

# The BULGE BUGLE

VOLUME XVI NUMBER 1

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

FEBRUARY 1997

## WHO ARE THOSE AMERICANS?

Like a watchman waiting for the dawn, we were waiting  
for liberty.

When Noah saw the dove, he knew the flood was over,  
So, when in the sky of France, the first paratroopers were  
dropped,

We knew that the fortune of war was changing at last.

On the shores of Normandy, from landing crafts, ships  
and planes,

Poured a tide of soldiers and equipment,  
Church bells were ringing, people were cheering,  
And everyone wondered: Who are those Americans?

All they knew about those who had crossed the Atlantic,  
Was what they had seen on movie screens,  
Westerns, musical comedies, and other films,  
Showing big cities, crowned by skyscrapers  
Or factories turning cattle into corned beef.

Businessmen smoking big cigars,  
Clerks or bankers at their desks,  
Cowboys with tanned faces,  
Riding horses in the plains, always ready for a fight in a  
saloon.

When their jeeps and their tanks entered our cities,  
The first soldiers who came to liberate us,  
Were covered with flowers and kisses from the girls,  
And, when not on duty, were received in our homes.

When we learned to know them better, we often realized,  
That their fathers or grandfathers had come from Europe.  
From Italy or France, Spain, Holland, or Belgium,  
And with signs or dictionaries, we tried to communicate.

They were no movie heroes, but real ones,  
Those American boys, tall or middle-aged,  
With their nonchalant gait, their smiling faces,  
Women found them gallant, old men said they were good  
boys.

And soon they became our friends, Harold, the butcher  
from Chicago

Robert, Black Jack, Jo, Bill, and John from Leone,  
Arthur Borze, Esquipula and good-looking Hilario,  
All different, but all alike in their khaki uniforms.

Twice in a century, brave men have come over,  
Crossing the Atlantic, reuniting two continents,  
After a short good bye, they are now in their homes,  
But the most glorious are here, we shall care for their  
graves.

Half a century later, some veterans are coming back,  
To meet their Belgian friends, who are now guiding them,  
In the Ardenne where they fought and in front of a  
monument

Erected in their honor, we remember the day when they  
became our friends.

BY EMILE PIRARD, Verviers, Belgium



**17<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL VBOB REUNION**  
**GETTYSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA**  
**SEPT 15-18, 1997 - Full Details in Next Issue**



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**CONTACT THE CHAPTER  
IN YOUR AREA. YOU'LL  
BE GLAD YOU DID!**





## President's Message

I have always felt the VBOB December 16th observances held at Arlington Cemetery each year should be witnessed by all who served in the Battle of the Bulge. If you've never been able to attend and are able to do so, please make an effort to come next year. You will be glad you did.

As I know there are many of you who are unable to attend, I would like to share my remarks given at the site of the VBOB Memorial in Arlington Cemetery on December 16, 1996.

"It is a truly humbling experience to stand here before you on this date that is forever engraved in the hearts and minds of all who can proudly say: We are veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

"We meet this morning as men and women who answered our nation's call on December 16, 1944. We meet 52 years later, on December 16, 1996, to pay our tribute to those who fell in the snows of the Ardennes Forest of Belgium and Luxembourg.

"We remember also--with equal honor--our comrades who fought through to our final victory--and have since gone on to join their buddies in eternal rest.

"As your president I am proud to salute them all--and to tell their wives and husbands--their sons, daughters and grandchildren--that we have not--and will not--ever forget them.

"In a time that called for heroes--whether an enlisted private--or a four-star general--those who earned the right to wear the Ardennes Battle Star on their ETO Ribbon--earned the right to march with the heroes of World War II.

"I am sure hundreds of them are interred here in Arlington National Cemetery with their wartime leaders including General George C. Marshall, Army Chief of Staff, and General Omar Bradley, who led the American troops in the battle.

"I think I can safely say that all of us gathered this morning will remember a particular buddy--a special village--a snowy trail through the Ardennes Forest--memories that will remain forever.

"But I think it is most important that we who have survived keep the memories of the Battle of the Bulge burning in America, just as the memory of our victory is remembered in Belgium and Luxembourg.

"This past May, I had the unforgettable experience of joining with other VBOB members and their families in returning to the Ardennes. I wish I had words to adequately express the impact our visit had on me, and the others in our group.

"Yes, we visited St. Vith, Bastogne, Marsh, and Houfaleez, and we were quiet with our private thoughts on those occasions. We visited our military cemeteries at Henree Chappell, at Homm, and the Ardennes Cemetery near Liege.

"What an experience--and what a sense of gratitude we owe to those buried there. And, yes, we are grateful to the American Battle Monuments Commission for their devotion in maintaining these overseas parts of America.

"But what touched all of us most was hearing from our guides that the people of Belgium and Luxembourgish villages and towns have adopted individual graves of our American GI's and



Stanley Wojtusik  
VBOB President

place flowers on them on special days of the year in gratitude for their sacrifices.

"As if that were not enough to bring a lump to your throat--these same heroic people who had endured so much under Nazi tyranny, came up to us--as individuals--in restaurants or in town squares and asked "American veterans?" When we would say "Yes," they would respond by saying, "Thank you for what you did for us. Thank you for giving us back our freedom." This was after 51 years!

"It was enough to touch each of us--and to make us realize what we as young men and women did for those oppressed peoples 52 years ago.

"They do remember--and we, too, remember--and we have a job to do!

"Let us work together. Let us dedicate ourselves to preserving our victory in the memories of the American people.

"In doing this we preserve and pass along not only the memory of a great American victory, but a part of the priceless heritage that can, and should, inspire our children and grandchildren for generations to come.

"In Belgium and Luxembourg they remember. May all Americans remember as we do--the Battle of the Ardennes--the Battle of the Bulge."

On behalf of the Executive Council, I would like to encourage each of you to make plans now to attend the VBOB Reunion in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, September 15-18, 1997. There's nothing like sharing your Bulge experience with someone who's "Been There, Done That."

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS



September 15-18, 1997  
Gettysburg, Pennsylvania

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# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## FRIEND OR FOE?

I was an ammunition sergeant in Battery B, 953rd Field Artillery Battalion. Our outfit came to Omaha Beach on the 12th of June, 1944. We were attached to the 2nd Infantry Division and we were a 155 mm Howitzer outfit. We took up positions in the hedgerow for the battle for St. Lo and Hill 192. We gave fire support to a lot of infantry divisions and others during our fighting. We also took part in the Falaire Gap in November and December. We were in the Hurtgen Forest when the Germans broke through and we were forced to retreat.

All our (127) guns and trucks took off and I was told to go to the town of Liege, Belgium. I had a lot of shells on the ground so I took all I could on my 4-1/2 truck plus powder fuses--left a lot on the ground. I took off with my driver, plus a 50 (?) machine gunner in the truck. We had no map so we were lost for three days behind enemy lines. We were shot at by American and German planes as the lines were all mixed up. We finally found our outfit and we fought in the Bulge. We lost three men killed, 3 lost legs and 25 wounded. We finally got to Pilzen, Czechoslovakia, in May, where the war ended.

George Anthor  
953 FA BN B

## YOU HAD TO BE THERE

In the May 1996 issue, page 30, a captured German battery commander said he did not think too much of our artillery's accuracy. Apparently he was no where near Elsenborn Ridge during the Battle of the Bulge. Our artillery was devastating due to the use of the new "proximity fuse." Had he been there, he probably would never had the opportunity to make his statement.

Real B. Whitmore  
2 INF 15 FA BN C/MEDIC

## HOW COULD IT HAVE BEEN A SURPRISE

Regarding page 4 of the August issue of *The Bulge Bugle* and the last paragraph of Charles D. Curley, Jr.'s letter titled "USS Leopoldville--Better Under the Rug." In reference to the Battle of the Bulge, I also wondered for over 50 years how this could have been a surprise.

I was #11 rifleman, Company I, 423rd Infantry Regiment, 106th Infantry Division that with others in the 106th relieved the 2nd Infantry Division on the front line December 8, 1944.

I called the command post numerous times advising of heavy movement and the direction of this sound each time I heard it and the answer was always the same, "If you hear anything else let us know."

I now have information that Major General Kenneth W. Strong, Eisenhower's personal G2, was the only man in the senior intelligence community to predict and locate the enemy blow. This was the first week of December. The following week Strong circulated a top secret intelligence summary to the top Allied Commanders. General Eisenhower dispatched Strong to General Bradley in Luxembourg to warn him of the possibility of an enemy attack through the Ardennes. But Bradley was less than impressed by Strong's admonition because he was considered something of a worry wart. Mindful of his own G2's prognostications of the hopelessness of the enemy situation and the power of his first army, he brushed the warning aside. "Let them come," Bradley replied--a remark he would live to regret.

There is documented evidence of this and it answers questions I have had for over 50 years.

If Charles D. Curley, Jr., would like more information regarding this information please write to me at P.O. Box 56, Pleasant Garden, NC 27313.

Walter M. Wright  
106 INF 423 INF I

## YOU SEND IT, WE USE IT

The 184 AAA Gun Battalion (90 mm), the 634th (40 mm and quad 50 cal) and the 635th (40 mm and quad 50 cal) units have never been mentioned as having participated in the Bulge. All of us were in the thick of it. The 634th AAA AW Battalion lost an entire battery. D Battery a total of 163

men near St. Vith" (missing in action).

The 635th had the 1st Platoon set up as road block near Bastogne and had a number of dead and injured. I was in the 2nd Platoon and we were ordered to move back to Bouillon. We had a few stops on the way.

Walter J. Meinecke  
635 AAA AW BN D

*[Again, let us say: If you send the information in, we will surely try to use it at some time. We do not have the funds to pay for researchers and rely almost entirely on you, the members, to provide us with the information we print. If we don't use it, it's probably due to the fact that it's waiting its turn, was too long, etc.]*

## HURRAY, HURRAY!

Having read about the deplorable [burial situation in the November, 1996 issue], I have sent letters to my politicians in Washington, DC, and am putting a "letter to the editor" about it in our local paper.

*[Following is the text of the letter written.]*

I write to you for help to provide burial facilities for the United States veterans who fought for our country (yours and mine) in World War II. They are entitled to burial in a National Cemetery, but the government won't bury them any more because they say there are no funds to develop burial plots. FOR SHAME!! There appears to be money to bury politicians, like Ron Brown, but not for the men and women who fought the war.

I ask that you use your influence to provide the necessary funds to bury my comrades in arms. Please help us before someone gets the idea of delivering the dead bodies to the politicians in Washington, DC.

Sinclair F. Cullen  
75 INF D

*[Quite a few of you wrote to let us know that you had taken action; however, I'm hopeful that the ones we heard from are not the only ones who wrote. If you haven't written, please do so. As you know, if you want something done, you have to do something about it. WRITE TODAY!]*

## GOOD TO SEE AN OLD FRIEND

What a surprise to see Camille Kohn's picture on the front of *The Bulge Bugle*.

In December, 1994, along with four friends, I attended the heart-tugging ceremonies at Hamm cemetery and visited Clervaux with our host Camille.

Camille's final paragraph in his preface for the new "Bulge" book was beautiful.

We are planning a revisit to the Grand Duchy when I retire next year. I always look forward to delivery of *The Bugle*. Keep up the fine work.

Harry Meisel  
565 AAA AW BN C

## NO RETREATING

This is in addition to the letter from Edward A. Bergh, 55 AIB Company A in Volume XV #4, November, 1996.

I was in the 11th Armored Division, 22nd Tank Battalion Company, B. We landed at Cherbourg, France, made our mad dash through Paris to Souson, France, left our belongings there on December 24, 1944. Left at 5:00 a.m. At 7:00 a.m. Souson was strafed by the Germans. We arrived in the area between Houfalize and Bastogne. When my company moved out to the front on December 27, 1944, at 5:00 a.m., there was no retreating. The 22nd Tank Battalion stopped the Germans from cutting off the supply road into Bastogne.

Another story which may be of interest to you: When we stopped in Paris to find out the route to take to Belgium, we had a Frenchman in my company. We were near where his family lived but could not allow him to go find them since we could move out at any minute. He was able to find a young boy to run and get them. He had a 10-minute reunion with his family and then we moved on.

Harry Schaeffer  
11 ARMDD 22 TK BN B

*(Continued on Page 5)*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 4)

### IT ALL TOOK COURAGE

If the writer contributes something (other than dues) maybe some VBOB guy, who was near or with Myro Anderson will respond.

To a person that wasn't in combat to try to understand the kind of courage it took to endure an artillery barrage, and then jump out of a fox-hole and advance with the rest of guys towards the enemy, would have to be awesome admiration.

Recently, this veteran (never in combat) found in a library a book entitled *A History, Hell Hawks* by Charles R. Johnson, about the famed 365th Fighter Bomber Group (flying P-47s). They were probably based nearest to the Battle of the Bulge of any fight group and flew many missions/sorties during the battle.

If a combatant (veteran on the ground during the Bulge) can be made to understand the weather conditions P-47 pilots had to endure to support ground troops, they may be could forgive for bombing/strafing their own troops. A fast glimpse through cloud cover (hole in the clouds) could easily result in mistaken identity of those ground troops. It happened, sadly, many times. The flight missions during the Battle of the Bulge were classified as suicidal missions, because of the weather.

In the above mentioned book (history) please refer to Chapter 12, page 329, "Ardennes Counterattack" about what these pilots and mechanics did to support ground troops during the Battle of the Bulge.

With the utmost respect and admiration for VBOB guys, I am

**Clemens Loftsgard**  
ASSOCIATE MEMBER

### NO FOOTPRINTS IN THE SNOW

I was with the 592nd Field Artillery Battalion, 106th Infantry Division. We were pulled over—I don't recall why. The weather was rainy, with snow and sleet. It was so dark you couldn't see five feet in front. A Lt. Mudd asked for Sgt. Conner and told me there were paratroopers and that we were going to find them. I answered him with: Who told you that secret? We didn't find anything and the lieutenant and I had a good laugh [at our trekking around in that weather]. Lt. Mudd, you were a brave, young officer.

**Mick Conner**  
106 INF 592 FA BN

### BOOTS—BY ANY OTHER NAME

Re: "War Graves" article: World War II did not end on 7 May 1945. It ended on 2 September 1945 when the Japanese surrendered to General MacArthur on the battleship *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay.

We veterans of the war in Europe often overlook the tremendous sacrifices our fellow soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines made in the various Pacific theaters during the war. We should not, and I was happy to see the review of Howard Brodie's book on page 27 of your November issue.

Re: "Bulge Tactics Traced Back to Mexican War": Commander Starke states that "in the Bulge combat troops did not get combat boots until after the battle." I don't know where he found this tidbit of misinformation, but I can assure him that we in the 84th Infantry Division did have combat boots long before the Bulge. In fact, we had to turn in our high-top shoes and leggings at Camp Kilmer in early September 1944 and were issued those then-new combat boots—you remember, inside-out leather, two-buckle top, no steel top cap? These were the worst boots the Army has ever created in modern times but they were combat boots and we did have them, as much as we disliked them. I would guess many other units that fought in the Bulge had the same boots, usually worn with a four-buckle overshoe in cold, wet weather.

We were finally issued shoe pacs (solid rubber boots usually worn in the Arctic that had no steel shank for support) in early February, after most of the snow and ice had begun to disappear. We moved back to 9th Army shortly thereafter to begin our preparations to cross the Roer River. We trained with the shoe pacs, although we wanted our old boots back because we needed more support for our feet, but the higher-ups would not hear of it. We crossed the river on 23 February, and after a week or so on the other side, during our drive for the Rhine River, we got our old boots back (they had been tagged and kept for us in the regimental service company area) and we turned in the shoe pacs. Good riddance!!

The airborne units were more fortunate, although leather is not the best thing to wear on your feet in extremely cold weather. They had the all-leather jump boots, probably Corcorans, and were the only units authorized to wear them. Lots of fights started when other units, not airborne, managed to get hold of jump boots and to wear them. The airborne folks didn't like that example of sacrilege, I guess!!

We straight-legs could never figure out why we could not get the same or similar type boot for wear, but in those days the airborne folks ruled the roost and got pretty much what they wanted, despite the fact that the straight-leg infantry units had far better combat records than any of the airborne units. Off hand, I would suggest the following infantry divisions: 1st, 3rd, 9th and 45th Infantry Divisions. You cannot overlook the combat records of the infantry units that belonged to the 1st and 2nd Armored Divisions.

Regardless, the jump boot was a combat foot, and they served as a model for many of the later combat boots the army has developed during the past 50 years. Of some interest, a few years ago the army tried to bring back the inside-out leather boot; it failed in its tests and the army, thankfully, let it go.

**Albert N. Garland**  
84 INF 334 INF L

### REUNION A HIT

My heart swollen with pride and praise inhibits my ready reference to words endeavoring to acknowledge the outstanding, most successful reunion in Hyannis. You and your staff are to receive every expression of esteem, respect, affection and admiration for your untiring efforts and focus on details fostering enjoyment and gratification of those fortunate to have been in attendance.

Your sincere and personal regard for the human being, coupled with professionalism throughout the entire stay in Cape Cod, marks this reunion and entire program, as most meaningful and meritorious and was certainly conspicuous and ubiquitous.

The many photographs capturing the diversified moments will serve to remind my sister and I of these memorable and noteworthy events for many years ahead.

My sister, Anita Keyser, and I, sincerely thank you and your staff, and their families. Each family's willingness to endure the loss of many hours of your's and your staff's presence at home, necessary while you were arranging this whole event, does not go unnoticed.

