

# The BULGE BUGLE

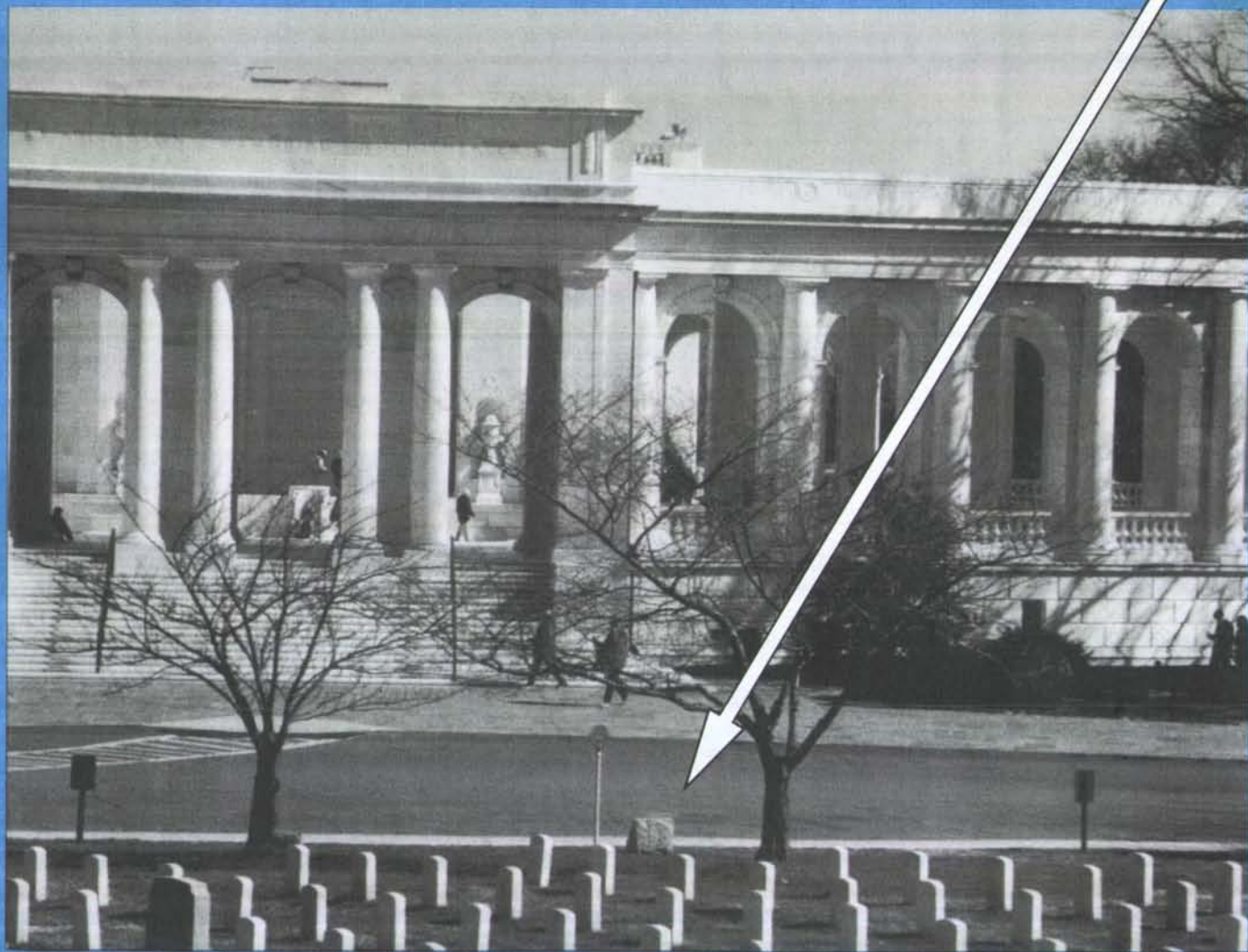
VOLUME XXI NUMBER 2

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

MAY 2002

## VBOB MEMORIAL AT ARLINGTON DETERIORATING

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

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

\*\*\*\*\*  
IF YOU FIND YOU HAVE A LITTLE TIME,  
WRITE TO VBOB AND WE'LL SEND YOU THE  
NECESSARY TOOLS TO GET OFF TO A  
GOOD START IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF A  
CHAPTER IN YOUR AREA.

YOU'LL FIND THAT IT'S EASY TO DO AND  
THE REWARDS TO ALL OF THOSE YOU  
BRING TOGETHER CANNOT BE  
DUPLICATED.



# President's Message

As each day goes by, I find reasons to feel honored to be President of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. Communications that come in to our national headquarters in Arlington, and to me at home in North Wales, Pennsylvania, tell me that many of you are working in your chapter areas to keep the memory of our battle alive.

Among the most important of your activities is the continued VBOB presence in the schools where our members are telling the history of our victory to students who will carry this story well into this new century. If you have a particular success story as a chapter or as an individual we want to hear about it, and pass it along to our members. It can serve to encourage them to make that phone call to their local schools and offer help as veterans with a message in social studies or American history classes.

Sad to say, our message of patriotism and sacrifice is needed even after 9-11, since many of the textbooks skim the war years and neglect not only WWI and II, but Korea, and Vietnam.

## We can make a difference.

I think it is also encouraging that you are keeping up our drive to place memorials to the Battle of the Bulge in parks and prominent places in cities around the country. We are presently working on a monument that will be a "thank you" to the U.S. Army Air Force for the sacrifices the air crews and support staff made to help stem the German attack.

I have heard many of you relate your feelings when the weather cleared early in the Bulge and hundreds of B-17's and B-24's filled skies heading toward the German lines, and about the awesome fighters and fighter-bombers hitting the Panzer units.

Along with other 106th Infantry Division GI POW's, I can verify that nothing was stopping the Army Air Force. Even though we were in the target zones at times, we knew the bombers were helping to win the battle, and bringing us closer to freedom.

We owe them a lot.

And while I'm on the subject of monuments, I want to alert you to another project we are working on. Those of you have visited Arlington National Military Cemetery at our December 16th wreath-laying ceremony, or as tourists, may have noticed that after 16 years, our memorial opposite the Amphitheater of the Unknowns is steadily being deteriorated by Washington winters.

We are trying to do something about it.

As you will read in the following pages, we are starting on the process of obtaining a Joint or Concurrent Resolution of the Senate and House of Representatives to make a memorial more visible and more fitting for the hallowed ground on which it has been placed. Please read the article because at some future date you may be called upon to help our effort by contacting your



Louis Cunningham

Senators or Congressmen and enlisting their support for our proposal.

One project I hope you can enlist you and your families to support is our upcoming national reunion. This year we will be meeting in the Baltimore area at the BWI Airport Marriott, August 29th to September 2nd. The Labor Day weekend is always a great way to close out the summer. You will find more details in this issue. It promises to be an exciting weekend with a number of special events scheduled including visits to Baltimore's famous Inner Harbor, and to historic Fort McHenry, where the *Star Spangled Banner* inspired Francis Scott Key to write the poem that became our National Anthem.

I have to thank our Recording Secretary John Bowen, his wife, Mary Ann, and Dorothy Davis, our corresponding secretary, for the really thorough research they did as leaders of the reunion committee. John and Mary Ann must have investigated every hotel and motel in the Baltimore-Washington area in their search for the best hotel, and the best price, for the reunion. Please mark the dates down on your calendar and plan to be with us for what promises to be a memorable weekend.

In closing, I hope you plan to show our VBOB colors in your local Memorial Day, Flag Day, and Fourth of July celebrations. I know you are all proud to be veterans of the U.S. Army's largest land battle, and it is up to us, the survivors, to keep the memory of those who fought and died in that battle alive forever.

Thanks, and hope to see you in Baltimore. ■

## JOSEPH HOFFMANN HONORED

[Excerpts from *South Bend Tribune* article, dated May 15, 2001, written by Christine Cox.]

"It was on a winter day in France during World War II when a French commander approached a U.S. Army division to see if anyone could replicate a German artillery pin.

The plan, the commander said, was to use the copied pins to turn abandoned German weapons on the Germans themselves.

When fingers pointed to Arthur Hoffmann, then a 23-year-old machinist, "I said I'd try," Hoffmann recalled.

For three days and nights, Hoffmann studied a sample pin, figured out how to copy it and collected the scrap steel and other materials to put together five replicas.

The pins worked. Shells from 75-millimeter artillery pieces helped prevent thousands of German troops from reaching the critical Battle of the Bulge [and other battles]."

Hoffmann received the Army Commendation Medal for this achievement 56 years afterward. ■

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### MORE ON PRESIDENTIAL CITATIONS

I wish to express my thanks to Demetri Paris, of the 14th Tank Battalion, 9th Armored Division, for sending the information for the article in the February, 2002, issue of *The Bulge Bugle* in regards to Combat Command "A" of the 9th Armored Division being awarded the presidential Unit for action in the period of December 16-23, 1944. However the listing under Non-divisional Troops (attached): of Battery "B", 42nd Antiaircraft Artillery AW Battalion (SP) is incorrect. This listing appeared in early notices of the release in regards to the PUC award. In the official award with the listing of the Non-divisional Troops (attached) Battery "B," 482nd Antiaircraft Artillery AW Battalion (SP) is not listed since they were not with Combat Command "A" at St. Vith and are listed under Non-divisional Troops (attached) which was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation for their action of 17 December to 23 December 1944 which CCB also received after almost 57 years.

Also of interest in regards to the PUC is that Battery "A," 482nd Antiaircraft Artillery AW Battalion (SP) received their award of the PUC on February 22, 1945, as an individual unit. This was General Orders No 40 from Headquarters, Third United States Army by command of Lieutenant General Patton.

The citation reads as follows:

"Battery 'A,' 482nd Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion (SP) is cited for its action during the period of 17 December-26 December, 1944. During this period Battery 'A' was assigned the mission of supplying ground support to infantry, artillery and tank destroyer units defending positions against the strong enemy thrust into Belgium and Luxembourg. Facing overwhelming odds with outstanding heroism the battery fought stubbornly over difficult terrain, inflicting heavy losses upon the enemy. At one time this unit held a sector alone, without the immediate support of other arms. The indomitable fighting spirit, the courage and devotion to duty of the officers and men of this battery were in keeping with the highest traditions of the military service."

Chuck Gregorovich  
482 AAA AW BN (SP) A

### FIELD OBSERVER RADIOMAN

On page 4, February, 2002, of *The Bulge Bugle*, in "Letters to the Editor," article by Alfred A. Alvarez, states that he (quote) A field observer radioman with "C" Battery, 7th Battalion of The Big Red One, from D-Day landing to Czechoslovakia (unquote).

Field observers from a firing battery are not qualified to serve with an infantry rifle company unless they have first been selected by their artillery battalion.

It is the intent that those artillery field observers who have been selected by battalion orders to serve with front line infantry rifle companies (including the radio operators), are the only individuals to be granted an Artillery Forward Observer Badge. This award is totally free and separate from the CIB Award.

The final decision for a Field Artillery Forward Observer Medal must be made by Congress or the Department of the Army.

I believe, as a group, the infantry rifle companies support the granting of an award of service medal to those who provided artillery fire for them at a possible cost of their lives.

Ross H. Rasmussen  
87th INF

### GETTING BROADER

[Excerpt] Thanks for a very interesting newsletter. Reading accounts of the experiences of others, especially those in units other than infantry, where I was, give me a broader and more complete perspective on the Bulge than I had. Keep up the good work. [We have to pat ourselves on the back every once in a while. Thanks for giving us the opportunity, Bert.]

Bert H. Morphis  
1 INF 26 INF B

### DRESS CODE OKAYED

I wrote a letter to *The Bulge Bugle* which was published in the August 2001 issue. The question I asked was whether or not other vets would think it was plain "tacky" for me to wear a jacket, bright orange in color, with the lettering on the back to the jacket to wit:

Been There/Done That  
D-Day  
Hurtgen Forest  
Battle of the Bulge

The response was certainly not overwhelming in quantity... I have received five responses and all of them said pretty much the same thing--in essence, they said "Go for it"! A few excerpts from the response might help in explanation:

"Tacky? Hell no. We wear badges and patches letting people know we were in World War II. You would be surprised how many people come up to me and thank me personally."

"Saw this in *The Bulge Bugle* and oh, how clever. I say Go for it!!

"Your actions are certainly not tacky or your generation for being boastful or self-serving. When I'm out and about, if I see a veteran with a WWII cap or jacket on, it offers me the opportunity to introduce myself and ask questions. I have never been denied a conversation and I have learned much from these men. While I hope we do, I do not believe we will ever see another generation of people who were as tough as steel yet so modest of their actions and accomplishments. Mr. Ostrom, you should wear your jacket when out and about. You should be proud of your unit and the accomplishments made."

I must admit that one of the letters I received was from a member of our outfit, the 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion, but he was from a different company--just to keep everything on an even keel. I do wear the jacket and the cap to many events where the younger generation can view them and as they said, hope that questions will be asked. Since we are using conjecture here anyway, wouldn't it be great if we could talk to a Revolutionary War or Civil War veteran at this late date? ....

Thanks, people, for your endorsement.

R. Keith Ostrum  
87 CHEM MTR BN

### GENERAL CORRECTIONS

Your excellent article in the August 2001 issue by Rev. Msgr. William F. O'Donnell, on page 11, the fourth and fifth lines down on the right side, states that "I was present the afternoon of the capture of Ohrdruf when Generals Eisenhower, Bradley and Patton along with others, showed up." The three generals did not show up the day Ohrdruf was liberated (not captured). They arrived two days later to see Ohrdruf.

Many prisoners were machine-gunned by Nazi guards just before we arrived and then they ran. The prisoners were so starved, that blood did not even come out of the bullet holes, just some yellow ooze. The only Nazi soldier we saw at Ohrdruf was a 19-year-old soldier hiding in a culvert under the gate entrance. Some American soldiers led him somewhere. I never knew where.

You had an article a few years ago about General Patton being killed while hunting pheasants. This was not true. I was working in General Eisenhower's SHAEF headquarters in the fall of 1945 and went to see a football game between two army units. After the game, I was at the entrance of the sports field and General Patton came out and got in his command car. We all saluted General Patton. His car went down the road and crashed and he was killed. The next day in Frankfurt, the *Stars and Stripes* said he died shortly after the car crash. He did not die while hunting pheasants.

F. Keith Davis  
16 FAO BN A

### RETURNING TO THE BULGE AREA?

Will Cavanagh has written an outstanding guide book to the areas in Germany, Luxembourg, and Belgium where the Battle of the Bulge was fought. Based on his years of study, his personal friendships with many of the participants on both sides and the countless tours he has conducted for groups and individuals, he has come up with a guide book that anyone can use in touring the area to get a complete and comprehensive understanding of the entire battle.

(Continued on next page)



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continuation)

Organized in a series of itineraries, the book has very explicit directions to all the major points of interest accompanied by a concise narrative of the battle in each area--lots of maps and photographs. The book is an interesting read, and would be a valuable aid to anyone touring this area.

*A Tour of the Bulge Battlefield* by William C. C. Cavanagh, Casement Publishing, 2114 Darby Road, 2nd Floor, Havertown, Pennsylvania. \$24.95 plus \$5.00 shipping and handling, 256 pages, paperback.

Thor Ronningen  
99 INFD 395 INF I

### CORRECTION

I appreciate your publishing my letter in the February issue of *The Bulge Bugle* regarding the importance of the battles on and around Elsenborn Ridge in determining the eventual outcome of the Battle of the Bulge. However, I want to correct a gross error that somehow got into my letter between the time I wrote it and you printed it.

