

The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XXII NUMBER 4

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

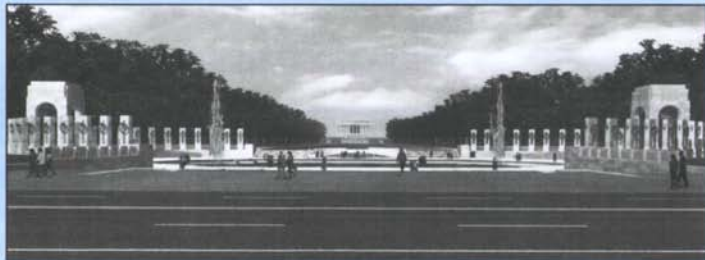
NOVEMBER 2003

UPCOMING Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge EVENTS

DEC. 14-16, 2003
59th
Anniversary
Commemoration
Page 16



JAN. 27 – FEB. 1, 2004
Battle of the Bulge
Reenactment
Page 19



MAY 25-30, 2004

Battle of the Bulge Reunion & WWII Memorial Dedication - Page 22

2004 60th Anniversary Communication
Belgium / Luxembourg - Page 10

**VETERANS OF THE
BATTLE OF THE BULGE,
INC.
P.O. Box 11129
Arlington, VA 22210-2129
703-528-4058**

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

Publisher/Chief Editor:

George Chekan

9th Infantry Division

Contributing Editors:

Robert F. Phillips

28th Infantry Division

Historical Research:

John D. Bowen

Associate Member

ELECTED OFFICERS:

President:

Louis Cunningham

106th Infantry Division

Executive Vice President:

George Chekan

9th Infantry Division

Vice President/Membership:

Harry J. Meisel

56 AAA AW Battalion

Vice President/Chapters:

George Fisher

26th Infantry Division

Vice President/Military Affairs:

Stanley Wojtusik

106th Infantry Division

Vice President/Public Affairs:

Jack Hyland

84th Infantry Division

Treasurer:

William P. Tayman

87th Infantry Division

Corresponding Secretary:

Dorothy S. Davis

57th Field Hospital

Recording Secretary:

John Bowen

Associate Member

Administrative Director:

Nancy Monson 703-528-4058

TRUSTEES:

Three Years:

Richard G. Guenter

511th Engineer Light Ponton Company

Neil B. Thompson
740th Tank Battalion (Med)
Joseph F. Zimmer
87th Infantry Division

Two Years:

Frederick R. Carmichael

87th Infantry Division

Peter F. Dounis

75th Infantry Division

Robert F. Phillips

28th Infantry Division

One Year:

James W. Hunt

1st Infantry Division

Demetri Paris

9th Armored Division

Charles L. Goss

75th Infantry Division

HISTORICAL FOUNDATION:

President: William T. Greenville

86th Chemical Mortar Battalion

VBOB PAST PRESIDENTS:

Clyde D. Boden* 1981-84

Robert J. VanHouten 1984-86

George Chekan 1986-88

William T. Greenville 1988-90

Darrell Kuhn 1990-92

William R. Hemphill* 1992-93

William P. Tayman 1993-94

Grover C. Twiner 1994-95

Stanley Wojtusik 1995-97

George C. Linthicum 1997-99

John J. Dunleavy 1999-2001

***Deceased**

CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

ALABAMA

GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON, JR. (XI)

Leslie Ray Huckaby 256-593-8353

99 Huckaby Hollow Rd

Horton, AL 35980-9771

ARIZONA

ARIZONA (XXVI)

Ponce Long 602-723-9425

648 W Central Ave

Coolidge, AZ 85228

SOUTHERN ARIZONA (LIII)

John G. Westover 520-297-1492

6100 N Oracle #20

Tucson, AZ 85704

BELGIUM

5TH FUSILIERS OF BELGIUM (XXXVIII)

Roger Hardy (50) 41.71.13

14, Landdijk

8370 Blanbenberge, Belgium

CALIFORNIA

FRESNO (V)

Kenneth Hohmann 559-227-5232

5515 N Fresno St #124

Fresno, CA 9371-3335

GEN. GEORGE S. PATTON, JR. (XIII)

Donald C. Stafford 408-662-0472

101 Via Soderini

Aptos, CA 95003

GOLDEN GATE (X)

Russell S. Rodgers 415-731-8225

1912 10th Ave

San Francisco, CA 94116

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA (XVI)

John W. Mosley 562-947-1727

16428 Lebo St

Whittier, CA 90603

SAN DIEGO (LI)

Robert D. Schrell 858-274-5738

2530 San Joaquin Ct

San Diego, California 92109

CONNECTICUT

CONNECTICUT YANKEE (XL)

Richard Egan 203-634-0974

79 Alccve St

Meriden, CT 06451

COLORADO

ROCKY MOUNTAIN (XXXIX)

M. Dale McCall 970-876-2508

245 S Golden Dr

Silt, CO 81652

DELAWARE

BRANDYWINE VALLEY CHAPTER (LXVI)

Charles Gaffney 302-762-3023

907 Shipley Rd

Wilmington, DE 19803-4927

FLORIDA

CENTRAL FLORIDA (XVIII)

President's name needed

FLORIDA CITRUS (XXXII)

Gerald V. Myers 863-686-2121

320 E Palm Dr

Lakeland, FL 33803-2650

INDIAN RIVER FLORIDA (XLI)

Alfred J. Babecki 561-664-0952

915 Hemlock St

Barefoot Bay, FL 32976

SOUTHEAST FLORIDA (LXII)

George Fisher 561-585-7086

3456 S Ocean Blvd #503

Palm Beach, FL 33480

GOLDEN TRIANGLE (XLVIII)

Harry E. Kirby 352-873-8380

11569 SW 71 Cir

Ocala, FL 34476-9482

FLORIDA SOUTHWEST CHAPTER (LXVII)

Vincent Runowich 727-323-3793

4083 10th Ave N

St. Petersburg, FL 33713

INDIANA

NORTHERN INDIANA (XXX)

President's name needed

CENTRAL INDIANA (XLVII)

John R. Kerr 317-852-5665

1030 Harris St

Brownsburg, IN 46112-1704

IOWA

IOWA (XXXIV)

Pius P. Reis 712-368-2335

103 Davenport St

Holstein, IA 51025

HAWKEYE STATE (XLIV)

Harold R. Lindstrom 515-278-0081

4105 75th St.

Des Moines, IA 50322-2551

MARYLAND-DC

MARYLAND/D.C. (III)

John T. Worthington, III

3110 Gracefield Rd #CC-203

Silver Spring, MD 20904

MASSACHUSETTS

L A M A R S O U T T E R / C E N T R A L

MASSACHUSETTS (XXII)

John E. McAuliffe 508-754-7183

425 Pleasant St.

Worcester, MA 01609

CAPE COD & THE ISLANDS (LVIII)

Alexander W. MacIsaac 508-362-6876

21 Freeman Rd

Yarmouth Port, MA 02575

MICHIGAN

WEST MICHIGAN (XXIII)

Maurice Cole 231-879-4040

PO Box 81

Fife Lake, MI 49633

GREAT LAKES (XXI)

Chapter now defunct

MISSISSIPPI

MISSISSIPPI (XXXIII)

James E. Booth 662-258-7584

108 Meadow Ln

Eupora, MS 39744

MISSOURI

GATEWAY (XXV)

W. Kent Stephens 618-344-1616

107 Bluffview Lane

Collinsville, IL 62234

NEW JERSEY

PETER F. LESLIE, JR. (LIV)

James K. Cullen 973-584-6126

6 Parkwood Rd

Succasunna, NJ 07876

FORT MONMOUTH (LVI)

Edward Turrell 732-264-5447

3 Chestnut Dr

Hazlet, NJ 07730

FORT DIX/MAQUIRE AFB (LX)

Lloyd Orth 856-235-0504

10 Locust St

Mt. Laurel, NJ 08054

SOUTH JERSEY (LXI)

Milton Shepherd 609-465-4199

PO Box 185

Goshen, NJ 08218

NEW YORK

CENTRAL NEW YORK (II)

Donald F. Dixon 315-668-7771

269 Northland Dr

Central Square, NY 13036-9756

MOHAWK VALLEY (XXVIII)

Robert L. Hyde 315-724-2067

15 Sherrill Ln

New Hartford, NY 13413

HUDSON VALLEY (IL)

Andy Maier 518-235-1281

837 6th Ave

Troy, NY 12182

STATEN ISLAND (LII)

Carmine D. Burzumato 718-966-3795

630 Woodrow Rd

Staten Island, NY 10312

GENESSEE VALLEY (LVII)

Martin J. Cocco 585-671-1229

813 Hawthorne Rd

Webster, NY 14580-2625

MID-HUDSON VALLEY (LIX)

Herbert Goodwin 914-783-3801

PO Box 285

Monroe, NY 10950

LONG ISLAND (LXIII)

David Saltman 516-221-5096

PO Box 7127

Wantagh, NY 11793

NORTH CAROLINA

NORTH CAROLINA (IX)

William R. Strickland 910-897-8295

R.D. #3, Box #514

Dunn, NC 28334

NORTH DAKOTA

NORTH DAKOTA (XX)

Sybil Peterson

(Address needed)

OHIO

BLANCHARD VALLEY (XLII)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

While sitting down at my desk to type this column, it suddenly dawned on me that this is my final column as president of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. It has been a privilege to carry on the traditions and to work toward the goals that a small but visionary group of vets set for themselves some 20 years ago. They laid a foundation for an organization that has spread across the country, and even across the Atlantic. They have to be justifiably proud of that growth, and we all benefitted from the leadership and continuing involvement of our "founders." Those still with us contribute as mentors and as members of our Executive Council.

They were, and are today, veterans dedicated to keeping alive the memory of our battle in the Ardennes. That is a legacy we embrace wholeheartedly when we sign our names on the membership application and send it along with our check to Nancy Monson at our national headquarters in Arlington.

I was tempted to call our efforts to keep alive the memory of our battle in the Ardennes 59 years ago as a challenge. But I don't think that is a strong enough word. I rather believe it is a trust, a duty left to us by the 19,000 American soldiers who gave their lives for freedom in the snows that blanketed Belgium and Luxembourg during that bitter winter of 1944-1945. Whether they died battling to free a small hamlet, or fell from the skies, or died from cruel starvation in a prisoner of war camp. They deserve to be remembered.

I am happy to report that from all I have heard and seen during my two-year tenure as your president, you are doing that in many ways.

You are doing it by placing memorials in key locations around the country. Last spring I had the honor of helping to dedicate one such monument in Tucson, Arizona, and then at our annual reunion we placed another monument in the town square of our host city, Quincy, Massachusetts. Last month, I had the pleasure of being with John McAuliffe as the Central Massachusetts Chapter dedicated a new memorial at Holy Cross College in Worcester, Massachusetts. We have approximately 13 months leading up to the 60th anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, and I feel that this might be a great occasion to go full speed ahead in erecting a memorial in your local area, if there isn't one at the present time.

We must keep on the move, and even though each day we lose a few members to the ravages of time and illness, we are enlisting new members to keep our ranks steady. I would like to point out that as we do gain these new members, our Vice President for Chapters George Fisher has been canvassing the country, and building new chapters where there are a group of members who can be assembled. George has already helped form new chapters, and would welcome hearing from you if you feel that one can be formed in your area.

We might be getting a little older, but as you can read in the pages of *The Bulge Bugle*, we aren't slowing down.



Louis Cunningham

That has been evident at our recent reunions. In 2002 in Baltimore, John and Maryanne Bowen, and Dorothy Davis put together an outstanding meeting.

While each of us came away from the reunion with happy memories, I will always treasure the memory of our visit to Fort McHenry and being permitted to raise the American flag over that historic edifice.

Memories of that great reunion carried over to this September when we gathered in Quincy, for our annual meeting, planned by Past Presidents Stan Wojtusik, George Chekan, George Linthicum, with host John McAuliffe. I can tell you much work goes into these annual meetings, but when we have the opportunity to be together it makes it worthwhile. As you have been reading in past issues of *The Bulge Bugle*, we will be holding our next reunion in conjunction with the dedication of the World War II Memorial on the Mall in Washington, DC, on May 29th. John and Maryanne once again have been going beyond the call of duty to arrange for rooms in the area, so if you haven't signed up yet, please read the information in this issue and try to be with us for a momentous week for all veterans, but particularly for the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

As I close this column, I do so with many happy memories of the wonderful people I have met in person, through the phone or by letter working to achieve the goals of a great organization. We are not the only ones who feel that way. We are now on the White House list, with George Chekan, Stan Wojtusik, and my wife Charlotte, we met many high ranking diplomats and military leaders at the President's Veterans Day breakfast.

It was a humbling experience because we knew we were there because of the work you are doing as chapters and as individual members to keep the Battle of the Bulge in the history books, and in the hearts and minds of the present and future generations of Americans.

You do this each time you enter a classroom, march in a holiday parade or speak at a luncheon for a community organization.

In closing, I want to extend my sincere thanks to all of you, especially my wife Charlotte, who helped to make these past two years flow smoothly.

Speaking on behalf of all of you, I want to congratulate George Chekan on his election as your new president. George has done so much for our organization over the years, and deserves, and I am sure will have, the support and cooperation of all of us as we enter an historic year for all WWII veterans. ■

IN THIS ISSUE

- | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 3. President's Message | 19. Bulge Reenactment |
| 4. Letters to the Editor | 20. An Easy Decision |
| 6. Christmas of '44 | 21. VBOB's 26th Reunion |
| 7. New Year's Toast | 22. 2004 Reunion & WWII |
| 8. 2003 Annual VBOB Meeting | Memorial Dedication |
| 10. 60th Anniversary | 23. Bugle Boy of Co. B |
| 11. A Dream Come True | 24. Reunions |
| 12. Remembering | 25. Memorial Day in Belgium |
| 13. Central Florida Chapter | 26. We Ask Your Help... |
| 14. Worcester Dedication | 27. Ohio Buckeye Chapter |
| 15. Behind the Scenes | 28. A Little R&R |
| 16. 59th Anniversary, VBOB | 30. Lehigh Valley Chapter |
| 18. Members Speak Out | 31. VBOB Quartermaster |

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[As time passes, memories of war times come flooding back. The number of articles we have recently received for the newsletter has become overwhelming (except for the "Memorable Bulge Incidents". The stories we're receiving are more than one incident.) Please don't be impatient if it's a while before your story appears, we need and want to publish them all. They're history. We ask for your patience.]

NO MORE POLISH JOKES

If only I could hug those Polish men and women who assembled those 88's. "A" Company found itself surrounded for three days and three nights about December 20th. We broke out through a unit of the 1st Division in Elsenborn late at night. We dug all night to find we were in the middle of a cow pasture. Calhoun and I were a BAR team.

When daylight arrived, I said to Calhoun, "Give me those wire cutters and I will go out and cut the wire from the fence posts, and put the posts over our holes and cover them with sod in case they throw some fire in on us.

I got to the fence, and before I cut the first wire, in came a screaming 88 that plowed up the snow and dirt within 6-10 feet of me. A dud. A few seconds later I tried again--another 88 came in. Another dud. I got up and tried the third time, and another round came screaming in. Another dud. All three plowed up the snow and dirt about the same distance from me. That was enough from me. I ran back to my hole and jumped in on top of Calhoun.

Almost 60 years later, I find out it might not have been an act of God but of our little Polish friends. God knows how many lives they have saved--God bless them!

I will never tell another stupid Polish joke again. *[But he did.]*

William (Bill) Goss
99 INF 395 INF A

MORE ON MONSCHAU DEFENSE

Reading David A. Levine's account of the defense of Monschau brought back many memories. I was with Battery B of the 186th Field Artillery Battalion. At dusk, we landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day. We landed with Service Company of the 1st Infantry Division. Our FO team was with their infantry side-by-side. We did not see our outfit for over 72 hours.

I was the radio operator of our team. The day before the Germans launched their offensive on December 16th, 1944, we were in that exact position where the German's broke through. We were moved the day before to support the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron.

Like Max Brudner (a friend of mine) stated, we were the bastard outfit of the war, supporting the division that was on attack.

The morning of December 16th, about 5:00 a.m., we were under heavy artillery fire. Our Captain Batten received a call from headquarters to send our FO team and we were it--Cpl. Tom Abrams, the jeep driver; S/Sgt Harry Blacker, in charge of the team; and me, Sgt Albert Kaplan, the radio operator. Driving out to find an OP, we were under heavy, constant artillery fire.

We finally found a farm house that gave us a great view of the German advance. We had two problems, the heavy enemy artillery fire and German patrols looking for us. We were very fortunate to survive both. We were able to hold up the German advance and inflict heavy damage to the enemy. David described that battle much better than I.

When we returned to our outfit, Capt. Batten praised us for what we had done, and put in our names for a Bronze Star. One of the reasons I am writing this is to find out if Tom Abrams or Harry Blacker ever received their Bronze Star, because I never received mine.

Albert Kaplan
186 FA BN B

WEAPONS COMPARISON

In the May issue of *The Bulge Bugle* there was an interesting article by Mitchell Kaidy about the weapons the Germans used compared to our weapons.

I am in agreement with the article and would like to add another comparison--the Germans had a flameless powder compared to our

powder. I was in a light machine gun squad and our 30 caliber machine gun produced about a 6 inch flame pouring out of the barrel. We had to fire a burst and immediately change location or we would be a perfect target for return fire.

Thomas B. Corning
104 INF 413 INF B

A VALUABLE RESOURCE

Three cheers to George Fisher ("Letters to the Editor," August, 2003).

I, too, for several years, have addressed (mainly the 7th and 8th grades) social studies students at schools here in northeastern Indiana.

I tell them of my experiences with the 8th Armored Division in Europe during WWII. As George said, academic indifference has almost eliminated WWII from the classes.

