

# The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XXI NUMBER 1

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

FEBRUARY 2002

*"General Carlson's address to our VBOB Orlando Reunion was, arguably, the most informative, entertaining tribute to the courageous Bulge GI ever written."*

Past VBOB President John Dunleavy

*The Ardennes woods are silent now  
The battle smoke has fled  
Fifty years and seven have past  
Now, only memories . . . and the dead.*



## VBOB NATIONAL CONVENTION

Battle of the Bulge Keynote Speaker

2 October 2001

By

Brigadier General William E. Carlson (USA/Ret.)

**W**ars are planned by old men in the comfort of council rooms, far from the field of battle.

It was the 16th of September 1944. Adolf Hitler had summoned a group of his senior officers to his study in the huge, underground bunker called the Wolf's Lair. Hitler's secret headquarters, hidden deep underground in a pine forest in East Prussia. Those summoned were his closest and most trusted military advisors.

Among them, there was only one who wore the red stripes of the German General Staff on his uniform. He was the head of Operations Staff of the High Command of the Wehrmacht, General Alfred Jodl. The officers were waiting when Hitler entered. Looking considerably older than his fifty-four years, he was recovering

from the injuries he had received in the assassination attempt on his life two months earlier. His shoulders were sagging, his face was drawn and drained of color, and his skin had turned yellow, as if he had jaundice. He had a ruptured eardrum and at times he had an uncontrollable twitching of his right arm. Slowly taking his seat, Hitler instructed Jodl to sum up the situation on the Western Front.

Jodl noted that the strength of the opposing forces heavily favored the Western Allies. Over the past three months, the Germans had suffered more than a million casualties – half of them had been in the West. Jodl noted that there was one area of particular concern where the Germans had almost no troops. That area was the re-

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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

I want to begin with a very sincere "thank you" for the honor you have given me to serve as your new president. Indeed, I feel it is an honor to serve as a representative not only of our members but also of all of our comrades who fought and won the Battle of the Bulge 57 years ago.

We are the ones charged with keeping not only the memory of our victory alive, but with keeping alive the memory of those 19,000 GI's who died fighting in the woods and villages of Belgium and Luxembourg in the winter of 1944-45. They left us a legacy of courage, determination, and victory that we have a duty to keep before the world. We will continue to do all we can to make sure this memory of their sacrifices--and those of our own--remain before the American people.

And, while I am honored to be your president, I feel humble that I think of our past presidents--founders of VBOB and those who followed. They have been an inspiration to me, and I know I can call on those who are still with us for help in the future. With honor goes responsibility, and I welcome it and the challenge that goes with the job.



Louis Cunningham

One area where we are needed right now is in rallying support for our troops in the field and all of our servicemen and women engaged in the battle against a new kind of enemy. Let's not make the mistake made during the Vietnam era where few rallied to support those in uniform. Working together with our chapters throughout the country we can make a difference, we can make an impact.

I want to cite one example of chapters working together to accomplish a goal. The five chapters in Florida petitioned Governor Jeb Bush to declare December 16th as Battle of the Bulge Day. The governor issued a proclamation to that effect and officially December 16 is Battle of the Bulge Day in Florida.

The Executive Council is now planning next September's reunion. Although it will be hard to match the wonderful reception we had in Orlando last year, we will do our best to find a site and date that will be acceptable to as many of you as possible. You will be notified as soon as plans are finalized. It was great meeting so many of you there and we hope to see you next fall as well.

Let me add a word of thanks for my friends from the Delaware Valley who made the trip to attend the ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington Cemetery and our luncheon and installation of officers on December 16 at Fort Myer, Virginia. Security was high and it did slow us down, but everyone understood and accepted in good humor.

In the days and weeks ahead, I want to hear from you--from all of our members--and with you will work out a program that will keep our organization growing.■

## 5TH BELGIAN FUSILIERS PAY TRIBUTE

Submitted by Roger Hardy, Chairman  
5th Fusiliers Chapter of VBOB

### Activities for 2001 [Edited]

1. On May 26th the Fusiliers veterans celebrated Memorial Day as follows: Wreath laying at the 5th Fusiliers/526th Armored Infantry Battalion/825th Tank Destroyer Battalion memorial in Stavelot and attendance at the ceremonies in Henri-Chapelle U.S. Military Cemetery.

2. On May 31st, a delegation was also present at the Memorial Day ceremonies in Bastogne. Our National Chairman Marcel D'Haese and Regional Chairman Jean Bartet laid a wreath at the Mardasson Memorial.

3. On July 27th, the 5th Fusiliers attended the parade of change-over of command at the U.S. 80th Area Support Group in Chievres between Colonel Stephen Hayward and Colonel Timothy Quinn. Our platoon was invited to participate in the inspection of troops and parade. This was a great honor for us.

4. On May 10th (celebration of the end of WWII in Europe) the 5th Fusiliers veterans laid a wreath in Mons at the memorial of the 1st U.S. Infantry Division which liberated Mons in September of 1944.

5. On October 7th (57th anniversary of the creation of the 5th Belgian Fusiliers Battalion) we laid a wreath of flowers at the 5th Fusiliers memorial in the old Tresignies Barracks in Charleroi where we trained before being sent to campaign with the 1st United States Army on December 13, 1944.

6. A delegation was sent to the commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge which took place in Bastogne on December 22nd.



Pictured left to right: Marcel D'Haese, Chairman of the 5th Fusiliers Association; Andre Liesse, representative of Charleroi Mayor; and Colonel (U.S.) Timothy Quinn, Commanding Officer of the 80th Area Support Group (SHAPE).■

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### ...PROBABLY SAVED MY LIFE

I read Ross Rasmussen's article in the November, 2001, issue of *The Bulge* about artillery forward observers and agree completely with his assessment of their value, expertise and bravery. As a combat infantryman, I can attest to the fact that a forward observer probably saved my life and that of my friends more than once.

That being said, I do take issue with his desire for a separate Combat Artillery Forward Observer Badge. I feel that in the last few years there has been such an explosion of badges and medals and such a reduction in the requirements for them, that they are becoming almost meaningless.

Remember how we made jokes about soldiers from little, obscure countries who sported a chest full of medals? Look at some of those guys interviewed on TV--a rainbow of color. Very impressive to the civilians, but close inspection reveals a lot of ribbons about as meaningful as my Good Conduct and North American Theatre medals. Remember those three guys captured in Kosovo? Each of them got six, count 'em SIX, medals as a reward. Our CinC awarded Congressional Medals of Honor, a dozen or more at a time. Also in the Kosovo bombing operation, ground crews in *Missouri* were awarded combat medals for servicing the bombers. This also happened at Italian bases. Remember the point system at the end of WWII? Who went home first because all of their medals gave them points? Not the combat infantryman, the combat medic or the combat forward observer. Who actually fought and won the war? You got it!

Anyone who was actually in combat knows of instances where a medal was awarded without merit and also where a medal was earned but not awarded. It has always been so and will always be so. Life is not fair--never has been and never will be. To anyone who has been in combat, acceptance and approval by his combat buddies is a much higher reward than any medal, badge or ribbon could ever be.

I salute you, Ross, and thank you and other forward observers for saving my butt.

Thor Ronningen  
99 INF 395 INF 1

### LEAVE 'EM ALONE

Your Rasmussen article of "Forward Observer Duty with the Infantry," page 25, in your November 2001, caused me to ponder and now expound. Leave the combat badges alone! Let the CIB remain as the sole recognition of the "PBI"!

My credentials: Initially as a field observer radioman with C Battery, 7th Field Artillery Battalion, of "The Big Red One" from the D-Day landing to Czechoslovakia! Then again as a forward observer lieutenant in Korea with the 187th Airborne Regiment. Though this duty was always daunting, it was never as "hairy" as that of the supported doughfeet, in the infantry platoons alongside!

[Author included an article entitled "The Hurtin' Forest" to be forwarded to Mr. Rasmussen.]

Let me mention, I acquired by CIB by transferring to the infantry and pushing (like wet spaghetti) an infantry platoon, on my second tour in Korea.

Alfred A. Alvarez  
1 INF 7 FA BN C

### FORGOT TO GIVE CREDIT

In the August, 2000, issue of *The Bulge Bugle* you published the combat history of the 253rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion for the period of the Bulge. I neglected to tell you this information was put together and written by Capt. Douglas Chambers, Headquarters Battery Commander, and Assistant Battalion 3-3, and S/Sgt. Lambert Gerding, also of HQ battery. The material was taken from the Battalion After Action reports.

Boyd O. McNeil, Jr.  
253 AFA BN

### THE GOOD PEOPLE OF BELGIUM

I finally realized my dream of returning to Belgium, in September 2001, for the first time since World War II.

In the August 2001 issue of *The Bulge Bugle* there is an article written by Melissa McKeon, entitled "Gratitude United Liberators and the Liberated." What a wonderful article for such good people as the Schmetz. My wife and I were fortunate to meet Marcel and Mathilde Schmetz and visit their "Remember 1939-1945" Museum. They make you feel so appreciated. I just cannot fully express my gratitude toward them. My feelings toward the people of Belgium was great during the war. It is now even more so because of people like Marcel and Mathilde and the other people of Belgium.

Edward Echmalian  
557 ORD HVY MAINT CO

### DIDN'T MAKE MANHAY

The following is offered in response to Thomas Tengrove's comment about Manhay appearing on page 14 of the November 2009 *Bulge Bugle*.

The paperback book *Manhay, the Ardennes Christmas 1944* by George Winter, copyright 1990, published by J. J. Fedorowitz Publishing, 267 Whitegates Circle, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada R3K 112, is a good source of information on the subject. (Not sure it's still in print.)

As for myself, the closest I ever got to Manhay was about a 1,000 yards the last five M-4's in my company were knocked out in our attack on Christmas morning 1944.

John P. Naulty  
7 ARMDD 31 TK BN B

### I STOPPED COUNTING!

The articles on hot chow made my stomach churn.

As a first scout with Company F, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 5th Division, for five months, I recall checking on how long we'd been on K rations. After 30 days, I stopped counting. What's hot chow?

George H. Jackson  
5 INF 2 INF 2 BN F

### FIERCELY LOYAL

This is in response to the article on forward observers which appeared in the November edition of *The Bulge Bugle*.

I am fiercely loyal to my heritage. I was an infantryman--this sets me apart from any others who call themselves combat men. Through eleven months and five campaigns, I saw live combat every day while serving as a battalion scout with the 1st Battalion, 109th Infantry Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division.

DON'T lump me in with any other branch of the service, important as they may have been. Combat with a "line company" is a hell no one but an infantryman who has been there can imagine.

The Combat Infantry Badge is a decoration that should be reserved for just that--combat infantry men.

This said, I would like to note one exception to all of this, the forward observer with the accompanying artillery unit: without the forward observer, I know I would definitely not be here writing this letter. They, and especially a Captain Lynch, saved me and countless others in Hurtgen Forest as well as many other sectors. Captain Lynch lost both of his legs while directing fire to protect us. He endured every hardship that we did, he was in the same danger zone that every other infantry man was. The forward observer was definitely a special breed of cat. He was a combat infantryman while up there doing his job. Yes, DEFINITELY, give him the badge--he has earned it.

Thomas W. Hickman  
28 INF 109 INF 1 BN

### INFO ON MANHAY

Thomas V. Tengrove, of the 82nd Airborne, asked why no one mentions Manhay, Belgium. I might have some news about this town. The 75th Division was split up at the end of December to fill holes in our line of defense. My outfit was the 1st Battalion of the 291st Regiment.

We moved into a small town in the vicinity of Manhay on or about December 29th. We relieved the 7th Armored and went to the far side of the town and set up a defense looking across a field where we could see Germans walking around on the other side. (Continued on next page)



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

This may have been the town of Manhay. Perhaps someone can clear this up. We got a severe barrage of mortars shortly after we arrived. We lost one man at this time. The Germans never captured this town.

Jacob Bryan Sperry  
75 INFD 291 INF 1 BN

### REMAINS OF WWII COMRADES

As we all know too well, a number of our comrades were hastily buried during the battle and have been MIA ever since. The media have made a big thing about the MIA's in Nam, but little is said about WWII MIA's. Most people do not know that efforts are continuing, with some success, to find the remains of our WWII comrades.

Four young Belgians have made it a personal crusade to find these men. This is an all volunteer effort and they seek no greater reward than to find the missing and return them home. For some years now we in the 99th Division have worked closely with them and it has paid off. We are very pleased at their success and would like more people to know about them. I enclose a short narrative of something about them [published elsewhere in this issue, entitled "The Diggers"]. You are welcome to edit my account, if necessary. I have no personal point to make and am only seeking some well-deserved recognition for these four outstanding young Belgian friends of all American veterans.

Thor Ronningen  
99 INFD 395 INF 1

### ONE OF THE BEST

I have just finished reading one of the best, if not the best copy of *The Bulge Bugle*. The article "Chronicles of a Military Career," by Rev. Msgr. William F. O'Donnell really hit home. I enjoyed what he wrote very much because some of it seemed like my experiences. ....

On the internet, there is more conversation going back and forth about the Bulge than ever before. Since the Belgian researchers found the remains of three 99th Division men, it has opened up many more memories of those awful, cold days. Many write that they have been back over there and are warmly welcomed. The interest of the younger people over there are much more interested in what went on in 1944-45 than those in the same age groups in this country.

I think the article about veterans of that time giving talks to school children is great. I have, in the past, given a talk to high school Junior ROTC students and was amazed by the lack of knowledge of what the words "Battle of the Bulge" meant. I sincerely hope that I reached some of them.

Charles Curley  
2 INFD 38 INF 2 BN E

### GREAT AFFECT ON MY LIFE

[Excerpts from letter forwarded to Monsignor O'Donnell] Your "Chronicle" in the August 2001 issue of *The Bulge Bugle* was very interesting and your service experience was so very similar to my own. By changing some numbers and dates, I could almost duplicate your story.

I was particularly attracted to your story because of your post war schooling and entry into the priesthood. My service experience with a catholic chaplain had a great affect on me and my life, even though I am protestant (United Methodist).

My unit (99th Infantry Division), arrived in LeHavre, France, in September, 1944, just as you did, on LCI's and moved up into Belgium, relieving the veteran 9th Division in the Ardennes Forest. We were there when the Germans made their big push on December 16th. I was wounded on December 19th, when a Bouncing Betty mine that I was trying to disarm exploded under me. I was a battalion I&R man and was trying to get a path through a mine field so my men could escape. I was extremely fortunate to come out of that alive, but this was only one of several miraculous happenings for me.

I was hospitalized for four months in England and was enroute to my unit when the war ended in Europe. I was redirected and shipped to LeHavre and a satellite facility, Camp Pall Mall, In Etretat, France. I arrived there in late May and remained there until the camp was closed in late December. I had been reclassified from my original I&R MOS, to

604 clerk typist and had worked in personnel at Pall Mall. Upon returning to LeHavre, I had met our chaplain and since his regular assistant had been deployed on points, he asked me if I was interested in working with him until my points (42) came up. I agreed that I would do that and thus begins another story.

We worked out of the same office as the Catholic and Jewish chaplains, in LeHavre POE Headquarters. The Catholic chaplain, Father Joseph I. Collins, from the Boston Diocese, was a very personable man and was most easy to work with. He was ex-combat from the 89th Infantry Division and understood what it was like "Up there."

As time passed in the spring of 1946, different ones redeployed on points, and finally my count came up. I was cleared for departure and left in early May, arriving home from discharge on May 28, 1946.

I "lost" Father Joe, but some years later I met a nice young man who worked in the Washington, DC, Diocese Office. He gave me the address of seven Father Joe Collins who were still active in the priesthood and I wrote to all seven. To their credit, I had a reply from all seven, including my Father Joe. He was a senior priest at the Harvard Church in Boston. We corresponded and talked and we visited each other over years. He is retired, living at the Regina Cleri in Boston. We don't have the opportunity to visit now--his health is bad and I have had Parkinson's Disease for 20 years and have difficulty talking and walking. But, my--what fond memories of this great man of God who added so much to my life.

W. M. "Mac" Goldfinch, Jr.  
99 INFD 394 INF 2 BN HQ

### CAN YOU HELP?

...I am trying to put some of the pieces back together after 55 years.

Our battalion, the 172nd Engineer Combat Battalion, has, like so many others, just faded away. Known as corps engineers, we served in Normandy under the command of the First United States Army, in the Hurtgen Forest and the Battle of the Bulge under the 9th Army and occupation of Kassel, Germany, under the 7th Army.

After the surrender of Aachen and demolition of miles of pill boxes, mines removed, and road clearings, we moved south to lay mines, fell trees, and string barbed wire in the Hurtgen Forest. On Christmas Day the battalion was strung out some place south of the Malmady Massacre and north of St. Vith.

I have been in two evacuation hospitals and a U.S. Army General Hospital in Liege, Belgium.

After a P-8 bombing on Christmas Day all my memory was lost and only through recent therapy have dates been re-established on events.

Clayton Quimbach  
172 ENGR CMBT BN C

[If you can help Clayton remember dates, places, etc., please write to him at: 28905 Westwynd Drive, Elkhart, Indiana 46516-1551.]

### GOOD REUNION MEMORIES

As I am sitting at home knowing that I cannot make the Orlando Reunion and feeling sorry for myself (it would have been my tenth), I started to think about the BOB after all these years.

I remember our First Sergeant Joe White (now deceased) telling us at our last regimental reunion that the 372nd G.S. Engineer Regiment was eligible to join the VBOB as we had served as infantry from December 22, 1944, to January 25, 1945, in Luxembourg. White even brought applications for us to fill out and mail in. I filled mine out and mailed it in, not realizing how many of my buddies did the same thing.

In 1989, my good buddy Darrow Jackson (from Milwaukee, Wisconsin) told me he and Herm Hoffman had been to a VBOB Reunion and what a good time they had.