**Edith T. Nowells**  
Associate Member

### ARLINGTON CEMETERY EPICENTER OF AMERICA

Subject: War Graves by Camille P. Kohn. My wife (Ann) and I attended the Veterans Day ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery and found it an exhilarating experience. Veterans and their families from all of this great land were in attendance. I thought of a quote I read within the past year: "The boundaries of a nation are marked by the graves of its soldiers." If true, then the Arlington National Cemetery is the epicenter of America because servicemen and women of all conflicts beginning with the Civil War are interred there.

**James R. Bird**  
45 INF 160 FA BN A

### GO TO THE "TOP"

I was first sergeant of an automatic weapons company during WWII in Europe and will state that men in my organization received the Purple Heart for frostbite during this time. I was offered one in an evacuation hospital during the Ardennes Campaign or Battle of the Bulge in 1945.

Frostbite was considered LOD in the morning report, which stood for "Line of Duty."

That does not mean to infer that Purple Hearts were given out indiscriminately to any one for any thing.

Not all first sergeants were stupid. If as portrayed you wanted to know what went on or who did what—you should have asked the "top kick."

**Robert Hasen**  
65 INF 268 INF AW BN C

(Continued on Page 6)



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continued from Page 5)

Wayne Alter

3 ARMDD 36 AIR 1 BN MEDICS

### INFANTRY..."ALWAYS THERE"

...read Frank Pagliuca's article on my previous letter.

I believe the key words in Mr. Pagliuca's letter are "while there." I would like for him to know that we in the infantry were **always** there and as for eating what the infantryman ate, I never saw a forward observer that didn't have rations in his jeep.

I do not knock the artillery people. God knows, they saved our necks several times on Elsenborn Ridge and later also, but the fact is they did not live the day-in-day-out miseries that the front line dog faces lived.

Jim Langford  
99 INF 394 INF 3 BN I

### WHAT WAS THIS THING CALLED "R&R"

I've noticed that the February issue (1996) carries some gripes(?) about the 4th Armored and Tank Destroyers not receiving any mention.

There has been some mention of an Afro-AM tank destroyer battalion. However, I haven't read a word about the Afro-AM tank destroyer battalion which suffered terrific losses near Richcourt. Our guys would just like to say: We were there doing what we were asked to do.

My VFW Post members (65 of them) never heard of tank destroyers. I ask, what was this thing called R&R.

Larry Miller  
691 TD BN HQ

[Again, we say: if you don't sent it, we can't print it.]

### WHERE 'WOOD' IT BE?

Being curious about almost everything, I have often wondered what happened to all the lumber that was being stockpiled for the First Army winterization program just prior to the Bulge.

Our engineer battalion operated more than a dozen saw mills throughout southern Belgium and Luxembourg when the Bulge interrupted the program. Our battalion history says that the program was almost finished and we had stockpiles in Habay La Neuve, Arlon, Mersch, and Stockem.

...other engineers also producing lumber at the time. Supposedly, the First Army was to build barracks so that troops could be rotated throughout the winter. From December 16, 1944 to January 25, 1945, I don't believe they could have released personnel to build barracks. Spring came fairly early that year so what happened to all that lumber?

Perhaps someone with First Army Headquarters may have the answer.

James H. Burke  
299 ENGR CMBT BN

### COULD WE HAVE BEEN FRIENDS?

After reading the article "War Graves," it rekindled my mind. I was a medic. We were litter-bearing a wounded German soldier who looked about 15-16. We got in an artillery barrage. We dove in a shelter taking the German with us. We lit a cigarette and gave it to him. The thought came to me: if this war wasn't going on we could be friends. What kind of a God is this that puts you in a mess like this as short as life is at its longest. I prayed for the knowledge, wisdom of what life is all about.

Near the end of the war I was in 813th Hospital Center. I had just eaten lunch and was laying on my cot with my hands behind my head talking to a buddy. All of a sudden I heard a loud, deep voice say: "Here is your answer." I saw a ball of light the size of a softball come through the wall hovering above the foot of my cot. Then I saw a tunnel of light coming through the wall. Then came a man in a black robe, white hair, blue eyes, sandals, standing at the foot of my cot. He said, "They cannot hear me. The reason for war is man will not do what I tell him to do; therefore, there is no other outlet but war to bring humility into the hearts and minds of people. I must go now." He left the same way he came.

After the war I searched religions, philosophies, etc., for 15 years. One day I opened *The Bible* and read: "God is spirit and truth and must be worshiped in spirit and truth. That answered my question: Who is God? A couple of years later, I opened *The Bible* again and read: The Devil is a liar and a murderer and the father of a lie and a murder. That answered my question: Who is responsible for evil?

To answer Mr. Kohn's question: People will not understand from generation to generation until Jesus Christ returns.

### YOU GUYS ARE GREAT

[We publish all kinds of requests in this publication and it's great to know that you are reading (even the small print) and responding.]

Some time ago I wrote to you folks asking for any information you might have on where I might obtain a copy of Bill Mauldin's book *Up Front* after seeing several of his cartoons featured in *The Bulge Bugle*.

At this time I'd like to thank you for printing my request as now, not only do I have a copy of it, thanks to a fellow in Washington, DC, who wrote me that he had an extra copy of it and was willing to, for a few bucks, send it along to me.

I'd like to thank, not only him, but each of the others I heard from (six in all) from all over the country: California, Kansas, Iowa, New Jersey, etc., offering advice and addresses where I might be able to locate one. Their notes, cards, etc., did not go to waste as a buddy of mine from our old outfit read of my request and called me asking if I heard from anyone about it to please pass along the information as he'd like a copy of it as well. I've since done this for him. With the cooperation I got from a bunch of old GI's, it's sure nice to know, after all these years, they're still willing to help another ex-GI out if and when they're able.

Since I received my copy...I've read and reread the cartoons several times as well as finished reading all the text. All I can say is thank you for your help and that it's a lot more fun sitting here in warm, sunny Florida looking at the book than it was at this holiday season 52 years ago when we were all part of Bill's drawings.

Edward W. Linder  
32 AAA GP HQ

### OOPS, AGAIN!

This letter is written in reference to my article in the November, 1996, *Bulge Bugle* "Memorable Bulge Incidents" concerning an error in the date. It must have been a printer's error as my master copy read December 23 and the article in *The Bugle* stated that it was December 13, 1944. The article was on page 16 and titled "A Hostile Tank in a Hospital."

...My division (the 80th Blue Ridge Infantry) was in the St. Avold area getting ready to assault the Siegfried Line but we were ordered by General Patton to move to Luxembourg City and attack the German southern flank with the 4th Armored and 26th Infantry Division.

Dick Radock  
80 INF 305 MED BN C

### CLEARING THE RECORD

Let's keep the record clear about my historical article about the 87th Division. At no time did I offer my own opinion of the 11th Armored....

I am in no position now--nor have I never been--to pass judgment on any division's performance. But my article directly quoted two authorities who wrote extensively and passed judgment on the two divisions--Lt. Gen. George S. Patton and Maj. Gen. Troy H. Middleton.

Having commanded both divisions, both leaders certainly were in a position to judge their performance. Both commanders had good things to say about the 87th Division and more derogatory information than I reported about the 11th Armored. So if Edward A. Bergh, of the 11th Armored dissents, as he does, he has an argument with the two generals--not with me.

Michael Kaidy  
87 INF 345 INF 1 BN D

### WE ALL HAD 'EM

I enjoy your publication and read it from cover to cover--sometimes twice...thrice. Never mind about the character on page 5 [last issue] every outfit had its a-----s. Just ignore!

Joseph F. Triano  
90 INF 358 INF 1 BN A

[Our thanks to Joe for his kind words and reassurance. The holiday season brings so many nice cards and notes. We thank all of you who wrote and we wish you a HAPPY, HEALTHY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR!]



## GOLDEN GATE CHAPTER DEDICATES BoB MEMORIAL

*[The following press release describes the dedication services for the Battle of the Bulge Memorial which was erected in San Francisco due to the many efforts of the Golden Gate Chapter. The article was sent to us by George Wendt, President of the chapter, and appeared in Vet Press, Bay Area Edition, Friday, August 16, 1996.]*

### **The Battle of the Bulge: Its lessons are for your children and your children's children!--Remember!**

**By Sara Durham  
Vet Press Writer**

It was a cold, gray, overcast day Wednesday, at Fort Miley, it sent a chill through the bones. Many likened it to the day 51-1/2 years ago when they faced their worst enemy (sometimes themselves) in mortal combat at the Battle of the Bulge.

They are old men now, all of them, and their memories after half a century are sometimes a little faded.

But they remember the cold, the loneliness in early morning darkness. They remember, hunger, confusion, and they remember the dead.

Most of all they want us to remember. They want us to remember so that no one will ever again have to go through the same horror and pain that they faced so bravely.

There were more than 600,000 American troops who went to war that day. They paid a horrific price, 81,000 casualties. And in the end there were more than 19,000 who purchased that ground with their very lives.

The Allied Army bent but did not break; the Germans bowed back the Allies along the 85-mile front, giving the battle its name.

The bloody battle swept across 2,000 square miles of Belgium and Luxembourg. Some villages changed hands as many as four times. In scope, intensity and duration, it was the single greatest battle the Allies fought in the war.

In the end, the Battle of the Bulge broke the back of the Germans. Within six weeks of fighting more than 120,000 Nazi soldiers had lost their lives. Four months later, Hitler himself was dead and the Third Reich had surrendered.

Wednesday we dedicated a memorial plaque for those who endured so much for our freedom. Many were on hand, including emissaries from Luxembourg and Belgium.

It is hard for me to talk about the war," said Rita Bral, Consul of Belgium. "I lost my father in that same war."

She went on to say, "You, my friends, gave us back our future. One village at a time. One house at a time."

Pierre Gramagna, Consul General of Luxembourg, said: "We will never forget...Americans will always be at home in Luxembourg."

The dedication of the memorial plaque was sponsored by the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Golden Gate Chapter. Their [then] president, Lyman Li, was only a 130 pound 19 year-old during the battle. Li's pack and two rifles weighed almost as much as he did. He was in the midst of some of the worst fighting and was severely injured, never-the-less he returned to the States as did most survivors to raise his family and become a contributing member of his community.

That is one of the many stories which was shared at the ceremony.

Mr. Li, we will remember, and we'll teach it to our children, and our children's children. We'll visit the memorial in San Francisco and we'll be proud. *[End of Article]*

Many other honored guests were present. Among them: Willie Brown, Mayor of San Francisco; surrounding area dignitaries; American Legion and VFW officers; Golden Gate Chapter Past Presidents Fred Dong, Martin Tarkington, and Ernest G. Figueira; veterans and veterans organizations representatives.

The day was declared "Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Day in San Francisco" by Mayor Willie Lewis Brown, Jr.

*The (below) monument is located at Fort Miley Veterans Affairs Medical Center, 4150 Clement Street (at 42nd Avenue) in San Francisco.*



Inscription of plaque reads:  
(VBOB Insignia)

Dedicated to the gallant and victorious men and women who participated in the Battle of the Bulge, 16 December 1944 through 25 January 1945 in Belgium and Luxembourg.

This major conflict has been called the greatest battle ever fought by the United States Army. Victory was achieved at the cost of 80,987 American dead or wounded

Presented by the Golden Gate Chapter  
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge  
on this day 14 Aug 1996



## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

**GLEN E. CORBIN, 90TH INFANTRY DIVISION, HEADQUARTERS**, would like to find the wife and/or children of his buddy, **M/SGT COWANS (COWENS)**, who died in his arms. If you can help, write to Glen at: 313 Arlington Avenue, Arlington, Ohio 45814.

**MYRON A. SMITH** is searching for **LT./CAPT. MELVIN N. CRANK, 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION**. They served together in the 7708th JA War Crimes Group in Wiesbaden, Germany in 1946. Write to Myron at: 3385 Frazerdale Drive, Lexington, Kentucky 40503.

**BROWNLEE BUSH, 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, would like to hear from those who might be interested in a trip to Europe September 15-27. They plan to visit Belgium/Germany: Aachen, Heidelberg, Rothenburg, Eagle's Nest. Then to Austria: Salzburg, Vienna, etc. Write to Brownlee at: 9305 Trask River Road, Tillamook, Oregon 97141. Incidentally, Brownlee is attempting to form a chapter in his area. If interested, write to him.

**TOM H. EVANS, 898 FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY A**, would like to hear from the following forward observer team members: **1ST LT JACK KEITH, 1ST LT ED HINES, CPL DONALD VINER**. Write to Tom at: 10905 North County Road 15, Ft. Collins, Colorado 80524.

**WARREN E. CHANCELLOR** writes to tell us that Stan Bellens, Jr., of Hermee, Belgium, had been extremely helpful to him in locating a family in Modave, Belgium. Warren is very grateful to Stan for his help on this.

**H. LAMAR JOHNSON** would like to know if someone can provide information and/or photographs relating to the **2ND ARMORED DIVISION, 66TH ARMORED REGIMENT, 2ND BATTALION**, during December 1944 to July 1945. Write to Lamar at: 14709 Park Hills Circle, Anchorage, Alaska 99516.

**HERMAN "JUMPIN'" POSCH, 17TH AIRBORNE DIVISION**, writes in the hope that he can locate the man who played the trumpet so beautifully in the lobby of the hotel at the 50th Anniversary VBOB Reunion. If you can help, write to him at: 2601 North Valley Road, Greenville, California 959947.

Herman also sent a letter from Besseling Guy in which he tells of finding a belt in an old granary in Bastogne. On one side is printed: R5832. On the other side is written: **RIGGALL ARTHUR W. 20315832**. Write to Besseling at: Rue du Bois D'Hazy, 23; B-6600 Bastogne; Belgium.

**LEONARD E. BENASKI, 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, would like to locate members who may have known **LYLE LERE, 90TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 357TH INFANTRY, CANNON COMPANY**, who was killed December 12, 1944. Lyle's wife would like to hear from them. Write to Mrs. Lere

in care of Leonard at: 647 Peach Street, Novato, California 94945-2528.

**WARREN J. PARES, 35TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 134TH INFANTRY, 2ND BATTALION**, (wireman) needs verification of an accident involving his jeep driver: "We were pulling wire from the jeep and a lieutenant stopped us and told me he had to see the battalion colonel right away. I cut the wire and headed for the farm house where I knew the colonel was. We hit a shell hole in the road. I was thrown up into the air and landed on my back and head on the asphalt road. I thought we hit a mine. The lieutenant was thrown forward and his stomach hit the pistol grip of the 30 cal. machine gun. He fell out of the jeep. My driver was also thrown out. The jeep took off down the road. When we finally got our thoughts together, I told my driver to get the jeep back. We finally put the lieutenant into the jeep and to the farm house where the colonel and two medics were. One medic took the lieutenant to battalion aid and the other patched my jeep driver and I. The colonel, a captain and his driver hit the same shell hole and the captain hit the 30 cal. and busted his teeth. A letter from any of the four, verifying what happened that night would be appreciated. Write to Warren at: 30293 Crane Creek Road, Perkinston, Mississippi 39573.

Ed Frutig would like to have information regarding the period his dad, **AMOS J. (A.M.) FRUTIG, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 112TH INFANTRY, 1ST BATTALION**, served as a prisoner of war in Stalaag 12A. Write to Ed at: 60345 Knottingham, Elkhart, Indiana 46517.

Jean-Claude Thommes would like to locate **E. S. CORNELSON** (Third Army?). If anyone can help, write to Jean-Claude at: 182, rue de la Gare, L-4460 Belvaux, G.D. of Luxembourg.

**CHARLES FARRELL** would like to learn where he could obtain a medal issued by one of the countries to men who served in the Battle of the Bulge. He also like to obtain the Normandy Medal. Write to Charles at 6681-F 121 Avenue North, Largo, Florida 33773.

John Ulferts (his letter to Murray Shapiro appears in the November, 1996, issue) writes to invite any of you who happen to return to the Bad Kreuznach, Germany, area to visit his school and speak with his students. He would also like to correspond with other veterans and, if you're interested, his students would like to write to you too. John's address is: CMR 438, Box 1909; APO AE 09111; 011-49-6703-2877.

Raymond L. McGinnis would like to hear from someone who may have known his cousin, **EUSTACE BUTCHER, JR., 45TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 157TH INFANTRY, 5TH BATTALION**, who was killed on Christmas Day in the Bulge. Write to Raymond at: Box 350, Gerry, New York 14740.

**AL PRICE, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION**, is seeking any information regarding 19 GI's captured and shot by SS troops in Krinkelt. One survivor was named **VAUGHAN** and he would like to contact him also. There were also massacres of others in that area from the **2ND DIVISION**. Any information you can send Al will be appreciated. His address: 3732 East 58th, Tulsa, Oklahoma 74135.

(Continued on Page 9)



## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

*(Continued from Page 8)*

**MAJOR F. PARKS, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 109TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY B**, would like to hear from anyone who may have served in his outfit. Write to Major at: 1503 Hazel Avenue, New Bern, North Carolina 28560.

**DALLAS H. SWEPSTON, 5TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 10TH INFANTRY, ANTI-TANK COMPANY**, would like to hear from anyone who may have served with him. His address: 2117 South 3rd Street, Burlington, Iowa 52601-6502.

**ORLANDO CAFASSO, 95TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 379TH INFANTRY, COMPANY C**, would like to hear from anyone who served with him. His address is: 40 Whitman Street, Malden, Massachusetts 02148-6439.

Jean (Plantz) Brown would like to hear from anyone who may remember her uncle, **ROBERT C. PLANTZ, 759TH TANK BATTALION**. Write her at: 3780 Oaktree Lane, Loomis, California 95650.