Not all teachers feel this way. Two different school system have given me awards. One called me "friend of education" and another sites me as "honorary educator." These hang on the wall of my office.

While I value these awards, I feel my time has been well spent when a teacher introduces me as "a valuable resource," stating that all they do is teach what in the approved books, while I have experienced it first-hand.

Most of all *[it means the most]* when a student comes up to me or writes a thank you letter and says, "Thank you. I had no idea that was how it was in WWII."

Robert J. Castile
8 ARMED 36 T BN

AUGUST ISSUE A "MIND BLOWER"

The August *Bugle* was a "mind blower" with the revelations that the 114th Signal Radio Intelligence Company could have been instrumental in saving many, many GI's in the Ardennes. Questions that boggle me more are: If this 1st lieutenant Thomas R. Dole was responsible for holding up "concrete evidence" of this enormous German army build-up; why haven't we heard about hearings or possible courts martial proceedings for over 50 years? How could the upper echelon of the SHAEF command act so blase at a critical junction of the campaign? Above all, this is an engrossing and fascinating story, which seems from my perspective to be totally valid. Are there any other sources that have been unearthed to back up Mr. Werlhof's recounting? As the writer states: "...we were sworn to a 30 year secrecy." Also, being prohibited from taking notes, etc., how did all this information become available? Has a book been published relating to any of these assertions?

Seamer Knoll
35 INF 320 INF G

IS THE BOOK AVAILABLE?

Your cover article by Jay VonWerlhof in the August issue was outstanding and very interesting. Like many of the battle participants, I was completely unaware of this aspect. In his cover letter as printed on page 11. VonWerlhof said, "This is a sort of summary of the article I finally wrote."

I would very much like to purchase a copy of the article referred to and hope you can advise me how to do this. I look forward to your response.

[Editor: We do not have this information but if Mr. VonWerlhof will let us know how copies can be obtained, we'll publish the information.]

Thor Ronningen
99 INF 395 INF I

THE 358TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

I noted an error on page 29 of the August issue of *The Bulge Bugle*, in the article, "My Bulge Experience," by Arnold L. Brown.

I must point out to you that the 358th Infantry Regiment was NOT a part of the 30th Infantry Division, but was a part of the 90th Infantry Division.

The 30th Infantry Division was on the north shoulder of the Bulge, in and near Malmedy, not in Luxembourg.

Frank W. Towers
30 INF D

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

[Another member writes to tell us the same thing--it was his old regiment.]

Arthur T. Ellsworth
90 INF 358 INF

[And yet another member writes to tell us that he was with the 30th Signal Company, 30th Infantry Division, from beginning to end and to the best of his knowledge there was no 358th Infantry in the division.]

Donald L. Maddix
30 INF 30 SIG CO

[...and another member tells us: I served with the 30th Infantry division from 1/22/45 on. All I know of the Division's history never puts it in Luxembourg.... Does this agree with your histories?

Gene Pflughaupt
30 INF 120 INF

THE 9TH ARMORED DIVISION

I just received my copy of *The Bulge Bugle* and read the article written by Mr. Kraft, who, like most historians, names only the 7th Armored Division at St. Vith. Unfortunately during the Battle of the Bulge, the 9th Armored Division fought separately by Combat Command with Combat Command A in Luxembourg, Combat Command B at St. Vith and Combat Command R at Bastogne. Because we fought in different areas of the Bulge, we have received very little recognition or credit for our achievements in the Battle of the Bulge and the ultimate containment.

Our Combat Command B was at St. Vith in support of the 106th Infantry Division when the Bulge erupted on the 16th of December, 1944. The next day elements of the 7th Armored Division started to filter in, as they were held up by traffic jams on the roads. When the full division arrived, Combat Command B was attached to the 7th, fought along side them and was ordered out of the Bulge early on the 24th of December by General Montgomery at the same time to avoid encirclement. All three Combat Commands of the 9th Armored Division received the Presidential Citation for our combat actions during the Bulge. Combat Command B received a second Presidential Citation for capturing the bridge across the Rhine at Remagen, in tact, on March 7, 1945; thus, according to General Eisenhower, shortening the war by six months and in fact the war ended in Europe exactly two months to the day after the capture. In fact on the 10th anniversary of the capture, then President Eisenhower formed the Society of the Remagen Bridge for members of the 9th Armored division. For a division which had little combat experience prior to the Bulge and to have every combat command receive a Presidential Citation for the Bulge speaks highly of the Phantom Division (so named by the Germans). While the division has received very little recognition by historians our achievements have been documented by the four Presidential Citations.

Harold Trethaway
9 ARMED 16 AFA BN CCB

10TH ARMORED DIVISION

A friend of mine gave me your issue Volume XXII. Many times General Patton was mentioned but, I noticed no mention of the 10th Armored Division which he commanded and to which we were attached--796th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion (SP) during his entire European Theater Operation in WWII.

Are you a new organization? How did you figure qualification?

I remember vividly our unit position, having completed a battle phase and receipt of order to move out early the next day with radio silence. Our location was on the French and German border.

I commanded D Battery of the 796th and relieved the 5th Infantry who had been fighting in the Battle of the Bulge.

Our CO was in command post when the Germans demanded Americans to surrender and the AAF command and the answer was "Nuts."

My discharge gave me credit for three battle stars in the European theater--including the Ardennes.

You have over looked us entirely as being qualified for the Battle of the Bulge....

Hugh A. Wilson
96 AAA AW BN SP

[Editor: Nope, we're not new--founded in 1982. Regular (veteran) membership is based on the word "Ardennes" being on the discharge.

Of course, we have associate members who are other interested parties. We ignore no division, regiment, battalion, company, etc., who served in the Battle of the Bulge. We've carried many stories about the 10th Armored Division. There just wasn't one in the issue you read. There were over 400 units in the Battle of the Bulge and, needless to say, we can't put something about each one in every issue. Our stories come from the ones who served and submit a story. However, if you don't send it in, we can't print it. We have no research staff and depend entirely on our members for the newsletter's content. We have over 7,000 veterans on our roles, so you can imagine the number of stories we receive. We try to be fair in publishing the stories we receive--big groups not being given preference over small ones. If they're not about the Bulge, we don't use them. If they are, we'll use them at the first opportunity.]

A GOOD BOOK

Just in case other members of VBOB haven't read or heard of it yet, this note is being sent to recommend a book I just finished entitled "Odor of War," by former Sgt. Andy Giambroni, once a combat infantryman in the 6th and then the 3rd Armored Division.

It's an extremely up-close and first person account of his experiences in training, crossing the Atlantic and the English Channel, and combat in France, Metz, Belgium (Ardennes), Margaret, Arloncourt, the Our River and Lunenbach. It takes his readers through the liberation of Buchenwald, the Army Occupation, and, finally, returning home.

The book is full of descriptions of personal triumphs and tragedies--and "odors"--which most of us have seen (and smelled) all too well. I recommend it.

You might find it in your local book store, but if not, write to Giambroni at PO Box 459, Red Bluff, California 96080. Or telephone 530-527-5659.

Pat Murphy
78 INF 10

WE LOST A GOOD FRIEND

In a past issue of *The Bulge Bugle*, you mentioned that Bill Mauldin was in ill health and would like hearing from ex-GI's. so, I wrote him an enclosed my idea of Joe & Willie, who gave us all so many laughs many years ago.



I made a couple of book marks for a couple of ex-GI buddies of mine for their copies of *Up Front*.

We've sure lost a good friend when we lost Bill.

EDWARD W. LINDNER
32ND AAA GP HQ

This article is a true story, written by Kate Nolan, an army nurse in the ETO. I was there with her and can verify the occurrence. She was a nurse in my unit of the 53rd Field Hospital.

She wrote this article as an assignment while attending "A Creative Writing Class for Adult and Community Education Program" in Naples, Florida, in March, of 1976.

She is an at large life member of VBOB. Also, she was one of the nurses who participated in the wreath-laying ceremony at the VBOB Monument in Fort Meade, Maryland, during the 2002 reunion.

I think this story will rekindle the spirit of members of the Christmas season 59 years ago.

**Marty Sheeron
53rd Field Hospital**



Christmas of '44

By Kate Nolan



The third platoon of the 53rd Field Hospital arrived in a small village in Holland not far from the German border. It was early November, 1944, and bitter cold. A few women and children and one old man stood staring at us as we huddled under khaki blankets in the back of the truck.

"I can imagine what they are thinking of us. We are really a mess," said Marie, our platoon chief nurse.

"We sure are. What I wouldn't give for a hot shower," said Laura, "And a hot meal."

"The cooks should have the field kitchen set up tomorrow but hot showers? Who are you kidding?," I said.

Then the trucks began to move again. We were on the main street passing houses and stores and finally a church. Then we turned into a schoolyard and stopped. An old priest stood on the steps of the school, a threadbare black coat over his cassock. Our commander approached him. They spoke for a few minutes and shook hands. Turning around to face us, the colonel shouted, "We'll set up in the school."

Our long journey had begun at five o'clock that morning. From somewhere in Belgium the convoy had bumped along potholed dirt roads and some paved ones also in bad shape hour after hour with frequent delays. If we got to a check point ahead of schedule it would be a wait there while another convoy with higher priority went through first. We had K-rations all day. Cold, tasteless cans—something that was called scrambled eggs and meat and those dog biscuits they called crackers. Some powder to mix with water in the mess kit tin cup. Lemonade it was called. Meanwhile the temperature kept dropping and it looked like snow. The tarp covering the top of the truck gave a little protection from the wind but that was all. We were dirty, weary and chilled to the point of numbness.

The school was a newly-built red brick one-story structure with four wings. After living and working in tents since landing on Utah Beach in Normandy, we were delighted to be moving indoors at last. When the desks and chairs were removed it made an excellent hospital. Quickly, the cots were set up, IV paraphernalia in place, receiving, shock wards, post ops, and surgery were made ready just in time to care for the first casualties.

For the next fourteen hours there was no let-up. From time to time we caught glimpses of nuns peeking in the room as we worked. They were surprised to see us nursing the patients. They, like the villagers, had taken the six of us for prostitutes.

Since we wore the same uniforms as the male officers including the pants, and these were what the camp followers wore.



Kate Nolan, Dorothy Davis & Agnes Sweeney, WWII Army Nurses at the wreath-laying ceremony, VBOB Monument, Ft. Meade, Maryland during the 2002 VBOB Reunion.

A company of the 84th Division (Rail Splitters) was pinned down at a railroad bed and taking heavy losses. Ambulances kept arriving with more and more until every cot and litter was taken.

An invitation was soon extended through the priest who spoke English. The nuns wanted the nurses to move in with them in the convent.

Several hours later two of us managed to get off duty to go over and see our room. The nuns had prepared a large storeroom as our dormitory. Six of their beds were ready for our use. The nuns and 28 war orphans in their care slept in the basement. They at first expected us to join them there, but at this point we were ready to die in our beds if need be in comfort. To sleep in a real bed under a roof was such luxury that we felt spoiled and pampered. The doctors and corpsmen teased us about it and wanted us to ask Mother Superior when their turn would be. She spoke a little English and when she finally understood, she said they were welcome to come one at a time for a hot bath.

Now in order to have hot water for the tub a lot of work was involved. Wood had to be gathered from the woods, broken or cut up with an ax to fit into a small furnace built under the water tank behind the tub. I still think about all this sometimes when I turn on a hot water faucet and wonder whether the nuns at our favorite convent still heat water in the same way.

Usually the hospital remained in one place about ten days. Then the patients would be evacuated to a general hospital in the rear, or to an evacuation hospital for an airlift to a general hospital in England. The packing up of equipment and supplies, taking down of tents, getting our personal gear in order went swiftly and smoothly by this time, since we had done it over and over till it was routine. When the outfit we had supported went back for a rest period, we would be reassigned to a new outfit just going into action.

However, this didn't happen with the 84th. As Christmas approached, things quieted down on the fighting front. As the days passed, the orders to evacuate patients did not come. Tubes were removed, IV's discontinued, and for the first time we had convalescent men taking food by mouth, growing stronger and getting into the holiday spirit. There were still a few in serious condition, but they did not want to be moved to a quieter area. Perhaps they felt more secure surrounded by their buddies. I don't know. Whatever the reason, it worked, because every one of them made it.

A young Dutchman began to visit the hospital each day. He spoke English and

(Continued on next page)

Christmas of '44

(Continuation)

soon was helping out in the wards. He finally moved in. An excellent organist, he would play the school organ, moving it from room to room, playing requests and Christmas carols until the atmosphere was really jolly.

Leo, our Dutch friend, went out to the woods to cut down little Christmas trees for the wards. The patients made silver stars from K-ration cans. The Red Cross gave out cartons of Life Savers. We used bandages to string them to add to the trees. Everyone had the Christmas Spirit.

Meanwhile, the nuns were planning a Christmas threat for the nurses off duty. They baked some special Christmas pastry from ingredients our cooks scrounged up for them. They brewed herb tea from roots of some sort. The feast would follow three Christmas masses in the convent chapel starting at midnight Christmas Eve.

On the 23rd of December, orders came in for us to evacuate all patients. Wrapping them up warmly for their trip to a general hospital, much good natured kidding went on. We had grown close to them all and it was like saying goodbye to family. Several of them were from New York State as were three of our nurses, Laura Ball, from Syracuse; Marie Arsenault, from Schuylerville; and Virginia Stenson, from Brooklyn. They were getting all kinds of promises about visits when the war was over so we pretended to feel slighted until we got assurances of the same. This would mean a trip to Worcester, Massachusetts, to see me, Katherine Flynn; to Memphis, Tennessee for Ruth Nolen; and to Clayton, Alabama, for Ruth Stevens. Their intentions were sincere but ever did these reunions occur.

Christmas Eve at the appointed hour, we assembled in the chapel. The masses seemed to go on forever. Finally, we went to the dining room. The best linen, crystal and China was on the table. Hand painted place settings with our names completed the beautiful scene.

It was a wonderful and strange little Christmas party with us speaking no Dutch and the nuns speaking no English, except for the tiny bit Mother Superior knew. Somehow, though, we communicated with gestures, nods, smiles or frowns; but we understood one another and that too was beautiful.

Just after the tea was poured, we heard sounds of engines. One of the drivers came and said for us to report at once. The tea was too hot to drink; yet we did not want to waste it. Also we would be on the road for many hours and might not have anything hot to drink or eat for days. We would not be cheated out of this last luxury.

"Please tell the colonel to give us a few more minutes," said Marie, our chief nurse.

"Yes, mam," he replied and left.

For some reason that tea took a long time to cool off. The driver returned to say we were holding up the convoy and must come immediately. Then the horns began to blow like mad.

Down the street the Red Ball Express was waiting. Trucks stretched out as far as we could see. Head lights blazing, horns blowing, the colonel shouting: "Those damned women are holding up the war." It was quite a sight.

The nuns followed us to the street, waving and saying Merry Christmas in Dutch. We wished them the same and thanked them for their kindness and hospitality through our friend, Leo. Then we were rolling along toward the border and Germany. That was Christmas Day in 1944, one I am not likely to forget. ■

DON'T FORGET OUR NEW YEAR'S TOAST

In tribute to all who served in the Battle of the Bulge, let's all drink a toast again this year (the seventh year). The choice of beverage is yours. Again this year the time will be: Noon—Pacific time; 1:00 p.m.—Mountain time; 2:00 p.m.—Central time; and 3:00 p.m.—Eastern time on New Year's Day.

It's our special way to be together again, even it is only in our thoughts. We shared so much so many years ago, we should remember those we were with and be grateful for each and every one.

Comments from our members indicate that many of you join in this special observance.

A HAPPY AND HEALTHY NEW YEAR TO EACH OF YOU AND YOUR FAMILIES. ■

VBOB QUOTED AT VA MEETING WITH CONGRESS

By Mitchell Kaidy

Representing the Genesee Valley Chapter, Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, three members have met with or contacted Rochester, N.Y. Congressmembers and Senators to oppose the closure of the huge V.A. facility 20 miles south of the Rochester.

After the meeting with Rep. Amo Houghton (R.-N.Y.) in his office, the Congressman was so impressed with their presentations he quoted them during a high-level meeting with Anthony Principi, secretary of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

As reported in the Oct. 17 Rochester Democrat and Chronicle, Houghton told Principi: "'When I'm...talking to people of my age who were fighting in the Battle of the Bulge and need the psychiatric and medical help of a (V.A.) hospital within driving distance, you have to listen to these guys, and nobody did."

Houghton was a World War 11 Marine who saw action at sea in the closing days of the war.

The V.A.'s proposed closing of the huge facility in Canandaigua outside Rochester would leave a huge vacancy because, of all the major cities in New York State, Rochester is the third largest, yet it alone has no full-fledged V.A. hospital. Instead it has a small clinic.

In the past few years, two members of Congress have spoken at Chapter meetings, while two others of both political parties have met with Genesee Valley representatives in their local Congressional offices. All the meetings were arranged by Mitchell Kaidy, now immediate past president, either during his presidency or directly afterward.

Kaidy, a prize-winning former Democrat and Chronicle reporter, has urged all chapters to follow suit by calling on their Representatives and Senators, as well as by seeking television appearances and writing letters to the editor of their local newspapers.



2003 ANNUAL VBOB MEETING

Quincy Marriott, Quincy Massachusetts

7 September 2003

The meeting was opened by President Louis Cunningham at 8:02 AM. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Stanley Wojtusik, VP of Military Affairs. The Invocation was given by John D. Bowen, Acting Chaplain & Recording Secretary.

Three Past National Presidents, Stanley Wojtusik, George Linthicum and George Chekan were recognized.

Stan Wojtusik spoke about the remaining activities for the day.