That started something that just kept not only us three guys, but other guys from the 372nd together for the last 16 years. We started in 1990 at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. We had a great time. I know that Bob Brown has written me saying he expects about six 372nd men at the Orlando, Florida, reunion. We have kept in touch all these years only because of guys like Joe White (getting us to join), Darrow Jackson (who got the ball rolling), and Herman Hoffman (who was the best buddy we ever had).

(Continued)



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continuation)

So now I sit here not feeling so bad as I have these good memories of the VBOB reunions. We all have enough bad memories of the Bulge.

Robert C. Scanlan  
372 GS ENGRS REGT A

### DO YOU SPEAK ITALIAN?

Just finished reading the article in "Letters to the Editor" in which Bill Strauss tells how he was thanked for having fought in World War II.

My experiences are quite the opposite.

Having also fought in the Bulge but being unfortunate enough to have been severely wounded and captured causing me to be hospitalized for over a year, my post war experiences are quite different.

I have several "T" shirts and jackets with the BOB emblem and Prisoner of War emblem.

It's embarrassing for me to write that people stop me and ask what the black and white POW patch means. You undoubtedly know that the patch says, "POW-MIA." When I ask people if they know what the patch means, you'd be amazed at the answer. The people I ask range in age from 15 to 70 (I'm only 81) and they're native born Americans.

More than half of the people tell me "POWMIA--that's Italian and I don't speak Italian." Unbelievable!! It never ceases to shock me how ignorant people can be.

On the other hand, I've had many people just thank me for having served during the war. It always embarrasses me--why, I don't know. Most of them weren't even born during the war.

Had a phone call several months ago from Hines Veterans Hospital here in Illinois. They wanted to interview me for a video as a PW. I told them I'd come on one condition--that I could tell it "straight" and not a buttered up version like "Hogan's Heroes" and "Stalag 17." They agreed and it was a "straight" interview for the most part. Some of the questions were totally stupid. For example, do I want any help now for any mental problems that I may have? I asked them where they were over 50 years ago when I may have availed myself of their service--it's much too late in the game now. Those that could be solved, I've done and those I couldn't handle I've learned to live with.

Arthur S. Lipski  
28 INF 112 INF CANNON

### IT WAS A MEAN WAR

I really enjoy *The Bulge Bugle*. Great job.

I would love to shake the hand of the Reverend O'Donnell. Believe me, my opinion is he was far and away from the norm or average at the time. That is based on the fact that our company had three no less drop-outs (as in "total failures"). But, not to worry, since we also had the very same number of replacements.

Our platoon leader, A. Gamble was killed in action in the hedgerows of France before he received his bars. Then our captain, Robert E. Lee, plus about six of the crew were killed on or about January 3, 1945 from a shot that lifted the 76 mm plus turret from their tank.

It was a very mean war.

Curtis O. Glass  
2 ARMDD 67 AIB D

### NO GIRLS TO KISS

It's been said, "All's fair in love and war," and "Life isn't fair."

I finished WWII in the ETO with 127 points and waited in a small Austrian mountain village until the middle of September, 1945, for my "ticket" home. Many ETO veterans, including The Rev. Msgr. William F. O'Donnell, were extremely lucky on two counts. Their scheduled trip to Japan was canceled and they were able, at the convenience of the army, to receive a discharge before "old timers" still waiting for transportation home. I'm glad they won on both counts. However, by the time many other high pointers arrived back home, the parades had stopped and no girls to kiss. America had become accustomed to our arrivals.

I can't recall which cigarette camp we went through or much about it, but this incident is impressed on my mind. About half of my contingent had boarded a liberty ship named *"The Marine Fox"* when we were ordered off because the ship had engine trouble. Of course, we were highly p-----

off on being returned to camp. Luckily, early the next morning we were routed out and put aboard an army troop ship named *"The General Anderson."* We left France immediately and arrived back in New York City five days later--*"the Marine Fox"* would have taken 17 days to Charleston, South Carolina.

I served with A Battery, 160th Field Artillery Battalion, 45th Infantry Division, through more than 500 days of combat, in eight campaigns (including Ardennes-Alsace), including four beachheads, was awarded a Silver Star and two Purple Hearts--I'm thankful I'm still here.

James R. Bird  
45 INF 160 FA BN A

### PURPLE HEART INFO NEEDED

Is the Purple Heart for frozen feet available? [Encloses article] This is the first time I ever heard of it. If it is, I want to apply for an oak leaf cluster for my Purple Heart.

Jack Strother  
26 INF 104 INF F

[Complete information regarding where to write with Purple Heart questions is included elsewhere in this newsletter.]

### BATTLES IN AND AROUND EISENBORN

The article summing up the Battle of the Bulge from *The Austin (TX) American Statesman* which you reprinted in the August issue of *The Bulge Bugle* makes no mention on the battles on and around Eisenborn Ridge or the defense of the northern face of the breakthrough by the U.S. 18th Airborne Corps against repeated attacks by the 1st SS Panzer Korps.

These two sectors were as critical to the failure of Hitler's Ardennes offensive as was Bastogne and St. Vith. In fact, John S. D. Eisenhower wrote that the defense of the Eisenborn Ridge by the U.S. 5th Corps "could well be considered the most decisive of the Ardennes Campaign." Here, wrote Stephen Ambrose, "the Germans were stopped on their main line of advance." (*Military History Quarterly*, Spring 1988 for Ambrose; *The Bitter Woods*, 1969 for Eisenhower)

It is disheartening that nearly 57 years after the "greatest pitched battle in the history of American arms," as the historian Charles MacDonald called it, and after numerous books and articles by historians have been published correctly identifying the critical importance of the Eisenborn sector, popular journalists still sum up the Battle of the Bulge as a fight over the City of Bastogne and a U.S. general who replied "Nuts" to the enemy demand that the city be surrendered.

Reducing a two-month battle involving a million men and causing some 25 thousand casualties on both sides to a sound bite and a TV spot. How typical of news coverage in our time.

Joseph C. Doherty  
99 INF 393 INF 4 BN

### REFLECTIONS AUTOMATIC & INSTINCTIVE

It seems to be automatic and instinctive, that my VBOB friends, Frank Tichy, 575th AAA Battalion, 11th Armored Division and Frank Witkowski, 75th Infantry Battalion (they live in my area) and I, reflect on our experience in the Ardennes Campaign. (Especially here in the northeast (New York State), where winter can get harsh.

Each year, as late December and January roll along, we, and I presume, most VBOB veterans thoughts, at least for a moment, go back to that horrendous period in Belgium in 1944-45. We, who survived the Bulge, cannot get the Bulge out of us.

Here, it is easy to reflect because the weather was similar to what we experienced in the Battle of the Bulge. Like the fierce winter conditions then, we were "clobbered" by an oscillating Lake Erie snowfall that lasted for three days, commencing Christmas Day. It brought back memories of Bastogne, St. Vith, Houffalize, etc.

As *The Bulge Bugle* recommended, I did not forget the "New Year's Day Toast" to all who served in the Battle of the Bulge. At 3:00 p.m. Eastern time on New Year's Day, I sipped my "martini" and shared thoughts of many years ago.

Thad Conway  
11 ARMDD 575 AAA BN



## General Carlson's VBOB Address

(Continued from page 1)

gion of Belgium and Luxembourg called the Ardennes. At the word 'Ardennes', Hitler suddenly said, "Stop the briefing!" There was a long pause. Strained silence permeated the room. The silence was finally broken when Hitler, reminiscent of his once moving and powerful rhetoric said, "I have made a momentous decision!" His voice belied the weakened condition of his body, his blue eyes sparkled and were alight with a fervor that no one had seen since the attempt on his life. He pointed to the map unrolled on the desk before him and he boldly announced, "I shall go on the offensive here!" And he slapped his hand down on the map. "Here, out of the Ardennes! The objective is Antwerp!" Those assembled sat in stunned silence.

With these words Hitler set in motion preparations for a battle that was to assume epic proportions – the greatest German attack in the West since the campaign of 1940. While charging Jodl and his staff with preparing a detailed plan of operations. Hitler emphasized secrecy. Everyone who knew of the plan, from Field Marshals to clerks and typists, had to sign a pledge of secrecy. The penalty for a loose tongue was death. But Hitler himself was less than discreet. When the Japanese Ambassador, Baron Oshima, called on him at the Wolf's Lair, Hitler was very candid with him. A day later, Ambassador Oshima reported the conversation to his government in Tokyo.

Since mid-1941, the United States had been intercepting and decrypting Japanese diplomatic traffic. Oshima's report that Hitler was planning a large-scale offensive operation in the West to start sometime after the first of November, was on the desks of intelligence officers in the Pentagon almost as soon as it reached the Foreign Office in Tokyo.

Gradually, very gradually, the German Commanders who would direct the battle were told of the plan, a few at a time. The operation would be launched along a sixty-mile front from Monschau in the north to the medieval town of Echternach in the south.

One the eve of the battle, in the medieval town of Echternach, a glamorous German-born film star, Marlene Dietrich, the star of the USO troupe, was entertaining the American troops. In a deep, sultry voice she sang "Lili Marlene" to the raucous applause of hundreds of GIs.

Meanwhile, on the German side of the line, in assembly areas across the front, German Commanders read a message from Field Marshal von Rundstedt. The message began as follows: "Soldiers of the West Front! Your great hour has arrived! We attack at dawn!"

In the early morning hours of 16 December, the tramping sound of hobnailed jack boots broke the stillness of that cold, silent night as Nazi troopers, with visions of past glory, strutted upon the field of battle as they marched to the line of departure and formed into assault formations.

Hitler was personally directing his grand offensive from the Adlerhorst, an underground bunker amid the wooded hills of Taunus. At the Adlerhorst, the door of the cuckoo clock hanging on the wall opened and the cuckoo bird came out and announced that the hour of destiny had arrived.

A split second after five-thirty a.m., an American soldier in the 28th Infantry Division manning an observation post high atop of a water tower in the village of Hosingen, frantically turned the crank on his field telephone. He reported to his Company Commander that in the distance, on the German side, he could see a strange phenomenon – countless flickering pinpoints of light piercing the darkness of the early morning fog and mist. Within a few seconds, both he and his Company Commander had an explanation. They were the muzzle flashes of over 2,000 German artillery pieces.

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

landing on the Americans. The onslaught had begun! The German code name for the operation was AUTUMN MIST>

The Americans called it the BATTLE OF THE BULGE>

The Battle of the Bulge lasted from the 16th of December 1944 until the 28th of January 1945. More than a million men participated in this battle. It was to become the greatest battle ever fought by the United States Army.

The 16th of December was indelibly stamped in the memory of the Supreme Allied Commander, General Eisenhower. Early that morning, Eisenhower received notification of his promotion to the rank of five stars – General of the Army. Later that morning, he received a signal from Field Marshal Montgomery. Montgomery requested permission to return to England for the Christmas holidays since all was quiet on the Western Front. Request approved.

Aside from these activities, Eisenhower had something special he was looking forward to that day. His old Army buddy, General Omar Bradley, was coming back from his Army Group Headquarters to spend the night at Eisenhower's Headquarters. Eisenhower had prepared a special treat for his old friend, Brad. Taking advantage of a plane flying in from Washington, Eisenhower had ordered a bushel of oysters. Eisenhower loved oysters and he planned a special dinner for his old friend. Dinner would begin with oysters on the half shell, then oyster stew followed by fried oysters as the main course.

In the fading light of a wintry sunset, the two Commanders and several of their staff officers were discussing the major problem at hand, the diversion of replacements by Washington from the European Theater to the Far East, when a Colonel from the Intelligence Section tiptoed into the discussion with the first wisp of information about the battle. He announced that the Germans had secured penetrations at five points along General Middleton's VIII Corps front.

A review of the operations map revealed that there were two US Armored Divisions out on the line. After much discussion, Eisenhower, who alone of those assembled had the benefit of the intercepts of Baron Oshima's reports to Tokyo, believed that it might be more than a spoiling attack and said, "I think we had better send Middleton some help. Send the two Armored Divisions."

In the dinner that followed, it almost went unnoticed that Bradley was allergic to oysters and had to be served "powdered" eggs instead.

Far from the comfort of the council rooms of the high ranking Generals and Field Marshals was the soldier on the front line. As the last rays of sunlight fell dim and purple on the snow-covered hills of the Ardennes, there were no oysters on the half shell for Willie and Joe and their comrades on the front line that night! The order of the day for them was man's first law – self-preservation. They were dry-mouthed and their bowels churned with fear as masses of German troopers dressed in greatcoats emerged through the veil of the early morning fog and mist, and charged towards them like men possessed. Low in their foxholes they prayed to the Lord, and the enemy discovered the fury of their rifles.

The real story of the Battle of the Bulge is the story of these soldiers and the intense combat action of the small units; the squads, the platoons, the companies, and the soldiers who filled their ranks. For the most part they were children of the 20's – citizen soldiers, draftees – young men hardly more than boys. Raised during the Great Depression, they did not experience the carefree days of childhood. They watched as the worry and stress of the times wrinkled their mothers' faces. They watched as the dust storms, the stock market crash and the breadlines humbled their fathers, impoverished their families and dashed their hopes and dreams of the future.

Then, as the Depression receded, the world staggered into war and they received a letter from their local Draft Board:

(Continued on next page)



## General Carlson's VBOB Address

"Greetings - - - Orders to Report for Induction." Summoned by the clarion call to arms, they came from across the land, from the farms and the factories, from their offices and schools, from the sidewalks of New York to the shores of San Francisco, they came. They raised their right hand and pledged their sacred honor to defend their country. In their youth their hearts were touched by the flame of patriotism.

Resourceful, tough and tempered as hard as steel in the crucible of the Great Depression, these men were as tough as the times in which they were raised. These are the men who made up the fighting strength of the divisions, carried out the orders of the Generals and engaged the Germans in mortal combat:

Battalion Commanders and Company Commanders - young, lean, tough, battle-wise and toil-worn.

And Second lieutenants - newly minted officers and gentlemen, some still sporting peach fuzz on their upper lips - too young to require a razor.

And Grizzly NCO's with faces chiseled and gaunt by the gnawing stress of battle and the rigors of a soldier's life in combat.

And seasoned troopers, scroungy and unkempt, but battle-hardened, competent and disciplined in the automatic habits of war never learned in school.

Around their necks hung their dog tags and rosaries, on their head was their steel pot, and in their pocket, next to their heart was a picture, the picture of their girl back home.

Surprised, stunned and not understanding what was happening to him, the American soldier found himself in a situation that was as confusing as trying to read a compass in a magnet factory. Nevertheless, he held fast until he was overwhelmed by the German onslaught, or until his commanders ordered him to withdraw.

The battle was very personal for them. Concerned with the fearful and consuming task of fighting and staying alive, these men did not think of the battle in terms of the 'Big Picture' represented on the situation maps at higher headquarters. They knew only what they could see and hear in the chaos of the battle around them. They knew and understood the earth for which they fought, the advantage of holding the high ground and the protection of the trench or foxhole. They could distinguish the sounds of the German weffers and the creaming sound of incoming German 88's.

And they knew the fear of having German artillery rounds passing overhead. And they were reassured by the sudden stabs of flame through the darkness of night as friendly artillery tubes belched tongues of fire into the air, spreading a glow of flickering light above the blackened trees of the snow-covered forest.

They knew the overwhelming loneliness of the battlefield, the feeling of despair, confusion and uncertainty that prevails in units in retreat. And they knew that feeling of utter exhaustion - - - the inability of the soldier's flesh and blood to continue on, yet they must, or die. They knew first hand the violent pounding of the heart, the cold sweat, the trembling of the body and the stark terror that mortal combat brings. It was a hell that had to be endured, and they endured it.

Even Mother Nature was their enemy with bitterly cold weather. The ground was frozen solid. The skies were gray. The days were short, with daylight at 8 and darkness by 4. The nights were long and frigid and snow, knee-deep, covered the battlefield. GI's, their bodies numb, were blue-lipped and chilled to the bone.

At night, the German ground assault was assisted by artificial moonlight created by giant German searchlights bouncing their lights off the low-hanging clouds. The night sky was aflame with shimmering lights and pulsating patterns, casting an eerie, ghostly light in the fog and mist over the snow-covered field of battle.

When the chips were down and the situation was desperate,

the American soldier molded in the adversity of the Great Depression, proved to be unusually adept at taking charge of the situation and "going into business for himself" on the battlefield. GIs on that battlefield were craftier than crows in a cornfield.

These are the soldiers who, when their officers lay dead and their sergeants turned white, held the enemy at bay in the days when the heavens were falling and the battlefield was in flames with all the fire and noise humanly possible for over a million warriors to create.

For a brief moment in history, these men held our nation's destiny in their hands. They did not fail us. They blew the trumpets that tumbled the walls. Theirs was the face of victory. Super heroes - - - super patriots. Their legacy - victory, victory in the greatest battle ever fought by the United States Army.

But the cost of victory was high. There, on that cold, brutal field of battle, 19,000 young Americans answered the angel's trumpet call and had their rendezvous with death. Heroes sacrificed on the altar of the god of war, whose valor in many cases died unrecognized with them on the field of battle.

Tonight we look into the mirror of the past and we remember them. In the muffled cadence of memory only, they go marching by, and we salute them. We hear the echo from those years long ago as the drum beats the long, slow roll of the soldier's last tattoo, and the bugler blows the sad and bitter notes of Taps.

Back home in America, Western Union telegraph lines hummed with those dreaded messages of sadness: "The Secretary of War regrets to inform you . . ." - - telegrams that forever shattered the lives of the innocent, bringing tears and sadness to homes across our land. Aged mothers and the youthful wives must bear the burden of grief throughout the remainder of their lives.

Over 23,000 American soldiers were captured during the heat of battle. Prisoners of war who staggered in tattered columns as they were marched to German stalags. There they were forced to serve behind barbed wire in silence and with courage, each in his own way until the war's end.

Purple Hearts were awarded by the thousands. The bleeding wounds of 81,000 young Americans stained the snow and left the 'red badge of courage' in that blood-soaked field of battle.

