

# The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XXIII NUMBER 3

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

AUGUST 2004

## A Grateful Nation Remembers

**Over 800 persons attended the VBOB Reunion which was coupled with the dedication of the WWII Memorial.**

This issue of *The Bulge Bugle* is intended to bring part of that memorable occasion to those of you who were unable to attend. (The majority of the pictures and their descriptions included herein appeared in the April 29, 2004, issue of *The Washington Post*.)

Many members returning from the dedication ceremonies were particularly impressed with the remarks presented by Tom Brokaw, the much recognized news anchor for NBC News, and author of *The Greatest Generation* and other publications. Mr. Brokaw's office has graciously provided his remarks and we publish them herewith for you.



Tom Brokaw

"We gather here to pay tribute to sacrifice and valor, common cause and compassion, triumph and determination. It has taken too long to erect a monument to symbolize the gratitude of a nation now and forevermore to those who answered the call at home and abroad in the greatest war the world has known. A war



Mike Diglio photo

the British military historian John Keegan calls the greatest single event in the history of mankind, fought on six of the seven continents, in the skies above them and on all the seas. A war in which 50 million people perished in their homes and on battle fields a long way from home; in infernos at sea and planes falling from the sky; in gas ovens and in slave labor camps. A war that for all of its cruelties and terrible costs was an epic struggle to defeat the maniacal fascism of Germany and the ruthless imperialism of Japan. A just war and a great victory that will be remembered as long as history is recorded.

"So it is fitting that we gather today around this handsome and evocative monument to such a noble undertaking. But no monument, however polished to well positioned, can take the place of the enduring legacy of those we honor. Their lives and how they lived them, the country they defended and loved and cared for all the rest of their days, that is the undeniable legacy of the men and women I call THE GREATEST GENERATION.

"My declaration that this is the "greatest generation" is occasionally challenged, even by members of the generation. My short answer is, "that's my story and I'm sticking to it."

"My longer answer can be found in their trials and triumphs. At an early age they learned the harsh realities of deprivation and common cause during The Great Depression. They quit school at an early age not to indulge their selfish interests but to put food on the table or shoes on their brothers and sisters. They didn't just double date, they went six and eight to a car to a dance or a movie where admission was maybe a dime. They learned to live without more than with and as their children learned later, they never took a dollar for granted or spend one without thinking about it first.

"There was no epidemic of American obesity during The Great Depression, many of the veterans here today will tell you the first thing they noticed about basic training was breakfast. You could eat all you wanted.

(Continued on Page 6)



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

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



# President's Message



George Chekan

## "A Sea of Smiling Faces"

...that familiar phrase entered my mind as I stood looking over the huge crowd of veterans and their families gathered on the National Mall Saturday, May 29th, for the dedication of the World War II Memorial.

Another familiar phrase, "long awaited" soon followed.

Yes, maybe it was sixty years in the making, but to that happy,

enthusiastic crowd of veterans filling up the space from the stage of the Washington Monument it was worth waiting for.

The Memorial Day weekend seemed the right time, and on the National Mall seemed the right place, and the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, their families and their friends just enjoyed being there for what was a truly memorable and historic occasion. As I have mentioned in past messages there was considerable powerful opposition to placing the Memorial at its location between the Lincoln Memorial and the monument to our nation's first Commander-in-Chief.

But, fortunately, that opposition was defeated and from now on I am sure the World War II Memorial will be a must-see destination for future generations of visitors to Washington from home and abroad.

We can all be proud that as World War II veterans, we helped make the Memorial possible by our financial support, just as we overcame all obstacles to make victory possible by our sacrifices from December 7, 1941, to V-J Day, 1945.

We were proud of our victory then, and I know how proud we are of the Memorial now.

As your President, I can't tell you how proud I was--and am--of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge for the impressive turnout we had for the dedication ceremonies, and we can all be proud of the record turnout we had for our 24th Annual Reunion which was held in conjunction with the dedication.

To use another familiar phrase, you "came by plane, train, bus and auto" to Falls Church, Virginia, in record numbers. As a veteran of many past reunions, I think I can say without challenge, this was the best one we ever had. You made it so.

I am still amazed, and impressed, by the sacrifices many of you, and your families made to attend the dedication and reunion. You came in wheel chairs, pushed by loving family members; others on walkers and canes, you were an inspiration with your determination to overcome all obstacles to be a part of an historic event.

You proved to any doubters that the title "The Greatest Generation," was well deserved.

It was no wonder that wherever we went in our special tours, people would pause and say "thank you" as you passed by. I know our reunion was an inspiration to me and your national officers to work even harder as we build on the success we enjoyed, and for all of us to renew our determination to keep the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, not only alive, but as a

vibrant, growing veterans organization.

That is a debt we owe not only to those who made the supreme sacrifice in the Ardennes, but also our members who have passed on in the years since then.

Most of you I met during the reunion told me that you are doing this in your chapters and as individuals. We have to keep it up so that future generations of Americans will be imbued with the ideals we fought for.

Those ideals were emphasized during the remarks at our Annual Banquet and the 800 in attendance were happy to be there, and welcome as honored guests the Honorable Fran Van Daele, Ambassador to the United States from the Kingdom of Belgium, and Paul Schmit, Deputy Chief of Mission, representing the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. We were proud to have them with us as distinguished representatives of their heroic peoples, just as we were proud to have so many of their countrymen with us, fighting at our sides, sixty years ago.

You can read more about the reunion later in this issue in a special report from Marty Sheeron (53rd Field Hospital). As the reunion passes into history, I want to add a heartfelt thank you to John Bowen, his wife Mary Anne, and Dorothy Davis for the hard work they and their committee put forth to make our annual get-together one filled with memories we will always cherish.

Those past weeks indeed were memorable, but we aren't done yet. We have the Sixtieth Anniversary of the start of our battle to look forward to and leading up to it, Earle Hart and his committee have been finalizing plans for us to return as a group to Belgium and Luxembourg, December 10th to 20th. For those of you still on the fence about making the trip, Earle's update may help you make up your mind.

I also urge you to read John Bowen's report on plans for the Battle of the Bulge Reenactment at Fort Indiantown Gap, Pennsylvania in January (dates in John's article). Dave Shaw and his reenactors plan an extensive program for the 60th anniversary, so you might want to mark the dates on your 2005 calendar, with the notation that veterans will be invited as guests of the organization.

And in a special way, I want to thank our friends from the Belgian Fusiliers for being with us at the dedication and the reunion. We hope as many of us as possible can return to visit in December to remember all those who fought together in the snow, sleet and freezing rain to gain a victory in a battle--your battle--the Battle of the Bulge. It must not be forgotten.■

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Did you check to see if your dues were due?



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### DIDN'T KNOW THEY WERE THERE

Just finished reading the latest *Bulge Bugle* and as usual it is the best of the magazines I subscribe to.

The article on the "Barn at Cobreville" was one that prompted me to search for the Town of Cobreville on every map at my disposal and I was unable to locate the town. It was a very vivid description and complete. Having gone into Bastogne on the 18th of December 1944 with CCB of the 10th Armored, I was envious of the meal described and it sure was better than C&K's we had.

"Removing the Blanket of Secrecy" was another of the articles that has been long overdue. All of the information in each of the *Bulge Bugles* are a credit to the staff and to the veterans who write them. More so the credit and thanks for their participation.

Previous articles by Dr. John Prior, Colonel Critinger, etc., have been ones that bring back memories, though not pleasant, are the ones that keep alive our past--lest we forget.

In 1993 a group of members of the 796th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, attached to CCB of the 10th Armored, returned to follow the route of the 10th in Europe. We found eight of our B Battery interred in the Hamm Cemetery--lost in Bastogne in 1944-45. We never expected that any of ours were buried in Europe. ...A very emotional happening. *[George sent along a very touching poem entitled "Hello, Old Buddy," which we will include elsewhere if space permits.]*

**George K. Waters**  
796 AAA BN B

### IT'S 68TH...NOT 678TH TANK BATTALION

In the February issue of *The Bulge Bugle*, I read a letter from Douglas Vink, 6th Armored Division, 678th TB.

I don't remember the 678th Tank Battalion, but I do remember the 68th Tank Battalion, so I'm wondering if the 678th was a mistake. *[Yep, it was. Our apologies to all.]*

I was an air controller, Combat Command A, 6th Armored Division. As I am 90 years old, I wondered if anyone from Combat Command A is still alive. *[If there's someone out there, write to him at: 527 Park Avenue, Quarryville, Pennsylvania 17566.]*

**L. Raymond Bird (aka Lewis R. Bird)**  
6 ARMDD CCA

### FIRST CLASS MAGAZINE

*[Excerpted from two letters]* Received my copy of *The Bugle* the other day and must say you folks put out a first class magazine. We, VBOB members, can be and are very pleased and proud of your efforts. Thank you all.

*[Do] you have any objection to our using articles published in the Bugle? [No, we're always pleased when our articles are reprinted and thank you for printing the membership applications.]*

**Russell W. Ruch**  
159 ECB

### WHY NO COMBAT ENGINEER BADGE?

This thought has haunted me more and more and now I've taken the action and question why no congressional effort has been made to honor the Combat Engineer with a badge? I honor and respect the infantrymen's badge and the combat medic's badge, yet we were there also.

This is looking back some 60 years, yet there are still some of us alive. Our platoon medic got the Purple Heart as I did, yet he never saw the combat medic badge as he rests in Margraten Cemetery in Belgium.

It took the company (172nd Combat Engineers) 55 years to find me. Now, only through the VBOB quarterly and my cry for my buddies, did you publish "Where Are You," did Joseph Lane, President of Long Island Chapter, write me and our reunion organizer.

So, I would have been a life member had I known the VBOB existed, but now I support you 100%. The stories and incidents bring back to life how we ever made it. If all the combat engineer organizations were assembled and though we're 80+ years old, nothing is impossible.

This is just a short message and something I had to get off my chest. I know everyone is extremely busy with the 60th year dedication, so I don't expect an overnight letter, but I would appreciate a reply in due time and possibly this subject has been addressed and so the subject is closed.

Thank you. God bless us all, the living and those of you in Heaven.

**Clayton S. (Quimby) Quimbach**  
173 ECB C

*[We notice a lot of ECB reunions in our "Reunions" column. Why not put this item on your Business Meeting agendas and try to get something done about it?]*

### I CONCUR

In an article concerning the "Combat Medic Badge," written by Lawrence T. Page in the May, 2004, issue of *The Bulge Bugle*, I completely concur.

As a battalion sergeant major, I had a close up relationship with these men, as they were part of the battalion headquarters detachment of an infantry division in combat.

I remember the anguished cry of "Medic" as they ventured out to assist a fallen buddy with only this Red Cross arm band to protect them.

Brave men, but some were KIA by the Krauts, disregarding the Geneva Convention rules concerning medical personnel in combat zones.

Yes, let us not forget these little publicized men.

**Phil Leibrock**  
26 INF D

### WASSERBILLIG WASN'T MENTIONED

In the May 2004 issue on page 9 is listed "Memorials to Americans in Luxembourg, compiled by Mr. Jean Milmeister, of CEBA, and Luxembourg Liberty Road Committee.

I have his book *The Liberty Road in the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg*, which I enjoyed thoroughly (Continued)



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

(Continuation)

The listing is long and states and towns and the units which liberated them. Some towns were liberated by more than one unit or division and thus noted as (Liberation units) without naming the individual unit.

I would call attention to the Town of Wasserbillig, not mentioned which was liberated by the 87th Infantry Division. The division also cooperated in the liberation of Osweiler, mentioned under "Liberation Units."

The 87th Division also has a street named for itself in Wasserbillig, if one could call that a memorial.

...I wonder how he could have omitted listing this memorial in *The Bulge Bugle* listings.

**John McAuliffe**  
87 INF

### THE TALL TIMBERS ARE FALLING

I applaud your plan to acquire new membership to our valiant diminishing organization--the tall timbers are falling.

*[The writer enrolled six new associate members. Needless to say, we are most grateful for all your efforts to see that the organization is able to carry on its work.]*

**Carl DeVasto**  
26 INF 101 INF HQ

### CORRECTING A REFERENCE CITATION

I'd like to correct a reference citation in a recent *Bulge Bugle*.

A VBOB member sent me an extract of the May 2004 issue's article by Robert J. Galgan, "The Failure of Leadership, The Hurtgen and the Ardennes." His bibliography cited my book, *A Dark and Bloody Ground*, as a source. I appreciate the recognition, but the date of publication is not 1958. (Actually, I was born in 1958--admitting my age here.)

Mr. Galgan possibly by accident copied the cataloging information inside the book instead of the publication date. The correction information follows: *A Dark and Bloody Ground, the Hurtgen Forest and Roer River Dams 1944-1945*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 4th printing (paper), 2004. The book is still in print and available on line from *Amazon.com* and other retailers.

**Ed Miller**  
Author

### A BREATH OF FRESH AIR

The "Christmas of '44" (November, 2003, issue of *The Bulge Bugle*) was a breath of fresh air when compared with the usual Bulge story. Thank you, Kate Nolan, for sharing.