According to my letter as printed on page 6 of the February issue, the Battle of the Bulge caused "some twenty-five thousand casualties on both sides." This is a large underestimate for sure.

The Germans suffered about 120,000 killed, wounded, missing in action and taken prisoner. American casualties totalled about 105,000 of whom 16,000 were killed, 3,058 went missing and were later declared KIA and 24,000 made prisoners of war. The British suffered 1,400 casualties of whom 200 died. Historians dispute the precise numbers to add up. They can never be fixed as certain.

However, whatever these numbers are, they total far, far more than "some twenty-five thousand."

I hope you can find space in the next *Bugle* to print this correction for I'm sure you'll be receiving a few letters from incredulous readers wondering this this Doherty fellow is coming from.

Joseph C Doherty  
99 INFD 393 INF 4 BN

### SOMEBODY DO SOMETHING!

This is not going to be your typical "Letter to the Editor" to *The Bulge Bugle*.

It is an appeal for help from any and all members of VBOB. Do--or more than any--members of the VBOB know personally Steven Spielberg, Stephen Ambrose and/or Tom Hanks? (Or know any one who does?)

We need them--badly--TO TELL THE TOTAL, COMPLETE STORY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE! The film industry and the national news and TV networks seem to operate on an "anniversary" basis, and we are quickly approaching our 60th--in film and TV and production/news time. But without personal intercession and contact, the total, real story of the small units and the dedication of handfuls of GIs is going to pass away with us. Unless we collectively DO something!

So, if you--or any of your influential and well-connected friends don't step forward--the legends and the courage and the dedication of all those "little guys" are going to die with us!

Here's your chance! If you have any influence with those mentioned above, NOW is the time to speak up and ask for their help!

They seem to be the three people in our country who are MOST likely to be on our side--and who are most willing to listen to whoever you--or your friends--are asking them to think about!

How about, really, seriously thinking about it.

Then, how about seriously, DOING something about it?

Pat Murphy  
78 INFD

### IT'S A SHAME

Regarding Ross Rasmussen's proposed FO Badge, I agree with Thor Ronningen that there has been a proliferation of medals since 1945 and that awards for heroic action and gallantry in action have never been distributed equitably. A good example was when General Douglas MacArthur was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for directing the war in the Pacific. In his book, *A Blood Dimmed Tide*, Gerald Astor wrote that the CIB was a sham because some non-combatants were able to drive to the rear of the combat zone, "stay there for a certain length of

time, then fill out the papers for a CIB." While not a sham, it is nevertheless a shame that this distinguished award and all it represents could be awarded to a few who never deserved it. Acceptance by comrades is very important, but realistically the CIB is a highly coveted award. You may recall a few years ago that the Navy's top-ranking officer committed suicide after it was discovered that he had obtained the Navy's equivalent of the CIB under false pretenses.

During WWII, FO personnel were generally not in line as long as riflemen, but there were many instances where, due to a shortage of FOs, they remained in the line for extended periods of time, often voluntarily. Both Americans and Germans targeted the other's FO personnel, because they knew the extent of damage that they were capable of inflicting. On 1 March 1945, the War Department created the Combat Medical Badge as a companion badge to the CIB for medical personnel; at least some discernible evidence that the War Department felt a need to recognize the combat contributions of some group other than combat infantry men.

Apparently much of the work that was done by artillery FOs on the ground and in spotter planes is now done by the Hunter Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV). In any case, it is highly unlikely now that the Department of the Army would create a Forward Observer's Badge, retroactively recognizing the combat contribution of all the Army FO personnel in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Even though it will probably never come to be, and with highest respect and regard for the combat infantrymen of all our wars, I strongly support the FOB as recognition that artillery FO's were in these wars, too.

John R. Walker  
Associate member

[John is the son of Donald L. Walker (deceased), 87th Infantry Division, 334th Field Artillery Battalion, Battery A.]

### MORE ON FORWARD OBSERVERS

This is in reference to the letters concerning forward observers in Europe during WWII.

I was a member of the 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion and was assigned duty as a communications man in "D" Company of that outfit, using the old field telephone, SCR 300 Radio and later the sound power phone. The communications man was sometimes located with the forward observer and sometimes exchanged to be located at the guns receiving messages from the communications man who was located with the forward observer at that particular time which meant in all fairness that one man was not always with the infantry who needed the support of our 4.2" mortars to make an attack or to repulse a counterattack, whichever the case might be. The forward observer party also included a rifleman for just a little more security.

I took the liberty of going through our battalion history's 326 days in combat and jotted down some interesting data concerning our forward observer parties.

On July 12--forward observer wounded.

July 13--accolades to the forward observer parties for their constant subjection to danger and for carrying SCR00 radios. The forward observer officer was "mouse-trapped."

December 17--forward observer is killed.

January 11--forward observer and radio operation both killed by a direct hit in their fox hole.

January 16--forward observer party fired on by tank. One man wounded, other man not found. (He was found dead later.)

Will make mention here that the radio man for one of our forward observer parties was awarded the Silver Star for actions as part of that forward observer party. I will also mention that I, personally, never was wounded during action and never received any medals for heroism either.

While reading through our history, I noticed references to when we killed or wounded parties of Germans from time to time and all of a sudden realized that those wounded or dead Germans had relatives at home who would mourn for them too. A case of "us or them" or both.

My wife and I were invited back to Germany last year to meet with some German veterans and learned something very interesting: when a German veteran dies he is not allowed any grave-side ceremonies like our playing of *Taps*, etc. This is because he lost the war.

R. Keith Ostrum  
87 CHEM MTR BN D



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continuation)

### POSTSCRIPT TO INCIDENT

I have read with interest and admiration Edward M. Selfe's letter published on page 16 of your February 2002 issue of *The Bulge Bugle*.

There is a postscript to that letter which Ed was too modest to include. For the actions covered in his letter, Ed received the Silver Star. Thought you might be interested.

John Morrow

## REUNIONS

**3RD ARMORED DIVISION**, August 28-31, 2002, Amway Grand Hotel, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Contact: Walt Stitt, PO Box 2346, South Bend, Indiana 46680-2346. Telephone: 574-291-3414.

**4TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 25-29, 2002. Contact: Roger Barton, 2 Spring Drive (R-19), Walkersville, Maryland 21793. Telephone: 888-845-4040.

**7TH FIELD ARTILLERY OBSERVATION BATTALION**, October 2-4, 2002, Clarion Hotel, Charleston Airport, Charleston, South Carolina. Contact: Charlie Wright, Jr. Telephone: 812-925-6207.

**8TH ARMORED DIVISION**, July 17-20, 2002, Buffalo, New York. Contact: Hogan M. Ivey, PO Box 42, Conyers, Georgia 30094-0042. Telephone: 770-483-7107.

**10TH ARMORED DIVISION**, August 29-September 1, 2002, Radisson Plaza Hotel, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Contact: Tom Bubin, 713 Regency Square A104, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008. Telephone: 616-342-0115.

**11TH ARMORED DIVISION**, August 11-17, 2002, University Plaza Hotel, Columbus, Ohio. Contact: 11th Armored Division, 2328 Admiral Street, Aliippa, Pennsylvania 15001.

**11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY B**, September 5-8, 2002, Amana Colonies, Iowa. Contact: Gene Foster, 1401 17th Avenue, Eldora, Iowa 50627. Telephone: 641-858-2158.

**17TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION**, September 7-19, 2002, Virginia Beach, Virginia. Contact: Edward McClelland, 4384 West 182nd Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44135-3862.

**26TH INFANTRY REGIMENT**, June 12-16, 2002, New Orleans, Louisiana. Contact: Rudolf H. Egersdorfer, 359 Partridge Drive, Lititz, Pennsylvania 17543-1347. Telephone: 717-626-4521.

**28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 109TH INFANTRY**, September 25-28, 2002, Lanham, Maryland. Contact: George H. Bunnell, 175 Cedar Drive-Berlin, Barre, Vermont 05641-2339. Telephone: 802-229-9260.

**78TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 11-15, 2002, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Contact: Red Gonzales, 104 Oak Glen Road, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 1523.

**84TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, August 24-27, 2002, Renaissance Asheville Hotel, Asheville, North Carolina. Contact: Carlos Shook. Telephone: 864-585-1095.

**95TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, August 8-11, 2002, Radisson Hotel O'Hare, Rosemont, Illinois. Contact: Lester Wolf, 8032 South 86th Court, Justice, Illinois 60458-1445. Telephone: 708-458-3047.

**106TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 18-22, 2002, Hampton Virginia. Contact: Marion Ray, 704 Briarwood Drive, Bethalto, Illinois 62010. Telephone: 618-377-3674.

**127TH AAA 90 MM GUN BATTALION**, August 30-September 3, 2002, Horizon Hotel, Stateline, Nevada. Contact: Allan J. English, 4717 Marlborough Way, Carmichael, California 95608. Telephone: 916-487-7362.

**202ND ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, COMPANY C**, July 25-27, 2002, Days Inn, Carrollton, Ohio. Contact: Carl C. Miller, 516 8th Street, N.W., Carrollton, Ohio 44615. Telephone: 330-627-4513.

**285TH FIELD ARTILLERY OBSERVATION BATTALION**, September 20-22, 2002, Holiday Inn, Uniontown, Pennsylvania. Contact: Bruno Toia, 321 Beaver Street, Sewickley, Pennsylvania 15143.

**300TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, June 6-9, 2002, Holiday Inn Select, Dallas, Texas. Contact: Randy Hanes, 6490 Ridgemont Drive, Dallas, Texas 75214. Telephone: 214-363-3826.

**328TH INFANTRY COMBAT TEAM**, October 22-24, 2002, Eisenhower Inn, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. Contact: Alex Pagnotta, 302 Heritage Drive, Harleysville, Pennsylvania. Telephone: 215-412-3335.

**390TH AAA AW BATTALION (SP)**, September 9-11, 2002, The Heathman Lodge, Vancouver, Washington. Contact: C. Ray Allen, 12905 E 22nd, Spokane, Washington 99216. Telephone: 509-922-7695.

**398TH ENGINEER (GS) REGIMENT**, September 16-20, 2002, Holiday Inn, Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Contact: Bill Greenwood, 18 Williams Avenue, York, Maine 03909. Telephone: 209-363-2799.

**555TH, 563RD, 564TH, 566TH & 573RD SIGNAL AIR WARNING BATTALIONS AND ALL RADAR MEN**, September 26-28, 2002, Dayton, Ohio. Contact: William Freienmuth, Box 128, Cottage 903D, Quincy, Pennsylvania 17247-0128. Telephone: 717-749-7444.

**SHAFF/ETOUSA**, October 11-14, 2002, Holiday Inn, Inner Harbor, Baltimore, Maryland. Contact: Don Triffley, 7340 Dundee Street, New Orleans, Louisiana 70126. Telephone: 504-241-3065.

**VII ARMY CORPS HEADQUARTERS**, October 2-6, 2002, Wichita, Kansas. Contact: Art McGown, 6157 Beckwourth Way, Oroville, California 95966. Telephone: 530-589-2578.

## 911 Is September 11, 2001

On September 11th, 2001, this nation was attacked by terrorists who presumed that they could destroy the will of the American people. We have shown, as in the past, that again as on December 7, 1941, we could rise to the occasion as one body to resist the attacks from enemies of our country.

Interestingly, 911 is the phone number to call for assistance from most Americans to their local emergency units in their immediate area.

Strangely, the number 11 shows up in almost all of the events which occurred on September 11.

It starts with the date of the attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon: September 11 or 9/11 -  $9+1+1 = 11$ .

After September 11, there are 111 days left in the year.

The Twin Towers, standing side-by-side, always looked like the number 11.

The first plane to hit the towers was American's Flight #11. New York was the 11th State to join the Union.

There are 11 letters in "New York City," "Afghanistan," and "The Pentagon."

There were 92 people aboard Flight #11 -  $9+2 = 11$ .

There were 65 people on board American's Flight #77 -  $6+5 = 11$ .

Ramsi Yousef, accused of orchestrating the WTC action has 11 letters in his name.

And, if that wasn't enough, the groundbreaking for The Pentagon is said to have occurred on September 11, 1941.

*[The above was excerpted from the 87th Infantry Division newsletter "The Golden Acorn News," of December, 2001.]*



## **VBOB MEMORIAL ARLINGTON**

*In the sixteen years since the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Memorial in Arlington National Military Cemetery was dedicated on December 16, 1986, the rain, sleet, snow and hail that battered us in the Ardennes fifty-seven years ago has played havoc with the stone, and has sparked a drive to enhance it.*

Because of the government rules and regulations governing this hallowed ground, a Joint or Concurrent Resolution of the U.S. Congress is necessary before any steps can be taken to improve and give greater visibility to a more fitting memorial to the U.S. Army's greatest land battle, the Battle of the Bulge.

Located in a prime viewing area, across from the Amphitheater of the Tomb of the Unknowns, the weather has caused the stone to develop a cavity on the reverse side, and to flake around the front edges.

*While time remains for the survivors of our battle, a campaign has been launched to obtain the Congressional Resolution that will allow VBOB to dedicate a permanent memorial which will defeat the ravages of winter, and the Washington summers.*

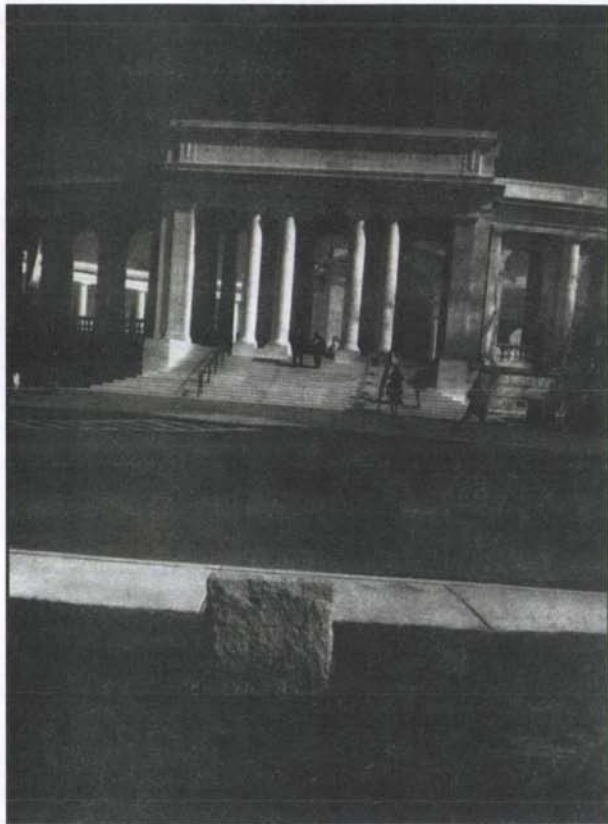
A start was made in March when a sub-committee of Past President George Chekan, 9th Infantry Division, Editor of *The Bulge Bugle*; Stan Wojtusik, 106th Infantry Division, Past President and current Vice President for Military Affairs; and Jack Hyland, 84th Infantry Division, Vice President for Public Affairs, visited Capitol Hill to enlist support for such a resolution.

They met with legislative aides of the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs in the Office of Senator Arlen Specter (R-PA), ranking member of the committee, and on the House side with Andrew V. Napoli, Legislative Director of U.S. Congressman Christopher H. Smith (R-NJ), chairman of the National Veterans Committee.