MINUTES:

The minutes of the 2002 Annual Meeting in Baltimore had been distributed and had been published in the Bulge Bugle. A motion was made to dispense with their reading and be approved as written. The motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

2004 CONVENTION/WWII MEMORIAL:

John Bowen, Chairman of the 2004 Convention/ WWII Memorial Commemoration reported on events for 2004. He indicated that blocks of rooms had been secured at an excellent rate of \$85.00 plus tax at the Fairview Park Marriott in Falls Church VA, which will be the headquarters hotel as well as at the Tysons Marriott and a Residence Inn and Town Suites owned by Marriott in the nearby area. He indicated that the blocks of rooms at the Fairview Marriott required a 4 or 5 day stay beginning either on the 25th or 26th of May and leaving on the morning of 30th May 2004. The Tysons Marriott block was secured for those desiring to stay only 2 or 3 nights beginning on the 27th or 28th of May and leaving on 30 May 2004. The Residence Inn and Town Suites by Marriott can be secured for a 2 or three night stay. John pointed out that with all hotels they will honor the \$85 rate three days before and three days after the dates cited above. Some people who have wanted to come only 2 or 3 nights were concerned as to why they couldn't be put up at the Headquarters Hotel and John indicated that because the block of rooms at that hotel requires a four or 5 night stay, the National organization would have to pay for the days not used out of the 4 or 5 day blocks.

Information about the activities has been published in the last three Bulge Bugle and as a result there has been a tremendous response. All reservations must be made through the VBOB organization. At the present time there are 30 rooms left in the Fairview for 4 or 5 nights, 24 rooms at the Tysons Marriott for the 2 or 3 days, 29 rooms at the Residence Inn and 15 rooms at the Town Suites.

The Banquet is limited to 800 seats and already over 600 seats have been reserved. Events for the 1st Day, the 26th of May will be a Tour of Washington, the Spy Museum and the new Air Museum at Dulles Airport. There will be an Evening Reception followed by a Washington tour under the lites.

On the 2nd Day, the 27th the Annual Meeting will be held in the morning and a trip to Ft Meade, hosted by Dorothy Davis, will leave at 11:30 AM for lunch at Ft Meade followed by visits to the BOB Conference Room and the Ft Meade Museum. For those not wanting to go to Ft Meade they can visit the

Smithsonian Salute to Veterans on the Mall and/or the Smithsonian Museums. There will be another tour of Washington under the Lites as on the previous night.

On the 3rd Day, Friday, there will be a morning bus tour of Washington or visiting the Mall or museums and the Smithsonian Salute to Veterans with lunch on your own. In the afternoon we will attend the Department of Defense Salute to Veterans at 2:00 PM at the MCI Center. That evening the Annual Banquet and Commemoration Dinner will be held.

On Saturday, we will be bussed to the Pentagon Parking Lot where we will board their shuttles to the Memorial Dedication activities. Only the WWII Memorial Committee shuttles will be allowed in the downtown area for the dedication. The dedication will start at 2 PM but we most likely will leave for the entertainment that they will have from noon to 2 PM. In the morning there will be a Memorial Service and because the National Cathedral will only hold 3000 people that will be by invitation only. The WWII Committee is looking for other venues so that it may be viewed on large screen televisions.. Everyone registering for the VBOB Convention will get tickets for the Memorial events and the Salute to Veterans on Friday Afternoon at 2PM at the MCI Center.

On Saturday evening we will be offering a new event which is a show being sponsored by the VBOB South Carolina Chapter entitled the Road to Victory. It will be two hours long and cost about \$22 plus bus transportation. It will be at the Lisner Auditorium.

John thanked his committee members consisting of George Chekan, Dorothy Davis, Mary Ann Bowen, Marty & Phyllis Feldman and is seeking other volunteers.

In the next couple of weeks those who have made hotel reservations will receive a confirmation number and an 800 number to call to confirm their reservations and give their credit card information. Forms to register and pay for the other events will be sent in late November as soon as prices are determined.

NOMINATION COMMITTEE REPORT:

The Committee report was read since John Dunlevy, the Chairman, was unable to attend to present it. It was the same as was printed in the Bulge Bugle. For President, George Chekan, for Executive Vice-President, Stanley Wojtusik, for Treasurer, William Tayman, for Corresponding Secretary, Dorothy Davis, for Recording Secretary, John D. Bowen, for VP of Military Affairs, Stanley Wojtusik, for VP Membership, Harry Meisel, for VP Chapters, George Fisher, for VP Public Affairs, Demetri Paris, for Trustees - Three Years, Richard G. Guenter, Neil B. Thompson, Robert Phillips, for Two Years - Frederick R. Carmichael, Frances Doherty, James W. Hunt, For One Year - Joseph F. Zimmer. Nominations were requested from the floor and there being none it was moved that the Report of the Committee be accepted and that the Secretary cast a ballot for each nomination. The motion was seconded and approved.

VP FOR MILITARY AFFAIR:

Stanley Wojtusik indicated that he had provided a summary of his activities in the Book of Reports. He acknowledged Edith Nowels and her sister Anita as well as Charlotte Cunningham for the decorations and work on the Convention and Banquet to be held in the evening. He discussed that as with the WWII Memorial in Washington the Mayor in

(Continued on next page)

Quincy had met opposition on the placement of the VBOB Memorial but that the Mayor kept to his word and the Memorial will be dedicated in the Park this afternoon.

VP FOR CHAPTER DEVELOPMENT:

George Fisher indicated that he had sent out letters to all Chapters and has maintained lines of open communication with them. With the Internet, e-mail communication has increased contacts with the chapters that have e-mail. He provided a list of Chapters who have sent newsletter to him. He has discussed methods for increasing membership as well as creating new Chapters. A new Chapter at St Petersburg FL was born and there is interest in forming another Chapter in California and in Las Vegas NV.

BULGE BUGLE:

George Chekan, Editor, reported that the Bugle needs to hear from more Bulge veterans with their stories. He is also interested in Chapter News and asked for stories on how you are involved in VBOB. He asked for the submission of Memorable Events and asked for more cartoons. He thanked Mike Petrick for his tribute to Bill Mauldin cartoon, in the previous issue. General Kicklighter told him that of all Veteran publications that he receives he considers the Bulge Bugle the best.

BOB COMMEMORATION:

Dorothy Davis reported on this years December 15th/16th commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge at Arlington Cemetery as well as the tour to the new National Air Museum which will open that day on Dec 15th at Dulles Airport and the banquet to be held that night. Col Totten, grandson of General S. Patton, Jr. will be the banquet speaker.

2003-2004 BUDGET:

Nancy Monson presented next year's budget for Treasurer Bill Tayman who was unable to attend. The budget printed in the Book of Reports shows Total Spendable Income of \$148,495 and Total Operating Expenses for Fiscal Year 2003-04 of \$148,495 for a balanced budget. A motion was made and seconded to Approve the Budget as presented. It was approved without opposition.

HEADQUARTERS REPORT:

Nancy Monson, reported that she had presented in the Book of Reports what a daily month's routine was in the Hqs. Office. In the report she indicated that our Active Total Membership consists of 7,778 members made up of 357 Charter Life Members, 2,207 Regular Life Members, 148 Associate Life Members, 4,541 Yearly Regular Members and 525 Yearly Associate Members.

DELAWARE VALLEY SONS & DAUGHTERS:

Peter Munger gave a presentation on the Society for Sons & Daughters of Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge formed by the Delaware Valley Chapter. Their first board was formed last June. They are a 501(c)(3) charity to educate our children on the Battle of the Bulge. Dues are \$20.00 per year.

VP PUBLIC AFFAIRS:

Jack Hyman reported that he was not running again for personal reasons. He has some other matters to tend. He indicated that the 60th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge gives us a great opportunity for publicity about the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. Everyone has a story and it is on the local level that these stories can be submitted by the Chapters to their

local newspapers. The more events that members and Chapters participate in and the more books that are written the more we keep our Bulge heritage going. Seize the opportunity now and generate new stories on people who haven't gotten credit. This will generate more members.

John McAuliffe, President of the Central Mass. Chapter indicated that on 11 Oct 2003 the Chapter will dedicate a VBOB Memorial at Holy Cross College Football Field near the WWI & WWII Memorials

George Fisher said that publicity is the key to increasing membership. Each State Chapter should petition their Governor and Legislature to dedicate 16 December as Battle of the Bulge Day.

VBOB CERTIFICATES & 2004 REENACTMENT

John Bowen reported on VBOB Certificates. We have sold close to 6000 certificates and many are concerned as to which child to leave their certificate. He pointed out that multiple certificates can be purchased so each child can be given one.

John also reported that the annual Battle of the Bulge Reenactment at Fort Indiantown Gap PA will be held from Tues, 27 Jan to Sun, 1 Feb 2004. On Wednesday there will be a special tribute to Veterans with a free luncheon. There also will be a 21 gun salute at the VBOB Memorial there that week. The price for Veterans this year has been reduced \$5.00 and will cost \$60 for 5 nights sleeping in authentic WWII Barracks as well as Breakfast (5:00-6:30AM) and Dinner on Saturday nite with entertainment. Contact John Bowen for a Registration Form.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

Marty Sheeron, 53rd Field Hospital, Delaware Valley Chapter, indicated that on his own initiative he put in information about the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge in the VFW and received 12 calls. He made them copies of pages of the Bulge Bugle and sent them a membership form. The one phrase he heard was I never knew that the VBOB organization existed." He said that you should try to get notification in your VFW and American Legion newsletters about the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. Even if it is only the notice of the next meeting. That will catch someones eye.

Al Sussman, 106th InfD, Piccatiny Chapter, said that we need follow-up. Assign people in meeting, go to area schools, get publicity out for each meeting in your newspapers. Get the stories out and you will get members. Have to work as a unit to get the word out.

Stanley Wojtusik, 106th InfD, Delaware Valley Chapter, indicated that when sending notifications out to the public do not use the VBOB abbreviation. Always spell it out Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge so the public knows what the name is.

Lou Cunningham, 106th InfD, indicated that we have a wonderful web site and recommended that members visit it at www.battleofthebulge.org

Max Burdner, Chapter 56, Ft Monmouth indicated that they had recruited 50 cadets and made them honorary members with the potential that they would join the organization.

Al Rosenblatt, 78th InfD, suggested that we give honorary memberships for the first year then pay after the first year. Don't ask. Give them the periodical

ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 9:35 AM.

60TH ANNIVERSARY OBSERVANCES IN BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG

An official VBOB committee has been appointed and plans are currently being formulated for a return trip to Belgium and Luxembourg to observe the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. All plans at this time are **TENTATIVE**, but we wanted you to keep your schedule clear for December 2004 and plan on honoring our heroic, fallen comrades when and where they "gave their all."

At present, the dates are: departure--Saturday, December 11, 2004, and return--Monday, December 20, 2004. This allows for three days of travel with the other seven days for visiting museums, ceremonies, battlefields, etc.

The most important 60th Anniversary events, with the largest public attendance, will occur during the December 16th period; the main focus for VIPs and the media. The visiting VBOB group will be featured VIP guests at all functions they attend--VBOB will choose which events. The Belgian and Luxembourg support groups will accommodate our every request.

We will be flying into delightful Luxembourg City and will stay there in one hotel for the entire period--no time or energy wasted moving from one location to another.

WHY VISIT IN DECEMBER? VBOB's official participation in the 60th Anniversary Commemoration is not intended to be a conventional, vacation type tour. Our only reason for going is to honor and pay tribute to our valiant comrades who made the extreme sacrifice in December/January of 1944-45. They must be forever remembered--never forgotten!

The weather should be of minor concern. Mostly, we will be indoors or in heated buses. During the main 50th Anniversary outdoor event in Bastogne in 1994, the veterans (and guests) were seated under an enclosed canopy (three sides and top)--out of the wind, with heavy lap robes--we were all quite comfortable.

Airfare and hotel costs are being investigated--the Belgian/Luxembourg Governments are using their influence to obtain the lowest possible costs for their esteemed VBOB guests. There are several endeavors underway to possibly fly the VBOB group over at no cost. This may or may not materialize--there will be more details later.

The governments have offered to furnish the following to VBOB group members **AT NO COST**: meals, local transportation, VIP IDs, preferred access to events.

For planning of the events Points of Contact (POCs) have been appointed, as follows: one representing both governments and one representing veterans' support groups, museums, tourist bureaus, etc. VBOB will be working closely with the main principals and will provide information when it becomes available.

FURTHER INFORMATION IS NOT AVAILABLE AT THIS TIME. However, as details and requirements become available, the information will be published in *The Bulge Bugle*. The Headquarters Office has no further information at this time. All members will be advised as plans develop. ■

December 1944



January 1945

—PATRICK—



Quincy, Mass. Sunday, Sept. 7, 2003

Benjamin Patton, Grandson of Gen. George Patton, Wm. J. Phelan, Mayor of Quincy, Stanley Wojtusik, VP for Military Affairs at the dedication of the VBOB monument in McIntyre Park. (See page 21)



Quincy, Mass. Sunday, Sept. 7, 2003

Keynote Speaker Joann Holbrook Patton, Daughter-in-law of General George Patton was presented with a brass replica of a Sherman Tank enclosed in a glass covered Trophy. (See pg 21)

A DREAM CAME TRUE

[Information excerpted from Northern Indiana Chapter newsletters dated December, 2002, and June, 2003.]

"If you build it they will come," is a famous line from a Kevin Costner movie, *The Field of Dreams*. Costner's character builds a baseball field and fans eventually filled the seats.

Bill Tuley, or the Northern Indiana Chapter, had a dream too. That dream was to build a monument somewhere in northern Indiana dedicated to the veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. His hope was that it would be a memorial that veterans of the historic WWII battle could visit and it would serve as a lasting tribute for future generations to visit. It would ensure that the deeds of all those brave soldiers who fought in the Battle of the Bulge would never be forgotten.

Anyone who knows Bill Tuley (87th Infantry Division) knows of his tenacity--his ability to get a job done. Armed only with his desire to see the memorial constructed, Bill approached the Board of Directors with a plan and asked for and was granted authorization to pursue his idea and see if a memorial would be possible.

Bill presented his dream to the members of the Northern Indiana Chapter and they were unanimously in favor. It took effort on the part of all 100+ members to make the dream come true. Over \$8,000 was collected and the owners of the cemetery donated the land and two flag poles for the monument. The flags of the United States and Belgium will fly on special occasions.



Pictured above is Chapter Past President, Bill Tuley--not only a "dreamer" but a "doer."

The monument dedication took place in the veterans section of the Calumet Park Cemetery in Merrillville, Indiana, on May 17, 2003. Approximately 300 veterans, their families and friends attended the ceremonies.

The sounds of bagpipers filled the air, starting with a high-pitched distant whisper and getting stronger and louder as they came nearer. First, the flags came into view; then the men carrying them. Marching on each side of the three flag bearers were WWII re-enactors dressed in authentic combat garb.

Carrying the American, Belgium and VBOB flags were members of the chapter.

The *National Anthem* was led by Abe White and Elaine Olsen. Joe Smrt (319th Engineers) led the crowd in the Pledge of Allegiance and chapter founder Stew McDonnell (28th Infantry Division) gave the invocation.

Chapter President Carroll Austin (3519th Ordnance Company) welcomed the guests and gave a moving recollection of the Battle of the Bulge.

Bill Tuley spoke briefly about the monument project and of the people he had never met who contributed money for the memorial.

The monument was unveiled by Iris Delmerico, wife of departed Past President John Delmerico (78th Infantry Division), and Stew McDonald.

The monument is of jet black highly-polished stone with gray letters. It is 4' x 8' mounted on a base of the same material approximately 5' x 8' in size.



Pictured above is the front of the monument which bears the VBOB emblem.



Pictured above is the back of the monument which depicts the area of the Battle of the Bulge and shows the penetration of the German forces.

REMEMBERING

By Max Brudner
186th Field Artillery Battalion
B Battery

On December 16, 1999, I was invited to the Staten Island Chapter of VBOB to see the drawings of the future monument of the Battle of the Bulge Plaza. This is what Bill Franz, reporter for the *Staten Island Advance*, wrote and I quote, "The chill December wind blowing across Wolf's Pond last week was a reminder, though none of the men standing there, or their comrades who weren't able to be at the ceremony really needed to jog their memories about what it was like more than a half century ago in the Ardennes region of Belgium and Luxembourg.

Memories of December 1944 came flooding back and it was as if the intervening years had disappeared. Here was Bob Karlin, of Company C, 4th Battalion, 119th Infantry Regiment, 30th Infantry Division. Over there was that kid, Joe Reilly, of the 893rd Tank Destroyer Battalion; John Capano, of the 30th Infantry, Buzz Burzumate, of the Railhead Battalion; Dom Corcillo, of the 981st Artillery and myself, of the 186th Field Artillery, V Corps, First United States Army.

All around them in spirit were hundreds of their comrades and friends--those too ill to attend, those who had died recently, those who had never come home. All had paid a heavy price so that, today, the people of the United States could enjoy the greatest level of peace, prosperity and democracy in recorded history.

The monument groundbreaking ceremony for the Staten Island Memorial to the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge at Wolf's Pond took place on the 55th anniversary of the beginning of the "greatest battle ever fought by the United States Army." The battle would go on for another 40 days after that--"41 days of hell" they called it, though on some of those bitter, cold days, hell might have seemed a welcome relief. At least it was warm.

The memorial that was built as a reminder to all Staten Islanders of the sacrifices made by those who lived through that winter, and those who died during it, owes its existence to one man--John Capano, of Princess Bay--a one-man dynamo who founded the borough's chapter of VBOB and who dared to dream a dream, a vision of commemoration and remembrance of his comrades. Capano's struggle to make the memorial a reality has been one filled with pain and problems, but he got to see the first sign that such a monument would actually arise.