On January 1, I was transported to a field hospital and on to a general hospital. I had a million dollar wound, caused by a mortar that killed my partner, John Beverly, and filled the third man, Roy Girard, with so much shrapnel that he was shipped back to the U.S. for a slow recovery, and blew me down with such force from our track that I sustained a

broken arm. At the field hospital the dentist, who wasn't busy, checked me out, but made me go in the next room and unload the grenades, ammo, etc. I remember how busy, busy, busy they were.

On to the general hospital where I walked in having not bathed for over two weeks, hadn't shaved in as many (so there, George Patton), was wearing only my dirty, olive drab winter underwear, wrapped up in an army blanket for a robe, and unbuckled boots. I was filthy, tired, hungry, and then I saw an army nurse all scrubbed and fresh in a fresh clean uniform and I looked at myself and realized that I was more animal than human. It was a shock. She may not have been another Miss America, but that night she looked like one to me.

**James M. Power**  
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## BENEDICTION

**At the end of the VBOB Reunion Banquet, May 29, 2004, Rev. Michael Kerestes, St. Gregory's Church, Beltsville, Maryland gave the following blessing.**

Almighty God, You are the Creator and Sustainer of our lives. Today we gather together with gratitude to your divine providence in watching over your old soldiers, the veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. Once again, these brave men have gathered to relive the memories of those tumultuous days sixty years ago when, as young soldiers, they made history in the bitter woods called the Ardennes.

It is impossible for time to eradicate the memories of those days of deprivation, fear, and death and the endless frozen nights. Yet, sustained by Your might, with fortitude and courage these soldiers persevered on to victory.

Lord God, may we never forget--may this nation never forget--those 80,987 fine young soldiers, the pride of American youth, who gave their lives, were captured, or went missing in action in the Battle of the Bulge. They are indeed heroes--every one of them--and they are worthy of the undying honor and respect of a grateful nation.

As we approach the 60th anniversary of the greatest land battle ever fought by American military forces, we acknowledge with heartfelt thanks those veterans who founded this association for the purpose of perpetuating the memory and the meaning of the Battle of the Bulge. We give thanks for those who have worked to carry out its purposes over the past 25 years and we pray that succeeding generations will step forward to keep these memories alive.

Finally, we thank You, Almighty God, for this great nation and for the privilege of being citizens of the United States of America. We thank you for all the men and women who have served our country in the past. May their memory be eternal! We also express our gratitude for those who serve today. Protect them by your might, Lord God. May the United States always be the land of the free and the home of the brave.

In the name of the Lord, we pray. Amen.■



## MONUMENT DEDICATION and BROKAW SPEECH

(Continuation)

"Many will also tell you that before war came to America at Pearl Harbor, they were opposed to this country getting involved but when the Japanese attacked and the Germans declared war, they converted overnight--and transformed this country into a mighty military machine in uniform, in factories, in laboratories, shipyards, coal mines, in farm fields, shops and offices.

"Men, women, young and old. Everyone had a role. Farm boys who had never been in airplanes were soon flying new bombers with four engines; surgical nurses were in front line MASH units, assisting in operations while being shelled; teenagers were wearing sergeants' stripes and fighting from North Africa to Rome; guys from city streets were in close quarter combat in dense jungles; women were building ships and driving trucks; kids went without gum and new toys--and in too many cases, they lost fathers they never met.

"In the Halls of Congress and at The White House they bet the future of the country on the absolute necessity of an unconditional victory--while simultaneously planning for the new world that would come after with new international, political, financial and military institutions and alliances that emphasized cooperation and common goals.

"And when victory was complete, this generation returned to this country and married in record numbers, went to college in record numbers (thanks to the brilliant idea of the GI Bill), gave us new industries, new art, new science--and supported the unprecedented idea that as military victors they must for political, economic and moral reasons re-build the shattered countries and confidence of their enemies.

"They became the mobile generation, starting families in adopted states but many returned to the homes they'd left, to the comfort of their families and the familiarity of their communities. Wherever they settled they brought with them a discipline and maturity beyond their years, shaped by the hardships of a depression, the training and horrors of war. They were conditioned to serve so they became the members of their school board or elders in their church; they ran for Governor, Congress, the Senate and the White House. They had given so much but they didn't hesitate to give more because too many friends had died defending this way of life and system of government that is constantly renewed by good people willing to do the right thing.

"They had ferocious political battles by day and one shared concern by nightfall: what's best for the country. On some issues it took a little longer than on others for while this was THE GREATEST GENERATION, it was not perfect.

"When the men came home it took them a while to fully appreciate the right to women to take their place at their side, whatever the endeavor. And despite the unalloyed patriotism and courage of black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Japanese Americans, native Americans and other people of color during the war, it took too long, much too long, to openly deal with the codified and practical inequalities of race.

"When America was deeply divided by another war and a cultural upheaval, you in the Greatest Generation were bewildered and divided as well but you didn't give up on the generation that came after you, your kids--as much as you wanted them to cut their hair, get married before they lived

together and, for God's sake, turn down the music.

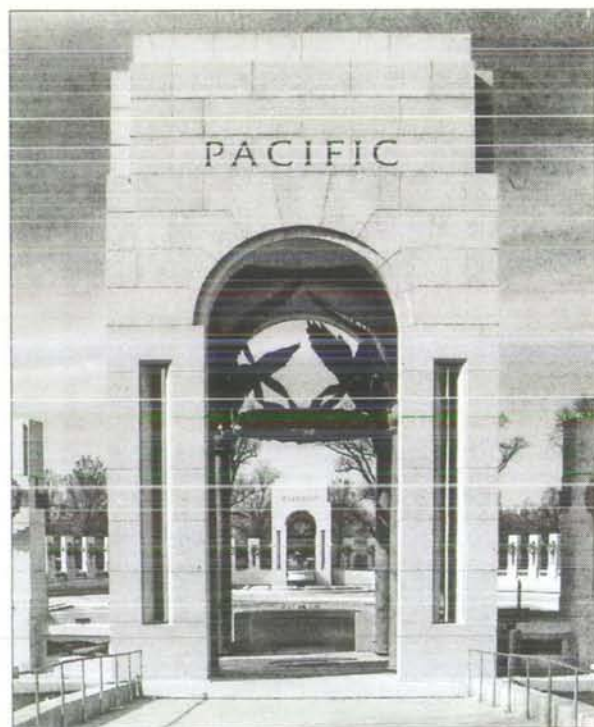
"Moreover, as men and women of THE GREATEST GENERATION know first hand, not everyone in their own generation was up to standard. There were the slackers and the cowards, the profiteers and the blow-hards, bullies and boneheads. But they've been forgotten now, lost in the pettiness of their behavior, overwhelmed by the sweeping and indisputable achievements of the authentic members of the generation we honor here today.

"On a personal note I want to thank all of you for the privilege of sharing your stories and your lives; I've a wonderful career but nothing means as much to me as our association. I am humbled by our relationship.

"More broadly speaking, at this stage in my life and career, I want you to know the deep debt those of us in succeeding generations owe you for first giving so much of your youth, your families and your friends to war--and then so much of the rest of your days to your country and to the world.

"So many of you have been reluctant to talk about those difficult days because the memories were too painful and because, as so many of you have said, you were lucky. You survived. So many of your friends did not. So you have felt an obligation, a duty, to them. To live your life in a way that honors them.

"We, in turn, have a duty to you. To carry on this noble mission." ■



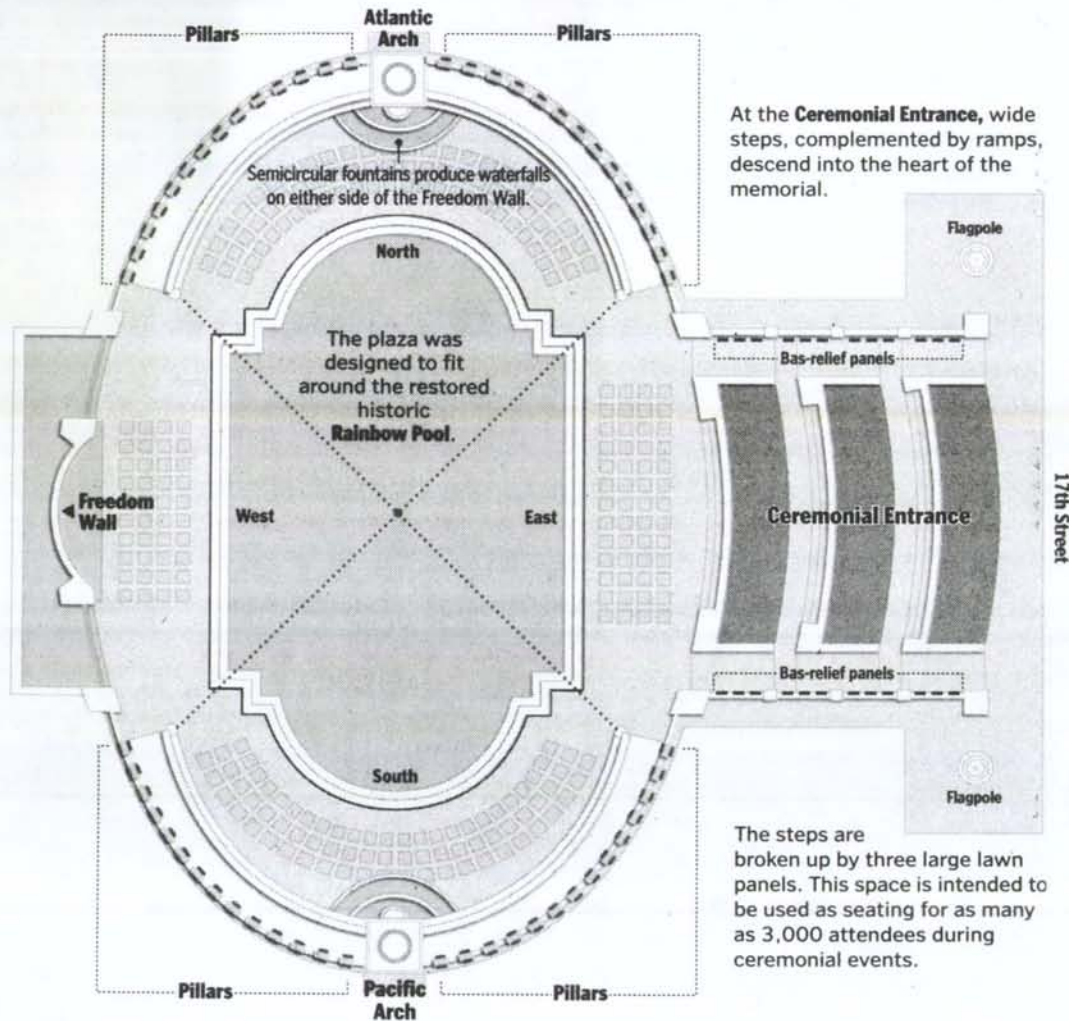
Two 43-foot **Memorial Arches** on the north and south ends of the plaza serve as markers of the war's two major theaters--Atlantic and Pacific.

**Four bronze eagles**, each with a wingspan of about 10 feet and weighing about 2,600 pounds, form a ring inside the arches. In their beaks, the eagles hold a ribbon that supports a laurel wreath, commemorating victory.



## MONUMENT DEDICATION and BROKAW SPEECH

(Continuation)



[From *The Washington Post*.]

The memorial features side entrances to the north and south and a ceremonial entrance on 17th Street. The walls flanking the ceremonial entrance will feature 24 bronze bas-relief panels, some of which will be installed after the dedication.

The main plaza of the memorial is an oval defined at its north and south edges by two 43-foot arches, representing the war's Atlantic and Pacific Theaters. Fifty-six pillars form

the perimeter of the oval, representing the states, territories and the District of Columbia at the time of the war. Each pillar is adorned with two sculpted bronze wreaths.

Inside the plaza, small fountains sit at the bases of the two arches. A wall of 4,000 gold stars--each representing 100 U.S. deaths in the war--is surrounded by waterfalls on each side. The Rainbow Pool, which has occupied the site since the 1920s, has been restored and features a series of jets designed to produce a spray that looks like a rainbow when sunlight hits it at a certain angle.

More than two-thirds of the memorial consists of grass, plantings and water. A double row of elm trees lines the memorial to the north and south. A circular garden of about 38 feet in diameter sits in the site's northwest corner and is enclosed by a two-foot-high stone wall. Called the "Circle of Remembrance," the garden includes a seating area with wooden benches.

Like the Mall's other monuments, the memorial will be open 24 hours a day. Park Service rangers will be on the site seven days a week from 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. The Park Service is discouraging visitors from leaving mementoes. "There is no place for keeping them, and sadly, if people leave flowers, they'll likely just be thrown away," said Bill Line, a spokesman for the agency.

An information center will open today (April 29th) on the south side of the memorial where tourists can ask Park Service employees to search the World War II Registry, a database of individuals who served in the war effort either in the military abroad or as a civilian at home. People can add a name to the registry by visiting the American Battle Monuments Commission Web site at [www.wwii-memorial.com](http://www.wwii-memorial.com).