Chekan reported that they were well received, and pictures of the Memorial stone's condition, taken by John D. Bowen, national recording secretary, appeared to impress the staff members that a resolution was in order.

That feeling was echoed by Wojtusik and Hyland.

Wojtusik said that this was the first step in a process that may call for a campaign that would have all of our VBOB chapters, as well as individual members, contacting their U.S. Senators and Representatives to enlist their support for the Joint or Concurrent Resolution.



### ***STAY TUNED!***

By Jack Hyland  
VBOB Vice President/Public Affairs



## PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATIONS 9TH ARMORED DIVISION COMBAT COMMANDS A & B

[ELMER B. LINDSEY, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION, 27TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, COMPANY A, wants you to know that Combat Command B also received the PUC and sent the following. (Combat Command A was cited in the last issue of this newsletter.)]

*"By virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armored Forces of the United States, I have today awarded*

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

*"Combat Command B, 9th Armored Division is cited for extraordinary heroism in combat in the vicinity of St. Vith, Belgium from December 17 to December 23, 1944. Combat Command B, 9th Armored Division was subjected to repeated tank and infantry attacks, which grew in intensity as German forces attempted to destroy the stubborn defenses that were denying them the use of the key communication center at St. Vith. By the second day, the flanks were constantly threatened by enemy forces that had bypassed the St. Vith Area and pushed far to the rear in an effort to encircle the command east of the Salm River. The attacking forces were repeatedly thrown back by the gallant troops who rose from their fox holes and fought in fierce hand-to-hand combat to stop the penetrations and inflict heavy losses on the numerically superior foe. As the command continued to deny the important St. Vith highway and railroad center to the Germans, the entire offensive lost its initial impetus and their supply columns became immobilized by 21 December, the German timetable was so disrupted that the enemy was forced to divert a corps to the capture of St. Vith. Under extreme pressure from overwhelming forces, Combat Command B, which for 7 days had held the St. Vith area so gallantly, was ordered to withdraw west of the Salm River. By their epic stand, without prepared defenses and despite heavy casualties, Combat Command B, 9th Armored Division, inflicted crippling losses and imposed great delay upon the enemy by a masterful and grimly determined defense in keeping with the highest traditions of the Army of the United States."*

COMPOSITION OF COMBAT COMMAND "B"  
Divisional Troops (Assigned)  
Headquarters and Headquarters Company,  
Combat Command "B"  
27th Armored Infantry Battalion  
14th Tank Battalion  
16th Armored Field Artillery Battalion  
Company "B," 9th Armored Engineer Battalion  
Troop "D," 89th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron

4th Platoon, Troop "F," 89th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron  
2nd Platoon, Company "F," 89th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron  
Company "B," 2nd Medical Battalion, Armored  
Company "C," 131st Ordnance Maintenance Battalion  
Detachment, 9th Armored Military Police Platoon  
Non-divisional Troops (attached):  
Company "A," 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion  
2nd Platoon, Reconnaissance Company, 811th Tank Destroyer Battalion  
Battery "B," 482nd Antiaircraft Artillery AW Battalion (SP)  
Detachment, 489th Ambulance Company

Elmer adds that his unit kitchen and supply people were captured along with three civilians and taken into a field and shot. ■

## THE BLESSED HELMET

[The following was gleaned from an article sent to us by MILTON F. BARTELT, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 10TH INFANTRY, 2ND BATTALION, COMPANY G, MEDIC. The name of the newspaper was not included but the article was written by Rick Reed, Daily Commercial Staff Writer.]

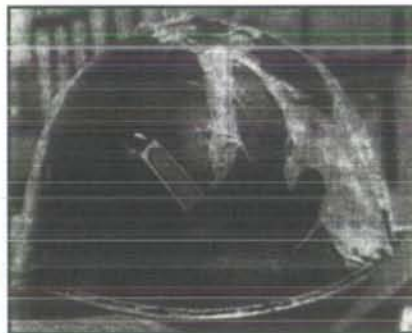
Dave Severns, 30th Infantry Division, credits his helmet with saving his life in the Battle of the Bulge. The helmet was on display at the Lake County (Florida) Historical Museum.

Severns' unit was on the road to St. Vith to halt the German advance "by clearing out a machine gun nest in a farm house that was manned by about half a dozen German snipers."

"A German sniper hiding in a farmhouse did the damage when he scored a direct hit. But his shot didn't wound Severns. The bullet entered the helmet above Severns' right eye and exited out the top without hitting the fortunate GI."

"Some U.S. soldiers took cover in a barn overlooking the farmhouse and they ordered the Germans to surrender in German saying, 'Come out immediately.'

"Severns, who was in front of the barn, peeked out to see if the enemy complied. A shot rang out and Severns was knocked flat on his back as the bullet entered and then exited the helmet."



In the winter, the drab olive green helmets stood out like sore thumbs because of the snow. So GIs found linen tablecloths and covered their helmets with. It did the trick until they got dirty. Severns' helmet is still partially covered by some of his linen camouflage.



## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Bobby Lightell writes to see if any one knew his brother or served in his brother's unit. His name was **CHARLES D. LIGHTELL**, of **BATTERY B, 115TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**. If you have any information, write to Bobby at: PO Box 18, Mantee, Mississippi 39751.

Tori Hartman writes to tell us her loving memories of her father, **ELEK HARTMAN, 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION, 508TH PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY B**. If you knew Elek, Tori would, no doubt, be glad to hear from you. Her address is: 1447 Franklin Street #2, Santa Monica, California 90404.

**GILBERT STEVENOT, 4TH ARMORED DIVISION**, writes to see if anyone has any information on **CAPT. ROBERT L. LYBARGER, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION**. Gilbert last heard from Robert in 1946 when he was stationed with the Tactics Department, TAS, Fort Knox, Kentucky. If you have information write to Gilbert at: Rue de l'air Pur, 24; B5580 Rochefort, Belgium.

**PATRICK J. KEARNEY, 55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION**, would like to thank those members of VBoB who wrote to the VFW at his suggestion to ask that December 16 be marked as the date of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge on the VFW's annual calendar. Patrick organized a campaign to get the Bulge added to the VFW's calendar back in 1997. Thanks to his efforts, the Bulge now appears on the calendar. Patrick would also like members to know that on August 6, 2001, New York State Governor George Pataki signed the "Bastogne Day Law," which designates December 16 as the annual official observance date of the Bulge in New York State.

Associate member **William P. Gillet** is seeking information regarding his father, **GILBERT STEPHEN (STEPHAN or STEVEN)**. His father was a colored man from Newark, Ohio. He was quartered at Bressoux, at General Mena Barracks, near Liege. His regiment or company was HK1817 QMBD150H and the regimental code was Q183J. His commanding officer was **CAPT. LESTER SILVER**, from Brooklyn, New York. Two buddies were: **JOHNNY SAUNDERS AND JENA FISHER** (both also from Newark, Ohio). Any information you can provide will be much appreciated by William. Write to him at: rue J. Dessis, 74; B-4460 Grace-Hollogne; Belgium.

Joseph Padalino is seeking information from anyone who may have known his brother, **JOHN PADALINO, 305TH SIGNAL OPERATIONS BATTALION**. Write to Joe at: 500 South Riverside Drive, Neptune, New Jersey 07753.

Joseph Pothén is searching for information on **PFC HUGH McGRADY, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION**. During the Bulge he was attached to the **3RD TANK DESTROYER GROUP, HEADQUARTERS COMPANY**. You can contact Joseph at: Sur les Roches, 8 B-4960, Malmedy, Belgium.

Susan Evans would like information regarding her father,

**JOSEPH R. EVANS, 99TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 924TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**. If you can help, write to Susan at: 205 West Plumstead Avenue, Lansdowne, Pennsylvania 19050.

J. Delbert Kindred is seeking information regarding an officer reportedly killed in the Battle of the Bulge by the name of **JOHN BEST**. (No further information provided.) If you can help write to: 125 East San Miguel, Phoenix, Arizona 85012.

Bonnie Ruff writes with much sadness in her heart. Her father, **JOSEPH ELTON RINGER, 4TH ARMORED DIVISION, 51ST ARMORED INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY C**, died of injuries received in the Battle of the Bulge. Bonnie was just a baby. If you can help fill in any of the blanks regarding her father, she would really appreciate hearing from you. Her address is: 145 Aspen Drive, East Berlin, Pennsylvania 17316.

**SEYMOUR KROLL, 35TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 320TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 2ND BATTALION, COMPANY G**, writes to see if there is anyone out there who served with him. He recalls having a PX "see in the dark" watch which was incredibly handy for his squad for the two hours on-four hours off duty. Write to Seymour at: 2958 West 8th Street, Brooklyn, New York 11224.

Associate member **Brian Schwall** writes to say that he will be returning to Luxembourg in June of 2002. If anyone wishes to have a family member or friend remembered in Luxembourg, please contact with the appropriate information. He will be happy to do this for you. Contact Brian at: 308 East Monte Way, Phoenix, Arizona 85040.

**DEE PARIS, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION, 14TH TANK BATTALION**, advises us that the Cold War Museum, founded by Francis Gary Powers, Jr., is seeking stories for the *Cold War Times*. If you have a story you would like to submit, send it to: Cold War Museum, PO Box 178, Fairfax, Virginia 22030.

### Up Front with Willie & Joe



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



## 21-GUN SALUTE...ORIGIN?

[The following information appeared in *The Ardennes Campaign*, the newsletter of VBOB Northern Indiana Chapter.]

The use of gun salutes for military occasions is traced to early warriors who demonstrated their peaceful intentions by placing their weapons in a position that rendered them ineffective. Apparently this custom was universal, with the specific act varying with time and place, depending on the weapons being used. A North African tribe, for example, trailed the points of their spears on the ground to indicate that they did not mean to be hostile.

The tradition of rendering a salute by cannon originated in the 14th Century as firearms and cannons came into use. Since these early devices contained only one projectile, discharging them once rendered them ineffective. Originally warships fired seven-gun salutes--the number seven probably selected because of its astrological and Biblical significance. Seven planets had been identified and the phases of the moon changed every seven days. The Bible states that God rested on the seventh day after Creation, that every seventh year was sabbatical and that the seven times seventh year ushered in the Jubilee Year.

Land batteries, having a greater supply of gunpowder, were able to fire three guns for every shot fired afloat, hence the salute by shore batteries was 21 guns. The multiple of three probably was chosen because of the mystical significance of the number three in many ancient civilizations. Early gunpowder, composed mainly of sodium nitrate, spoiled easily at sea, but could be kept cooler and drier in land magazines. When potassium nitrate improved the quality of gunpowder, ships at sea adopted the salute of 21 guns.

The 21-gun salute became the highest honor a nation rendered. Varying customs among the maritime powers led to confusion in saluting and return of salutes. Great Britain, the world's preeminent sea power in the 18th and 19th Centuries, compelled weaker nations to salute first, and for a time monarchies received more guns than did republics. Eventually, by agreement, the international salute was established at 21 guns although the United States did not agree on this procedure until August 1875.

The gun salute system of the United States has changed considerably over the years. In 1810, the "national salute" was defined by the War Department as equal to the number of states in the Union--at the time 17. This salute was fired by all U.S. military installations at 1:00 p.m. (later at noon) on Independence Day. The President also received a salute equal to the number of states whenever he visited a military installation.

In 1842, the Presidential salute was formally established at 21 guns. In 1890, regulations designated the "national salute" as 21 guns and redesignated the traditional Independence Day salute, the *Salute to the Union*, equal to the number of states. Fifty guns are also fired on all military installations equipped to do so at the close of the day of the funeral of a President, ex-President or President-elect.

Today the national salute of 21 guns is fired in honor of a national flag, the sovereign or chief of state of a foreign nation, a member of a reigning royal family, and the president, ex-President or President-elect of the United States. It is also fired at noon on the day of the funeral of a President, ex-President, or President-elect.

Gun salutes are also rendered to other military and civilian leaders of this and other nations. The number of guns is based on their protocol rank. These salutes are always in odd numbers.

Source: Headquarters, Military District of Washington. FACT SHEET: GUN SALUTES, May, 1969, Up-dated 5 Feb, 2002. ■

## WE, TOO, WERE CITED

[RUTH PURYEAR, former 1st Lieutenant of the 107TH EVACUATION HOSPITAL, sends us the following.]

### RESTRICTED

#### HEADQUARTERS

THIRD U.S. ARMY AND EASTERN MILITARY DISTRICT  
APO 403

GENERAL ORDERS

6 December 1945

NUMBER 333

#### EXTRACT

II. AWARD OF MERITORIOUS SERVICE UNIT PLAQUE - by Direction of the President and under the provisions of Sec I, Cir 32, Hq ETO US Army, 20 March 1944, as amended by Sec I, Cir 56, Hq ETO US Army, 27 May 1944, the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque is awarded to the 107th Evacuation Hospital for service between 1 October 1944 and 6 January 1945.

OFFICIAL:

DON E. CARLETON,  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Chief of Staff.

SEAL

THOMAS ROBINSON  
Colonel, Adjutant General's Department,  
Adjutant General. ■

### WERE YOU IN ONE OF THESE OUTFITS?

When the war was over in Europe there was a simple two page paper entitled REDEPLOYMENT FROM EUROPE. One would think that for such a momentous matter that this redeployment would have been on Letterhead paper from some higher command and have a signature and BY COMMAND OF: notation. But the two sheets of paper only carry the SECRET stamp at the top and bottom of each page.

But this was the list that determined which units in what order would be sent back to the states for redeployment to the Pacific. One of them on the sheet for the July quota, the 86th Inf Div, is encircled and has the handwritten notation that it had "arrived." This was the list to be followed had President Harry Truman not dropped the Bombs that changed the fate of these units destined for more war. The sheet says:

"68 Division in Europe -- 42 to be in US or en route to Pacific by the end of 1945. Movement will involve 500,000 men. Daily shipment of 1,600 men July to be boosted to 3,000 by August.

(8)	To Remain in Europe	(5)	October Quota
	4th Armored Div		9th Armored Div
	1st Armored Div		92nd Inf Div
	82nd Airborne Div		26th Inf Div
	1st Inf Div		79th Inf Div
	3rd Inf Div		99th Inf Div
	9th Inf Div	(6)	November Quota
	29th Inf Div		10th Armored Div
	36th Inf Div		10th Mountain Div
(13)	July Quota		13th Airborne Div
	95th Inf Div - US		83rd Inf Div
	97th Inf Div - US		63rd Inf Div
	86th Inf Div - US arrived		106th Inf Div



# JERKS, SAD SACKS, PROFITEERS and JIM CROW

The guys who were permanent jerks were the usual suspects—officers with too much authority and too few brains, sergeants who had more than a touch of sadist in their characters, far too many quartermasters, some MPs. The types were many in number and widely varied in how they acted out their role, but the GIs had a single word that applied to every one of them: *chickenshit*.

Fussell defines the term precisely: "*Chickenshit* refers to behavior that makes military life worse than it need be: petty harassment of the weak by the strong, open scrimmage for power and authority and prestige ... insistence on the letter rather than the spirit of ordinances. *Chickenshit* is so called instead of *horse-* or *bull-* or *elephant shit-* because it is small-minded and ignoble and takes the trivial seriously. *Chickenshit* can be recognized instantly because it never has anything to do with winning the war."

There were some at the front, but not many. In most cases they were visitors who didn't belong there. Captain Colby led an attack down a road in the hedgerow country. His company got hit hard and dove into the ditches. A firefight ensued. After a half hour or so, Colby looked up to see his regimental commander standing above him, "nattily attired in a clean uniform, and his helmet was clean and sported a silver star. He was the picture of coolness."