Amidst the drone of politicians and bureaucrats trying to bask in the reflected glory of the heroes of the Bulge, the faces of the veterans attending the ceremony, surrounded by their families, friends and fellow vets from other battles and other wars were there to honor them, told a story of honor, decency, loyalty, courage and faith. Some wore medals honoring their deeds, others wore tears in their eyes remembering those who are gone.

Historian Stephen Ambrose, writing last year in *The Wall Street Journal*, said, "The GI's, born between 1918 and 1927, saved Western civilization. They had grown up in the depression, and their generation had paid a price. It was a splendid generation, those men and women that fought World War II and then led us through the next 40 years. They brought more freedom to more people around the world than any other generation."

The old statistics don't tell the real story, but they must be recorded. They must be remembered.

Between December 16, 1944, and January 25, 1945, more than 600,000 Americans, most of them youngsters in their tens and early twenties, fought through a record-cold winter in the deeply forested Ardennes region of eastern Belgium and northern Luxembourg.

The American presence was larger than the combined Union and Confederate forces that had clashed at Gettysburg. There were three full U.S. Armies and six corps, equivalent to 31 divisions. They were joined by 55,000 British troops, consisting of three British divisions, plus contingents of Belgium, Canadian and French troops. They faced three powerful battle-seasoned German armies with what was widely perceived to be superior armor, artillery and aircraft. The only thing the Germans accomplished was to create a bulge in the defense which gave the battle its name. But, the bulge never broke, and the ferocious fighting continued.

By the end of it, the Americans had suffered 81,000 casualties including 19,000 killed. The British lost 1,000, including 200 killed. The Nazis suffered a loss of 100,000 casualties, 800 tanks and 1,000 aircraft. Addressing the House of Commons, Winston Churchill said, "This is undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war and will, I believe, be regarded as an ever famous America victory."

When one speaks with Staten Island and New Jersey veterans of the BoB, however, it isn't the grand sweep of history they recall. It's incidents, experiences, very human events. Several remember the Christmas Eve on the battlefield when, in the freezing forest, they broke into an impromptu chorus of "Silent Night." From across the shell-scarred wasteland they suddenly heard other voices joining theirs, but those voices were signing the hymn in German. For that brief moment, the bullets, grenades, bombs and artillery rounds had stopped. Dozens of cold, lonely youngsters from alien worlds shared a moment of prayer. Tomorrow they would again be trying to blow each others' heads off, but for one night, at least, they could set aside the war.

Others recalled the terrible deaths, not as statistics, but as the loss of their best buddies and brothers. Some also recall wily the generosity of the civilians of Belgium and Luxembourg, caught in the crossfire, who treated the GI's as saviors.

The Battle of the Bulge Memorial on Staten Island had not been without controversy and suffering. The veterans were rebuffed by politicians from placing their monument at the original site the same politicians had offered them. Instead, they were relegated to a remote section of the island. Likewise, the process itself had been marred by dissension, political arm-twisting, bureaucratic red tape and credit taken by people who didn't deserve it.

But most of the Battle of the Bulge veterans and their supporters agreed that such petty squabbling, along with the petty agendas behind it, had to be set aside in favor of the grater food, namely honoring the veterans--deceased and still living--of the battle that turned the tide of the most terrible war in history.

The veterans were determined there would be no delay in proceeding with the

(Continued on next page)

REMEMBERING

construction, as has unfortunately happened with other monuments around the island. America's World II veterans are dying at a rate of 1,100 a day. For every day that passes, so many fewer such vets will be able to see and hear the gratitude of those who benefit from their legacy each day. It was up to the people of Staten Island and New Jersey to see to it that the dream of these heroes was quickly fulfilled.

I am vice president of the Fort Monmouth Chapter of VBOB. The officers of our chapter, whenever they speak of World War II, mention the veterans of the Bulge. Recently, speaking to a large group of plebes from West Point, Colonel Johnson, with tears in his eyes, told the plebes "you will hear from historians when they talk about history it is usually hearsay, but now you can hear history from the heroes who made history. You will be hearing the stories right from their mouths." Colonel Johnson continues to say, "If not for these veterans, we would not be here."

General Nabors, another great speaker and soldier, talks to VBOB veterans with much sincerity. He keeps thanking us for the work we did in the Ardennes and says if it had not been for the VBOB veterans, he wouldn't be talking to us and he would not have the enjoyment of his beautiful family. Another officer, Major Peter Panzeri, goes out of his way to help us. The major goes the extra mile to please us.

"Dying for Freedom isn't the worse that can happen. Being forgotten is."

A SOLITARY OBSERVANCE

GEORGE H. WAPLE, III, 83RD INANTRY DIVISION, 331ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, HEADQUARTERS COMPANY, was in the Hurtgen Forest when the BoB began. His unit rushed south and pushed into the front lines and remained there until the German withdrawal.

He lives near the front gate of Fort Monmouth, New Jersey, and visits the Battle of the Bulge monument there quite often. He is shown here placing a wreath on the monument which was created by his wife in remembrance of the Bulge and its veterans.



George states the snow in this picture sure makes for memories of where he was so long ago. ■

CENTRAL FLORIDA CHAPTER RECORDS HISTORY

The Citrus Ridge County Library (Florida) has recorded the experiences of various veterans of the Central Florida Chapter for its "Learning Is ForEver (LIFE) Collection. The Collection will document the lives of people in and around Lake County and Central Florida.

Ridgeview Global Studies Academy Instructor Deanna Youngs, filmed the project with the help of students from the academy. Lake County Public Transportation, the Lake County Transit, and Stewart Harris assumed the responsibility for getting the veterans to and from the library for the interviews. The Orlando Marine Reserve Unit provided flags and personnel. Papa John's Pizza and Publix Supermarket provided food for all.



Standing left to right: Deanna Youngs, Ridgeview Global Studies Academy Instructor; Battle of the Bulge veterans: Dean Vanlandingham, Lou Crusco, Milton Bartelt, David Severns, William Carmon, and Jack Miller; John Seery, Citrus Ridge County Library Branch Manager; kneeling, Kaley Palmer and Nelson Guild, camera technicians; Camron Mouton and Ryan Hall, interviewers.

KANSAS HONORS "IKE"

A statue of General Dwight D. Eisenhower was placed in the Statuary Hall of Congress on June 4, 2003. You may want to take a look next time you're in Washington, D.C. ■

VETERANS ADMINISTRATION FACILITIES BEING CLOSED

A recent phone call from Richard Brookins, 28th Infantry Division, 28th Signal Company, asked that we have our members write their Congressmen and Senators expressing your displeasure with the proposed closure of VA facilities throughout the country. ■

The infantryman is the farthest projection of his nation's foreign policy.

Gen. William Train

Battle of the Bulge vets, families unveil memorial

By Chris Echegaray
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

WORCESTER — John E. McAuliffe, president of the Central Massachusetts Chapter of Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, said the fellowship and comradeship that began in one of Europe's fiercest battles during World War II has held strong for many years.

Mr. McAuliffe, who served in the 87th Infantry Division, which was part of the American 3rd Army under Gen. George S. Patton and one of the main forces that pushed the Germans back, stressed how important the battle was to the world.

"We were there to free the countries," he said. "We were there to free them from totalitarianism. Death came by cold, hunger and a shot in the dark by the enemy."

Yesterday, the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge unveiled a monument, "Triumph of Courage," at College and Southbridge streets, outside the doors of Fitton Field at the College of the Holy Cross as tree leaves drifted down toward the ceremony.

ROTC members held 50 state flags during the ceremony yesterday morning as the traffic whizzed by above them on Interstate 290. More than 60 people, including veterans and family members, attended the ceremony.



State Sen. Guy W. Glodis, D-Auburn, and state Rep. John P. Fresolo, D-Worcester, spoke about the importance of the battle.

"You played a defining role," Mr. Glodis told the veterans. "We had the first generation without a draft. We will never ever get the sacrifice."

More than one million soldiers fought in the heavily forested Ardennes region of eastern Belgium and Luxembourg. There were 500,000 German soldiers and 600,000 Americans soldiers, with 55,000 British soldiers.

Mr. McAuliffe said 100,000 Germans were killed, 19,000 Americans died and 81,000 soldiers were injured or missing in action. Winston Churchill called it the greatest American

battle of the war.

It was known as the Battle of the Bulge because of the 65-mile bulge in the Allied forces lines created by the Germans. The German plan was to split the Allied armies and recapture Antwerp, Belgium, a vital supply port for the Allies.

German soldiers used the cover of the forests for their surprise attacks. American soldiers spent six weeks counterattacking across Belgium and Luxembourg, finally prevailing.

The veterans chapter will participate in the Columbus Day Parade today on Shrewsbury Street.

An elderly man fell ill toward the end of the ceremony. He required medical attention and an ambulance was called.

Reprinted from the
Worcester Telegram
October 12, 2003

*"We were there
to free them from
totalitarianism.
Death came by
cold, hunger
and a shot
in the dark
by the enemy!"*

John McAuliffe
87th Inf. Div.

POW BENEFITS

The following excerpts are from an article which appeared in the September 20, 2003, *Washington Post*.

"The Department of Veterans Affairs wants former prisoners of war who are not getting disability compensation, health care and other benefits to contact the department.

"The agency said an estimated 11,000 former POWs are not getting benefits to which they are entitled....

"Former POWs are eligible for VA medical care and re exempt from health care co-payments. Free dental treatment is available if their captivity lasted more than 90 days.

"The VA said it is hard to find many former POWs because they served during World War II, before Social Security numbers were used as military service numbers.

"The VA is asking anyone who knows of former POWs who are not enrolled for benefits or who did not receive [a recent letter] to call 1-800-827-1000."

[VBOB has no influence with the Veterans Administration on this matter. You must contact them.]

Also received a letter from the American Ex-Prisoners of War stating that if you are one of the 27,000 former POW's who has never been to the VA for a protocol exam to determine your benefits, you should all 817-649-2979. ■



Check your label--are your dues due?

BEHIND THE SCENES... What Really Happened in the Bulge?

[The following is an excerpt from an address by RALPH G. HILL, JR., 1ST AND 9TH UNITED STATES ARMIES. The article appeared in the newsletter of the Southcentral Pennsylvania Chapter of VBOB and was sent in by MARCELLUS A. GROVE, 417TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 76TH INFANTRY DIVISION.]

The 28th Division full of new replacements was given a 30 mile front. It was quite impossible for them to do other than place company strength posts in key villages astride roads from the East. They were hit by the 17,000 man 26th VG Division supported by the armor of 2nd Panzer Division. The key villages were quickly surrounded or bypassed. General Cota's problem was to provide from his reserves support units to aid the villages under assault. I do not know just when he felt his force was in the path of a large attack. (Note #4--which follows.)

Note 4: The 28th Division was also hit by the 116th Panzer and 560th VG Division on December 16th.

I heard General Jones talk to General Middleton via my telephone switchboard about 2200, December 16. General Middleton said he wished the rest of his area was as secure as St. Vith. (Note #5--which follows.)

Note 5: Each military government detachment was given one telephone. General Lauer directed me about November 20th to get rid of the 10,000 cows who were bellowing because they were not being milked and we could not sleep at night. We could not shoot them because of the odor. We could not drive them on the roads because the MP's objected. So I had to butcher them at 12 locations and move the meat to near Belgium towns. Army supply trucks would carry the meat if I arranged Belgium civilians to unload it in Antwerp, Brussels, Liege, Namur, etc. I needed long distance telephone service so I got wires to the best telephone exchanges in the area. To answer the calls I needed four telephones. As a substitute, I used a four position switchboard that permitted interconnection.

In the area to the north, the reaction of General Lauer, of the 99th Division; General Robertson, of the 2nd Division; and General Gerow, of V Corps at Eupen, was delayed and greatly effected by:

1. The early German shelling did terrible damage to the forward telephone lines. As a result, word from the front lines was long delayed.

2. During the 16th, the over-riding preoccupation of these Generals was the attack on the Roer dams at Wahlerscheid. To the north, the divisions of VII Corps and Ninth Army were held on the banks of the Roer River and denied permission to cross. It was feared that if they did cross, the Germans would open the dams causing the Roer River to turn into a wide raging torrent behind our advanced units. Great pressure was applied against these generals by those above to make the seizure of the dams a quick event.

About 1015, December 16th, I talked to the 99th Division Signal Officer. He told me his lines to Eupen were cut and General Lauer wanted to talk to General Gerow. Promptly, after that call, General Gerow got the 1st Division alerted and later

moved to support the 99th Division. (Note #6--which follows.)

Note 6: I connected General Lauer to General Gerow via my line to 1st Army at Spa. This was a civilian line in an underground cable that before the war connected Spa to Bonn, Germany, via Bullingen.

General Hodges at Spa commanded 1st Army and all U.S. Units involved. On December 16th, he received a call from General Simpson of the 9th Army. The call dealt almost entirely with the Roer River problem and the reported stalled attack of the 2nd Division on the dams. To help the 2nd Division attack, General Simpson offered to send his 30th Division to assist. While the 30th Division moved on the 17th, Colonel Peiper's German force moved and the 30th had to be diverted to cover Malmedy and Spa.

General Bradley and General Eisenhower had knowledge of the Atomic Bomb threat but on December 16th they had an appointment at SHAEF forward CP at Verdun.

The subject was the grave shortage of replacements which had an indicated grave impact on the Battle for the Rhineland which had been started November 15th.

While they were meeting, a Staff Officer interrupted to tell of an indicated serious attack in the Ardennes. Six German Divisions not previously located in the Ardennes were reported as attacking our forward forces and having made a serious penetration in the Losheim Gap. This at 1700 was the first either of these key men knew about the attack. Previously, General Bradley had been on the road from his CP in Luxembourg City. General Eisenhower had attended the wedding of his car driver.

It is reported that General Bradley at first thought no action should be taken as it was only a spoiling attack to avoid American reinforcement of the attack on the Roer Dams.

It is presumed that in fact General Bradley worried about the Atomic Bomb threat, did not want to do anything that would have weakened our impending advance into the Rhineland.

General Eisenhower, however, overruled General Bradley and directed 7th Armored Division with 9th Army and 10th Armored Division with 3rd Army be ordered to move at once to the command of General Middleton of VIII Corps at Bastogne. With knowledge of the Atomic Bomb threat, General Eisenhower may have felt an attack into the Ardennes may have been designed by the Germans to keep us away from something in the Rhineland. In any event, the Germans had to be met with more strength in the Ardennes.

Both of these generals prepared their early accounts of what happened at a time that the Atomic Bomb was still top secret because of the cold war threat.

As soon as we got into Germany in 1945, officers went in search of the German Atomic Bomb threat. They soon learned there was no Atomic Bomb threat from the Germans.

It had long been recognized that Germany could only win a war with a Blitzkrieg. This means quick war.

Germany did not raise enough food to feed its 80 million people. It lacked the petroleum, copper, chrome, and other war materials needed for a long war. It had to trade and the British sea blockade cut its trade. Germany defeated France, Belgium, Holland and Poland in a quick war in 1939 and 1940. Hitler hoped to defeat Russia by Christmas 1941. ■

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION
Invites You to Join Your Friends for the
"EVENTS OF REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"
OF THE 59th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE
December 14, 15 and 16, 2003
Metropolitan Washington, DC

The Marriott Fairview Park, 1495 (Capital Beltway) and VA Route 50, Falls Church VA has been selected as the site for activities commemorating the 59th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, December 14 - 16, 2003. This hotel, just off the Beltway will provide easy access and accommodations, for a reduced rate of \$85.00, single or double occupancy. Parking is free. This rate is available for any night(s) between December 13 and December 17. For room reservations please call the Marriott Reservations (1-800-228-9290) or Marriott Fairview Park at 1-703-849-9400 or by December 3, 2003. Mention that you are attending the Battle of the Bulge events for the special rate.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2003

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

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2003

- 8:00 AM - 9:00 AM Registration/receive name badges, Banquet/bus tickets (hotel lobby).
- 9:30 AM Charter buses depart hotel.
- 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM Tour the new Smithsonian Air Museum at Dulles Airport on its opening day. This new addition will be opening Dec 15th as the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center for the display and preservation of its collection of historic aviation and space artifacts. It will include an IMAX theater, on your own, as well as three levels of air and space crafts.
- 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM Lunch on your own at the Museum.
- 3:00 PM Return by bus from Smithsonian Air Museum to Marriott Fairview Park Hotel.
- BANQUET AT MARRIOTT FAIRVIEW PARK, FALLS CHURCH VA**
- 6:15 PM Social Hour/Cash Bar.
- 6:45 PM Seated for Dinner.
- 7:00 PM Color Guard/Members of the Drum and Fife Corps/Ceremonies.
- 7:15 PM Dinner served.

Program:

Greetings from Dignitaries.
 Speaker, Colonel James P. Totten
 Grandson of General George S. Patton.