- 16 million Americans served in World War II
- 405,973 Members of the U.S. armed forces were killed
- 671,278 Members of the U.S. armed forces were wounded



## MONUMENT DEDICATION and BROKAW SPEECH

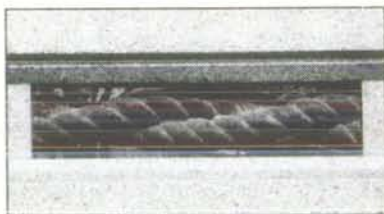
(Continuation)



Fifty-six 17-foot-high pillars embrace the Rainbow Pool and form the outer boundaries of the memorial.

The pillars represent the U.S. states, territories and the District of Columbia at the time of the war. The pillars are open at the center, which creates space between each to allow viewing into and across the memorial. This space is also intended to symbolize the loss of lives from each state.

The pillars are united by twisted bronze ropes set in granite blocks. This arrangement signifies the unprecedented unity of the nation during the war.



The \$172 million National World War II Memorial, conceived in 1987, received presidential approval in 1993.

May, 1993	Clinton administration authorizes the American Battle Monuments Commission to establish a World War II Memorial.
Nov., 1995	The president dedicates the memorial site.
Oct., 1996	Friedrich St. Florian is chosen to design the memorial.
Aug., 2001	Construction begins.
May, 2004	Completed memorial to be dedicated.

Special Notice: Photographs and video of the National World War II Memorial can be viewed at:

[www.washingtonpost.com/metro](http://www.washingtonpost.com/metro)

[Monte Reel sent us a copy of a *Washington Post* article, which expressed the sentiments of those working on the memorial (date not available).]

...Almost all of the workers will move on to other jobs, but many say they'll be taking some vivid memories with them when they go. Some say they remember seeing an airplane flying toward the Pentagon on September 11, 2001. Many anxiously watched floodwaters rise within inches of a ruinous setback during Hurricane Isabel. They've labored through two unusually harsh winters. They've mourned the death of their lead construction supervisor. A couple of them fell in love with each other and plan to marry. Almost all of them have watched tourists poke their heads through gaps in the construction fence and ask: What are you building in here?

Answering that question now, a lot of them say they have built much more than a memorial.

When it's a day-in-day-out job, there is a tendency to take a narrow view of a project, focusing on the task at hand instead of the collective results that will emerge. But construction supervisors have emphasized to the workers on this project that it adds up to more than the laborious challenge of arranging huge pieces of stone into an artful memorial. With few exceptions, the message seems to have connected. Most of the construction site, from the bottom of the pay scale to the top, seem to agree with laborer Jimmy Wilson when he explains, "This one's different—it's special."

"I know I'll never do anything like this again," said William B. "Barry" Owenby, project executive. "My dad is a veteran of World War II, and he calls me every week and asks: How's my memorial doing. It's the same for a lot of people working on this project. You can just tell by the looks on their faces that this is not just another construction job."

About 500 people have been involved in constructing the memorial since site preparation began August 27, 2001....

"Trying to beg people to do their jobs is what I usually end up doing a lot of times on projects, said Kenneth J. Terry, project manager for Tompkins Buildings, Inc., the company partnering with contractor Grunley-Walsh to supervise the project. "But not on this one."

Terry believes that's because so many people, even though they might be generations removed from the war, claim a connection. Both of his grandfathers served overseas during the war. His maternal grandfather died a month ago, but not before Terry took him on an emotional tour of the site.

... Some of the workers worried that last year's Hurricane Isabel would deal their spring 2004 deadline a final blow. Water crept up to the sandbags that encircled the site, coming six to eight inches from flooding the work zone, said Pat Bizzell, who is overseeing electrical work at the site. That wouldn't have posed a threat to the memorial's stone or its foundation, but Bizzell's electric systems were in jeopardy, he said. "We almost lost everything here," Bizzell said.

[Anita Hooker said: "It's special, knowing our hands have been part of having this built."] □



LOOKING WEST



Lincoln Memorial

A curved **Freedom Wall** centered at the back of the memorial pays tribute to the American lives lost in the war. A field of 4,000 hand-crafted, gold-plated stars illustrate the nation's sacrifice: One gold star represents 100 U.S. servicemen and women who gave their lives in the war.

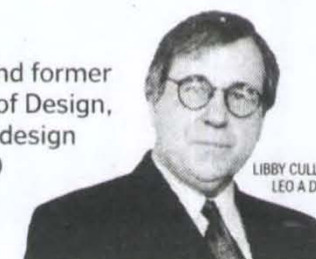


Throughout the monument, visitors will see the indelible words of some of America's leaders engraved into granite.

THE HEROISM OF OUR OWN TROOPS... WAS MATCHED BY THAT OF THE ARMED FORCES OF THE NATIONS THAT FOUGHT BY OUR SIDE. THEY ABSORBED THE BLOWS... AND THEY SHARED TO THE FULL IN THE ULTIMATE DESTRUCTION OF THE ENEMY.

PRESIDENT HARRY TRUMAN

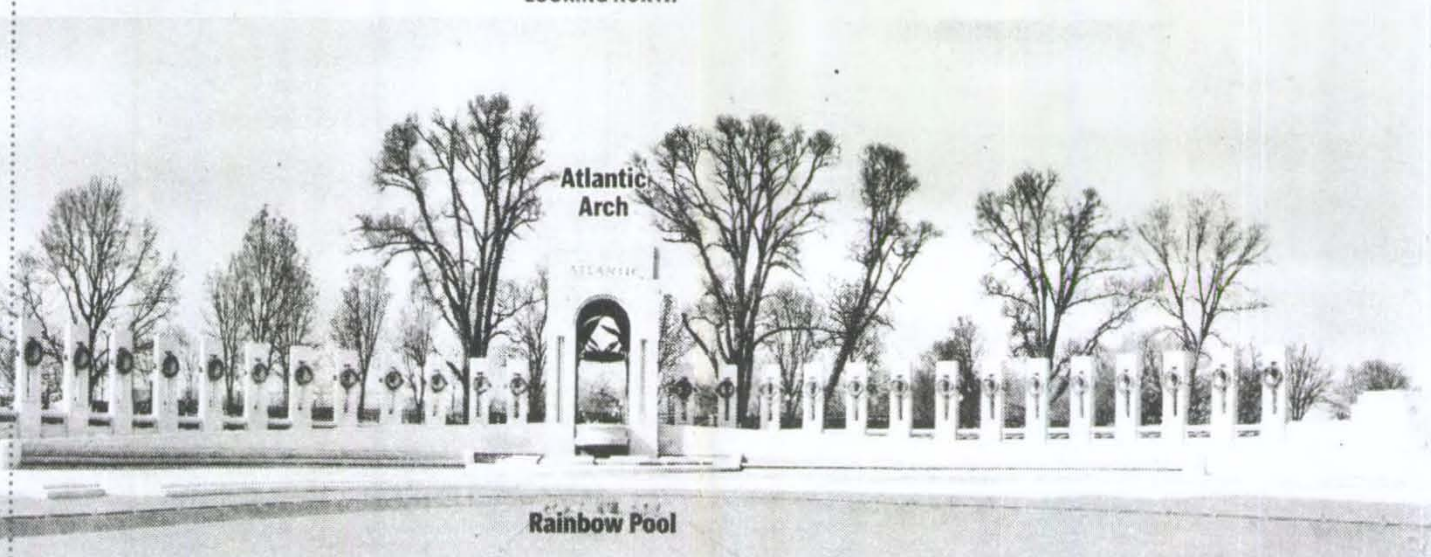
**Friedrich St. Florian**, an architect and former dean of the Rhode Island School of Design, designed the memorial. Florian's design was chosen from more than 400 entries in a nationwide competition.



LIBBY CULLEN, LEO A DALY

GRAPHIC REPORTING BY BRENNAN MALONEY, PHOTOS AND ILLUSTRATION BY LOUIS SPIRITO—THE WASHINGTON POST

LOOKING NORTH



Atlantic Arch

Rainbow Pool

LOOKING EAST



Washington Monument

17th Street

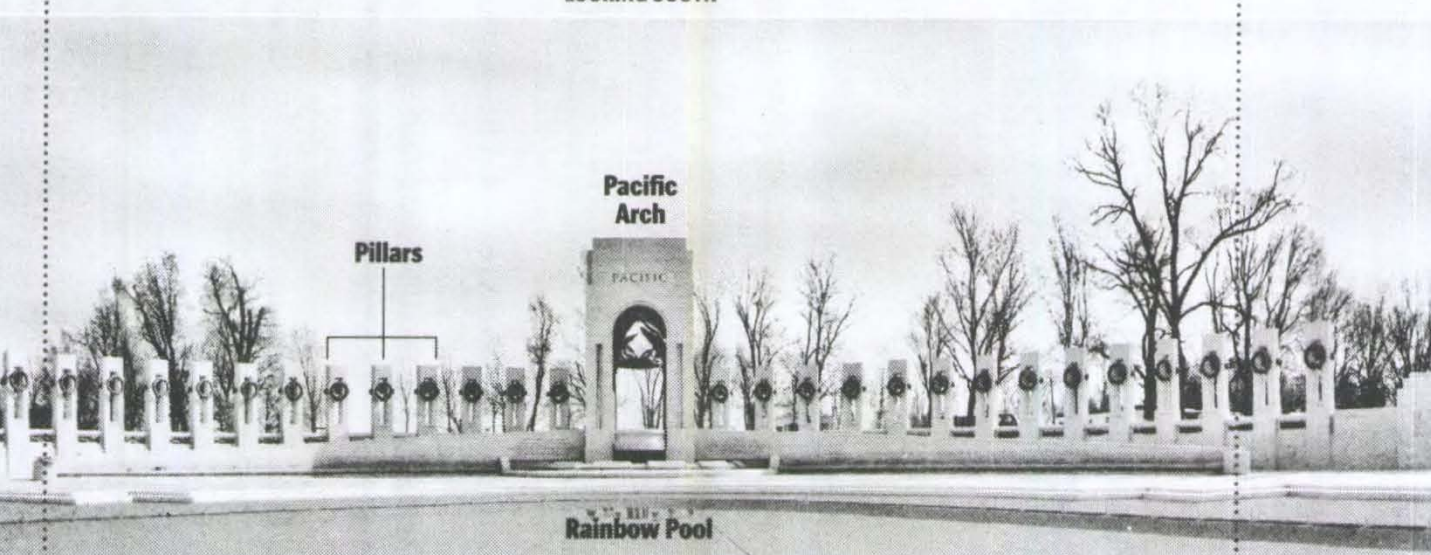
Ceremonial Entrance

Lining the ceremonial entrance, a series of **24 bas-relief panels** will depict America's vast agricultural, industrial, military and human resources at the time of the war. Sculptor **Raymond Kaskey** sought to depict the human element of the war based on archival photographs taken during the war.



AMERICAN BATTLE MONUMENTS COMMISSION

LOOKING SOUTH



Pacific Arch

Pillars

Rainbow Pool

Pillars are adorned with two **sculpted bronze wreaths**, one on either side. The oak wreaths represent America's industrial might and the wheat wreaths symbolize her "breadbasket."



Oak



Wheat

SOURCES: American Battle Monuments Commission, Leo A. Daly, National WWII Memorial



## 24TH ANNUAL NATIONAL REUNION OF VBOB

*[The following summary of activities was provided by  
MARTY SHEERON, 53RD FIELD HOSPITAL.]*

The 24th Annual National Reunion of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge was held at the beautiful Fairview Park Marriott, in Falls Church, Virginia, on May 25 through May 29, 2004. To accommodate the large number of VBOBers, relatives and friends, the Tysons Corner Marriott, in Tysons Corner, Virginia, was also utilized to house the overflow of the Fairview.

•**Tuesday, May 25th, 2004**, was devoted to registration of all attendees. Each member received a packet containing a CD (Compac Disc) titled, "And We Came Marching Home," featuring patriotic songs and music of the "40's." The Hospitality Room was open from 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. for snacks and sodas. In compliance with Virginia laws, alcoholic beverages were not available until after 5:00 p.m. Many tales could be overheard exploiting the events and encounters of the BoB. Numerous books were on hand describing the events and after action reports. Official Army photographs recalling precise details of units on the move and in action were available. A new addition this year--a photo slide show prepared by Ralph Bozorth, Associate Member of the Delaware Valley Chapter. This half-hour long show consisted of scenes from the BoB and individual pictures of members with name and organization. The show was repeated every 20 minutes. There was a bit of unplanned excitement in the early evening at the Fairview--a fire alarm sounded with the announcement to evacuate the building. Fortunately, the alert was cancelled in minutes.

•**Wednesday, May 26th, 2004**. Attendees had several options, such as: Tour of Washington/International Spy Museum; Tour of Washington/Air Space Museum at Dulles International Airport; or Washington Under the Lights bus tour of Washington. The International Spy Museum was intriguing and fascinating. Secret espionage tactics and underhanded methods used by spies were mind-boggling. An interesting exhibit was the James Bond automobile with all its gadgets. Astonishing to the average civilian was the intricate use of so many various items to conceal the secret devices. These exhibits were very educational and enlightening. Lunch was on your own at Washington's Union Station. The Washington tour included a ride on Constitution Avenue to view such buildings as the Organization of American States; Museum of American History; Museum of Natural History; National Art Gallery; and the U.S. Capitol Building. This tour also included a visit to the WWII Memorial. (Under my article on the dedication (elsewhere in this issue), I have made more detailed remarks concerning this visit.)