Amid the serene hills of the Ardennes to this very day reposes the dust of American soldiers listed as "missing and unaccounted for" from that battle. Those known only to God, who were left behind, never to return. There, on that field of battle they perished and disappeared as though they had never been born. History cannot record their deeds for it knows not even their names.

We muster here tonight to honor and pay tribute to all those brave young warriors who served with honor and won that battle. We are reminded of what their journey through life has left behind for us.

The warriors of 'the greatest generation,' a generation that is taking their final curtain calls and soon will leave the stage of life. They have passed "Old Glory" on to the next generation unsoiled, their swords untarnished, their legacy a great nation under God, with liberty, justice and freedom for all.

Look at these old warriors gathered here tonight. They are yesterday's heroes. They were soldiers once and young - the vibrant youth of that time, men who were there on that battlefield 57 years ago. Men like: PFC Jim Hendrix who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroic action during that battle. Men like Albin F. Irzyk, a twenty-seven-year-old commander of a tank battalion in the 4th Armored Division, which spearheaded General Patton's relief of Bastogne.

Young, fuzzy-checked lieutenants such as John Newell, a tank commander and Bill Kane, a Platoon Leader in that juggernaut of old 'blood and guts' Patton as they raced 150 miles under the severest

*(Continued on next page)*



## General Carlson's VBOB Address

of winter conditions in their valiant effort to relieve Bastogne.

Bob Stevenson, "one of those damned engineers," an accolade from the German SS Colonel Peiper about our engineers for blowing bridges and building obstacles at every turn and bend in the road, obstacles that stopped the advance of the SS Panzer column.

Jim McKearney, a Mortar Platoon Sgt. In the 101st Airborne Division, who just days before had received a battlefield commission while fighting in Holland. As a new lieutenant, he led his platoon in the defense of Bastogne. There they stood, as immovable as soldiers in a painted picture, as their Division stood like the 'Rock of Ages' as they laid a wreath of steel and fire around the town of Bastogne. Before them the German onslaught wavered, then withered on the vine.

Angels of Mercy – nurses such as Lieutenant Evelyn Gilberg. Evelyn, an Army Nurse went to sleep at night haunted by memories of the mangled bodies of the young American soldiers she had cared for in the Field Hospital that day. So ghastly were their wounds, that death was little more. Wounded men were crying for help from everywhere while others who were dying, offered God their final prayer.

Men like Chuck Morgan who was digging a foxhole atop a small knoll beside a road. A vehicle loaded with soldiers came fleeing down the road heading, for the rear. The vehicle stooped and the soldiers hollered to him, "the Germans are coming! Come on! We have room for you!" he looked up, and in four letter words, the language of war his mother never taught him, replied to the effect, "You can stop now because the Germans aren't going past this point – not while I'm alive! This is the 82nd Airborne Division area!"

Young American men, hardly more than boys – men such as Harry Meisel, a veteran of that battle. Fifty-five years later this battle is still one of life's defining moments for Harry. He formed a committee and raised the money to build a monument – a monument for all eyes – a monument for all time – a legacy dedicated to his fellow warriors who fought with him in that battle.

These men and the others like them are the soldiers, who, in the hours when the earth's foundation shook, and the ground did tremble, stood their ground amid the whine of bullets, the blast of mortars and the zinging sound of jagged artillery shrapnel filling the air around them.

Some bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, or a certain faraway look in the eye. Others may carry the evidence inside them: a steel pin holding a bone together or a piece of shrapnel still in their arm or leg. But they all bear another kind of inner steel, a spirit forged with their comrades on that field of battle. The spirit of a band of warriors, a band of warriors called Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. Veterans bound together with a bond as strong as right itself and as lasting as their lifetime.

With their fellow warriors on that field of battle, they followed duty's call and lived the code of the soldier: duty, honor, country.

When history calls the roll of heroes, these warriors earned the right to stand shoulder to shoulder with their forebears from Valley Forge, Fredericksburg and the Marne. Before them, the Nazis' visions of glory drifted away like the sound and fury of battle. When the smoke had cleared, more than 120,000 enemy soldiers lay stiff in the snow, wounded or captured, and over 800 enemy tanks were left burning and rusting in the wooded hills of the Ardennes.

### THE BULGE WAS NO MORE.

During the final days of their countdown to victory, these American soldiers were as pitiless as a hanging judge as they brandished the sword of retribution and raced across Germany, greeted by signs on buildings all along the way: "Alles est kaput!"

And finally, the bells of liberty did ring and peace spread her lovely mantle softly over the land. The lights came on again all over.

With duty done, with their saber in their scabbard placed and their colors furled away, their dreams turned to the journey home, the harbor lights of New York and the girl they left behind. Their place in history secured as "the

greatest generation," the generation that saved the sum of all things we hold dear. And all this for love of their country and the meager pay of a soldier.

Ask yourselves now, with heads bowed, from where, Oh God came such men as these?

This country was truly blessed

The Ardennes woods are silent now,

The battle smoke has fled.

Fifty years and seven have past - - -

Now . . . Only memories . . . And the dead.

The warriors of the greatest generation, passed "Old Glory" on to the next generation, unsoiled, their swords untarnished.

Their legacy, a great nation under God with liberty, justice and freedom for all.

But on the 11th of September this legacy was challenged as our nation watched in horror

as the bricks crumbled

the glass shattered

the steel twisted like spaghetti

and the mortar turned to dust

as the symbols of our nation turn to rubble.

Each generation has its heroes. On that fateful day a new generation of Americans was handed the torch of freedom and the colors of this nation. The commitment of their fathers is now the calling of our time.

A generation that for years has picked and eaten the fruits of freedom they have not had to fight or sacrifice for.

Now the battle has been joined. The defense of freedom is their duty.

As young Americans, they will gain a new understanding of the high cost of freedom as they must wield their swords of retribution.

"Our hearts and our hope are with them.

We will not waver,

We will not tire

We will not falter,

And we will not fail.

Freedom will prevail."

And may God Bless each of you

God Bless the USA

Thank you

### Brigadier General William E. Carlson (USA/Ret.)

Bill Carlson was born in Goldenrod, Florida in 1929 and graduated from Winter Park High School in 1947.

At ten years of age, he saved a woman from drowning and as a result of his heroic action, he was appointed as a Page Boy in the Congress of the United States. At the age of 12, he was the youngest Page Boy in Congress. He was present on December 8, 1941, when President Roosevelt addressed Congress and WWII was declared.

Bill attended the University of Florida, from which he graduated in 1951 and received a commission, through ROTC, in the US Army. He was called immediately to duty in the Korean War. In 1952, he was assigned to C Btry, 96th FA Bn and served as a Forward Observer and later as Battery Executive Officer. After the Korean War, he served as Battery Commander.

Bill also served in Vietnam as Bn Commander of the 1st Bn, 21st Artillery, the direct support artillery battalion of the Seventh Cavalry, First Cavalry Div, Air Mobile. In 1972 he was assigned as the Asst Div Commander of the 7th Inf Div at Ft Ord CA.

He served one tour on the Army General Staff in the Pentagon and three tours with the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Among his military schooling he attended the Command and General Staff School at Fort Leavenworth, Armed Forces Staff College at Norfolk and the Naval College at Newport RI. He received his Master's Degree in International Affairs from George Washington University in 1969. General Carlson's final military assignment was Deputy US Military representative to the NATO Military Committee in Brussels, Belgium. He has received 29 awards and decorations including the Distinguished Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, the Silver Star and the Bronze Star.

After retirement he has been active in civic affairs in Orange County, Florida and his community. He served as vice-chairman of the VBOB memorial Committee in Orlando Florida.

Bill is married to Nancy and has been for 44 years. They have three children and three grandchildren.



## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

**FRANK G. MIDKIFF, 7TH ARMORED DIVISION**, would like to obtain a copy of the 7th Armored Division history mentioned by Mr. Knowlton in the November issue. Can you help him? If so, write to him at: 1444 Woodview Drive #9, Crown Point, Indiana 46307.

Associate Member Wayne Dodds would like to find anyone who may have served with his uncle, **PFC FRANK K. JOLLIFF, 550TH GLIDER INFANTRY REGIMENT**. Frank was England waiting to go home when the Bulge began. He was shipped to Belgium and was surrounded and captured on January 4, 1945. If you can provide Wayne with any information, please write to him at: 1500 Autumn Drive, Findlay, Ohio 45840.

Associate member Paul A. Sims would like to obtain information regarding his father and/or his unit: **JOHN W. SIMS, 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 335TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY A**. John passed away in 1983 and Paul was only 15 so was unable to ask all the questions he would have asked today. Contact Paul at: 6320 Sequoia Drive, Montgomery, Alabama 36117-4489.

Mina Ray Evans is looking for information regarding her brother, **PVT RAYMOND LEE EVANS, 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 119TH INFANTRY REGIMENT**. He is buried in Plot C, Row 4, Grave 18, Netherlands American Cemetery, Margraten, Holland. Mina didn't give an address but did provide her e-mail address: minaevans@excelsionline.com.

**HAROLD E. CANN, 18TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON, 14TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE GROUP**, would like to hear from anyone from his unit. Contact him at: 751 Coleen Drive, Winder, Georgia 30650.

**R. E. THURMSTON, 75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 289TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, HEADQUARTERS**, is trying to locate **DESMOND O'BRIEN**, who served in his unit. Can you help? Write to Mr. Thurmston at: 3642 Armstrong Street, San Diego, California 92111.

Rachel Branham is seeking information regarding her brother, **PFC WILBUR MAC PRICE, 508TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT, 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION**, KIA in Belgium during the Bulge January 9, 1945. Her address: 1212 Westmoreland Drive, Staunton, Virginia 24401.

**H. E. LASHHORN, SR., 556TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY (AUTOMATIC WEAPONS) BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS**, is looking for the tape entitled *December Dawn*. Can anyone help? Write to him at: 3516 Williams Drive, Weirton, West Virginia 26062.

Lucy Siragusa is trying to help her aunt find an American soldier she met in Flemalle Haute, Belgium. His name is **BOB HUBER** and he was an engineer from New York City. Around Christmas time in 1944 he and his unit went to The Trixhes, in Flemalle Haute. If you know his whereabouts, write to Lucy at: 2446 Trace Oak, San Antonio, Texas 78232.

**GEORGE H. JACKSON, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 2ND INFANTRY REGIMENT, 2ND BATTALION, COMPANY F**, would like to locate **LAWRENCE M. HARWICK**, of his unit, and **WALTER H. JOHNSON, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION and 8TH ARMY AIR FORCE** (from Colorado). If you can help, write to George at: 15110 NE 9th Court, Miami, Florida 33162-5864.

Associate Member Stephen Morris is trying to put together a unit history of the 294th Engineer Combat Battalion. His father **ROBERT E. MORRIS** was a member of the unit. The battalion was under the 1120th Engineer Combat Group and was attached to numerous divisions in the ETO from D+1 through occupation. If you can provide some information write to Stephen at: FM 1323, Willow City, Texas 78675.

Toni Colby Roberts is trying to find out more information about her father's time in the service: **RICHARD WAYNE COLBY, 3160TH SIGNAL CORPS**. Other reference he made was the **2ND INFANTRY DIVISION**. Richard served in five campaigns: Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland, and Central Europe. His records were destroyed in the St. Louis fire, so Toni hasn't been able to find out anything. If you can help, write to her at: 317 Patriot Way, Yorktown, Virginia 23693-4640.

Dave Aitken is trying to locate information on his uncle: **ROBERT EDMUND YOUNG, 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION**. He was killed in action January 10, 1945, at Samree, and is buried in the American Cemetery in Leige, Belgium. If you can provide any information, write to Dave at: 24 Gibbs Road, Hookstown, Pennsylvania 15050-1729.

**AL PRICE, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION**, would like to hear from anyone who witnessed the massacres of unarmed American POW's during the Battle of the Bulge. Write to Al at: 3732 East 58th, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135.

In the last issue Sandra Eve MacDuffer writes for information regarding her father **JOHN CHICHILLA**. However Sandra did not provide us with an address. Sandra, if you get the word, **JOHN "JACK" S. DAVIS, 5 INFANTRY DIVISION, 10TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 1ST BATTALION, COMPANY D**, writes to say he didn't know your father but may be able to put you in touch with someone who did. So, write to him at: 80 Paxinosa Avenue, Easton, Pennsylvania 18042.

Antoine Nouens is looking for information on a B-17 Flying Fortress which crashed during the Battle of the Bulge on December 24, 1944, in Belgium, near Fraiture Comblain-au-Point and near a place called Route de Presseu. The plane number was (B17 G) 42-102497, and it was stationed at Air Base 137 in Lavenhan (Great Britain/France). Anyone who can provide information please write to Antoine at: Vredestraat 173, 6511 Ad Nijmegen, Holland.

Bert Neale is seeking a member of the **82ND OR 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION** who may have known his friend **JOE SEESMAN**. Write to Bert at: 1544 Cherry Ridge Drive, Heathrow, Florida 32746.

(Continued on next page)



## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

(Continued from Page 10)

Peter Schrijvers is looking for stories concerning the part the civilians played during the Battle of the Bulge, i.e., sheltering in houses or cellars, aid from civilians or resistance fighters, friendships, shared suffering, images of refugees or wounded or dead civilians, glimpses of German war crimes against civilians, or any other aspect involving the civilian population of the citizens of Belgium and Luxembourg. Write to Peter at: Manteliusstraat 22, B-350 Hasselt, Belgium.

Marie-Josée Jodocy-Tholl is seeking information regarding two GI's who stayed in her home during the Bulge. They are: **TONY TOMASELLI** and **RALPH SHUTTLEWORTH**. If you can help write to her at: 53, rte d'Ettlebruck; L-750 Beringen; Luxembourg.

Associate member Roger Marquet is looking for information on the following: **DODSON CRAYDON (9TH or 6TH ARMORED DIVISION; HAROLD STECKER, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION; and JOHN WEBB, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION, 502ND PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY B**. If you can provide information, please write to Roger at: Chenogne, 1D; B-6640 Sibret; Belgium.

**CECIL D. GILLIAM, 788TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY (AW) BATTALION**, is looking for members who were transferred to the infantry in 1944 in Europe. Write to Cecil at: 2503 Earlcove Drive, Dallas, Texas 75227.

Rita Ansbach is trying to locate some one for her mother. They are looking for a staff sergeant whose name was **IRVING R. SHAU** (or a name similar), **3RD ARMORED DIVISION**. He was killed during the Battle of the Bulge. If you can help, write to Rita at: 7501 Colson Drive, Louisville, Kentucky 40220.

## NO SWEAT



"It happened on that last big raid up North, he fell off the ladder getting out of his airplane!"

## ARMED FORCES MUSEUM OPENS AT CAMP SHELBY MISSISSIPPI

[Information submitted by VBOB Trustee **JAMES W. HUNT, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION**, and information was extracted from an article which appeared in *The Clarion-Ledger*, Jackson, Mississippi, on October 26, 2001.]

The Armed Forces Museum of Mississippi opened in October, 2001, under the direction of Chad Daniels the museum director and designer.

Sixteen thousand square feet is dedicated to several life-sized "immersive" displays, i.e.:

- One is an actual "Huey" helicopter evacuating soldiers from the front in Vietnam.

- Another takes visitors into the trenches of WWI, passing a machine-gun nest--complete with sound and smoke.

Tracing the state's military history, starting with the War of 1812 and ending with the Gulf War, the museum houses over 17,000 military artifacts of men and women. Also included are: dioramas, maps, interpretive signs, weapons upon weapons, and photo after photo.

Life of German POW's at Camp Shelby during World War II is documented in photos, artifacts and recreations of living quarters.

A central courtyard has been dubbed the Court of Honor and will eventually be paved with bricks and granite stones which are available for purchase by museum benefactors who wish to have the names of servicemen engraved there for posterity. The courtyard is dominated by a copper Medal of Honor Tower with displays dedicated to Congressional Medal of Honor recipients: 26 Mississippians and 44 honorees who received their training at Camp Shelby.

Senator Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii) spoke at the reception prior to the dedication and reviewed his training at Camp Shelby and his introduction from a pest free Hawaii to "ticks, chiggers and snakes" in sweltering humidity.

Inouye and his compatriots would prove their mettle during World War II as members of the famed 442nd Regiment.

**Open:** Tuesday-Saturday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.; Sunday from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m., and closed on Monday.

**Admission:** Free.

**Where:** Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Directions: Take U.S. 49, south of Hattiesburg (take south entrance to the camp), Building 850.

**Information:** Call 601-558-2757. ■

## CHECK YOUR DUES DATE

The date which appears above your last name on the mailing label used to mail this newsletter to you, is the date your dues were (or will be) due. Please save us the time and expense of having to mail a dues reminder.

Dues are \$15.00 per year and life membership is \$75.00 for those over 70 and \$125.00 for those under 70.

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



## FORT BELVOIR (VIRGINIA): SITE OF U.S. ARMY NATIONAL MUSEUM

[Reprinted from *On Point: the Newsletter of The Army Historical Foundation*, Volume 7, Number 3.]

"On 15 October 2001--187 years after Congress passed a law directing the Secretary of War to bring captured flags of enemy units to the seat of the capital for appropriate display--Secretary of the Army Thomas White announced that Fort Belvoir, Virginia, had been selected as the location for the National Museum of the United States Army. Secretary White stated that after a careful review of potential sites, 'Fort Belvoir emerged as the best place to display the Army's historical artifacts for generations of visitors.'

"Despite the fact that it is the nation's oldest branch of the armed forces, the Army is the only one without a national museum. For almost two centuries, much of the Army's extensive collection of artifacts and artwork has lacked a permanent home where it could be properly exhibited to the public. The decision to build the national Army museum at Fort Belvoir will correct that oversight, as well as end the speculation of the past eighteen years concerning the best location for the Army's capstone museum.