BANQUET ENTRÉE

The choice of entrée for the Banquet is:

Seared Chicken Breast

OR

Mustard Herb Loin Pork

After Banquet

Hospitality Room open at Marriott Fairview Park.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2003

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

December 14, 15 & 16 December BOB Commemoration

RESERVATION FORM

"REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"

OF THE 59th ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

December 14, 15 and 16 2003

Metropolitan Washington, DC

Return form and check by December 3, 2003 to:
 Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation
 PO Box 2516,
 Kensington MD 20895-0181

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

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Spouse/Guest: _____

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

Battle of Bulge Unit: _____

RESERVATIONS	<u>Number Attending</u>	<u>Cost/Person</u>	<u>Total</u>
Registration Fee	_____	\$15.00	\$ _____

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2003

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

MONDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2003

Chartered Bus, 9:20 AM – 4:30 PM _____ \$20.00 _____

New Smithsonian Air Museum at Dulles Airport _____ Free _____
 Lunch, On your Own at Museum _____
 Shopping, Stop at Virginia Mall _____

Commemorative Banquet, Marriott Fairview Park _____ \$49.00 _____

Please make your Main Course selection(s):

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

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

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2002:

9:45 AM	Chartered bus to Arlington Cemetery	\$15.00	
11:00 AM	Ceremonies: Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers/ VBOB Monument	No. Attending:	_____
12:30 PM	Bus Return to Marriott Fairview Park		
1:00 PM	VBOB Luncheon & Installation of Officers _____	\$10.00	_____
	Total Cost of Luncheon is \$22.00 of which VBOB will pick up \$12.00		

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

NOTES & REMINDERS:

Banquet Dress: Business suit/black tie (miniature medals encouraged) or military dress uniform
 Room reservations must be made with the Marriott Hotel directly, by December 3, 2003 (Telephone (1-800-228-9290)).
 Return completed Reservation Form for events to BOB Historical Foundation by 3 December 2003, (Telephone 301-881-0356).
 No cancellation refunds after December 9, 2003.
 Please indicate in all places the number & names attending so that we can be advised of the proper number to plan. Thanks!
 ***PLEASE BRING A PICTURE ID (Drivers License, Passport, Mil ID)

December 14, 15, & 16 December 2003 BOB Commemoration

Members Speak Out

Mrs. Linis F. (Buck) McHenry is trying to find out any information she can obtain regarding her brother, **CHARLES EARL BUCK, 3808TH QUARTERMASTER TRUCK COMPANY**. The little information she has indicates that he was attached to the 101st and the 82nd Airborne Division. Can you help? Write to her at 37110 Northeast Wilsonville Road, Newberg, Oregon 97132.

Associate Member **Marjorie B. McCormick** would like to hear from anyone who may have served with her husband, **JOHN F. McCORMICK, 7TH ARMORED DIVISION, 17TH TANK BATTALION, COMPANY B**. Drop her a line: 5908 Evanston Avenue, Indianapolis, Indiana 46220.

William T. Murphy would like to locate **ROBERT STANLEY WEAVER**, who he believes served with the **99TH INFANTRY DIVISION**. If you can provide information about Robert or the 99th, please write to William at: 400 Travis Street, Suite 1900, Shreveport, Louisiana 71101-3188.

ROBERT BARILOW, 553RD CA BATTALION ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY, BATTERY D, is looking for anyone who may have served in his battery. Write to him at: 459 West Hellen Road, Palatine, Illinois 60067.

WARREN G. BROWER, 605TH TANK DESTROYER BATTALION, would like to obtain information and/or maps concerning his battalion's route during the Battle of the Bulge. If you can help, write to Warren at: PO Box 450204, Grove, Oklahoma 74345.

RICHARD STAMPER, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, 38TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY F, 3RD PLATOON, is looking for a history of his outfit and a pin for his cap. Can anyone help? If so, write to him at: 4435 East Broth, Tucson, Arizona 85712.

Jeff Biagetti writes on behalf of his father, **ANGELO BIAGETTI, 18TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**. Angelo is 85 years old and terminally ill. He would like to hear from an old army buddy--**ELMER HALE** (maybe Junior), who Angelo believes may have lived in Oklahoma or West Virginia. If you knew Angelo or know the whereabouts of Elmer, write to Jeff at: 183 31st Street, Northwest, Barberton, Ohio 44203-6757.

ELDON R. "OLE" OLIN, 33RD SIGNAL CONSTRUCTION BATTALION, would like to hear from anyone from that outfit. *[His reunion notice was received too late for inclusion in the last newsletter.]* Write to Ole at: 35012 McKenzie View Drive, Springfield, Oregon 97478.

Anyone who served with **GREGORY H. RODRIGUES, 80TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 317TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY E**, please contact his daughter, Mary Lou Pevehouse, 5429 FM 619, Taylor, Texas 76574.

ROBERT I. DENNEY, 9TH ENGINEER COMBAT

BATTALION, COMPANY C, would like to know where he can get a tape or CD of *Lili Marlene*. Can you help? His address is 1691 West 700 North, Greenfield, Indiana 46140.

Associate Member **F. Albert** is trying to obtain information regarding **RICHARD CHERTOFF**. He may have served in the **2ND ARMORED DIVISION, 17TH ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION**. Write to him at: Ruy No 0/1; B 4987; LaGleize (Stoutmont); Belgium.

MICHAEL F. O'CONNOR, 965TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, would like to locate anyone from the **106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 592ND FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY C**, to learn their whereabouts on December 16, 17, and 18. Write to Mike at: 17 Warren Street, Florence, Massachusetts 01062-1332.

PATRICK J. KEARNEY, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, would like to thank those members of VBOB who contacted the Disabled American Veterans at his suggestion to request that December 16 be marked as the date of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge on the DAV's annual calendar. Pat's campaign and your help was successful: the "Bulge" will appear on DAV calendars starting in 2004.

Mike Muehlbauer is trying to find information concerning his uncle who was killed in the Bulge on December 17, 1944. His uncle was **LOUIS V. KUNZIKER, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION, 38TH INFANTRY DIVISION**. Like so many of you, Mike has written to St. Louis and has received no response. He says he has filled out enough forms to start another fire. If you can provide Mike with any information, write to: 131 East Golden Lake Lane, Circle Pines, Minnesota 55014.

DANIEL F. McMURTRIE, 194TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, would like to find some information regarding his unit's activities in the Battle of the Bulge. His address is: 34 Village Green Lane, Budd Lake, New Jersey 07828-1334.

ROBERT COLEMAN, 80TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 318TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY C, is trying to locate the bazooka man for Company C. We all called him "**DUKE WITH THE BAZOOKA**," although the name of **KENT** comes to mind. Can anyone help? Write to Robert at: 401 Centre Avenue, Nyack, New York 10960.

Associate Member **Richard DelCheccolo** is looking for copies of the *Jay Journal* which was a post-war weekly publication for personnel of the **294TH, 297TH, and 237TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALIONS**, as well as **HEADQUARTERS, 1120TH ENGINEER GROUP**. If you can help, contact Richard at: 656 13th Avenue, Huntington, West Virginia 25701.

CHARLES L. TRAWICK, 106TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 423RD INFANTRY REGIMENT, 2ND BATTALION, would like to find **FRED LINBERY, 81ST ENGINEER BATTALION**. Fred was last seen in St. Vith a few days before moving to the front lines. Charles isn't sure of the spelling of his name. If **JOHN GALLAGHER** is out there, he may have

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT (Continuation)

the answer. If you have any information write to Charles: 7340 Lester Road #322. Union City, Georgia 30291-2333.

Walter Serve, who now lives in England, became a German POW at the end of January, 1945, in Buellingen. He would like to find out what divisions were instrumental in his capture so he can answer the questions of his grown children. Walter's address is: 1 Parkside, Alexandra Road, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 8EB, United Kingdom.

LES CHASTAIN, 97TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 303RD INFANTRY REGIMENT, 2ND BATTALION, COMPANY G, would like to hear from anyone who may have served in his unit or anyone who would like to exchange correspondence. Write to Les at: 190 Wet Park Avenue #9, Soldotna, Alaska 99669.

HARRY MEISEL is trying to locate four BOB veterans for Joseph Feller-Schroeder of Sandweiler, Luxembourg. If you knew George Provencher, CO. M, 112th Reg., 80th Inf. Div. (Manchester, NH), Earl Bean, (Califon, NJ), Stanley Wilson, (Geyser, Montana), or Edward Burgess, (Glasgow, NJ), please call 407/647-4672, or E-Mail bluedolphins@msn.com.

NEW BULGE BOOK

A new book on the North Shoulder of the Battle of the Bulge has been published by H J Wijers of Holland. The book is entitled, *The Battle of the Bulge - The Hell of Bütgenbach - (We fight & Die Here)*. This is number 3 of a series of 4 books on the North Shoulder and it tells the story about the 1st Infantry Division, and its attached units, that defended the area of Bütgenbach.

Lt August T Mc Colgan, Company G, 26th Infantry, 1st Division, states in the forward "Rarely does one get an opportunity to cross the Line of Departure (LOD) a second time. I stood there and looked across the broad expanse of lush green fields at my objective about 2000 yards away. All was peaceful and quiet on 20 May 2000. No one was there to oppose my forward movement. It was not so on 17 December 1944. My orders then were to attack, seize my objective, dig in, dig fast and dig deep. The Battalion Commander finished his attack order with the statement, 'gentlemen we fight and die here.' Many did die there, friend and foe alike. The attack was successful. We moved to the objective without firing a single round. There was no one there. No one had been there. We established our defensive position astride the Bütgenbach - Bullingen Road. Tank Destroyers and Anti-Tank guns moved in to support the defense. We, G Company, 26th Infantry established the 'Hot Corner.' The 'Hot Corner' belonged to the 'Blue Spaders,' more specifically, the 2nd Battalion, 26th Infantry."

The book can be purchased for \$40.00 US which includes airmail postage. It has 250 pages and is soft cover. Write to Hans J. Wijers, Zegerijstraat 27, NL-6071 ZN BRUMMEN, The Netherlands or send an e-mail to wijers@was.nl

RELIVE BASIC TRAINING DAYS BULGE REENACTMENT

The annual Battle of the Bulge Reenactment will be held at Fort Indiantown Gap, PA from Tuesday 27 January to 1 February 2004. If you have not attended one of these reenactments, it is a fun week where you get to live in authentic World War II barracks and have an enjoyable time watching the reenactors, reenactments, trading war stories, remembering the comradery of barracks life and fellow veterans.

All veterans are in the same barracks with modern latrines and we have a continuing hospitality suite along with many historical mementoes from or about the Bulge. We also have a good selection of war movies in the barracks. The price cannot be beat. This year the cost for 5 nights lodging in the barracks the price is \$5.00 cheaper than last year for Veterans at \$60. This includes breakfast on Saturday Morning from 0500-0630 and dinner that evening at the Community Club along with entertainment. Saturday is also day of the reenactment and it brings back many memories watching the troops fall out in their authentic WWII gear with original vehicles and weapons.

On Wednesday, at 0900 there will be a veterans tour of the Battlefield by bus and at 11:30 AM there will be a Tactical Battle Briefing for the Veterans followed at 12:30 PM, by a special luncheon free for all WWII Veterans at the Community Club. At 1730 hours that day there will be a wreath laying ceremony at the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Monument at Ft Indiantown Gap and 21 gun salute.

The \$60.00 registration allows you to come for one of 5 nights beginning after 1600 hours on Tuesday the 27 January 2004. You should bring sheets and a blanket for your bunk or a sleeping bag as well as a pillow. The bunks are newer regulation bunks with mattresses. All veterans sleep on bottom bunks.

There is a woman's barracks as there are no co-ed accommodations however your spouse should be made aware of what barracks living is like before signing her up. For those who prefer to stay with their spouses in a local motel there is an Econo-Lodge and Holiday Inn available at the next exit south of Annsville PA.

If you would like to join a great group of your fellow veterans you can receive a Registration form from John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring MD 20904-3331, Tel. 301-384-6533 or visit the WWII Federation web site at www.ww2federation.org

Enjoy your military heritage. You formed it through your service.

30th INFID HELP SOUGHT

Hans Wijer is asking for help with his 4th book on the North Shoulder from 30th Infantry Division members. He is interested in hearing from any veterans of the 30th InfD and its attached units during the period of the Bulge. He has heard from a number of both 30th InfD veterans as well as German veterans who saw action against the 30th InfD and have sent their accounts. He would also like to hear from members of the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion (AIB) and all others who saw action at Stavelot and Trois-Pont.

Please write to Hans at Hans J. Wijers, Zegerijstraat 27, NL-6971 ZN BRUMMEN, The Netherlands or by e-mail to wijers@was.nl

AN EASY DECISION

By Ralph A. Dorner
3rd Auxiliary Surgical Group

[The following excerpts are from a story submitted by
**WENDELL C. "OBIE" OBERMEIER, 899TH FIELD ARTIL-
LERY BATTALION, a member of the Iowa Hawkeye Chapter.]**

I was on the surgical staff of the University of Iowa, in Iowa City, in charge of the thoracic surgery service when the war clouds were rumbling over Europe. I realized that the United States would eventually get involved in the war. Feeling that I did not want to be embroiled in making decisions when that time came, I signed up for the Army Medical Reserves when Germany moved into Czechoslovakia. Some months later, the Dean of the Medical School called me to his office and said that I would have to declare myself essential to the surgical staff or I would soon be called up for service. I told him I would have trouble explaining why I did not go into the service to my brother (who was a chaplain in the Army on Guadalcanal) or to my brother-in-law (who was serving somewhere on the high seas). The dean got a big grin on his raw-boned Scottish face and said, "Oh, Bud, I'm so glad for you. I had the same decision to make in WWI, and I chose the other way and some of my friends from those days have not spoken to me since."

I was soon off to Camp Grant in Rockford, Illinois for orientation and then in November, 1942, to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, where I was assigned to the Third Auxiliary Surgical Group. This group was made up of teams with a trained surgeon as leader plus an assistant physician and an anesthesiologist. Each surgical team had four enlisted men to serve as technicians and nurses aides. My boys had been a machinist, a bartender, and I am not sure what the other two were doing before they became additions to our marvelous team. Our surgical nurses played a very important role moving from one hospital to another was the war progressed.

We moved from Fort Sam Houston on November 27, 1942, to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, for a short stay where we were given immunizations before sailing on the *Queen Mary* on December 7 for England. After arriving in England on December 15, 1942, our group was divided so that half of us were later sent to Africa where we took part in the African Campaign (ending May 12, 1943) and the Sicilian Campaign (July 10, 1943, to August 17, 1943)....

In April, 1943, my surgical team and another Third Auxiliary team were assigned to LST 511 for practice maneuvers in the English Channel. A convoy of seven (or eight) LST's were sent out with only one small escort ship to sail to Slapton Sands (a beach on the south coast of England which simulated the Normandy Beaches). We were to practice landing for the forthcoming invasion. There was a terrible mixup so that we were unprotected when German E-boats came out of Cherborough, France, and torpedoed three LST's, sinking two with a loss of 750-923 lives. A torpedo was said to have gone under our low-draft ship. More damage might have been done if the Germans had not run out of torpedoes. We had 18 casualties from exchange of small arms fire on our ship. This was the most terrifying night of the whole war for me. This tragedy was kept hush-hush until the full story finally came out 40 years later.

The invasion of Normandy came on June 6, 1943. We crossed the Channel on D-Day, and we waded ashore from about 200 yards from Utah Beach on D+1. On Utah Beach we joined with others from our group who had landed on D-Day. We took over their hospital while the GI's set up our hospital. I took over triage, and the first patient I saw on Normandy Beach was a boy with a belly ache (no wound) who turned out to have a very hot appendix.

We worked in field hospitals. Our operating tables were the stretchers the casualties were on when brought to surgery. The stretchers were placed on "horses." We had sterile drapes and instruments, but no laboratory equipment. We had universal blood (could be given with

relative safety without cross matching). We used a lot of plasma. We had no X-rays so that we depended greatly on physical examination and clinical judgment. We used sulpha drugs and were given penicillin in France--it truly was a miracle drug.

On December 16, 1943, my surgical team was sent to Butgenbach (about 12 miles east of Malmedy). The 47th Field Hospital had just arrived a few days earlier and was set up in a battered school without light or heat. We had two Third Auxiliary Surgical teams and four nurses. All during the night of December 16, we heard tanks and trucks going past our building but to our surprise, they were going away from the front. And during the night the flight of buzz-bombs was incessant.

My team was due to take over the surgery on the morning of the 17th. There was a temporary lull in the traffic going down our road when a Belgium boy came by on a bicycle. He had been shot in the foot by a German soldier 500 yards down the road. The bullet was made of wood and did not penetrate the skin. A radar truck then came speeding down the road. It careened off the road and came to rest in a ditch. The driver warned us that there were many Germans just down the road. And as he talked, he set the radar truck on fire. He said: I don't want the Jerries to lay a hand on it.

At this point the nurses were loaded into an ambulance leaving all their belongings. They went to the 2nd Division Clearing Station at Elsenborn and were later moved back safely.

At 8 o'clock the 2nd Division surgeon came rushing in and said, "Get everybody out of here and damned quick. The Germans are coming down the road." We loaded the patients into two ambulances and climbed on the running board. It was cold, but we were pumping a lot of adrenalin by this time. We were ordered to the 44th Evacuation Hospital in Malmedy. Thirty-one people packed in a water truck and one ambulance.

We passed the area where at about 2:00 p.m., Battery B of the 85th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, were overtaken by tanks of the 1st Panzer Division. The Americans were herded into a field--about 200 of them. A German private in a command car stood up and fired two shots into the group. Immediately, machine guns opened up. They raked the field, back and forth, mowing down the Americans in a matter of seconds--only a few survived this notorious Malmedy Massacre.

We were at the 44th Evacuation Hospital in Malmedy when word came that we should get out. We headed for Spa where we stayed over night. The next day we dropped back to Huy. (Here we worked in the 102nd Evacuation Hospital.)

[Details of this story were taken from an account written by Capt Warren in a book about the 3rd Auxiliary, "Front Line Surgeons," edited by Maj Clifford Graves.]



Dr. Dorner, above, at 95 years-of-age, is planning "a h--- of a party in five years."

VBOB'S 26TH ANNUAL REUNION

By Martin Sheeron
53rd Field Hospital

The 23rd VBOB Reunion was held at the beautiful Quincy Marriott Hotel, in Quincy, Massachusetts, September 4th thru 7th, 2003.