•**Thursday, May 27th, 2004**. At the General Business Meeting the nominations for 2004-05 VBOB Executive Council was presented by Lou Cunningham, Chairman of the VBOB Nominating Committee. Nominees were unanimously approved by the membership and will take office December 1, 2004. On other business, Tony Moody, Long Island Chapter, discussed plans and proposals for the enhancement of the VBOB monument in Arlington Cemetery. Further meetings on this subject will be held at a later date. Site for the 2005 VBOB Reunion was announced as Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. After the meeting, members boarded buses for selected tours. Most

members and guests attended the luncheon at Fort Meade, Maryland. Fort Meade garrison commander welcomed all. Attendees visited the BoB Conference Room and the Fort Meade Museum--I cannot give any further details as I did not attend this event. Other members were bused to the Smithsonian National Reunion on the Mall. The following venues were free and open to the public: Homecoming Stage; Capital Canteen; Veterans History Project; Reunion Hall, Wartime Stories; and Family Activities. There was big band music and dances from WWI era at the Homecoming Stage. Veterans and their families relaxed, socialized, and got acquainted with others in the Reunion Hall. At the Veterans History Project, first-hand accounts from men and women, civilian and military, were presented on stage. All these activities made for an interesting and exciting afternoon. TV reporters and camera crews were seeking veterans to interview. A TV reporter interviewed Jim Barlow (Maryland-DC Chapter). Also a radio reporter interviewed Kate Nolan (Florida); Jim Barlow (Maryland-DC Chapter); and Marty Sheeron (Delaware Valley Chapter), as a group.

•**Friday, May 28th, 2004**, was another day of options. I, with Jim Barlow and Bob Cook (Delaware Valley Chapter), took the bus trip to the new Air Museum at Dulles International Airport and the Salute to Veterans at the MCI Center in Washington. At the Air Museum--the Observation Tower was a must. The deck, at 164 feet above Dulles, offered the best scenic view of Virginia, Maryland, Washington, and a working airport. On display was a collection of flight artifacts from 1876. Throughout the largest museum of its kind in the world were such notable aircraft as the SR-71 Blackbird (spy plane); the B-29 Enola Gay; the Concord, and many, many more aircraft on the floor and hanging from the ceiling. On to the MCI Center in Washington for the "Salute to Veterans" show. What a show! Terrific! Emotional! There was re-enactment of family scenes of sons leaving home for military duty and war time scenes of military operations. Outstanding portrayal of life at home and in the service in the "40's" that brought tears to veterans and family members in attendance. "The Finale"--what an outstanding presentation! Beautiful! Each service band entered the arena in full dress uniforms, in a precision and professional manner in single file formation: Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard and the Merchant Marines. Once their music was coordinated as one band and followed by platoons of each service. A beautiful, impressive military display par excellence and an elaborate, outstanding display of military pageantry. Everyone in the production received a thunderous applause, lasting untold minutes, in recognition of their great performances.

The commemorative banquet dinner was held in the ballroom of the Fairview. The ballroom was decorated with oversized replicas of shoulder patches worn by major units of the BoB donated by Tony Moody, Long Island Chapter. The evening opened with the presentation of the Colors by the Color Guard, 3rd U.S. Infantry (the Old Guard), and members of the Fife and Drum Corps. The "Star Spangled Banner" was sung by Stewart Boone, 99th Infantry Division; Pledge of Allegiance was given by grandchildren; Invocation by Msgr. William F. O'Donnell, 87th Infantry Division, VBOB Chaplain; welcome by George Chekan, VBOB President, 9th Infantry Division. The Toast was to those who served in the BoB; to those men and women serving worldwide; to Belgium and Luxembourg; to fallen comrades. *TAPS* were played by Stewart Boone. Greetings from Luxembourg--Mr. Paul Schmit;

(Continued)



## VBOB REUNION

(Continuation)

Embassy of Luxembourg. Greetings from Belgium--Ambassador Fran vanDaele, Embassy of Belgium. Introduction of guest speaker by Demetri Paris, VBOB Vice President of Public Affairs, 9th Armored Division. Guest speaker General William A. Knowlton, 7th Armored Division. Presentations by George Chekan and John D. Bowen, VBOB Recording Secretary. Reflections by Joseph F. Zimmer, 87th Infantry Division. Benediction by Rev. Michael Kerestes. Living Legacy by Cheryl Ann Diday. Remarks by Aline Evans on associate members of VBOBers. Closing remarks by George Fisher, Vice President for Chapters, 26th Infantry Division. Entertainment was provided by a group of troubadours strolling among the dinner tables playing favorite tunes and requests.

•**Saturday, May 29th, 2004.** Memorial Dedication Day. Charter buses departed from the Fairview and Tysons Corner. No charter buses were permitted near the WWII Memorial. All charter buses were directed to a parking lot at RFK Stadium to discharge attendees. Members and friends were directed to the Memorial shuttle buses for transport to the Memorial. Attempts to board the shuttles was horrendous. It was a case of the strongest and mightiest to board the shuttles. Organization was lacking. At the dedication site it was open seating. There was no protection from the blistering rays of the sun. The ceremonies lasted approximately 90 minutes. (See information on the dedication in my remarks that follow.) At the close of the ceremonies there was the same transportation situation as in the morning. Charter buses could not leave the restricted parking area until the bus was filled. Buses arrived back at the hotels anywhere from 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. or later.

As a result of these delays the "Road to Victory Musical" at the Lisner Auditorium on the George Washington University Campus, in Washington, D.C., was delayed to 8:30 p.m. to allow members and friends to attend the show. Unfortunately there were many ticket holders unable to attend, these people received a refund. The show was billed as "Saluting the Greatest Generation." The show comprised WWII scenes of family life; military departures, victory dances, and music of WWII era. This show was a reminiscence of USO shows at Army bases.

•**Sunday, May 30th, 2004.** Now we take our leave for another year, farewell and a safe journey home to our new friends and old ones. See you in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for the 2005 VBOB Reunion.

.....

## NATIONAL WWII MEMORIAL

**Hallelujah.** At last, on a beautiful, hot summer day "The National World War II Memorial" was dedicated on May 29, 2004, between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial. After an 11 year effort, from 1993, starting with a Congressional authorization, introduced by Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (Ohio) at the urging of Roger Durban, a veterans of the Battle of the Bulge; President Clinton signing of the Public Law; subject of 30 public hearings on design and location; ceremonial ground-breaking Veterans Day 2000; 31 months of construction; then the long-awaited memorial ends a 59 year wait. As Tom Hanks said, "It's time to say thank you." Regretfully Roger Durban did not see his dream come true--

Roger died in 2003.

The official ceremony consisted of the following events: presentation of State flags; invocation by Archbishop Philip M. Hannan, WWII Chaplain; welcome by General P. X. Kelly, USMC (Ret.) Chairman, American Battle Monument Commission; remarks by Tom Brokaw, News Anchor and Author; remarks by Tom Hanks, National Spokesman, WWII Memorial Campaign; remarks by Frederick W. Smith, National Co-Chairman, WWII Memorial Campaign; remarks by Sen. Bob Dole, National Chairman, WWII Memorial Campaign, *TAPS* by Trumpeter, USMC Band; presentation of WWII Memorial to the Nation by General Kelley to President George W. Bush, who accepted the memorial on behalf of the Nation; Remarks by President Bush: "As a new part of our national landscape, it stands as a lasting tribute to the contributions of these heroes who preserved liberty's blessing; the *National Anthem* by the United States Navy Band; *God Bless America* by the United States Army Chorus; benediction by Dr. Barry C. Black, Chaplain of the United States Senate; ceremony concluded.

In attendance on the stage were former Presidents George H.W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and WWII Medal of Honor recipients.

Entering the memorial plaza from either the Atlantic or Pacific pavilions, inlaid on the floor is the WWII Victory Medal, surrounded by the years "1941-1945" and the words "Victory on Land," "Victory at Sea," and "Victory in the Air." The 56 pillars are inscribed with the name of a state or territory. Friedrich St. Florian, Design Architect, in his words "a roll call of the nation." Each pillar has a bronze oak or wheat wreath symbolizing the industrial and agricultural strength of the nation. The memorial is built of bronze and granite. Granite from South Carolina, Georgia, North Carolina, California, and Brazil. Linking the 56 pillars are green sculpted granite ropes (from Brazil) symbolizing the unprecedented unity of the nation. To paraphrase the unity of the rope, this rope also symbolizes the camaraderie of all members in the military services during WWII.

Along the pathways are 24 sculptured panels recalling war time memories, depicting Americans at war on the battlefield and on the home front. These bas-reliefs speak volumes about the scope of the war impact. The most touching element is a curved wall of three-dimensional 4,000 gilded stars. This "Freedom Wall" evokes the poignant war time ritual--hanging a gold star in the window to show the loss of a family member. Each of the 4,000 stars signifies 100 deaths. The memorial includes a number of stone inscriptions of memorable and quotes from President Franklin D. Roosevelt, President Harry S. Truman, Admiral Chester A. Nimitz, General Douglas MacArthur and others.

On a bus tour prior to the dedication as VBOB members strolled the pathways, people would approach to say "Thank you." Especially grade school children would come to you with a hand shake and say "Thank you." Not to be out done were young ladies and women who would give you a hug. Request for photos with veterans was a common event. To sum up our honors was a young man who said, "I would like to deeply thank you for the services you performed for your country."

Thanks to the following publications for the help in details included in this article: *The Washington Post Magazine* (May 24, 2004); *WHERE Magazine* (May, 2004); *Stars & Stripes* (May 27-30, 2004); and *The Downtown Paper* (May 13-27, 2004). ■



## 24<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL VBOB MINUTES

The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual National Reunion of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge was held 25-30 May 2004, at the beautiful Fairview Park Marriott, Falls Church VA. We also housed members at the Tysons Corner Marriott, Residence Inn by Marriott and the TownePlace Suites.

The Annual Meeting was held on Thursday, 27 May 2004 at the Fairview Park Marriott Hotel. President George Chekan opened the meeting at 8:15 AM. He welcomed the membership and introduced Past Presidents John Dunleavy, Lou Cunningham and Bill Greenville. He then introduced Tony Moody who provided us with the large unit patches. The Pledge of Allegiance was then led by VP for Military Affairs, Stan Wojtusik. John Bowen then gave the invocation.

John D. Bowen, Chairman of the 2004 Reunion was asked to report on the WWII Memorial Dedication and the reunion. He indicated the activities for the remainder of the week and the importance of patience in all of the activities so that we can account for everyone. After this meeting, the majority will be leaving for the Ft Meade Luncheon and visit to the Battle of the Bulge Conference Room and the Ft Meade Museum. Others are just planning to visit the Mall. On Friday there will be additional tours in the morning which will all culminate at the MCI Center for the presentation of the Salute to Veterans by the Department of Defense. Friday night will be the annual Banquet at which General Knowlton will be our speaker. Saturday we will leave for the WWII Memorial Dedication and return for the two-hour musical "Road to Victory at the Lisner Auditorium.

John Dunleavy, Judge Advocate spoke about the organization starting just over 20 years ago with Clyde Boden as President and Dee Paris one of our original charter members. He said that we are solvent and that we pay our own way. We treat your dues, which you work hard for; we do not throw them away. He said that we are in the process of installing a monument probably in Arlington Cemetery. In Florida they placed their monument in a park with all major units on it and bricks around it with the names and units of those who purchased bricks. Whether it goes up in Arlington or elsewhere is still up for consideration. He asked for the members to let us know. He mentioned that John Mc Auliffe of the Central Mass Chapter has a memorial at the entrance to Holy Cross College and has also had a highway named after the Battle of the Bulge. While many units are going into oblivion, we are going strong and will be around for a long time.

Lou Cunningham, Chair of the Nominating Committee was introduced and he presented the Nominations for the 2004-05 Executive Council as follows:

President	George Chekan, 9 <sup>th</sup> InfD
Exec. Vice Pres.	John J. Dunleavy, 737 <sup>th</sup> Tank Bn
VP Membership	John Hyland, 84 <sup>th</sup> InfD
VP Chapters	George Fisher, 26 <sup>th</sup> InfD

VP Military Affairs	Stanley Wojtusik, 106 <sup>th</sup> InfD
VP Public Affairs	Demetri Paris, 9 <sup>th</sup> ArmdD
Treasurer	William P. Tayman, 87 <sup>th</sup> InfD
Corresponding Secretary	Dorothy Davis, 57 <sup>th</sup> Field Hospital
Recording Secretary	John D. Bowen, Associate Member

### Trustees Three Years:

Trustee	Joseph Zimmer, 87 <sup>th</sup> InfD
Trustee	Earle Hart, 87 <sup>th</sup> InfD
Trustee	Richard Schlenker, 26 <sup>th</sup> InfD

### Trustees Two Years:

Richard G. Guenther	511 <sup>th</sup> Engr Lt. Ponton Co.
Neil Thompson	740 <sup>th</sup> Tank Bn
Robert Phillips	28 <sup>th</sup> Inf D

### Trustees One Year:

Frances Dougherty	Associate Member
James W. Hunt	1 <sup>st</sup> InfD
John Mc Auliffe	87 <sup>th</sup> InfD

Nominations were solicited from the floor. Hearing none, the Secretary was directed to cast on vote for the slate of officers, which he did.

