel features Moniker's Grille for superbly prepared seafood specialties, aged beef and traditional fare. Battle of the Bulge Veterans will receive a 15% discount on the Breakfast Buffet. In addition after 4PM, Champions, The American Sports Bar is available serving light meals and cocktails, featuring satellite sports and DIRECTV.® A Lobby Lounge with morning coffee bar and afternoon and evening cocktails is also available for your pleasure

A total of 125 rooms have been blocked so it is important that you secure your reservations as soon as possible to ensure that you receive the Battle of the Bulge special rate. The deadline for room reservations is 14 August 2002 or when the block of 125 room has been reserved. After that the rate will be based on availability and the prevailing rate at the hotel which is between \$179 and \$229 per night. The special rate is extended for the evening of the 28th of August and/or the evening of the 2nd of September if you wish to stay.

DIRECTIONS: From Baltimore and points north: Take Route 295 South (Baltimore/Washington Parkway). Take West Nursery Exit, turn left. Hotel is on the left, 1-½ miles.



From Washington DC and points south: Take Route 295 North (Baltimore/Washington Parkway). Take West Nursery Road exit (after the BWI Airport), turn right at top of the ramp. Hotel is on the left, 1-½ miles.

From I-95: Exit onto I-195 East to Route 295 North (Baltimore/Washington Parkway). Take West Nursery Road Exit, turn right at top of the ramp. Hotel is on the left 1-½ miles.

By plane: Make reservations to Baltimore/Washington International Airport, which is serviced by all major airlines. Southwest Airlines generally offers good rates if booked more than 3 weeks in advance. Ask them about their specials. Upon arrival at the airport, pick-up on of the courtesy Hotel phones and select the BWI Marriott and they will provide free shuttle service for you from the airport.

By train: AMTRAK service along the East Coast is relaxing and efficient. There is an AMTRAK MARC station stop at the BWI Airport. Upon arrival call the Marriott Hotel for free shuttle service pick-up.

By boat: Docking slips are available with the HarborMaster in the Inner Harbor. Reserve early since Labor Day Weekend is a busy weekend for local boaters who like to park and gawk. Call John Bowen at the Hotel number and we will find a way to pick you up.

In the event that you need to cancel your Hotel reservation please inform the hotel 48 hours prior to the day of scheduled arrival.

VBOB 2002 CONVENTION

BALTIMORE MD

29 August – 2 September 2002

Baltimore has been selected as the City, which will be the site of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge National Convention for 2002. The host hotel will be the beautiful BWI Marriott Hotel at 7401 West Nursery Road, Baltimore MD and is easily reached via auto, airplane to BWI Airport, or train (use BWI Amtrak Station). Baltimore is a great city established in 1729 and the largest city in Maryland. Since its early days it has been a city of commerce and is a leading US port of entry. It is the birthplace of Babe Ruth and the final resting-place of Edgar Allan Poe. Its beautiful Inner Harbor restored by the Rouse Company as well as historic and quaint Fell's Point are delights to just stroll. In 1814, Francis Scott Key was inspired by the 15 stars and 15 stripes of the huge flag still waving over Ft Mc Henry to write the verses of our Star Spangled Banner, while it was under siege. Baltimore is also where the railroad was introduced to America. Annapolis is the State Capital of Maryland and is the home of the US Naval Academy. Maryland is also the home to many colleges and universities as well as NASA Greenbelt (where the Hubble Space Telescope is controlled), Aberdeen Proving Grounds and Fort Meade. Many veterans that were in the Replacement system, during World War II, likely went through Ft Meade on their way to Europe.

A full round of activities has been planned including a hospitality & memorabilia room, tours, luncheon cruise, Memorial Service, Annual Meeting and Banquet. A great rate has been negotiated with the hotel for \$87.00 per night plus taxes for those who wish to stay in the BWI Marriott hotel. Activities planned:

Thursday, 29 August 2002

- Registration for Convention
- Wine & Cheese party for those registered for the convention
- Hospitality Room (Salons A, B & C) with displays and space for socializing

Friday, 30 August 2002

- 0800 Bus tour to Ft Mc Henry and Baltimore Inner Harbor
- 0930 Flag Ceremony at Fort Mc Henry & tour of Ft Mc Henry
- 1100 – 1400 Tour Inner Harbor self guided, visit
 - The USS Constellation, Three master ship
 - The USS Torsk WWII Submarine,
 - The Coast Guard Cutter Taney, last ship afloat that was at Pearl Harbor
 - Shopping in the Inner Harbor
 - Lunch on your own from the myriad selections of eateries at Inner Harbor

OR

- 1130-1400 Take a Luncheon Cruise of Inner Harbor and enjoy lunch while viewing the Inner Harbor from the comfort of an air-conditioned boat that will handle 500.
- 1400 1700 Visit the National Aquarium at Inner Harbor Special entry as a group, Dolphin show at 1530 (3:30 PM).
- 1700 Return to Hotel – Dinner on your own. Hospitality Room Opens 'til 2300 hours.

Saturday, 31 August 2002

- 0900 Bus leaves Marriott Hotel for Fort Meade MD. **(Bring your photo-ID)**
- 1000 Memorial Service MD/DC VBOB Memorial, Fort Meade MD
- 1100 Tour Fort Meade Museum and alternate in groups to tour Battle of The Bulge Conference Room (Buses will provide shuttle service between Museum and Conference Room)
- 1230 Leave for Lunch at the Olive Grove, 705 N. Hammonds Ferry Rd off of W. Nursery Rd, Linthicum, MD
- 1430 Visit Famous B&O Railroad Museum, Baltimore
- 1700 Return to Hotel – Dinner on your own. Hospitality Room opens 'til 2300 hours

Sunday, 1 September 2002

- 0900 Catholic Mass
- 0900 Protestant Service
- 1000 – 1200 Annual Meeting
- 1300 – 1500 Tour Historic Electronics Museum adjacent to hotel.
 - Learn about many of the things that you saw but didn't know what they were from the first radar to the current AWACs airplanes that now guide our military.
- 1830 Reception – Cash bar
- 1930– 2200 Banquet Dinner, choice of Salmon or Sirloin Strip Steak w/wine.

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC
2002 Convention – Baltimore Maryland
29 August – 2 September 2002
703-528-4058

REGISTRATION FORM

Date: _____

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ - State: _____ - ZIP+4: _____

Wife/Guest Name: _____ Staying at the BWI Marriott? ☐ yes

Division: _____ Regt/Bn: _____ Company: _____

e-mail: _____ Signature: _____

Event	Number of Persons	Cost per Person	Total
Registration Fee: (All attendees must Register)	_____	\$20.00	\$ _____
Thursday, 29 August 2002:			
Wine & Cheese Reception (Ticketed)	_____	Free if Registered	
Friday, 30 August 2002:			
Bus Transportation to Inner Harbor Events- 8:00 AM – to 5 PM	_____	\$20.00	_____
USS Constellation Tickets	_____	\$ 5.00	_____
Maritime Museum USS Torsk, Light Ship, USS Teney	_____	\$ 5.00	_____
Lunch on Your Own at Inner Harbor	_____		
OR Lunch Cruise on Inner Harbor	_____	\$27.50	_____
Baltimore Aquarium Entry Time (2:30 PM) as a Group	_____		
Senior 60+	_____	\$11.75	_____
Age 11-59	_____	\$14.50	_____
Age 12-18	_____	\$10.75	_____
Age 3-11	_____	\$ 8.75	_____
Saturday, 31 August 2002:			
Bus Transportation to Events 9:00 AM to 5 PM	_____	\$20.00	_____
Memorial Service Ft Meade, Ft Meade Museum, BOB Conf. Room	_____	Free	
Full Name: _____			
2 nd Name: _____			
Use separate sheet of paper for additional Names to enter Ft Meade			
Lunch – Buffet Olive Grove Rest. 705 N. Hammonds Ferry Road	_____	\$13.50	_____
B & O Train Museum 901 West Pratt Street	_____	\$ 6.00	_____
Hors d'Oeuvre Reception, Hospitality Room 6:00 PM	_____	Free if Registered	
Sunday, 1 September 2002			
Church Services Catholic _____ Protestant _____			
Historical Electronics Museum	_____	Free	
Reception (Cash Bar) and Banquet Dinner	_____	\$35.00	_____
Indicate Dinner preference: Salmon <input type="checkbox"/> OR Steak <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetic Dessert			

Monday, 2 September 2002

Breakfast Buffet in Marriott's Moniker's Restaurant _____ Free if Registered

(Compliments of VBOB) Tickets required

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

\$ _____

Mail registration form and check payable to VBOB to:

VBOB Convention 2002, PO Box 11129, Arlington VA 22210-2129

Registration Receipt Deadline August 22, 2002 – AFTER THAT DATE BRING FORM

BALTIMORE 2002 CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

SCHEDULED TOUR INFORMATION & MISCELLANEOUS

Introduction: We will gather at the BWI Marriott in Baltimore Maryland, which will be our Headquarters Hotel to Honor You Who Have Served. We have arranged with the Hotel a special rate of \$87.00 plus tax per night, single or double room. **This rate will be available until August 14th at which time the block of remaining 125 rooms will be released for general sale and the room rate will increase to their standard rate between \$179 and \$229 per night.** So it is important that you register early as once the block of rooms has been secured then the specially negotiated rate of \$87 will no longer be available. The Committee has planned a great convention and will have a large Hospitality Room in Salons A, B & C for you to meet and greet, relax and enjoy the many exhibits, photos, books and Battle of the Bulge Memorabilia. If you are planning to bring a display please contact John Bowen at 301-384-6533 or johndbowen@earthlink.net so that we ensure that we have space available. Registration will open at noon on Thursday, the 27th of August, and continue until 1700 hours. The Quartermaster will also be set up for you to purchase VBOB items. The Hospitality Room will be open from 12 Noon until 1800 hours at which time there will be a Wine & Cheese party provided by the Hotel and the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, for an hour, for those who are registered for the Convention. After the Wine & Cheese party the Hospitality Room will reopen until 2300 hours.

Registration Fee: All that attend any portion of the reunion must pay the registration fee. Wreaths, name tags, programs, table decorations, hospitality, etc. are paid for by this fee.

Friday Tours: On Friday, 30 August, we will motor by bus to Ft. Mc Henry and Baltimore Inner Harbor for a day of relaxation. At Ft Mc Henry we will participate in the patriotic & impressive flag raising of the giant flag which inspired Francis Scott Key to write the verses to what became our National Anthem. Following this ceremony we will have time to view the movie about Ft McHenry and tour this beautifully maintained fort.

Proceeding to Baltimore's beautiful Inner Harbor you will have an opportunity to do a number of things. You may visit the USS Constellation (tickets required), which is the last all sail warship built by the US Navy and the only Civil War vessel still afloat. You may then visit the WWII Submarine USS Torsk, and next to it the Chesapeake, a floating lighthouse used in the Chesapeake Bay, followed by the Coast Guard Cutter Taney, which is the last ship still afloat that survived the Pearl Harbor attack. Two tickets will be required, one for the Constellation and another which covers the sub, lightship and the cutter.