Thursday: Registration of attendees and guests. The Hospitality Room was open to meet and greet old buddies. The many books, displays, and photographs brought many memories to mind.

Friday: The City of Boston tour started with a stop at the John F. Kennedy Library on the University of Massachusetts campus. The museum, a memorial to the 35th U.S. President, contained over 20 exhibits regarding the life and times of JFK.

Next, we traveled the narrow streets and stately avenues of Boston to view 350 years of American heritage and history. Among the sites were: Boston Commons; the State House; Old North (Christ) Church; Copp's Hill Burying Grounds (burial grounds of earlier Bostonians); the U.S.S. Constitution (oldest active duty naval vessel); the Faneuil Hall Marketplace (nick named "Cradle of Liberty"); and the Bull and Finch Pub (set of the popular TV series "Cheers"). Traveling the technologically constructed roadways and tunnels of the "big ditch" was awe inspiring. It is a tribute to the God given talents of mankind.

Saturday: Our scenic tour took us to Salem, called "Naumkaeg" in 1626. It was renamed Salem, an adaptation of "shalom" meaning "peace." Here, we visited "The House of Green Gables," the inspiration for Nathaniel Hawthorne's legendary fictional novel. We journeyed to the Salem Witch Museum the site of "the Witch Hysteria of 1692." The innocent victims came alive and plead to a deaf justice system caught up in the hysteria of that time.

Next stop was the Fisherman's Statue in Gloucester. This is a bronze monument with a square base of sea green granite. The stone itself has a rough finish, typifying the rugged character of the figure and, symbolically, all fishermen. The statue is that of a helmsman contending with the perils of a stormy sea. The danger of the ocean is reflected in his eyes and the tenseness of his muscles as he holds the ship's wheel steady.

We were greeted by Lennie Liguata, manager of the Gloucester House, overlooking the Gloucester fishing fleet. It is appropriate that the family name "Liguata" is the Latin word for flounder. Lennie instructed the land-lubbers on the proper method of dissecting a lobster. We had a delicious meal composed of a cup of clam chowder; crackers; corn bread; corn on the cob; potatoes; lobster/chicken; pink lemonade; and dessert. We then returned to the hotel via Rockport, a seaside village of Cape Ann.

That evening, members of the catholic faith attended a mass in the hotel, celebrated by Father John Sheridan, of St. Matthew Parish, in Dorchester. Jim Barlow, Maryland/DC Chapter member, was the lector and read scripture passages.

Sunday: The general membership meeting was held in the hotel. A new slate of officers was elected for the year 2003-04. Site for the 2004 Annual Reunion was announced as Washington, D.C., on May 25th through 28th. It will be held in conjunction with the dedication of the WWII Memorial on May 29th.

After the meeting, we boarded buses for a tour of Quincy. We viewed the birth places of John Adams and his son John Quincy Adams. This the only location in the country where two presidents' birth places stand side by side. We proceeded to the United First Parish Church (Church of the Presidents). John and Abigail Adams and John Quincy Adams and Louisa Catherine Adams are entombed there in the crypt. On to the Adams Mansion, the summer and retirement home of John Adams. On the mansion grounds is a carriage house converted to a 14,000-volume library with books owned by the Adams Family.

Quincy is also known for its granite quarries. Among the buildings constructed of Quincy granite are the Bunker Hill Monument; the King's Chapel (in Boston); and the Quincy City Hall. The first commercial railroad was built in Quincy for transporting granite from

the quarry to the Neponset River for shipment all over the world.

We then returned to the Marriott for lunch.

In the afternoon we returned to Quincy for dedication of the VBOB monument in McIntyre Park, near City Hall. Stanley Wojtusik, VBOB Vice President for Military Affairs, opened the meeting and called for the presentation of the Colors which was made by the 1st Battalion, 102nd Field Artillery Battalion, of the Massachusetts National Guard. The invocation was made by Jack Hyland, VBOB Vice President for Public Affairs. The master of ceremonies was John McAuliffe, President of VBOB Central Massachusetts Chapter. Welcoming remarks were made by VBOB President Lou Cunningham. Other speakers were: William J. Phelan; Mayor of Quincy; Col. Jean Pierre Hulpiau, of the Kingdom of Belgium; Paul Schmit, of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg; and Benjamin Patton, grandson of General George Patton. The monument was unveiled by Rose and Charles DeChristopher, who generously donated the monument. *Taps* was sounded by the Massachusetts National guard.

That evening the annual banquet was held in the ballroom of the Quincy Marriott. Stanley Wojtusik opened the ceremonies by ordering the presentation of Colors. The Colors were advanced by the 1st Battalion, 102nd Field Artillery Battalion, of the Massachusetts National Guard. Jack Hyland presented the invocation. *God Bless America* was sung by those in attendance. VP Wojtusik greeted members and introduced the honored guests at the head table. A welcome address was given by National President Lou Cunningham.

After dinner Vice President Wojtusik introduced our guest speaker, Mrs. Joann Holbrook Patton (daughter-in-law of General George Patton), who presented the keynote speech. After her address she was presented with a brass replica of a Sherman tank which was enclosed in a glass-covered trophy case and a large reproduction of a painting of General Patton.

Vice President Wojtusik then ordered the color guard to retire the Colors.

At the close of the banquet, those veterans present received Christmas gifts and several Christmas carols were sung by the attendees. A great evening of entertainment was had by all.

Monday: Members and guests enjoyed a free buffet breakfast provided by National VBOB. We bid each other farewell and a safe journey home.

See you in Washington, D.C., in May 2004.

Acknowledgments: In preparing this summary of events of the VBOB 2003 Reunion, I could not have included certain details without the help from brochures I collected along the way: namely, Boston Guest Information; Salem Official Guide Book; The House of Seven Gables brochure; Salem Witch Museum brochure; the Gloucester House brochure; and the Quincy Sun special supplement.



The VBOB "Choral Group" made their premiere appearance at the annual reunion. George Chekan and Earle Hart led the group in singing *Lili Marlene*, a haunting melody from WWII. Back-up singers are: Jim Barlow, Marty Sheeron (not shown), John McAuliffe, Mike Petrick, and George Watson. ■

LAST CALL **2004 VBOB REUNION** **& WWII MEMORIAL DEDICATION**

If are planning to attend the WWII Memorial Dedication in Washington DC and/or the 2004 VBOB Convention this most likely will be your "Last Call" for accomodations. We are rapidly running out of rooms in our hotel blocks as well as seats at the VBOB Banquet on Fri, 28 May 2004.

At the present time we have over 600 seats out of the 800 seats, available for the banquet, reserved and we have only about 50 rooms available out of 430 hotel rooms that we have blocked.

Everyone who has previously sent in a registration request to our Secretary, John Bowen, should have received a letter with a confirmation number. If you did not please contact John immediately by telephone, 301-384-6533, or by e-mail johnbowen@earthlink.net

Progress on the WWII Monument is proceeding ahead of schedule in spite of the rains and hurricane that the Washington area has experienced this year. This will truly be an event of a lifetime and we have taken the initiative on your behalf to be ahead of the crunch. That is why if you are planning to come you must make your reservations now. We will not have any capacity after the Holidays, it appears.

We have a few more rooms at the Fairview Park Marriott which will be our headquarters hotel. These require a minimum stay of 4 or 5 days beginning with Tuesday the 25th of May 2004 or Wed the 26th of May departing on 30 May. There are only a small number of 2 or 3 day reservations at the Marriott Residence Inn or the Marriott Town Suites nearby. There are no more two day reservations at the Tysons Marriott however we have a small quantity of 3 day reservations beginning on Thursday eve, 27 May 2004 leaving on 30 May 2004. In all cases you can extend your reservation, on a space availability.

Please understand that based on the room blocks that we have at the various hotels the VBOB organization would have to pay for the unused rooms in the block if less than the agreed to block was used such as two days of a four or five day block at the Headquarters hotel.

In order to receive the special VBOB rate you must register through VBOB not directly with the hotel. Please contact our Secretary John Bowen at 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring MD 20904-3331, Tel. 301-384-6533, or by e-mail johnbowen@earthlink.net as soon as possible for a registration form or go to the VBOB Web Site at www.battleofthebulge.org For detailed information on the events please see your August 2003 Bulge Bugle.

A new event has been added for Saturday evening at the Lisner Auditorium in Washington DC. The VBOB South Carolina Chapter is sponsoring a two hour musical entitled the *Road to Victory*. The event will be around \$22 plus the cost of bus fare which will be a special rate for Bulge Veterans attending the Convention/WWII Memorial activities. For those who have

pre-registered, this will be included on your final registration sheet that you will receive in late November. You need do nothing now.

Because these will be secure events it is necessary that you be prepared with a photo identification and be prepared for some lines in order to go through security check points. It is also necessary to have the names addresses and telephone numbers of all people that will be attending.

EVENTS PLANNED:

Tuesday., 25 May 2004

Early Arrival Registration 5-7 PM
 Dinner on your own
 Hospitality Room open 5-10 PM

Wednesday, 26 May 2004

Morning/afternoon bus tour of Washington # _____
 New International Space Museum # _____
 New Smithsonian Air Museum at Dulles # _____
 Welcome Reception (Free if Registered) # _____
 Hq Hotel 6:30 - 8 PM
 Washington Bus Tour Under the Lites # _____
 8-9:30 PM

Thursday, 27 May 2004

Annual VBOB Meeting 9-11 AM
 Bus Trip to Ft Meade with Lunch leave at 11:30 AM
 visit BOB Conference Rm & Ft Meade Mus # _____
 Bus Trip to downtown Smithsonian Mall &
 Museums as well as Smithsonian Salute to
 Veterans Leave at 11:30 AM # _____
 Washington Bus Tour Under the Lites # _____
 8-9:30 PM (Same as Weds) # _____

Friday, 28 May 2004

Morning Bus Tour of Washington # _____
 Morning Bus to Smithsonian Mall &
 Smithsonian Salute to Veterans on Mall # _____
 Lunch on own
 Dept of Defense Salute to Veterans 2 PM
 MCI Center * # _____
 VBOB /WWII Memorial Banquet Gala at
 Fairview Park Hotel Ballroom. Begins with
 cocktail hour (cash bar) at 6:00 PM followed
 by Dinner at 7:00 PM (Limited to 800 seats)# _____

*Bus transportation from the hotel or at Museum drop-off points on each day will be available for purchase.

Saturday, 29 May 2004

Morning Memorial Svc 10:00 AM # _____
 WWII Memorial Dedication 12:00 Noon # _____
 til about 3:30 PM. Entertainment from
 12:00 Noon to 2:00 PM. Ceremony starts
 at 2:00 PM
 Dinner on your own
 Road to Victory Musical sponsored by # _____
 SC VBOB Chapter at Lisner Auditorium
 Leave hotel 7:00 PM

Sunday, 30 May 2004

Departure for those desiring to leave

Date Arriving _____ **Date Leaving** _____
Number of Rooms _____ **Number of People** _____

BUGLE BOY OF COMPANY B

A December Surprise!

By William H. Barker
99th Infantry Division
324th Engineer Combat Battalion
Company B

On December 16 my assignment was "kitchen police." At 4:00 a.m., I am assisting the cooks preparing our breakfast. The menu was pancakes, syrup, sausage and coffee. Breakfast was all set up in the courtyard of our farmhouse ready to receive our company of 200 men. Suddenly at 5:25 a.m., along a 30-mile front, we encountered an intense two-hour barrage of all caliber of artillery and mortar fire, which saturated the troops on the line. At first we thought it as our artillery dueling with the enemy. Without breakfast, all personnel of Company B (cooks, drivers, specialists, etc.), with the exception of a hand full of us, were immediately trucked northeast of Krinkelt to a place called Rath Hill. The 324th Engineer Combat Battalion (absent Company C) is now operating as an infantry battalion taking orders from the regimental commander. Our Headquarters Company along with Company A joined us in the defense of Rath Hill. Stripped of all arms including our truck mounted 30 and 50 caliber machine guns, the company's trucks and drivers rejoined my small group at Bullingen. At least we got breakfast while dodging the incoming artillery. Our refuge is the farmhouse cellar when needed; however, dug foxholes were ready if we had to defend ourselves. Our arms consisted of carbines and rifles with limited ammunition. All the good stuff, such as bazooka, explosives and machine guns, are with the men defending Rath Hill.

On December 13 to 15, our 395th Regimental Combat Team, attached to the 2nd Infantry Division, went on the offensive toward the Roer River Dams. Although successful at penetrating the Siegfried Line and gaining its immediate objectives, the assault of the SS Sixth Panzer Army and the Fifteenth German Army on the 99th Division's 22 mile front, the 2nd Infantry Division and our 395th Regimental Combat Team canceled its offensive and reverted to defense of the Bulge north shoulder.

The Bulge is the result of enemy penetration further south directly west of the Schnee Eifel (the Eifel was the principal staging area for German forces before the December 16 offensive). The Rath Hill defense by the combat engineers played an important advantage as the 395th Regimental Combat Team and 2nd Infantry Division needed the road network to get in its defensive position on Elsenborn Ridge. Company C of the 324th Combat Engineers rejoined our defense line at Rath Hill until all could safely take up their respective positions on the main Elsenborn Ridge line. During the initial three-day period of the German offensive, enemy losses exceeded 400 killed as a result of maniac charges against the engineer battalion's defenses. The northern shoulder of the Bulge at the Elsenborn Ridge held forcing the Germans southwesterly. With their timetable severely disrupted, the enemy abandoned the direct route to strike toward the Meuse River and on to Brussels and Antwerp with the Sixth SS Panzer Army on the right driving through to Liege and the Fifth Panzer Army thrusting toward Namur.

Meanwhile, my small group spent the night of December 16 in

the farmhouse at Bullingen. During the night, an enemy tank stopped at a road junction some 100 yards away from our farmhouse. They stopped, looked at the road signs carried on a brief conversation and proceeded directly on the Bullingen-Butgenbach highway. This roadway passed through the center of Bullingen in a northeasterly direction then veers westward toward Butgenbach. After reporting the event we took refuge in the farmhouse cellar remaining quiet since we lacked communications or firepower to resist. More tanks passed during the night as we met some of them the following morning--December 17. At daybreak, we noticed enemy infantry crossing open fields near our farmhouse. With but a five minute period, we are ordered to load everything on our several vehicles. Most trucks are hauling trailers. We tossed duffel bags of company personnel on anything that would hold them. My duffel bag, with my trusty plastic bugle and a watch given to me by my parents at my high school graduation, found its way onto one of our trailers. In the rush, my last trip was to the kitchen area. I selected a #10 tin can that had no markings. Lucky for me, I tossed the can on the truck I occupied as we sped off in the direction of Butgenbach while under artillery fire and menaced by the approaching infantry. Our immediate task was to keep our vehicles and other valuable items from the enemy rather than attempt to defend Bullingen.

It is about 7:00 a.m., when we sped out of Bullingen on December 17. After going about three miles toward Dombutgenbach, we encountered at least two Tiger tanks blocking our way on the Bullingen-Butgenbach highway. The narrow road circled around very hilly terrain with sharp curves, steep inclines and embankments making a rapid turnaround almost impossible. On the right edge of the highway, matured trees hampered our maneuvers. Turning around was very tricky as most trucks were pulling trailers. The decision to dump all trailers by pushing them down the steep embankment eased our turnaround situation. Of course, I lost all of my belongings (and bugle) as they were in my duffel bag and on one of the trailers. We ignored the snow and very cold weather since our column was constantly under fire. The curvature of the hill provided some shelter from parts of the hostile action. All trucks and jeeps made the turnaround and we sped off this time in the direction of Bullingen.

As we approached Bullingen from the west our convoy took the same northeasterly Bullingen-Krinkelt highway our trucks used the day before. Not certain what we would find, we stopped at the Town of Wirtzfeld. Insane as it may seem, I patrol a small bridge with but a few rounds of ammunition while the lieutenant seeks instructions. When the convoy returns, we rejoin my company defending Rath Hill northeast of Krinkelt-Rocherath area. After spending a few hours on the front lines with our engineer company on December 17, our group and its vehicles assemble in on open hillside about 1,500 yards behind the engineers' defensive positions on Elsenborn Ridge. The engineer battalion abandoned Rath Hill and withdrew to its final defensive Elsenborn Ridge position once all elements of the 395th Regimental Combat Team and 2nd Infantry Division was in place to defend the north shoulder of the Bulge on Elsenborn Ridge. The 1st Infantry Division secured the right flank of the 99th and 2nd Infantry Divisions and the Town of Butgenbach. This placement completes the north shoulder defense line that thwarted the German campaign toward Antwerp.

The Christmas Season of 1944

(Continued on next page)

BUGLE BOY OF COMPANY B (Continuation)

was unique for all of us. The cold and snow only added to the drama. The main assignment consisted of destroying the vehicles rendering them useless to the enemy should that be necessary. The vehicles and equipment are booby-trapped and explosives set except for a few jeeps for our get-a-way. The division chaplain's jeep is my assignment. The defense lines held. Life slipped into a routine quickly. Constant artillery firing is deafening. The nights were ablaze with flashes from these guns. We feel secure with all this activity. The cold, lack of sleep, frost bite and army rations brought visions of past Christmases. A warm fire, great feasts, family and singing in worship are dreams that kept our spirits high.

On Christmas Day, I remembered that I saved that #10 tin can of 'something.' After many searches, I found the can and we held a ritual opening. To all of our amazement, it was a can of peanut butter! A great treat for all of us. It makes good covering on the army K-ration biscuits or for eating just from the can. A few did not like peanut butter leaving more for the rest of us. It took a while for supplies to catch up with our needs. The peanut butter caper paid off handsomely. It lasted to New Year's Day! We all pooled our money and bought spirits from local Belgium farmers. Most of these spirits went to our company on the front line.