VP-Military Affairs: Stanley Wojtusik indicated that his part would be brief. He said that we had assembled nine and a half months ago in Quincy and opened the door to the Patton Family. He indicated that we had opened a door when Strom Thurmond was alive to obtain a Charter, recognized by Congress for the Organization. Strom Thurmond served with the 101<sup>st</sup> Airborne and in the Bulge. (Strom Thurmond died before any action was taken.) We have now approached Representative Chris Smith to initiate such a bill. Stan then discussed the project at Arlington National cemetery to place a large monument to the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. He introduced Tony Moody of the Staten Island Chapter who designed their monument. The committee consisting of Stan, John Dunleavy and Bill Greenville met the other week with the Supt. of Arlington Cemetery. Three designs will be submitted. It was indicated that a site next to the RoughRiders monument was offered. Dunleavy said that if you put up a good monument the people would come.

VP-Chapters: George Fisher complimented John Mc Auliffe of the central Mass Chapter for getting a road named after the Battle of the Bulge. He advised members to contact their local & state politicians to get the Battle of the Bulge days and items recognized. He said that he is working on six new chapters. Chapter 68 is the current and we may have a chapter in Las Vegas within 6 months. We need to



## **VBOB MINUTES (Continuation)**

continually get the word out about the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge organization being in existence.

Treasurer: Nancy Monson presented Treasurer Bill Tayman's budget for FY 2004, which was moved, seconded and passed by unanimous vote.

60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration Trip: Earle Hart reported on the Commemoration trip between 10-20 December 2004 to Belgium and Luxembourg. He indicated that the veterans and one support person might likely get free transportation. Both the Belgians and Luxembourgers are well organized for this event. Further details will appear in the Bugle.

Bulge Bugle: Editor George Chekan encouraged members to submit their stories for the Bulge Bugle. He is in need of them. All stories eventually end up in the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Collection at the US Military History Institute at Carlisle PA.

Stan Wojtusik spoke about 12 black soldiers who were massacred in the Village of Wierth during the Bulge.

Corresponding Secretary - Dorothy Davis: She welcomed everyone and thanked them for sending their memorabilia to her. She indicated that this stuff gets placed in Carlisle also. She spoke of the special meeting the next day with 25 Senior High School Students from Belgium who will be here to mingle with and speak to the Bulge Veterans. She encouraged veterans to join them between 10 to noon and indicated that there will be a buffet at noon at \$15 inclusive.

Nancy Monson referred members to her written report in the Book of Reports.

George Fisher mentioned that there will be a meeting at 6 PM for all Chapter Presidents and Dee Paris and Peter Munger would hold a meeting at 6 PM for Children and grandchildren and other interested being in being associated with VBOB.

Mike Diglio of the 42<sup>nd</sup> InfD Rainbow Division rose to suggest that since we share the same battle star that we could add thousands of members by allowing Alsace awardees membership in the VBOB. He mentioned that the 42<sup>nd</sup> Div would hold its 88<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting this year.

Edith Nowels rose to state that on the Tour of Washington that the Step on Guide had a heavy German accent and that a better selection could have been made.

William Oliver, North Canton OH, rose to mention that that the 17<sup>th</sup> Airborne Division was doing away with reunions and it might be advantageous for VBOB to invite them to attend our conventions.

Dorothy Davis reminded members to please sign the sign-up books in the Hospitality room, which has been a tradition since the beginning of VBOB Reunions.

Al Sussman stated that we are the best-kept secret. He said that we have to get out more information on the organization. We need to work on a continuous campaign for membership.

George Fisher suggested that each Chapter should work on getting the Governor of their state to proclaim Dec 16<sup>th</sup> as Battle of the Bulge day.

Al Rosensweig rose to state that we should keep the organization for those who fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

Nicholas Zillas then rose to be recognized and presented John Bowen with a plaque that he had made.

Discussion was then had on where to have the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Reunion next year. Pittsburgh PA was recommended and voted upon.

The meeting closed at 9:50 PM. Respectfully submitted,  
John D. Bowen  
Recording Secretary

## **ROAD TO VICTORY REBATE**

Though we had a wonderful 2004 Annual Reunion, there was a SNAFU in getting everyone back from the WWII Memorial site to our buses, which had to park at RFK Stadium. As a result it caused many of our buses and attendees to get back too late for the Road to Victory Musical at the Lisner Auditorium. Only about one-third of those who signed up were able to make it. We are deeply sorry to all of you that all 333, who signed up, couldn't have made it together. Those that did manage to go said that it was a tremendous show and one that they enjoyed very much. Though we did all we could to plan for a smooth reunion obviously we did not anticipate this SNAFU at the end of the WWII Memorial Dedication and regret that circumstances messed up the remainder of your evening.

As a result, we are offering refunds to all that missed the Road to Victory Show. Please return your tickets to John D. Bowen, at 613 Chichester Lane, Silver Spring MD 20904, so we may send you a refund.

We do want to thank the following who donated their tickets to the organization: John & Jeanne Breazeale, Richard & Lucie Diehl, Bob Friend, Bernard Gallagher, Colin Griffiths, Stephen & Margaret Jamison, Gordon & Karl Kleiner, Tony & Natalie Moody, Richard Moran, James & Carol Nicol, Eugene & Marjorie Pflughaupt, and Joseph & Lauretta Pillitteri. If you donated your refund to the organization and your name doesn't appear here please let John know by mail or by e-mail at [johndbowen@earthlink.net](mailto:johndbowen@earthlink.net) so it can be properly credited. We would also like to know who did see the Road to Victory that Saturday Evening, and what you thought about it.

## **They Earned Their Day in the Sun! 5-29-04**

How do you describe such a sea of humanity?

Together as proud Americans, in total unity

All here for the same reason; to honor those of WWII

Who fought and died for me and you

Singing God Bless America still gives me a chill

In unison, 140,000 voices strong, what a thrill

God Bless those who survived, please hear our thanks  
You were the ones on land, sea and air; our special "Yanks"

This was a long time coming; actually long over due  
But it's a wonderful monument with a beautiful view!

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## 2004 VBOB ANNUAL REUNION

All in all we have had many positive notes, e-mails and cards from fellow VBOBers about the 2004 Annual Reunion's week's activities. We thank you for your kind words. It was a tremendous week and a success and we are glad that a little over 1,000 were able to make it. We enjoyed meeting you and regret that we did not have more time to spend with you. The camaraderie and good will was noted throughout the week. You truly are the "Greatest Generation."

There is always that hesitancy to attend for the first time figuring that you may not know anyone but as many of the first timers have written it only took a few minutes to feel like we were among friends for years. That is what makes VBOB events great. There is a common thread among veterans, especially those who served in the Bulge, and our purpose is to treat each one like family.

The slide video presentation put together by Ralph Bozorth was a great hit and you may view it on our web site [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org). Many, many hours went into it by Ralph and as a token of our appreciation we presented Ralph with a Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Certificate of Appreciation at the banquet.

The hospitality room was also a huge success thanks to J. David Bailey, David D. Bowen, Cheryl Ann Diday, Marty & Phyllis Feldman, Charlotte Loukas, Don Praisner, Dave Shaw, Caroline & Patricia Terrigno and Anna Venditti who spent almost all of their reunion time serving free refreshments to our Bulge veterans and their guests. These free refreshments would not have been possible without the donations from Bill & Ethel Bearisto, Nancyann Rella of Brio Communications, John & Catherine Coath, John & Elizabeth Coath, Alfred & Mary Di Giacomo, John Doherty of Capital Beverage, Forest Hills MD, Melvin & Mary Jane Dusek, Phil & Kathy Ellena, Ken & Kathy Favata, Preston & Colleen Geren, Jr., Ed & Fran Gibbs, Randall & Kathy Hamilton, Barbara Hunt, Tim Janego of Greater Tampa Bay Auto Auction, Norm & Betty Kaiser, Bill & Nancy Leunig, Ennio & Marjorie Mariotti, Stu & Marjorie Mc Donnell, Tony & Natalie Moody A.I.A., Margden & Mabel Nelson, Marg Nelson, Jim & Mary Nolan, Keith Oderman, Bob & Evelyn Orner, Henry Spignesi, Bill & Betty Swope of Swope Auto Center in Elizabeth, KY, Douglas & Patricia Tatro, Anthony Torrieri, Anna Venditti, Billy Ware, Dr. Benjamin & Marilyn Williams

We thank Bobbie Hunt of ArtyPE of Ft Myers FL who made the beautiful copies of our VBOB Emblem and signs for our buses and our reunion.

We also thank Tony Moody and John Pardo for the beautiful unit insignias, which decorated our banquet room. We know that a few insignias were inadvertently borrowed but we know that you will return them for our next reunion. These large insignias can be purchased from John Pardo, Telephone 914-533-3075 or e-mail [jpardo@optionline.net](mailto:jpardo@optionline.net)

Hopefully now, you will return in the future to our various activities throughout the next year. There is the December 10-20th 2004, 60th Anniversary Commemoration in Belgium & Luxembourg, the Battle of the Bulge 60th Anniversary Reenactment at Ft Indiantown Gap, 25 - 30 January 2005, free to Bulge Veterans and next year's Annual Reunion to be held in Pittsburgh PA. Further information on these activities will appear in the Bulge Bugle.

We also want to share the comments of the Marriott staff on how much they enjoyed having all of you as guests and how proud they were to host a part of the "Greatest Generation."

Mary Ann and I thank all of you for your kind comments. Of course we did not do it alone and we had a great group of volunteers. We were amazed at how willing everyone was to lend a hand when they were asked to help. We have been surprised to receive over a hundred thank yous and they keep drifting in by mail or e-mail. We have put them in a binder. We did not consider it anything out of the ordinary but do admit that it was a great deal of work. It was a labor of love for all you have done, to preserve the freedoms we enjoy today. It could not have been done without the many volunteers and the committee that served unselfishly. We thank them for their many hours and help in this endeavor.

We especially want to thank Dorothy Davis who served so willingly and did such a super job on the visit to Ft Meade and the Battle of the Bulge Conference Room and Museum, Colonel Ives and his staff and Bob Johnson and the Ft Meade Museum Staff. We thank the 3<sup>rd</sup> U. S. Infantry (The Old Guard Color Guard and Fife & Drum Corps. We also want to thank J. David Bailey, J. Diane Baron, Vernon Bloomer, Denise Bolinski, Stewart Boone, David D. Bowen, Ralph Bozorth, Ken Butler, George Chekan, Dorothea & Al Darago, Charles DeSantis, Cheryl Ann Diday, Kathy Favata, Marty & Phyllis Feldman, George Fisher, Ronald Gagliano, William T. Greenville, Earle Hart, Rick Janier, Kacy Kirtley, Charlotte Loukas, John E. McAuliffe, June Moady, Michael Morris, Sharon Parkhurst, Robert F. & Marjorie F. Phillips, Don Praisner, Mariane Raney, Louis Paul Robles, Sr., Louis Paul Robles, Jr., Dr. Allan H. & Fern Romanoff, Dave Shaw, Alfred H. M. Shehab, John A. Swett, Betty & Bill Swope, Anna R. Venditti, George Watson John G. Westover, Herman Zeitchik, Joseph F. Zimmer and those Bus Captains that volunteered on a moments notice. We apologize if we have missed anyone.

With fond memories,  
John & Mary Ann Bowen  
and the

2004 VBOB Reunion Cmte



### A Salute to Veterans of World War II

Seeing this monument, brings about so much emotion  
For those who served our country with pride and devotion  
The thought and planning behind this is truly incredible  
And the impact this leaves on us all is forever indelible!

Thank you and God Bless!

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## REFLECTIONS

*These Reflections were written and presented by Joseph Zimmer, 87<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division at the 2004 VBOB National Convention in conjunction with the WWII Memorial Dedication at the Fairview Park Marriott, Falls Church VA, on 28 May 2004*

Let us look briefly around this room, where we roughly 740 people of four generations have convened. How great it was to hear young 8 year old Connor (Diday) recite our storied Pledge of Allegiance, among the many grandchildren who are just growing up and starting to have their own lives. Best to you Connor in your upcoming soccer tournament. AS a grandfather to ten like these young children, it warms the cockles of my heart. They are our future, and we are in good hands.

What a time it has been for us, this World War II Memorial Dedication Week, culminating tomorrow on the Mall, just a few miles away in our Nation's Capital. We celebrated band of brothers', Tom Brokaw's 'Greatest Generation,' are here tonight, in our swan song, with family and friends reunited in the common memory of the legendary Battle of the Bulge. Carrying out those long held sacred American values of duty, honor, country, esteemed throughout our 227 years as a nation, we met the test, and, emerged triumphantly during the worst winter of snow and cold seen in Europe in forty years. Twenty degrees below zero in a foxhole is no fun.

Prime Minister Winston Churchill in an address to the House of Commons after the battle was won, said it very well: This is undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war, and will, I believe be regarded as an ever famous American victory."