"You can't lead your men from down there," he snapped.

"Come up here and tell me what happened. Try to set an example of how an officer should behave."

"Come down here, sir, and we can talk about it," Colby replied.

"Come up here," the general replied. "That's an order."

To Colby's relief, a mortar round went off a few meters from the general. "He joined me in the ditch."

Most *chickenshits* were rear-echelon. There are innumerable stories about them. Sgt. Ed Gianelloni remembered the time in Luneville when his division was temporarily out of the line and the opportunity came to take the first showers in two months. For the officers, there was a public bath, where Frenchwomen bathed them. For the enlisted, there were portable showers in the middle of a muddy field. Everyone undressed, piled up clothes and weapons, and stood around shivering, waiting for the hot water.

"All right, you guys," the engineering sergeant in command barked out, "you got one minute, to wet, one minute to soap, and one minute to rinse off and then you get out of here."

A private standing near the weapons pile reached in, grabbed an M-1, pointed it at the sergeant, and inquired politely, "Sergeant, how much time did you say we have?"

The sergeant gulped, then muttered, "I'll tell you what, I am going to take a walk and check on my equipment. When I come back you ought to be done."

General Patton had more than a bit of the *chickenshit* in him. He was notorious for being a martinet about dress and spit-and-polish in Third Army. He ordered—and sometimes may have gotten—front-line infantry to wear ties and to shave every day. Bill Mauldin did a famous cartoon about it. Willie and Joe are driving a beat-up jeep. A large road sign informs them that "You Are Entering The Third Army!" There follows a list of fines for anyone entering the area: no helmet, \$25; no shave \$10; no tie \$25; and so on. Willie tells Joe, "Radio th' ol' man we'll be late on account of a thousand-mile detour."

But it was no joke. Patton's spit-and-polish obsession sometimes cost dearly. It not only had nothing to do with winning the war, it hurt the war effort.

Twenty-year-old Lt. Bill Leesemann was in a reconnaissance section of the 101st Engineer Combat Battalion, attached to the 26th Division. On December 18, the 26th, along with the 80th and 4th Armored, got orders to break off the attack in Lorraine, turn from east to north, and smash into the German southern flank of the Bulge. This required frenetic activity. Leesemann's job was to go from division headquarters in Metz to the Third Army Engineer headquarters in Nancy, to pick up maps—no one in the attacking divisions had any maps of Luxembourg. It was a sixty-kilometer drive. Leesemann and his driver took off late on December 19, as the 26th was forming up to head toward Luxembourg. It wouldn't be able to move out until the maps arrived.

It was raining, the road was muddy, troops moving north caused delays. It was fully dark by the time Leesemann got to Nancy. He stopped at a crossroads, where "a real spit and polish MP was directing traffic." Leesemann asked directions to the Engineers HQ. The MP took one look at the dirty, unshaven lieutenant and driver and ordered them to the MP post. He said they could not proceed into Third Army area until they had washed the Jeep, shaved, and put on clean uniforms. Leesemann replied that such things were out of the question and explained the urgency of the situation. The MP called his corporal.

Twenty minutes later the corporal arrived. After further interrogation, he called the sergeant. The sergeant came, more talk, finally he called Engineers HQ. Permission to come on was granted. Leesemann drove to the HQ, a large chateau with surrounding gardens. The sentries at the large iron gate entrance gave us the same routine with threats of being arrested. "No way will we be responsible for admitting you two into the Command area." Another call, another wait. Eventually, but not without further adventures in the maze of Third Army, Leesemann got the maps and returned to 26th Division HQ. It was 0500 hours, December 20.

*Excerpted from Stephen E. Ambrose's best-selling book "CITIZEN SOLDIERS," Submitted by Bill Leesemann, 101st Engineer Combat Battalion.*

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

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# VBOB 2002 CONVENTION BALTIMORE MD

29 August –  
2 September 2002

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

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

## Thursday, 29 August 2002

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

## Friday, 30 August 2002

0900 Bus tour to Ft Mc Henry and Baltimore Inner Harbor  
0930 Flag Ceremony at Fort Mc Henry & tour of Ft Mc Henry  
1100 – 1400 Tour Inner Harbor self guided, visit  
The USS Constellation, Three master ship  
The USS Torsk WWII Submarine,  
The Coast Guard Cutter Taney, last ship afloat that was at Pearl Harbor  
Shopping in the Inner Harbor  
Lunch on your own from the myriad selections of eateries at Inner Harbor

OR

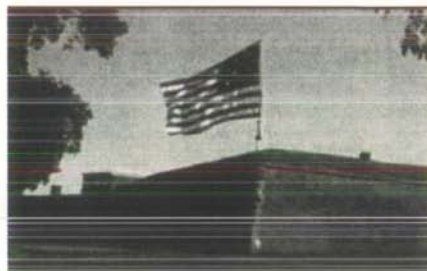
1130-1400 Take a Luncheon Cruise of Inner Harbor and enjoy lunch while viewing the Inner Harbor from the comfort of an air-conditioned boat that will handle 500.  
1400 1700 Visit the National Aquarium at Inner Harbor Special entry as a group, Dolphin show at 1530 (3:30 PM).  
1700 Return to Hotel –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

## Saturday, 31 August 2002

0930 Bus leaves Marriott Hotel for Fort Meade MD. **(Bring your photo-ID)**  
1000 Memorial Service MD/DC VBOB Memorial, Fort Meade MD  
1100 Tour Fort Meade Museum and alternate in groups to tour Battle of The Bulge Conference Room (Buses will provide shuttle service between Museum and Conference Room)  
1230 Leave for Lunch at the Olive Grove, 705 N. Hammonds Ferry Rd off of W. Nursery Rd, Linthicum, MD  
1430 Visit Famous B&O Railroad Museum, Baltimore  
1700 Return to Hotel – Dinner on your own. Hospitality Room opens 'til 2300 hours

## Sunday, 1 September 2002

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







## BWI AIRPORT MARRIOTT

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

**Welcomes**  
**VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE**  
**29 August – 2 September 2002**

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

**REGISTRATION FORM**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

**City:** \_\_\_\_\_ **-State:** \_\_\_\_\_ **- ZIP+4:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Wife/Guest Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Staying at the BWI Marriott?** ☐ **yes** \_\_\_\_\_

**Division:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Regt/Bn:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Company** \_\_\_\_\_

**e-mail:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

Mail registration form and check payable to VBOB to:

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

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



## BALTIMORE 2002 CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

### SCHEDULED TOUR INFORMATION & MISCELLANEOUS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## LIVING LEGENDS



### MEMORABLE

# BULGE INCIDENTS

UNEDITED AND HERETOFORE UNPUBLISHED

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

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

#### NO REGRETS

January, 1945

F. Keith Davis  
16th Field Artillery Observation Battalion  
Battery A  
Springville, Utah

Our 16th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, Battery "A," was at Auw, Germany, when the Battle of the Bulge began on December 16, 1944. We were pushed back to St. Vith and then to Bastogne and back and forth through Belgium and Luxembourg and the border of France.

After the fog lifted, the Air Force began to attack and the Germans were being pushed back toward Germany again.

Near the end of the Bulge fighting, several of our "A" Battery ran upon a large, old stone barn which had been occupied by the Nazi troops the night before. There were American soldiers from several outfits in this barn.

We were talking to the man who owned this barn which had housed many dairy cows. The big barn was full of holes from artillery, tanks and hand guns and his dairy cows were all killed and his farm house was in ruin.

The owner told us he was an American and had fought in World War One in this same area. He met this pretty Belgium girl, fell in love, and married her. After WWI, they started their life in her home village and raised their family there and had a productive dairy farm.

We asked if he had any regrets that he did not return to the United States to live his life, rather than stay in Belgium with his new wife. He said that he was unhappy about the barn being damaged along with his house and his cattle had been killed, but he did not regret making his choice of living a happy family life in Belgium.

The next morning we left this old broken barn and the farmer and headed for the front lines again.

#### AN 88

January 18, 1945

Charles Reis Felix  
5th Infantry Division  
2nd Infantry Regiment  
2nd Battalion  
Headquarters Company  
Woodside, California

After the heavy shelling, there was a seemingly long interval of nothing, and then an 88 came over. I threw myself face down and burrowed into the snow with all my might. It passed over me. Another one came. It veered off. The third one came. Its whistle got louder and louder and louder. Oh, my God! It was coming in on me!

They say that at a time like this your whole life flashes before your eyes. I don't know if it was because I had lived a fuller life than most but there was no time for my whole life to flash before my eyes. I only had time to scream silently, "Save me, Lord!" and it was in on me.

I did not hear the explosion; you have to be outside it to hear it. I was at the center of a tremendous force. I had the physical authority of a leaf in the wind. The air pressure blasted me with such power my body was anesthetized, cut off from me, my mind dulled. My spirit was floating above the earth.

I felt I was in the air but not that I had been tossed there. Rather, I felt that I was immobile and it was the earth that had fallen away from me.

And then it was over. I lay on the ground. I was in a stupor. I could not feel my body. I thought I was dying. Then my mind started to come back. My mind was able to think. That was a good sign. Maybe I wasn't dead.

My body was numb. I could not feel anything. I thought for sure I must be wounded. I looked for wounds and blood. I didn't see any. But my body wasn't sending me any signals. My hands could help. I started by squeezing my ankles to see what would happen. The ankles seemed alright. I worked my



way up, squeezing my calves, knees, thighs, hips, ass, sides, shoulders, arms, neck, face. Everything was still numb but seemed whole.

Then I saw my helmet three feet away from me. I hadn't noticed I didn't have it on. I had had it tightly buckled under my chin and it had been blown off my head.

And there, on the snow directly in front of me, six inches from where my head had been lying, was a chunk of shrapnel the size of a baseball. I picked it up and hefted it. It was heavy. It had multi-jagged, razor-sharp edges.

I was alive when I could just as easily have been dead. I felt a surge of wild joy. I was in a state of sublime bliss.

That shell was a master teacher. I walked out of those woods a different person from the one who had walked in. I had never thought much about life and death. Now I knew something. I knew how precarious life is. And in my life as a civilian after the war, I had the usual bumpy ride of an ordinary human, vexations, conflicts, disappointments, failures, but those things never depressed me past a certain point because I knew they weren't important. What is really important is being alive. Every day of life, every hour, every minute, is a priceless gift to be enjoyed. That shell taught me that and I never forgot it.

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### CROSSING IN FRONT OF A GERMAN PANZER

December, 1944

**Richard Radock**  
80th Infantry Division  
305th Medical Battalion  
Company C  
Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania

During the Battle of the Bulge we were located in a small village in the dead of winter; it was very cold and we had a lot of snow. Our ambulances were dispersed around the town so I had to walk a couple of blocks to get an ambulance to transport a few wounded soldiers to a 3rd Army Field Hospital.

The night was cold and crisp with a full moon shining and the ambulance that I was seeking was in a shed at the end of town. As I was walking across a dirt road on the outskirts of town two German panzers were travelling fast down this lane as if they were trying to escape. I dashed across the road in front of the first panzer almost under its 88 cannon. Another panzer was following close, so I high-tailed it to the shed. I was fortunate they did not shoot me with their machine gun, but they could not give their position away.

Shortly, three of our Sherman tanks from our 702nd Tank Company were in pursuit of the Germans. The lieutenant popped out of the turret and saw me and asked if I had seen the German panzers. I said they had just passed and I did not know that they were the enemy. They took off after the Germans.

I was anxious to get back to my ambulance and get them back to my collection station. I related the incident to my comrades and they said that I was lucky I did not get shot and I agreed.

This was another incident of many that I will always remember and I think the Lord for sparing me for another day.

\*\*\*\*\*

### LOST AND FOUND

December, 1944

**John Gregory Cole**  
87th Infantry Division  
334th Field Artillery Battalion  
Battery B  
Troy, New York

As a forward observer, I was part of a team which consisted of Lt. Ervin Evans and Don Welver. We were assigned to the 334th Regiment, 87th Infantry Division.

Late one afternoon, we were with either I or K Company when we prepared to advance down a valley to capture a small town ahead. We had a jeep assigned to us to carry our extra radios and equipment. The trees were so thick to drive through so I was told to take the jeep and circle around the woods and we would meet that night after they captured the village.

I drove through the fields in the direction of the objective and arrived there early in the evening. I waited several hours but did not meet anyone. Being nearly frozen, I hid the jeep in a barn, went into the farm house, put the family in the basement, and laid down in a bed and fell asleep. I woke up shortly feeling a rifle barrel against my face and a flashlight shining in my eyes. Not a word was spoken.

After several minutes of silence, I heard several voices in German. The rifle and light were removed from my face and I watched the German soldiers leave the farm house.

When daylight came I met Lt. Evans and Welver, who said they had been looking for me. I said the Germans had found me instead.



FEBRUARY 21, 2002, EMBASSY OF FRANCE  
WASHINGTON, D.C.

The following Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, who had also served in France during World War II were awarded the *Certificate of Thanks* from the Government of France. Receiving these certificates were from left to right:

Neil Thompson  
740th Tank Bn (MED)  
Dorothy Davis  
57th Field Hospital  
MSGR William O'Donnell  
Co L, 346th Inf, 87th INF  
George Chekan  
Co C, 39th Inf, 9th INF

After the ceremony, champagne and dessert were served to the more than 75 veterans present and their guests.



## MANTUFFEL'S APPRAISAL OF THE BULGE

[The following is a copy of a letter sent to JOHN E. BRATTEN, 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 333RD INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY K]

February 23, 1969

Dear Mr. John E. Bratten,

I wrote some years ago the following "Appraisal" for a journal in U.S.A.--that applies, in my opinion, to all soldiers of the U.S. Forces engaged in the so-called Battle of the Bulge (December, 1944-January, 1945).

"Diessen/Ammersee

August 1st 1964

Appraisal of the U.S. Army during the Battle of the Bulge Ardennes 1944/1945.

Even the former enemy highly appreciates the valor of U.S. Army troops committed at Bastogne and at St. Vith in eastern Belgium during the Ardennes Offensive of 1944-1945. From the German point of view, and in my opinion, these engagements were conducted in a manner equal to the best performances of the U.S. Armed Forces in theaters of operations other than in European. The devotion of the American soldiers and their courageous defense of St. Vith introduced the final phase of the defeat of the German Army in Western Europe, the subsequent American counteroffensive brought about the ultimate defeat of these German forces in the West.

Not only the weapons played the decisive role here, but also the rank-and-file, the commanders, the non-commissioned officers and the soldiers of all branches with their unshakeable trust in their military leaders to whom they felt close and who, in turn, had a feeling of true camaraderie for their troops.

Once again proof was brought that the war of weapons plays a subordinate, supporting role, and that the center of gravity lies in other spheres, namely those of politics, economics and psychology. Moral factors are all-decisive, for battles are won in the hearts of men--Bastogne and St. Vith being a striking example. Therefore, the dramatic weeks of December 1944 occupy an important role when the history of the U.S. Army in World War II is being written.

The courage of the men and the command of the troops was, from the German viewpoint, of the highest order!"

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"No theoretical studies, no intellectual attainments on the part of the layman can be a substitute for the experience of having lived and delivered under the stress of war." **General Maxwell Taylor**, graduation address at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, June, 1963.

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Once during a debate, Abraham Lincoln was accused by Stephen Douglas of being two-faced. Without hesitation, Lincoln calmly replied, "I leave it to my audience.... If I had two faces, would I be wearing this one?"