You will have time to shop in the interesting Inner Harbor Shops developed by the Rouse Company and/or have lunch on your own among the variety of eateries there. Or, if you desire you may take a luncheon cruise of the Inner Harbor from 1130 to 1400 hours and enjoy lunch aboard while enjoying the comfort of an air-conditioned boat.

In either case at 14:30 hours we will gather at the National Aquarium at Inner Harbor and enter the Aquarium as a group to be part of the delightful Dolphin show at 1530 hours (3:30 PM). This show will delight young and old and we have received a special group rate. We will return to the

hotel at 1700 hours. The Hospitality Room will be open till 2300 Hours. Dinner will be on your own.

Saturday Tours: This day we will proceed by bus at 9:00 AM to Fort Meade MD and have a special Memorial Service at the MD/DC VBOB Monument on the grounds of the Fort Meade Museum. Because this is a secure facility we will need to have the names of all that plan to attend so that it may be provided to the Military Police for entry unless you have a Military ID. **You will need a photo identification.** We will then tour the Fort Meade Museum and run a shuttle service between the Museum and the Battle of the Bulge Conference Room, located in the Post Library Building.

At 1230 hours we will leave for a buffet lunch at the Olive Grove Restaurant, a great Maryland Restaurant at 705 N Hammonds Ferry Road, off of West Nursery Road, which specializes in Maryland Crab Cakes and other food. For those who would prefer to be dropped at the Hotel prior to lunch, as well as after, that can be arranged. At 1430 hours we will proceed to the B&O Railroad Museum at 901 Pratt Street in Baltimore, which is celebrating 175 years of railroading in America. Railroading got its start in Baltimore and changed the fabric of America. This museum has one of the finest collections of railroad equipment and memorabilia. We will return to the hotel at 1700 hours. There will be a hors d'oeuvre reception in the Hospitality Room for Registered Members, at 1800 hours courtesy of VBOB. The Hospitality Room will be open then 'til 2300 hours. Dinner will be on your own.

Sunday Events: We will have separate Services for Catholics and Protestants at 0900 hours followed by our Annual Meeting and election of officers from 1000 to 1200 hours. Lunch will be on your own followed by a free tour of the Historic Electronics Museum adjacent to the Hotel from 1300 to 1600 hours. This wonderful museum of military electronics will describe many things that you may have seen during WWII but never knew what they were; from the first radar to the current AWACs airplanes and the side seeking radar that our modern military use today. Of interest particularly to our group is the proximity fuze or Pozit, which was first allowed to be used on land during the Battle of the Bulge. This use of a ruggedized vacuum tube fuze that would detonate when in proximity to an object rather than having to hit it was so top secret that it was not allowed to be used on land so as to prevent the enemy from finding out what we had. That is, until the Bulge broke! The Hospitality Room will be open from Noon till 1630 hours and then after the Banquet. (It will close at 1630 hours so that folks can prepare for the evening Banquet Dinner.) There will be a cash bar from 1830 'til 1930 hours at which time seating will take place. There will be assigned seating so that **if you desire to sit with others please mention those names on your registration.** There will be a choice of Salmon or Strip Steak served with salad, vegetables, beverage, dessert (fruit for diabetics) and wine

Monday Departure: As we take our leave for another year, registered convention members will be able to enjoy the free buffet breakfast in the Marriott's Moniker's restaurant from 0700 to 1000 provided by VBOB. Tickets to be given to the server will be in your packets. Please give them to the server when you sit down.

LIVING LEGENDS



MEMORABLE

BULGE INCIDENTS

UNEDITED AND HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED

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

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

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE, THERE'S FIRE

December 1944

William Gilliam
2nd Armored Division
66th Armored Regiment
Company G
Brumley, Missouri

We left Germany under cover of darkness on either December 17th or 18th. We traveled all night with our radios off. We met or passed other traffic in a town. One of our tanks crushed an old Belgian man and we all felt really bad.

We hit the Germans our best blow on December 14th. We were battalion strong with fighter planes (P-38's, P-47's) helping us.

We came out of the pines above a town where the Germans were below us with two or three of our tanks they had captured. They had to go up a hill across town in plain view. We fired so many rounds we had to turn on the exhaust fan to pull the smoke out of the turret.

I was in the 1st platoon leader's tank. We lost our 2nd platoon leader there. I was wounded January 3, 1945 (the first morning of that drive) and the war was over for me.

HERE THEY COME

December 1944

Edward Echmalian
557th Ordnance Heavy Maintenance Company
(Tank)
Towney, California

Shortly after the Bulge broke out, I, and some of my buddies were sent to an ordnance evacuation company for road patrol duty outside of Eupen, Belgium. We were told to look for German soldiers dressed as GI's. Our first night at this location,

was a night that I can never forget.

We were strafed and bombed by enemy aircraft. The last words I heard before the attack were, "Here they come." The sounds of machine gun fire and bombs exploding was like a roar. Luckily, the building we were in was not hit by any bombs but there was a large bomb crater just outside of it.

The next morning, we went out on road patrol again. It was apparent, from seeing all the damage, that the German planes had done their share. We also noticed a lot of anti-aircraft guns passing by. Our patrol led us to the outskirts of Eupen onto a mountain top above the town. Some German planes then flew over us and the anti-aircraft guns began firing on them. It was quite a sight to see the anti-aircraft bursts filling the sky in front of us. One of their planes made an attempt to fly down lower but he changed his mind quickly. The planes then left. I was quite impressed that the anti-aircraft units moved into Eupen so quickly after the night before and that we were able to see them in action.

Perhaps some of our readers remember that night and day. I will never forget it. We were located in the village of Francorchamps before moving to Eupen.

OUR LAST HOT MEAL

December 1944

Warren Luft
11th Armored Division
575th AAA Battalion
D Battery
Fredonia, Wisconsin

I was in the 575th AAA Battalion, D Battery. It was very cold. We had Christmas dinner at Sessone Barracks. We had a hot meal and I remember having a turkey drum leg and that was the last hot meal we got until the end of the war. We were on "C" and "K" rations.

We left our duffle bags and only took our backpacks. They

left one of our GI's back to guard our duffle bags. He was a shy person, so the captain left him there because it was the best job for him.

We never knew where we were going or what was going to happen. We were in an endless column all afternoon and all night. Everyone was cold and tired.

As I remember, about 1:00 a.m. I was sitting in the back of our 6x6, three quarters filled with gas cans so we could refill our vehicles, half tracks and trucks. I was the mechanic and had our tools in the back of the truck. We were in the Neufchateau area. We would move about 100 yards and stop and go all night. It was very cold and I had my shoes off rubbing my feet and half dozing off. It was a moonlit night, which cast our shadows on the road. The German plane strafed our column, firing at the shadows of the vehicles. Shells were exploding and hitting the sides of our vehicles. The scare was so great and I jumped over the tailgate and ran into the ditch with no shoes on and was shaking for a half hour! This was our first day of combat. Later, the story was that we shot down the plane.

At daylight we got into position. Our battery was split up into platoons and the platoons were attached to different units--tank battalions, cavalry, infantry division and artillery units.

My job was then a runner to deliver and receive oral messages to whichever one we were attached. We headed north to Bastogne. We helped to take Foy Noville, Huffelize, Borch and then to the Ardennes.

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Sally Medley writes to see if anyone remembers her father, **WALLACE J. TAGUE, 2ND ARMORED DIVISION, 41ST ARMORED INFANTRY**. If you remember Wallace or can provide Sally with information regarding her father's service, please contact her at: RR 4, Box 43, Crawfordsville, Indiana 47933.

Delores Sternot would like to obtain information regarding her cousin **EDMUND J. STERNOT, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, 327TH GLIDER INFANTRY**. Edmond was killed in the Bulge on January 13, 1945. Recently, the family had returned to them a leather packet of his prayer medals and crucifix. Contact Delores at: 5692 Encina Road, Goleta, California 93117.

Donna Slobodny writes on behalf of her father, **EARNEST D. COOK, 895TH SIGNAL COMPANY DEPOT**. He would like to hear from anyone who may have served with him. Write to Earnest at: 210 North 10th Street, Norfolk, Nebraska 68701-3904.

Daniel P. Huseman would appreciate hearing from any one who might remember his grandfather **JOHN SMITH HUSEMAN, JR., 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, 9TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY I**, or those who served in the 2nd Division. Write to Daniel at: 428 Old Dixie Highway, S.W., Vero Beach, Florida 32962.

Hans Wijer is conducting research on the northern shoulder of the Battle of the Bulge and is interested in hearing memories, recollections, experiences, etc., from those who served in the **2ND INFANTRY DIVISION**. Write to Hans at: Zegerijstraat 27, 6971 ZN Brummen, NL or email at: wijers@wxs.nl.

Bruce R. Longnecker is trying to help the son of a veteran who was in the Battle of the Bulge. Information on the father is: **PVT MAURICE A. BUTLER, 4TH ARMORED DIVISION, 51ST ARMORED BATTALION**. Maurice was killed in action on December 26, 1944. If you can help, write to Bruce at: 712 West Main Street, Centralia, Washington 98531.

IT'S OH SO TRUE...

The following quote appeared in *The Static Line*, the newsletter of the 101st Airborne Division. The quote is attributed to Lt. General (R) James M. Gavin, who not only served in the Battle of the Bulge, but held many governmental/diplomatic positions.

"You were born to be free, you were also born with a responsibility to contribute to our common defense. For as long as a trace of avarice exists in the hearts of men, there will be a need for the defense of men and their established institutions."■

FRENCH CERTIFICATE

In the May issue we ran a picture of local members receiving the "Thank You" certificate from the Government of France. Many of you wrote to us regarding your failure to receive the certificate after having made application. Please be advised that VBOB's only participation in this matter was to provide the forms in order that our members might make application. There have been many who have received the certificate and, from your response, many have made application and have to date heard nothing. As we understand it, the French Government did not expect the large number of requests they received and have not been able to keep up with the demand. If you made application and have received no response, please write to the consulate where you made application. If you wish to receive a form to make application, please send a stamped (37 cents), self-addressed envelope to us--put the word "France" on the envelope for a quicker response--and mail it to VBOB.■



"THERE GOES BOTTLEBY POLISHING THE OLD APPLE AGAIN."

-Sgt Al Mullins

COMBAT MEDIC MEMORIES

By Frank Bessler
307th Medical Detachment
307th Field Artillery Battalion
78th Infantry Division

While billeted in Belgium I listened for the putt-putt sound of an approaching V-1 rocket and the silence after it had exhausted its fuel and the brief frightening moments as it dived uncontrolled toward the earth and destruction.

The beautiful sight on a very crispy, cold winter dawn as U.S. bombers, with their expanding contrails (or as they were called, fingers of death) trailing through the atmosphere, dropping shreds of tin foil (to deflect the German radar) on the beautiful, snow covered evergreen trees in the Hurtgen Forest below.

The fear of the unknown the first night we entered combat, in Germany, during a raging blizzard and in sub-freezing temperatures to take up our first gun positions in total darkness.