Now the call goes out tonight to three of you generations here, to take up the torch and our banner, as we



**Ft. Meade, MD – June 24, 2004**

*VBOB President Chekan presents John Bowen (R) with a well-deserved award. The plaque reads: "Presented with deep appreciation to John Bowen for his dedicated service to the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge as Chairman of the Committee for an outstanding and memorable VBOB 2004 Annual Reunion and WWII Memorial Dedication 25-30 May, 2004."*

surely fade from life's scene. We need your young hearts and minds, your enthusiasm and help in preserving our life's story and legend. Historian Stephen Ambrose wrote: "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 who fought WWII, and, then led us through the next forty years of the Cold War against the Soviet Communist Regime. They brought more freedom to more people around the world than any other generation. That is why we are here tonight, and, surely, there is no other place we would want to be.

Currently, numbering about four million, we warriors, though now passing on at the rate of 1300 a day, according to our Veterans Affairs office, must be remembered, honored, and never forgotten. The recently completed Memorial will enhance the chances that their story will be forever remembered. This is truly our LAST HURRAH!!

Grateful for the quality of our lives, let us assure that all the brave men who fought and died did not leave this earth in the snows of Belgium or Luxembourg, the way a snowflake disappears, without a trace, without a single permanent imprint to mark their passing. Their indelible mark lies in the freedom now enjoyed by each of us and those two countries, Belgium and Luxembourg, represented here, the rest of Europe, and other peoples seeking peace around the world.

Finally, for our tomorrows ahead, let us remember especially, the brave men and women of our Army, Navy, Air Force Marines and Coast Guard, in harm's way, in Iraq and Afghanistan, and, those also serving in over 120 countries around the globe, as sentinels of freedom and the values we stand for. May our future be bright and peace be found some day soon, through their gallant efforts and our support here at home. Our work is done. Our lives are now complete and let the new era begin. Good night and God bless.



## Wine and Cheese Reception

May 26, 2004

With so many emotions, I'm not sure where to start  
It's an honor to be here, to be allowed to take part  
These men and women fought for us, each and every one  
For the freedoms we enjoy now, they fought our battle and won

Having endured so much, they *should* feel proud  
Sharing memories and feelings with this kindred crowd  
Listening carefully to stories being told  
Very enlightening as the details unfold

This is up close and personal, not some history book  
Observing different uniforms and medals, wherever we look  
*Thank you* again for all you did sacrifice  
We are well aware that you paid a heavy price!

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7 Stanley Road  
West Orange, New Jersey 07052



# Pictorial Highlites of the VBOB 2004 Annual Reunion & WWII Memorial

May 25-30, 2004



WE DEDICATE OUR LIVES AND OUR LEGS



BATTLE OF THE BULGE

THEY HAVE GIVEN THEIR  
SONS TO THE MILITARY  
SERVICES. THEY HAVE  
STORED THE FURNACES  
AND HURRIED THE  
FACTORY WHEELS THEY  
HAVE MADE THE PLANES  
AND WELDED THE TANKS.  
RIVETED THE SHIPS AND  
ROLLED THE SHELLS.

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT



ATLANTIC



WELCOME

Veterans of the Battle of The Bulge  
REUNION

Photos by:  
Wm. E. Bearisto  
Mike Diglio  
Martin Feldman  
Marty Sheeron



# 146TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION IN THE BULGE

[The following story was sent to us by **WES ROSS, 146TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, COMPANY B**, and was excerpted from "Essayons," their newsletter.]

*Wes writes: Jay von Werlhof's great story of failed intelligence in the August 2003 Bulge Bugle is especially interesting to me, as it helped to fill in some of the blanks. My 3rd Platoon, Company B, 146th Engineer Combat Battalion, was in the area from Monschau to Bulligen during the Bulge.*

On the morning of 16 December 1944, the well-orchestrated German attack in the Ardennes was launched. Because Hitler suspected a security leak within his Wehrmacht, he limited disclosures of his plans to only a few of his most trusted generals. He was unaware that the British had broken his secret Enigma Code, even though some of his advisors had suggested that this may have happened. "Impossible," said der Fuhrer!

There were so few radio transmission intercepts concerning the upcoming Ardennes offensive that our high level commanders were caught completely off guard, even though many at the line company level were antsy about all of the enemy activity along our front. In general, the Wehrmacht followed the mandated radio secrecy orders; but there were enough slip-ups--especially by their air force and civilian transportation units to have given our high-level commanders the insight they needed, had they not been so overconfident that they discounted these critical intercepts.

The 146th Engineer Combat Battalion (146ECB) was bivouaced at Mutzenich Junction, near Monschau, at the northern shoulder of the German build-up. Captain Arthur Hill, H&S Company commander; along with Warrant Officer William Langhurst, Assistant S-1; and Warrant Officer Al Sarrach, Assistant Motor Officer; dropped in on their favorite little Malmedy restaurant on 16 December for dinner. This was the first day of the Bulge, and the situation had not yet been sorted out--it was still being viewed by army headquarters as a limited action to relieve the pressure of our attacks towards the Roer River dams near Schmidt.

The restaurant owner had just gotten in fresh steaks that afternoon, so they all ordered steak. While waiting to be served, the owner suggested that they move their jeep around to the rear so that the German soldiers who had been seen in the vicinity would not shoot up his establishment. They complied, polished off their steaks in a hurry, and then took off in high gear for the battalion--about fifteen miles northeast. A good move as Malmedy was on the projected route of Kampfgruppe Peiper!

At 1520 hours (3:20 p.m.) on 16 December, Colonel Pattillo from V Corps called Major Baker, our S-3, and ordered 146ECB to immediately furnish a company of engineers to serve as infantry--to be attached to the 38th Cavalry Squadron at Monschau. A Company dropped their shovels and were in the line at 1700 that evening. They were relieved about one week later, per 38th Cavalry records--but on 20 December per 146ECB After Action Report.

At 1525 hours on 16 December, Colonel McDonough, the 1121 Engineer Combat Group commander called and advised that

another company be alerted for an added infantry mission. B Company was deployed to a barrier line the following morning. For several days our company was deployed along a thin line a short distance behind the front near Elsenborn; with the purpose of slowing the advance of the 6th SS Panzer Army, should they penetrate our front. The 3rd platoon patrolled a 2,000 yard front in the snow, until 22 December.

We set up several machine guns in defensive positions and patrolled between them; but being in a semi-wooded area, we had inadequate fields of fire and would have been overrun or bypassed by any determined enemy attack in force. Sylvan Keck and others from the second platoon manned several daisy-chains on a nearby road. Daisy-chains are AT mines roped together so they can be quickly pulled across a road at the approach of enemy vehicles--but they are not effective unless adequately supported by covering fire.

The 2nd Infantry Division's attack towards the Roer River dams was called off on 17 December, and they and the 99th Infantry Division formed a defensive posture along Hofen/Bullingen/Butgenbach line. The 291ECB set up road blocks around Malmedy to halt Kampfgruppe Peiper. Even more important than their roadblocks was the 291ECB's contribution in blowing a number of bridges--some just as Peiper's tanks arrived--to thwart his intended drive west to the Meuse.

Early during the Bulge, we heard of the exploits of this engineer outfit, but don't believe I ever knew its designation, and first had heard that only a platoon was involved. This was a battalion operation under the direct control of Colonel David Pergrin, even though the numbers directly involved in enemy action appear to have somewhat fewer. I believe that the stout defense by the 291st was a significant factor in blunting the German attack, and in saving our bacon during the Bulge.

The 291st Engineers, along with the 30th Infantry Division, were bombed three separate times in Malmedy by our 9th Air Force during the first few days of the Bulge. Misdirected air strikes were not too unusual an occurrence whenever mists and clouds mask the events on the ground, or when the front is poorly defined. This debacle was related by Colonel Pergrin, the commander of an unhappy battalion of combat engineers.

Lt. Colonel Frederick August Baron von der Heydte's parachute force was dropped on 17 December in the Hohes Venn--a large marshy area. (His 6th parachute regiment had fought several vicious engagements with the Screaming Eagles--101st Airborne Division--in Normandy and again in September in General Bernard Montgomery's "Market Garden" offensive.) During this period, the 3rd Platoon 146ECB was patrolling the front between outposts and we saw no Germans.

For the first several days we had no clue as to the Germans' intent as we were located in the woods away from our battalion and from other units--but the wealth of unverified rumors, the actuality of the paratroopers, unconfirmed rumors abounded! Anyone moving about was challenged and this included well-known, easily recognizable American generals. While on a reconnaissance mission, Lt. Fox was taken prisoner by a patrol from the 38th Cavalry because he had not received the password for the day. After six hours at their CP where they checked on his legitimacy, he was released.

Engineers have only occasional need for machine guns, but we had both the WWI vintage water-cooled .30 cal. Brownings and the air-cooled version; as well as the .50 caliber Brownings (ring-mounted on our truck

(Continued)



cabs for anti-aircraft). Our .30s were light years behind the vastly superior German MG-42. During the early hours of the paratroop drop, one of our four water-cooled machine guns fired just one round and then sat there mute--the water in the cooling jacket had frozen, jamming the action.

One of the primary objectives of von der Heydte's paratroopers was the capture of a road junction between Eupen and Malmédy, ten miles west of Monschau in the Hohes Venn. The German paratroopers were one day late because of a glitch in getting their planes assembled. They were also widely scattered because of inexperienced pilots and minimal advance information concerning their mission--as was dictated by Hitler. General Sepp Dietrich's 6th Panzer Army had vowed to link up with the paratroopers at this road junction on 16 December, as his army blasted through Monschau and swung north to Eupen trapping our frontline troops--a replay of their 1940 Ardennes breakthrough that had been so successful.

The 6th Panzer Army, the only SS army in the Wehrmacht, included eight divisions equipped with the latest tanks and weapons. It included the 1st SS Panzer Division (Liebstrandarte Adolph Hitler), one of their best divisions, from which Colonel Joachim Peiper's Kampfgruppe Peiper was to launch the quick strike to cross the Meuse River near Huy, Belgium.

Three of our battalion radio operators (James France, Julius Mate, and Norman Nettles), were captured by paratroopers on the morning of the 17th as they were going to breakfast. They escaped and came back hungry but unharmed a few days later, when our infantry engaged the paratroopers. One of the captives, who spoke German, overheard their captors discussing how they would dispose of the captives by throwing grenades into their midst while they were huddled together during the night. Marvin R. Lowry, Warren Hodges, and Joe Manning were sent to look for the radio operators. Lowry was killed in an ensuing firefight with the paratroopers. In another action Fred Matthews was captured, but he managed to escape.

We learned later that the planned assembly point of the paratroopers was the battalion radio shack in a cabin located several hundred yards back in the woods from the battalion headquarters--so located to keep from drawing artillery fire on our headquarters. In this action, 60 troopers were captured, and nine were killed by the 146ECB. One trooper wandered into a C Company chow line and was captured--he did get fed, however.

To bolster the Monschau front, A Company, 146ECB, and 3rd Platoon, A Company, 112ECB were attached to the 38th Cavalry Squadron, which was on the north flank of 3rd Battalion, 395th Regiment, 99th Infantry Division. Machine guns and tanks with canister shot were positioned with only modestly favorable fields of fire but they were able to beat back several determined attacks by the 326 Volksgrenadier Division; and although they were pushed back on one occasion, their counterattack regained all of the lost ground.

Willard (Bill) Shoemaker--who had been a sergeant in Gap Assault Team #8 on D-Day, and who had been battlefield commissioned to 2nd lieutenant on 12 December 1944--was awarded a Silver Star for his heroics at Monschau. He and his men on outpost duty broke up a nighttime attempt to infiltrate his company's position. They withheld their fire until the Germans were almost within spitwad distance, thereby killing and wounding several while suffering no fatalities of their own.

The 38th Cavalry and its attached units were all awarded Presidential Unit Citations. Since the 146ECB had already been awarded a PUC for the demolition of the anti-boat obstacles on Omaha on D-Day, this added an oak leaf cluster to A Company's PUC. A Company, 612 Tank Destroyer Battalion (of the mallard duck episode at Camp Swift, Texas) was also at Hofen, and they were awarded a commendation for their aggressive defense.

Sepp Dietrich's 6th Panzer Army had planned to drive to the road junction in the Hohes Venn between Eupen and Malmédy, that was to have been captured by the paratroopers on 16 December. The 38th Cavalry, with its attached troops; and the 3rd Battalion, 395th Infantry, at Hofen, upset their timetable, and was a major factor in their ultimate defeat. Had Dietrich been able to push through Monschau as planned, he very well may have captured the gasoline dumps near Eupen, and then moved on to Antwerp.

Also, had the Hofen pillboxes not been blown up and bulldozed full of dirt by our battalion, the Germans may well have reoccupied them during one of their forays into the 3rd Battalion, 395th Infantry, positions; and would then have been difficult to dislodge. Some attackers from the 751st and 753rd Volksgrenadier Divisions appeared to have been too heavily into the schnapps, and were oblivious to our infantry's withering machine gun fire. They kept coming until large numbers were killed, wounded, or captured--or they may have just been fiercely loyal, highly motivated young soldiers. Who is to say?