"Fort Belvoir sits astride U.S. Route 1, one of the oldest and most historic roads in America. The proposed Army museum site sits just three miles from Mount Vernon, the home of the Army's first commanding general, George Washington. Nearby, too, are Woodlawn Plantation and prospective sites for several new Army facilities--all of which could finally lead to a subway stop (from Metro's Yellow Line) coming to Fort Belvoir. Furthermore, Fort Belvoir is close to Interstate 95, the north-south route for millions of tourists along the east coast.

"By finally designating Fort Belvoir as the site of the National Museum of the United States Army, the army has ensured that the greatest possible number of Americans, especially soldiers and former soldiers, can see what promises to be a first-rate telling of the Army's story. The Greater Washington, D.C., area includes large numbers of both active and retired soldiers and their families. In addition, visitors from all over the world come to see the monuments--many of which have a strong association with the Army--and museums of Washington, D.C., which is just 15 miles from Fort Belvoir.

### *"From the Executive Director's Desk*

"The most recent version of these notes was unusually prescient. A decision was indeed made by Army Secretary White on where the National Museum of the U.S. Army (NMUSA) would go (Fort Belvoir);...

"With respect to the NMUSA, a few points. First, the Army--the U.S. Army Center of Military History--is very much in charge of the design. Second, they have told us they expect it to be built within this decade and that it will ultimately cost around \$90 million, which means that we have our work cut out for us. Third, we are already at work planning this extensive capital fundraising campaign. [If we receive information regarding manner of donation, we will publish it in the future for those of you who wish to contribute.] Fourth, we need your

help--not only your financial help but also your ideas and your time. Remember, this effort--raising funds for the National Museum of the U.S. Army--is a major reason why AHF [the newsletter *On Point*] was created in the first place. It is also why we signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the Department of the Army over a year ago--for the philanthropic support of an Army museum in the National Capital Region."

"Fifth--and a point that deserves its own paragraph--the Secretary's decision means that **the one NATIONAL museum of the Army** will be at Fort Belvoir, nowhere else. There should be no confusion on this. Carlisle Barracks, which will undoubtedly provide a world-class setting for the Army's archival materials, and perhaps a local museum, will **not** be the site for the Army's National museum. Many of you have asked, 'why are there apparently going to be two Army museums and two fundraising efforts?' AHF has worked with the Army since 1983 to build a national museum in the National Capital Region, and has never wavered from that mission. Recently, a group [of] Pennsylvania enthusiasts with strong local support lobbied hard to have Carlisle declared the site, and promised to build a museum for the Army as an adjunct to a new Army archival facility. Now that the Army has selected Fort Belvoir, the need and wisdom for a large Army museum at Carlisle is questionable. Despite the use of the word 'national' by the Carlisle supporters, AHF remains the only 'official' fundraiser of the National Museum of the U.S. Army.

"Creighton W. Abrams, Executive Director

"One of my favorite anecdotes was about a soldier on guard duty in the front lines one night, for the first time. He heard a strange noise, fired at it, and then called out 'Who went there?'"  
Ernie Pyle.

### Up Front with Willie & Joe



"We're jest a coupla red-blooded American boys."



## CHRISTMAS--57 YEARS AGO

*[The following article appeared in the 75th Division newsletter "Bulgebusters," December 2001, no author named.]*

The German threat demanded immediate action. There was insufficient time for the division to execute essential reconnaissance and move forward as a unit; consequently, the VII Corps Commander on 23 and 24 December attached Combat Team 290 and Combat Team 289 to the 3rd Armored Division. The remaining tactical elements of the division outposted along L'Ourthe River between Bomal and Grandmenil.

Combat Team 290 initially met little resistance. It cleared the Hotton-Soy road of the enemy, pushed south, and by 2400 on 25 December had reached its objective (the line: Blier-Hampteau). The heaviest resistance was met in the advance toward Hampteau. Near the Village of Werpin, the enemy was entrenched on a high hill which controlled the Hotton-Hampteau road. It was necessary to cross an open field 300 yards wide in order to reach its objective. Company K made a frontal attack, but was pinned down by enemy machine gun fire with great loss. Then, supported by supplemental flank attacks by Companies I & L, Company K attacked again and drove the enemy from his position. This ended the threat of Hotton and marked a highwater mark of the German drive northward toward Liege. Many acts of heroism were performed by the officers and men in Companies K, I, and L in taking this hill.

The 289th Infantry was attached to Combat Command B and the 3rd Armored Division, and was given the mission of seizing, organizing, and defending a frontage of approximately 10,000 yards in the very heavily wooded area running south and east from Grandmenil to Erezee. The regiment was ordered to attack at 0800 on 25 December, with battalions abreast. While dismounting from trucks in the assembly area on the eastern flank of the regiment, the 3rd Battalion was hit by German tanks which had succeeded in breaking through elements of the 3rd and 7th Armored Divisions east of Grandmenil. A bazooka man from Company K scored a hit on a German tank and stopped this attack. The three battalions advanced against light opposition, but due to wide frontages and thick woods were unable to establish contact during the night of December 25-26. Early in the evening the 3rd Battalion received orders to be prepared to assist elements of the 3rd Armored Division in the capture of Grandmenil. On the morning of 26 December, the entire battalion was detached from the regiment and attached to CCB for the attack on Grandmenil, which it spearheaded. By late afternoon of 26 December, the town had been taken. The battalion, after reverting to regimental control, defended Grandmenil. ■

*[The following appeared in the newsletter of the Christmas Special Issue newsletter of the Northwest Chapter of VBOB. It was written by Lou Winsor (Chapter Historian) and provides further information on the above incident.]*

Another Christmas Season is here and most of our thoughts are centered around our families and the joy of being with them at Christmas time. But we can't forget that once again we have soldiers fighting for our freedom in a far away land. All of us remember what that is like, and our thoughts and prayers are with them.

Last time [last newsletter] I mentioned a history of the 289th

Infantry Division, by Tom Leamon. I think that an excerpt about Christmas night 1944 should give us pause to remember.

"In the hills around Grandmenil, the men of F Company, 2nd Battalion, could see and hear the battle for the town. That Christmas night the 2nd Battalion was lost and had no contact with the 1st and 3rd Battalions. Harold Lindstrom, a mortar man with F Company remembered that it was a beautiful Christmas night with a bright moon. Our squad was walking single file on a narrow road down the side of a hill.

"I was tired to the point that it surprised me. I was sort of numb. We had a ring-side seat to the battle going on down there. Many buildings were on fire, and tracers were streaking all directions. Suddenly tracers swept the road ahead. I dove for cover and could feel the bullets hitting the ground. This was Christmas night 1944."

*[The next two articles appeared in the Northwest Chapter newsletter Special Christmas Issue and are excerpted from The History of the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion, by Lois Pawley Wick].*

### **Sgt Ralph "Shorty" Vining 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion Company C**

"On Christmas morning, I took some men to get some gas. When we got to the dump, we were told to wait in a building. I was stomping around trying to keep warm when I saw a trunk type box in the corner with the lid up. It looked like it was full of straw. As I moved the straw around I found a lot of bottles full of liquor. I shut the lid and went to see about the gas but I didn't get any gas. So, I went back to the building and stuck those bottles inside the big coat I was wearing and in the side pockets of the coat. I was loaded!

"I got back to where our destroyers were parked just after five German tanks had come in and surrendered. They had put white sheets over the gun barrels to surrender. But some of the guys from the 101st Airborne sneaked up and threw hand grenades down the hatch.

"Then I called Sgt Don Williams and told him about the booze that I had. I told him that since he was the platoon sergeant, he should control it. He gave each crew enough to warm up on but no one got enough to get drunk on. It was cold and miserable."

### **Corporal Lloyd E. Anderson 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion Headquarters**

"On Christmas morning, we heard the jingle of sleigh bells. They came from around the side of a barn. We were on a road block on a dirt road into Bastogne. The road was covered with snow and nobody knew what it was because we couldn't see around the barn. Then the sound came around the end of the barn. It was a German officer and his girl friend in a horse-drawn sleigh! As they came around the corner a tank destroyer was parked in their way. They were captured right then and there. The German officer said that the Germans were supposed to be holding his area since they had captured Bastogne. He was informed that maybe they were supposed to have, but they hadn't captured Bastogne.

"The horse and sleigh were given to the Belgians and I don't know what happened to the girl friend. ■



# THE DIGGERS

**Thor Ronningen**  
99th Infantry Division  
395th Infantry Regiment  
Company I

Jean-Phillipe Speder and Jean-Louis Seel met for the first time when they were in high school in 1978. They were both natives of Belgium and had grown up hearing about World War II and particularly about the Battle of the Bulge which was largely fought in the area they called home.

For several years much of this area was closed to visitors of any kind because of the abundance of explosives left over from the war. Many explosive devices are still found there. A determined effort was made to clean up these explosives and in doing so some marked and unmarked graves were found in the cleared areas by policemen and forensic teams. However, many of the heavily forested areas were not searched for remains.

In the late 70's the two young men began to search for artifacts and souvenirs, which were plentiful. On a rainy day in February 1980 they went searching with JP's new mine detector. JL found his first dog tag before he was 18 years old near Rocherath. It had belonged to Max Wisnieski, from Waukesha, Wisconsin, who had been a member of Company A, 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division. With Will Cavanagh's help, Wisnieski's widow was located.

This opened up a completely new vista--real front line soldiers with real stories. They now began searching for items with personal identification such as dog tags, ID bracelets, mess kits and canteens with names and serial numbers or laundry numbers scratched in them. (Army laundry numbers were the first letter of the soldier's last name followed by the last four digits of his serial number.) In 1986 they contacted the 99th Infantry Division Association for help in identifying and locating men to match the numbers they were gathering. This began a close association and in 1987 JP and JL joined the 99th association.

Over the years they have been able to identify items belonging to more than 450 veterans from more than 50 different units and, in most cases returning them to the veteran or his family. They have built an extensive file of names, serial numbers and units. In some cases it has been harder to find the veteran than it was to find the artifact. Veterans of the 99th welcomed these men as members and called them "The Diggers."

On Thursday, September 29, 1988, the "MIA Project" began. This is the day the Diggers found the remains of PFC Alphonse M. Sito, of B Company, 394th Regiment. Sito had been guarding the right flank of a light machine gun squad in heavy woods near Losheim, Germany, when the Germans launched the Battle of the Bulge on December 16, 1944. The squad fought valiantly but were overcome and had to surrender. Sito died in his foxhole of a head wound and remained there for 44 years. The team notified the 99th Division Association and also contacted Mortuary Affairs of the U.S. Army in Frankfurt who sent a team to examine the site and take charge of the remains. On December 6, 1989, he was returned to his family and on December 18 received a proper burial in St. Stanislaus Cemetery in Baltimore, Maryland.

This was the genesis of "The On-Site Search Team." The late Richard H. Byers and Rex Whitehead, both 99th veterans, and

Bill Warnoch, a student at Ohio State, all members of the 99th Archives Committee, heard of the Sito discovery and felt that more should be done to locate other MIA's. Warnoch compiled a list of 33 names of men from the 99th who were listed as MIA's.

This list was published in *The Checkerboard* (the association newspaper), requesting help from the members. The Archives Committee searched records in the National Archives, Military History Institute and the National Personnel Records Center. They ended up with a mass of data such as maps, photographs, overlays, witnesses, morning reports, after action reports, etc., which gave as complete a picture as possible of potential search sites.

In October 1990 Dick Byers went to Belgium with a number of ex-99'ers to dedicate a monument to the division at Krinkelt-Rocherath and brought all this information to the On-Site Search Team. From this they created a map showing the possible location of 2nd Lt. Lonnie O. Holloway, Jr.'s remains. Holloway had been weapons platoon leader, K Company, 393rd Infantry. On November 9, 1990, Lt. Holloway's remains were found about 10 yards from where he was last seen on December 16, 1944. The team contacted the Army who sent the remains to Hawaii where positive identification was made. On September 6, 1991, Lt. Holloway was buried at Fort Sam Houston National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas, with full military honors.

Finding these bodies is not as simple as it may seem to some. Fifty year old memories are not always that accurate and even a small error can lead to futility instead of success. The area where these men are searching is in mostly heavy forests, many hills, winding streams and relatively few roads. Digging in battlefields is strictly prohibited in Belgium but The Diggers believed in what they were doing and took the risk. They had some trouble with the forest rangers, but, when they explained what they were doing and why they were doing it, several rangers gave them unofficial permission and two rangers have even worked with them and helped as much as possible.

In June 1992 Jean-Louis was seeking permission to search an area in the forest when the chief ranger, Mr. Erich Honen, told him a lumberjack had recently found bones near a foxhole with rusty remains of some German equipment. Mr. Honen has verified the lumberjack's story and local authorities decided to bury the German bones in a pauper's grave in Rocherath. However, nothing had been done yet and Jean-Louis suggested a search of the foxhole for identification. This was done and on July 3, 1992, Mr. Honen took The Diggers to the foxhole. They carefully searched the area and sifted the dirt in and around the foxhole. They not only came up with a sizeable collection of bones, they also unearthed pieces of a U.S. winter combat uniform and vestiges of a .30 caliber cartridge belt and clips for an M1 rifle, but, unfortunately, no dog tags. It became obvious to them that these were the bones of an American, not a German. By the end of the day, almost a complete skeleton had taken shape, but things were complicated by the discovery of duplicate bones and a set of U.S. Army sergeant's stripes. Again the remains were turned over to the U.S. Army team who also searched the area and sent all they had to the laboratory in Hawaii. The MIA Search Team has concluded that they had found the remains of two American soldiers, one of them a sergeant, and from exhaustive study of all available records, feel reasonably confident that

*(Continued on next page)*



## THE DIGGERS

they know who these men were, but, in the absence of positive identification by the Army Forensic Lab, can do no more.

In 1994 Marc Marique and Jean-Luc Menestrey joined The Diggers so now there are four dedicated young men on the On-Site Search Team.

For several years, The diggers searched diligently, but were unable to discover any more remains. On January 9, 1998, a German citizen working in his garden in the Village of Schmidt discovered the remains of Sgt Lemuel H. Herbert, a member of the 112th Infantry, 28th Division. Herbert had been reported missing as of November 7, 1944. This led to a meeting between The Diggers and Manfred Klein and his team, a German counterpart of The Diggers. The two groups now share information and do what they can to help one another.

In 1992 the team received very accurate information about the location of the grave of three men who were buried in a temporary grave when their unit had to pull back. They located the gravesite quickly and discovered a rifle, probably used to mark the grave, but no remains. It became clear that the bodies had been located, moved and re-buried as unknowns. On April, 2001, Seel was in the area and decided to search the other side of an adjacent trail. He found an American hand grenade but nothing else. His metal detector was still on as he headed for his car and got a positive signal. With his foot he scratched out a dog tag, and it had the name of one of these three men! David Read! He left immediately and notified the rest of the team. On April 17 they cleared tree debris away from where the dog tag had been found. Seel noted the outline of a slit trench about two meters away, checked with his detector and got a positive response. The ground was soft and a foot down they encountered a human bone. They called forest ranger Erich Honen to join them as they were just across the border into Germany. These remains turned out to be those of PFC Jack C. Beckwith, of C Company, 395th Infantry. The detector gave a positive reading as they searched about three meters away from the first grave. Digging here they recovered the remains of PFC Saul Kokotovich, also a member of C Company. It took about 20 minutes to find a third grave. By this time it was late afternoon and a large fir tree had been planted right over the grave so they left for the day. On April 19 it took the better part of a day to remove the remains of PFC David A Read, of Cannon Company, 395th Infantry.

On May 14 the U.S. Army Memorial Affairs Team set up facilities on site and searched the area and examined the bones and the graves very carefully. On May 15, the three bodies, in caskets, were delivered to German authorities. On May 18, the Germans returned these caskets to U.S. officials at an impressive cemetery ceremony with full military honors from V Corps troops stationed in Germany.

This success was a great emotional boost to the team and led them to re-examine other files and thoroughly review their past attempts to locate missing men. Marc took the file of Frederick Zimmerman and decided to re-examine the area where he had been buried. Past searches going back to March 1991 had convinced The Diggers that Zimmerman's body had been recovered and re-buried as "unknown." With his detector, Marc worked in ever-widening circles until he got a lot of signals. He began to dig with his shovel and discovered a dog tag, which is always a moving event, and immediately notified the other team

members. On June 1, 2001, Jean-Phillipe, Marc and Jean-Louis met at this area and began digging in the many foxholes nearby. Marc called to the others that he had found something--a rubber snow boot. This contained a leg bone. In digging for the rest of the skeleton, a shovel struck a skull and here was a second skeleton. Continued digging unbelievably brought up yet a third set of bones! They had discovered the remains of Sgt. Frederick F. Zimmerman, PFC Stanley Larson, of H Company, 394th Infantry, and PFC Ewing Fidler, of E Company, 394th Infantry. For nine years the search team had been unable to locate a single MIA, and now, in a period of a month and a half they had located six!

Now you know why those of us who know them are so proud of The Diggers. They have recovered eight of our comrades who have been positively identified and two whose identity is uncertain. They have worked diligently for years and invested money, sweat, emotional effort and countless hours for the sole purpose of paying back American veterans for the freedom Belgium enjoys today. They well deserve the respect they have from American, Belgian and German army search teams, local government officials, hundreds of American veterans and others who are aware of their work. Above all they have the undying gratitude of families who can now put closure on their loved ones who had been listed as "Missing in Action."■

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## FOLDING THE AMERICAN FLAG

*[The following article appeared in The Railsplitter, the newsletter of the 84th Infantry Division. It is an abbreviated version. The VBOB Office has received many requests for information on proper attention to the flag in the days following September 11th. Elsewhere in this issue you will find instructions for the proper hanging and flying of the flag.]*

The first fold is the fold of life, the life that our comrade lived here on earth.

The next fold is the fold for the eternal life that we will live from here on.

The next fold is a triangle fold that is the shape of our heart, which stands for the love and devotion to our country.

The next fold is a fold for courage that only God gives us.

The next fold is a fold for the courtesy, compassion and competence we give our families and country. This fold is a fold for the women who gave us our lives.