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## PLANS COMPLETED FOR THE COMMEMORATION OF THE 58TH ANNIVERSARY BATTLE OF THE BULGE December 14 to 16, 2002

The agenda and registration form for the 58th Anniversary Commemoration events, Battle of the Bulge, to be held on December 14 to 16, will be in the next issue of *The Bulge Bugle*. **DON'T MISS THEM!!**

The beautiful Fairview Park Marriott Hotel, just off the Capitol Beltway, 495 and Route 50, Falls Church, Virginia, has been selected for this year's activities. Some of you may recall this hotel as the one used by the 87th Infantry Division for their reunion year 2000. Cost of the rooms, single or double, will be \$85.00.

Interesting activities include a visit to the International Spy Museum, Washington, D.C.; the Exhibits/Hospitality Room (bring your World War II photos and scrap books to share with your friends) and the guest speaker for the commemorative banquet will be Secretary of the Veterans Administration, Mr. Anthony Principi.

On December 16, VBOB will sponsor the impressive wreath-laying at the Tomb of the Unknowns and the Battle of the Bulge Memorial. A special farewell brunch will be held at the hotel after the ceremonies.

Question: Call John Bowen (301-384-6533) or Dorothy Davis (301-881-0356).

April 29, 2002  
Dorothy Davis



**Diekurch, Luxembourg - 1/24/45**

Lt. Edward C. Meleane, Los Angeles, Calif. 5 InF.D utilizes this German built log cabin in the pines as the Command Post of his platoon. It is located in a well-concealed position; Shrapnel proof walls, well dug in and has a real pane or glass in the window.



## BREAKING THE SILENCE

[Being a good neighbor, Bineke Oort helped JAMES A. BOWERS, 18TH INFANTRY DIVISION, COMPANY I, put together some of his recollections from WWII and sent them in for our publication. We have excerpted that portion which applies to the Battle of the Bulge.]

By the end of November, regardless of uncountable losses and all the hardship, the overall picture looked favorable for the Allied Forces. The Germans had been pushed back and taken the important city of Aachen. It was a quiet December on the front. Many Americans were taking a well deserved rest and recreation. They had been transported back from the front into a Belgium camp and were tired from months of nearly non-stop fighting. It seemed to many that the war was just weeks from being over. But they were wrong. Hitler, in his last gamble and act of desperation, had devised a massive counter offensive to defeat the Allied Forces. The plan was to split the Allies and push through to the North Sea port of Antwerp.

On December 16, the Germans moved in full force to the total surprise of all those on the battlegrounds. They pushed in with parachutists, bombs, tanks and of course with hordes of foot soldiers. What followed was the bloodiest and fiercest battle of the ground war in Europe, later known as "The Battle of the Bulge," a three-month long fight in Belgium which took the lives of 80,000 American soldiers. More than one million soldiers fought in that battle, half a million Americans and 600,000 Germans.

As far as Jim's personal experiences, although he described the whole war experience as hell, several ordeals stand out.

One time there were three days and four nights of continuous walking and fighting in three feet deep snow, without any food. At some point Jim was hit so badly by rifle bullets that he couldn't get up anymore. He fell asleep in the snow. His sergeant seeing Jim's mess kit on his back riddled with bullet holes thought Jim was dead. He nudged him with his boot to make sure. Jim stirred and was told to get up and move on, which he did with much difficulty. Miraculously Jim escaped the constant barrage of gun fire. He got shrapnel in his chest but was able to remove them himself. One time a bullet ripped off the shoulder strap of his pack but Jim survived.

While most of his buddies were killed, Jim experienced many miraculous close calls.

There was the time when his sergeant commanded him to dig his fox hole under a tree. Jim had the intuition not to do that and he dug a few yards away. His sergeant threatened he would be court marshalled after the war for insubordination, but Jim persisted. Not long after that a bomb shell hit exactly the spot where he had been told to dig. Jim and others prayed every day but, he said at moments like that he prayed even harder.

Christmas was lonely with Jim spending the day alone in a fox hole. His fellow men were spread out over the snow-covered fields, each one by himself in his hole. The plan was for turkey, but it was not until the next day that someone brought Jim his treat. It was cold and dirty because some one had dropped it. Jim, grinning, said it tasted good anyway.

It was hard not being able to get out of the same clothes. The exception had been Thanksgiving when Jim got a change of clothes. But for the next change he had to wait five months! ■

## Crossing the Sauer

A Memoir of World War II

Charles Reis Felix

"This is absolutely the best volume I've ever read on the GI in World War II. True to life? Wow! Every former GI will love this one. It's Mauldin come back to remind us of those two great characters—Willie and Joe—and the special place in our hearts for the memories of them. Get out of the way, Mr. Ambrose. Sorry, but here come the ghosts of the real ones."

—Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., former editor, *American Heritage*, and author of *The Long and the Short and the Tall*

"Felix's is one of the **most honest, unforgettable** memoirs of the war I've read. He pulls no punches and has set himself refreshingly to deliver the truth. For this, I admire him and recommend his book."

—Paul Fussell, author of *Doing Battle* and *Wartime*



Private Charley Felix was a combat infantryman with the Fifth Division, Third Army. He was at the front from January–March, 1945. *Crossing the Sauer* is his account of those three months.

At your local bookstore or call Burford Books Toll Free 1-888-672-5247. Also available from Amazon and BarnesandNoble.com.

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# ATTACK ON MANHAY CHRISTMAS DAY, 1944

[The attached article by MILTON J. SCHOB, 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 424TH INFANTRY, 2ND BATTALION, COMPANY F, is provided in response to THOMAS V. TRENGROVE, 82ND AIRBORNE, request for information on Manhay.]

After a week of fighting in the area of St. Vith, Belgium, at the onset of the Battle of the Bulge, German forces had compressed the American defenders into an oval-shaped area which became identified as the "fortified goose egg." Units within the "goose egg" were the 7th and 9th Armored Divisions, the 112th Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division and the remnants of the 106th Infantry Division (essentially the 424th Regiment and attached artillery). These troops were incorporated in the XVIII Airborne Corps under command of Major General Matthew Ridgeway. Being a paratrooper Ridgeway believed that the troops in the "goose egg" should attempt to hold their positions until friendly forces could fight forward to enforce them. Field Marshal Montgomery, Ridgeway's superior officer at this time, thought otherwise and ordered that the battle lines be "tidied up" by withdrawing the more than 20,000 troops from their nearly encircled positions on December 23, 1944, through an opening held by the 82nd Airborne Division. The withdrawal was successful and the troops were repositioned north of the bulge created by the German panzers driving to the west in an attempt to reach the Meuse River.

My unit, Company F, 424th Regiment, reached a position in the woods well north of Manhay in the area of Werbomont, as darkness approached on the 23rd. We had not had a decent meal in a week, we hadn't had shelter from the weather and we weren't able to get more than a few hours of sleep here and there during the preceding week. Because we had retreated many miles, we had difficulty accepting the fact that the Germans were still near at hand, not realizing that our withdrawal was largely parallel to the German thrust. At any rate we were miserably cold on that night of the 23rd--it was cold enough for the drinking water in my canteen to be a solid block, around zero. To get some sleep a number of brush fires were started by the troops, not exactly a brainy decision in a combat area, but nothing came of it and we did get sleep.\*

*\*Colonel Dupuy in "St. Vith Lion in the Way" reports thusly, "It was a battered, disgruntled, groggy aggregation which finally found billets and bivouacs up in the vicinity of Werbomont during the night of 23 December. But for the 424th Infantry, dead on its collective feet, there was only the windswept, snow-covered wooded area around Houssonloge, north of the Werbomont crossroads. No wonder that Reid, the regimental commander, to this day sets his jaw in bitterness when he talks about it--What did they do? They did what might be expected--they chopped down trees and lit fires to bring some warmth into their frozen bones. Damn the enemy! Damn the blackout! After all, there's a limit to what flesh and blood can stand. And Reid approved."*

December 24th, Christmas Eve, dawned beautifully. Blue sky was showing and the sun which we hadn't seen in some time, perhaps since we landed on the Continent, was dazzling us by its

appearance. The clear weather was extremely important to us because it gave Allied planes an opportunity to bring destruction to the enemy. The German tank columns had been able to make their huge penetrations without the interference of our planes for the entire first week of their attack.

The sun's appearance had a great buoying effect. The next lift was from the opportunity of the first shave since early December. A woman in a farm house near the bivouac area offered "chaud d'eau" (hot water) and the use of her kitchen for shaving. I had barely dampened my face and daubed on lather, when the woman came dashing in screaming, "La Boche, La Boche, La Boche!" I grabbed my rifle and ran outside, lather dripping down my face. Overhead a formation of B-17's was moving east on a mission over Germany. And then I noticed several parachutes descending from a very high altitude. What the woman had guessed were German paratroopers were in fact the crew of a B-17 which had been disabled--back to the shaving chore, and all's well on Christmas Eve in 1944, or so I thought!

Later, sometime after dark on Christmas Eve, some higher authority must have taken sympathy on the rugged lifestyle we had been following and had us trucked into a nearby village, probably Werbomont, where we were quartered in homes for our first protection from the weather elements since the German offensive started. We sacked out on the floor, crawling into our sleeping bags. We had barely pulled up the bag zippers and started to doze off when all hell broke loose--"Everybody up--we've got to move out quickly--the Germans have broken through our lines." The absolute disgust of tired men is hard to project. Profanity, cursing, oaths floated through the air. Stumbling outside in the coldness of night, we were loaded into trucks of the 7th Armored Division and headed south in the direction of the important road junction of Manhay. We were dropped off on the highway, perhaps a mile north of Manhay. We walked a short distance down the road and then cut off into the woods on the west side of the Liege highway. Still in somewhat of a stupor and cursing the bad luck and once again being denied a decent night's sleep, we were brought back to reality by Captain Cassidy's screaming that the Germans may be coming over the nearby hills at any moment and we had better start digging foxholes. I was very confused as to what was going on, and it wasn't until months later that I became aware of the facts.

It seems that the 2nd SS Panzer Division had commenced an attack at 9:00 p.m. Christmas Eve in the direction of Manhay. The German tank column had a captured American Sherman tank in the lead. The 7th Armored Division defenders had assumed the column was the American 3rd Armored Division which was known to be changing its positions. When the Germans suddenly began firing the surprise was absolute and the 7th Armored fell back in chaotic state. The Germans captured Manhay; the fear of American commanders was that they would head north toward Liege and in the process outflank American positions. Hence the hurry-up alert in bring us to the vicinity of Manhay to thwart a northern thrust from the Germans.

So here we were in the early morn of Christmas Day, 1944, digging foxholes as protection against the German onslaught which never came. We dug and anxiously watched the nearby hills for signs of the enemy. Hours passed, nothing happened and we began to wonder if our leadership knew what was going on.

*(Continued on next page)*



## MANHAY

(Continued from Page 20)

With such inactivity, we were told to move closer to Manhay at midday and we were treated to a bombing exhibition. We could see American P-38 fighter planes, those with the distinctive twin fuselages, dropping bombs in the hazy outline of the village of Manhay. Our visibility of the targets was poor, but we later learned that the planes were zeroing in on panzers of the 2nd SS Panzer Division.

We didn't know it then, but Maj. Gen. Ridgeway, our corps commander, had ordered Brig. Gen. Hasbrouck, of the 7th Armored Division, to retake Manhay by darkness on Christmas Day! In the mid-afternoon we learned that our 2nd Battalion of the 44th Regiment and units of the 7th Armored Division were selected for this task. We were given no briefing as to objectives or anything else, but merely told to lighten up for the attack, that is, to leave such things as sleeping bags behind to improve our mobility.

We moved out along the edge of the tree line in a single file on the high ground. In the process of this movement, the activity was noticed by the Germans who started some machine gun firing, not too intense, but enough for a couple of men to receive leg wounds.

It was late afternoon, in twilight, that we reached the positions from which we were to begin our attack. Word was given for us to emerge from the woods and begin our race downhill across open farmland toward houses along the main highway. As we began our attack and picked up running speed, not a shot was fired by the Germans. Our confidence increased as momentum picked up, and whooping and hollering started, with the troops firing wildly to the front. It was as if we were playing a game of "cowboys and indians." The open area that we were traversing was 300-500 yards in my recollection, and the only cover provided along that route in our area was a sunken farm road cutting across the fields. I remember running down on to the road and up the mound on the other side with barely a pause. Still no fire from the enemy. But then, about 30 yards behind, it started. Rapid fire machine guns began their stutter and traversed the field from my right across my front. It wasn't difficult to spot their source because of their use of tracer bullets whose entire trajectory could be followed.

Forward movement stopped as if by command, and we hit the ground. Thirty or 40 feet ahead my squad leader, Mike Jerosky, was hit as he reached a wire fence 100-150 feet behind the house toward which I was moving. George Evansco, close to Jerosky, also was hit but much more seriously. I'll never forget his screams for a medic followed by the words, "I'm dying!"

As I lay on the ground trying to be as inconspicuous as possible in the absence of a hole to crawl into, many thoughts go through my mind--What do I do now?--Do I docilely take the enemy's fire without retaliation--Isn't it my duty to fire my rifle--After all, I know where the enemy's fire is coming from because of the tracers. So I slowly bring my rifle to firing position and fire the eight rounds in a clip toward the source of the tracers. By now it is quite dark and I have no idea of the effect of my fire, but then the Germans fire a flare high into the air. It looks as bright as the morning sun and seems to take an eternity to descend to the ground to be extinguished. I guess it drops on a parachute principle to extend its life, but at any rate it appears so bright that I feel certain that all enemy eyes are focused on me and that I must even minimize breathing to appear completely motionless, expecting the "coup de grace" at any moment.

When darkness again settles over the area, I feel I have to do

something to improve my position. But then an artillery barrage starts, and I didn't know if it was German or American fire. I'm now convinced it was so-called "friendly fire." The shells land behind me and they are not coming from my front. Fear again enters my heart as I lie completely exposed. I don't know how close the shells are landing, but the ground is trembling as I hug it as tightly as I can. When the shelling subsides I crawl over to the only soldier I see. I don't remember his name, but he is in the same squad as I. He says that he felt something hit his shoulder. I look at it and see that his field jacket is tattered at the shoulder but no bleeding is in evidence. I ask him if he swallowed any "wound tablets." He says "no," so I give him some, along with water from my canteen. Then I suggest that we make a run for it back to the recessed dirt road that is some 30 yards behind us. He agrees and we get up and run as fast as we can, expecting machine gun fire to sweep the area; it doesn't happen as we reach and collapse on the sunken road. We see no other men from our company and learn later that the order to withdraw was given which never reached us. Dozens of wounded men are on the road and the medics are doing what they can to alleviate their pain. We assist in moving the men on makeshift stretchers to bring them closer together for eventual evacuation. It is very cold out and the wounded keep asking for blankets or something to keep them warm. I have no idea where the rest of our company has gone but I suggest to my fellow squad member that we walk toward the area and see if we can find anyone. No one is in sight as we come to a road, but a short distance away we spot a house. We have no idea who might be inside, friend or foe. We rap on the door and see the front window shade slowly curl up as a soldier's face appears. Thank God, it's an American. The door opens and we see perhaps eight or ten men sleeping on the floor. We prostrate ourselves, alerted periodically by the sound of vehicles passing in the night, wondering who they might be. We hardly give thought that this is our observance of Christmas as we fade off to sleep.