The "Jumo" engines of the German planes were unsynchronized, and so had a very distinctive uneven "yummy-yummy-yummy" beat-frequency sound as they flew overhead at night. I don't know if they were transports or bombers, but they probably were being used for aerial resupply. We were itching to turn our machine guns on them, but this was forbidden as it would have revealed our defensive positions. Several V-1s that were found nearby were said to have contained food and medicines instead of explosives; but I saw none, and if this story was accurate, that effort was poorly coordinated and was not effective.

The 2nd Infantry Division called off their flanking attack toward the Roer River on 17 December and reformed in a defensive posture south of Elsenborn. That the 2nd Division could abort their attack and then make such adjustments, while under continuous heavy enemy pressure, was due to the superb leadership of General Water M. Robertson and his organization; and this is why "The Indianhead Division" was recognized as one of the premier U.S. Infantry Divisions of WWII. For several days, General Robertson also took over control of the greater part of the 99th Division which had been scattered and severely crippled in the initial German assault. Lt. Col McClelland Butler's 3rd Battalion, 395th Infantry, 99th Division, at Hofen, held their ground, and so was not involved in this command restructuring.

The 1st Infantry Division was brought in to bolster the southern flank near Bullingen, and these seasoned troops--with the 2nd and 99th Infantry Divisions and their attached troops, stabilized the northern shoulder of the breakthrough. This was the area in which the 3rd Platoon had laid a number of AT mines a few weeks earlier. I'm not sure why the mines were laid at that time and at that particular location, but suspect that this was only a precaution against local probing attacks, certainly not as an expectation of a major German assault--as was the Bulge.

(Continued)



About 23 December while working on a large anti-personnel (AP) minefield near Elsenborn--positioned to deny access to a natural infiltration corridor; a flight of British "Typhoons" came roaring in and rocketed a woods 800 yards to the east. We were a bit jumpy as their path was almost directly overhead and we thought that they might have mistaken us for Germans. That would not have been unusual, considering the chaotic conditions along the front at that time. We saw no indication of German forces before or after the strike; but since we were near the front line, there is a distinct possibility that German troops may have been there.

A prominent radiator bulge under their engines gave them a distinctive appearance, and their engines made an unusual roaring noise--not at all like the sharp exhaust cracks of the Rolls Royce Merlins in the Spitfires and Mustangs. I was told that these engines had 24 cylinders (four banks of six), compared to the twelve cylinders of the Merlin. The twenty-four exhausts blended the sound into the unusual roar. (Since verified.) Our After Action Report indicated that our AP mines were picked up before being activated and were reinstalled nearby, probably a short distance further east.

Christmas Day, 1944, on the way to the minefield, a doe and a yearling crossed in front of our truck. We stopped and I told the men in back to shoot her. After ten or more rounds had been fired, I yelled "Cease Fire," just as the deer disappeared into the brush. (The firing might have been interpreted as a fire fight with a German patrol, initiating a wasteful response.) The doe then wandered back across the road, so I shot her--the fresh meat was a welcome change from our recent diet.

Several weeks previously, B Company's various work parties returned to the company bivouac area one evening with five hogs, two cows, and a deer. Someone had suggested that we have some fresh meat, but had not coordinated the effort. The animals were a nuisance around minefields, walking into the trip wires, detonating the mines and killing themselves in the process--we only hastened their demise. The hogs were fried first and the pork fat was then used to fry the rest. The meat was chewy and tough--but the change of diet was much appreciated.

On the night of 26 December 1944 our bivouac area was shelled heavily for about 30 minutes. We were in an area of large trees, so there were many tree bursts. Heading for a safe refuge in a culvert (which he called a tin horn), Sergeant Homer Jackson found that it was a tight squeeze as 12 others had beaten him there. I flattened myself on the ground at the base of a large pine tree away from the direction of most of the tree bursts, and was happy when the shelling ceased.

We believed that the damage was one by our captured 105mm howitzers. The shelling probably stopped when the Germans ran out of ammunition. The 99th Division 105s were overrun close by, nearby the Wahlersheid Crossroads, and these may have been the ones. They knew our location and may have had forward observers, as they took very few rounds to register on us.

We suspected that our position had been pin-pointed by the paratroopers. Their designated assembly point was the forestry shack being used by our battalion radio operators--the three who had been captured previously. Several trucks had flat tires and other holes, and the driveline of one truck was completely severed. A shell fragment smashed through the front panel of a

headquarters desk drawer, and spinning around inside, made a mouse nest out of the papers within. Many shell fragments riddled the aid-station tent, one striking Ernest K. Hansen in the chest as he was holding a plasma bottle over one of our wounded.

New Year's Day morning 1945 was clear and cold. While we were adding the red triangles on the barbed wire--outlining a minefield--the sky was suddenly filled with 28 ME-109s flying northwest at 1,000 feet. We later learned that they planned to attack the airfield at Liege and destroy our planes on the ground--a continuation of the Bulge. A number of our airfields near the front were successfully attacked that day and several hundred American planes were destroyed. Their losses were only one-third of ours--but these were losses that they could ill afford.

Luckily for us, our P47s were rendezvousing near the Liege airfield for a strike of their own, and they caught these Germans by surprise as they were coming in. It must have been some dogfight, but we saw only the tail end of the action from our work area. In 20 minutes, as we watched in fascination, as four Me-109s were shot out of the sky. The first one fell 1,500 yards from us, and they kept dropping closer and closer until the last one was only 300 yards away.

The story was almost the same in every case. The 109 pilots, who were flying southeast and very close to the deck heading for home, were being slaughtered by the P47s. Our pilots were definitely more aggressive, and must have had superior training and experience. We didn't see any parts being shot off the 109s, but two were spewing smoke--before they crashed and sent up big black pillars. The third downed plane hit 600 yards away and several of us headed out to see what we could find of interest. (read Lugers of P-38s!) We had just started off, when another 109 came limping toward us, smoking and losing speed and altitude.

The P-47 kept boring in and firing short machine gun bursts. The 109 was hidden by a group of pine trees when the pilot finally hauled back on the stick in an attempt to gain enough altitude to jump. His plane rose only a few hundred feet, coming back into our field of view, and then stalled just as he bailed out. We charged down the hill to the crash site, fully expecting to find a dead pilot near the wreckage, since we were sure that he had lacked sufficient altitude to safely eject.

The pilot could not be found, but the plane was on fire and its magnesium castings were burning brightly. We poked around in the wreckage until the machine gun and cannon shells began to cook off, and then made our mad exodus. We searched the surrounding area and finally found the pilot's chute in a pine tree 100 feet back in the direction from which we had come. Landing in the tree surely saved him from severe injuries or death. He had slipped his chute and laid low until we had passed, and then backtracked in our trail in the snow. We followed his tracks, but lost them at dusk in the area where the snow had been heavily trampled.

After escaping death in such a remarkable exit by parachute, we were saddened the next morning to find the young pilot dead within our minefield. He had crawled inside the wire barrier and suffered modest wounds from an antipersonnel mine. We surmised he believed he would freeze to death before morning, so he killed himself with his 9mm P-038. (Mentioned in the battalion's S-1 record of 3 January 1945.)

The winter of 1944 was one of the coldest in many years, often dropping below zero degrees Fahrenheit. (Continued)



Our battalion had few medical problems during this period, although some who failed to change their socks often contracted trench foot (but none from the 3rd Platoon). During the Bulge our armies lost many men to this malady. It was easily prevented by keeping a spare pair of woolen socks tucked inside of one's pants. Body heat dried them out and they could then be swapped several times a day--and at the same time giving the feet a good massage. Dr. Goldman, our new medical officer, treated several cases of combat exhaustion with rest and sedatives, followed by several days of heavy labor within the battle sounds of artillery and other fire at the front.

A group of B Company men built a cardboard warming shack with a diesel fired steel drum in the middle of the floor. When one man tried to force his way into the already full shack to warm himself, he was unable to do so, and no one offered to swap places. Not to be deterred, he yelled "I'll show you sons of bitches," and he threw a clip of M-1 Garand ammo into the flames. The mad scramble for the doorway almost demolished the hut, after which the perpetrator was run down and pounded.

We must have been a bit odoriferous as we rarely had an opportunity to shower. "Whore baths"--water heated in helmets over an open fire was our only option for washing face, neck, ears, underarms, crotch and feet--in that order. Our helmets then also took on a dingy hue. We were usually able to shave daily--often in cold water--and our razors were not the sharpest ones on the planet. I often fantasized about luxuriating in a tub of steaming hot water, followed by a professional barber's shave. When the opportunity arose later for a German barber to do the job, I had to mentally restrain myself to keep from bolting from his chair when I realized how close to my throat his straight-edged razor was operating!

Although we were often frozen from riding in jeeps--always with the windshield down--or from sloshing about in the snow; few of us were ever sick with colds or flu. After most of the Bulge fighting was over and the weather had improved, we finally were issued insulated shoe pacs in lieu of those foot-freezing GI boots. The book *Citizen Soldiers* by Stephen Ambrose noted that the American Command gambled that the war would be over before we needed shoe pacs--in retrospect an error in judgment, but c'est la guerre--you can't win 'em all!

By early January, we were gaining control in our area; the captured Germans dressed in American uniforms from Colonel Skorzeny's force had been executed by firing squads at Henri-Chapelle, a few miles north of Monschau; and the paratroopers had been rounded up and shipped off to the PW cages. Our infantry was gaining control, and we had heard of the successful relief of our troops at Bastogne. Although the news that came through seemed to be more favorable, we didn't always hear the bad news.

Still, all it took to journey back to reality was to observe the graves registration men picking up the dead. After one big tank battle near Bullingen, I had reason to be thankful that I was not a tanker. The bodies that were being removed from knocked out Sherman tanks (Ronsen Lighters to their deprecators, because of their propensity to never fail to flame up when hit), were wrapped in sheets that looked like oversized diapers--some of the corpses were so badly burned that they had no apparent arms or legs. The stench of burned human flesh is an odor that is not easily forgotten!

Bernard Montgomery's self-serving news conference to the British press, emphasizing the great detail how he rescued 18 American divisions in Bradley's 1st and 9th Armies--finally shifted down to us. This was at the end of the Bulge, after the Germans had torn a deep salient into our lines, requiring an immediate restructuring of the army commands. There is little doubt that Eisenhower's decision to transfer these troops to Montgomery was proper; but that, coupled with Montgomery's grand pronouncements, greatly rankled Bradley and caused a major dissension between British and U.S. troops--and almost gave Hitler a victory of sorts by splitting up the Allies.

I was then saddened to learn of Lt. Trescher's death at Monschau, just prior to the Bulge; where his 2nd Platoon, B Company, had been attached to a cavalry squadron. He was killed by artillery fire while attempting to determine the location of that enemy battery by analyzing the artillery burst patterns in the snow. I found it hard to believe that he was gone. He was such a fine, caring gentleman who watched over his men as if he were a doting mother--thus his nickname "Mother Trescher."

He was "very old" (about 32), and a civil engineering graduate from MIT. Trescher had been at the Assault Training Center near Barnstaple, Devon when I joined the 146ECB in December of 1943. He was also the OIC of Demolition Boat Team #D on Omaha Beach, so we had been together for a year. He was more of a gentleman than the rest of us lieutenants--and laugh, although he usually tried to ignore our raunchy jokes, he enjoyed a good laugh, and was a fun fellow in his quiet droll way. R.I.P. "Mother Trescher"--you will be remembered always with fondness.

In January an infantry lieutenant was wounded by an AP mine near our work area, and his men called on us to sweep the area for additional mines. Becoming impatient with our standard mine-sweeping technique, they ran on ahead down to their lieutenant. I carefully followed them, stepping in their tracks to avoid being another casualty. We each then grabbed an arm or a leg and carried the lieutenant to safety by retracing our path on the return trip. He was vomiting and one man kept his head turned to the side to keep the intracranial fluid from running out through the hole in the side of his skull. He was only semi-conscious, and would have remembered nothing. I hope had a complete recovery.

In January, 1945, plans for a new Allied offensive were taking shape. In preparation for the proposed Roer River crossing, we built a quantity of duckboards that were to be used in that assault, but when our infantry outflanked the German positions and captured that area, the duckboards then became unnecessary. Meanwhile, Ranger patrols were making nightly forays into enemy positions across the Roer River. On one trip, they found three German soldiers asleep in a Siegfried bunker. The two men on the outside were knifed, and the one in the middle was left untouched. Imagine how that poor soldier would feel upon awakening and finding out that he was alive only by the shake of the dice.

Our offensive to the Rhine began in late February with the "Mad Minute"....■

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**Check to see if your dues are due--the date is above your last name on the mailing label. Thanks.**



*[The following article regarding JEROME A. CAPLAN, 969TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, appeared in the "Life" column of the Springfield, Missouri, newspaper, News-Leader, December 21, 2003. It was written by columnist Mike O'Brien.]*

## Pain tempers glory of long ago cold winter's night

December 21 holds special memories for Springfield businessman Jerry Caplan. Horrible memories. Proud memories. Memories that took me a long time to pry out of him.