The German threat and offensive to Antwerp ended when the U.S. Third Army under General George Patton broke through to Bastogne on Christmas Day.

The January, 1945, allied offensive eliminated the Bulge and pressed ahead toward the Rhineland. During this period, the 99th Division remained in the Belgium Ardennes to be re-equipped, rested and our engineer battalion resumed its normal function of support for its infantry regiments. We spent many more days building log huts and roads for a rest area.

According to our Commanding General Walter E. Lauer, the engineers lost over 100 officers and men, about 15 percent of its normal strength. In my little group, we all stayed throughout the Battle of the Bulge, although suffering from frostbite, sleep and hunger. At home, little was reported about the north shoulder as it was classified a 'secret' and not released until long after the battle. Luckily, I won a three-day pass to Paris, France, just before the 99th Infantry Division resumed its drive toward the Rhine River.

Once I understood the enormity of the situation that faced us on December 16 and 17 of 1944, the youthful, carefree innocence of a 19-year-old Indiana lad disappeared; my life was forever changed.

Rumors often circulated about other units' actions; they meant little to me until faced with our own possible capture or destruction. Depending on others, if taken lightly, can put you in a bind. How did such a massive force assemble without being detected by the Allies? The intelligent gathering information we sent to higher headquarters is ignored because of their preconceived beliefs and overconfidence. Why would the enemy attack through such difficult terrain? History shows it is often the route of invaders. ■

CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL TO SEE IF YOUR DUES ARE DUE.

IT WAS NO DREAM

By Walter Gronlun
78th Infantry Division
309th Infantry Regiment
2nd Battalion
Company F

Does anyone remember this day, or, were you there with me?

It was near Aachen, Germany, the first week in January, 1944. I don't remember the name of the soldier with me, but we were told to leave our dufflebags on the truck and we would be able to get them back later.

We went east into the woods to a pillbox and there we were given white uniforms, even white coverings for the helmets. It seems like half a mile further when we were told to dig foxholes in front of this rock.

To the front of us we could hear German being spoken at times, but nothing on the left or the right. We were there until the snow had melted and was gone. We were shot at by snipers and German patrol came looking for us, but could not find us--they were as close as five feet away at times.

First, we took the German pillbox and from there we went to the German Army camp, and there I was hit the second time that day. The soldier who was with me had come from Germany and told me he had a brother in the German Army. I was sad that this soldier was killed that very day in that same foxhole with me.

When we took the army camp on February 16th, the soldier was still with me since we had joined up in Aachen. We were in the woods many days and lived in foxholes. There was a lot of shelling on that last day. That night we made it to Schmidt. There we slept under a house--no basement.

So far, in the 309th Regiment I have found no one who knows about the German Army camp. I was hit three times before the Remagen Bridge. My first partner disappeared on the bridge and is still listed as Missing-in-Action?

If you can help me, write to: P.O. Box 147, Verndale, Minnesota 56481. ■

REUNIONS

297TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, June 3-6, 2004, Owensboro, Kentucky. Contact: Hal C. Miller, 5251 Windy Hollow Road, Owensboro, Kentucky 42305. Telephone: 270-785-4088 or 270-683-4180.

The following were received too late for last issue:

285TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION. Contact: Nicholas Zillas, 190-12 35th Avenue, Flushing, New York 11358. Telephone: 718-463-1321.

9TH ARMORED DIVISION, 89TH CAVALRY RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRON. Contact: Bobby Cobb, 1025 Cherrywood Drive, Guthrie, Oklahoma 73044. Telephone: 405-282-0918.

SCARED, COLD AND LONELY CHRISTMAS, 1944

By Joseph T. Doll
26th Infantry Division
263rd Field Artillery Battalion
Headquarters Battery

It was Christmas, 1944, the enemy had made new, ambitious advances and it was cold (even for a 22-year-old soldier). This was Luxembourg. I thought it was Germany, but what did I know? (No body reported to me.) If we were trying to find the best place and time to be scared, cold and lonely, we found it. We'd been in action since mid-October. Doesn't the war ever get any easier, friendlier, or warmer?

Dick Youngblood and I pulled guard duty. Dick was an alert soldier and a good steadying influence. I was glad he was there. Another guy who was good to have around was Bill Eshelman. After landing at Utah Beach and marching inland to bivouac awaiting call to combat, Bill and I volunteered and did a two or three week stint driving on the Red Ball route. We were partners on a 2-1/2 ton truck and trailer most of the time. Soldiering was more bearable having good pals.

Bill hailed from Central or Southern Illinois and said he had been a hobo. With our belated mail deliveries, he'd get copies of the out-dated *Hobo News*, which he would sometimes share with me. He would help curb my homesickness when he was around. I suppose hobos can't get homesick if they have no home. He also told me how to keep from being cold. A bit part of the procedure was to close your eyes, relax and visualize logs burning in a warm indoor fireplace. It didn't work.

Bill was pretty good at sketching. He had previously drawn a couple of comic strips at my request. I asked Bill to do a sketch of me standing guard. He did so on a V-mail letter form and I penciled in a poem for my wife, Val, who passed away in 1989. A few weeks ago, I found this V-mail letter in one of her scrap books.

[Joe sent us a copy of the drawing, but it was too vague to reproduce.] ■

MEMORIAL DAY IN BELGIUM

*[ROGER HARDY, 5TH FUSILIERS, Chapter President
sends us the following story of Memorial Day Observances
in Belgium.]*

On May 8, a group of 20 war veterans of the 5th Fusiliers Association laid a wreath at the memorial in the garden of the Town Hall in Mons, which reminds that the war volunteers of the 5th Belgian Fusiliers Battalion enlisted in the second part of September, 1944, a few days after the liberation of Belgium by the Allied Armies.

After these ceremonies, they went with Mons town authorities to the memorial of the 1st U.S. Infantry Division, which had liberated the town in the early days of September, 1944, at the price of many lost lives.

Jose Delor, Secretary of the Mons Section of the 5th Belgian Fusiliers Battalion Association, made the following speech:

"On this 8th of May, the 58th anniversary of our victory on Nazism, it is with a great spirit of gratitude that we pay a tribute as always at this memorial which remembers that in September, of 1944, three hundred and fifty American soldiers lost their lives for our liberty. We, who were war volunteers in the days which followed these heroic sacrifices, wanted to fill the gap they had left.

"On December 16, 1944, we were with the First United States Army in the Battle of the Bulge and we ended the fight on the 8th of May, 1945, along the Fulda River in Germany.

"Today, we pay a tribute to these 350 U.S. soldiers and thank them for having enabled us to take part in the victory. A victory which is almost theirs. Today, we also think of the soldiers who are dying for bringing the freedom to opposed people in the world. Let us not forget that this freedom must be gained and defended each time it is threatened. Let us be full of dignity toward our heroes."

On May 24th ten 5th Belgian Fusilier war veterans and their wives visited Henri-Chappel U.S. Cemetery for the Memorial Day ceremonies and laid a wreath at the memorial in Stavelot which reminds that the soldiers of the 5th Belgian Fusiliers and members of the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion and the 825th Tank Destroyer Battalion partially burned the gasoline dump on the 18th of December, 1944, to avoid the capture of this important resource by the SS Kampfgruppe Peiper.

After lunch we went to the U.S. Military Cemetery for the usual ceremony. This year, a U.S. Army band was playing during the cortege of a platoon of the 80th (U.S.) Area Support Group, their Honor Guard, a platoon of the 4th Belgian engineers Battalion, and us. Our wreath was laid by our National Chairman Marcel D'Haese accompanied by Col (U.S.) Timothy Quinn, of the 80th Area Support Group. Despite the rain it was a moving day of remembrance.

On June 2nd, a group of 17 war veterans of the 5th Fusiliers went to the Memorial Day ceremonies in Bastogne. The religious service took place in beautiful weather and wreaths were laid by the U.S. Ambassador Collard, the Mayor of Bastogne, Marcel D'Haese, Jean Bartet, and other dignitaries.



Lt. Col. Jon Davis, commander of NATO Support Activity, and Camille Michel, chairman of the Mons Section of the 5th Fusiliers Battalion, lay a wreath to honor fallen Americans at the monument for the 1st Infantry Division in Mons. Photo by Rick Haverinen.

*We Ask Your Help...*IN BUILDING A SECOND LINE OF DEFENSE

As you can well imagine, a power bigger than all of us is daily taking its toll on our numbers. We must begin to look to our spouses, children, relatives and history buffs to carry the load and see that the Battle of the Bulge is never forgotten.

VBOB continues to grow (a little slower than in the past)--but we are the ones who must ensure that that we have built a fortress so strong that it will not crumble with time. We have so much left to do.

We are again making a special effort to enroll family members and history buffs so that they can carry on our efforts. We are offering a two-year membership to any member of your family for the price of one--\$15.00 for two years.

"What am I going to do with two copies of *The Bugle*?" you might ask.

Glad you asked. This could be the most important piece of second class mail you have ever received--other than the *Victoria's Secret* catalog. The extra copy of *The Bugle* should be taken to your local high school or public library. If you have a college in your area, take it to their history department library. If there is a military post in your area, take it to the library there. These copies will be instrumental in helping to educate students of the sacrifices made during "America's greatest battle."

Many of you have a difficult time talking with your family about your war experiences. Perhaps, a gift of a two-year membership would whet their appetites to learn more and enable you to be able to speak of your experiences a little easier. Many of the letters we receive are from children who are eager to learn of their dad's experiences--"Dad never talked about it."

To take advantage of this offer, it is necessary that you use the membership application below--the regular membership application will not do. If you need more than one or do not wish to cut up this newsletter, make a Xerox copy and send it in along with your check.

-----Detach and Mail-----

SPECIAL ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.
P.O. Box 11129, Arlington, VA 22210-2129

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

AO

Do not write above this line

Two Year's Dues--\$15.00

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____ Phone (____) _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ - _____

I am joining VBOB in honor of my _____ (relationship), whose name is: _____

He/she was in the following campaigns: _____

Unit(s) assigned to during period December 16, 1944-January 25, 1945. Division _____

Regiment _____ Battalion _____

Company _____ Other _____

Make check or money order payable to VBOB
and mail with this application to above address.

Applicant's signature _____

OHIO BUCKEYE CHAPTER CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY



Pictured above, left to right: Speaker Lee Kessler; Vice President and Treasurer John Kalagidis, Recording Secretary Sam Hiatt and President Milan Rolik.



Pictured above, left to right: Founder Earl F. Witmer, President Milan A. Rolik, Founder William B. Rinkes

The Ohio Buckeye Chapter of the VBOB celebrated its Tenth Anniversary on August 14, 2003, at 1:00 p.m. at the WWII 356th Fighter Group Restaurant. Following the banquet, a meeting was conducted at which charter members were presented with certificates of appreciation for their dedication and hard work in forming the chapter, which has grown to the current roster of 92 veterans, plus their wives and families.

The honored speaker was Lee Kessler, a World War II flight engineer on a B-17 bomber which was shot down over Germany in 1943. He was captured and held a prisoner of war for almost two years. Recently, North Canton Hoover High students prepared a video production about Mr. Kessler's experiences, entitled "Kessler's Legacy."

The Buckeye Chapter meets regularly on the second Thursday every other month at 1:00 p.m. at the American Legion Home Post #44 located at 1633 Cleveland Avenue, Canton, Ohio. Its members live primarily in Akron, Canton, Massillon and surrounding areas but some hail from as far away as Columbus. All

Bulge veterans are invited to join and keep alive its heritage

The chapter was established in June of 1993 and became the first VBOB group in Ohio. Three other Ohio chapters are now functioning in Ohio--Independence, Findlay and Kenton. The four founders of the chapter were Bill Rinkes, Walter Geese, Fred Salhany and Mick Miskimens. The chapter has continued to grow under the leadership of President Milan A. Rolik, of Akron; Vice President and Treasurer John Kalagidis, of Canton; and Recording Secretary Sam Hiatt, of North Canton. After working and raising families during which time very little was said about their WWII experiences, the battle scarred veterans, now in their 80's, remembered Europe's bitterest winter in 20 years through which they suffered in 1944 and the deadly fighting in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium. They decided that an organization was needed where comrades could reminisce together and insure that their efforts to free all of Europe from Hitler's tyranny was not forgotten.

Another Incident in Sicily that gained Patton notoriety

Outwardly undeterred by the obvious distress of Bradley and Truscott, Patton continued turning up in the front lines without warning. A 3d Division infantry commander recalls his first encounter with Patton on the north coast of Sicily. His battalion was halted outside a village that was under heavy German artillery fire from a nearby ridge. Suddenly Patton appeared on the road above him:

He stood up in his command car and looked down at me, and he said, "You, man, who are you?" And, I said, "I'm the 3d Battalion commander, sir, Lieutenant Colonel John A. Heintges." And he said, "Well, you son-of-a-bitch, why the— damn hell aren't you moving?" I said, "Sir, we are temporarily halted here because the Germans have us under observation from that ridge about 600 yards in front of you." And I said, "You have no business being here. You must have gone through my guard on the other side of the village behind us." And, just then, the German artillery opened up and I have never seen anybody turn around on a narrow road as quickly as he did. His driver turned around on a dime and left nine cents change. And, that was Patton."

From PATTON- A GENIUS FOR WAR - Carlo D'Este



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

A LITTLE R&R?

By E. Charles (Chuck) Hageman
84th Infantry Division

Twice I went back for trench foot therapy, the last time to Brussels where I budded with another private, whose name I can't recall. One day walking in the city, we wondered why so many 106th were in Brussels. Our concern was who was in the holes in their segment. Rumor among them was that two out of three were withdrawn for R&R.

Within a short time after returning to the Siegfried Line and capturing Wurm, we were replaced on the understanding we were going on R&R. We got on trucks and ended up in the Bulge. The rumor then was that the allies has created a weakness in our line that allowed the Germans through so that we could isolate them with a pincher movement.

Here are parts of *My Memories*, which I wrote in 1966:

There are many things I recall about the Battle of the Bulge. I remember being trucked to a huge mine shower facility at Spa where I enjoyed one of the few hot showers I had in Europe. I can't remember the exact sequence of the fights in Belgium, but one of our first assignments was to clear out the woods on the hill above the Town of Bourdon and either side of the road to Verdenne. We had been told the Germans had captured American uniforms and equipment so we were told to stop everyone while we were guarding the roads and bridges in the valley. We went to our right behind a couple of Sherman tanks from the 776th Tank Battalion that was attached to us a lot. (It may have been the 2nd or 3rd Armored because we also worked with them at times and on occasion the British Sherwood Rangers using Sherman tanks were there.) I was behind a tank and we hadn't gone far until the machine gun started firing and I looked ahead to see what he was shooting at. What I saw was what I thought were Americans and I got on the phone on the rear of the tank and asked if they knew they were shooting Americans and was quickly told they were taking no chances. As it turned out their targets were Germans and Sergeant Kuykendall ordered us to undress them and send them down the hill in the direction we had come. The snow was about eight inches deep and it was cold, but the Germans didn't argue as they knew what the alternative was.

When we cleared the woods about 600 yards we met up with our people coming from the other direction. Shortly thereafter, we went forward across a beet field between the woods and a steep bank that ran east from Verdenne and took up positions in holes previously occupied by a heavy weapons company. The holes were not very deep and many had dead soldiers in them. It was getting dark and we were free to move around more. I helped remove some of the bodies and soon the grave registration truck and men showed up and finished our job. I helped a couple of new replacements find holes and told them to toss a live grenade in the hole before getting in. One ignored me and the first thing I knew he came flying out of the hole. I don't remember if the hole had been booby trapped or whether he saw a body in the hole and got in to remove it and the body had been booby trapped. I found a hole that was deeper than most and tossed a grenade in it before I got in. I put in with an Irish boy by the name of Halloran, who I would buddy with later on while we were defending the hill.

Either that night or the next one, the moon was out and I went over to examine a small German tank that had been knocked out just ahead to our left. I think our hole was the last on the left side of our line and not far outside Verdenne. There was a dead soldier half in and half out of the hatch. The buddy with me, crawled up and took a look inside and said there was a girl inside with ear phones on. I didn't feel like looking but didn't notice a couple of Sherman tanks dug in the back of the bank to the rear. That explained what happened to the German tank.

I don't recall how or when I ended up in a hole with the Irish boy and it may have been because I spotted many machine gun ammunition boxes behind one of our water-cooled machine guns. I had used a couple of BAR clips and was glad to see the supply because I had a

good idea what was coming. I checked the gun only to find the bolt had been jammed. I didn't give it much attention but did kick a couple of ammunition boxes free of the frozen ground and looked to see if they were full, which they were. I had just got in the left position of the hole and by folding double could go just under ground level. I tried to dig deeper without any luck so I set up the BAR and zeroed it in on a fence running parallel about 500 yards in front of me. Halloran jumped in the right hole and we decided we had a good spot because of all the ammunition and a phone we erroneously assumed was working.

That afternoon, which I think was Christmas Eve, we started getting direct fire from across the valley. We had heard the tanks moving in the woods about a mile across the valley. I decided I needed to get the machine gun out of sight because I was too late. It was frozen in hard. I was afraid to get out of the hole far enough to tear it down--besides my BAR was setting right beside it. I must have had three or more new BARs those few days. I kept having trouble with the bolt jamming and finally came to the conclusion the gun would heat up during daily use and it being so cold at night the oil or cosmoline would jell because the bolt glides didn't have a chance to get dirty. I never got a chance to thank the cooks for bringing me the new rifles.