Samuel Tannenbaum would like to locate anyone who may remember **DAVID BROOKS, 83RD DIVISION, 331ST INFANTRY, COMPANY F**. We previously published Samuel's request, but misspelled the name. David Brooks served with Samuel's father, **HENRY IRVING TANNENBAUM**, who was killed in action on January 11, 1945, somewhere in Belgium. If you remember either man, or were in their group, please write to Sam at: 4931 NW 65 Avenue, Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33319.

**H. SCOTT BARKER** and his father-in-law, **CHARLES A. LAND, 9TH ARMORED DIVISION, 9TH ARMORED ENGINEERS BATTALION, COMPANY A**, are seeking information to write a detailed battalion history. They would like to secure information regarding BoB engineer activities as a whole and particularly the 9th Armored Engineers. He would like information and particularly photographs. Write to him at: 36131 North Springbrook Lane, Gurnee, Illinois 60031-4515.

**TERRELL M. NELSON, 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 104TH INFANTRY, 1ST BATTALION, COMPANY C**, would like to receive information on his unit from the middle of January of 1945. He would also like lists of those who went to Wiltz as replacements. Write to Terrell at: 300 18th Avenue, NW, Birmingham, Alabama 35215.

Larry Widner would like to hear from someone who can provide some details about his brother's (**EARL L. WIDNER, 30TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 120TH INFANTRY**) death in the Bulge on January 10, 1945. Write to Larry at: 1310 Kensington Drive, High Point, North Carolina 27262.

Imogene A. Garrett joined VBOB in memory of her husband, **HORACE G. GARRETT, 208TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**. She would like to hear from anyone who was in that unit. Write to Imogene at: 342 South Lincoln, Orleans, Indiana 47452.

Maureen A. Love is looking for a friend of her father, **PFC PAUL J. CROSBY, 75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 291ST INFANTRY, COMPANY C**, who was from Arlington, Massachusetts. The friend's name is **PFC LARRY O'NEILL**, who lived on Whitney Avenue in the Grasmere section of New York City. They had a mutual friend named **OLLIE**. Write to Maureen at: N 9817 Nez Perce Court, Spokane, Washington 99208.

**TOM V. JOHNSON, 90TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 358TH INFANTRY, 2ND BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS COMPANY**, who was a wireman and switchboard operator, would like to hear from anyone who served in his group. Write to him at: 13391 Grant St, Yucaipa, California 92399.

Publicity for the Cape Cod Reunion produced letters from some seeking information. We regret that we were unable to get them into the November issue. We reproduce these requests at this time.

Jim Turner would like to hear from anyone who might have known **EDWARD**

**(NED) TURNER, 82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION**, who was killed in action near Bastogne on January 15, 1945. Please write to Jim at: 41 Joyce Anne Road, Centerville, Massachusetts 02632.

Lavern Daves would like to hear from anyone who might remember her brother **SGT LLOYD F. DAVES, 83RD INFANTRY DIVISION, 329TH INFANTRY**, who was killed in the Bulge on January 13, 1945. Please write to her at: PO Box 66, Silva, Missouri 63964.

Mary Shanholtz would like to hear from anyone who might remember her brother **CHARLES J. WYATT, 9TH INFANTRY**, who was killed in the Bulge. Write to her at: 223 Springmelt Drive, Mooresville, Indiana 46158.

Steve Adams would like to hear from anyone who may have known his father, **PFC ALEC ADAMS, 36TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 141ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY E (Military Policeman)**. Steve's address: 919 Poplar Street, Moody, Alabama 35004.

Annie May wrote to ascertain what happened to her brother, **RUFUS MUIRHEAD**, who was in an **ENGINEERING** unit. She has no other information. There were six men guarding a bridge and they were told to hold the bridge or blow it up. He was killed guarding the bridge. If you know anything, write to Annie at: Route 1, Box 142, Goodman, Mississippi 39079.

Daniel Sagaria would like to know if someone remembers **JOHN P. SAGARIA, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 60TH INFANTRY, COMPANY A**. He was wounded several times before the Bulge and was hospitalized in the **4TH AND 8TH CONVALESCENT HOSPITALS**. Wounds January 10, 1945, in the stomach proved fatal and he passed away on the 12th. If you can provide information, write: Daniel Sagaria, 192 Colfax Avenue, Staten Island, New York 10306.

Lee Kantz would like to learn more about the death of his brother, **PVT. RICHARD KANTZ, 4TH ARMORED DIVISION, 8TH TANK BATTALION**. Write to Lee at: 1124 Lakeview Avenue, Richlands, North Carolina 28574.

**HUGO W. (WILLIE) GORGAS, 514TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY C**, would like to hear from anyone who served with him. Write to Willie at: 5783 Janke Loop, Elm Mott, Texas 76640-3523.

Mark Buffington would like to hear from anyone who served with his father, **JERALD DEAN BUFFINGTON (BUFF), 8TH ARMORED DIVISION, 36TH TANK BATTALION**. Write to him at: Route 5, Box 125, Mt. Vernon, Illinois 62864.

Richard Hawes would like to hear from someone who served with his father, **ORVILLE LEE HAWES, 7TH ARMORED REGIMENT?, COMPANY C**. Write to Richard at: 484 Northeast 70th Avenue, Okeechobee, Florida 34974.

Barbara M. Garr would like to hear from anyone who may remember her father, **PVT JOHN JULI**. She only knows that he was in the **INFANTRY** and was awarded the Purple Heart. Write to her at: 445A Oakridge Road, Auburn, New York 13021.

Verta Sweetapple would like to hear from someone regarding her father, **PVT. HARRY VERTAL BLYMILLER, 176TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY A**. MIA on December 17th but found alive three days later by British(?) troops. Write to Verta at: 109 Barr Avenue, Grove City, Pennsylvania 16127.

**KENNETH G. PRICKETT, 5TH ARMORED DIVISION, 22ND ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION, COMPANY B**, would like to hear from anyone who may have served with him. He still maintains contact with **CHARLES PERRY**, who served with him. Write to Kenneth at: 1802 Southwest 22nd Street, Troutdale, Oregon 97060.

**JAMES B. KIRKLAND, 251ST ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE COMPANIES**, would like to hear from anyone who may have served with him. Write to James at: 164 Old McDonald Road, Elizabeth City, North Carolina 27909.



# ELEVEN AMERICAN NEGRO SOLDIERS AT WERETH

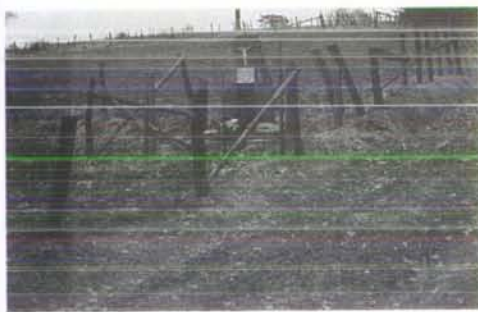
By Raphael d'Amico-Gerard

On December 17, 1944, during the early afternoon, a small group of eleven American Negro soldiers, belonging to the Charlie and Service Batteries of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Howitzer guns), arrived near the village of Wereth, Belgium. These men had, some time earlier in the morning, either avoided being captured or managed to escape in the vicinity of Schonberg, Belgium, where they had faced a strong German armored unit. After having wandered through an extensive forested area, they reached the vicinity of Wereth. Under tree cover, they observed a long time the road traffic on the other ridge, three hundred yards away from their hiding place.

Wereth is a small village which numbers about ten houses and stretches across a ridge. When coming from Heresbach and going in the direction of Halenfeld, the main road is clearly visible before entering into the village. Once having passed through the village it plunges during about half a mile in the valley of the Helbach, a small river, toward Halenfeld, situated less than one and a half miles away.

After having for a long time observed the movements within the village, especially the traffic on the road, the eleven American soldiers spotted a farm located slightly away from the road, in the middle of the grassland. Moving slowly and prudently, waving their hands to show that they had no harmful intentions, also reasoning that if Germans were staying in the house they would simply be captured, become POWs and be treated as such (some of them, maybe, had been captured earlier in the vicinity of Schonberg as told above). Two of them still had their rifles. But could one consider a serious threat their old 1903 model, bolt action type, Springfield rifles?

Once having reached the farm, they were "hosted" by the proprietor. A visiting neighbor woman, left and took the village's main road some sixty yards from the house. She then took the small paved road surrounded by pastures. Soon thereafter a Schwimmwagen with several SS belonging to the Reconnaissance Group of the SS-Obersturmbannführer Gustav Keittel arrived. Beckoning the vehicle's passengers, she signalled the SS that American soldiers were inside the "Burgmeister's" farm. The amphibious vehicle stopped in front of the main entrance door and the sergeant summoned the Americans to come out, hands up.



Only armed with two rifles and facing a heavy armed vehicle, the American artillery men had no other choice but to come out arms raised. Immediately they were ordered to sit down on the ground in front of the building, making it easier to guard them. One man inspected the house and...then some unexplainable events took place regarding the general behavior of the SS. They would have had no hesitation to shoot the prisoners and the civilians who housed them on the spot as took place in many other instances. However, the Germans lined the prisoners up in front of their vehicle and spared the inhabitants. Night was falling and visibility was poor. The sky's light outlined the trees' dark silhouettes and road. Left and right stretched meadows where a determined man could easily have fled.

While heading towards Halenfeld, the Germans spotted to the left a cattle lane climbing steeply alongside a field. They made a quick decision, forcing the prisoners to climb the path. William E. Pritchett, who did not obey fast enough, was hit violently by the Schwimmwagen which broke his two legs. To make the others move faster, they fired their weapons behind them, very close...hitting some in the thighs and legs. Then began the massacre, which ended with the atrocious deaths of these eleven American Negro POWs.

# THE COMBAT INFANTRY MEDIC

[This article by VIC SACONNE, 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, INFANTRY COMBAT MEDIC, appeared in the Ohio North Coast News--a VBOB Chapter.]

The Combat Infantry Medic Badge is highly prized in the army and rightfully so. It is worn on the left breast above all other ribbon bars. This CIMB, as the badge is called, is awarded to those brave combat medics who came to the aid of their wounded comrades under enemy fire, on the battlefield. Recently, the heroism, of infantry medics, along with their sacrifices and dedication in combat, was further recognized, by awarding the holders of the CIMB badge a Bronze Star Medal, which must be applied for in order to be issued.

**What is a Combat Infantry Medic?** The closest answer is that he is a combination of medical technician, combat infantry man and very often surrogate father, chaplain and comforting friend.

**The Making of a Combat Infantry Medic.** The medic is fully trained in all the usual infantry skills, such as weapons qualification, forced marches, map reading, living off the country, etc. In addition he is thoroughly trained in first aid, anatomy, physiology, diseases such as malaria, and a host of medical subjects. Most go on to advanced training at hospitals where they worked on the treatment of wounds and all kinds of trauma. The focus is on combat medical procedures. He is also trained in comforting the wounded and becomes familiar with the basic tenets of various faiths. With all this training behind him he is assigned to an infantry unit where he is an integral part of the organization. These are the guys he will live with and go into combat with so that he will be there to treat them in need.

**The Combat Medic in the Field.** Despite all the prior training the Combat Medic is forced in the chaos of the battle. It is there that he truly fulfills his role. He will be unarmed and be expected to go to the wounded no matter where they are, behind enemy lines or not. He will face artillery, mortar and small arms fire, often in exposed locations. In the time-honored Hippocratic tradition he will treat the wounded enemy as well as his own men.

A medic is the first person a fallen combatant sees who has the training which can literally mean the difference between life and death. This is not to take away from the skills and dedication of the personnel of the aid station or of the field hospitals. As we all know these people perform miracles under primitive conditions. But it is the medic who is first on the scene and he must take immediate steps to treat the wounded and his actions are almost always irreversible. It is also his onerous burden to decide the priority of treatment, i.e., which of the wounded are beyond help and which have non-life-threatening wounds so that the most needy ones can be treated first. Despite this charge, he cannot be always coldly efficient at it.

Mortally wounded "kids," only a couple of years younger than the medic who have aged far beyond his years in the crucible of battle, cling to him. Some of these eighteen year olds had come fresh from Thanksgiving or Christmas dinners, gone into battle and were now laying at his feet. All conscious ones want his comfort and assurance. Some ask him to retrieve photos or letters from their pockets for one last look at loved ones. Some want him to pray with them, Christian and Jew alike. Most just don't want to be alone in their last minutes.

What keeps the medic going when he constantly deals with the wounded and dead? It is not only duty and the fact that his outfit counts on him to be there when needed. It is the care and comfort he can give to his buddies and the great satisfaction he gets from the ones he "wins."

The U.S. Army in recognition of the high profile risk the combat medic faces and the sustaining courage he needs in the battle area, created the Combat Medical Badge to award those so qualified.

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## THE MORTARS OF HIGH DAWN

*[The following is excerpted from a speech by **KENNETH GOOSMAN**, at the 51st Reunion of the 91ST CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION.]*

Over 50 years have come and gone since our last roar of our fire missions faded into muffled echoes of our past. We remember the endless effort of pushing ourselves physically and emotionally beyond measurable limits, just to sustain those roaring fire missions.

Our battalion of 4.2 inch chemical mortars, code named "High Dawn," was a member of XII Corps, the spearhead of Patton's Third Army. We held a unique distinction in the fact, that we were the only 4.2 inch chemical mortars in all of XII Corps. It was this distinction that caused us to be involved in most every combat operation within XII Corps.

Our code name, "High Dawn," always seemed to suggest that we were a secret covert operation. It cast a certain aura over our battalion, hinting that something special was going on. On several occasions, we did fire into virgin areas, and purposely leave the safety pins in some of the shells, for the Germans to identify, and perhaps believe that some new 4.2 inch chemical mortar battalion was located in the area.

We were to understand that because the night time firing of our mortars produced a bright distinctive muzzle flash, we seldom if ever would be involved in any night time fire missions. Hence, only after "High Dawn." However, the awakening to the stark reality of combat changed our mode of operations considerably. Although, not wishing to brag, we were just damned good. Once our infantry realized the full potential of our mortars, the demand for our supporting fire missions was unending. Bettendorf, Luxembourg, where General Patton is reputed to have swam the Sauer River as an inspiration to his troops, was a good example. For almost two weeks, one of our platoons fired from the same position, while attached to the 4th Infantry Division, the 80th Infantry Division, the 4th Armored Division and back to the 80th Infantry Division, in that order. It was a case of "to hell with the muzzle flash" and thereafter, our night time fire missions often were as busy as those during the day.

While attached to such memorable combat divisions as the 4th Armored, the 11th Armored Division, the 5th, 35th, 76th, 80th and 90th Infantry Divisions, we helped in our own special way to make the spearhead of Patton's Third Army a bit more successful.

On a clear beautiful morning, Christmas 1944, our convoy was winding its way through the snow covered hills of Luxembourg. Without warning, an American P47 fighter plane, skimming just above the tall pine forest, was dipping its wings from side to side as it burst over our heads. As it roared by, we instinctively thrust our fist skyward screaming, "Go get 'em." Seconds later, this same P47 fighter plane circled behind us, then strafed and blew up the last vehicle in our convoy. Someone in our midst, speaking with choking words, muttered "Merry Christmas."

Digging in was second nature to us, especially after experiencing a barrage of German screaming meemies or 88's landing in our midst. While digging in, the long handled axe, that came buckled to each jeep, made the hard frozen dirt fly like wood chips. A quarter pound block of TNT with a pull fuse helped to loosen the hard frozen crust on top of our mortar pits.

Always the lack of sleep, trying desperately to keep warm in zero degree weather, and always numb with exhaustion. The unbelievable misery of living in frozen fox holes, sticking your head above ground level only to be met with sharp ice crystals that were driven by the relentless wind. The endless fire missions, firing and being fired upon. Being over run and joining our infantry when things are getting out of hand. Always the whine of artillery, their's and our's.

When our fire missions were the most urgent and our rate of fire most rapid, we, on several occasions, applied snow or water soaked burlap to our hot mortar barrels. This kept the powder rings on the shells from igniting before reaching the bottom of the barrel.

It was almost routine to be in the middle of a fire mission and be subjected to counter battery fire. It was one thing to be physically struggling to manhandle the mortars and their 25 pound shells, and something else, when you are hugging the ground to avoid the deadly burst of incoming shells. It was asking to give all you could give.

We stood toe to toe with our mortars and answered our enemy with whatever was necessary. Our fire power was overwhelming. With just one platoon of mortars, the usual request for, "fire for effect," would place 300 pounds of high explosives on our target. We fixed white phosphorus shells mixed with our high explosives, which completely enveloped our enemy. Men exposed to searing phosphorus burns, suffocation, and being blinded, were helpless to retaliate in any effective way.

At our most grueling period of our combat we found ourselves playing Russian roulette with our own mortar shells. For no apparent reason, some of our own mortar shells would explode in the mortar barrel. Each time resulting in dead and wounded. This new deadly experience placed a terrible burden on all the mortar squads. Thank God, it mysteriously ended with the same abruptness that it had arrived.

The long moonless nights of winter made artificial moonlight a welcome addition to our innovative ideas. Bouncing powerful searchlight beams off the low hanging clouds increased our night vision tremendously, thus allowing much more freedom of movement. However, it seemed to promote the dilemma, that if we could better see the enemy, might he also better see us?

Traveling by jeep, with chains on all four wheels, always seemed to double the possibility of detonating a mine. The damned mines were everywhere, and never where you thought they would be. A quick thaw in the weather and it wasn't unusual to have a vehicle detonate a mine on the road that had been cleared of mines. Traveling a road which we knew was probably mined was like rubbing salt into the wound, especially when this very road was under continuous fire from German 88s.