Manhay had not been captured by us, but the Germans withdrew, so for the night it was a "No man's land." One of our wounded who rejoined our company months later, said a German patrol came through the area where the wounded were lying and an English-speaking member of the patrol told them the Germans were withdrawing and that they could expect help from the Americans soon. This seemed rather remarkable to me since our opponents in this area were an SS panzer division, and compassion is something not generally associated with the SS.

The 106th Infantry Division history describes the action at Manhay in this manner:

*"Colonel Reid, of the 424th Infantry, called upon on Christmas Day for a battalion to work with CCA, 7th Armored, immediately chose Lt. Col Umanoff's 2nd Battalion which had come out of the previous fighting in better shape than the others.... The battalion attacked in a column of companies.... It was a nasty business. From cellars turned into pillboxes in both Manhay and Grandmenil, the Krauts were throwing a knee-high crossfire of machine guns. The attack got within 50 yards of Manhay, could go no further. As darkness fell the battalion was ordered to withdraw on the high ground on Hill 522, 2,000 yards north of Grandmenil.... Umanoff's outfit was badly mauled. 'Thirty-five percent casualties' is the estimate of Lt. Robert Logan, Battalion S-3. What had been the strongest battalion in the regiment was now cut to ribbons."\**

*\*\*ST. Vith Lion in the Way, by Colonel R. Ernest Dupuy.*

Today, if you visit the northern edge of Manhay on the main highway to Liege, you will see a marker which indicates the furthest point of German penetration in the Bulge and I have the satisfaction of knowing that I contributed to the location of that marker. ■



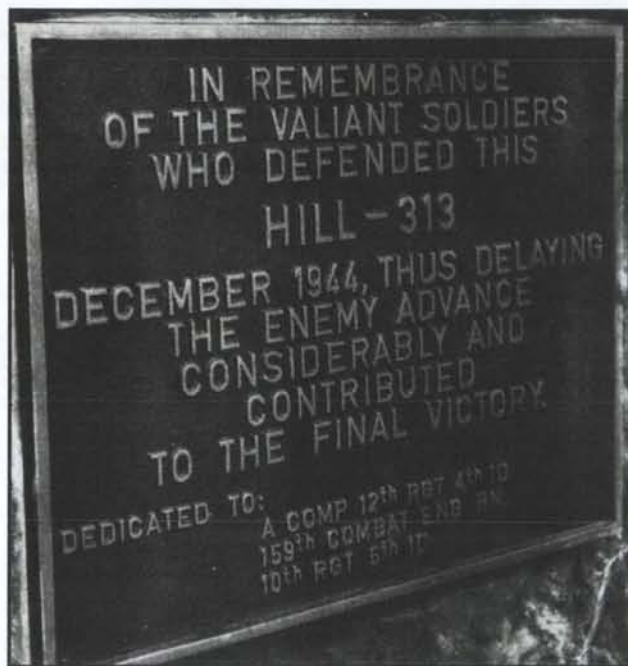
## 159TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, 4TH AND 5TH INFANTRY DIVISIONS HONORED

*[The following excerpts were taken from materials submitted by JOHN "JACK" STITZER and written by MURRAY MENDELSON, 159TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, H&S COMPANY.]*

[Excerpts] On April 16, 2001, several Luxembourg historical societies honored these units by dedicating a plaque installed at Hill 313 at Lauterborn near Scheidgen and Consdorf.

Various groups from the Luxembourg societies as well as representatives of the American units attended the ceremony. *[Participants of the 159th were: Kenneth Boring, James Sellars and Sam Greenwood.]* It was a moving event as the members made remarks on the importance of the battle.

*[Remarks by Murray Mendelsohn read at the dedication.]* As we look back to the Battle of the Bulge which took place some 56 years ago, many thoughts rush back to us. First off, it is amazing how much we still remember in intimate detail of the events of that time. Of course, they were momentous occurrences, but one would think that many of them would be dimmed by now. When I started to put these remarks in place, I spoke with several fellow members of the 159th Engineers and I was struck again and again by the recollections that were just below the surface in all of these men. I just had to mention a few places or events and the memory cascaded forward.



It is good that we are having this event today, while there are still members of the 159th to bring those thoughts out. Each succeeding year decimates our ranks and the first-hand accounts will no longer be there for posterity to fall back upon. That is why it is so important to get as many oral histories as possible while the participants are still alive. CEBA and other similar

groups are helping to accomplish this task. By having this event remembering and honoring what took place here in December of 1944 is noteworthy and deserving of much praise.

We Americans appreciate that the people of Luxembourg remember these events and that they are still so appreciative that they create events such as this to recall those dark days which eventually led to victory over Nazi tyranny. Because we had been brought up against a background of freedom, we could not tolerate the possibility of a Nazi and Axis rule of the world. They had to be stopped and it had fallen to us to provide the leadership and wherewithal to accomplish that end. Here, in Luxembourg, we had come to recognize your friendship and assistance in whatever degree you could provide it. You took us into your homes and showed us your genuine love. When the Nazis attacked on December 16th, we could not think of doing anything else except to help to defend our Luxembourg friends. I know that feeling of amicability is still there and obvious on both sides all these years later.

I felt that it would be better to remember Hill 313 in this manner, rather than to recall each individual event which took place in this hallowed area. We can refer back to our histories of the actual battles and special acts of courage and heroism which occurred here. As we go back over them in our moments of reflection and recollection, we are amazed by those individual acts which were part of the whole battle that saved that day and brought us back here today. We are all proud of the 159th Engineer Combat Battalion as well as the 4th and 5th Divisions, who are being honored by our wonderful Luxembourg friends and allies. Personally, I feel elated that we could have been part of the group that guaranteed peace and freedom for you. ■

## GATEWAY CHAPTER CELEBRATES V-E DAY

May 8, 2001, was the 56th Anniversary of V-E Day and it so happened that this was the same date as the monthly meeting of the St. Louis Gateway Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. It was decided to have a memorial ceremony to commemorate this historical event.



The above information and photo were supplied by W. Kent Stephens, President of the Gateway Chapter. ■



## AN ARTILLERYMAN'S STORY

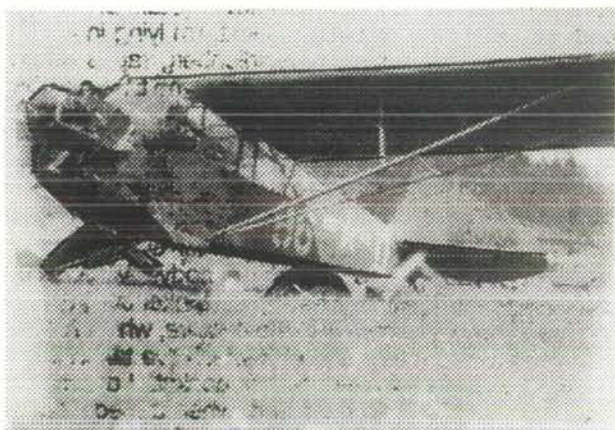
*[The following excerpts were written by JACK D. SMITH, 903RD FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS, and appeared in the April 2001 issue of The Flash--the newsletter of the 78th Infantry Division.]*

On our second day up, we were patrolling along the eastern edge of our line with the Roer River running through. We hadn't seen any activity when suddenly we were being attacked by enemy anti-aircraft guns just across the river. We pulled back a little way while I called the position of the guns to the fire direction center and after one round was fired to make sure the range was correct, we went right into "fire for effect." The guns bracketed the target and we had no more trouble from those enemy guns.

Meanwhile, the division was advancing slowly against a determined defense. German pillboxes were solid structures of steel and reinforced concrete. The walls were as much as 12 feet thick and the firing openings so narrow as to make accurate firing into them almost impossible from any distance. In the Siegfried Line there were pillboxes at almost every road crossing or curve in the road, camouflaged and built into the sides of hills. Their weapons were mutually supporting and could cover all the routes of approach with interlocking bands of fire. Into this hell the men of the 78th were attacking just before dawn and slowly advancing on their objectives. Enemy machine gun and mortar fire began to pour in and make it difficult to advance, but the men continued on. Artillery fire from our guns poured in just in front of our advancing men giving them a chance to relax for a few minutes.

We had been in action for only three days when Von Rundstedt launched his famous penetration that became known as the "Battle of the Bulge." This caused a sudden change of plans and our division was repositioned and instructed to hold the northern edge of the Bulge at all cost, and were not to retreat under any circumstance. The weather was unchangeable and there were a number of cold, sunny days when visibility was very good, and on one of those days Johnson and I spotted what looked like enemy troops moving along the edge of a tree line about a mile or so in front of where we were patrolling. I called the information in to the Fire Direction Center and asked for an adjusting round on the coordinates I gave them from our photograph. The reply came back to wait a few minutes, and we did. They came back on the air and said they wanted to fire the entire army artillery on the target using "Time on Target" fuses. Since many guns of the whole 1st Army were located in different positions, some much farther away than others from the target, it was necessary to compute the time in the air between each battery of guns to the target so that all the shells would arrive on the target at the same time. This meant that there would be no warning to the enemy troops that they had been spotted. Finally the word came on the radio that all the guns were ready to fire. Suddenly, over the target, the air was full of exploding shells and all the guns continued to fire for a short while. The shells exploding in the air 30 to 50 feet above the ground, tore the trees to shreds and anything under that barrage was doomed. If not killed, badly injured. It was later confirmed, when our troops finally moved through there, that there were many dead German soldiers on the ground.

One day the weather was bad but we could see the top of the hill and that meant we had to fly our mission. Some time near the end of our mission, the weather began to close in and we decided we had better head back to our field. There was only one thing wrong. We became lost. We were just above tree-top level trying to determine where we were and the wind was blowing pretty hard. Even though the plane had a compass, the enemy was on three sides of us and we didn't know if we were flying into enemy or our territory. Suddenly, we spotted a deserted landing strip and realized it was probably abandoned because it was too close to the front. Steel mats had been set so planes would have a solid surface to land on and we decided to land there hoping it was in friendly territory.



Because the wind was blowing, Johnson decided to make a power landing. In other words, he would keep the engine going at speed until after the wheels had touched down and then cut the throttle. This is done in heavy winds to keep the plane flying straight until we are actually on the ground. This time it didn't work. Just as we reached the beginning of the steel strip, we saw it was curled up about a foot. We were coming in at about a speed of 50 miles per hour when the wheels caught in the curl, the plane flipped over, and we went down the runway upside down and backwards at nearly that speed until we finally came to a stop. We were upside down, hanging with all our weight on the safety belts. Johnson and I both reached to cut off the engine switch the minute we flipped, so the engine would not ignite gasoline coming out of the tank. We were finally stopped, and frantically trying to unfasten our seat belts with all of our weight hanging on them, because the gasoline still might ignite the fabric covering of the plane into a ball of fire. We both got loose at about the same time and scrambled away from the plane.

Our radio antennae had jabbed its way through the left side of the cockpit just missing both of us and we were very lucky not to be injured by it. Luckily, also, the plane did not catch on fire and even with the antennae going through the cockpit, the radio was still working. Johnson radioed in and gave a description of the strip we crashed on and fortunately for us, it was just inside our front line. We were advised to get under cover and some one would be sent to pick us up. We were very lucky to survive this crash, but it was only the first of several over the next few months. A jeep finally arrived to pick us up and take us back to our airstrip and the next day Johnson left to go back and pick up another plane. It usually took a day or two before he would get back and we could resume flying our missions.

*(Continued on next page)*



## AN ARTILLERYMAN'S STORY

(Continued from Page 23)

At this time, it was decided that our planes needed to be positioned farther back from the front. It was also decided to leave one plane there to hopefully spot Von Rundstedt's advance. Johnson and I volunteered to be the ones to stay, and all the rest of the planes and men left us to ourselves. When we woke up the next morning, there was a big Sherman tank sitting on the edge of the woods out our back window.

That morning we took off and headed for our usual coverage of the front line and in the middle of the mission we received a radio call from the Fire Direction Center asking us to go up to about 5,000 feet to see if we could see anything with regard to Von Rundstedt's drive. We weren't too happy about this as we would be very vulnerable to enemy fighter planes because our plane would be too slow to get away from them.

Orders were orders, so we began a slow climbing turn to gain altitude and soon got up to 5,000 feet. We looked around in every direction but couldn't see anything unusual. The sun was bright and I was having a hard time looking in its direction when suddenly there appeared a flight of fighter planes coming right toward us. I smacked Johnson on the shoulder and hollered "Dive," and he shoved the stick forward and we were into a screaming dive toward the ground. The plane never went faster in its entire existence and at about 3,000 feet the engine cowlings flew off and we were still going at top speed. Johnson began to pull out of the dive at 2,000 feet and we were down to 500 before the came out of it, and, luckily for us, the fighter planes ignored us and kept on going. We reported in on the radio to the Fire Direction Center and told them what happened and that we could not see anything of the enemy on our circling trip to gain altitude. Johnson had to fly the plane back to the replacement center to replace the cowlings and was back the next day.

Von Rundstedt's Ardennes offensive would have given Germany the breathing period it needed. The Port of Antwerp was to be reached in the period of three weeks. If the drive had been successful, 38 Allied divisions in the north would have been cut off and the most accessible support port in northern Europe would have been lost. His attack was begun on December 16th northeast of Bastogne and south of Monschau, just south of the 78th Division sector.

The Germans expected to capture large amounts of American gasoline in Belgium, but when they reached the supply dumps they found nothing. First the panzer forces were slowed down and then stopped. The northern and southern sectors of the Bulge were under Field Marshal Montgomery and General Bradley. By January 3rd, the Allies had renewed the offensive and within two weeks the Germans were forced to withdraw back into the Siegfried Line. Only the bad weather, often grounding Allies planes, saved the Germans from total disaster.

When the German attacked in the Ardennes, the 78th Division was ordered to go on the offensive. On December 18th, we were transferred to the VII Corps of the U.S. First Army, and four days later, to the XIX Corps of the U.S. Ninth Army. On the edge of the Bulge, our position stuck out two miles into German lines. Surrounded on three sides, the 78th was ordered to improve, consolidate and hold this position.

This holding period lasted until the end of January when the Germans were completely cleared from the Ardennes. No attacks were made by us or the Germans after we went on the defensive. However, there were attacks by us on enemy pillboxes and we laid wire to and built good defensive positions. Our planes were in the air from dawn to dusk reporting signs of enemy activity and firing missions on any enemy movements we could observe. ■

## REUNION

### ...THANKS TO THE INTERNET

[Information submitted by **BERT H. MORPHIS, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, 26TH INFANTRY, COMPANY B.**]

[Excerpts] [After being wounded at Stolberg, just outside Aachen...] a German artillery shell had buried me and filled both my legs with shell fragments, sand and gravel. After another three months I was well enough to rejoin my unit. I found them on Christmas Eve, 1944, at Butgenbach, Belgium, in the midst of the Battle of the Bulge.

Although only a PFC, I was given acting command of the second squad, first platoon, Company B. At the same time, two other men joined Company B as replacement riflemen in combat for the first time. As fate would have it, 23-year-old Walter Morgan (of Chicago) and 19-year-old Marvin Stremke (of Milwaukee) were assigned to my squad.

The three of us fought together until March 2, 1945, when Stremke was seriously wounded by a German machine gun. I treated his wounds and took him back to an aid station, and that was the end of the war for him. He was in the hospital when the war ended. Later in March, I was wounded a second time, but after only three weeks returned to my old squad. Morgan and I continued together until he was given command of another squad in the first platoon....



Left to right: Wally Morgan, Bert Morphis and Marv Stremke.