The eerie sounds of the German 88's and other artillery missiles of incoming mail responding to outgoing mail from our 105 mm Howitzers.

The urgent call for "MEDIC" or "Where the hell is the 'PILL ROLLER'" who was always prepared to respond whenever or wherever at a moment's notice even under life threatening situations.

The terrible, sickening feeling of running into a mine field and seeing and attending to my first casualty who was blown to pieces by a land mine. The final tying of a KIA tag on another young soldier who was killed.

The sorrowful sight of expired bodies of soldiers, both American and German, stacked near roadsides awaiting removal to the rear.

The blinding snow storms and bitter cold penetrating our uniforms and freezing every soldier to the bone--freezing many hands and feet due to the fact that we were not properly dressed or prepared to withstand the sub-freezing weather.

The awful tired, dirty and battle weary and fatigued infantrymen with their darkened, sleepless eyes, returning from the front lines for clean uniforms and desperately needed R&R.

The darkened skies all day and evening as 1,000 bombers and other planes flew back and forth from raids on Berlin and other targets.

The rise, trail and graceful arch as another V-2 rocket rose on its path of destruction and death towards England and France.

Impatiently waiting for "Mail Call" to hear your name called and receive a letter from home or a package of goodies.

The frightening and helpless feeling as I lay nakedly exposed in an open field while being strafed by a German fighter plane on Christmas Day 1944 during the Battle of the Bulge.

The elation of capturing another town or what was left of it. Seeing white flags of surrender and watching the surviving and defeated enemy soldiers unhappily marching to the rear compounds with their clasped hands on their heads.

The sight of elderly men, women and children left behind in the towns who were told how horrible we were and would probably kill them. To their amazement, their tears of fear dried as they observed that we were more concerned with our next meal than bringing harm to them.

The tragic and very sad news, which electrified and angered

every soldier in the European Theater, upon hearing of the slaughter of approximately 100 unarmed American prisoners at Malmedy, Belgium, by SS and German soldiers. Major Werner Poetscheke, Commander of the 1st Panzer Battalion, ordered Sgt Hans Siptrott to open fire on 130 American soldiers herded into a field, roughly in eight rows with their hands over their heads: "Machen Alle Kaput" ("Kill Them All"). Then they opened up from two Mark IV tanks. Then the engineers from the 3rd SS Pioneer Company moved in to finish off the survivors.

News that the weather had finally cleared and that the soldiers who were trapped in Bastogne could be relieved. The defeat and retreat of the German troops after the Battle of the Bulge which involved a total of approximately 1,000,000 persons on both sides. The Americans lost 80,000 killed, captured or wounded and the Germans lost approximately 100,000 soldiers killed, captured, or wounded.

The high adrenalin rush of Victory as we raced through many towns in pursuit of the rapidly retreating German Army toward the last remaining bridge--the Ludendorf Bridge at Remagen.

Arriving under tremendously heavy artillery fire and German fighter planes attacking us, we set up positions at the "First Crossing of the Rhine River at Remagen at the Ludendorf Bridge." The collapse of the bridge five days later and the crossing of the Rhine River on Pontoon bridges to pursue the remnants of the disintegrating German Army back to Berlin and final unconditional surrender.

While observing the impact of a V-2 rocket, which had landed to the rear of our gun position at Remagen, I recall the feeling of waiting to die as a second rocket passed overhead exploding beyond the next hill. I heard someone explain, "It's no use to run--you don't know which way to go."

The pleasure of freeing and trying to communicate with the hundreds of slave laborers from many countries. Their happiness of finally being liberated and assisting them back to Displaced Persons Center where they were fed, deloused, clothed and classified to be returned to their native countries.

The first meeting on May Day 1945 with the Russian soldiers and nurses at Wetzlar, Germany. This was an historic day for me.

The 24-hours of advance notice of the "Unconditional Surrender" on May 16, 1945, and the end of the war in Europe. The celebration the next day as we all victoriously dined on venison and plenty of wine (which we liberated from a nearby train station).

The post war occupation and my visit to beautiful Heidelberg, Germany.

The long, very uncomfortable ride from Germany on the old 40 and 8's train to camp Philip Morris near LeHarve, France, where I angrily viewed a sign nearby that said "Yankee Go Home." This was my final memory of the appreciation we received after all our sacrifices and freeing France from German Occupation.

Joyously walking up the gangplank with my loaded duffel bag onto the Sheepshead Bay Victory Ship and leaving France, the war, death, destruction and Europe behind me.

After leaving LeHarve harbor, I went below deck and was very sea sick for the next four days and did not come back on deck until we passed the Azore Islands. Shouts of joy rose from all the troops aboard the ship at the beautiful sight as we passed the Statue of Liberty, returning to America and thanking God for being alive and having a safe return. ■

REUNIONS

3RD ARMORED DIVISION, August 28-31, 2002, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Contact: Walter B. Stett, PO Box 2346, South Bend, Indiana 46680-2346. Telephone: 219-291-3414.

4TH ARMORED DIVISION, September 23-28, 2002, Drawbridge Inn, Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. Contact: 4th Armored Division, 182 Shady Drive, Farrell, Pennsylvania 16121.

7TH ARMORED DIVISION, September 26-29, 2002, San Antonio, Texas. Contact: Charles Barry, 947 "A" Street, Meadville, Pennsylvania 16335. Telephone: 814-333-8051.

17TH AIRBORNE DIVISION, August 22-25, 2002, Florence, Kentucky. Contact: Edward J. Siergiej, 2903 Revere Place, Deland, Florida 32720. Telephone: 386-736-6722.

26TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, September 27-28, 2002, Drury Inn, Nashville, Tennessee. Contact: Ralph L. Herndon, 8063 Crown Way, Jonesboro, Georgia 30238. Telephone: 770-473-4015.

30TH INFANTRY DIVISION, October 15-20, 2002, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Contact: Frank H. Pruitt, P.O. Box 886, Spartanburg, South Carolina 29304-0886.

35TH INFANTRY DIVISION, September 11-15, 2002, Hotel Hilton, Springfield, Illinois. Contact: James G. Graff, 1246 100th Avenue, Middletown, Illinois 62666. Telephone: 217-445-2570.

38TH SIGNAL BATTALION, September 19-22, 2002, Eatontown, New Jersey. Contact: William D. Foiles, 2208 Dunvegan Drive, Columbia, South Carolina 29209-3012. Telephone: 803-776-1114.

75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, September 14-19, 2002, Wyndham Myrtle Beach Resort, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Contact: James E. Warmouth, 6545 West 11th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46214-3537.

90TH INFANTRY DIVISION, August 9-September 1, 2002, Double Tree Hotel, Little Rock, Arkansas. Contact: James Reid, Sr., 17 Lake Shore Drive, Willowbrook, Illinois 60526-2221. Telephone: 630-789-0204.

101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, June 13-15, 2002, Nashville, Tennessee. Contact: Jim Patton. Telephone: 270-439-0445.

159TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, September 12-15, 2002, Asheville, North Carolina. Contact: Russ Ruch, 709 North 7th Street, Pottsville, Pennsylvania 1791. Telephone: 50-622-2942.

244TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, September 24-26, 2002, Days Inn/Days Suites, Savannah, Georgia. Contact: Marie P. Varrecchia, 4507 Merlin Drive, Uniontown, Ohio 44685. Telephone: 330-896-0929.

264TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, September 21-13, 2002, Florence, Kentucky. Contact: Bob Latz, 148 Vicary Hill Lane, N.E. #1, Canton, Ohio 44714. Telephone: 330-493-4657.

275TH ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, November 8-9, 2002, Hampton Inn, Hyway 45 Bypass, Jackson, Tennessee. Contact: Kenneth Stevens. Telephone: 731-658-3361.

280TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, September 19-22, 2002, Dallas, Texas. Contact: Marlin Kreighbaum, 1726 West Bel Aire Avenue, Peoria, Illinois 61614. Telephone: 309-691-9410.

482ND AAA AW BATTALION (SP), September 25-29, 2002, St. Charles, Missouri. Contact: Chuck Gregorovich, 908 Williams Street, St. Marys, Ohio 45885-1562. Telephone: 419-394-3548.

501ST PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT, July 11-13, 2002, Fort Myers, Florida. Contact: Jennie Thompson, 2216 S.E. 6th Terrace, Cape Coral,

Florida 33990. Telephone: 941-772-3517.

644TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, October 6-9, 2002, Holiday Inn Daytona Beach Shores, Florida 32118. Contact: William T. Walker, 120 Azalea Street, Lakeland, Florida 33803-4802. Telephone: 386-761-2050.

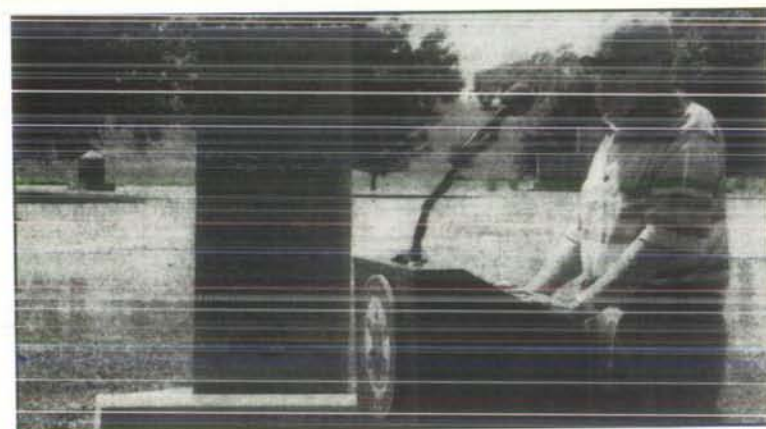
773RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, September 7-19, 2002, Virginia Beach, Virginia. Contact: Edward McClelland, 4384 West 182nd Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44135-3862.

Reunions received too late for the last issue. Dates for the reunions may have passed or be too close for you to make plans; however, we have listed information where you may contact the unit.

254TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, July 19-21, 2002, Iron River, Michigan. Contact: Edward C. Vickstrom, 2012 Washington Avenue, Ishpeming, Michigan 49849-3237. Telephone: 906-486-4804.

561ST FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION DEDICATES MONUMENT

The 561st Field Artillery Battalion (attached to the 106th Infantry Division during the Battle of the Bulge), dedicated a monument at Constitutional Park in Fort Sill, Oklahoma, May 3, 2002. The monument was paid for by the sons and daughters of the men who served. They have made their children an intrical part of their organization.