The 88 kept firing at us and it was only the frozen ground that saved us as he would divide his azimuth and obviously did not get right on us. He had no more than quit trying to hit us than we saw motion on the whole parameter in front of us and in particular tanks on our left and soldiers running on both sides. Intuition told me to get the hell out of there. I picked up the phone and it was dead and no wonder, the line run right back in the path where the 88 gunner had been trying to zero in. My friend and I started back and hadn't gone far until we jumped in a sunken road and I ended up next to a soldier and asked him if this was the first platoon. It turned out to be a German and he had several with him. He raised up and said, "ka-put," the German slang for wrecked or destroyed, and pointed to his shoulder. I looked at it and saw the bullet had passed through and he had quit bleeding. As we went to leave the hole I found the bi-pod on the BAR was frozen in the ground so I had picked up a carbine Halloran had brought to the hole. I placed the carbine in the German's belly and motioned him to go back in the direction of the CP and just as I made the motion, the several other Germans got up and ran back toward the town. I took aim at them and not being familiar with the carbine, I pushed what I thought was the safety and dropped the clip out of the rifle, leading with what I hoped was one round in the chamber. Until I read *Citizen Soldier* and Phil Stark's account on that hill that night I thought the German squad was after me and the Irishman, now I think it may have been after Phil, since he was undoubtedly on our right, making lots of noise and doing considerable damage. His line of fire would have been along the same fence line I had been using.

We took the German on back and found the CP where the company had been gathering and were just getting ready to cross the beet field. I had the German help Catchem or Tom Kyle--I think one had been hit in the head or shoulder and the other in the leg or legs. I think they all beat me to the first beet pile but I stopped to help a replacement who was yelling his head off and after I got him quieted down, I found he had been hit in the hand. I put a bandage on and he got up and out run me to the pile of beets. It was a short run from the mound of beets to the edge of the trees just to the east of the road. That was as far as we were going to retreat. Colonel Gomes was there with a runner carrying a 300 radio. I asked where we were going and he said this was it, to spread out and dig in, which was a joke because the ground was frozen and rocky. I scraped off the snow and made an effort to lay down. I could still hear the colonel and he was calling in azimuth and eventually there came two test shots on top of the hill we had just left. After a few minutes, I heard him say, "Now watch this." Then came a barrage I had never seen before and later found out it was one of the first uses of the proximity fuse. The rounds simultaneously burst about 25 feet off the ground and looked like a huge umbrella had been spread over the hill. Shortly, Sergeant Kuykendall

(Continued on next page)

called us in line and started up the road toward the hill. You can imagine the slaughter we witnessed as we went back to some of the holes we had been in. There wasn't a living thing anywhere and I would guess that even our own wounded had been finished off, but I really didn't want to know. As I recall there were 26 in the group that originally assaulted the hill but only eight of us went back. Most of the replacements were gone also. Until the barrage hit the hill, I don't think the town was secure, now it appeared we had stopped their attack and kept them from reaching the road in the valley behind us and had withdrawn. I don't recall where we went from there but was sure glad to get the h--- off that hill.

One little town we took was a one day fight that ended up being a breeze compared to the fighting at Christmas time and in the Siegfried Line. While I don't recall the name of the town, I do know we came in from the east side and were being fired upon as we went down the slope into the valley where part of the town was located. We were getting consistent fire from a machine gun across the valley that was sweeping our hill side. It was obvious the operator was too far away to be accurate and I got scared enough I stood up and let short bursts of the BAR go in his general location. Soon his firing stopped and I kept walking toward him. When I got within 80 to 100 yards, he came out of his hole and surrendered. Someone had hit him in the hand and I knew right away what he had been doing. He had stayed down in his hole with his finger on the trigger and fired randomly in our direction. Like shooting at the covey instead of an individual quail.

A CP was established at the first building we came to. We could smell the German soap as if the room had been used for a bath house. We knew the enemy hadn't been gone long. From there, we spotted a small German tank that had apparently been parachuted in and landed on the hill on the south side of the town. One of its tracks had been knocked off just as it approached the town's main intersection and just in front of a large church on the corner. It was still moving in a circle with its turret moving and machine gun firing. We went to finish it off. There was a vacant lot next to the church and I went down next to the side of the church with the intent to keep the tank buttoned up until the bazooka man could get close enough to shoot from the other corner. I hadn't fired but a couple of bursts when the turret moved to point in my direction and I moved back a short distance from the corner. His first shot barely hit the corner of the church and I moved back to a vestibule where sinners waited for confession. The tank fired again at the building across the vacant lot. I guessed he was attempting a billiard shot that would ricochet in my direction. It worked and knocked out the arch over the vestibule opening where I was standing. The arch came down and hit the back of my pack and took me to the ground. I said a prayer or two and heard what turned out to be the bazooka. I had done my job by distracting the tank. I understand the fellows shot the Germans as they crawled out of the tank. I went to the back of the church and crossed the street when the shooting stopped and ended up in the entrance way of a home-barn and was filling my canteen to put in a water pill when a medic came out of the house and saw my hand. I had trouble putting a bandage on it with my left hand and it was now swelling and became painful, especially when I tried to grip the trigger. He put some sulfa powder and a new bandage on it and I was in good shape in a couple of days. He put me in for a purple heart to my surprise. Actually, I was wounded four times--three times with shrapnel and the hole through my helmet. One, I caught a piece in my right heel but was reluctant to do anything about it because I learned from the trench foot problems that you had to immediately put your boot back on as your foot would swell and you couldn't get it back on. Besides it was more likely to stop bleeding as it was and there wouldn't have been room for a bandage anyway. I took the boot off the next day since I tried to change socks every day to keep my feet as dry as possible, something I learned from the R&R trip to Brussels for treatment of trench foot. The wound was only slight and the sock had absorbed all the blood. The second piece of shrapnel was in my shoulder and lucky

for me, it hit the strap on my pack and I pulled it out and put a clean handkerchief over it and the strap kept it in place.

When I left the chateau across the street from the church, I looked to the west and here came a German officer with his hands over his head and a white flag leading about eight to ten soldiers. The sun was going down behind his back and I realized he was no dummy. The Germans didn't like to stay outside at night and especially in the middle of winter. We were about to take his half of the town and he knew it. We all felt relieved as we could tell from the evidence of the air drop on the hill that it was no small outfit that had landed and occupied the town. I never did understand where the civilians were but guessed they had been warned and left before the air drop. We surely missed the cover provided by the Royal Air Force which we had been furnished on the Siegfried Line where we frequently saw British Spitfires make a run on a specific target. We didn't see much of our air force in the Bulge because the weather provided practically no visibility. However, that night a couple of twin-tailed P-38 Nighthawks (Black) came over to take a look. We were certainly glad to see them.

Another town we took was during the worst weather during my time in the Bulge. I never did know the name of the town. It was located high in the mountains and we came in the back side by way of a long march through the snow. Several of the guys were exhausted by the time we got to the first house on the edge of town. I helped one get there and we proceeded to check the house. Neither of us had a phosphorus grenade, which we preferred to clean a basement, so I yelled down the basement well "com se," pulled the pin, released the clip, and tossed a regular fragment grenade to the basement floor. After it went off, I went to the window to see Germans running down a fence line to a corner post where they crawled over and headed on. I guessed they were about a quarter of a mile away but tried to allow for the drop and laid the BAR on the window sill and let go a couple of bursts. I zeroed in on the corner since they had to be in that position as they crossed over. A couple went down but the others laid down and crawled under the fence. I didn't do much more but scared them--at least they were occupied and going other directions.

We went on down the street and were lucky a sniper at a second story window missed us. Someone behind us took him out and as I turned around to see who it was, I saw six to eight Germans coming out of the house we had just searched. Later that day at the CP, I found the guys who found the enemy. They said they heard a noise and tossed a phosphorus grenade in the basement and out came the Germans. I told him I had tossed a grenade in the basement and one of the guys said they had made a circle pile of potatoes at the foot of the stairs and the grenade apparently went off among the spuds with little or no damage, except the percussion. I never understood why they didn't shoot me through the floor when I started firing out the window. They must have been as scared as I was.

Later on that day two of us went out to the opposite side of town and took up a guard position. We had no more started to dig a hole only to find the ground was so frozen we couldn't make a dent. Suddenly, we saw Germans above us setting up a heavy machine gun and we took a couple of shots at them but didn't stop them--they were soon firing at us. Lucky for us, we had put our gear down along a furrow and it provided just enough cover to keep them from hitting us. The frozen ground was so solid their bullets didn't penetrate our barrier. It was getting dark and I was having trouble with the BAR jamming and never fired at them again. I think they ran out of ammunition or someone scared them off as we didn't catch any more fire from them.

That night was the worst of my life. It was so terrible cold, the wind blowing and the snow coming in spurts and we didn't have the usual hole to give us protection. There was no way we could survive out there, let alone sleep. We took turns returning to the CP: where they had a fire going. German medics were helping our medics to take care of the wounded regardless of nationality. How I hated going back out to that guard post. It gives me chills and makes me sad as I think about those couple of days. Just after we

(continued on next page)

A LITTLE R&R?

(Continuation)

reached our assigned guard post, a German ambulance made a run for it behind us and I fired at it with the BAR not expecting to stop it, but it did. I don't know why I shot at it but I think I suspected there were healthy people on board and took shots at those. That night there were screams and crying coming from it most of the night. I assume most occupants died from wounds or were frozen to death. That was the only time I remember feeling sick about the injury that I might have inflicted and was always lucky I didn't have to be close enough to face injury or death directly. Just before we left the area and after the storm was over and the sun was out, I walked in the direction the machine gunners had been to see if I could tell where they went. As I went in that direction, I looked down the mountain to see a stream meandering in the valley far below. There was what appeared to be a small bridge but I couldn't tell if it was still in position and I never did now where those two Germans headed.

I don't recall knowing when the Battle of the Bulge was over. We returned to the Siegfried Line and I got a three day pass to Paris, but that's another story. ■

EVERYTHING WAS "SWELL"

By Edward Echmalian

557th Ordnance Heavy Maintenance Co (Tank)

I, like other VBOB veterans have to rely on my memory to recall experiences during the Battle of the Bulge. As time goes by, it becomes more difficult to recall everything. I have read many of the letters that were mailed to my parents from overseas, but, according to the letters, everything was "swell" during the battle. Like many parents, they were constant worriers and I did my utmost to prevent that from happening.

We had relocated to Eupen, Belgium, to the cable factory to set up shop after a sort of quiet period in the little Village of Francorchamps, where our only concern were buzz bombs. I remember one of the villagers calling them (in French) "Torpedo of Fire." In Eupen, our bunks were on one of the floors above. I think that it was the fourth floor of one of the office buildings. Another ordnance company moved into our area shortly after, and they set up their sleeping quarters in the basement of the same building. We heard that they had had some bad experiences in one of their previous locations.

On the morning of December 17th, at about 3:00 a.m., we were awakened by the sound of breaking glass. A piece of shrapnel had broken one of the glass windows, went into a closet and cut through some GI's clothing. Without any talk, everyone put on their clothing and went down to the basement to join the other ordnance company. We then understood why they had decided to bunk there. The cable factory sits in a low-lying area and there was a higher elevation between there and the Germans. We never heard any explosion, and the only thing that we could figure out was that it was stray piece of shrapnel from a shell a short distance away.

At about 5:00 a.m., we were told that breakfast was ready and so we formed a line, like always. The sound of German artillery shells, screaming overhead, greeted us and we hit the ground. Apparently the shells were duds, since there were no explosions, and they (I was told) were found nearby. I don't remember if I ever ate breakfast. I was told that the German shells were 170 millimeter. This was our introduction to the Battle of the Bulge

since we had no other information about what was going on further south in Belgium.

During our stay in Eupen I remember seeing one of the nearby highways, clogged with vehicles, bumper to bumper, day and night, with GI's heading south. It was probably (guessing from what I have read) the 30th Infantry Division heading toward the breakout.

Right inside the entrance to our area was a big pile of duffel bags guarded by a lone GI. I was told that the bags were from a medical outfit that had to relocate as a result of the battle.

A German shell came into our area early one morning and bounced through the wall of a small brick building without exploding as a couple of our guys were getting off guard duty. Like the other duds, a bomb disposal unit took care of the unexploded shell.

We were re-equipping and performing maintenance on a tank battalion before the Bulge broke out. After that, I was told, they were on the road in 24 hours because of the urgency. I was away on detached duty at the time and did not see it happen.

We were not able to get road clearance until December 23rd to leave Eupen. After some other stops, we finally ended up in Huy, Belgium, for a stay of about three weeks. From there, we went to Saubhid Liege as the Battle of the Bulge came to an end.

On a trip to Belgium in 2001, I noticed that the Eupen cable factory was still there but was much larger in size. It brought back memories of cold, cloudy, and dark days that I can never forget.

On the brighter side, the love and appreciation of the people of Belgium for all of the GI's who were there for their "liberation," as they like to say, is something that I will never forget. Going back to see some of my Belgian friends and the towns and villages of my wartime experiences, was well worth the trip. ■

LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER MEMBERS DELIVER HONORS POSTHUMOUSLY

On the fifth year anniversary of the chapter's founding, veterans, local dignitaries and friends converged at their regular meeting place to honor former VBOB Treasurer Peter Leslie, who had formed their chapter and many others.

When plans were made for the celebration it was to be a surprise for a man who had served his chapter (and others) well. As fate would have it, Pete had been involved in an automobile accident several weeks before and he was still hospitalized on Tuesday (the day of the planned ceremonies).

Nevertheless, plans proceeded to honor the man who led the way in forming a chapter deeply involved in spreading the word about the legacy of the Battle of the Bulge and who was so instrumental in seeing that the children of today are made aware of the Battle of the Bulge and the role this battle and its veterans played in ensuring the freedom and prosperity enjoyed by all of us today.

Pete never knew of the gratitude expressed by his chapter that night—he passed away the next day. But the children who have witnessed the presentations prepared by Pete and his chapter will always remember the Battle of the Bulge as a result of his foresight and planning. He would have wanted this. ■

VBOB QUARTERMASTER

ORDER FORM

NOVEMBER, 2003

Please ship the following items to:

Name: _____
(first) (last) (phone #-will call only if there is a problem)

Address: _____
(no.) (street) (city) (state) (zip)

Item Description	Price Each	Quantity	Total Price
VBOB Logo Patch - 3"	\$ 4.50		\$
VBOB Logo Patch - 4"	\$ 5.50		\$
VBOB Logo Decal - 4"	\$ 1.25		\$
VBOB Windshield Logo - 4"	\$ 1.25		\$
VBOB Logo Stickers - 1 1/2" (in quantities of 10)	10 for \$1.25		\$
Baseball Cap w/3" VBOB Logo Patch - Navy only	\$ 10.00		\$
Windbreaker w/4" VBOB Logo Patch - Navy only Please circle size (they run a little snug): S M L XL XXL XXXL (XXL and XXXL - see prices)	\$ 25.00 (S, M, L and XL) \$ 26.00 for XXL \$ 27.00 for XXXL		\$
VBOB Logo Lapel Pin - 1/2"	\$ 5.00		\$
Miniature VBOB Logo Medal w/Ribbon (pin on type)	\$ 8.50		\$
VBOB Logo Belt Buckle - Silver tone or Gold tone (Please circle choice)	\$ 16.00		\$
VBOB Logo Bolo Tie - Silver tone or Gold tone (Please circle choice)	\$ 16.00		\$
VBOB License Plate Frame w/Logos - White plastic w/Black printing	\$ 5.00		\$
VBOB 100 Sheet Notepad w/Logo - "This Note Is From... A Veteran of the Battle of the Bulge" - White paper with Blue printing	\$ 3.00		\$
BACK IN STOCK Large VBOB Logo Neck Medallion w/ribbon Ideal for insertion in medal shadow box	\$ 25.00		\$
VBOB Tote Bag--SOLD OUT			\$

Only Cash, Check or Money Order Accepted

Make Checks Payable to "VBOB" - Mail Orders to VBOB-QM, PO Box 11129, Arlington, VA 22210-2129

DO NOT INCLUDE ANY OTHER MONIES WITH QM PAYMENT

Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery

Shipping and Handling:

\$0.00 to \$5.00 - \$ 2.00

\$5.01 to \$10.00 - \$ 3.00

\$10.01 and over - \$ 4.00

Please add \$1.00 to for all items shipped outside the USA.

Cost of Items: \$ _____

S&H: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Office Use Only - Do Not Write Below This Line

Date Received: _____

Date Mailed: _____

Payment: Cash Check MO

Check No.: _____

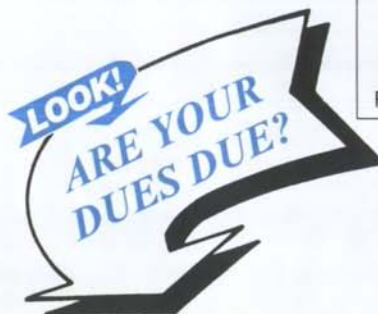


VETERANS of the BATTLE of the BULGE

P.O. Box 11129
Arlington, Virginia 22210-2129

ADDRESS SERVICE
REQUESTED

NOVEMBER, 2003



Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Arlington, VA
Permit No. 468

LC0071 LIFE
NEIL BROWN THOMPSON
525 PATRICIA CT
ODENTON MD 21113-1716



WE SEND TO YOU
OUR VERY BEST WISHES
FOR HAPPY HOLIDAYS
AND A HEALTHY NEW YEAR

— Detach and Mail —

OFFICIAL USE ONLY



APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP
VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE
P.O. Box 11129, Arlington, Virginia 22210-2129

OFFICIAL USE ONLY

Do not write above this line

Annual Dues \$15

Do not write above this line

☐ New Member ☐ Renewal - Member # _____

Name _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____ Phone () _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

All new members, please provide the following information:

Campaign(s) _____

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

Regiment _____ Battalion _____

Company _____ Other _____

Make check or money order payable to VBOB
and mail with this application to above address:

Applicants Signature _____

RECRUITER (Optional)