The next fold is a fold for the thirteen stripes, which stands for the thirteen original Colonies.

The next fold is the fold for the Red Stripes which stand for the sweat and blood that we shed for our families and country.

The next fold is the fold for the White Stripes that stand for peace, good will to all man and purity that God gives us.

Coming to the finish of the flag we see the Blue, which stands for the skies above.

The flag has fifty stars, one for each State of the Union.■

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## 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.

#### \*\*\*\*\* CLEANING UP

January 23, 1945

Edward M. Selfe  
9th Infantry Division  
60th Infantry Regiment  
1st Battalion  
Company A  
Birmingham, Alabama

On January 23, 1945, I was a platoon leader in Company A, 1st Battalion, 60th Infantry Regiment, 9th Infantry Division, and we were on the front line near a small town in Germany named Konzen. This town is near the border of Belgium and Germany, and is about 20 miles south of Aachen and about five miles north of Monchow. The Battle of the Bulge was drawing to a close and the Germans had retreated from the Monchow area. Patrols were being sent out to locate the German forces, and it became my platoon's turn to send a combat patrol to Konzen.

I was to lead a combat patrol of six men with the objective of capturing a German soldier in Konzen and bringing him back to be interrogated. The patrol included the platoon sergeant, a radioman, a man equipped with a Browning automatic rifle and three other infantry men. The plan was to enter Konzen around midnight with the objective of capturing a German soldier. We would have available by radio artillery support and tank cannon support.

A Company was dug in along a tree line facing open fields in front of Konzen. The snow was several feet deep in the open fields in front of Konzen, and we wore white camouflage suits. There was a full moon but there were also clouds, and we moved when the moon was covered by a cloud. We left after dark and worked our way across the open fields to Konzen, and arrived at the edge of the town about midnight. We entered Konzen along a street lined with houses and began to search each house as we came to it. After we had searched about twelve houses, we approached a large building which appeared to be either a church or a school. A German guard at that building spotted us and

began shooting. He raised the alarm and other German soldiers soon appeared and the fire fight began. We retreated to one of the houses we had searched and the fighting continued from house to house. After a while the Germans occupied the house on each side of our house and the house across the street from our house. The fighting continued all night.

By dawn it was obvious that either we would try to escape or we would surrender, and we decided to try to escape. The house we were in had a back yard that sloped down to a ditch possibly 50 yards from the house, and that appeared to be the only escape route. In order to keep the Germans at bay we used our radio to call for artillery support and tank cannon support on the houses around us. This involved some risk that our own house would be hit by artillery so we retreated to the cellar. The artillery and tank fire continued for a while and we then decided to make our break. By radio we requested a heavy concentration of high explosive shells followed by a two or three minute cessation of artillery fire to be followed by a heavy concentration of phosphorous shells to create a smoke screen. Our plan was to make a dash out of the cellar down the back yard to the ditch during the interlude between the high explosive shells and the phosphorous shells. After making that plan by radio, we prepared to make the break out from the cellar down to the ditch. The high explosive shells came in as planned. When the last high explosive shell exploded, we destroyed the radio, pulled the pins on our grenades, dashed out of the cellar and threw hand grenades as we left the cellar. We ran down the back yard to the ditch and by the time we had reached the ditch the phosphorous shells began to explode creating the smoke screen. As we ran down the back yard toward the ditch, I was shot high in my right thigh but fortunately no bone was broken.

The Germans were firing machine guns and small mortars at us in the ditch and we had to decide whether to move out across the open fields back to our own lines. There was a fence line running from the ditch up a gradual slope toward the forest where the American front line was located. I moved out of the ditch and began to crawl along the fence line in hopes that the smoke created by the phosphorous shells would conceal my



movement. However, it did not and machine guns began firing at me as I moved up the fence line. When the rest of the patrol saw that firing, they remained in the ditch. Fortunately, I was not hit while crawling up on the fence line and ultimately got out of sight of the German machine guns and mortars.

It was difficult to walk on my right leg, and so I crawled through the snow going in the general direction of the tree line across the open fields. The snow was deep and my progress was slow. At one point I was approaching what appeared to be an abandoned farm house, but I heard noises inside the farm house. The farm house was between me and the tree line in the distance, and so I approached the farm house with my pistol drawn. When I was able to look in the window in the farm house I was relieved to see a cow moving about and that was the noise I had heard. I continued crawling and partly walking toward the tree line for several more hours, and ultimately got within 50 yards of the tree line when I stopped. I thought that there would be booby traps set out in front of the tree line because I had set some booby traps myself. I called out to the tree line saying I was from the patrol and asking for help. The American units along the tree line had been warned to look out for the returning patrol, and the captain of the company which I was approaching came out to his booby traps and led me back to his unit. I described to him the situation and told him that if he followed my tracks back to the ditch he would find the rest of the patrol.

I was then taken to the battalion aid station on a stretcher on the front of a jeep. I was examined at the battalion aid station and a bandage was put on my leg. My company commander came by to see me and I gave him a report on what we had experienced in Konzen including a description of the German weapons that were fired at us and an estimate of the number of German troops in Konzen. After that I was placed in an army ambulance and taken to an army hospital in Liege, Belgium. At the hospital my leg wound was treated and a week or so later I was sent to a field hospital for recuperation. After several weeks in the field hospital, I was sent to a hospital in Paris and ultimately returned to combat duty in March. When I returned to combat, I did not go back to A Company but instead I was assigned to the 1st Battalion of the 60th Infantry Regiment as an S-2 officer. I believe that all of the men in the patrol were brought back but I have never seen any of them since that night. Should any of them happen to read this story, I would like to hear from them. I would also like to hear from the artillery and tank crews who probably saved our lives with their very accurate bombardment. [Address is 2001 Park Place #1400, Birmingham, Alabama 35203-2736]

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#### PRISONER OF WAR?

January 2, 1945

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

When the German attack started, they attempted to disrupt the allied defense by parachuting English-speaking, highly-trained German soldiers dressed in American uniforms, carrying U.S. weapons, and wearing dog tags. These spies attempted to cause chaos by changing road signs, misleading troops and many acts

of sabotage. These Nazi spies were dropped behind American front lines and caused real problems in some areas.

To counteract this, Allied Forces set up road blocks and checked all soldiers. At the check points they would question everyone with questions referring to American slang--baseball talk, such as line drive, Texas leaguer, etc. Things that only true Americans would know.

On January 2, 1945, my survey crew and I were making a reconnaissance for new battery positions in case we had to displace to support our unit.

We were stopped at one of these check points. Evidently, my answers to questioning was not conclusive that I was not a spy. I was disarmed and separated from my crew who were also under interrogation.

From the check point, I was taken, at gun point, to MP headquarters and questioned further.

Probably part of the problem was my characteristics: I am of German descent, 6 foot tall, blond, fair skinned, blue eyed, butch haircut, and name on my dog tag--Obermeier. No wonder they were hard to convince! I finally persuaded them to contact my division through corps headquarters. A couple of radio calls and I was released and my weapon returned. I rejoined my survey crew. We continued on, finished our mission, and returned to our unit.

When anyone asks me, "Were you a prisoner of war?" I have to say, "Yes," and then explain I was a prisoner of war of our own forces for a short time.

This was my most unusual incident in my two years overseas.

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#### THE AROMA WAS GREAT

Christmas, 1944

**Lester "Les" R. King**  
643rd Tank Battalion  
Company A  
Phoenix, Arizona

At Christmas time in 1944 every member of the U.S. Armored Forces was promised a traditional Christmas dinner: roast turkey and southern baked ham, candied sweet potatoes, mashed potatoes, corn bread stuffing with giblet gravy, a fresh veggie tray, corn and peas and green beans, along with fresh, hot-out-of-the-oven dinner rolls, pumpkin and mince meat pies.

I was a member of "A" Company, 643rd Tank Destroyer Battalion. At the time, we were equipped with M5 Towed 3 in anti-tank guns. On Christmas Eve, we were selected to stand rear-guard for the retreating GI's through Manhay, Belgium.

The incoming German artillery and mortar fire was constant. All we could do was helplessly watch as the advancing enemy infantry, supported by armor, flanked us on both sides of Highway N-15.

Finally, at about midnight, we received orders to save our own skins. We hooked the gun to the half-track, forced our way into the line of retreating vehicles and headed north through the burning town of Manhay.

We had already pulled as many fleeing foot soldiers into our track as it would hold.

By now, the Germans landmen were in force on our flanks. The scene was much like an old-time western movie where the indians are on both sides of the stagecoach with all of the cowboys and indians shooting at each other.



We managed to escape the town without casualties and positioned the run for the night north of the village.

Christmas Day was spent guarding one of the hundreds of single lane bridges located in the area; with one-half of a K-ration breakfast as the only meal for each man.

On the day after Christmas the surviving members of the company were divided among the remaining guns. We found a few replacements and received our new assignment.

The next day we were ordered to dig-in our gun on a bluff overlooking a wooded valley occupied by the enemy to prevent their tanks from advancing any further.

The never-ending artillery and small arms fire was devastating and casualties were heavy among our supporting infantry men.

The following day, December 28th, the "incoming" slowed considerably and our Christmas dinner finally arrived. Late, but never the less, a very welcome sight. The mess truck was parked and the cooks began preparing the long anticipated meal.

The smell, no, the magnificent fragrance of the cooking food was phenomenal. Every man's juices began to flow uncontrollably as the ice cold air was filled with it.

The eager men queued up at the portable serving table when suddenly the gates of Hell opened! "SPANG-SPANG-SPANG!" The area was completely bracketed with artillery fire!

The startled men hit the ground trying to make themselves invisible. The cooks gathered their gear, threw everything haphazardly into the bed of the truck and flew down the road with pots and pans banging and clanging like a run away chuck wagon in an old Tex Ritter movie.

They had made the almost always fatal mistake of parking on a hilltop.

We never did get our Christmas dinner, nor did we ever see the mess truck again until we were waiting for the boat to take us home.

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## MY UNTOLD STORY

January, 1945

Joseph Campagna  
17th Airborne Division  
193rd Glider Infantry Regiment  
2nd Battalion  
Headquarters  
Omaha, Nebraska

It was a cold miserable January day in Belgium. The fog was thick and the snow flakes large. We were in single file heading for some woods in the Ardennes when we started hearing our artillery coming over. It didn't take us long to distinguish our artillery from theirs.

We were to attack the enemy which consisted of panzer grenadiers and armor at 0815 hours. Our objective was to drive the Germans out of the woods. Between the fog and the snow it was difficult to see some of our troops, which in turn gave the feeling of being alone.

We set up our water-cooled machine guns in text book fashion, that is to place them so we would have interlocking bands of grazing fire. Even though our guns fired only 500 rounds per minute, we were soon low on ammunition. My squad leader, Sergeant Fisher, asked me to find our ammunition supply dump and bring back as much as I could carry. When I walked out of the woods into the open field, all Hell broke loose. The

Germans opened up on us with small arms, machine guns, 88 mm paks, and those ever frightening Nebelwerfer, six tube rockets, better known to us as "screaming Meemies." When I finally got back to my squad, almost everyone was hit from tree burst, including my squad leader Fisher. He was hurt pretty bad and my friend Pete Covick was trying to give him a shot of morphine but was afraid he would hurt him. I heard Fisher yelling at Covick to stick the damned needle in his arm. He was in a lot of pain by this time. Pete was trying to give Fisher the morphine because our medic was down with part of his head blown away.

I can still see Jim Kelley sitting in the snow looking at his jump boots and cursing the Germans for knocking the heel off his boot. He said, "Don't they know boots are rationed and hard to get?"

We finally got word to withdraw but unfortunately as a machine gunner, we have to stay back and cover the withdrawal. When I felt that I gave our troops ample time, I dismantled my gun and threw parts in all directions so that the Germans couldn't use it against us. As soon as I started across the field to join my company, the Germans started in with the artillery again. I could hear the six tube rockets coming in so I hit the snow. That's when my helmet pushed back off my forehead and shrapnel hit me across the top of my head and went out the back of my helmet. A medic was trying to reach me but we were fired at and he finally had to give it up. I didn't blame him at the time since there was nothing he could do.

I lay in that freezing cold for about two hours with nothing but a field jacket as our overcoats were taken away for some reason. Army logic I'm sure. My jump boots were little protection for my feet.

I can remember calling for my mother as I thought I was going to the "happy hunting ground."

I felt my eyes close as I was beginning to feel comfortable and sleepy.

Soon, I felt myself being cradled in very strong arms and knew that I was on my way to that happy place. I soon realized that it was a human voice I was hearing reassuring me that I would be alright. I didn't realize that it was a German medic until he started to bandage my head. He threw an overcoat over me and my teeth finally stopped chattering.

I was laying next to another airborne trooper when our artillery started pounding the Germans. The trooper said, "Let's get the Hell out of here. I don't want to be killed by our own shells."

He helped me up and we headed back to our lines.

I had no idea where our lines were, so I followed him and he lead us right to our battalion aide station. By the time we made it back, my feet were frozen so bad that I couldn't stand anymore. I looked up from my prone position and saw Frank Greco from my home town of Omaha. He asked me to contact his mother and tell her that he was alright. He did make it home later.

The medics tagged me and a few days later I was in a hospital in France and then on to England.

A colonel was checking my feet and I heard him telling his assistant that he wasn't sure about saving some of the feet he had seen.

When I heard that, I said, "Please, Colonel, don't cut my feet off, I'm short enough." He laughed so hard that tears rolled down his cheeks. He smiled down at me and reassured me that he would do his best for me. Thank God, I'm still 5'9" tall.



I have only told this experience to a girl I was dating years ago. I broke down and was so embarrassed that I have kept it to myself ever since.

I know that our children should know of some of our experiences as I realize we are losing WWII veterans at an alarming rate.

I have regretted the fact that I didn't ask the German medic for his name and address. He was such a great human being, and so gentle and caring with me. Hopefully, he was reunited with his mother and family. I never saw my mother again as she passed away while I was recuperating in the hospital in England. However, I was fortunate that I had a father, and brothers and sisters to come home to.

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## A POOR SET-UP AT BEST

December, 1944

**Beldon Peters**  
75th Infantry Division  
289th Infantry Regiment  
Canyon Lake, Texas

One afternoon during the first days of the Bulge (I don't remember the exact date), six members of my squad and myself, mines platoon, AT289, were ordered to set up a road block together with a tank destroyer on a hillside road in the vicinity of Grandmenil, Belgium. When we arrived at the site the tank destroyer was already in place at a 90 degree bend in the road and its crew was camouflaging their machine with nearby pine limbs. Our truck driver Joe Pieprzyca (yep, the spelling is correct) backed our 6x6 truck and mines trailer about a quarter mile from a stream bridge to a spot about 50 yards down the road from the tank destroyer. A rather trivial point to make at this time, but it's significance will be seen later.

We spent the remainder of the day light hours scratching out a shallow, poor foxhole in the frozen ground and rocks, and assembling a "daisy chain." In case you may have forgotten, a "daisy chain" is a group of anti-tank mines tied together about two feet apart with a length of rope long enough to extend out to the location of its operators. In this case from the far side of the road where the mines are assembled to the foxhole where we sat waiting for a tank to come down the road. The object was to let the tank get almost to the daisy chain rope and then pull the mines suddenly into the path of the oncoming tank. Incidentally the name "daisy chain" originated from the fact that those who operated "daisy chains" often wound up pushing up daisies.

So now with the road block established, the tank destroyer crew waited in their vehicle and two of us at a time sat one hour on duty and two hours off duty freezing in our foxhole while waiting for the enemy. During the off duty, we tried to thaw out enough in the back of the 6x6 to sleep but it was almost hopeless. And it was cold! All six of us had frost bite if not frozen hands and feet, to this day I still feel the effects of that night. Both of my hands and feet cannot take any cold weather and my feet have such poor circulation that I cannot wear anything but 100% cotton socks. So back to the ordeal.

The night passed relatively quiet with only sporadic small arms fire and an occasional mortar in the distance. So then between 8:00 and 9:00 in the morning, day light had overtaken darkness and our daisy chain was essentially worthless since all of our

activity could easily be seen in the snow. So we mines men crawled out of the foxhole, and the 6x6, and started trying to warm some C rations on the 6x6 engine. We had a hell of a time getting the truck started but it finally cranked up and that may have saved our lives.

The tank destroyer crew joined us and we all ate the warmed rations and tried to thaw out our numb bodies.

The woods were noiseless and I was planning to drive back to our company CP and get further orders, when a tremendous blast occurred! We turned and saw that the tank destroyer was an inferno with fire belching out of every opening in it. How in the world that German tank made its way out of the woods and got close enough (about 100 yards away) to destroy the tank destroyer without our hearing it, is something we will never know.

With nothing left to fight a tank with, everybody including the tank destroyer crew piled into our truck (thank God the engine was warm) and Joe "put the pedal to the metal." I was watching fearfully as we made a complete U-turn at the stream bridge, fully expecting to get another round or more from the German tank as we came into his view at a point about 75 yards directly behind the burning tank destroyer. But he must have seen all of our activity in the snow between the mines and our foxhole and retreated because he was not in sight as we raced on by on our way to the CP. And so ended that road block mission.

We were not sent back that night, thank God. I don't know why, but probably because it was an extremely poor set-up at best and we were lucky we all weren't killed which we would have been if that German tank would have just come around the corner after he knocked out the destroyer.

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## IN AN AIRPLANE

**R. Keith Ostrum**  
87th Chemical Mortar Battalion  
Erie, Pennsylvania

I don't remember the date this happened but it did happen in the Battle of the Bulge.

I was standing at the location of our 4.2" mortar gun positions and looked up in time to see a P-38 airplane in about a fifteen-degree drive toward the earth. I never knew what the cause of its dive was--ack ack, German fighter, or whatever else, but as the plane was diving, I noticed that the pilot had apparently ejected from the plane but his parachute became entangled in the section that ran between the twin tail assemblies (aeron?) and the pilot was being dragged down with the plane--being still connected to the parachute.