The three of us had no further contact until the spring of 2000. While Stremke and his wife, Marie, were visiting her sister in Florida, she brought some books home from the library where she worked. One of these was *Citizen Soldier*, which quoted an item concerning the Bulge written by me. Recognizing this as his old squad leader, Marvin immediately asked his sister-in-law if she could find my phone number. She went to the internet and found the number. He called and we talked for the first time since March 2, 1945. By the greatest coincidence, just a month later Walter Morgan's daughter Kathe was describing a feature of the internet and he asked her to see if she could find his old squad leader. She quickly did so. He called and we two talked for the first time since September, 1945.

[The three had a marvelous reunion at the regiment's reunion after 56 years.] ■



## SURELY, A FRIEND INDEED

[The following article was provided by Jean Pehovic, widow of **JOHN V. PEHOVIC, 526TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION**. The article was written by Fernand Albert, of CRIBA. (Translator unknown.)]

On Tuesday, December 19, 1944, Edmond Klein, who was behind his house in Houvegneux, observes with concern shrapnel explosions in the direction of Recht, when suddenly he sees three American soldiers who are coming up the road in his direction. These men address him using a few words in their language. Edmond does not understand what they want.

He explains, as best he can, that the American artillery units are located in the direction of Ville du Bois and perhaps even at Petit Thier and offers to take them through the woods--an offer which is immediately accepted.

The trip takes place without incident and when coming into view of the town of Petit Thier they see some figures. Edmond takes the precaution of waving his handkerchief. An American soldier advances toward the group with weapon in hand. When he recognizes his compatriots, he leads them toward a guard post and Edmond returns to the road leading home.

Upon returning home, he learns that 13 other famished American soldiers are at the Castle of Houvegneux. He and his sister bring food and supplies to the lost men. Among the soldiers is an officer who knows a little French and during the meal becomes better acquainted with Edmond. Edmond offers to take the group to the American lines as he has done for the other group. However, considering that it was already late in the day, he deems it more prudent to take the men to his residence so the soldiers can get a good night's sleep and dry their soaked uniforms.

When they arrive in Edmond's village, a neighbor comes to announce that five German cars had come to Houvegneux a little while earlier and that the Germans had inquired about the presence of Americans in the region. They did not obtain any information and left. Edmond lead the 13 soldiers to a hay loft, where they got a good night's rest.

The group leaves early the next morning, taking a forest route. Edmond leads the group but maintains a certain distance in front of the Americans. Suddenly, he finds himself among German soldiers who are stationed near a small pond. One of them cries a resounding "Halt," and Edmond stops. The Americans draw their rifles which causes the Germans to withdraw.

Leaving the road, the group advances quickly across the woods and arrives on the other side of the woods without further incident at the church of Petit Thier which is now an American command post.

An American officers warmly thanks Edmond, who declines an invitation to be evacuated to a safer place. He chooses to return to his home.

On recounting these stories to me, Edmond added that the American officer who commanded the group of soldiers had offered him his binoculars in appreciation for his efforts and he would always remember this souvenir.

We ended the conversation with Edmond expressing regrets at not knowing what had become of the soldiers he had helped escape. He showed me a certificate signed by Eisenhower, General of the Army, commanding General U.S. Forces,

European Theater, worded as follows: "The President of the United States of America has directed me to express to Edmond Klein the gratitude and appreciation of the American people for gallant service in assisting the escape of allied soldiers from the enemy.

I decided to try to find out more about this subject and launched an inquiry--I must admit with little hope of seeing a successful ending.

Discussing the matter with Joseph Gavroye, it reminded him of a passage in a book he had read. A few days later he sent me a copy of an excerpt from a document entitled *My Longest Week*, written by Arthur Brown, ex-captain of the 589th Field Artillery of the 106th Infantry Division. Here is the translation of the excerpt:

"December 19--our host advised us to spend the night in his barn. There, we really enjoyed the warmth which only hay can give and we enjoyed a night of marvelous sleep. From time to time, we would hear the Germans, who toured the farm, outside.

"December 20--Early in the morning, our farmer host came to the barn. He was willing to direct us to the American lines. Out of gratitude, I gave him my binoculars. We left in single file but quickly. We found ourselves in the presence of German soldiers who were washing themselves in the vicinity of a pond. They did not see us right away and we lay in drawing position. As soon as they became aware of our presence, they went in the direction of their main forces.

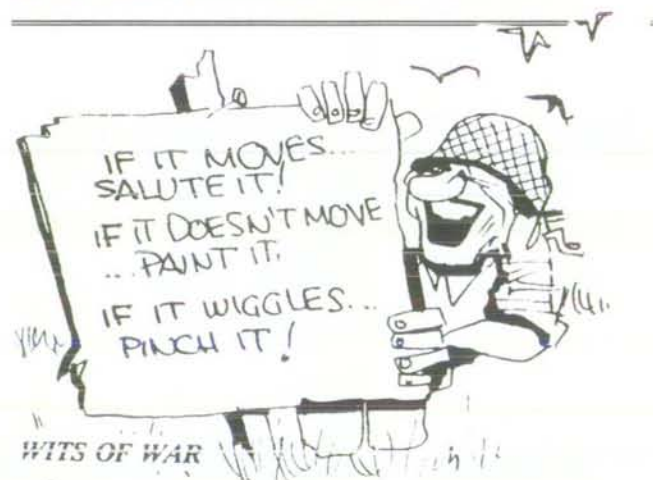
"Given our desire to reach as soon as possible our lines, without delay, we continued our march without firing a shot.

"After having walked about a mile across the country, the Belgian farmer pointed out the friendly lines. Having a white flag, he advanced alone and announced our arrival. This precaution to send this man alone was necessary because we were coming from a territory occupied by the enemy and we could not risk being identified by our soldiers, at such a distance, as Germans.

"The soldiers, who welcomed us to their ranks, directed us immediately, at my request, toward Vielsalm."

After reading this text which corresponds almost word for word with what Edmond Klein told me, there is no doubt in my mind that Arthur Brown was the officer who commanded the group of fugitives, even to point out that he had given binoculars.

I wrote, without delay to the American veteran, and a short time later, my friend Edmond received from America news of the one whom he believed he would never find again. ■





## LETTER FROM THE FRONT

[Following are excerpts from a letter written by **WENDELL C. OBERMEIER, 75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 899TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS**, written to his wife from Meschede, Germany on May 22, 1945. We have reprinted the portion dealing with the Bulge.]

...Our last day aboard ship was spent navigating up the Seine River, and it was here we saw the first great destruction wrought by war on the continent. The battered buildings in Wales and England were mute evidence of the bombings there. We rammed our bow onto a sandy beach at Rouen, France, late on the afternoon of December 16, at the same time Von Rundstedt was trying his all-out bid for a German victory. After disembarking at Rouen, we traveled by our trucks, to our bivouac area, a rain-soaked field near Freville, France.

On the morning of the 17th, we started on a motor march that was scheduled to take us to Vise, Belgium, to relieve British troops. We traveled as far as Soissons, the weather was miserable. It was cold, rained all day long, and we were soaked. We pitched our tents and spent the night.

We stayed over the next day in order that we might draw a full quota of ammunition before continuing on. We again were on the move the following morning, but were halted the next evening before we had reached our destination because of the advance of the Germans in the Ardennes sector and, the fact that German paratroopers in American uniforms had been dropped in that area. This night we saw our first buzz bombs and having seen and heard one of these, it is not quickly forgotten. We bivouacked along the road that night and the following day found billets in a little town called Schalkhoven near Tongres in Belgium.

We remained here until the 22nd and then received orders to move south as a reserve, to stop the German breakthrough. On this day, I saw the situation map at corps headquarters in Tongres and saw the full extent of the breakthrough and the number of identified Nazi units against us in that sector. We moved to Borlon, Belgium.

On the 24th of December we moved to Gros-Chene, Belgium, and remained there until the 27th. On Christmas Day we were bombed and strafed by an unidentified P-38 but suffered no casualties. Again, we had turkey for Christmas as the President had promised.

On the 27th, we moved to Ferriers, Belgium, and from there to Grand Hoursinne, Belgium, to our first combat position on the afternoon of the 28th.

The following day, December 29th at 1251 hours, we fired our first round of ammunition at the enemy, a base point registration, in order that we would be able to support the relief of the 424th Infantry by the 291st Infantry, which was completed that night and our doughboys took up a defensive line at Vaux-Chavene, Grandmainland Manhay.

These positions were held with light casualties until the 5th, when the Third Armored Division attacked through us and we supported the attack with artillery fire. On the 6th, we moved to Vert Buisson into First Army reserve. It was on the 4th of January that our battalion suffered its first casualties with the death of Lt. Schaffner, who was killed by artillery fire.

On the 9th, we made a blackout night march in bitter cold and deep snow to St. Jacques and Bergeval, Belgium. We occupied positions and the following day our infantry relieved elements of the 82nd Airborne, which had established a bridgehead across the Salm River. On the 13th, we moved to Petite Halleaux and on the 15th, were in position to support the first large-scale attack of our infantry. We fired a 20-minute preparation, but Jerry was dug in and waiting for us and our doughs had 1,500 yards of open ground to cross up-hill in order to reach the woods and ultimately the battalion objective. Our doughboys suffered heavy casualties here and the ground was literally covered with American dead and dying. At the end of the day, we had only gained a few hundred yards.

During the night, this battalion was relieved and another battalion jumped off the next morning, again suffering heavy casualties, but reaching the woods and the objective that night. The weather during this attack was freezing cold and snow was more than knee-deep in many places. If a man was wounded, the blood would freeze in a matter of a few seconds. Many men suffered from frozen feet, hands, etc., as well as the battle casualties.

We continued this attack until we had reached our objective and then we supported a battalion of the 290th in an attack. While in these positions, we drew enemy counter-battery fire as the enemy had excellent observation on our positions. I nearly lost two members of my survey crew at this time when a shell knocked the top off of a foxhole they had dove into while taping across the open field. They were covered with dirt and badly shaken up for awhile, but were soon okay. I have submitted them both for a Bronze Star. We were also strafed by Jerry planes while in these positions.

We next displaced to Beaufays, Belgium, where we supported the attack of our doughs while they captured the towns of Commanster, Maldringende and Aldringen. This attack was to cut the St. Vith-LaRothe road, which it did. Again, this was accomplished in bitter cold and deep snow, which makes any job much more difficult.

We remained in these positions until the 26th, when we were transferred to the 7th Army in southern France and moved to join them.

We had finished up our job of wiping out the Bulge in Belgium and thought we were going to get a much-needed rest in a small village near Liege. ....

This is in no way an account of the battles as far as the individual is concerned, as each of the battles would warrant the amount of space I have devoted to this entire period. Each battle, no matter how small or unimportant it may seem as a whole, is very important to each and every individual concerned. ■



## CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL!

Right above your last name on the label is the date your dues were due. Postage rates are going up, please save us the expense of sending a reminder. Annual dues are \$15.00. If you wish to become a life member it is \$75.00 if you're over 75 and \$125.00 if you haven't reach that age yet. Your help will be very much appreciated. Thanks.



## WHAT HAPPENED TO LILI MARLENE?

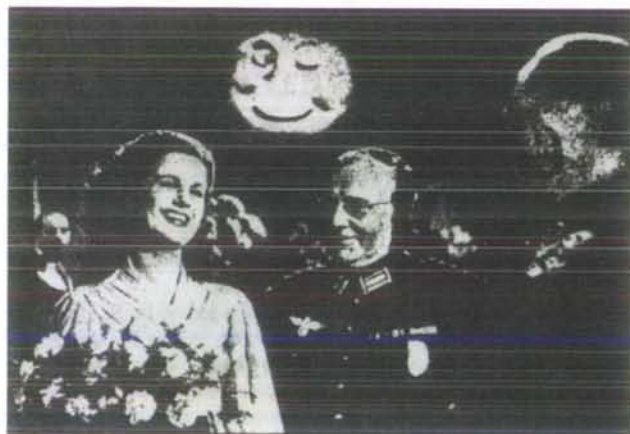
[Information for the following article was gleaned from *The Ardennes Echo*, the newsletter of VBOB Central Massachusetts Chapter. The article was condensed from *Life* magazine's June 5, 1944 issue, written by Fillmore Calhoun.]

[Excerpts] "To be quite proper and logical about it, the song should be sung by a man in recordings and broadcasts, but it never is. It is one of those unfathomable things about the song, much the same as the fact that the usual sputter and snort of German words disappear in the German rendition, in which the opening lines go:

*"Vor der Ka-ser-ne, vor dem gros-sen Tor  
Stahd ei-ne La-ter-ne, steht sie noch da-vor  
so woll'n wir uns da wie-der-sehn  
bei der La-ter-ne woll'n wir stehn,  
wie einst, Lili Marleen, wie einst, Lili Marleen.*

"A translation of this, and the second verse, goes:  
*"In front of the barracks, before the heavy gate:  
There stood a lamppost, and if it's standing yet  
Then we shall meet there once again  
Beside the lamppost in the rain,  
As once, Lili Marlene, as once, Lili Marlene.*

"Last Christmas Eve the guns were silent on the Italian front. The British Eighth Army was stalled in mud and snow. It was no night for fighting. Only a few patrols moved forward, the men treading warily because of land mines and listening intently for any noises. There, among the splintered olive groves in no man's land, they could hear the sound of singing from both armies--and both were singing the same two songs. One song was *Stille Nacht, Heilige Nacht* (*Silent Night, Holy Night*) which was immortalized by Madame Schuman-Heink, who had sons fighting in both the German and Allied Armies in World War I. The other song was *Lili Marlene*, which British soldiers contend they 'captured' when they annihilated the German Afrika Korps, and which can now be accepted as the greatest war song of World War II."



BEFORE INTERNMENT, LALA WAS THE TOAST OF OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS ALIKE

Lala Anderson became a star as a result of having made this recording. "She went to Norway, Belgium, Holland, and France to sing to the German troops and was invited to Belgrade to sing the song in person. Winter relief funds and music bars were named after her.

"By January 1, 1943, Radio Belgrade had played her song twice nightly for 500 consecutive nights and by that time more than a million fan letters and love poems had been sent into the mythical Lili. Letters came in from lonely soldiers on the Russian front, from prison camps in Egypt and from U-boat crews, one of whom, 'somewhere off New York harbor,' wrote that: 'Tonight we tuned in softly in order not to wake up Uncle Sam.'

***"...and which now can  
be accepted as the  
greatest war song  
of World War II."***

"Only once has *Lili* been off the air since the Germans captured Belgrade on April 13, 1941. That was for three nights after the German armies were smashed at Stalingrad, when all entertainment of any sort was banned. Goebbels brought her back again on the air as soon as the ban was over, and she still sings, or at least her record is played every night. But Lala Andersen, whose voice is that of *Lili* to millions of soldiers, is no longer heard in person." A British film, *The True Story of Lili Marlene*,... "is based on evidence that Lala Andersen has fallen into disgrace. Director Jennings, who gathered research on *Lili* from all possible sources, learned that shortly after Stalingrad, Lala was put into a concentration camp. An intercepted letter from the one time toast of Berlin reads in part: 'All I want to do is get out of this terrible country.'

"At one time Nazi propagandists decided that they had overplayed *Lili* and attempted to substitute a new theme song...but Europeans so promptly corrupted the [new] with a subversive new text that it was banned by Goebbels."