Keeping the phones working was a top priority. Laying wire along a road that we weren't sure had been cleared of mines made the task a dangerous one. Tramping beyond the road berm in to the drainage ditches and tying off the wire from harm's way could always prove to be fatal.

None of us could ever forget the bloody river crossings, like the Sauer and Our rivers which formed the German/Luxembourg border. We fired hours on end, shells by the tons, only to sometimes receive the discouraging news that the crossing had met with failure, and all assault boats were lost. The infantry could do little but regroup, and try again at another time. If the infantrymen survived the crossing of the river, he stepped off the assault boat on the far side, only to face the massive fire power pouring down from the hidden concrete pill boxes from above. Flooded rivers, with mines and barbed wire crowding their banks like overgrown briar patches, laced with German 88's and machine guns, made progress almost impossible.

We were quick to learn that the bright colored air to ground identification panels we so carefully displayed each day, wasn't a guarantee that we wouldn't be attacked by our own Air Corps.

At the close of the Battle of the Bulge, and still out of breath, we found ourselves helping our infantry punch holes in the famous Siegfried Line....

Remember the many German soldiers, the ones that changed to civilian clothes to escape us? When we looked at their hands for signs of blisters or calluses, they would say "arbidien, arbidien, nix solditen." So many of them flashed pictures of relations supposedly living in Philadelphia, that one of the most knowledgeable members of our group estimated that more than half of the German army had a brother living in Philadelphia.

During 117 days of continuous day and night combat, the many times our fire missions helped determine the difference between the infantry's success or failure, filled us with a deep burning pride. Yes, we were a cocky bunch, but we earned the right to be.



## RADIO MAN REPORTS ON THE NORTHERN SHOULDER

*[The following excerpt of an article was submitted by A. A. ALVAREZ, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, 16TH INFANTRY, COMPANY D.]*

As a FO radioman in the "Big Red One", we were alerted in our rest camp at (?) Belgium, after one day of rest! We were [used] as artillery spotters, for an engineer, reconnaissance, tank-hunting team, under LTC Davisson and moved out "to fix, find and fight" the on-coming Germans. We bumped into a tank column at Walk-Weimes, Belgium, and a shoot-out commenced! Two American jeeps loaded with Germans roared through town after fooling and KIA'ing our outposts. Everyone fired and they crashed at the town exit!

We fired on all targets with our new "Posit Fuze" which effectively determined correct height of burst by electronic means. Sgt. Vacher, our team chief was slightly wounded but returned from medics.

The "biggest tank you ever saw" blew our jeep to kingdom come. We retaliated with purple smoke (air strike marker). Our bluff must have worked since the panzer probably a "tiger" of a "panther" withdrew, even though no U.S. aircraft responded to our requests. That night, Sgt. Desforge and motor Sergeant Hofer came up during darkness and told us that this was called "the Battle of the Bulge"!

My FO, Lt. Sheehy (battlefield commissioned) loaned me his .45 pistol to escort 2 prisoners back to infantry company CP. In the deep snow, I stumbled and lost the pistol--so the two prisoners and myself frantically searched. The Germans naturally found it, cleaned out the snow from the barrel with his little finger and returned it. They raised their hands and we continued on--two happy prisoners and one embarrassed guard.

## IT FIT LIKE A GLOVE

[Excerpts] As I prepared to attend the dedication of the Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Room at Fort Meade, Maryland, it crossed my mind to wear the GI blouse issued me at Fort Meade when I was discharged 16 February 1946. No Ike's jackets were to be had.

After the ceremony, we were directed to the Officers Club and enjoyed a wonderful dinner. Many dignitaries were there. Some from Belgium...spoke and brought us up to date, explaining the work involved in bringing the Battle of the Bulge Memorial to reality.

By this time people started mingling around, going from table to table getting acquainted. I thought it's now or never. I went to the car to get the blouse, Pete Dounis, a member of the 75th Infantry Division, was seated at the same table as I. He knew I had the blouse. When I came back to the table, he asked what was in the bag. I said: The GI blouse, what do you think. He said: Go for it.

When I removed the blouse from the bag, I heard a lady say: He will never get it on. At this point, I noticed how quiet it was. Then as I started to button up, the applause was astounding. I think everybody was standing, and cameras were flashing.

I was pleased, yet embarrassed. I was asked to the podium. The applause was loud and I don't think any one could hear a word I said. I'm not sure what I did say.

Now, I will write about what I would like to have said. The 75th Infantry Division was activated at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. I believe the figure was 80% teens--18 and 19 years old. When sent to train the recruits, officers and noncoms the average age was 21 years old for the division.

In closing I would have said: The Germans called us the Diaper Division, but in the end they were the ones who needed the diaper. We made our mark in history. If it wasn't for the other 44 units making up the VBOB, there is no way we could have won the war--no way.

If anyone got a picture of me in my blouse, I would very much appreciate receiving a copy. Please send it to: B. E. Walk, 4602 Marie Street, Beltsville, Maryland 20705. Thank you.

## BOOK REVIEW TO SAVE BASTOGNE

By Robert F. Phillips  
VBOB Historian

This is the story of the 110th Infantry Regiment of the 28th Division in the Battle of the Bulge. It covers the area of the southern attack by more than one division on a single regiment. By heroic sacrifice the regiment, which lost two commanders in six days, was able to frustrate the German drive to the Muese by the 5th Panzer Army. By the 22nd of December the unit had been driven back to Neufchateau with only one-third of its original strength.

Each unit in the Pennsylvania National Guard 28th Infantry Division has a lineage dating back in some cases to Colonial troops. Throughout the centuries these units have almost without exception borne heavily the cost of saving America.

The regiment fought as a unit only briefly during the first days, then split up into individual battalions and eventually to the squad level in certain cases. By the individual soldier's determination to give ground reluctantly, the German march was slowed to the point where Patton and his troops could take over the defense and drive north.

For infantry men, 28th and 110th veterans and current soldiers, this book, written by a professional military historian, is of great interest. Hundreds of other numbered units of all arms are given full credit. The older versions of this book are extremely rare and this edition is severely limited in number.

Cost is \$17.45, including postage and handling. Make check payable to Robert F. Phillips and mail your order to: 5530 Beaconfield Court, Burke, Virginia 22015.

*[Review by Pete Leslie, VBOB Treasurer, a self-taught historian and author of Spare Parts--a history of the 511th Engineer Light Ponton Company.]*

## UP FRONT With Willie & Joe



"The krauts ain't followin' ya so good  
on 'Lili Marlene' tonight, Joe.

Ya think maybe somethin' happened to their tenor?"



# TOUGH MEMORIES OF WWII

By Dan Bied

December 17, 1944: It was a Sunday, if that means anything a half-century after the fact. It meant nothing at the time. All that mattered then was staying alive and keeping our guns working in the frigid, fog-shrouded Ardennes.

"Piss on your rifle bolt if it freezes up," a battle-savvy sergeant had told us when the 106th Infantry Division moved up front in early December. He'd been with "the Big Red One" in North Africa and joined our outfit, "the hungry and sick," in time to earn three more battle stars during and after what the World War II press corps labeled "the Battle of the Bulge."

The Bulge threatened to bail out the Germans when, on December 16, their desperate bid to win the war surprised everyone, even Ike himself. The 106th, occupying a 28-mile front an Army historian later described as "an invitation to disaster," was the first unit hit by the colossal attack. The battle went on a month with 600,000 Americans, including truck drivers and clerks, in on the fighting. Some 81,000 Americans were killed wounded or captured. The Germans suffered an estimated 100,000 casualties.

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**Somehow, with all the stew in the pot, the men...got their act together 6,000 miles from home and won the war.**

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Oddly, the same German army that developed "the Blitzkrieg" still had some horse-drawn artillery late in 1944. But they also had machine guns that fired more rapidly than ours, hundreds of huge tanks, a fearsome artillery piece called "the 88" and a weapon to pick our brains, nicknamed "the Screaming Meemie," that was intended to scare anyone to death it didn't disembowel.

Our side wasn't exactly unarmed. The M-1 rifle could fire as fast as a GI could pull his trigger. We had reliable mortars and devastating artillery backing us up. Our air support was lethal, and pretty much unchallenged, when there was flying weather. There were Sherman tanks with us, too. But many of the unfamiliar roads were impassable, some of the tanks were down for repairs and the others, due to a command "snafu," never made it to where our regiment, the 422nd, was deployed.

The Germans had been up to something for several nights prior to December 16. We could hear their trucks from our wooden huts in the Siegfried Line and dutifully passed the word back to "headquarters."

It was around 5:30 a.m. when the sky lit up like a gigantic fireworks show. "Incoming mail" from the German guns shattered the limbs around us. The trunks of the big fir trees quivered, the frozen ground shook. The attack was "the real thing," not a diversion. Our expectation to hang around in the Ardennes until "the big push" to the Rhine, probably in March, had been derailed.

Much of December 17 and 18 are a blur after 50 years. There was little realization of time, day or night, and no sleep as we prowled through the bewildering forest. It was "hit and run," much like Hollywood's battles, only with real fear, real anger, real flesh and real blood.

Mostly, it was quiet. An eerie silence prevailed, when we weren't shooting or under fire. It was an unexpected calm, a menacing prelude to some kind of doom. Death, maybe, or the loss of an arm, a foot or a leg.

December 19--Six of us, including a lanky West Virginian who

became a lifetime friend, were on a patrol near the village of Schonberg, in a draw surrounded by thick woods. It was around mid-day when we spotted German activity at the edge of a field and radioed back for mortar fire. The rounds came in like clock work: "Kerplunk, kerplunk, kerplunk." They wiped out a long-barreled gun that was pointed skyward at the rear of a tan, camouflaged truck.

"We're pulling out," somebody yelled from the nearby woods. "Move it!" More "mail" was delivered by the Germans, making our mortar salvo sound puny. The ground around us erupted, spewing hunks of dirt and belching flames.

Everything was chaotic. We were separated from the rest of our company and joined up with some men from our cannon outfit--guys we didn't know, including a wild-eyed corporal driving the truck some of us piled into to "tear ass!"

If this was the end of the line, at age 19, maybe it would be sudden. I thought: a bullet in the head or, even more emphatic, a direct hit from an "88." That's how our medic, a guy we called "Nose," got it a day or two earlier.

We fell in with other fragments of the 106th, which was outgunned by parts of three German divisions, and zigzagged through the Ardennes on narrow, bumpy roads. Luckily, our truck got back on the main road, finally. It turned quiet again, after a few miles, as if we were in the eye of a hurricane.

Our column came to a halt, unexpectedly, in an abandoned village. "Break up you guns," someone barked. "We're going to surrender!" Our regimental commander, Col. George L. Descheneaux, Jr., made the awesome decision, he explained after the war, to end a "hopeless" situation for the 422nd, manned by scores of machine gunners without bullets and artillerymen without guns. "There was no food or water," our divisional history noted in 1949. "Descheneaux's remaining battalion's fragments were melting before his eyes." He feared we would all be "slaughtered," after being caught in a trap.

The 106th, with its reserve regiment, the 424th, hanging on to make an epic stand at Saint Vith, took more than 8,000 casualties in what author John Toland dubbed "the greatest battle." Our losses included 1,670 wounded and killed.

The 106th's battle was brief, compared with what most combat outfits endured in Europe, but spectacular.

"It was a quiet sector they handed the 106th, fresh to the front and rarin' to go," the AP reported on January 21, 1945, after details of the battle were known. "The quiet ended in a shattering eruption of fire and steel a few days later...in those days the men of two regiments (422nd and 423rd) were engulfed by the overwhelming weight of Field Marshal von Funstedt's breakthrough spearhead. They went down fighting."

After the war, Field Marshal William Keitel and Gen. Alfred Jodl were asked to summarize why their attempt to reach the supply depots at Antwerp, then ousted the Allied troops from France, failed.

First, they said the soft roads made it impossible to advance their armored units "as rapidly as anticipated."

Second, they reported in an apparent reference to the untested 106th, the Germans met "tougher resistance than expected of, in themselves, weak American troops."

Allied air superiority, regained when the skies cleared on the battle's eighth day, was a major factor in stopping the Germans, the men pointed out. Our countermeasures, with Third Army troops dashing to Bastogne, were "uniform and promptly applied," the Germans added.

Dozens of memories about what happened in December 1944 are still sharp even though such miseries as sore feet and heat exhaustion, while training in Indiana that summer, are nearly beyond recall.

It is easy to remember, "just like yesterday," the hot spaghetti and meatballs delivered up front by an excitable cook named Kai Jeong. Kai had been warned by our CO, partly in jest, to "serve good food or go check out a rifle."

It is impossible to forget the first dead German, on his back in a ditch with his mouth wide open, or the first dead American we saw. The GI was still in his long overcoat

*(Continued on Page 15)*



## A LONG SHORT STORY

By David Saltman

*[The following excerpt was taken from David's history of the encounters of the 638TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, which was attached to 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION. David's recollections were in a letter written May 30, 1945, in Germany.]*

In the meantime, in addition to being Liaison Officer with the infantry, I had the job of battalion historian and that gave me something to do in addition to all the other things. Assuredly I kept busy all the time. Then suddenly, out of a clear sky we got orders to move. Something was in the wind but we didn't know what. The papers were cautious and we were completely surprised when we learned that we were heading for Belgium and the "Bulge."

En route to Belgium, and while on the outskirts of Liege, I took advantage of our traffic halts to talk to some of the people. They were wailing and moaning about the fall of Malmedy. I didn't have the faintest idea where it was or anything else. Officially no body knew the situation. It only happened in December, too, about a week before Christmas; but it seems so long ago, although the events of the Ardennes Offensive still linger fresh in my memory. We wound down and around through the country en route to Marche. It was foggy and cold. We heard that Germans had sent patrols into the town the night before and here we were all jammed up trying to get into town.

About that time the Krauts found out that we were in town and so they put a little artillery fire on us. It was late and I had just been undressing when we heard a loud explosion and the glass in the window crashed on to the floor. You don't mind sweating out a little shelling--that's normal. But when they get that close to you it's time to head for lower altitude. By the time I got to the cellar from the second floor of the house I couldn't get any further than the steps because a small space can only hold just so many people and I was a bit late. The artillery will still come in and presently the battalion radio operator came in too. He was a good boy sticking to his post outside the building, but when a shell lands close to your vehicle and some of the shell fragments start slapping up against light armor it's time to take off and he did. Later, in the space of time of a half-hour, he went back to his vehicle and we all went about our business. Back up to the second floor, but I slept with my clothes on this time.

The next day there was a buzz of activity. Troops pulled out of town and the civilians began to evacuate in droves while those remaining were terrified. It also represented the first time I ever saw the American army on the defensive. Trees were prepared for demolition as road blocks; daisy chains (several mines on a board with a strand attached so that a man in a fox hole can pull them in front of an approaching tank) were prepared at strategic points. And we took over the next house using the cellar only. I thought we were crazy for staying, but we held our ground though it was plenty tough.

Task forces were sent out in every direction to stem the tide. Many incidents later came to light and the heroism displayed by all troops in the campaign was such as to reflect none but the highest respect for the American soldier, the American civilian converted into a hard fighting man. I never thought we could do that well back in training days. The fact that this is a personal letter and not a book, prevents me from going into greater detail. But once again I shall try to relate some events.

For one thing I obliged the commanding general by staying up all night to maintain communication between one of the task forces and the division headquarters. The commanding general invited me to stay in the CP but I said that I couldn't because I was the radio operator as well as liaison officer, and had to stay on my radio outside. It was freezing cold and a hard night to keep awake in but nevertheless contact was maintained between the task force and division headquarters so that the progress of the force could be ascertained. I stayed up till about six that morning, and at least I have the satisfaction of knowing that I

contributed to the campaign and assisted the TD commander in getting a Bronze Star which he so richly deserved.

The Krauts thought they would have Marche by Christmas and in fact both sides admitted that it had fallen to the Germans. But it was not so. Like Malmedy, the American troops held. The front line was a semi-circle around the town, actually. I can remember one time when radio communication with a company commander was out and I was sent out to make contact. I tried, but couldn't reach him, and here's why. The Krauts held the high ground, a very definite ridge line covering the main road which was what all the fighting was for. In an open field huge spirals of smoke emanated from two burning TD's--a battle scene just like the movies. I went up a dirt trail and stopped my jeep right on the intersection of two dirt roads and got out. A doughboy frantically told me to get back down the hill because that spot was well observed by the Krauts. I did. No sooner did the vehicle disappear over the rise when a 75mm shell came whizzing right after me. Thanks to the doughboy I'm able to tell it. But if he hadn't been there I'd have learned the hard way, only it might have been too late by then--depending on the aim of the tank gunner who took a pot shot at me. Well the wind-up is that with all roads cut off and the Jerry tanks still holding up the advance of the doughboys I had not accomplished my mission. So I got back down the same trail I'd taken before--only there was no stopping this time. Managed to get some kind of radio communication and stuck it out relaying all kinds of orders in the midst of a hot fire-fight. After a time the action sort of died down, when I and behold a reconnaissance unit broadcasts the position of an "enemy" tank just 100 yards from my position. It turned out to be an American light tank. But strangely enough it didn't take more than five minutes for a couple of rounds to hit in the open field right close by. I took off, my mission having been accomplished and that was all the excuse I wanted.