The P-38's helped us out a lot with close-in strafing and dive-bombing. That incident was a far cry from the P-47 that strafed us on Utah Beach on D plus one.

Anyhow, they all deserve a lot of credit for their roles in the overall picture.

We always observed that you couldn't dig a fox hole in an airplane, no matter what designation it held--bomber, fighter, or anything else.

## YOUR STORY SHOULD BE HERE!

So send it in.



## RECURRING MEMORIES

Arma E. Andon  
26 Infantry Division  
328th Infantry Regiment  
Company H

The recent edition of your fine publication *The Bulge Bugle* contained a review by Harold E. Raugh, Jr., reprinted from *World War II* magazine--February, 2001, on General Manton S. Eddy.

The article brought back some memories which frankly over the years cross my mind quite often and particularly during the period of the Bulge.

I was CO of H Company from the time we went overseas until I was seriously wounded on March 13th in Serrig, Germany, on Hockers Hill.

Both incidents were during the Bulge period. The first had to do with an attack where I was with the leading rifle company which was my policy throughout the campaign.

We had entered a small village and noted a garage on the right side of the road adjoining a house and for some reason I said to our communications sergeant, "Let's take a look." We used his bayonet and a knife which I carried to check for booby traps, etc., and, none found, we opened the door and there was my life's dream. There sat a Mercedes phaeton command car similar to the ones the German High Command officers and Hitler used. I immediately radioed for our motor sergeant to bring a crew and put this in with our other vehicles. Muddy it up and put in some of our heavy weapons and make the vehicle look as innocuous as possible and a prayer to keep me alive so I could take the car with me after the war.

Things went well for the next few days with nothing said by either the battalion or regimental commanders or division. The men were fully cooperative as they took pride in our new vehicle.

Then about the fourth or fifth day, while on a march, I saw coming a jeep with two stars followed by a command car with two stars and knew immediately we were the target.

Sure enough, out stepped General Manton Eddy and I saluted, gave him my number, and after some small talk, he said, "Captain, I note you have a non-issue vehicle." I said, "Yes, General, but we are utilizing it to carry additional weapons and ammunition." He then asked me if we were using government-issued fuel and I said, "Yes." He then cited the rules and said he would have to appropriate the vehicle on behalf of the U.S. Army. So, we kissed our dream car away and candidly felt it would have happened by a high command sooner or later.

However! On or about early January and January the 4th is my birthday, so this happened on the 2nd I believe. Our battalion was approaching Wiltz, at the time occupied by the enemy, and we were on high ground in a heavily wooded area and it was now dusk and we set-up an OP which was right out of the text book. We overlooked the entire city and the enemy in plain sight. Between the artillery observer and our team we were in business. I issued orders saying there would be no movement during day time and the night shift would be relieved just before day light and no one to be allowed to go out during day light. Previous experience dictated that this order be followed to the letter and I would take all responsibility in the event higher rank wanted to visit the OP.

The next morning I was up early, having checked that all was okay at the OP with transfer of men and supplies for the day.

I started back about 50 yards from the route to the OP when up came a one star and said, "Captain, I want to go out to the OP." I said, "Sir, no one goes out," and proceeded to explain our past experiences. He said, "Do you know who I am?" I said, "Yes, you are General Ross, artillery commander," and with that up came the Assistant Division Commander, General Harlan Hartness. We started again to explain the reason, when up came Division Commander General Paul, asking what was going on. I started again to explain and all at once all three generals saluted and I said to myself "Boy, they finally recognized my position." But that was a split second as behind me was General Manton S. Eddy, who said, "Carry on, Captain, and gentlemen, I want to see you."

So that is my General Manton S. Eddy stories and I will never forget either one. ■

## WEST MICHIGAN CHAPTER PARTICIPATES IN PARADE

The West Michigan Chapter participated in the Traverse City Cherry Royale Parade, which is the highlight of the annual Cherry Festival.

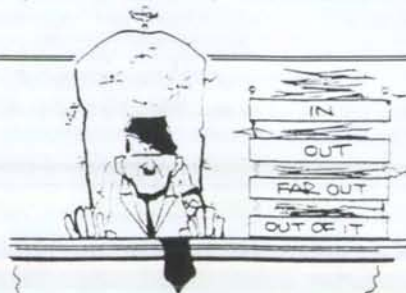
They used two Humvees which were provided by the Michigan National Guard in Grayling, Michigan.

After the parade, they posed for pictures in front of the VBOB monument the chapter erected.



Pictured left to right are: Jim Wibby, Wayne Mentier, Fred Faulkner, Charles Lewis, Jim Pekkala, Fred Korb, Richard Rizzio, Walter Hartman, Carl Goss and Maury Cole. ■

WITS OF WAR





## THE CHRISTMAS WE NEVER HAD

[The following information was submitted by **GEORGE FISHER**, 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 328TH INFANTRY, 3RD BATTALION, COMPANY K, who is also president of the Florida Southeast Chapter.]

Two hundred ninety-two people attended the Florida Southeast Chapter memorial luncheon meeting the theme of which was "The Christmas We Never Had."



*The Rewards of Being President  
Southeast Florida Chapter President George Fisher  
shown with the "Swing Sisters"*

After a holiday turkey the members and guests were entertained by the "Swing Sisters," who have performed at military installations all over the U.S. Their renditions look and sound like the Andrews Sisters and was enjoyed by all.

A proclamation from Governor Jeb Bush which declared December 16th as Battle of the Bulge Day in the State of Florida was read by President Fisher.

It was a memorable affair. □



"YOU SAY IF I WAS YOUR HUSBAND YOU'D POISON MY TEA? IF I WAS YOUR HUSBAND, I'D DRINK IT!"

## 76TH GENERAL HOSPITAL MEMORIAL COMPLETED

Twenty-five men of the 76th General Hospital were killed by V-1 bomb on January 8, 1945. The intense bombing of the U.S. Army installations in the Liege, Belgium, area was intended to prepare the way for the German offensive to reach Antwerp, Belgium. On January 8, 1945, during the Battle of the Bulge, a direct hit on the 76th General Hospital killed the 25 men listed below.

**Baugh**, Albert-Indiana; **Benjamin**, James-New York; **Brower**, Calvin R.; **Busskohl**, Leo J.A.-Iowa; **Cook**, Alva A.-Missouri; **Costa**, Charles; **Dorton**, Willie-West Virginia; **Farrer**, Frank D.-Tennessee; **Genda**, John E.; **Geneske**, Richard J.; **Guderburr**, Paul A.-Iowa; **Isenberg**, James L.-Tennessee; **Kapp**, William P., Jr.; **Marshall**, Carl N., Jr.-Indiana; **McWilliams**, Andrew; **Mosher**, James K.-Idaho; **Martin**, Hrold V.-Ohio; **Pfeifer**, Fred E.; **Privett**, Fred L.-Kentucky; **Sapio**, Charles R.-New York; **Schmidt**, Erwin C.-Iowa; **Spurlock**, Hubert-Kentucky; **Tanner**, Harold D.; **Tester**, Ernest L.; and **Wills**, Walter N.-Washington.

For the first time in 57 years, relatives and friends can learn about the fate of these 25 men. Interested persons should write to L. M. Bohlig, 7500 York Avenue south, Edina, Minnesota 55435. Telephone: 952-835-6738. FAX: 952-835-2154. Email: bohliglyle@msn.com. □

## JUBILEE OF LIBERTY MEDAL RECEIVED



*Bob Schrell, President of the VBOB San Diego Chapter, with the help of Chaplain Ron Ritter of "Eagle's Wings" displays his Jubilee of Liberty Medal from France received in the name of the organization. □*

The most terrible job in warfare is to be a second lieutenant leading a platoon when you are on the battlefield.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER



## BOB 57<sup>th</sup> COMMEMORATION Dec 15<sup>th</sup>

By John D. Bowen

This year's commemoration used the Holiday Inn in Laurel MD as a commemoration headquarters in part due to early planning for this event.

The original plans called for the banquet to be held at the Ft Meade former Officers Club but because of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, it was necessary, in late November, to move the banquet also to the Holiday Inn. On Friday evening, the 14<sup>th</sup> of December, early registrants enjoyed the hospitality room and the books, artifacts and memorabilia that were displayed from the collections of the reenactors who dressed in original WWII gear to meet and greet the veterans.

On Sat., the 15<sup>th</sup> of Dec., the group left for a special tour of the Goddard Space Flight Center in Greenbelt MD. In spite of regular tours having been cancelled since Sep. 11<sup>th</sup>, the staff held a special tour for the Bulge Veterans and discussed the work of the center, especially the Hubble Space Telescope. A tour of the giant clean room for assembly of components for the Hubble telescope was shown to the veterans. Though most of the material had been recently shipped out for the up coming space flight to upgrade the Hubble telescope, in February 2002, they did discuss what the new improvements would be.

We proceeded to the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, where we an outstanding lunch was served in the Officers Club, followed by a tour of the new visitor's center on the Academy grounds. We then proceeded back to the Hotel to freshen up for the evening events.

The annual 15<sup>th</sup> December Banquet was held at the Holiday Inn with Ambassador Arlette Conzemius of Luxembourg and her husband attending as well as Brigadier General Guy Melchoir, Military Attaché, representing the Belgian Embassy. Colors were presented by the Young Marines.

The guest speaker was Professor Friedrich St. Florian, Architect of the WWII Memorial, who gave an outstanding talk about the Memorial and showed the final design sketches.

The Person of the Year Honors Award was presented to Bulge Historian Robert F. Phillips, for his outstanding contributions in presenting, promoting and preserving the history of the Battle of the Bulge. Certificates of Appreciation were given to Mary B. Nolan and William T. Greenville for their many years of service to the BOB Historical Foundation. An award of appreciation was also given to General Melchoir, whose term of duty was completed, for his many contributions in promoting and remembering the Battle of the Bulge and the outstanding manner in which he represented the Belgium Embassy with the Bulge Veterans.

## VBOB COMMEMORATION CEREMONIES Dec 16<sup>th</sup>

By Marty Sheeron

On a completely reversal weather-wise day of 57 years ago, on this date, Dec 16<sup>th</sup> 2001, Delaware Valley Chapter (DVC) members and friends traveled by bus to Arlington National Cemetery VA, to attend and participate in the Commemorative Ceremonies of the 57<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

The day began with a visit to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers. DVC was privileged to witness the impressive military display, par excellence, of the US Army guard (from the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Regiment - "The Old Guard") guarding and protecting the Tomb. The personal appearance,

dress uniform, and rifle were meticulous. The guard was a work of precision: Cadence, shouldering rifle, and changing of position of rifle was done in a flawless manner. Prior to the wreath laying ceremony the guard was necessitated to admonish the audience to refrain from loud talking and remain silent in respect to the sanctity of this hallowed memorial. At 1105, VBOB National President, John J. Dunleavy laid a wreath at the head of the Tomb. Taps were rendered by a Bugler from the US Army Band.

At the conclusion of the wreath laying ceremony, DVC was again privileged to watch the changing of the guard. To the right of the tomb, led by a "Buck" Sergeant, the relieving guard was scrutinized impeccably from head to toe, front to rear, and his rifle was likewise inspected. After the inspection procedure, the Sergeant led the guard, in a coordinated cadence, to the center of the Tomb where the change took place. The relieved guard gave the order: "All orders remain the same!" The Sergeant and relieved guard, in cadence, departed the area.

At 1130 DVC members and friends, joined by other members from other VBOB Chapters, proceeded to the National VBOB Monument. Call to order was made by Stan Wojtusik, VBOB National military Affairs Officer. Prayer was said by Monsignor Wm. F. O'Donnell, VBOB National Chaplain. Stan Wojtusik introduced guest speaker Colonel Thomas W. Sweeny, US Army (Rtd). Colonel Sweeny spoke on the courageous actions VBOB members had taken and the leadership displayed during the battle. A wreath was laid by the VBOB Monument by Bruno Terlizzi and George Watson, DVC Members. Taps were rendered by a Bugler from the US Army Band.

After the above ceremonies VBOB members and friends boarded buses for the luncheon at Ft Meyer. On the way, DVC was given a sightseeing tour of urban Northern Virginia including a view of the damaged Pentagon building, the Marine Corps Memorial (raising of the flag on Iwo Jima WWII); and the Netherlands Carillon (gift from the Netherlands in gratitude for US aid during WWII). On arrival at Ft Meyer, everyone was required to show a picture ID to the MP who boarded the bus at the gate (no terrorist was found, ha).

At the Officers Club, the VBOB party was directed to the "Abrams" Room (named after the famous tanker, Creighton Abrams from the 4<sup>th</sup> ArmD WWII). Luncheon consisted of a buffet dinner of many delicious salads, vegetables, meats, fish and desserts. After chowing down, John J. Dunleavy, VBOB National President introduced the incoming National Officers. George Chekan, Past President and Publisher of "The Bulge Bugle," was given the honor of swearing in the slate of officers. Lou Cunningham, DVC, officially became the new VBOB National president.

On leaving Ft Meyer, DVC was again treated to a sightseeing tour of Northern VA and Washington DC. Leaving the state of Virginia, we traveled over the Potomac River via the Theodore Roosevelt Bridge connecting with Constitution Avenue into Washington DC. On this avenue were numerous federal government buildings such as the Department of State; Bureau of Indian Affairs; Department of Interior, Department of Justice, National Archives, National Museums of American and Natural Histories; National Gallery of Arts; US Botanic Garden; US Capitol Building and the Library of Congress.

The observation of these historical and politically powerful structures embedded with American lore and renowned governmental decisions are a valuable education outside formal schools and colleges of higher learning.



## MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER HONORS SURGEON

We have been advised by the Central Massachusetts Chapter President John E. McAuliffe, that the chapter has been renamed. It is now: Lamar Soutter/Central Massachusetts Chapter.

Dr. Soutter volunteered to fly to Bastogne, which was then surrounded, to bring medical supplies and help with the treatment of 1,500 wounded American soldiers. He arrived safely in a glider despite hostile fire. German troops withdrew two days later with the arrival of General George S. Patton and the Third United States Army.

The late Dr. Soutter founded the University of Massachusetts Medical School and Hospital, in Worcester. ■

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## LET'S CHEER TILLEY UP!

Many of you are acquaintances of Tilly Kimmes and we wanted to let you know that she hasn't been feeling too well. If you would like to help cheer her up by sending a card, her address is:

Tilley Kimmes  
c/o Centre Saint Jean Dela Crois  
30, Rue Ste. Zithe  
L-2763, Luxembourg

She'll be glad to hear from you. ■

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## REUNION BRINGS GREAT JOY

*[The following represents excerpts from an article which appeared in the Peoria, Illinois Star Journal, dated July 14, 2001. The article was written by Erika Wittekind. HENRY DOAR and BOB GRAY, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, were reunited at a division reunion.]*

Peoria--When Henry Doar disappeared amid the battles of 1944, Bob Gray [9th Infantry Regiment, Company K] assumed the worst: the man who had been his friend from the D-Day invasion to the Battle of the Bulge had been killed in action.

"I knew he was dead," Gray said Friday. He believed that for more than a half a century.

The World War II veteran learned the truth last year, when a historian interviewing him told him that Doar had survived being blown against a tree at the Bulge and was shipped home because of his injuries.

"He's been dead all these years, and then to find out he was alive--I cried with joy," said Gray, now in his 80's and living in Oregon. ....

Doar and Gray recognized each other immediately across the lobby.

"He said, 'Hey, Bob!' and I came barreling through there," Gray said. "I heard my name, and I knew it was him."

Both sergeants, Doar and Gray came to know each other during the many times their two companies entered combat together.

A particular camaraderie emerges on battlefields, said Doar, 80 of Georgia. Men become closer in a shorter period of time than

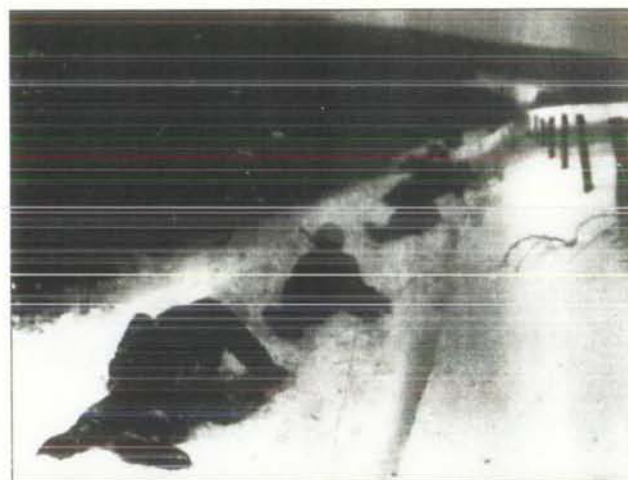
they might otherwise, even to the point that they would risk their lives for each other.

"If you're in a group with friends, and a grenade comes flying, a man would throw himself in front of the grenade for another, even though they just met in combat," he said. "I saw that many times."

It never came to that for Doar and Gray, but they were close just the same. .... [End of excerpts.]

Bob sent along a photograph which he calls "Soldiers in the Snow." The photograph was purchased at a Second Division reunion. He would like some help identifying those who are in the picture. Handwritten on the back of the picture are the words:

WWII  
Battle of the Bulge  
2nd Infantry Division  
"Indianhead"  
CO G, 23rd Inf Regt.  
Members of combat patrol near Ondenval, Belgium  
Jan 16, 1945



If you are in this picture or knew any of the men pictured, contact Bob at 80488 Courtney Lane, Enterprise, Oregon 97828-5007. ■

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## Bet You Didn't Know This!

It is estimated that during the war, U.S. military personnel consumed about 10 billion wasp-waisted bottles of a certain soft drink. So popular was this beverage with the troops that the army brought along several complete bottling plants when it went to war, three being brought ashore to North Africa in 1942-early 1943.

In some remote outposts and on some ships far from home, the precious fluid was so rare that bottles were known to have been stored in safes.