Bill McKinzie recalls his days with the 561st Field Artillery Battalion in the European theater at the monument dedication. Nine of the battalion's original member attended the ceremonies. □



**VBOB REUNION
BALTIMORE, MD
AUGUST 29 –
SEPTEMBER 2, 2002
*Be There!***

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION
Invites You to Join Your Friends for the
"EVENTS OF REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"
OF THE 58th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE
December 14, 15 and 16, 2002
Metropolitan Washington, DC

The Marriott Fairview Park, I 495 (Capital Beltway) and VA Route 50, Falls Church VA has been selected as the site for activities commemorating the 58th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, December 14 - 16, 2002. This hotel, just off the Beltway will provide easy access and accommodations, for a reduced rate of \$85.00, single or double occupancy. Parking is free. This rate is available for any night(s) between December 13 and December 17. For room reservations please call the Marriott Fairview Park at 1-703-849-9400 or (1-800228-9290) by December 1, 2002. Mention that you are attending the Battle of the Bulge events for the special rate.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2002

- 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM Registration (Hotel Lobby), receive name badges, Banquet/bus tickets. (If you are only attending the Banquet, you may pick up your tickets with table assignment at the Marriott Fairview Park at 6:00 PM Dec 15th.)
- 3:00 PM – 10:00 PM Hospitality Room/Exhibits, scrapbooks. John Bowen & Earle Hart, Battle of the Bulge Historians will be the hosts. A private area in the Hotel restaurant has been reserved for supper from 6:30 – 8:00 PM for the Battle of the Bulge Veterans (payment is on your own).

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2002

- 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Registration/receive name badges, Banquet/bus tickets (hotel lobby).
 9:00 AM Charter buses depart hotel.
 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM Tour International Spy Museum, 800 F St NW, Washington DC.
 12:30 PM Depart for Union Station, Washington DC.
 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Lunch on your own at Union Station.
 3:00 PM Return by bus from Union Station to Marriott Fairview Park..

BANQUET AT MARRIOTT FAIRVIEW PARK, FALLS CHURCH VA

- 6:15 PM Social Hour/Cash Bar.
 6:45 PM Seated for Dinner.
 7:00 PM Color Guard/Members of the Drum and Fife Corps/Ceremonies.
 7:15 PM Dinner served.

Program:

Greetings from Dignitaries.
 Speaker: Secretary Anthony Principe
 Department of Veterans Affairs.

BANQUET ENTRÉE

The choice of entrée for the Banquet is:

Seared Chicken Breast

OR

Mustard Herb Loin Pork

After Banquet Hospitality Room open at Marriott Fairview Park.

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2002

- 9:45 AM Bus from Holiday Inn to Arlington Cemetery
 11:00 AM Impressive ceremony and placing of wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington Cemetery.
 11:30 AM Ceremony of Remembrance, Battle of the Bulge Memorial, across from Amphitheater.
 12:30 PM Bus to Marriott Fairview Park, Falls Church VA
 1:00 PM Buffet Luncheon, Hosted by VBOB, Marriott Fairview Park
 Swearing-in of new VBOB officers.
 Comments by VBOB President.
 Farewell.

RESERVATION FORM
"REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"
OF THE 58th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE
December 14, 15 and 16 2002
Metropolitan Washington, DC

Return form and check by December 1, 2002 to:
 Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation
 PO Box 2516,
 Kensington MD 20895-0181

Questions:
 Dorothy Davis 301-881-0356
 E-Mail: johndbowen@earthlink.net

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Spouse/Guest: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Battle of Bulge Unit: _____

Korean War Service: (6/25/1950 – 1/31/1955) When: _____

Unit(s): _____ Where: _____

RESERVATIONS:	<u>Number Attending</u>	<u>Cost/Person</u>	<u>Total</u>
Registration Fee	_____	\$10.00	\$ _____

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2002

6:30 PM – 8:00 PM: Marriott Fairview Park Restaurant _____ **on your own**
 Please indicate the number that will be attending so that we can advise the hotel.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2002

Chartered Bus, 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM	_____	\$16.00	_____
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New International Spy Museum, 800 F St NW	_____	\$11.00	_____
Lunch, On your Own Union Station, Washington DC	_____		
Shopping, Union Station Mall	_____		

Commemorative Banquet, Marriott Fairview Park	_____	\$44.00	_____
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Please make your Main Course selection(s):

- ☐ Seared Chicken Breast _____ (Name _____)
OR
☐ Mustard Herb Loin Pork _____ (Name _____)

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

MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2002:

9:45 AM	Chartered bus to Arlington Cemetery	\$11.00	_____
11:00 AM	Ceremonies: Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers/ VBOB Monument	No. Attending:	_____
12:30 PM	Bus Return to Marriott Fairview Park		
1:00 PM	VBOB Luncheon & Installation of Officers Courtesy VBOB	No. Attending:	_____

GRAND TOTAL (Enclose check made out to BoBHF Commemoration): \$ _____

NOTES & REMINDERS:

Banquet Dress: Business suit/black tie (miniature medals encouraged) or military dress uniform
 Room reservations must be made with the Marriott Hotel directly, by December 1, 2002 (Telephone 1-800-).
 Return completed Reservation Form for events to BOB Historical Foundation by 1 December 2002, (Telephone 301-881-0356).
 No cancellation refunds after December 9, 2002.
 Please indicate in all places the number & names attending so that we can be advised of the proper number to plan. Thanks!
*****PLEASE BRING A PICTURE ID (Drivers License, Passport, Mil ID)**

106TH INFANTRY DIVISION 424TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

Submitted by M. H. Kunselman

December 23, 1944—It was long before daylight when we headed south. Supposedly we were the last Americans out of Commenster and a heavy barrage hit the town shortly after we left. We fell in behind our battalions at Beho. This time they were riding, clustered like flies on 7th and 9th Armored tanks and vehicles. The pace again was just a crawl. Along the dark road we passed a number of vehicles, abandoned for one reason or another. I was riding in the jeep which had a 30 cal MG on a pipe mount which I hoped we wouldn't have to use. We were all bundled up to our eyes against the biting cold. We finally dragged in to the outskirts of Salm Chateau some time in the morning and there, we finally came to a complete stop with a fantastic jam of vehicles and men ahead of us.

Groups of civilians stood shivering outside their houses, talking and watching us and glancing to the east. Some gathered around the vehicles and tried to converse, but the language barrier was too difficult to understand much. Their main concern was the Germans, of course. These were Belgians and I along with others felt ashamed that we were pulling out leaving them under the yoke of the enemy again. When they were liberated a few months ago, I'm sure many of them took revenge on collaborators. Soon, German sympathizers would crawl out of the woodwork to point them out to the Germans. Many probably would die before this was over. As the frosty ground haze started to dissipate we could see it was going to be a clear morning. The first sun we had seen since England. Unbelievable! A cold one though, as the breath froze on our faces. To the northeast, east and southeast the sound of gunfire held the attention of both soldiers and civilians. I wondered what was holding us up and if the German Panzers would cut us off yet. At what point did we abandon the vehicles and head for the river? Somewhere behind us, men were buying time with their lives.

Unknown to us of course, our 3rd Battalion and a battalion of 9th Armored tanks were fighting a desperate battle around Grufflingen, attacking the enemy to the north and southeast in order to gain elbow room to extricate themselves and fall back toward the bridges. German tanks stopped the attack and then raked them with 88's and MG's as they fell back. Earlier, a fore of tanks and infantry came after our column as it cleared Beho, but ran into the 1st Battalion, 112th, and four 90mm guns of the 811th Tank Destroyer (part of Task Force Jones). The 90mm guns stopped the tanks, but the desperate fight continued along the road behind us.

Sometime around 10:00 a.m. we heard a strange drone of engines in the west and soon we saw hundred of black specks approaching, soon revealing themselves to be our Liberators (B-24's). They passed just a little to the south of us, streaking the frosty blue sky with their vapor trails. The column was endless, still coming as far as we could see. The Air Corps had finally entered the battle with this first break in the weather. A mighty cheer arose from our stalled columns of vehicles. We could see them wheeling and dropping their bombs over some target 10 or 15 miles to the east. Assumed it was St. Vith; then the returning formations passed just to the north of us. We saw several planes drop out of formation and explode. Other planes, obviously damaged by German flak, struggled homeward at a slower pace; some trailing smoke. Except for short intervals, the show continued for over an hour and we could see a great pall of smoke over the target area. Above the sound of their engines though, the noise of artillery and tank fire continued. Some of it coming from due north and we wondered what was happening and why we were still sitting here.

It was afternoon before we finally crossed the high bridge over the Salm. German armor had penetrated to the river between Vielsalm and Salmchateau and self-propelled 76mm guns were firing down the road

toward the bridge. Several vehicles were burning on the road north of the bridge. The mass of vehicles crawling along the escape road was unbelievable; half tracks, tanks, ambulances, artillery, big engineering trucks hauling bulldozers, bridge equipment, tank retrieval vehicles and of course jeeps and QM trucks. As we passed into the countryside northwest of the bridge we had a false sense of security. Unknown to us, the 2nd SS Panzer division was pounding north just a few miles west of us, while north of us the 9th and 1st SS Panzer divisions were still advancing westward. If these two columns met, then our escape route would be slapped shut on us.

The nice clear day had given way to another storm bringing wind and snow. We were thankful for the brief break in the weather that allowed our air force to launch that splendid raid. Along the road we passed many disabled vehicles abandoned in the ditches, even one of the Long Toms (155mm long range gun). Also saw groups of refugees who fled their homes with what they could carry. Forced off the road by military traffic, they huddled in open fields and woods without shelter to survive the terrible, bitter cold blizzard that would develop as the day wore on.

Fortunately, once we crossed the bridge, the convoys maintained a slow but steady pace northward. The day had darkened with the winter storm and the wind was piling the snow in drifts. I thought Napoleon's retreat from Moscow must have been like this, except they were horse-drawn or on foot. Numb with cold, we stoically watched the bleak landscape pass slowly by. Finally, we passed through part of the 82nd Airborne Division which was part of the new American line being formed on the north flank of the breakthrough. We had escaped the German pincers. Our convoy stopped at a windswept intersection near Werbomont until an officer from XVIII Corps assigned us a bivouac area. No shelter for the infantry; our area was an open field and the snow was now about two feet deep on the level. The whole regiment started building bonfires from fence posts, trees, old lumber. Soon, an officer from Corps HQ's drove up and ordered the fires extinguished as they would draw enemy artillery fire. Col Reed said: my men were cold, hungry and without shelter. They need the fires to survive the night so go back to your warm headquarters and we will take a chance on any artillery.

Well, it was a miserable night huddled around the fires. All night long, we had to forage for fuel to keep the fires going until eventually there was no more wood to be found within walking distance. At least we had the comfort of knowing we had escaped the German trap. It had been a hectic eight days of fighting and falling back.

Now I will go back and cover the final collapse of the Salmchateau-Vielsalm bridgehead. I left the 112th, 1st Battalion, desperately engaged with panzer units at Beho. They were slowly pushed back and joined other units of Task Force Jones withdrawing from the south. Together, they continued to impede the Germans. Meanwhile 2nd Battalion of the 112th managed to disengage and withdrew across the river at Vielsalm about 4:30 p.m. Enemy panzers, however, had forced their way into Salmchateau shortly after we crossed the bridge, blocking that escape route and trapping a mass of vehicles on the road from Beho. So, 1st Battalion, 112th, found itself caught between the traffic jam on the north and the advancing enemy from the south. Enemy 88's were firing into the jammed columns and vehicles were starting to burn and explode. Panic was in the air. Col Nelson walked up the stalled column and found a light tank company, which he extricated and with the 1st Battalion they found a side road toward the river. The road ended at a marsh or swamp. With the tanks helping the trucks and jeeps, they managed to cross both the frozen swamp and the river.