The situation changed from the defensive to the offensive during the next seven days. We succeeded in capturing that important ridge line and the threat to Marche was ended. The civilians knew it too, somehow, for they began to stream back, smiling and happy. Things seemed to be quiet for a day or so, too. At the invitation of a company commander I took a jaunt around to see some of the gun positions. The gun positions were the front lines. And here is where the peculiarity of warfare at this stage comes in. The front lines of the Americans and the Germans were the southernmost and northernmost cellars respectively and in between is no man's land. We toured the line from town to town, right on a ridge line all the time. It was bad enough to expose yourself that way, which is contrary to all the tactics ever taught, but to make matters worse we stopped dead to look at the buzz bomb flying just under a hundred feet in the air. One machine gun firing at us direct could mow us down like flies. But that's one of the things to which there is no answer. And this went on right down the line except that in the last town I visited, the guns were idle and most of the crew and platoon leader fast asleep, dead tired from all night work and some hard fighting. It's a funny war in respects like that. But such a thing as just described would never happen anywhere on the Siegfried Line.

Some days later, operating in another sector near Laroche, I was making a call on my radio when a tank backed into some buried mines and the resulting explosion gave me a jolt just like somebody cuffing you on the back of the head. The small arms began to pop like firecrackers.

But talking about the Ardennes also reminds me of the difficulties in driving under various conditions. For example, driving in a blinding snowstorm. In civilian life, in a snowstorm, you just drive along and keep the windshield wiper working and maybe brush off the snow a bit when it gets too heavy. But in the army you drive in an open vehicle with the top down, darkness, and country roads that wind along without rhyme or reason. The only way that I could tell the road was by heading the vehicle between patches of brush and in very many cases by getting out in front of the vehicle and trudging along while the driver follows. Besides, there are the deep ditches that are completely hidden, but which suddenly come to life when you fall in them. And last, and last but by no means least,

*(Continued on Page 15)*



## TOUGH MEMORIES OF WWII

(Continued from Page 13)

(most of us had discarded ours) with his rigid body straddling a barbed wire fence. But his boots had been taken by a German.

It is impossible, also, to forget the blood gushing from the belly of a guy from South Carolina who accidentally shot himself when he slammed his gun against a truck bumper when ordered to "break it up." Jim made a fatal mistake in a war filled with errant snap judgments, touch luck and irreversible ironies.

The most remarkable thing, viewed with 20-20 hindsight, was the way hordes of draftees, with only a sprinkling of cowards among them, did their jobs in World War II.

There was bitching galore, of course. But hardly any whimpering as the men, some who only shaved once a week and others with kids of their own in high school, helped each other learn the art of killing.

"It's him or me," any GI could explain as he sharpened his trench knife while crossing the English Channel to, perhaps, plunge it into a hapless German in Normandy, the Hurtgen Forest or in a town the AP writers never mentioned: such as Auw, Bleialf or Dockweiler-Dreis.

Some GIs had been farmers, school teachers, grease monkeys or florists. One, at least, had been an Iowa soda jerk who built model planes while, in Germany, his future enemies were schooled in warfare during their early teens. Our men came from the dunes of Cape Cod, the Appalachian hills, the Indian reservations of Oklahoma, the Ivy League campuses and the teeming neighborhoods of Philadelphia, Chicago and Detroit. As in the war novels, a typical GI barracks was populated by silent types from the Midwest, extroverts from the Bronx and, likely enough, at least one rich kid whose dad, a congressman, was "working on my appointment to West Point."



Somehow, with all the stew in the pot, the men--including thousands of teenagers who matured almost overnight--got their act together 6,000 miles from home and won the war.

The Germans had a good army, too. Second best, as it turned out, in a filthy, gut-wrenching ordeal in which even the winners got shellacked.

[We earlier previewed Dan's book, "1945, a Remembrance." A few copies are still available: \$15.00 for softcover and \$22.00 for hardcover. Write to Dan at: 108 Leffler Street, Burlington, Iowa 52655.]

## A LONG SHORT STORY (Continued from Page 14)

the shoulders of the roads are mined and the engineers have not had the time to clear them. And if they did have the time they could not do a good job in snow as some people found out--the hard way. And the funny thing about mines, too, is that sometimes a few vehicles can run over a mine field without setting off a single mine, then one does. That's some more of the fate you hear about.

The Ardennes campaign successfully closed when we joined Third Army (I was in First Army during the campaign) but the Krauts made an orderly retreat after very severe losses. So we hung around Belgium awhile awaiting orders and not doing too much in general when we finally rejoined Ninth Army for the push across the Roer River.

The man who loves other countries as much as his own stands on a level with the man who loves other women much as he loves his own wife.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

## DINNER INVOCATION BY MSGR WILLIAM F O'DONNELL BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION BANQUET 15 December 1996

### LET US PRAY

Almighty God we ask your blessings on this gathering assembled to commemorate events which took place in Belgium and Luxembourg 52 years ago. As Veterans of "Battle of the Bulge" we express our appreciation for the opportunity of serving our Nation in war and peace. We acknowledge your protection which brought us home safely, and now, after 52 years has given us the health and opportunity to gather here today.

But most of all, we remember, and continue to pray for, the many thousands of our comrades called to God during the Battle itself, and the intervening years.

Though our endeavors were blessed with victory, let us not forget the sacrifices required of so many during the dark and tragic day of December 44 and January 45 - certainly not the least were the brave people of Belgium and Luxembourg who provided us with food, shelter and friendship we desperately needed - often at risk of their lives.

In asking Your blessing this day Almighty God, we pledge our continued thoughts and prayers for those we remember this evening.

AMEN!

*Msgr O'Donnell is himself a Combat Infantryman having served with the 87th Infantry Division in the Battle of the Bulge, before he entered the priesthood. He is currently head of Catholic Cemeteries for the Archdiocese of Washington.*

## Exhibits Expanded at the Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Room

Thanks to the contributions of members of the Washington Model Armored Club, seven miniature dioramas of Battle of the Bulge scenes are being added to the displays in the Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Room, Fort Meade, Maryland. These displays join the impressive Memorial Conference Table and Chairs of Ardennes oak in Stavelot, Belgium.

This room is open for viewing every Wednesday and Friday from 12:30 PM to 3:00 PM. A Battle of the Bulge veteran in on duty during these times to answer questions concerning the room. The public and especially those veterans involved in the Battle of the Bulge are warmly invited to visit this memorial.

For more information you may call Dorothy Davis, Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation, (301) 881-0356 or Robert Johnson, Curator, U.S. Army Museum, Ft. Meade, Maryland, (301) 677-7054.

I hate war as only a soldier who has lived it can,  
only as one who has seen its brutality, its futility,  
its stupidity.

DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER





## 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.

### "YOU'RE IT"--NO GAME OF TAG

December 23, 1944

Glenn R. Fackler, Sr.  
7th Armored Division  
38th Armored Infantry Battalion  
Company A  
Farmington Hills, Michigan

Early afternoon of the 23rd of December, 1944, while dug in behind a tree on the outer edge of woods north of St. Vith, Belgium, overlooking an open field some 500 yards to my front, I spotted a German tank with just the turret showing.

I crawled back to a tank battalion, FO and related what I saw. He came up to check it out and said: "It would knock me out before we could get a round off from where he's at." Just after dark we got orders to pull back about a hundred yards and dig in. Just then all hell broke loose, with APC and tree bursts in the area we had just left.

As it let up we were ordered to resume our original position and upon reaching my fox hole, I found that tree had taken a direct hit about 6 feet above ground and toppled it. That tank must have seen me in his sights and let go after dark.

I saw the tri-pod up and mounted my gun to traverse the area to my front about knee high and waited. The Town of Walerode was over that slight rise in the ground beyond the clearing. It was so dark we couldn't see anything around us. Not long after getting set, I heard noises out in front of us that had to be troops carrying ammo boxes coming toward us. I waited for my squad leader, S/Sgt Alphonse Alpino to start shooting as I felt they were only some 100 yards away. No sooner did I open up when his gun started too and we criss-crossed the field with a full box of ammo. Expecting return fire, but only dead silence.... In just minutes we got orders to pull out and I found that Alpino had gotten one of those tree bursts and was wounded, putting me in charge of the squad. Not until I met up with my company commander at our reunion in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1968 and I asked him if he knew what had happened that night, did I learn that the after action reports had told of that field being strewn with bodies. We must have killed every one of them.

In trying to get out of St. Vith that night we had to hold hands to maintain contact. Even then, with shelling all round, many got separated. I was only able to keep in contact with my

gunner, Milton Baxter, with another one, Peter Andrelewicz getting out on his own. We were joined by a Sgt Kenny just outside St. Vith on a road I felt would lead us back to our half tracks. Sgt Kenny said he had a white phosphorous grenade with the pin out and would throw it if challenged. In about 10 minutes a German shouted "achtung" and I heard that grenade pop. We dove for the ditch and waited for it to burn out never hearing any more from the German. I crawled to Baxter and called low to Kenny, who had argued we had to go to the left to get out. That was where the Germans were and I said, "No, we have to go to the right." Only thing we can figure is he took off to the left and got captured.

Baxter and I took off across country to the right and after about an hour met up with one of our field artillery units ready to pull out and we joined them. A couple of days later we found our half tracks and the platoon sergeant, Jimmie Long. I asked him: "Where is everybody, Long?" He answered, "You're it, Fackler."

Needless to say, it took a lot of replacements and equipment to rebuild the units and we went back and retook St. Vith the 23rd of January, 1945. After a little breather, we took off into Germany where we helped to reduce the Rhur Pocket.

But that's still another story where Baxter got hit by a mortar shell and upon rushing to his aid, I took a direct hit from a 20 mm he meant to finish him off. With the aid of a fearless medic and a rifle squad, S/Sgt Paul Wagner, we got to a nearby farm house and got patched up.

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### CHRISTMAS EVE HAS SPECIAL MEANING

December 23-24, 1944

Jack Hyland  
84th Infantry Division  
333 Infantry  
Company E  
Havertown, Pennsylvania

On the night of December 23-24, 1944, during the Battle of the Bulge, E Company, 333rd Infantry Regiment of the 84th Infantry Division, was defending the rear near Marche, Belgium. The company was ordered to move out along a ridge line near the



Village of Buissonville, west of Marche, to investigate reports that the German spearhead was coming that way.

While the company waited on the ridge, a combat patrol, mostly the second platoon (10 or 12 GI's), was sent across the fields and entered the outskirts of the village. Two mini-patrols were sent off in different directions, while the rest of the group set up a 30 calibre machine gun outside the first house and spread a "daisy chain" of eight mines across the road.

I was on the two-man patrol that went up one road, and about 200 yards along the road we heard Germans standing by a camouflaged tank and talking. We quickly headed back to where our guys were and gave them the news. The second two-man patrol had gone along the main road, and about 300 yards down it, they discovered a long line of German tanks and armored vehicles, with the German troops standing in the middle of the road, smoking, talking and taking a break.



The patrol leader radioed this information back to the company commander, hoping he would tell us to withdraw. Instead words came back we didn't want to hear--wait for further orders. We spread out beside the road figuring our small patrol had no chance against what looked like a battalion of Panzers. After about 15 minutes we heard commands given, and motors starting, then the column started down the road, headed for our lone 30 calibre mg and pathetic "daisy chain." They came closer and closer, and just when we were ready to start firing, we got a "miracle."

In the dark we hadn't seen a side road splitting off about 50 yards away. As the head of the column approached with motors roaring, all of a sudden they turned left and headed up the hill away from us, saving us from certain annihilation.

When they had all passed, we radioed back to the Company CO, and got the welcome words, "Come on back" and took off over those fields like champion sprinters.

Reading the Official Military History of the Ardennes in later years, I came to realize that we had run into the Assault Detachment of the 2nd Panzer Division, and that our little drama was noted on page 436: "The appearance of this force was responsible for reports reading American Headquarters shortly before midnight that Company E of the 33rd had been trapped in Buissonville."

We almost were, but for that hidden side road. Needless to say that through the years, Christmas Eve has a special meaning for a small group of GI's from "Easy," 333rd.

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## "YOU MISSED ME"

December, 1944

**Jim Langford**  
99th Infantry Division  
394th Infantry  
Company I  
Springdale, Arizona

The following incident that took place during our stay on Elsenborn Ridge during the Battle of the Bulge. A friend of mine (from my squad) says this happened to us. I do remember the incident, but not that we in the squad were participants.

Early one cold snowy morning on Elsenborn Ridge well before daylight a voice to the front was heard calling: I give up--I give up. This was repeated every minute or so and seemed to be getting close. It was still very dark and as the Germans were very good at playing tricks to get us to expose ourselves, no one left their holes to investigate what was going on.

Shortly this person (still shouting "I give up") came into view but we could not really see that he was alone, so we still did not leave our holes. One of our soldiers finally fired a shot at him causing him to stop--he stood for a few seconds--gave a high pitched, crackling laugh and yelled "You missed me." He then came toward us again shouting, "I give up." Another shot was fired and he again laughed and shouted, "You missed me." This was repeated two or three times until it got light enough to see that he was alone and we went out and brought him in.

We found out that he was just a kid--15-16 years old and so drunk he could hardly stand alone. He just wanted out of the war.

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## WEATHER ALSO WAS OUR ENEMY

December, 1944

**Loren W. Gast**  
1st Infantry Division  
26th Infantry  
2nd Battalion  
Company G  
Prospect, Ohio

We were in Butgenbach for a month or more. I'll never be able to look at snow without getting the chills.

We stayed up on line for about three days, then moved back into reserve for three days. That reserve was a joke: we weren't out of range of Jerry artillery and mortar fire and you never knew when it was coming in on our position.

It was worth your life to crawl out of your hole. But it wouldn't have been so bad if that's all we had to worry about: the weather was our enemy. It snowed steadily until the drifts were waist-deep: the cold was wicked.

Baths were a thing of the past; we couldn't even shave, and in a couple of weeks we were gruesome-looking men. But the worst of it all was the tenseness of the situation. They'd told us how important it was to hold the area, but your morale in such conditions can be high.

We held; the Jerries knew it. I guess they knew the Big Red One pretty well by now: knew its men and knew its artillery.

Finally, the action narrowed down to a defensive one on our



part; we waited for a break in the weather. If you've ever been out on patrol in the middle of a cold nowhere, you'll know why I wasn't sorry to leave Butgenbach.

Well, h---, the weather finally cleared up; we moved on.

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### ...IT WAS ON TO THE BULGE

December 1944

**George J. Kelley**  
**95th Infantry Division**  
**379th Infantry**  
**Cannon Company**  
**Malden, Massachusetts**

The 95th Infantry Division was regrouping in Saarlautern after a bitter and fierce battle in conquering the heavily fortified city of Metz, France, which we finally conquered with many casualties and wounded fellow soldiers.

Word came from Division 95th Headquarters that the Germans had broken through the lines in Bastogne and many American soldiers were killed and wounded and we were told to grab our rifles and ammunition belts and nothing else and get moving into Bastogne to help our fellow soldiers.

We all loaded on the Army trucks and on our way a fierce snow storm developed and the weather was 14 degrees below zero but we all huddled on the truck like sardines and survived the hectic ride and took our positions in Bastogne to help our fellow soldiers. I recall on our arrival [seeing] German tanks still smoldering and dead German soldiers and civilians lying around our area. German 88 artillery shells which we were dodging constantly and mines were all around the area. When the fog lifted a German plane attacked our position and, fortunately, I can remember 50 calibre bullets just missing me and my buddies.

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### WHEN DID IT ALL BEGIN?

December 15 or 16, 1944

**Anthony Strank**  
**981st Field Artillery Battalion**  
**Battery A**  
**Laurel, Maryland**

On the day before my unit pulled out for the Ardennes, I witnessed what was surely one of the greatest dogfights of all time. Since, then, for over 50 years, I have been ever alert for details of that spectacular air battle, but without any success. It appears that no one has written a word of it. Even W. J. Boyne, author of *Clash of Wings*, which is the Story of WWII in the air, does not mention it. Therefore, lest this great air battle be forgotten, I am obliged to make some record of it.

My battalion, the 981st Field Artillery Battalion, was another of those bastard battalions so often overlooked by military histories. We were a "Long Tom" outfit and I was in Battery A. We were VII Corps artillery and had participated in every major corps action since Normandy. On this particular day, which was either the 15th or 16th of December, we occupied a comfortable firing position west of Duren, a shattered town on the Roer River and located about 20 miles southwest of Cologne. We had been firing our 155-mm Long Toms in general support of the infantry fighting in the Hurtgen Forest as well as long-range interdiction

missions towards the east. Our guns were positioned in the shallow depression of a hilltop a few miles west of Duren and well hidden from enemy observation. Aachen and the notorious Purple Heart Valley were already fading memories. We considered our location easy duty since there was no incoming fire and we had encountered only one strafing run by a pair of German fighters.

VII Corps, part of the First Army, had chased the Germans across France and continued to push them in Germany. Before the Battle of the Bulge, most of the men in Battery A shared the notion that the end of the war was in sight. There was no doubt we were winning. Except for a couple of night-flying nuisances (Bedcheck Charley and that other guy, Pete) the Luftwaffe was of no consequence. In fact, we all believed the Luftwaffe was kaput--finished.



There was always lots of air activity, however. British bombers flew over us at night--virtually every night--and many were shot down in flames by enemy night fighters. American bombers were the daylight workhorses. We were thus constantly aware of, and sensitive to, any activity in the air.

On this particular day (15th or 16th) some of us in my gun crew became concerned over the appearance of an unusually large group of aircraft approaching rapidly from the east, from the direction of Cologne. Normally, we saw the daylight bombers returning from a mission on this course, but this swarm of aircraft was approaching too fast for bombers. Anything unusual tended to make a GI uneasy and so the oncoming planes quickly got our attention. In the past we had been bombed and strafed a number of times, even by our own, friendly aircraft. These planes were coming on too fast; and they were too small for bombers. They were enemy fighters. The Luftwaffe was not kaput! There were too many to count--more than 100 and perhaps as many as 200.