Thus did Coca-Cola become another world-wide symbol of America. ■

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If World War III is fought with atom bombs the war after that will be fought with stones.

ALBERT EINSTEIN



# Remembrance Commemoration

## 57<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of The Battle of the Bulge Holiday Inn – Laurel MD December 15, 2001

By Joseph Zimmer, Co. B, 345<sup>th</sup> Inf, 87<sup>th</sup> InfD

Good evening: So much has happened since we met last December. This is the 14<sup>th</sup> Banquet Remembrance and Commemoration of the 57<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. Our Historical Foundation and leaders are owed a debt of gratitude for keeping alive the legacy of that momentous Battle. We thank the Ambassador from Luxembourg and the representative from the Embassy of Belgium, for gracing us with their presence.

I often stand in awe, as I view the artists rendering of the design by our speaker, the noted architect of the WWII Memorial, Friedrich St. Florian. Sir, you are truly a saint, to have had to put up with the delays, banalities, distortions, and sheer utter nonsense you, and others had to go through from opponents of the location and design of this magnificent proposed National World War II Memorial. Thank you sir, from the bottom of our hearts. May we all from the WWII generation be here, a few years hence, to see your design in its structural reality and beauty.

We are inspired and thrilled to have the Young US Marines' Color Guard participate with us. History shows us, that the young of our nation bear the brunt of wars; the dying, wounded, whenever our nation fights to defend, protect our country and to preserve liberty. The invasion force of Normandy was purposely structured, in the main, by young invaders under 23 years of age. The Naval Battle Group that left Norfolk shortly after the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> was made up mostly of men and women between 20 – 23.

Valor, courage, bravery, sacrifice, all are coins in the currency of all those who fought and died, and, each of us in that currency are very wealthy indeed. The harshness of life's lottery that took the fallen from us has been balanced by, some gently compensating thumb on the scale of chance, that gave, we survivors, life.

We mourn still for the victims, with their families and friends, of the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Sixty years ago, last week, the sneak attack on Pearl Harbor was burnt into our beloved nation's consciousness like no other event before. Today, there are fresh scars burnt into our psyche, more terrible, because, it happened so recently and, on our homeland. (The US Island of Hawaii did not reach statehood until 1959.) The TV pictures of the flames of the collapsing twin towers of the World Trade Center, the scorched section of the Pentagon, the wreckage of Flight 93 in Pennsylvania, will be forever etched in our minds. Curiously enough, these attacks took place on the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of when construction effort commenced on the Pentagon – September 11, 1941. None of what followed the attacks is about revenge or retribution – IT IS ABOUT SELF-DEFENSE.

We are at war again, into the fourth month of the campaign against those who unleashed that treacherous attack, killing over 3,500 and injuring many thousands more, orphaning over 15,000 children. Westerners fight face to face. We choose the crudest deadly weapons and use them with appalling

violence. Orientals by contrast, shrink from pitched battles . . . preferring ambush, surprise, treachery and deceit. Ask the men who fought in Korea and Vietnam. On September 11<sup>th</sup>, the oriental tradition returned in an absolutely traditional form; Arabs appearing suddenly out of empty space like their desert raider ancestors, assaulted our heartland in a terrifying and unthinkable surprise raid and, did appalling damage.

Each of us can recall vividly those cold, dark, damp, deadly days of December '44 and January '45. We witnessed full well the horror and devastation of the battlefield, the sacrifices made by we, the living, and those who gave their last full measure of devotion. We are once again the world's best hope for peace. Imagine what kind of man or woman will be lost when the last veteran of WWII, now numbering about 4.5 million, passes on. May we, Brokaw's "Greatest Generation," in our vintage years, continue to serve as an example for today's generations and those to come.

This is the season of joy – Christmas and the New Year. Fifty-seven years ago, it was none of that, at all. During a 24-hour cease-fire to recover our dead, the word came down, before dusk, that those who desired could attend a Mass service in a small village church near Alsace Lorraine. It was with the proviso that we must carry our weapon into the church, as a precaution, in the event the Germans chose to violate the agreement. It is still hard for me to express my emotions as to how I felt, carrying an M-1 rifle into this House of Worship, honoring the birth of the Prince of Peace, almost 2,000 years before. As a former altar boy, it was even more incongruous and wrenching. The next morning the killing began anew. Our ground zeroes were scattered all over France, Belgium, and Luxembourg and for me, Germany, twice. In a cold and desolate place we were like the shepherds that first Christmas night, wishing we were doing something else or, in any other place than where we were.

All of this speaks to a number of experiences over the years. Writing and speaking of these happenings helps me again to bond and have real contact with you good people. I'm the writer and speaker and, you all are the second bananas, making it easy for me to tell it like it was and is. As my memory recalls what we comrades all went through, it must be written and recalled in the recesses of our minds. It is like being in a rowboat, drifting in the fog, wondering where this will take us. Shakespeare wrote of Hamlet's mother when she handed her son a shining glass and told him to look into it to discover and see his innermost self. The recent terrorist attacks and video are being held up to the Arab world of Bin Laden as a mirror of his intrinsic evil.

Finally, let us continue to live out our proud lives and take our strength from our service to our country many years ago. The giant school of war, in which we all grew up fast, maybe too fast, equipped us so well, over time and, continues even today, in our vintage years. The best to each of you for the holiday season and, a peaceful and safe New Year 2002.

I continue to stand in awe of all the courageous veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

BGen. James Herbert  
U.S. Army (Ret.)

## ARE YOUR DUES DUE?



## TASK FORCE DAVISSON

**Al A. Alvarez**  
1st Infantry Division  
16th Infantry Regiment  
Company C

"Recon, you find 'em; engineers, you fix 'em; tanks, you fight 'em; and TD's, you finish 'em!" With these emphatic, but crystal clear adjurations, LTC Henry L. Davisson set the tempo for his task force subordination commanders. It was 16 December 1944, and the yet-to-be-named "Ardennes Offensive" had exploded. This Kraut's massive tank penetration now was creating this northern shoulder of what was to be its acquired sobriquet, "The Battle of the Bulge."

In response, hastily thrown together units from the vaunted 1st Infantry Division (The Big Red One), would acquire its title "from the aggressive commander of the 634th Tank Destroyer Battalion." Task Force Davisson was thus quickly formed as a lightly armored, tank-killing reaction force! Major Olson, the "TDF" S3 designated the line of march, handed out strip-maps for a southward reconnaissance.

Our armored convoy consisted of the 1st Recon Troop heading out with puny 37 mm armed M-8 Greyhound armored cars. Intermingled came the 1st Combat Engineer Battalion's A Company, riding its soft-skinned vehicles. Now came D Company of the 745th Tank Battalion with its measly Lt. Whippert tanks armed also with 7 mm guns, but back up by its 75 mm assault gun platoon. Spread out and looking for targets came C Company of the 634th Tank Destroyer Battalion with their 9 mm rifles, claiming the ability to compete with German armor. All probably supported by "The King of the Battlefield," our four-man "F.O. Charlie" Artillery Observation party (with the commo capability to call down Divarty and Corps Arty "barrages or serenades").

Our battery veterans of the "Lucky 7th" Arty Bn, who had fought German armor in Tunisia, Algeria, the beach at Sicily, and in the fields of Normandy, spoke out in warning to our little observer party: "Be ready. This TF Davisson is outgunned by the huge Panthers and King Tiger monsters reported coming your way. Remember, your tank-destroying force needs to equal or outgun those battle-tested German Behemoths and also mount sufficient armor to protect themselves from the superior German anti-tank weapons. In other words, you better be 'killer tanks' rather than tank killers. If not, you will have to stop 'em with indirect 105 mm or 155 mm arty concentrations."

Despite these knowledgeable words, we heard only the spurrings of Col. Davisson. Quickly, the "TFD" saddled up and cautiously commenced traveling south through snowy Belgium. The lengthy convoy slid out of Sourbrodt and Robertville and clanked into Walk and Weimes, small villages recently vacated by U.S. medical units.

The weather was frigid cold and damp, but the fog was dissipating, and for once, Arty would have wonderfully clear observation! Here we were, "The Lucky 7th's" forward observation party on high ground, salivating at the abundance of lucrative targets! Spotting from our town's church steeple with our 20-power scopes, German convoys, to include tanks, traveling west across our front from 863-020 to 863-024--an artillery man's dream! Compounding our good fortune, our

"Lucky 7th" Arty Bn had recently been supplied with the previously secretive ammo employing "the proximity fuse" constructed around its nose plug, which activated when the emitted radio beam encountered an object within 15 yards! We were going to have the proverbial field day...and we deserved it!

Our parent organization, "The Fighting First," was still recuperating from its horrific bloodletting in "The Hurtin Forest" this past November, where the Krauts had grounded us into Hurtgen Forest and past! Surely now was to be pay back time...but the war gods frowned and said no...not yet!

The American artillery ammunition supplies across the entire 1st Army front were dangerously low, contriving to place "quotas" on all "shoots"! Our radio pleas to FDC for fire missions received a "wait out"! Our frantic telephone messages informed us their priority was to our east. There, our sister regiment, the 26th Infantry "Blue Spaders," were in continuous battle with German armored thrust at Bullingen and Butenbach. There, LTC Derrill, M. Daniels, and his 2nd Battalion would successfully blunt the German Col. Pieper's rampaging westward drive and dream! That portion of the northern shoulder would remain firm!

So now it was to be our turn. The German 1st SS Panzers, frantically searching for a route on the Rollbahnen to the west, then sideslipped and proceeded to smash at us; TFD now intermixed with 3rd Battalion 16th Infantry at Weimes. Our front erupted with tank fire and reported infantry advancing plus intensified artillery fire in our immediate front. Our first indicating was a flying buzz bomb smashing into the battery area and WIAs three gunners--Cpl Homer A. Jerome, T/5 Raymond A. Fink, and PFC Erlo Baton. We were further alerted by a commotion reported on our eastern outpost which luckily forewarned everyone in town! Speeding down the only street in Weimes came two G.I. jeeps over loaded with Krauts. Firing madly and careening widely to escape our firing gallery response, they crashed off the road on the west side of the village.

Col. Davisson then ordered, "Recon, send a squad to investigate and recover the bodies and/or the vehicles." Lt. Cagerosi, our FO, took over the viewing scopes from our lofty OP as the submachine-armed Recon squad gingerly approached the overturned vehicles. They sprayed the area, righted a jeep, and returned with a WIA spread-eagled on the hood! Another German captive was shoved into the co-pilot's seat, hands on his head. Arriving at the town square, now crowded with a rubbernecking GI throng, the Jerry prisoners held center stage! Looking like "right out of Hollywood" with his peaked hat and black leather topcoat and gloves, in excellent English, he demanded medical attention for his men! In response, someone in the crowd belted him with a rifle butt! He was saved from further harm by the NCO's who held back the provoked soldiers. It appeared that in breaking through our outpost, the Germans had hailed in English, then fired and killed the wounded, surprised guards. These angry crowd members were old-time buddies of the soldier killed by this "ruse-de-guerre"!

Later, with his head now bandaged, the German officer was carted off to the 16th Infantry Regimental S-2, where subsequent interrogation divulged he was an officer-courier transporting the photographic proof of this German explosive and successful penetration through the American lines. The following day, angered regimental staff members descended and oversaw a search of the snowy

*(Continued on next page)*



## TASK FORCE DAVISSON

jeep accident area and found this valuable film!

These important photos, immediately developed at the rear headquarters, received prominent world attention as the classic "Bulge" combat film showing smiling German paratroopers as "successful warriors in action"!

With our shooting priority reestablished and our observation still A-OK, our arty observer party initiated fire missions with visibly outstanding results! Lt. Anthony Cangelosi, our latest FO, who would break the "bad luck cycle" of officer casualties and proceed to "make it" to the war's end in Czechoslovakia, took targets under fire. First, we fired on "enemy troops forming for attack," then followed a mission on enemy vehicles. Finally, we observed for a Divarty TOT on an enemy assembly area. With the horizon ablaze, we continued with harassing fires throughout the night. Cpl Maurice Vacher was our instrument corporal who would be promoted and get the Purple Heart the following week. He would return, bandaged, with three new stripes and stories of great chow in the medical rear. Me, now a T/5 (corporal's pay without the authority) and my cohort, T/5 Rene Cote, our dependable driver, rounded out our crew. At first light, all of us, now professionals after six months on the combat scene, poured destruction on the advancing white-painted enemy armor and accompanying white-clad infantry. After four missions and 275 rounds expended, we reported "enemy activity ceased and one tank burning!"

Later, during a slow afternoon, Capt Fred F. Chirigotis, from the 745th Tanks, asked for our indirect fire observing so they could "use up" their 75 mm ammo. With a total expenditure, their tanks would be able to acquire new 76 mm tubes! Jumping at the chance, I got some invaluable and exhilarating shooting experience and contributed some damage, too!

During another quiet period, on Cote's watch, he asked, "What the hell are those guys doing?" An engineering squad seemed to be laying a hasty mine field in the road leading south in the Town of Faymonville. Apparently, these engineers must have been short of mines because the engineering sergeant had his squad scrounge up dinner plates from the nearby Belgium homes. His squad, laden with this ample supply of dishes, were pacing off the distances and placing plates face down on the road and adjoining fields. As viewers, our interest peaked. "Look at him now. He's putting some real mines amongst those kitchen plates!" Finally, the squad members covered these actual metallic mines with large porcelain dinner platters. "Very clever, these Americans!" Those porcelain covers will inhibit the mine metallic detectors." Later that afternoon, as it showed, our forward area was dimpled with the ingenious defensive preparation.

German counter-fire re-intensified and seemed to be directed at our high ground and steeple, so we moved into town to the second floor of the town hall or barroom... "kaboom"! The biggest tank you ever saw blew our jeep to kingdom come. No one was hurt, but we sure were happy we had gone to church the previous Sunday. We countered with "purple smoke," our air strike marking rounds as FDC insisted, "No aircraft available." A couple more rounds that "landed first, then whistled after" and whew, he backed out of view somewhere back into Faymonville. The troops were understandably quiet as we hurriedly plastered the town with HE and WP and set numerous fires, everyone privately hoping he was through with us good guys!

Our Chief of Detail and my boss S/Sgt Joseph Desforge and Motor Sergeant "Shorty" Hofer came up during darkness with a replacement jeep. Besides replacing our food and extra radio batteries, they told us we were stopping an enemy armored attack on the northern shoulder of something called "the Battle of the Bulge." After that illuminating information, we settled back in, but encountered some new problems. Our "posit" rounds were exploding at their maximum ordinate as premature bursts over our heads. Apparently, the sensitive fuses were set off by clouds! As if that was not enough, Sgt Ringers' howitzer, back in the firing battery area, had a muzzle burst and the gun was destroyed, but luckily, with no gunner casualties. Probably the intense cold on the metal tube and the sudden heat of the morning firing caused it. My remembrance of this December is the bitter cold, with all the troops occupied with ways of keeping warm. The approved method was putting on layers of any clothing. Many brainy GIs wrapped blanked strips over straw around their boots and created an incredibly large footprint in the snow--anything for insulation to stave off trench foot while occupying their foxholes.

During our lengthy and boring time on watch, someone mentioned, "Today's Christmas. This'll make our third Christmas overseas for our 'Lucky 7th Arty Bn.'" Cote reminisces about Christmas 1942 in Africa and on the moors in England on Christmas of 1943. Lt Cangelosi celebrated by knocking out an MG position at 864-013 with two direct hits!! The doughs cheered and waved their arms and weapons, stamping their cold feet, too, in their exposed foxholes. Afterward, when I sneaked down to the chow line in an adjoining cellar, the cooks told us "Boomers" (artillery observers), "You're doing a bang-up job." But more importantly, he slipped me an extra helping of meat and potatoes!

From Christmas to New Years, it was just continuous fire--at "enemy troops in the open" and "enemy tanks." Our records show we averaged over 1,800 rounds per day during the last days of December 1944. This wall of steel both harassed and hampered the enemy's efforts to exploit and enlarge his armored thrust. Our uninterrupted night defensive fires, requested by our supported 16th Infantry, commenced with the coming of darkness and carried over until daybreak. Even so, another strong tank counterattack was repulsed in the vicinity of 053-013 (railroad tracks near Steinback, Belgium) by the direct fire of the 634th Tank Destroyers and 74th Tankers. The blackened hulks of destroyed German tanks stood out against the snow. The bodies of German infantry were not as easily discerned.

New Year's Day opened with hordes of German aircraft strafing our positions. As usual the poor bloody infantry suffered the casualties, and as always, it's the new replacements. We "boomers" hid in our cellars as the bomb explosions rattled around us, watching the lieutenant celebrate by drinking his liquor ration as we under-aged peons looked on.

Rumors were now flying that we would attack Faymonville the first week of January 1945. So we took under fire all possible EN positions in the town. Methodically, we increased the destruction by dropping HE rounds through the roofs, then followed up with WP to burn the houses. Most of them, however, were constructed of stone and resisted all our bombardments. Still, slowly, Faymonville was not systematically pulverized.

*(Continued on next page)*



## TASK FORCE DAVISSON

During that first week of January, we carefully, in conjunction with the mortars, fired in support of a patrol attempting to retrieve the body of Lt McLaughlin, of L Company, KIA'd days previously.

Lt Cangelosi "had the word" and got us ready by checking our equipment, clothing, and footwear. "I want constant commo while on the attack," he said. "The infantry is going to get us on high ground every chance they can and protect us, too." That's good, but for me, first I must get and be warm. Layering of clothing was the answer. So it's long underwear, shirts, jackets, many trousers, ponchos, wrapped blanket strips over straw, and joining the "monster footprint brigade." With a French Foreign Legion "kepi" look, I covered my helmet with a white pillow slip with a flap covering my neck. Then I enclosed myself in a white bed sheet, a snow cape, and emerged through the slit for my head. Finally, I connected up the radio and set it on a German wooden sled with a 50-foot on/off switch for the lieutenant's use. We were "ready for Freddy." Threw some cardboard ammo cartons filled with coffee, sugar, and cans of cream on the sled and loaded my pockets with "goodies."