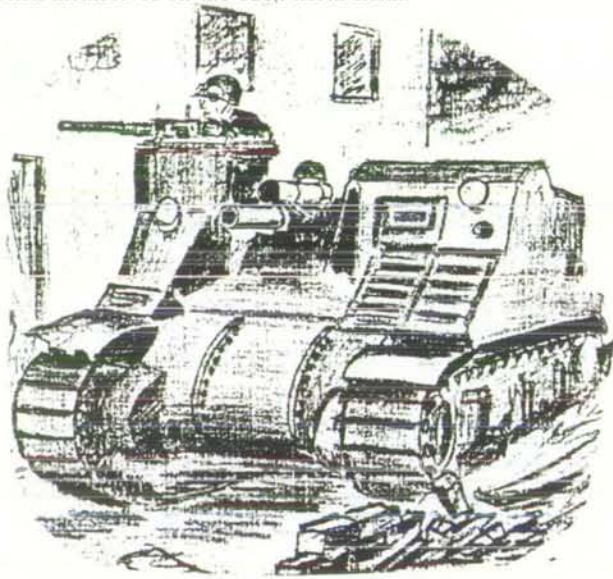
Having reached the west bank of the Salm, they still had to move north past the Germans at the bridge. The 229th Field Artillery laid a protective barrage of fire between them and the enemy as they raced north to join the tail of our column. Out of more than a hundred vehicles, they only lost eighteen. Quite a feat and western Pennsylvania can be proud of their national guard regiment. It didn't give up when things looked blackest.

(Continued on next page)

424TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

Other units in that trapped column managed to escape. Many on foot managed to reach our lines the next day. The 440th Armored Field Artillery Battalion (part of Task Force Jones) found itself cut off at Salmchateau, charged up the road to Vielsalm in a running gunfight and crossed the bridge to safety. It lost one self-propelled howitzer in the melee.

Meanwhile, north of Houffalize at a crossroad named Baraque de Fraiture, the one gun battery of our 589th Field Artillery that had run the gauntlet of enemy tanks at Schonburg (where the rest of the battalion had been destroyed) had dropped its trails and formed a roadblock. They were joined by survivors of 589th Service Company. As time passed, other groups joined them; 203rd Antiaircraft Artillery with three multiple 50 cal MG's, a couple of light tanks from 87th Reconnaissance, a tank destroyer platoon and miscellaneous infantry and paratroopers. Virtually surrounded, this motley crew held their position, blocking this key highway against enemy attacks starting on December 19th until they were overwhelmed on December 23 by the 2nd SS Panzer Division. Their action (unplanned) was one of the decisive delaying actions of the battle. Holding the Germans four days certainly was decisive in the escape of our forces from the Vielsalm-Salmchateau bridgehead and it gave time for the 82nd Airborne and 3rd Armored to establish themselves on the open north flank.



ART WORK BY M. H. KUNSEMAN

We learned the extent of the breakthrough this night. The 2nd Panzer Division (not to be confused with the 2nd SS Panzer facing us) had penetrated nearly 60 miles west into our rear area and was near the Moselle River in France. The 9th SS Panzer was a few miles east of us at a place called Trois Pont and the 1st SS Panzer was stalled at Stavelot to the northeast. The 2nd SS Panzer was coming up from the south on Highway 16 right at us. Meanwhile, the 116th Panzer (that had hit us the first day) was moving in from the southwest. On top of all this, the 18th and 62nd Infantry Divisions and the Fuhrer Panzer Escort Brigade would be following up from Vielsalm-Salmchateau. We apparently jumped from the frying pan into the fire. The prize was National Highway 16 which ran from Basel, Switzerland, right north through Werbomont, Liege and Antwerp. If these converging panzers could break through here, they could romp right up to the North Sea in the area areas of the U.S. Ninth Army, the British Second Army and the Canadian First Army.

To oppose them on Highway 16, we had the remnants of the 7th Armored Division and our 424th Infantry Regiment. To the west was the 3rd Armored Division and to the east was the 82nd Division.

Elements of the 7th Armored were sent south the evening of the 23rd, to occupy the villages of Grandmenel and Manhay thus closing the gap between 3rd Armored and 82nd Airborne Division. Again, it seems strange that a battered outfit down to 40% effective strength should be sent to hold crucial Highway 16, while two fresh divisions held the flanks.

December 24--We spent the day licking our wounds, so to speak, and preparing what shelter we could for comfort. No hot meals, but a supply of unit-sized rations was a welcome change from K rations. Learned that 7th Armored had been hit by 2nd Panzer before dawn and driven out of Grandmenel and Manhay, falling back toward Werbomont. Later that day, we were ordered to provide one battalion to help 7th Armored retake the villages on Christmas Day. Our 2nd Battalion was pegged for this, it being in the best shape. Meanwhile, we received several hundred replacements, mostly GI's who had escaped the surrender on Schnee Eifel. It still left us about 50% effective strength. That afternoon, regimental headquarters moved south and established its CP in a building overlooking the broad valley wherein lay Grandmenel, Manhay and the 2nd SS Panzer. All during the night, heavy concentrations of our artillery fire screamed overhead on their way to targets in the valley.

December 26--7th Armored plan to retake the villages, consisted to two battalions of infantry, supported by two tank companies. Our 2nd Battalion attacking down the west side of Highway 16 and the 48th Armored Infantry Battalion on the east side. After a preparatory shelling the attack got underway and progressed slowly most of the day. The attack was over fairly open ground, exposing our troops to a wicked cross fire from MG's firing from basements in the two villages. The attack got within 50 yards of Manhay and then stalled. The supporting tanks never really got into the fight as they were held at bay by several well emplaced 88mm anti-tank guns.

Withdrawing at dusk, the 2nd Battalion tried to regroup on Hill 522, a barren hump on the valley floor. German 88's and artillery caught them there in the open, causing heavy casualties. What had been the strongest battalion in the regiment, was now the weakest, suffering 35% casualties in the day's fighting. The rest of Christmas night, the wounded and dead were dragged back through the deep snow on improvised sleds and canvas shelter halves.

Meanwhile, the rest of the regiment received the Christmas dinner Corps had promised us. Turkey and most of the trimmings to go with it. It kind of stuck in our throats as we ate it that night, thinking of the misery and suffering out on that bleak snow covered hill. Some Christmas! We didn't sing any carols.

December 26--The enemy returned before dawn and charging with infantry and tanks, drove our forces out of Manhay again. Preparations were made for another attack. In yesterday's attack, 2nd Battalion was attached to 7th Armored and our regiment was not otherwise involved. In today's fight, we would have a major role, with 2nd Battalion reinforced with "L" Company, 3rd Battalion, attacking Manhay astride Highway 16 while 1st Battalion would attack Grandmenel. Also participating in the attack would be the 38th Armored Infantry Battalion, a battalion from the 82nd Airborne would attack from the east and a battalion from the newly-arrived 75th Division would attack Grandmenel from the northwest. Tanks from 7th Armored would add muscle to the effort.

December 26--Our artillery put two TOT's on Manhay, just before the attack started around 9:00 a.m., TOT means Time on Target, in which each of the dispersed artillery battalions time their fire so that all the shells arrive and explode over the target at the same instant. This has a devastating effect as the enemy has no warning or time to seek shelter. Later inspection revealed about 350 Germans were killed and 80 vehicles destroyed by artillery fire in Manhay. Grandmenel was given the same treatment, but forewarned, the troops there sought shelter and the casualties were much less. Of course, the artillery continued to shell the two villages as the infantry worked their way close enough for the final assault.

(Continued on next page)

424TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

(Continued from page)

"E" Company, 2nd Battalion, attacking down Highway 16 finally sought shelter in the roadside ditches from the punishing mortar, artillery and MG fire sweeping the road. Their attack stopped, mortar fire was still exacting a toll in the ditches. Then one of those unexplainable things happened: the battalion chaplain drove down that fire swept road, stopped and gave first aid to some of the wounded in the ditch. Then he carried a seriously wounded GI to his jeep and drove back up the road to the first aid station. Inspired by the chaplain's action, "E" Company got up from the ditches and charged into the outskirts of Manhay, closely followed by the rest of the battalion. About the same time, the battalion from 82nd Airborne entered the east end of the village. After several hours of house-to-house fighting and mop up, Manhay was again in our hands. Tanks were quickly moved in to solidify the position.

Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion attacked and entered Grandmenel and fought house-to-house until the met the battalion from the 75th Division moving in from the northeast. Now, both objectives were taken, not to be relinquished this time. The 2nd SS Panzer was stopped and now the buildup of our forces on the north flank would doom any further hopes of the German's to break out. We were proud to have had a major role in the Battle of Manhay: that stopped the momentum of a panzer attack dead in its tracks.

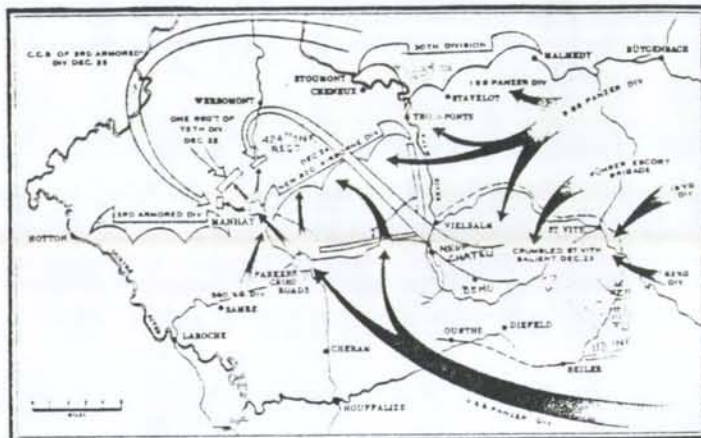
Yesterday, far to the west of us, our 2nd Armored Division fought a desperate battle with the 2nd Panzer Division in France and stopped their westward drive. From now on, we would do the attacking as the Germans would be slowly pushed back to where they started. Hitler's big gamble had lost. The delaying actions by the units over run the first days, caused the enemy to miss his time schedule and block his northern thrusts. He had made a penetration in our lines approximately 40 miles wide by 60 miles deep and all for nothing. Now, short on gasoline, many of his valuable tanks would have to be abandoned in the Ardennes.

December 27-30—The roads and valley around Manhay and Grandmenel was littered with destroyed or burned vehicles and tanks (both theirs and ours). We had our first chance to see close up German equipment and tanks. The huge 60-ton Tiger tanks loomed over our 30-ton Shermans. Yet, in many cases, the turrets had been completely blown off the hulls. One can imagine what this does to the occupants. Looking in one, all we saw was charred boots and bones. The front of the Tigers had 11" of Kraup armor plate, which shed our 3" shells like a duck sheds water. Our tanks had a faster rate of fire and more speed but had to attack the big German tanks from the flank where the armor was thinner. A German 88 would just cave in the front of our Shermans, and we saw what a German panzerfaust (bazooka) did to one of our tanks. It burned a small one diameter hole in the 5" thick armor where it entered, but it blew out funnel-wise on the inside, scattering molten metal and shrapnel.