Very soon they were close enough to identify: Focke-Wulfs and Messerschmitts with their distinctive black-cross markings. Then, at top speed and streaking in from several directions, came groups of Spitfires and Hurricanes, P-51s and P-47s, P-38s and perhaps other fighter craft. They closed eagerly with the oncoming foe, diving in with sudden cascades of action, climbing, rolling, looping--filling the sky with noise maneuver. Here were all the famed fighters of WWII in glorious combat. One moment our guy would be tailing a German, guns firing, and the next moment their positions were reversed. With so much interweaving action, it was not easy to follow a pair in



combat. One fighter, obviously defeated, plunged straight down, vertical, at full throttle to disappear on contact with the ground. Another looped and rolled skyward trailing smoke. Another simply exploded in midair. Because of the many crossing patterns in one's visual field it was not possible to keep track of kills or even to stay focused on a combat pair. There were simply too many to take in at one time.

In a very short time, perhaps only a few minutes, they were suddenly all gone, dispersed to the far horizons. The dynamics of air combat had carried them away and left a stunning silence. One moment we ground observers were witness to their sound and fury, to the frenzied imperatives of the kill, then all of a sudden there was empty sky and silence. I had witnessed a spectacular dog fight engaging legendary fighters. In my view, this was an historic battle. I trust that others who were there will add their comments.

Now, over 50 years later, my guess is that some 25 to 30 fighters, both Allied and German, were shot down before the combat arena drifted to other parts of the horizon. To my knowledge, no one has written an account of this action...

The Battle of the Bulge, everyone agrees, erupted on December 16. This air battle most likely took place on that date. However, I cannot discount the possibility that the fighters staged their spectacular dog fight on the day before. If so, then the Battle of the Bulge began December 15. Surely there are VBOBers around who witnessed this event and can recall the date more precisely.

For my unit, the 981st FA Battalion, the "Close Station, March Order," next morning got us moving again, but this time heading west, back toward Namur, reversing our direction of the past few months. We circled southwestward and then eastward to cross the Meuse River, much of the time in slow, heavy traffic that was often interrupted by incoming buzz bombs. Our initial action in the Bulge was to support the 82nd Airborne at the point of the Bulge. For at least the early part of the Bulge, the 981st was attached to the 18 Airborne Corps.

Unlike so many of the VBOBers who have written so vividly of their Bulge experiences, I can recall only a few details. Much of the time it was painfully cold and our firing missions went on without let up, every day and often all night. Twice, I can recall, we made ready to destroy our guns because of imminent capture, but the details elude me. My nicest recollection is the hot turkey dinner our kitchen crew brought up on Christmas Day or the day after. By the end of January or in early February we were again on duty with VII Corps. We sent on to cross the Rhine at Remagen and then pushed eastward as far as the Mulde River, south of Berlin, where we heard the welcome words, "Mission Accomplished."

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#### I JUST STOOD THERE....

December 1944

**George R. Kester**  
257th Engineer Light Ponton Company  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

My most scary moment during the Battle of the Bulge happened in a huge warehouse in Eupen, Belgium.

I was with our supply sergeant, George Brown, and we were in line to get waited on.

While we stood there, a buzz bomb flew directly overhead.

I had seen several of these bombs stop and watched them arch down to earth. This time, I was inside and could not tell which way it would fall (on top of me, I was sure).

My heart was up in my throat and I just stood there.

After a few seconds it struck the ground, just beside the building. The walls shook and several windows were shattered. I have never seen George Brown move so fast—before or since.

He expedited our business and we were on our way.

George Dickerson, our truck driver, backed the truck up and we loaded it and away we went back to Villsalm.

My heart went out to the GI's who had to work in that depot.

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#### THEY WERE THE REAL HEROES

December 25, 1944

**Frederick J. Costa**  
6th Armored Division  
86th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron  
(Mechanized)  
Troop B  
Butler, Pennsylvania

On December 25 and 26, 1944, we moved into Bastogne, where we spent 32 days. "Thirty-two days of freezing hell," as one General put it. We took 32 towns, 352 pillboxes, and captured over 1,000 German soldiers from Luxembourg to Belgium along the Siegfried Line. Then we moved on into Schonecken in Germany. I was always in mechanized cavalry, and a member of Troop B's 3rd platoon. Because we were a recon outfit, we saw many days and nights of constant fighting. Being the "eyes and ears" of the main combat team, we spent a lot of time on foot. We couldn't always take our vehicles.

On one particular day, 3rd platoon (my platoon) had been out all day and night. When we returned to camp we were immediately ordered back, until our sergeant informed the captain of our recent return. The decision was made to send out 2nd platoon instead and to use our sergeant, myself, and four others as backup. By late afternoon we had reached the forest we were to investigate. Much to our surprise, there were quite a few infantrymen and several tank destroyers already on site. When 2nd platoon informed the infantry colonel of their orders, he told them that his men had already tried to take the woods and couldn't because of the Germans entrenched inside. The 30 men and 1 officer of 2nd platoon formed a skirmish line and we went in. We had no air support that day because of the heavy snow and winds, but we thought we were okay. We had infantry, tank destroyers, and the two .30 calibers and BAR we brought along for back up. We were wrong.

As 2nd platoon made it in past the edge of the forest, the Germans sprang up out of covered trenches behind them and opened fire. In seconds the whole platoon was down. We opened fire with everything we had, but in the end only two men made it out and they were wounded. By now it was dark and we were forced to wait until morning to go back in. We went back to the command post that evening and demanded to know who gave the order. I yelled at the officers and demanded "Who was the dumb bastard that gave that order?" I didn't get reprimanded that night because, even though I had a terrible temper and often spoke out of line, my officers respected me for what I could do.

By the next morning it had cleared enough to bring in the air



support. The P-51's made short order of the area and we moved in. We found 27 men, but were still missing the sergeant, lieutenant, and two other men. We looked for a while and then I found the sergeant and lieutenant under a large pine tree. They were both wounded, naked, and shot through the temple. After that day, very few German prisoners were taken alive. Two days later while taking a small town, a priest took us behind a church and there we found the two remaining men. They, too, were naked and shot through the temple. To this day, nobody knows who gave the order that sent these men to their deaths.

As we moved on we had our first encounter with Screaming Meemees and Bouncing Bettys. For those that don't know, a Screaming Meemie was a cluster of 20 rockets fired at once that literally "screamed" as it flew. A Bouncing Betty was a mine about the size of a quart oil can loaded with ball bearings. Bettys were buried underground and were triggered when one of the three wires, attached to the top and sticking out the ground, were moved. When triggered, the Betty would leap up out of the ground and explode in the air at waist level. We were trained that if we stepped on one and heard the accompanying clicking sound we should stand still. Your foot would most definitely be blown off, but better to lose a foot than your life. Our first experience with Bouncing Bettys was while we were taking a town. The town was pretty beat up because of all the fighting, but we noticed this one yard that was perfect. The grass was green and there were no holes or anything in it. One of our guys and a friend of mine started across the yard before we could stop them. The guy took one more step and we heard the click. He didn't stop. The Bouncing Betty took off one of his legs and most of the other. My buddy and I rushed to him and tried to stop the bleeding. He died while the medics were working on him. This is only a fraction of the things I witnessed during the Battle of the Bulge. I saw many men die and get wounded in those 32 days and I want you to know--they were the real heroes.

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## BELGIUM BREAKTHROUGH

December 24, 1944

Phillip C. Stark  
84th Infantry Division  
334th Infantry  
1st Battalion  
Company A  
Madison, Wisconsin

It was the day before Christmas of 1944.

In the previous month we had fought in Holland and Germany. Those had been slow moving days and nights. In that time we had moved forward about five miles. One month of daily attacks had cost our company about 175 in dead or wounded of the original 200 men that had left the United States as a combat team. But this is not a true measure of our casualties. Periodically we had gotten replacements and they were equally expendable. It didn't take long to break in a new man on the front. After one of the artillery or mortar barrages that came on an average of once every 15 minutes, and after one attack, each new man became an experienced veteran. "A" Company of the 1st Battalion was a seasoned outfit.

And then one night a new outfit replaced us on the line. We thought we were being relieved for a 24 hour rest that would

take us behind the lines about five miles. Experience had accustomed us to one of these rests for roughly every seven days of fighting. These were the times when we would sleep, because there was no real sleep on the front. But this time we were disappointed. We were informed that the Germans had broken through the 106th Division in Belgium, were gaining territory in a route, and we were being thrown into the gap.

This was how it came about that on the morning before Christmas we were dug in on the outskirts of the small town of Bourdon in Belgium, on the northern flank of what was later to be known as the "Bulge." Our position was beside a railroad track on the edge of the town. The snout of my machine gun stuck through a hedge that ran along the tracks. We could thus cover the front through the hedge and the flanks of our position down the tracks on both sides. We also had to be vigilant to our rear because the Germans were spread throughout the whole area. No definite front line had been established.



An incident that illustrates this point occurred after our arrival in a truck convoy. When we disembarked from the trucks, we were supposed to be well behind the actual line. We started our march forward while the trucks turned back to retrace their route. We were later informed that they never reached the rear safely. The whole company was captured. This convinced us that a "front line" did not exist.

Near our position was an old railroad switch house. In it we had stored some precious food we had received in one of the very few Christmas packages that reached our company. We hoped that on Christmas Day we could split our watch into two sections and while one section stood guard, the other could enjoy rest and a good meal in the little brick switch house.

But this was never to be. On this same morning, and just after a particularly heavy incoming artillery barrage, a runner came to order us to move forward to clear a company of Germans out of the woods directly to our front. We were assured that we would return to this position as soon as the task was completed. So we left our treasured food to rot in that switch house.

Upon arrival in this sector we had been ordered not to take any prisoners. They didn't say, "Shoot any German who surrenders," but there was no alternative. The Germans executed their prisoners because, were they to take those who surrendered or were wounded, they would not have any way to take care of them. We had the same problem. Our forces were spread thin. Few people back home were aware of or could understand the necessity of these tactics. We were forced to use the same



dreadful measures that our enemy used. When a prisoner was taken, often the officer or "non-comm" in charge would order that he be taken on a "short trip back." The men thus assigned would take the prisoner back a couple of hundred yards, do what was expected of them, and be back with their unit with little time lost. I thank God that, because I was not a rifleman, I was never ordered to take a "short trip back."

These were the conditions under which we moved forward to clear out the woods. At 5:00 p.m. we entered the dense forest under heavy fire from the Germans within. As I ran forward I would hit the ground periodically when the whiz of a bullet sounded too close or a psychic urge befell me. Once I landed next to a clump of bushes only to have an enemy bullet clip off a branch not five inches from my head.

One of my short runs brought me to a wounded German lying on the ground. Because I carried the machine gun on my shoulder, my side-arm was a 45 caliber pistol. He saw me and frantically reached for a white handkerchief in a plea for mercy. He knew what he would do if our positions were reversed. We both knew what I was supposed to do. I aimed the pistol at his head and he began to cry.

No matter how much hate I had gathered from seeing Germans kill cold-bloodedly, I could not bring myself to shoot this young, good looking blond boy. I had made him suffer just by my threat. My hate consoled my conscience in this. I passed on, leaving him ungaurded in our rear. To this day, I wonder about him. Did some other GI come across him lying there and do what I was supposed to have done?

## DID YOU ENJOY THESE STORIES??

**Well, people would enjoy  
your story too!!**

We still have a few stories on hand, but they are rapidly being used up. So, get your story into the mail soon. Be as brief as possible, and confine the contents to **one incident during the Bulge.**



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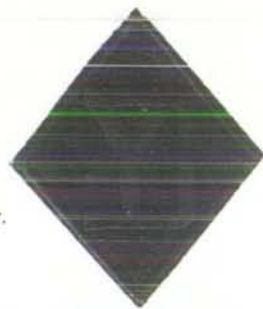
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# REUNIONS

**26TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, June 2-4, 1997, St. Louis, Missouri. Contact: W. Kent Stephens, 107 Bluffview Lane, Collinsville, Illinois 62234-1914. Telephone: 618-344-1616.

**30TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 17-20, 1997, Galt House Hotel, Louisville, Kentucky. Contact: Richard Jepsen, 2409 Lookout Drive, Manhattan, Kansas. Telephone: 913-539-4816. (Previous address was incorrect.)

**84TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, August 16-20, 1997, Clarion Plaza Hotel, Orlando, Florida. Contact: Forrest Lothrop, PO Box 827, Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Telephone: 605-334-8787 or 605-332-6933.

**86TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION**, May 6-11, 1997, Kissimmee, Florida. Contact: George L. Murray, 818 W 62nd Street, Anniston, Alabama 36206. Telephone: 205-820-4415.

**86TH ORDNANCE COMPANY**, September 17-19, 1997, Stoney Creek Inn, Galena, Illinois. Contact: Richard Schildbach, 101 South Whiting St #514, Alexandria, Virginia. Telephone: 703-370-2707.

**90TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 3-7, 1997, Omni Netherland Plaza Hotel, Cincinnati, Ohio. Contact: Allan Cornett, PO Box 730, South Hill, Virginia 23970. Telephone: 1-800-416-9090.

**150TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, May 14-16, 1997, Shoreham Acres Resort Inn, Falmouth, Massachusetts. Contact: Curtis F. Shaw, 25 Sagamore Road, West Yarmouth, Massachusetts 02673.

**300TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, June 5-7, 1997, LaQuinta Inn, East I30, Dallas, Texas. Contact: Frank Neuhauser, 6278 Revere Place, Dallas, Texas 75214. Telephone: 214-823-8789.

**501ST PARACHUTE INFANTRY REGIMENT**, July 17-20, 1997, Springfield, Missouri. Contact: Ralph Manley, 2335 South Golden, Springfield, Missouri 65807. Telephone: 417-882-7358.

**749TH TANK BATTALION**, March 30-April 2, 1997, Best Western, The Crockett Hotel, San Antonio, Texas. Contact: Herman F. Mayes, R. 1, Box 946, Clinton, Indiana 47842. Telephone: 317-832-3038.

## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE THAT'S 52 YEARS OLD

*[The following was excerpted from the 8TH FIELD  
ARTILLERY OBSERVATION BATTALION  
ASSOCIATION'S NEWS (latest issue)].*

To the Men and Officers  
of the 8th FA Observation Battalion:

Each of us at times has felt the inadequacy of words to express the full and sincere feeling of the heart. To each of you at this Christmas time may I, as your commanding officer say, "The best of luck be yours; may we continue to serve the best interests of our country, and to you and to those dear to you may we continue to successfully discharge our duties that we may early rejoin them in the peace that will follow the successful finish of this war."

Calvin A. L. Dickey  
25 December 1944



## ARE YOUR DUES DUE?

# CALL FOR NOMINEES FOR VBOB OFFICERS

Who will be the National Officers of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge for 1998 (known as the Executive Council)?

In accordance with VBOB Bylaws the Past Presidents are required to prepare a slate of candidates for presentation at the National Membership Meeting in September, 1997, at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania.

Any person (member) wishing to serve as an officer in any of the offices listed below should advise me through the Administrative Office, PO Box 11129, Arlington, Virginia 22210, by March 31, 1997. Your submittal should include your member number, chapter affiliation (if any), the unit you served with in the Bulge, and a short biographical sketch.

Inasmuch as our center of operation is located in the Maryland, District of Columbia, and Virginia area, anyone wishing to serve must consider the cost of transportation, lodging and meals for each meeting. There should be at least seven meetings to attend: regular Executive Council meetings, the national meeting and the December 16th meeting held each year at Fort Myer (Arlington), Virginia.

Positions to be filled: President  
Executive Vice President  
Vice President, Membership  
Vice President, Chapters/Regions  
Vice President, Military Affairs  
Treasurer  
Corresponding Secretary  
Recording Secretary  
Trustees (as follows):  
Three for 3 year terms  
Two for 2 year terms

## "Those Unsung Heroes"

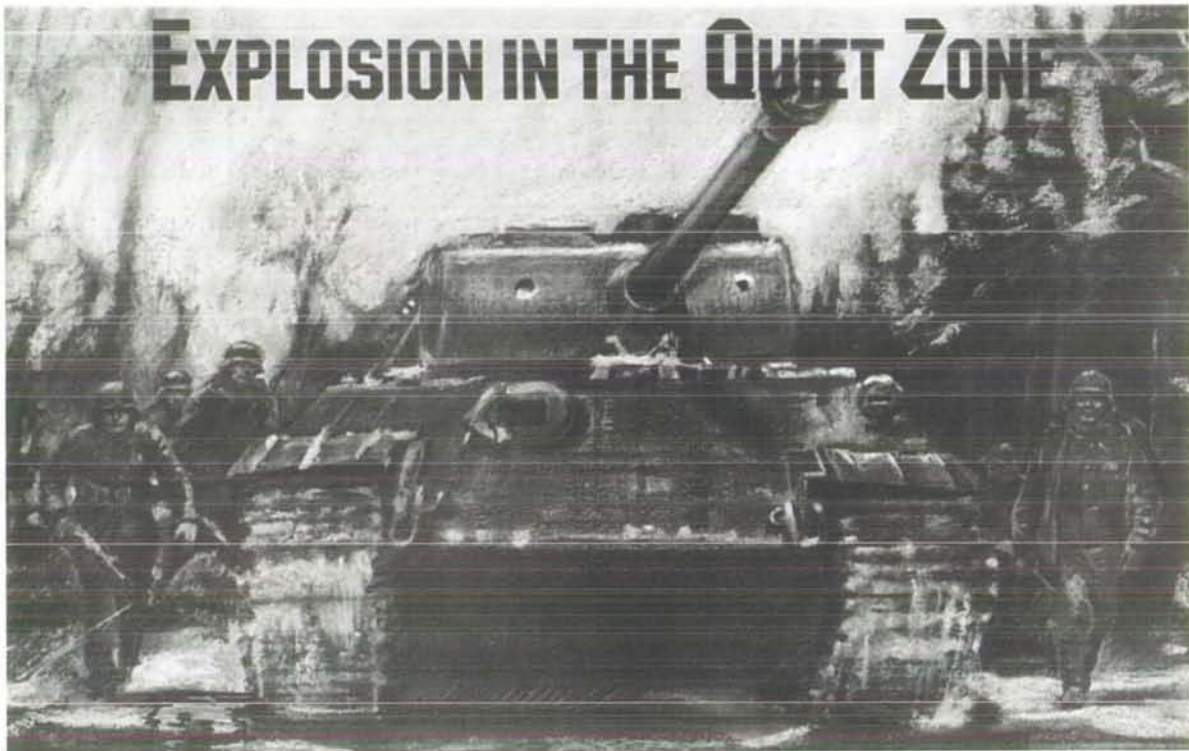
If there were ever unsung heroes of the Battle of the Bulge, they were the replacements, the cannon fodder troops. They would be parceled out to the Companies in the line as casualties were incurred, they would come from replacement depots, most of them with very little training, and in some cases only a few days out of the United States, such were the misfortunes of war as the country went on a full military basis, and the nation's numbers grew in the armed forces. There wasn't adequate time for the proper training. Later they would be called reinforcements, supposedly to add a little credit to their almost impossible mission.