Do you know what happened to Lala Andersen? Do you have a Bulge remembrance of *Lili* (that you can talk about, that is)? If so, tell us about it. ■



***YOUNG BOY  
EATS  
GI RATIONS***

US Army Signal Corp.  
Photo, The National  
Archives



## 11TH ARMORED DIVISION ...IN THE BULGE

*[The following was excerpted from the article "Preparation for Combat," by Brigadier General Charles S. Kilburn, which appeared in the 11th Armored Division newsletter for April, 2002. Brigadier General Kilburn was Division Commander for the 11th.]*

[Excerpt] At dusk on December 16, faint bits of news reached Chateau Briand of a formidable German counteroffensive somewhere on the front of the Twelfth Army Group. In the meantime the majority of the division staff had reached the new Command Post and all hands were busy in the final features of the plans to relieve the 94th. On the following day our plans for containing St. Nazaire and Lorient were complete. Assignments to each combat command had been developed and the location and make-up of Colonel Bell's Reserve Command were confirmed.

The news from the front was ominous--the Germans had penetrated American lines to a depth of 35 miles. General Maloney (94th) and Kilburn held hourly conferences. In the afternoon, General Kilburn motored to Rennes to look over the 21st Armored Infantry under Hoffman, the 55th Armored Infantry under Hearn and the 490 FA under Davitt, all having arrived at that point under the control of CCB and Colonel Yale. To check last minute details with the Brittany Base Section, in Rennes, General Kilburn visited that headquarters and was handed this message: "Suspend all movement 11th Armored in Division in place and await further orders--Signed Lee." The message was paraphrased to Holbrook at Cherbourg with instructions to get word to Bell at Southampton.

The discussions within the staff went on far into the night. On the morning of December 19, word reached Division Headquarters that the 11th Armored Division would move as promptly as possible on three routes to the vicinity of Reims in SHAEF Reserve. The Zone of Communications under Lieutenant General John C. H. (Courthouse) Lee required all of the 19th to develop routes of march, gasoline supply, etc.

The Thunderbolts headed East at daylight of December 20. Yale led the group now in bivouac at Rennes. Holbrook started CCA and those units waiting at Cherbourg. Bell put the heat on loading the last of our units out of England. Six hundred miles away by circuitous routes marked with temporary bridges lay the first march objective in Europe.

General Kilburn accompanied by Colonel Williams and Captain Neiman headed for Paris. With the mud and muck of winter ahead it was imperative that our new tanks be equipped with "track extensions" before our first action; the best source of supply was Paris. Within 48 hours, 8000 pounds of medium tank track extensions were on the way to Soissons for installation on our tanks. Just how much these accessories were to benefit many of our tank crews during those first bloody days at Bastogne may be questionable; yet there is satisfaction in the knowledge that no effort ever was spared in the Division to secure every possible advantage for its members by every staff and command echelon.

At a visit to SHAEF on December 22, the division commander was advised in an informal manner that, perchance, the 11th Armored Division might prove to be the lone remaining combat

element between the advancing Germans under Von Rundstedt and the Atlantic Ocean. That afternoon, having been preceded by Colonel Williams, General Kilburn headed for Reims. Arrival there found General Lee and his Reims commander in a rather portentous conference discussing the adequate defense of the Meuse River. The knowledge that the Thunderbolts were concentrating on Reims dispelled materially the heavy atmosphere of anxiety. (Note: with the remaining elements of the Division still moving out of England, the wheels and tracks of our march columns continued their grind over the roads of France.) In the meantime General Kilburn had been placed in charge of all defenses along the Meuse River from Verdun to Givet, some 160 miles. A large portion of the Division Staff was assembled at Charleroi coordinating this mission. In fact CCA had been ordered bivouacs north of that city for use as a mobile reserve. Together with three battalions of French Resistance Forces, CCA, on arrival was to push reconnaissance elements well to the east of the river.

Christmas Day 1944 found the Division still moving on the Reims area with the Division Commander and Staff engaged in a mission remote from close contact with our own elements. During the day, great fleets of C-47's (cargo planes) soared over Charleroi headed for the embattled forces at Bastogne to drop desperately needed supplies. The spirit of Christmas was not with us, but the situation of other men caught in the merciless pressure of the Bulge made our position enviable by comparison. On the following day, the 26th, a message to this effect was phoned to General Kilburn from both SHAEF and General Bradley's Twelfth Army Group, "Your friends to the north may give a party. It may be a large affair, but only a part of your family is invited to participate in some phases of it"--transcribed, "The British forces to your north may execute an attack; their attack to be reinforced by certain elements of the 11th AD."

In accord with the foregoing message, word was received from the VIII Corps requesting the Division Commander to join in a reconnaissance with staff members of the Corps for assembly areas near Givet. General Kilburn with Lieutenant Colonel Downer, G-3, and General Holbrook and Staff spent the greater part of the day on this purpose. On returning to Charleroi late in the afternoon, it was found that the 17th Airborne Division had arrived in such force as to enable them to assume the defense of the Meuse. Our staff lost no time in departing for the Division CP which had been installed in a French manor house some distance northeast of Reims. The assembled staff on the evening of the 27th was a welcome sight to General Kilburn who had been out of direct contact with the division since the 13th of the month. It was this night that the news was announced that the last of our units had closed in their assigned bivouacs at two o'clock that morning.

The first event on the morning of the 28th was a meeting of all unit commanders and staffs at the Division CP. Without delay the combat groupments of the combat commands and reserve command were designated with the directive that liaison agents would report at once to appropriate headquarters. Likewise the immediate preparation of an operating signal annex and other features of a SOP character, incident to our current situation were directed for early distribution. The remainder of the daylight hours were given to checks of supply matters to assure adequate issued of ammunition, gasoline, etc. A liaison officer already had been dispatched to the VIII Corps (Captain Emmett Keough).

*(Continued on next page)*



## 11TH ARMORED DIVISION

(Continuation)

The wide dispersion of the division, with CCA north of Charleroi, gave some concern.

At 8:30 p.m. (28th) the Division Commander's phone rang with the Chief of Staff, VIII Corps, on the other end. General Kilburn repeated this message, "Alert your division to march--Have the Signal Officer copy this coded message." To prepare the issue of orders and assure distribution down to subordinate units with a division requires six hours by all acceptable standards in Army circles. With some impatience the decoding of the message given to the Signal Officer, was awaited. When clarified, the Division had received orders to move without delay to assembly areas southwest of the beleaguered town of Bastogne. The only feasible route lay through Sedan with a one-way bridge on the Meuse River at that point. Within an hour, march orders had been prepared and issued to the major commands. By 1:00 a.m., December 29, CCA was in movement. Midnight of that day was to find the 11th AD with a march depth in single column of over 50 miles, beyond a one-way bridge and closed in bivouac some 96 miles to the east. Only a highly efficient, well organized, disciplined division could have accomplished that feat.

The Division CP was established at Neufchateau. Enroute to that point, General Kilburn visited Headquarters VIII Corps. There the proposed plan of attack of the Thunderbolts, to relieve besieged Bastogne, was discussed. The Division was to attack at daylight, December 30 (the next morning). It was noted that the plan specified an attack by one combat command to the east and the other to the west of a heavily wooded area; a situation which precluded any possible mutual support between these two major elements. This feature was protested by the Division Commander as dangerous to the welfare of our units as well as futile towards decisive results. This protest was over-ruled on the basis that the 87th Infantry Division would attack on our left and being a green division should be supported by the availability of armor. The 11th AD, also, was to taste combat for the first time. The plan was outlined, however, was to prevail--at a cost.

At 4:00 p.m. General Holbrook and Colonel Yale reported to the Division CP. Both had been in contact with the 6th Cavalry Group which was in contact with German Forces in the area where we were to launch our attack. Insofar as could be ascertained, two German Panzer Divisions held ground which we must secure. (Soon identified as the 3rd Panzer Grenadier and 15th Panzer Grenadier Divisions). In addition the Reimer Brigade (an armored unit commanded by a brigadier named Reimer, who previously had been chief of Hitler's personal bodyguard). A brigade comprising selected personnel of the most flagrant type of young and brutal Nazi. Comparing tables of equipment, the German forces opposing us were potentially stronger in tanks than ourselves. The proposed plan of attack was discussed and instructions given for the combat commanders to conduct final reconnaissance in view of the attack orders anticipated. A concluding assembly of unit commanders would be held at 9:30 p.m. when the formal orders for the attacks would be issued.

In the meantime the never ending stream of vehicles continued to flow through Neufchateau on their way to final assembly positions and their rendezvous with destiny and the Germans. Dusk fell and gave way to a clear, cloudless sky in which

glowed a brilliant full moon. The sound of airplanes announced the strafing of our columns by small flights of Messerschmidts. Alert driving together with the effective actions of our 575th AAA Auto Weapons Battalion resulted in negligible casualties. Later the 575th was to draw first enemy blood when their guns knocked down a lone German fighter who attempted to rake the Division CP. The kitchen crew of Division Headquarters Mess brought in the first German prisoner when the grounded aviator landed by parachute close to their culinary operations. A while after midnight, the mess crew, always alert ones, were on the job and pounced on the Heine the moment he struck the ground.

The formal written Corps Orders for the attack, were delivered by Keough at dark and the provisions of the Division attack for the following morning were complete by 9:30 p.m. when the major unit commanders assembled in the caravan of the Division Commander. The widely divergent maneuver of our two combat commands, previously specified by Corps, still held. Details for the coordination of supporting artillery fires, particularly for the supporting role of Corps Artillery, were anything but clear and specific. Air-ground liaison groups of the 9th Tactical Air Force operating under the Third Army had yet to appear. Information of the hostile situation in our zone of action provided by the 6th Cavalry Group was, to the Division Commander, of a hazy and indefinite nature.

As to be proven during the five ensuing days, as now described by Robert E. Merriam, in the book *Dark December*, the division was to contribute hugely to the decisive Battle of the Bulge. Its gallant and impetuous assault to assure American retention of the vital road-center of Bastogne was to result in the destruction of a great part of VonRunstedt's hordes which otherwise, on withdrawal to the East, would have manned later the Siegfried Line. As was declared afterwards by the VIII Corps Commander, the Thunderbolts saved that critical area and the attendant travail and confusion which would have prevailed had it fallen to the now desperate Germans.

By 10:30 p.m., the major unit commanders had received their orders, discussed last minute details and departed. Within a dozen hours the Division was to have tasted the rigors and cost of modern war. The stakes were high but irrespective of cost the Division had that fiber and that caliber to meet, head on, the severest crisis of its history. We were to join that Holy fraternity who, through American annals, have been launched into the throes of major battle in their first engagement. Outnumbered in tanks, out-gunned in tank cannon, operating in tricky tank terrain, we were to force two crack Panzer Divisions and a picked armored brigade of the vaunted German legions to surrender over six miles of key ground. Our junction with the intrepid 101st Airborne Division assisted materially in cracking the back of the Bulge.

Only a disciplined, trained division, high in esprit and pride, with complete confidence in every member could have boasted this magnificent achievement. When the harsh winds of winter and the mild zephyrs of spring flow over the graves of those valiant men of the division whom we left under European soil, one may distinguish, faintly but exaltedly, the undaunted refrain--"We were Thunderbolts."■

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**...always wondered...was Kilroy in the Battle of the Bulge? If you have a funny story about him in the Bulge, drop us a note.**



## REFLECTIONS by Joseph Zimmer

*These reflections were given by the author at the MD/DC Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Association meeting, on Sunday, 10 February 2002, at Perry's Restaurant, Rt. 175, Odenton MD. Joe served with Company B, 345th Infantry, 87th Infantry Division. His thoughts are shared with those who were unable to attend.*

By whatever count, our Chapter has its 11th President, John Worthington, to lead us in our 21st year. By historical contrast, our beloved country is 226 years old, as we see our 43rd President. Our hope, prayers, our best wishes and support are with him, maybe, even our destiny is in his hands, as he leads in the fight against terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. It is a very changed world for us. The fears, taste, sorrow, sympathies, the pathos of September 11th 2001, has been experienced by all. We will not falter. For the first time in history, terrorists struck, left no message – spoken or unspoken. They don't leave us or, offer us anything except uncertainty, doubts, treachery, or maybe questions. The stereophonic horror of our TVs and radios resounded all around us for days and weeks. There are more troops on the ground in Utah, than we have in Afghanistan. The Empire State Building stands alone, as nearby, just two weeks ago, another victim was found. The sound track of our lives continues. May the echoes of our trials and tribulations experienced in WWII strengthen the brave men and women of our special forces who bravely fight today.

We may be witnessing a most decisive decade in the history of liberty and freedom. In 1947, Harry Truman reversed a post WWII policy of withdrawal from Europe, and committed the United States to the rebuilding of a stricken Europe, through the Marshall Plan, and resisting expansion of the Soviet Union. Before his tragic death in the early sixties, Kennedy promised the Nation, that we would put a man on the moon, which was accomplished by the Apollo XI program in 1969. I was privileged to have worked on that achievement while employed by ITT. In 1981, Reagan reversed a failed policy of détente and committed us to seek victory over communism, as achieved in 1989, the fall of the Berlin Wall. His recent State of the Union address, George W. Bush, put an end to a decade of temporizing and timidity and started us on the complex and dangerous path of removing the threat of hostile regimes and tyrannies of a new "axis of terror" - North Korea, Iraq and Iran. This task is truly comparable to Truman's and Reagan's. It will not be easy or painless. But it is worthy of a great nation that fought the Cold War for many years after WWII. Worry is a luxury we can't afford now.

rather than terrorism being the final act on an uncertain journey, let us believe, as old warriors ourselves, that it is only another painful crusade and, very complex, but a limited adjustment in the endless project of building a safe and civilized community of nations. Life is truly like a lake, at times; we all start swimming across, some make it, others, unfortunately, do not. Maybe we'll be lucky – luck is where preparation meets opportunity. As we have heard Winston Churchill say in our troubled times, many generations ago during WWII, "If you're going through hell, keep going." this we all will do. May the current generation measure up to what we "the greatest generation" in Brokaw's parlance, accomplished defeating the old axis of Germany – Japan – Italy. The Olympic Code says: "It's not the triumph but the struggle that matters."

The brave men and women of our Special Forces by air, land and sea, who carry the battle effort to a hard to see and difficult to find enemy continue to receive the nation's admiration and full support and concern. Imagine we of WWII, fighting then, with today's pundits, academicians, the left, the ACLU, Human Rights groups, members of the British Parliament, others, conventional neutrals like Sweden, the Swiss and searching for and speaking about "potential" violations of the Geneva Convention Rules of 1912 – the rules of warfare. Most of them, if not all, have never faced actual combat, heard artillery or felt a bullet's sting, much less being in the proximity of battle. Some Taliban, all the al Qaeda forces, in the main, are not state warriors but terrorists in the full meaning of the word, killing and maiming thousands of innocent civilians and, do not fall under the Convention Rules. Money is their oxygen; this, we have cut off, captured many, have them as prisoners. The irrational, illogical, left brain world of some newspapers and columnists, even our very own, say we are mistreating these murderers, keeping them in shackles, blindfolded, mouths taped – inhuman treatment. The truth is they were in transit at the time, from Afghanistan in C-130s. Some pictured in holding areas had bitten some of our soldiers, were infected with TB, and had vowed to kill any Americans if they could. In a prison riot in Kandihar, they had set off a grenade, causing casualties, including the death of an American. "Just the facts ma'am," as TV Sgt Friday of the LA Police Force uttered. We were attacked for who we are, not for our land, wealth or resources.

Let us continue our lives, as best we can, grateful and stubbornly though cautiously optimistic. Thanks to all who keep this Chapter functioning and you know who you are and, they are. For starters, our past ten Presidents, and our current officers. Look forward to the coming Spring. Happy Valentines Day to all you sweethearts out there.



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