During the attacks on Manhay and Grandmenel, our infantry complained that our tanks gave them little close support until the objectives were taken. They referred to the 7th Armored as the mechanized road blocks. To be fair, one has to recognize that the 7th Armored had fought a desperate series of battles over a week, and in the process had lost heavily in tanks and tank crews. By the time of our action at Manhay and Grandmenel, they had to conserve what tanks they had left. At that point, infantry was expandable and could be replaced far quicker than tanks. Of course, this reasoning was of no consolidation to the infantry, huddled in the snow and being raked by 88's, mortar and machine gun fire.

After the retaking of the two villages, they were eventually abandoned as we built up defensive positions on the north slope of the valley. Behind us, a massive array of artillery was concentrated on a three mile front, straddling the highway. The Germans tried to concentrate a number of times in the succeeding days to resume their advance but the massed fire of 300 artillery pieces smothered them each time. The carnage inflicted must have been terrible. I was told the new proximity

fuses were used here. (First time in Europe.) Shrapnel shells have to detonate in the air, spraying their lethal splinters downward on the troops to be effective. This required calculating the time of flight for the shell to reach the target area and then setting the time fuse on it. Obviously, error would result in some shells exploding too high in the air, or hitting the ground before detonating. The proximity fuse detonated at a predetermined distance above the ground thus vastly reducing error and resulting in a much faster rate of fire; as calculations and setting of the old time fuses was eliminated.



In any event, the days following our taking the two villages were constantly shaken by artillery drumfire. An almost continuous ripping and tearing in the air above us hundreds of shells passed over us, to fall on one target after another in the valley. It was quite an experience and we were grateful they were our shells.

Finally on the night of December 30, we were relieved by the 75th Infantry Division. It was a windless cold night, snow lay heavy on the ground. As our men moved toward the rear, another shadowy line moved in the opposite direction. Any noise we made was drowned out by our artillery overhead. Looking back through the darkness we could see the twinkling of little lights, flashing on the dark hills across the valley. Like fireflies on a summer night. Except, they were our shells exploding along the German lines to make the enemy keep their heads down.

It hardly seemed possible only two weeks had passed since that first terrible barrage had hit us and the Germans came out of the eastern darkness. In that time, our division had lost over half of its men. Now we were headed for a rear area; that meant baths, clean clothes, hot meals and replacements to bring us back to combat strength. Now, we were the veterans, turning our position over to a green outfit fresh from England. Their time of testing was coming up, but their good fortune too, as they would be the first to meet the advancing Russian troops at the Elbe. ■



"SIGARETTA, JOE!"

— S/Sgt. Howard Adler

GENERAL PATTON'S MIRACULOUS TALK WITH GOD

Submitted by Milton F. Bartelt
5th Infantry Division
10th Infantry Regiment

Sir, this is Patton talking. The last 14 days have been straight hell. Rain, snow, more rain, more snow--and I'm beginning to wonder what's going on in Your headquarters. Whose side are You on, anyway?

For three years my chaplains have been explaining this as a religious war. This, they tell me, is the Crusades all over again, except that we're riding tanks instead of chargers. They insist we are here to annihilate the German Army and the godless Hitler so that religious freedom may return to Europe.

Up until now I have gone along with them, for You have given us Your unreserved cooperation. Clear skies and a calm sea in Africa made the landings highly successful and helped us to eliminate Rommel. Sicily was comparatively easy, and You supplied excellent weather for our armored dash across France, the greatest military victory that You have thus far allowed me. You have given me excellent guidance in difficult command decisions and You have led German units into traps that made their elimination fairly simple.

But now, You've changed horses in mid-stream. You seem to have given Rundstedt every break in the book and, frankly, he's been beating hell out of us. My army is neither trained nor equipped for winter warfare. And, as You know, this weather is more suitable for Eskimos than for southern cavalry men.

But now, Sir, I can't help but feel that I have offended You in some way. That suddenly You have lost all sympathy for our cause. That You are throwing in with VonRunstedt and his paper-hanging god. You know without me telling You that our situation is desperate. Sure, I can tell my staff that everything is going according to plan, but there's no use telling You that my 101st Airborne is holding out against tremendous odds in Bastogne, and that this continual storm is making it impossible to supply them from the air. I've sent Hugh Gaffey, one of my ablest generals, with his 4th Armored Division, north toward that all-important road center to relieve the encircled garrison, and he's finding Your weather much more difficult than he is the Krauts.

I don't like to complain unreasonably, but my soldiers from the Meuse to Echternach are suffering tortures of the damned. Today I visited several hospitals, all full of frostbite cases, and the wounded are dying in the fields because they cannot be brought back for medical care.

But this isn't the worst of the situation. Lack of visibility, continual rains, have completely grounded my air force. My technique of battle calls for close-in fighter bomber support, and if my planes can't fly, how can I use them as aerial artillery? Not only is this a deplorable situation, but, worse yet, my reconnaissance planes haven't been in the air for 14 days, and I haven't the faintest idea of what's going on behind the German lines.

Dammit, Sir, I can't fight a shadow. Without Your cooperation from a weather standpoint, I am deprived of an accurate disposition of the German armies, and how in the hell

can I be intelligent in my attack? All this probably sounds unreasonable to You, but I have lost all patience with Your chaplains, who insist that this is a typical Ardennes winter, and that I must have faith.

Faith and patience be damned! You have just got to make up Your mind whose side You're on. You must come to my assistance, so that I may dispatch the entire German Army as a birthday present to Your Prince of Peace.

Sir, I have never been an unreasonable man. I am not going to ask You for the impossible. I do not even insist upon a miracle, for all I request is four days of clear weather.

Give me four clear days so that my planes can fly; so that my fighter-bombers can bomb and strafe, so that my reconnaissance may pick out targets for my magnificent artillery. Give me four days of sunshine to dry this blasted mud, so that my tanks may roll, so that ammunition and rations may be taken to my hungry, ill-equipped infantry. I need those four days to send VonRunstedt and his godless army to their Valhalla. I am sick of this unnecessary butchery of American youth, and in exchange for four days of fighting weather, I will deliver You enough Krauts to keep Your bookkeepers months behind in their work.

Amen. ■



"I SUPPOSE YOU TWO REALIZE THAT THIS UNION HOLDS GOOD EVEN AFTER CESSATION OF HOSTILITIES."

Cpl. Ralph Newman

YOUR LAST ISSUE OF THE BULGE BUGLE?

If you received a dues reminder recently and have not as yet paid your dues, please be advised that you will be removed from our rolls prior to the mailing of the next issue.

On mailing this dues reminder we noticed that many who were delinquent were associate members. You are the future of this organization. We cannot carry on the work of ensuring that the heroic deeds of your loved ones without your support. We need your support. ■

MALMEDY REMEMBERS

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

[The following was submitted by GUSTAV SWIERSZ, 18TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 112TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 2ND BATTALION, COMPANY E.]

After a grueling and devastating encounter in the Battle of Hurtgen Forest (early November 1944) the 28th Division was deployed to the Luxemburg/German border. "E" Company was dispatched to Lieler, Luxemburg, located on the west bank of the Our River. (Germany being on the east bank.) Our line was a series of outposts on the Our River. In what perhaps may have been the first shots fired as the BOB began, they also, with hindsight, may be deemed to be prophetic of the campaign that followed.

That brief encounter is best described by two young GI's in my squad. The two GI's (James Norris of Conley, Georgia, and Robert Farmer, of Bluefield, West Virginia, were manning an outpost dugout on the Our River's west bank. This is how, in his own words, Jim Norris describes how the Battle of the Bulge began in our sector:

"He (R. Farmer) and I shared an unusual experience that morning of December 16th, 1944 (5:30 a.m.). We were in the outpost dugout, doing double guard duty. He was resting, I was looking at the beautiful scene, the moon on the snow all 'quiet and serene.'

"But this changed quickly, all at once big searchlights hit the sky, we could hear tanks running so I woke Robert and we called the Company C.P. The Company Commander told us to come back to the C.P. that the Germans had attacked the 110th Regiment and were coming in mass attack towards us.

"As we got our gear together we looked up on the hill in the moonlight and there was this German Tiger tank and he spotted our dugout position. He fired one shell over us then one in front of us. Robert looked at me and said, 'You know what this means, the next one is coming in.' So we laid there and could hear that third shell coming in. After a little time nothing happened. We raised up and saw the third shell sticking just a few feet in front of us. In a direct line with us. It was a faulty shell.

"I had always believed that God was taking care of us. Anyway you talk about two boys moving through the snow to get to the company--there was no stopping us. We were able to hold our position until some time in the afternoon, then we had to go. They were making it so hot for us that we just had to retreat. But, thank God, we lived to fight again."



Submitted by
Henry F. Thake

110th Antiaircraft Artillery Gun Battalion

I recently attended a battalion reunion in Orlando, Florida. We exchanged photographs of what was going on in Europe in WWII at that time. There were plenty of photos that brought back memories, both sad and happy ones.

One photo I came across was a monument in Malmédy, Belgium, which honored the men who liberated the town and also defended the town during the Battle of the Bulge.

The 110th AA Gun Battalion landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day plus one and took part in battles through and including the Battle of the Bulge. Most of us were unaware of this monument which had been put up by the people of Malmédy. I have enclosed the photo that stands in the town.



Pictured above are Harold Mueller and Walter Daggendorf in their VBOB jackets.

[The monument reads as follows:]

1st US Army
11 Sept. 1944 Liberation
De Malmédy
4th Cavalry
Reconnaissance Squadron
CIE B 625th Tank
Destroyer Battalion
Batterie C 87th Armored
Field Artillery Battalion
Bataille des Ardennes Dec. 1944
Defense de Malmédy
17 12 CIE C 291st Engineer
Combat Battalion
18 12 Task Force 88th Inf. Bn.
CIE B 825th Tank Destroyer
Battalion Norvegiens
30th Infantry Division
120th Infantry Regiment
21 12 110th Anti Aircraft
Gun Battalion
740th Tank Battalion
526th Armored Infantry Battalion
SEME Bataillon Fusiliers Belges

MY GUARDIAN ANGEL

John B. Masterson
80th Infantry Division
318th Infantry Regiment

My two brothers and I often talked about how lucky we were to survive World War II. After a number of incidents, we decided it was because we each had a "guardian angel" who protected us. This is my story about just one incident in which I survived because of my guardian angel.

In December of 1944, my outfit, under General George Patton, was attacking the famous German Siegfried Line leading to the invasion of Germany, near the Town of Strasbourg. It was very cold on December 16, 1944, when we were pulled back off the line and were told the Germans were making a large invasion to our north in the area of Belgium and Luxembourg. Adolph Hitler, the German dictator, was hoping to win a great victory, split the Allies, and ask for peace, thus ending the war. This was the beginning of the most decisive battle in Europe of World War II, known as the Battle of the Bulge.