We never had time to give the replacements the proper orientation and there never was time for them to get acquainted with the other men in the outfit. Seems like we'd always get them about the time we were going into an attack, just told them to watch the rest of us, told them if they could survive the first couple of days, they'd probably get by for awhile. We'd get say 20 replacements before an attack, the next morning five might still be alive. Some never even got on the morning report. It was the same way with officers in combat. The Infantry school at Fort Benning was graduating 200 2nd Lts. every day, seven days a week, to keep the platoon positions filled, and then sometimes there weren't enough, on numerous occasions, enlisted men led platoons. Many were commissioned on the battlefield.

From the "ARDENNES ECHO",—publication of the  
Central Massachusetts Chapter



# EXPLOSION IN THE QUIET ZONE



Captain Charles MacDonald shivered from the cold. A company commander in the 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Division, MacDonald had spent the night listening to German Nebelwerfer rockets shriek overhead. The Ardennes front was supposed to be quiet. But in the early hours of 17 December 1944, the forests around Elsenborn Ridge shook with the sound of battle.

Deployed outside the twin villages of Krinkelt and Rocherath, MacDonald's company was blocking a road that led to Elsenborn Ridge. His riflemen stood right in the path of the First SS Panzer Corps, spearhead of the Sixth Panzer Army.

German infantry attacked the company line seven times, screaming and waving their rifles. Seven times the G.I.s stopped them dead. Then came the tanks. Five heavy Tigers, with their 88mm. guns, came thundering down MacDonald's exposed left flank. There was only one bazooka in the entire company, and its tube had been dented by a German bullet. It would not fire.

The big Tigers opened up from 75 yards away. Their shells

snapped tree trunks in half, throwing deadly bursts of wood fragments in all directions. The company's 1st platoon, blasted from their positions, fell back in a daze.

At a nearby firebreak, MacDonald tried to rally his men, but a flanking force of Germans hit them before they could form a line. When he looked up from his radio, only three of his soldiers were still there. It was time, as MacDonald said, to "run like hell."

Retired Army Reserve Col. Charles B. MacDonald, 68, one of the country's foremost military historians, died of cancer Dec. 4, 1990 at his home in Arlington.

His best known work is an account of his wartime experiences, *Company Commander*, which was required reading at West Point, in Reserve Officers Training units, Army service schools, and the Marine Corps.

First published in 1947, the book sold more than a million copies and remains in print. His last book, *A Time for Trumpets: The Untold story of the Battle of the Bulge*, was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in 1984.

## "This is a Hell of a Way For a Soldier to Die"

On 9 December 1945, General Patton was traveling in his car along the Frankfurt-Mannheim road with his Chief of Staff Major-General "Hap" Gay. The car was a 1939 Cadillac, driven by Pfc. Horace L. Woodring. Shortly before midday they were in collision with a big truck belonging to a quartermaster corps unit. The front of the car was smashed, but Gay, Woodring, and the driver of the truck were unhurt. Patton, however, had been thrown forward and then hurled back. He was bleeding from cuts on his head and appeared to be paralyzed.

He was driven to the 130th Station Hospital at Heidelberg, which was commanded by an old friend, General Geoffrey Keyes. There he was taken to surgery where it was discovered that he had broken his neck and was paralyzed from the neck downwards. Mrs. Patton arrived during the afternoon of 11 December, and by the 13th, General Patton had shown such improvement that his doctors began to consider the possibility of flying him back to the States.

But it was not to be. On the 19th a crisis suddenly developed. He had great difficulty in breathing and the pressure on his spinal cord increased. For two days he struggled for survival, but at 5:50 p.m., on 21 December, he died of acute heart failure having confided to his brother-in-law that "this is a hell of a way for a soldier to die."

Patton's 3rd Army - George Forty



## LOST MONIES

[The following was sent to us by JOHN T. WORTHINGTON, III, 295TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION.]

Some time in 1945 in Germany, the monies of individual soldiers was being sent to the rear area of the combat zone for members of Col. George Carter's 295th Army Combat Engineer Battalion by a motorcycle courier from Headquarters Company for deposit in soldiers' deposit account or war bonds, etc.

After discharge at Indiantown Gap Army in Pennsylvania, and about halfway through my first year of college at the University of Maryland, I remembered I had a deficit in my soldier deposit account. Being a student under the GI Bill was a great thing, but the loss of \$75.00 was a lot of money in 1946.

I decided to collect the money, by making a trip to the Pentagon in Washington, DC. I finally got to the office of small claims in the Adjutant General's Office. In less than one hour, I was shown what had happened to the monies. After the war, the occupation troops traced down all types of things, this being one of them. Even though they had the monies, no attempt to my knowledge was made to tell any of us of its existence and thus I don't think many persons have claimed it. If the monies are still there in some fund, with the kind of interest that should have been paid for 50 years,, it might be a nice finding for the survivor or a member of his family.

They found the courier's body in an occupied town, where SS troopers were active. The motorcycle driver had made a wrong turn on his trip. He was captured, killed and he and his motorcycle were found along with his dog tags. No money was recovered by the army.

If anyone is still living or their descendants, I would have them contact their local congressman or senator.

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## BOOKS YOU MAY ENJOY

The following books have been donated to our archives by the authors/publishers. We very much appreciate these contributions. They will provide a valuable source of reference for WWII in the future.

*To Save Bastogne*, by Robert F. Phillips. This book chronicles the sacrifice of one valiant regiment (the 110th Infantry, 28th Infantry Division) and assorted support troops--including clerks, cooks, quartermaster troops, and bandmen; as well as armored and artillery units--in their attempt to hold off the drive of four German divisions toward Bastogne, Belgium. It is the bloody saga of American GIs willing to trade their lives for time so that reinforcements could occupy the vital crossroads of Bastogne to thwart the surprise German 1994 winter offensive that threatened to turn the tide of war in Europe.

*The Key to the Bulge--The Battle for Losheimergraben*, by Stephen M. Rusiecki. This book tells the story of a pitched and decisive battle that unhinged the German plan for a swift and successful counteroffensive in the Battle of the Bulge. A lone regiment of the 99th US Infantry Division, the 394th, successfully defended a critical road intersection, the

Losheimergraben Crossroads, for 36 hours from 16 to 17 December, 1944. This valiant defense incurred a delay from which the 6th SS Panzer Army, the main effort of Hitler's *Wacht am Rhein* counteroffensive, could never recover. When the 394th finally withdrew on 17 December, the Germans already had to shift their focus further south, to St. Vith and Bastogne, a move that sealed their eventual defeat. Cost is \$59.00 including postage and handling (CT & MD add sales tax). Order from Greenwood Publishing Group, Inc., PO Box 5007, Westport, Connecticut 06881-5007.

*Kriegie: Prisoner of War*, by Robert L. Jackson, a BAR man in the 28th Infantry Division, 109th Infantry, Company F. The book relates the author's time in the Battle of the Bulge and 101 days as a prisoner of war. Live with Robert in the foxholes. Experience the trauma of surrender. Endure the death marches and the forced labor camps. The book tells little of the pageantry of war, only the ordeal of the GI's fight for survival is important. Though surrounded by cruelty and death, Robert's unwavering trust in God helped him survive the horror and suffering that claimed so many lives. One in ten POW's died in German prison camps and this is a graphic and valuable record of the appalling conditions our soldiers endured as well as the eloquent testimony to man's indomitable spirit. Cost is: paperback \$13.00/hard cover \$18.00 with postage and handling. Order from Robert L. Jackson, 1506 Camp Road, Buchanan, Michigan 49107. Autographed upon request.

*Engineering the Victory--The Battle of the Bulge: A History*, by David Pergrin. This is not a story of strategy, or the story of generals, but the story of combat and construction engineers, trained to build and destroy and also to fight. This book reaches out for the other stories of the Battle of the Bulge and contains numerous battle stories, anecdotes, and experiences told by those who were there and who lived them. The stories bring attention to engineer soldiers in combat and construction units who fought and died with their comrades of infantry, tankers, artillery and others. The book may be ordered from VBOB on the Quartermaster order form contained in this newsletter. The cost quoted includes shipping and handling.

*We Were Each Other's Prisoners: An Oral History of World War II American and German Prisoners of War* by Lewis H. Carlson. This book contains the real stories (culled from 150 interviews with surviving POWs), in vivid, often harrowing detail of men whose unimaginable courage testifies both to their personal strength and to the human will to survive. For information to order write: Basic Books, 10 East 53rd Street, New York, New York 10022-5299.

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## A SPECIAL THANK YOU TO HENRY VERTREES

In response to our request in the last issue for information as to where we could order Bill Mauldin's *Up Front*, Henry and Ruth Vertrees sent us their personal copy of this publication. Many others wrote to tell us where we could obtain a copy. Again, thanks Henry and Ruth and to those of you who wrote.

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## THE OUTSIDER

[VINCE GORMAN, 447TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT (AUTOMATIC WEAPONS) BATTALION, returned to Europe in 1994 for the 50th Anniversary. While he was in a Brussels Hotel, a lady approached him and handed him the following prose. Vince wants to share it with you.]

I can only stand in awe and wonder in the shadow of the soldier of '44.

Fifty years ago after the failure of the peace that brought to the world the Wars I and II--the Argonne and Ardennes.

Looking out across the same fields of blood, today so calm and serene,

Undying thanks and pride for all who came.

Remembrance and honor by those who remain free in their homes and towns, because of him beside me who came.

I am only an observer of faces that saw the snows turn red as their comrades fell.

I observe as an intruder as the shadows of memories fall across the face of him who was there. Candy for children--flour for bread--He cared.

Would I stand here today, observing and free, if you, my father, had not marched; or you, my uncle, beside me, had flown?

Could that be the farm house where he fled and hid--the grass so green and the flowers grown? Today, but not then.

Cemeteries, memorials, carefully tended--not by the U.S.A.--but by grateful locals today: the English and French, Belgians, Luxemburgers and Dutch. Flying colors of red, white and blue--"Welcome to our liberators! I remember and thank you!" Window flowers--How can I repay you?

Is this the cross of your fallen friend? (I intrude on your thoughts once again.)

As I walk the roads and stand among the poppies--you, not I--relive the atrocities that time can't erase--the nightmares, the wounds, the embrace of a new friend. There are no guns today.

I am the guest--the daughter, the friend. You are the honored, the rarest of men.

Liberty you gave many whom I'll never know.

I am shamed by my own when toward you they show dishonor, ignorance, disrespect for your sacrifice.

Could this be the foxhole where you hid through the night?

You nod in agreement as historians recount and recall the battles and marches of both friend and foe.

The rain and cold chill me; but you had no warmth for days and for nights on this battle site.

Holding firm. Tending insured and ill. As darkness surrounds you, you pay for the still silence which heralds the end of the fight.

The sun warms my shoulder. You stare down the road through the trees. A chill rocks your stance. Whose shadow do you see?

I'm the intruder on memories so private you don't care to recall.

Those younger than I stop as you pass by, wave from windows above. "We remember!"

With eyes full of love they tell stories when mothers were children when GI's came. "Were you there?"--No matter--Meet their children now.

Ice cream, not K rations, for lunch today. Whose name from your nightmare last night did you say?

Roads look familiar--not quite the same. Exhausted with memories you rest on the hills of foreign soil, as if home.

Do you see crosses from yesterday's poppies today?

The view is full of beauty. Is your heart filled with peace?

The shadows again as you gaze through the trees at the teeth of the dragon surrounding the land freed by your presence--each tooth a reminder of the shots in the air at innocents, soldiers, and all who dared block the dragon's march toward the end of the war.

I, the intruder, take photos and buy souvenirs.

The veteran beside me? No need. He was there. He knew first hand

of the stories I'll tell to my children, his children, the future to share.

I stand back and wonder--Just what draws you back to a time in a land far from home and friend?

Your hair may be whiter, your gait a bit slow,

But my memories are now clear and your lives I now know.

Through your eyes I see pride in everything that you do.

With the French, the English, the Luxemburgers, the Dutch and the Belgians I join in: **Thank you!**

I'll sign this--"The outsider." The observer is me.

To you--the hero--that's all I can be.

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## REFLECTIONS

By Joseph Zimmer, 87th Infantry Division

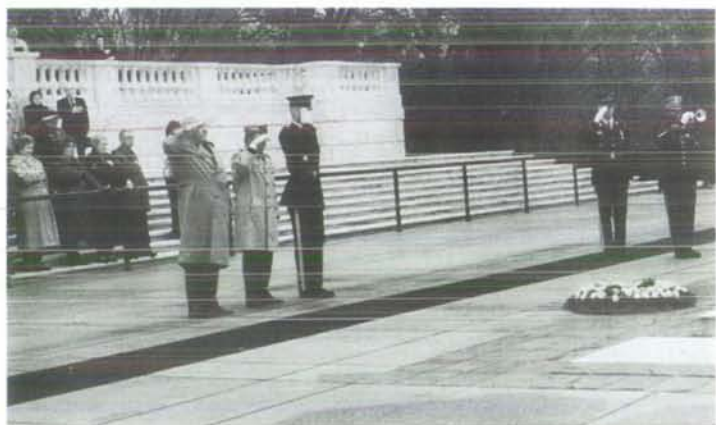
(Given at the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation Board of Trustees Meeting, Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Room, Fort George G. Meade, Maryland, October 30, 1996.)

"The history of the world," Thomas Carlyle, essayist, wrote in 1841 "is but the biography of great men. It is the story of not only a few great men and women, but of masses of ordinary men and women." We here are part of that history of our country.

Of our dead, the wordless world of their sleep still can be heard because of the way they died and the cause for which they gave their last full measure of devotion--their lives.

As members of the Foundation, we have gathered together once again to keep alive in the special vault of the national imagination the gallantry, courage, and sacrifices made during that great battle. Each of the 19,000 who died, every drop of blood shed, invigorated the nation and Western civilization.

Who knows what our comradeship means, but surely it means more than just that we are all haunted by ghosts; because they are not just echoes of voices that have years since ceased to speak, but the murmur of heroes in the sense that, through them something of the power and richness of life itself not only touched us once long ago, but continues to touch us today. Let us be worthy of this heritage as we continue our work.



VBOB President Stanley Wojtusik and Vice President for Military Affairs "Lucky" Loiacono are joined by the Honor Guard at the wreath laying ceremonies honoring those who served in the Bulge held December 16th, 1996, at Arlington Cemetery. (Photo provided by SAM SILVERMAN, 10 ARMD 11 TK BN A.)



## BY SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

**We are happy to advise you of the availability of two signed and numbered limited edition prints commemorating the 50th Anniversary of "Victory in Europe." To be fully appreciated the prints by John Paul Strain must be seen in full color. The size is 19" x 26."**

**The tribute to the Battle of the Bulge is a scene captured in Bastogne depicting the harsh weather conditions in the Ardennes and, thus, bringing to life the difficulties encountered.**



**The D-Day tribute is a scene from Utah Beach which depicts Brigadier General Theodore Roosevelt, Jr., leading his division ashore.**

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## MOVE 'EM OUT!

Edward J. Mooney  
3626 Quartermaster Truck Company

[A brigade of media people were already ashore and waiting when the first contingent of U.S. troops waded onto the beach at Somalia; an army of TV anchors and camera people covered the Haiti beachhead. But only a small handful of war correspondents covered one of the greatest military campaigns in U.S. history, the Battle of the Bulge. As a Bulge veteran, I have often thought of what might have happened had a Somalia-Haiti media coverage taken place in the Ardennes Forest on 18-19 December 1944.]

[Mourmelon-le-Grand, France, December 18, 1944] The armada of GI vehicles, of which my squad's four GMC 6x6 iron horses were small potatoes, cranked up and began pulling out of the vast R&R camp during late afternoon on this damp and foggy day with all of the 101st Airborne Division's paratroopers and glider riders aboard. I was driving our lead truck, splitting the chore with Rocket Roark, a peacetime cowpuncher from Pueblo, Colorado. A dozen troopers in battle dress were wedged into the vehicle's cold and drafty rear end; all of the gear and armament they owned was packed into the truck's 1/4 ton trailer. Our destination: a crossroads town in Belgium called Bastogne.