Now, as the last preparation, I ate everything I could of rations: crackers, cheese, meat and beans, cocoa, sugar, candy--anything for energy. "Now bring on those Krauts. I'm warm, full, and have dry feet. I can shoot, scoot, and communicate."

On 14 January 1945 with heavy snow falling, the 16th Infantry's 3rd Battalion, commanded by LTC Charles T. Horner, co-mingled with portions of TF Davissan's tanks assaulted Faymonville. We (with me pulling the radio sled) accompanied I Company, then later L Company. As we slowly trudged into the northeast portion of Faymonville, mines in the snow took out some of A Company's 745th tanks, but the doughs continued despite incoming mortars. The first reports were 2 KIA and 15 WIA for our 3rd Battalion. We stopped at nightfall and ran a line to the nearest company. To hear reports of 70 casualties for the 3rd Battalion. We fired harassing missions and kept everyone awake. The next morning dawned crisp and sunny, and Lt Cangelosi returned from battalion briefing: "We are going to take Schopen, the next town to the southeast. Let's move it." Trudging again through the snow, we encountered some woods where MG fire erupted. Lt Cangelosi quieted it with an HE concentration. We held up in these woods with no fires, no hot chow, and tried stomping our feet all night to stay warm. Only good thing was a can of sliced peaches (kept warm in my armpit) for breakfast from my food stash. The following day (maybe the 15th of January), we accompanied the 3rd Battalion's L Company, which seemed to be in reserve since we stepped in the footprints of the lead company. The snow was knee deep and snowing fiercely with drifts piling up. Someone passed the word down the line, "We are in a blizzard." Observation was impossible--we cannot see anything, but better still, the Germans cannot see us either. My day consisted of struggling through the snow, laying a line back on the road, and finally meeting our artillery liaison wire crew; then splicing the line with frozen fingers and hearing the two parties conversing. We tried bumming rides on the only vehicles moving, "Weasels," some type of a lightweight covered track vehicle. They seem to be ambulances carrying WIA and flying their Red Cross flags. Everyone on the road now piled on a tank dozer for a slippery, dangerous ride back, and I followed my line back into a house.

Thank God, the troops had fired up a stove, and it was crowded and cozy. While Lt Cangelosi and Sgt Vacher observed upstairs, I dried up and tried heating my radio batteries on the stove to restore their strength: "Eureka, I think it works."

The artillery liaison bunch gave me the bad news that "Jonsey," A Battery radioman, was KIA'd when we hit Faymonville. The word was he was hit by a sniper. We were losing a lot of doughs, but they were strangers to me. Jonsey was an artillery buddy doing my same job on the RO. I had just returned a quarter-mile of commo wire I'd borrowed from him.

We continued through the snow at the proverbial "snail's pace," the doughs plodding through snowdrifts, the tanks sliding and slipping off the roads. Noticed some oops had wrapped barbed wire around their boots for traction; they claimed it worked. My salvation was my sled and wrapped boots. The lieutenant is pleased with his constant commo as I dragged the sled.

We entered Modersheid and fired normal missions on enemy troops, and then strangely, we gave them four missions of propaganda shells. We continued with 13 missions on enemy troops at CPs and OPs with approximately 70 hits on houses containing troops, with resulting fires. Then we continued with harassing fires throughout the night--nobody sleeps.

The next morning--don't know the date--we commenced preparation fires prior to forward displacement, meaning "move out and drag the sled." It seemed to be getting lighter in weight--probably from eating the rations and throwing away the used batteries.

Great news! The 16th Infantry was squeezed out of the advance by the 18th Infantry, so for us, immediate support became general support, and another team took over. We were lucky--the food just about ran out. Sgt Vacher quartered us in a large barn while Lt Cangelosi checked with 3rd Battalion for hot scoop. We cleaned up the equipment, gassed up the jeep, set up a stove, and cooked some liberated food.

We were in heaven: no observation duties, in a warm barn, bellies full, just radio watch and waiting for the lieutenant to take us home... "kaboom"! A round came through an opening in the front wall and OUT the back wall--with a startling, crackling explosion that showered us with debris. Straw flew everywhere, and we were covered with shards of wood, powdered stone, and animal droppings. No one was physically hurt, but someone had to change their laundry. We moved next door to another barn, smaller, but with stone walls.

It was 31 January 1945, and we were pulling radio watch only while putting in land lines to artillery liaison. Listening on the artillery net, we heard a rare command given to the guns: "Battery C, continuous fire to the right at 5 second intervals with a converged sheath" for an expenditure of 45 rounds at the same target. Contact by telephone to my old buddies at Artillery Battalion FOC discloses that a subsequent 18th Infantry patrol reports a German 6-gun battery of 150 mm abandoned their positions and guns at the coordinates of that strange concentration.

It was the beginning of February; the sun came out, and it seemed that Task Force Davissan, having halted, then chased the Germans out of Belgium, then simply faded away with the spring thaw! ■

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## ARE YOUR DUES DUE?



## LEAVE THE COMBAT BADGES ALONE!

*[ALFRED A. ALVAREZ, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, 7TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, COMPANY C, sent the attached and asked that we send it along to Ross H. Rasmussen in response to his letter regarding the Combat Infantry Badge, which appeared in the November issue. We thought you might be interested in reading it. It is an excerpt from "The Hurtin' Forest!"]*

Our day seemed to consist of sitting around, hunkered down in cellars protected by logs and sandbags or observing from upstairs rooms and firing missions in response to local commanders' needs or FDC instructions. This daily drudgery became just "soldiering"—passing endurance, standing, leaning against the wall, finally stomping to warm up the blood! We moved around like old men in mind-numbing wet cold. It was difficult to understand conversation, let alone instructions. Everyone was yelling and repeating to make sure that simple info is comprehended! We sat forever, grey with shock, trembling white crouched around pitiful fires, heating and reheating sour coffee and flinching at every explosion. Doing our job had become running wire, standing radio watch, surviving another day. Inhaling harsh smoke from the burning buildings, squad fires, continuous cigarettes painted our nostrils black, and we spit nasty black sputum! We enjoyed a stolen moment of happy insanity when replacements asked us, "Is this as bad as it gets? Why us?" because we wore the mark of veterans, the old weather-beaten clothes! I guess they hoped we were gypsy fortune tellers and could promise them tomorrow! All we could tell 'em was, "Suck it up" and "Keep on playing 'swap the bullet!'"

Contact with my firing battery chief got us this cheery note: "Keep your butts dry, watch out for mines, and stand up on the radio." We just stared, not comprehending.

In thinking over this horrible period with the miserable weather, aggressive German defense, inhospitable terrain, inadequate clothing, and lack of proper footwear, I must, in all truthfulness, state that we of the artillery field observation team still had it better than Joe Rifleman, Joe Squad Leader, and Sir Joseph, the Platoon Leader—and all the other "poor bloody infantry" geographically located alongside us!

Consider our small four-man team: we had an immediate boss, our lieutenant, here in this wretched community where lieutenants reigned. We had comprehensive maps with significant features identified. Better still, all the team members were well-briefed, informed, efficient map readers. We had constant available ammo to an immediately responsive headquarters, and a straight line to an artillery CPT at the local infantry battalion CP (the artillery LN officer), the infantry battalion commander's artillery advisor! Instant priority to artillery battalion FDC when we announced, "Fire mission!" A job that produced instantaneous results (destroyed enemy personnel, armament, or barriers). But I think the most important—we had a jeep! (Our morale factor.) We could readily depart this horror and acquire necessities, equipment, food, and replacements. Even R&R trips back to the firing battery. We were certainly self-sufficient!

During and after World War II, many "infantry types" have

asked us: "'Boomers' (field observers), how come you didn't qualify for the CIB? You occupied the same perilous foxhole as us, your infantry cousins, and fought from the same buildings under direct enemy fire?" Considering all the reasons quoted above, I think the answer has to be: whenever possible, we could and did help ourselves out of this type of predicament and bettered ourselves out of these precarious situations. These lousy "doughs" had to endure their deadly nightmare until they were relieved or carried out!■

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## REUNIONS

**2ND ARMORED DIVISION, 17TH ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION, COMPANY A**, September 11-14, 2002, Nashville, Tennessee. Contact: John A. Shields, PO Box 106, East Butler, Pennsylvania 16029. Telephone: 724-27-4301.

**4TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 23-29, 2002, Spokane, Washington. Contact: Bob Reilly, 107 Schafer Street #7A, Wenatchee, Washington 98801-6340.

**11TH ARMORED DIVISION**, August 11-17, 2002, Columbus, Ohio. Contact: 11th ARMDD, 232 Admiral Street, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania 15001.

**17TH AIRBORNE DIVISION**, Cruise to Panama, April 1-11, 2002. Contact: Joe Quade. Telephone: 973-263-2433.

**75TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 4-18, 2002, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Contact: James Warmouth, 6545 West 11th, Indianapolis, Indiana 46214-3537.

**78TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 11-15, 2002, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Contact: Red Gonzales, 104 Oak Glen Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15237. Telephone: 412-364-1609.

**80TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, August 14-18, 2002, Melbourne, Florida. Contact: Eric Reilinger, 3000 South A1A Highway, Melbourne Beach, Florida 32951-3421. Telephone: 321-676-1723.

**86TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION**, April 14-18, 2002, Biloxi, Mississippi. Contact: George L. Murphy, 818 West 62nd Street, Annister, Alabama 36206. Telephone: 256-80-4415.

**99TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, July 15-21, 2002, Hilton Hotel, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Contact: Harry McCracken, 314 Mt. Manor Road, Manor, Pennsylvania. Telephone: 724-863-6263.

**110TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY 90 MM GUN BATTALION**, May 1-4, 2002, Kissimmee, Florida. Contact: Harold W. Mueller, 905 Sequoia, St. Louis, Missouri 63123. Telephone: 314-631-5350.

**279TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, August 7-10, 2002, Garden Plaza Hotel, Johnson City, Tennessee. Contact: John Petrush, 1238 South 48th Street, Baltimore, Maryland 21222. Telephone: 410-285-0918.

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The army taught me some great lessons—to be prepared for catastrophe—to endure being bored—and to know that however fine a fellow I thought myself in my usual routine there were other situations in which I was inferior to men that I might have looked down upon had not experience taught me to look up.

OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES, JR.

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## TANK UNIT RECEIVES PRESIDENTIAL CITATION

**Demetri Paris**  
9th Armored Division  
14th Tank Battalion

Combat Command "A" of the 9th Armored Division has been awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for action in stopping German attacks in the period December 16-23, 1944. The citation was issued June 12, 2001, 57 years after their gallant defense.

The Combat Command, which consisted of a battalion each of tanks, armored infantry and artillery, plus engineers and reconnaissance troops, repulsed constant and determined attacks by an entire German division. After six days and when other troops arrived, the surrounded survivors fought their way out of the German encirclement.

Their determined fight disrupted the German schedule and allowed the U.S. III and XII Corps to bring additional troops to hold Bastogne.

The three combat commands of the 9th Armored Division were widely separated and were the first to meet the December 16, 1944, attack by Hitler's panzer forces. Combat Command B was in the north at St. Vith alongside the 106th Infantry Division which had two regiments captured. CC "B" held the Germans from St. Vith until the arrival of a combat command of the 7th Armored Division. Combat Command "R" was in the center at Bastogne while Combat Command "A," which received the PUC, was in the south at Beaufort.

The German attackers called the 9th the "Phantom" Division since their attacks were being stopped by the division's combat commands at three separate places.

The citation reads:

"THE PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION (ARMY)  
FOR EXTRAORDINARY HEROISM  
TO  
COMBAT COMMAND A  
9TH ARMORED DIVISION

Combat Command A, 9th Armored Division, is cited for extraordinary heroism and gallantry in combat in the vicinity of Waldbillig and Stavelborn, Luxembourg, from December 16 to December 22, 1944, by repulsing constant and determined attacks by an entire German division. Outnumbered five to one, with its infantry rifle companies surrounded for most of the time, clerks, cooks, mechanics, drivers and others manned the 10,000 yard final defensive line. Supported by the outstanding responsive and accurate fire of its artillery battalion this widely dispersed force stopped every attack for six days until its surrounded infantry were ordered to fight their way back to them. This staunch defense disrupted precise German attack schedule and thus gave time for the United States III and XII Corps to assemble unhindered and then launch the coordinated attack which raised the siege of Bastogne and contributed to saving much of Luxembourg and its capital from another German invasion. The outstanding courage, resourcefulness, and determination of the gallant force are in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army."

Composition of Combat Commands  
9th Armored Division  
December 16-21, 1944

Combat Command "A"

Division Troops (Assigned):

- Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Combat Command "A"
- 60th Armored Infantry Battalion
- 19th Tank Battalion
- 3rd Armored Field Artillery Battalion
- Company "A", 9th Armored Engineer Battalion
- Troop "A", 89th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron
- Troop "B", 89th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron
- Troop "C", 89th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron
- Troop "E" (less 4th Platoon), 89th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron
- Company "A", 2nd Medical Battalion, Armored
- Company "A", 131st Ordnance Maintenance Battalion

Non-divisional Troops (attached):

- Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion
- Reconnaissance Company (less 2nd and 3rd Platoons), 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion
- Company "B", 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion
- Battery "A", 482nd Antiaircraft Artillery AW Battalion (SP)
- Battery "B", 482nd Antiaircraft Artillery AW Battalion (SP)

\*\*\*\*\*

**DON BEIN, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION, HEADQUARTERS COMPANY,** also sends us information regarding the Citation and thanks MG George Ruhlen, USA Retired, and others for their work over the past 56 years in accomplishing this matter. "...after lots of effort, hope and disappointment success has finally been achieved."

The 9th Armored Division CCA flag will now fly a streamer inscribed "Luxembourg--1944" In addition, there will be personal awards of the PUC given to members who served in the above units.

**Up Front**

**with Willie  
& Joe**



**"Hell of a way to waste time. Does it work?"**



## SEPTEMBER 11TH DISASTER SERVES AS WAKE-UP CALL

From Carl E. Ferguson  
75th Infantry Division Headquarters

I thought you might be interested in the enclosed copy of a letter I recently received from Paul Hass (75th Infantry Division, 289th Infantry Regiment). Paul was the driver for the lieutenant colonel who was killed at Arbrefontaine when a small German plane dropped an anti-personnel bomb on to the 75th Division mess.

In my response to Paul, I wrote that I would make an effort to find out the name of the lieutenant colonel.

Interesting that the terrible disaster of September 11th in New York City, prompted him to make the inquiry and recall the incident.

\*\*\*\*\*

Hi Carl,

My name is Paul Harris. In going over an issue from November 1999 which is almost two years ago, I remembered your article in *The Bulge Bugle*.

I was the driver for that lieutenant colonel who was killed that night. If I had not stopped to talk to a buddy I would have been with him. For the record, we were together for weeks almost side-by-side. Time takes its toll and I can't remember his name. He was a West Point graduate and was always concerned about my well-being: making sure I found a place to sleep and eat. We were on our way to get a bite to eat when we separated. I am not positive but I think there was more than one casualty that night.

Sorry about [not] responding sooner. September 11, 2001, was the wake-up call and [also] to so many people at the World Trade Center who had to pay the ultimate price and to those left behind my very best wishes.

Sincerely,  
Paul Hass

[If you can help Carl with the name of the lieutenant colonel, write to him at: 1717 West Elfindale Street #2A, Springfield, Missouri 65807.]

## BELGIANS FEEL OUR PAIN

From Robert W. Erskine  
78th Infantry Division  
303rd Medical Battalion  
Company D

Enclosed please find a copy of a letter I recently received from a Belgian acquaintance. Sometimes we Americans tend to assume that non-Americans don't feel as we do about the events of 9/11--but as you can tell from this letter, many outsiders are reacting as we are to the horror that has befallen us.

The person writing this letter is Jacky Comhair, a Belgian citizen who lives in southeastern Belgium in a town called Tongres. During World War II, they were occupied by the Germans for five years. Units from our 78th Infantry Division helped liberate them, and we were in that area during the Bulge battle.

Jacky and his area neighbors have never forgotten these deeds

and they continue to honor us in many ways. They maintain an American cemetery nearby where many of my 78th comrades are buried. I've been told by fellow veterans who since visited there that the grounds are immaculate--not a single solitary weed in the acres of cemetery land! Jacky also has converted the bulk of his large home into a museum and memorial to honor the American Army and Air Force of WWII.

...in these trouble times, when we are constantly confronted with vitriolic anti-American sentiment, it's reassuring to receive a few words of live and encouragement from our friends overseas.

\*\*\*\*\*

[Edited] 14 September 2001

Dear Robert and the Erskine Family,

My family and I would like to express our deepest thoughts of pity and tears of sadness for the terrible shock which hurt America and its people. All of Europe is in fear and very angry. We will pray together with America and hope you will find the terrorists who carried out this horror and punish them.

The world is in deep mourning. The American flag hangs at half mast at my house in Belgium and many places throughout Europe.

The television reports the news from the USA 24 hours a day and the newspapers are full of the disaster.

Never forget and forgive this criminal deed.

God Bless America.

Lisa and Jacky

and many friends from Belgium. ■

## VETERANS DAY PARADERS FROM INDIANA

Members of VBOB Central Indiana Chapter #47, took part in the Veterans Day parade November 12, 2001, in Indianapolis, Indiana.



Left to right: Harold Freeman, Chris Schneider, Ed Suding, Jeff Niese, Gordon Wire, John Kerr, L. Terry McDaniel, Al Daunoras, and Paul Bain. ■



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February, 2002

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VBOB Logo Lapel Pin - 1/2"	\$ 5.00		\$
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All new members, please provide the following information:

Campaign(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Unit(s) to which assigned during period December 16, 1944 - January 25, 1945 - Division \_\_\_\_\_

Regiment \_\_\_\_\_ Battalion \_\_\_\_\_

Company \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

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