My regiment was now taken off the line and moved northward in open trucks to Luxembourg and Belgium to stop the German invasion. This surprise attack by the Germans led to the huge bulge in our lines of fifty miles, thus this became the Battle of the Bulge. Our objective was to cut off their bulge and cut the invading German armies off from the rest.

We arrived at our destination around midnight and it was already snowing and very cold. Around 2:30 a.m., we were told to dig fox holes and hold the line. For the next week, we were in rough fighting with the invading Germans under extreme cold weather conditions. Our planes couldn't get in the air to strafe the Germans because of the fog and snow.

Around 4:00 p.m. on Christmas Day, despite the cold and snow, we launched an attack from a wooded area, hoping to capture a small town. At the time, our company was down to just 15 men when we attacked across the flat, snow-covered field with the German machine gunners on our right flank. As I was running forward firing my rifle, suddenly I went flying through the air. The first thing I remember saying was: "You clumsy Ox, you have tripped over your own big feet." As I hit the ground, I then realized I hadn't tripped, but was shot in my legs by the German machine gunners.

Now, I made my first big mistake. As I lay there in the snow, I decided to turn over on my side, raise up and take care of my wounds. We were trained to carry a small package of penicillin and pour the contents on your wounds to keep down infection. The other soldiers in my outfit, who weren't wounded, kept running toward the town, so I was a visible, easy target laying in the snow. Now, the German machine gunners saw I wasn't dead and opened up again hoping to finish me off. I tried digging with my hands in the cold, snowy earth and hung close to the ground without getting hit. The German machine gun bullets were hitting little puffs of snow all around me. I remember closing my eyes, and praying with all my heart: "Please, dear God! Don't let me die now. I am still alive, let me get out of here." I know I prayed harder than I had ever prayed before in my life.

After it seemed like a long time, probably about five minutes, I made my second mistake because I raised up again to see

whether or not some of my wounded other buddies may be near me. The German machine gunners saw I was still alive and started shooting again with bullets all around me. I again started praying and decided I would not move anymore until it was dark, hoping my sergeant, Frank Rivera, or some medic would come out looking for me. As I lay there, it was getting colder and darker. I kept thinking to myself, "What a way to spend Christmas."

When it finally got dark and much colder, I felt sure my sergeant would come looking for me. Sure enough, Frank Rivera, came out and found me. However, there was still a problem of how to carry me. I was 6'4" tall and weighed about 217 to 220, so I was a load to carry. Frank solved that problem easily, he came with a wheel-barrel, hoisted me up, and wheeled me in to the medic aid station in the town. Later, I was taken by ambulance to Luxembourg City, to be operated on, then flew to Paris and then landed in England on New Year's Eve a very happy soldier. In March, 1945, I was sent back to a different outfit in France, supposedly to get ready to go to the Pacific area to finish the war with Japan. Luckily, Japan surrendered in August of 1945 so I didn't have to go to the Pacific.

After the war, my brothers and I all talked about incidents like this one and wondered why we weren't killed. We all decided that we had a "guardian angel." I personally later thought about at least four other incidents, besides this one, where some one had protected me. It must have been my "guardian angel": I truly believe we all have one. ■

BEWARE

The June 2002 issue of the 501 PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSOCIATION "GERONIMO" newsletter contained the following notice, which we pass along to you:

"Bill Petz wrote an article in *The Screaming Eagle* about Pierre Godeau, from Belgium, who preys on families of WWII veterans who were KIA in the defense of Bastogne and the Battle of the Bulge. He has been known to contact families and obtain WWII memorabilia from them, using veterans' organizations as a front. He then sells these items on e-bay or to private collectors for a profit." ■



"MORALE, MORALE, ALWAYS MORALE. IT'S MAKING ME SICK."
—Pvt. Irwin Toustler

MONTGOMERY'S PROPOSAL IGNORED

By Carl DeVasto
26th Infantry Division
101st Infantry Regiment
Headquarters Company

As we, the winter soldiers of '44 and '45 review our past history, we are often reminded of the blunders made during history's greatest conflict. For example Hitler's refusal to release his armored divisions to Gen. Gerd vonRunstedt to drive the invading allies into the English Channel on June 6, 1944.

The men of the 741st Tank Battalion, attached to the 1st Infantry Division, coming ashore at Omaha, had lost the offensive support of 28 or 35 M4 Sherman tanks to weak struts and defective flotation skirts. They sunk like lead weights after being launched from LCT's, soon after the initial landings on June 6, 1944. These tanks were designated to bust the crust, penetrate the *bocage* and spearhead the 1st Infantry Division in the taking of St. Laurent, two miles inland. How many men of the 1st Infantry Division were lost due to the lack of the intended support from the 28 tanks that went to the bottom of the channel?

Or General Montgomery's failed Market Garden, the duel airborne and armored operation of September 17, 1944. The 101st and 82nd Airborne Divisions were to seize two bridges and waterways 60 miles behind enemy lines at Eindhoven and Nijmegen respectively, while the British 1st Airborne was to take the bridge over the Rhine River at Arnhem. Although the bridges were taken and held, the overwhelming German forces soon devastated the Allies at all points of occupation. Montgomery's failed Market Garden operation cost over 8,000 men--killed, captured or missing to the British, Poles and Americans. History's largest air operations had succumbed to German Panzer Divisions in bitter defeat.

So, what has the above got to do with Monty's ignored proposal? Having depicted the failed ventures that have become well known to students and historians of WWII, I am obliged to comment on a significant blunder that would have been added to the above, had Bradley and Patton acted upon Montgomery's proposal.

It happened on Christmas night 1944 at Bradley's CP at the Alpha Hotel in Luxembourg. Late that evening, after Patton had visited the CP's of the 4th Armored, and the 26th, 80th and 5th Infantry Divisions, Bradley said to Patton: "Montgomery told me that the First Army could not attack for three months and that the only attacks that could be made would be made by me, but that I was too weak. Hence, we should have to fall back to the line of the Saar-Vosge, or even to the Moselle, to gain enough divisions to permit me to continue to attack."

Bradley and Patton considered this a disgusting and absurd proposal with tremendous political implications with would result in retribution, death or slavery of all in formerly held Alsace and Lorraine. Had not Montgomery been aware that Patton's III Corps had been on the attack since December 22? On Christmas Day, 1944, my 26th was attacking towards Wiltz, Luxembourg, the 4th Armored on our left was driving for Bastogne, Belgium, and the 80th Infantry Division on our right was about to take

Mertzig, Luxembourg. Rambrouch, Grosbous and Eschdorf were in our control and our CP at Christmas, 1944, was at Heispelt, Luxembourg. On December 17th, Bradley had ordered Col. Roberts' CCB of the 10th Armored Division to form a defensive arc five miles northeast of Bastogne with 70 tanks, 18 tank destroyers and 350 men. (This was the wall of steel created by Roberts that held off the Germans for nine days, that most historians have forgotten.)

On the 19th of December, Bradley had ordered the 101st Airborne to Bastogne and the 82nd Airborne to Webomont on the north shoulder. Both of these airborne divisions had been at Reims, France, since the end of the failed Market Garden operation. By December 25, 1944, all the above mentioned units were in place and many units were eating up enemy geography at a great cost to our young lives. Yet Montgomery suggested to Bradley that we should pull back, wait three months, reorganize in strength, then attack. Among many U.S. generals, former incidents at Caen and Falaise had earned Montgomery a well-deserved reputation as being overly cautious.

Patton was so incensed at this preposterous proposal by Montgomery, that he directed every member of his staff to write an opinion on the matter. The memos included information that attested to the ability of the Third Army to successfully attack the on-coming Germans with an immediate counter-offensive.

Patton's staff submitted substantial information describing the preparedness of the Third Army to attack and it being in possession of adequate fuel, ammo, stores and combat units. The memo proclaimed: "It is our belief that the Third army should continue the offensive and carry the fight to the enemy, and destroy him without delay."

The memoranda was signed by Col. Paul D. Harkins, Deputy Chief of Staff, Brigadier General H. G. Maddox, G-3 and Col. Oscar W. Koch, G-2. Patton was aware of the historical significance of Montgomery's proposal.

Montgomery did not order his First Army (Hodges) to attack until the 27th of December, five days after Patton had attacked General Bradenberger's 7th Army with his III Corps (Milliken) on December 22nd, 1944.

Verification with regard to the above can be found in *War as I Knew It*, by General George S. Patton, pages 193 and 194. Montgomery's memoirs make no mention of his proposal to Gen. Bradley, as stated by Gen. Bradley to Gen. George Patton on Christmas Day at the Hotel Alpha, in Luxembourg. Confirmation of Montgomery's proposal may also be found in *Patton: Ordeal and Triumph* by Ladislav Farago, on page 705 and by John Toland's *Battle*, page 277. All of the above authors are recognized historians of WWII and have written extensively and comprehensively on the subject of the Ardennes counter-offensive.

On the 50th anniversary of their deaths, I was chairman of "Monuments and Memorials," a committee which paid tribute to those that did not return from the 26th Infantry Division. We published two special issues in their honor. This allowed me to become involved in extensive research on the subject of the Battle of the Bulge.

I have been very fortunate to have visited the Ardennes on three occasions and have made several close friends in Luxembourg who are members of "Cercle D' Etudes Sur La Bataille Des Ardennes" (CEBA). The proposal of Gen. Montgomery and Gen. Bradley to pull back, reorganize and attack in three months as the solution to the Ardennes offensive is not commonly known to most. This article is meant to pay tribute to the memory of Bradley and Patton, two great generals who had faith in the Third Army at a very crucial time, when others disagreed.

Members of VBOB, I salute you.

THE VBOB EMBLEM

Submitted by Demetri Paris
9th Armored Division
14th Tank Battalion

At the first meeting to consider establishing an organization of Bulge veterans, I suggested we should develop a distinguishing emblem or logotype. Acting Chairman Clyde Boden promptly appointed me as chairman to accomplish this.

I made an appointment with the colonel in charge of the Institute of Heraldry and invited several members to accompany me. The colonel stated that his organization was the source of emblems for all military and civilian branches of the U.S. Government but could not serve us officially. However, he turned to his chief artist and asked if he would volunteer his service and that of his staff of twelve artists working on their own and not on official time. He promptly agreed. (Incidentally, the chief artist of the Institute of Heraldry was J.C. "Jay" Morris, who was a veteran of World War II. He had joined a unit in Europe just after the Battle of the Bulge and heard the men talking about the Bulge.)