The hundreds of Army vehicles of every size and description, with speed limited to 15 mph for the 90+ mile trip, departed Mourmelon while the rain continued to fall. Light faded, night crept in. As we double-clutched through small town after small town every window in every house had an occupant. But nobody was smiling. Nobody was cheering. Nobody was throwing flowers in our path. I got a queasy feeling that they knew something we didn't.

Our three-mile long convoy trundled across the Meuse River at Sedan through which, four years earlier, the Nazi blitzkrieg had exploded into France on its unstoppable march to the English Channel. We entered Belgium as the night wore on. The weather grew more foul. The fog thickened. The cold drizzle worked its way into a light snow. We spanned the River Samois and soon penetrated the western blackness of the Ardennes Forest. Spooky, man.

What's that!! A hundred searchlights had snapped on!! They illuminated most of the convoy and half the forest!! Our vehicles, loaded to the gills with one of the crack combat divisions of the United States Army, skittered and slid to a halt.

Now--who are they!! Three dozen people, maybe more, unarmed and in camouflage gear (cleaned and pressed), appeared from no where. They quickly fanned out long the convoy. One of the newcomers, a great-looking, thirtyish doll, jumped onto my running board as I cranked the window down. She wore a "War Correspondent" patch on her tunic. A cameraman scrunched in beside her and focused over her shoulder.

The lady asked breathlessly as the camera whirled, "Are

you nervous, corporal?"

"What have you got in mind? was the best I could come up with.

"Why, it's the big battle, silly!"

"Battle?" I looked across at the Rocket who was riding shot gun. "What battle?"

Our inquisitor stamped her foot. "Haven't you guys been watching the news? It's the Battle of the Bulge! The Germans plan to encircle Bastogne at oh six hundred!" "My goodness," she scolded, "you are uninformed! Hold on a sec," she said. "I'll reconfirm."

She unhitched a walkie-talked from her belt, punched a few buttons, talked into the gizmo. "Calling Berlin," she said. "Come in Berlin." She answered my shocked look with, "I'm trying to get our European anchor in Berlin.... Oh, hi, that you Brunhilde?... Yes, it's me.... Oh, cool, thanks. Listen, Brunhilde, have I got a scenario for you! The 101st Airborne just entered the Ardennes!.... Yes, the 101st! The cutest guys.... Brunhilde, dear, tell me, isn't the German attack on Bastogne pencilled in for oh six hundred?... What?... Moved to fourteen hundred? Why on earth?... Oh, Larry King's hosting a brunch for Field Marshal von Runstedt?... I see.... Yes, okay. Well, thanks dear.... Yes, see you at the next staff meeting. Love to Wolfgang."

The first war correspondent I'd ever met leaned into the cab and lowered her voice. "I shouldn't be telling you this, but you're such sweet guys." "You see," she confided, "we've got a simply devastating photo op slated for Christmas eve." I wondered fleetingly what the Andrew Sisters had in store for us. "We've got that di-vine general from the 101st--Tony McAuliffe. And that nasty Nazi general Sepp Dietrich.... Dietrich is going to demand McAuliffe's surrender. And then you know what?" I didn't have a clue. "Then General McAuliffe is going to reply 'Nuts!'. Isn't that just precious?"

Her face clouded. "There's only one problem."

"Oh?," I responded.

"Yes. Timing. We've simply got to make sure McAuliffe's 'Nuts' comes just before the Planters' Peanuts commercial."

Hey quit shoving. Quit shoving! Cut it out!

"Wake up, Moonman." It was the Rocket. "You musta fell asleep at the pit stop. Better git yore butt in gear, man. We're movin' out. We gotta get these troopers to Bastogne."

[Thanks for the chuckles, Ed, and for sharing your wonderful sense of humor with us. Things just aren't the same.]

---

*"Belgians and Americans, fighting together, died together, and, from the earth fertilized by their blood, peace had sprung. You are here today because gratitude is a fundamental virtue among honorable men."*

Excerpts of Benediction by Father Choque, recalling the sacrifices at the Memorial Service, June 10, 1989, Malepre, Belgium.



# DAS RATSEL UM "TASK FORCE EZELL"

Jean Milmeister

From "The Bugle" (CEBA publication)

Third Quarter Issue, pages 16-20

"The Riddle of Task Force Ezell"

Reviewed by Peter F. Leslie

In most historical accounts of the battle of the Ardennes there is little mention and much conjecture about Task Force Ezell. Task Force Ezell was composed of units from CCB of the 4th Armored Division. It went in, through, and out of the Bastogne perimeter on 20 December 1944 before it closed. It was not reopened along the same route by the 4th Armored until December 26, 1944.

Probably the best current historical publication on the Battle of the Bulge is *The Bulge* the quarterly publication of CEBA. The Luxembourg group is well known to travelers from the U.S. and Tilly Kimmes.

Jean Milmeister is the Vice President and historian beyond compare. Unfortunately, *The Bulge* seldom prints in English. German is the principal language used, followed by Letzeburgish, and French.

The following was compiled from a fair knowledge of Holland Dutch, a smattering of German and a paperback German dictionary.

Milmeister heads each section with a question. The first is: What Happened? The text used by Milmeister is based mostly on the Center of Military History book, *The Ardennes* by Hugh M. Cole and an expanded version from *A Time for Trumpets* by the late renowned Charles B. MacDonald.

In addition there is a great deal more material than this reviewer has ever seen before. The purpose of this review is to stir up the historians of the 4th Armored Division and the 101st Armored Infantry Division to collect oral histories on the subject from the participants of TF Ezell's historic journey.

General Bradley had told VIII Corps Major General Middleton on 18 December 1944 that strong forces from Lieutenant General Patton's Third Army were on their way north. Fourth Armored Division was sending CCB immediately. CCB of the 10th Armored Division had been alerted.

Middleton called First Army on 19 December 1944, now on the north flank of the Germans and asked General Hodges what use could be made of CCB of the 4th Armored Division and when and where did he want it? Hodges replied he was unsure of the situation. He consulted Bradley and asked was this movement a fact? Bradley obviously assured him it was.

By midnight on the 19th 4th Armored Division was halted on what is now the N5 halfway between Bastogne and Neufchateau, after driving 150 miles from France. (It was then called Vaux-Les-Rosieres now only shown as Petite-Rosiere on the K&F Belgian Map.) A 4th AD sergeant wrote in what may have been a daily journal "Mission Unknown."

On the morning of 20 December Brigadier General Holmes B. Dagers of the 4th Armored Division CCB was notified that III Corps had opened in Arlon. Fourth Armored was ordered to gather its forces there. The entire 4th Armored was now completely confused and had not the slightest idea what its mission would be.

VIII Corps had a G3 officer telephone Vaux-Les-Rosieres from Bastogne at 0500 to ask what was holding up the 4th Armored.

Only part of the 4th Armored was at Vaux-Les-Rosieres and consisted of one tank company, one armored infantry company, and one self-propelled artillery battery. At 1030 20 December 1944 this small group less than a battalion in strength was titled Task Force Ezell. Ezell was either the acting 8th Tank Battalion commander or its emissary. He was to serve under the G3 operations officer from the 101st Armored Infantry Division Lieutenant Commander Harry W. Kinnard.

Word had come that the Germans had closed the Neufchateau-Bastogne road.

In truth the road was open. Task Force Ezell on its way to Bastogne was only subjected to German fire from patrols with hand-fired weapons. On reaching Bastogne Ezell first met with LTC Kinnard and then was taken to the acting commander of the 101st Armored Infantry Division Brigadier General McAuliffe.

McAuliffe told Ezell that CCB 10th Armored under Colonel Roberts was due at Villeroux (also on the N5) two and one-half miles south of Bastogne. He stated it was having a tough time getting there. He then ordered Ezell to take a position at Sibret just to the west of Villeroux.

At 1400 Ezell received a radio message from 4th Armored CCB. He was told to return his task force to Nives where the 8th Tank Battalion was quartered. Ezell returned his troops as ordered. The order had come from the commander of the 4th Armored, Major General Gaffey. The order was to return immediately to northwest of Arlon where the division was gathering to attack the Bastogne southern German line.

After TF Ezell left Bastogne Colonel Roberts of the 4th Armored CCB notified McAuliffe that Ezell had seen two artillery battalions with prime mover tractors heading south in full flight. This was seen as TF Ezell was heading toward Bastogne. First Lieutenant Kiley, commander of TF Ezell's tank company, asked a captain of the unidentified artillery battery if he had left any men behind and could TF Ezell help.

Seven hours after the task force had left Vaux-Les-Rosieres at 1030 it was back where it had started. Ezell had only three self-propelled artillery pieces in his command. He had seen and communicated with a heavy artillery unit and had made no attempt to turn them north to Bastogne.

Hugh M. Cole wrote: "Why wasn't TF Ezell used to keep the Neufchateau-Bastogne corridor open?"

Charles McDonald wrote: "Had VIII Corp's Middleton been allowed to hold on to the 4th Armored Division CCB and with it keep open the Neufchateau-Bastogne Highway, Bastogne never would have been surrounded even if the Germans had cut the Neufchateau-Bastogne highway. The 4th Armored could have capitalized on the location of CCB and attacked from Vaux-les-Rosieres instead of from Arlon. This would have spared many officers and men of the 4th Armored a great deal of misery and, in many cases, death.

Why was TF Ezell ordered to return from Bastogne? We can only answer this question with more questions.

**Why was TF Ezell of the 4th Armored CCB ordered back to Vaux-les-Rosieres?**

Patton had met with Bradley in Luxembourg City early on 18 December to plan the attack against the southern shoulder of the Bulge. Patton was headquartered in Nancy. The 4th Armored was in the area of Longway both in northeast France. By 0800 Patton had his troops in motion toward the north. He had ordered 4th Armored CCB to take a position southwest of Bastogne as close in as it could. The remainder of the division was to gather near Arlon.

**Why was the bulk of the 4th AD gathering at Arlon?**

Patton has spoken on the 20th to all his leaders in III Corps the lead Corps in the coming attack north. He consulted with his newly trained VIII Corps commander MG Middleton. Their decision was to gather the bulk of the 4th AD at Arlon and attack north with CCB and send CCR and CCB to retrace the road back to Neufchateau and then to Vaux-les-Rosieres and reopen the route that CCB had used on the 20th.

**Why was the 4th AD CCB ordered to retrace most of its travels north and come to Arlon?**

At 1400 on 20 December, 4th Armored CCB was relieved from command of VIII Corps and returned to 4th Armored control under III Corps. General Dager of CCB wanted his entire command back in one place and MG Gaffey, commander of the 4th AD, wanted all of his units in one area before a major attack.

In addition Patton was planning to use the infantry divisions in III Corps to attack the southern German line. He wanted 4th Armored handy for exploitation.

**Why was TF Ezell ordered back from Bastogne?**

(Continued on Page 29)



## TASK FORCE EZELL

(Continued from Page 28)

General Patton had only one available armored division on the scene--the 4th Armored Division. He had only two infantry divisions--the 26th and 80th. If he was to make an impression all had to be at full strength. MG Gaffey, 4th AD, therefore ordered every one of his units to gather at Arlon before the attack north started.

### Was the closing of the perimeter anticipated?

The Reconnaissance Battalion of the 26th Volksgrenadier Division under Major Rolf Kunkel was ordered in the late afternoon of the 20th of December to cross the Neufchateau-Bastogne Road and move on Sibret. MG Norman D. Cota of the 28th Infantry Division had gathered there some remnant troops and was defending the town from a company of the 5th Fallschirmjäger Division.

As Kampfgruppe Kunkel came on the scene Cota retreated to Vaux-les-Rosieres.

The following morning, 19th of December, Kampfgruppe Kunkel placed itself directly across the N5 at Villeroux. If TF Ezell had stayed the night it would have confronted the far larger German force reinforced by the following Volksgrenadier Regiment.

Milmeister at this point maintains that Charles MacDonald was wrong in stating that TF Ezell could have kept the N5 open by itself.

### Was CCB ever ordered to return to Vaux-les-Rosieres?

On the 25th of December, CCR was in the vicinity of Bondorf in the area of Neufchateau occupying the left flank of CCB which was in reserve. It entered Vaux-les-Rosieres at 0300.

Milmeister asks was the return of CCB to Arlon a gross tactical mistake? Throughout the 4th AD mission in Europe, MG Gaffey and his predecessor had held his division intact--never squandering it in multiple operations. Milmeister points out that the 9th Armored Division was wasted in the Bulge as it could never mount a major counterattack because of its dispersal.

### Question by Peter F. Leslie:

If TF Ezell had been reinforced by the balance of CCB could it have penetrated the German defense on the 19th of December? Could the rest of the 4th AD have kept the perimeter open if it had reinforced CCB and been sustained by the 26th Infantry and 84th Infantry Divisions?

### Observation by Peter F. Leslie:

The area to the north of Arlon all the way to the Sure was in the hands of two engineer groups until early on the 22nd of December. From about 1000 on it was held solely by my unit the 511th Engineer Light Ponton Company. The 4th AD jumped off from Arlon on the morning of the 22nd. The full attack and reconnaissance force could have driven north for 16 kilometers before encountering a single enemy soldier.

Did anyone know we were there?

To make matters even more confusing, the 511th was the only engineer unit in VII Corps to retain its bridging from start to finish.

The crossing of the Sure was delayed for 24 hours until III Corps could bring up its own bridging. The 511th was never asked to put in bridging at Martelange. Relieved from its manning of defenses by the 4th AD, it went off into the night.

## TIME ON TARGET LES BOIS JACQUES, BASTOGNE

By Benjamin A. Goodin  
6th Armored Division

Time on Target (TOT) was a term used to describe the massing of all artillery fire available to be placed on a designated target, with the initial salvo, of all guns striking the target at the same instant (theoretically). This was accomplished by computing the time of flight from each battery, with weather factors and temperature figured in, and deducting this time from the time the first salvo was to hit so that all batteries' guns would fire at different times but the projectiles would hit the target at the same instant.

The Sixth Armored Division was ordered to relieve the Fourth Armored Division on 31 December 1945, and to hold Bastogne at all costs. The composition of the artillery was the three organic battalions with 18 105 mm howitzers, (128th, 212th and 231st) and the attached 193rd Field Artillery Group consisting of the 253rd (-1 battery) Armored Field Artillery Battalion, and the 696th Armored Field Artillery Battalion, both being equipped with 105 mm howitzers. The 177th and 776th Field Artillery Battalions, equipped with 155 mm howitzers, for a total of 108 guns. Many TOTs were fired 1-9 January and the ammunition drawn through the division ammunition officer, averaged about 10,000 rounds per day. Covering a front of 14,000 yards, from the 35th Infantry Division on our right flank to the 101st Airborne Division on our left flank.

The division was fending off 15 to 25 local attacks a day during this period, since Hitler had ordered his commanders to take Bastogne, after he had told them to by-pass it. On 7 January (I think my dates are correct), the G2 of the division called down to the S-2 (Rocky Ross) and said PW information indicated that elements of three German divisions were assembling in the Le Bois Jacques to attack on the 8th. I had just received the information that Third Army had put us on a ration of 8 rounds per gun per day. (864 rounds total). I put in a request for more ammunition--request denied. I put in a second request--request denied. I had planned a TOT on the leading portion of the woods and had quite an area to cover and it took 5,000 rounds of combined 105 and 155 HE shells. The woods had closely spaced pine trees, snow was on the ground and the ground was frozen. I doubted if the enemy would be able to dig in. Fragmentation would be quite effective. However, I had to get the ammunition. I called the ammunition officer of the 231st and asked if he could help me get the ammo I needed. He (Lt. Edison P. Roy) stated he knew the back road into the Third Army Dump and could get me all the ammo I needed. I stated I would call him back later.

I took the fire plan for the TOT to the Artillery Commander (Col. Lowell M. Riley) and explained my problem of getting the ammo. He took the plan to Division Headquarters and discussed the plan with General Robert Grow. He returned and was soon called to the phone by General Grow. Shortly he sent for me and stated the general wanted to talk to me. I picked up the phone and the general said: "What are you going to do about that TOT you have planned?" I replied: "I would like to shoot it, Sir." He replied: "I would shoot it if I were you." I knew at once it was my responsibility. I remembered that General Patton had told his officers: "Do not sit there and do nothing. Do something even if it is wrong." Also, we had the mission to hold Bastogne at all costs.

I conferred with the combat command on the left flank about where to place the fire and what time to fire the TOT. I suggested 0215 on 8 January and they thought that would be as good as any. Soon after this, I sent the number of rounds of 105 and 155 I wanted at the gun positions by midnight to Lt. Roy. We fired the TOT at 0215.

On the after action report, I stated we had fired on enemy troop concentrations, G2 called down and stated they had PW's with blood coming out their mouths, ears and nose and they stated the attack had been called off. I was ordered to go to Paris for the Dumbarton Oaks discussion. I think they wanted no one from Third Army to talk with me.

After the war was over, I was talking to a person who had been in the army and he asked if I had been in Bastogne. I replied I had and he then asked me what happened in those woods north of Bastogne? I asked why do you ask that. He replied he had been with grave registration and that they hauled dead Germans, frozen stiff, stacked on 6 x 6's like cordwood. He further stated that they had never run into such carnage in the entire war. I think the only place you could corroborate this is with the Graves Registration records.

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Keep watching the Quartermaster Order Form, we're always adding something new. Recent additions:

- Note pads ...from a Veteran of the Battle of the Bulge.
- License plate frames.
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We will add new items from time to time so be sure to check the Quartermaster order form.



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February 1997

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