The basic design was conceived by Charter Member Neil Thompson as a sign for display at the first official VBOB meeting held December 16, 1981. The sign was placed on the front of the lectern in the event the meeting was covered by press photographers. Unfortunately, neither the print or

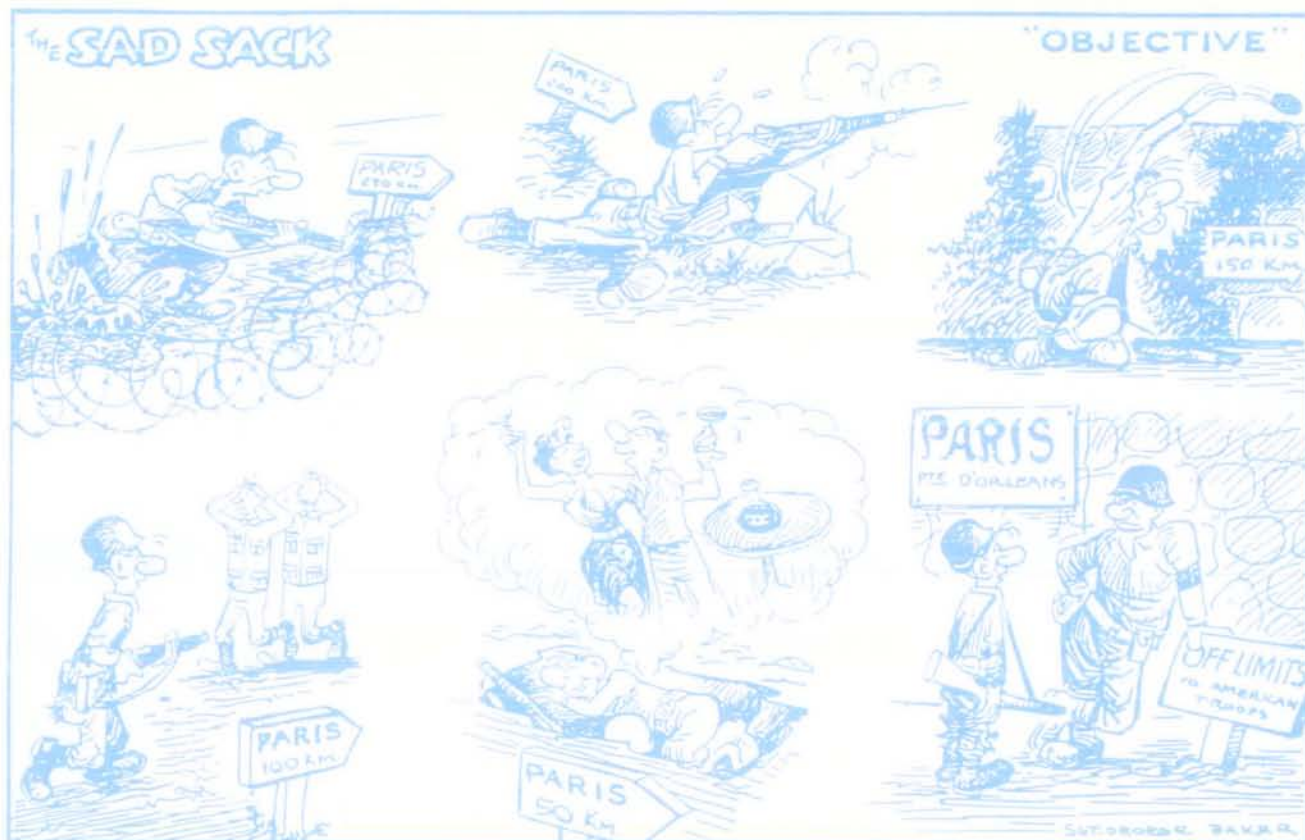
broadcast media attended. The design included the symbols and colors of the ground combat arms, a representative of the air arms and the snow-covered trees of the Ardennes Forest. I gave the chief artist a color photograph of the emblem.

We had four luncheon meetings at which he displayed several of his artists' conceptions but finally agreed that the photograph which I had furnished offered the best possibility. For artistic reasons and historical accuracy, several modifications were made in the artists' conception of the emblem. The air support was included with unidentifiable plane (such as a soaring plane) to avoid protests by fighter and bomber pilots. The final design included all the combat arms. We added certain touches including a brilliant star of Christmas 1944 with its rays reaching down to all parts of the emblem.

The official emblem (logotype) was approved on May 8, 1982, by the acting Executive Council who were those first organizers.

The first public display of the emblem with the logo was in a flag purchased by President (and Founder) Clyde Boden for the first annual membership meeting of VBOB on December 16, 1982. (This flag was later returned to the manufacturer for further definition of design and color.)

[Thanks, Dee, for providing the information. I'm sure that many of our members wondered about the design and I'm also sure that those who knew may have forgotten. Dee currently serves as a Trustee on the VBOB Executive Council and has given many years to service to VBOB.] ■



55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

By Patrick J. Kearney
55th Armored Infantry Battalion
Company A

On December 16, 1944, the 55th Armored Infantry Battalion of the 11th Armored Division of General Patton's Third U.S. Army (Patton's "Thunderbolts") disembarked at Cherbourg, France, with orders to head south and to contain the enemy in the area of St. Nazaire and Lorient.

On December 17, the battalion arrived in Rennes. But in response to the German counteroffensive in the Ardennes Forest, the battalion was ordered to halt its southern movement on December 20, and to immediately head northeast toward the Meuse River--where it was to defend the Givet-Sedan sector in the capacity of a mobile reserve.

On December 21, the battalion began a break-neck march of 353 miles from Rennes to Reims. It arrived at LeMans that evening, and at Rambouillet on December 22. The battalion arrived at the 11th Armored Division's assembly area at Camp Sissonne (located north of Reims) on December 23, and made a further 56-mile march to Guignicourt (near Charleville-Mezieres) on December 25.

On December 29, the battalion passed through Sedan and Carignan, crossed into Belgium at Florenville, passed through Jamoigne and Neufchateau, and arrived at Elby. The battalion moved to Vaux les Rosieres on December 30, and to the vicinity of Magerotte on December 31--where it entered the Battle of the Bulge, and the pages of history.

Baptism of Fire: The battalion (less the first platoon of "A" Company) then attacked northwest through the heavily mined Bois des Haies de Magery Woods, and seized the high ground southwest of Acul. Due to the threat of hostile fire from the vicinity of Acul, "C" Company (less its third platoon) then attacked Acul against strong resistance from Colonel Otto Remer's elite Fuhrer Begleit Brigade, and secured the town. Subsequent to reinforcement by "A" Company (less its first platoon), "C" Company then withdrew from Acul to the battalion's defensive positions on the high ground southwest of Acul. Four tanks and 100 infantrymen from Remer's 3rd Grenadier Battalion then counter-attacked the 55th AIB's left flank in the zone of "B" Company, but this counter-attack was successfully repulsed and Remer's forces withdrew.

The battalion defended the high ground southwest of Acul against hostile artillery, mortar and sniper fire from Remer's troops on January 1 and 2, 1945, and was relieved by the 2nd Battalion, 194th Glider Infantry Regiment, 17th Airborne Division, on January 3. The battalion then moved to a position one-half mile north of Magerotte, where it prepared to function as a mobile reserve in support of the relieving unit.

Action in Tillet: During this same period (December 31, 1944 through January 3, 1945), the First Platoon of "A" Company engaged the Remer Brigade in near-by Tillet. On December 31, the First Platoon advanced northwest via the Magerotte-Tillet road in order to locate the German positions on the battalion's left flank. They entered Tillet and headed to the western outskirts of the town, where they came across elements of the Remer Brigade on the high ground. The First Platoon attacked, Remer's forces retreated into the woods west of Tillet, and the First Platoon dug in for the night between the enemy and the town.

On January 1, the First Platoon remained in their defensive positions and Remer's men remained in the woods. On January 2, the First Platoon was ordered into Tillet--but quickly headed back to their

positions outside of the town when the Germans began shelling Tillet. On January 3, the First Platoon was relieved by troops of the 17th Airborne Division, which passed through their positions and on toward Remer's troops in the woods west of Tillet. The First Platoon then headed back to Magerotte--where they joined the rest of "A" Company, and the rest of the battalion.

Due to its actions at Acul and Tillet, the battalion contributed to the successful defense of the Neufchateau highway--thus saving this vital link with the besieged city of Bastogne and preventing the supply lines to Bastogne from being cut off by the German Army.

The Bastogne Perimeter: From January 4 to 11, the battalion remained on alert status in Magerotte, and maintained roadblocks and patrols in the surrounding areas. On January 12, the battalion moved northeast to its new positions in the vicinity of Hemroulle. On January 13, the battalion marched to the vicinity of Longchamps, where "A" Company relieved a battalion of the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division. The battalion then attacked north against the 15th Panzergrenadier Division. It bypassed Rouette, and secured Fays and Fme de Menil.

Bois de Nom de Falize: On January 14, the battalion attacked through the Bois de Nom de Falize Woods with "B" Company on its right, "A" Company on its left, and "C" Company in reserve. The attacking elements encountered heavy enemy fire from the well-entrenched positions of the 26th Volksgrenadier Division, but pressed vigorously forward and accomplished their assigned mission. On January 15, the battalion attacked the 9th Panzer Division on the high ground four kilometers southeast of Vertogne, but halted 1,000 yards south of its objective so that it could dig in and reinforce its position. On January 16, the battalion resumed the attack and seized its objective. It then reached the Bertogne-Compogne road and moved east through Compogne in pursuit of hostile forces. The battalion then halted its pursuit on order, and assembled in the vicinity of Mabompre--while other elements of the 11th Armored Division made the historic juncture with the First United States Army at Houffalize.

The Houffalize Perimeter: On January 17, the battalion moved to the vicinity of Cobru to again relieve the 502nd Parachute Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division, and to establish a defensive position from Hadigny to Bourcy. The battalion maintained this position under enemy fire from the 9th Panzer Division until January 21, when it captured Wandebourcy and Boeur. The battalion remained in these towns, and sent patrols to nearby Buret, until January 23. It then returned to Magerotte for eight days of maintenance and rest--and for the awarding of Combat Infantryman Badges and other decorations to its battle-tested men.

Conclusion: By the end of the Battle of the Bulge, the men of the 55th Armored Infantry Battalion had thundered through the Ardennes Forest, defeated the enemy, liberated the Belgian people, and left the restoration of democracy in their wake. But the price of victory was high. Fifty-one members of the battalion were killed in action, and 151 members were wounded. Twenty-six other members of the battalion were listed as missing in action.

In recognition of its role in the Battle of the Bulge, the battalion was awarded the Ardennes-Alsace 1944-1945 Campaign Streamer. And at a special ceremony in Rohrbach, Austria, on May 30, 1945, the battalion's companies were awarded the Combat Infantry Streamer--in recognition of the role of their combat infantrymen in the defeat of the enemy in Belgium.

At both Acul and Tillet, the men of the 55th Armored Infantry Battalion received their "Baptism of Fire"--and at both locations, the men of the battalion were transformed from infantry trainees into battle-tested "Thunderbolts." ■



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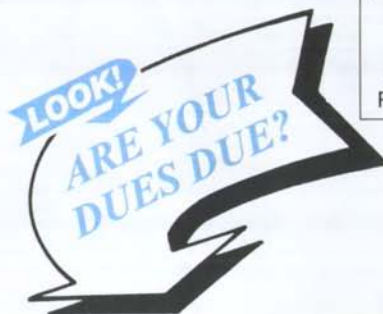


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