On December 21, 1944, Caplan was commander of a U.S. Army artillery battery that was surrounded by a much larger force of enemy troops and tanks near Bastogne, the tiny town in Belgium that became famous in World War II because an American general said "Nuts!" to a German surrender ultimatum.

On that long ago December 21, Caplan's 969th Field Artillery Battalion, "in spite of the fact that an artillery battalion to its rear had been overrun and dispersed by enemy tanks, maintained its position and delayed the enemy."

That much is easy to learn, from a rare Presidential Unit Citation bestowed upon the 969th.

It took persistent badgering to coax Caplan into talking about aspects of that December 21 that aren't so readily apparent. The numbing cold. The scarce supplies. The cruel losses.

And the fact many doubted the 969th was capable of such heroics because it was a black fighting unit at a time when the Army usually assigned African-Americans to menial chores.

Caplan is white. When the 969th was formed in early 1943, he was one of a handful of freshly minted white artillery officers put in charge of training and leading the otherwise all-black experimental outfit.

"I don't know why they picked me, except that I was available when they needed someone," says Caplan with a smile and a shrug. He never could figure out the Army's logic.

For example: "My first assignment after I graduated from officer candidate school was as a 'motor officer.' I was raised in big cities. I'd never had a driver's license. I didn't know how to drive. I had a sergeant give me driving lessons at night in a four-ton Diamond T truck."

There might've been some logic in picking Caplan for the 969th, however, based upon his "big city" upbringing.

Caplan was born in Hartford, Connecticut, and earned a business degree in 1939 from Columbia University in New York City, where he began a career in retail before being drafted into what was supposed to be a one-year hitch in the Army in the summer of 1941.

While he hadn't gained experience behind a wheel as a young Jewish man in East Coast metropolises, Caplan was familiar and comfortable working amid a mix of racial and ethnic heritages.

So while many in the mostly segregated Army of the day were startled to see that Battery A of the 969th was composed of 103 black men plus four white officers, Caplan says he "never had any problems--never thought much about it, really, especially once we got into the war. We were all in that together."

The 969th shipped over to England in February 1944, then

landed in France that July. The battalion participated in the hedgerow battles through Normandy and then moved into Brittany with its fearsome 155-millimeter howitzers.

By late October, the unit was parked in Belgium. It was the most bitter winter in a half-century, but the tide of war seemed to be flowing toward victory for the United States and its allies.

Although in the forefront of the American push toward Germany, the 969th's position in the dense forest region known as the Ardennes was thinly defended because it was thought to be a most unlikely spot for the Germans to attack.

"In late November, word came down that 'It looks like you fellows are going to be here all winter,'" Caplan recalls. "So we built log cabins for ourselves to get out of the weather. We moved into the cabins on the afternoon of December 15. About 2 a.m. the next morning, we got word that all hell was breaking loose and we were to move out at dawn.

The hell that had broken loose was a stunning German thrust on a half-million men and hundreds of tanks. The aim was to split the American-British forces, clear a lane to the sea and force a cease-fire.

The German attack caused what had been a taut front line to stretch. So the Allies' effort to regain that lost ground became known as the Battle of the Bulge.

"At first, we had no orders," Caplan recounts. "Then orders we did get often were conflicting. We didn't know where to go. And we learned that not everyone in an American uniform directing traffic was an American.

"We kept moving back for about 30 miles, until we got just outside Bastogne. We were surrounded. We were down to four howitzers. We pointed one in each direction.

"Tankers came along and drained the gas from our trucks. They told us, 'You don't need it--you aren't going anywhere.'

"I put my men in foxholes and said, 'When Germans come shoot 'em.' "And there we stayed...."

The Presidential Citation offers more detail than the reticent Caplan:

"Without benefit of prepared defenses, facing almost overwhelming odds and with limited and fast-dwindling supplies, the 969th Field Artillery Battalion maintained high combat morale and an impenetrable defense, despite extremely heavy bombing, intense artillery fire and constant attacks from infantry and armor on all sides of their completely cut-off and encircled position."

The official record lists two tanks, five armored vehicles and one machine gun nest destroyed and 40 enemies captured that day by the 969th while breaking up three attacks by German infantry.

"This masterful and grimly determined defense denied the enemy even momentary success," the citation continues. "The outstanding courage and resourcefulness and undaunted determination of this gallant force is in keeping with the highest traditions of the service."

December 21 wasn't the only day of fierce action. The bloody struggle for the strategic crossroads raged for more than a week. The 969th helped keep Germans from overrunning the 101st Airborne Division until General George Patton's tanks broke through and re-established a supply corridor to Bastogne.

"On Christmas Eve, the Germans really bombed and strafed us," Caplan recalls.

(Continued)



## PAIN TEMPERS GLORY

(Continuation)

"They dropped flares. You really feel naked when you're crouched down in a slit trench and the sky lights up like that."

The freezing temperatures also were deadly. "Keeping your feet warm and dry was important, but almost impossible," Caplan says. "And if you didn't, you got 'trench foot' and your feet turned blue. I saw a lot of that."

Caplan was aided in keeping his torso warm by a wool sweater knitted by his bride, the former Theda Ann Karchmer of Springfield. They'd met while he was training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and she was attending the University of Oklahoma.

"That sweater got some strange looks when someone saw it under my uniform, but every day I was thankful she'd done it," says Caplan of his knitting wife, who while growing up preferred to be called "Tak," based upon her initials. Since their marriage, she's spelled it "Tac." ....

The Caplans have traveled widely over the years, including visits to some sites in Europe where Jerry served with the 969th while earning five battle stars, the Bronze Star and the rank of captain.

"There's a supermarket built about a quarter-mile from where we were dug in at Bastogne," he says.

The Caplans also have visited cemeteries in Europe where many of the 19,000 GIs killed in the Battle of the Bulge rest.

"I'm fortunate to be able to say that we didn't lose very many from my battery," Caplan says. "But those we did lose were some of my best friends. And when you look out on all those graves...well, my wife and I couldn't help but cry."

Caplan says he doesn't have nightmares about the war. But at age 85, the memories remain vivid.

"Every Christmas time calls them up. I wonder why I'm here and someone else isn't. I'm thankful for all the years I've had, and the two wonderful kids and four wonderful grandchildren. But I still wonder why me and not those other guys."

If the answer to that question eludes Caplan, there is no doubt he helped settle another.

*The New York Times*, in an August 3, 1945, editorial, put it this way:

"Among the heroes of the Bastogne fighting of last December were the members of the 969th Field Artillery Battalion.

"For nine days, these gunners, fighting as infantry, short of food and almost out of ammunition, helped stand off three German divisions.

"The 969th, though commanded by white officers, is a Negro outfit. If prejudiced persons continue to say the Negro does not make a good and brave soldier, the rank and file of the 969th will now have a ready answer.

"Officers and men, they all did honor to the land of their birth." ■

**Check your mailing label to see if your dues are due. You can save us the cost of sending a dues reminder. Thanks.**

## NOW I'M AN ASSOCIATE MEMBER...What do I do now?

The best answer to that is **get involved.**

At the reunion and in response to recent appeals in *The Bugle*, we have enrolled approximately 100 associate members. As time passes, you will be the ones to see that the Battle of the Bulge is never forgotten. We can't let this interest on your part go untouched.

So, you might want to:

1. Help your veteran get his experiences onto a piece of paper. Too many of their remembrances will disappear forever if they are not recorded. When you have done this, send them to us and we'll see that they are preserved.
2. Assist your veteran in chapter activities: drive him to the planned functions and volunteer to help them with their events, help him form a chapter (or just a chat group) in his own area (we can send you names of Bulge veterans in your own area), etc.
3. Use your influence to see that the Battle of the Bulge is introduced to school children in your area. You'd be surprised how little the children are taught about World War II.

We are sure that you also have other ideas that will be helpful, so take your ideas and put them to use.

We thank you for your support and know that we have put our legacy in good hands ■

## The Wolf

by Sansone





## 9TH ARMORED DIVISION ON SECRET LIST DURING THE BULGE

[The following article appeared in *The Battalion Channel*, the newsletter of the 14th Tank Battalion Association, 9th Armored Division.]

The three combat commands of the 9th Armored Division were widely separated during the Battle of the Bulge. Each one delayed the German attacks until reinforcements could arrive.

CCB delayed Colonel Peiper and the Panzer Division in their attempt to pass through St. Vith, Belgium, until the arrival of the 7th Armored Division. The 106th Infantry Division in the same area had two regiments surrender to the Germans.

A second Combat Command suffered many casualties and tank losses in the Bastogne area and, upon arrival of the 101st Airborne Division and a Combat Command of the 10th Armored Division, the 9th Armored Division Combat Command withdrew into Bastogne to continue the defense.

The 9th Armored Division combat commands were attached to and fought in support of more units than any other element. It was not until January that the units were able to rejoin and come under the command of their division.

Dr. Walter Reichelt reports this in his excellent history *Phantom Nine*. But none of this was reported by the press since the division was on the SECRET list until about January 5, 1945.

Dr. Reichelt states that even though the division was removed from combat, there were no news reports of its excellent combat record in delaying and stopping the German advance. General John Leonard, commander of the 9th Armored Division, was not pleased and so wrote in a letter to the Third Army Commander, General George Patton, requesting "the 9th Armored Division be released for publicity. Several units that we have fought alongside of have been mentioned in the *Stars and Stripes*."

Patton responded on January 2, 1945:

*"Replying to your letter of the 31st of December, the 9th Armored Division was released on December 30. We have to wait until the master map at headquarters Twelfth Army Group shows that the Germans have located division. This accounts for the delay in the case of your outfit.*

*"I certainly want to congratulate you on the splendid fight the division is making, particularly in the case of Combat Command A. I will strive to get it released to you tomorrow. I have heretofore been unable to do so because it was holding a vital link in our defense.*

*"Hoping that you will soon be rehabilitated and back with us, I am*

*Most sincerely,  
G.S. Patton, Jr.  
Lieut. General, US Army  
Commanding"*

Source: pps 159-160 *Phantom Nine* by Dr. Walter E. Reichelt.

**Kilroy says...**

**"SIGN UP A NEW MEMBER...  
DO IT TODAY!"**

## INDIANA CHAPTER VETERANS DAY, 2003



Left to right: Pulitzer, Suding, Gryctko, Roberts, McDaniel, Daunoras, Robbins, Kerr, Van Dusen.

What a swell looking group of men.

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## HAVE YOU REGISTERED???

If you haven't registered to be included in the Registry of Remembrances at the World War II Memorial, you may wish to do so.

Write to them for a form and complete information on how to register. Their address is:

World War II Memorial  
Photo Processing Center  
PO Box 305  
Calverton, New York 11933

Persons who contributed to the war effort at home can also be included.

If you are the survivor of a veteran, you may also submit his/her information for inclusion.

Also, spread the word to other veterans you may know. ▣

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## YOUR LAST REUNION??

If your unit is contemplating "no more reunions," please give consideration to joining in on the events of a VBOB reunion. Many units are having a difficult time finding someone to organize and follow through on the plans for a reunion. You can join with VBOB for their reunion and have a special day for your own unit before, after, or during the activities we will offer. ▣



## MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

Patrick O'Hagan is trying to find out more about his father-in-law's service in WWII. His name was **CARL J. NILL**. He served from November 1943 until being separated at Fort Meade, Maryland, January 1946. Campaigns included: Northern France, the Ardennes, and the Rhineland. His unit was listed on his discharge as **DEMONSTRATION BATTALION, QUARTERMASTER SCHOOL**. Reportedly he was on "detached service" during his time in the ETO. Can you help? If so, write to Patrick at: 116 The King's Highway, Middletown Village, New Jersey 07748.

**CHESTER P. (BUCK) SLOAN, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION**, would like to locate a lucky tail gunner who survived a tremendous crash. **JACK THOMAS** and Buck were watching a Messerschmitt in a dog-fight was a P-38. The P-38 was after the Messerschmitt, and they came out of a cloud and the Messerschmitt missed the B-17, but the P-38 caught him right in front of the tail. The P-38 split and it also cut the tail off the B-17. The B-17 got into a big spiral, jump, but no one ever jumped. Undoubtedly they were pinned against the side. The tail was just floating down. A few days later, they saw where the B-17 crashed and burn. Forty years later, Buck read where the tail gunner survived. Buck believes they were with the 8th Air Force which was bombing Brest, France, at the time. If you can help Buck find this pilot, he would appreciate it. Write to him at: 7402 Lewiston, Houston, Texas 77049.

**RUSSELL E. KUEHN, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 110TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY I**, is looking for two vets he served with in the Huertgen and the Bulge. He also shared the same barracks in Stalag IVB Muhlbert on the Elbe with them. They are: **WALTER MONIK** (Kenosha, Wisconsin) and **MORTIMER SILVEY** (up-state New York where his family owned a resort). If you can help, write to Russell: 18825 Fourth Avenue North, Plymouth, Minnesota 55447.

Billie Jo Freeze is looking for information on the **724TH RAILWAY OPERATING BATTALION**. Her father, **PFC THOMAS H. BURKS**, served with them and she is anxious to learn more about his service. Can you help? Write to her at: 52 760-2 County Road 131, Bristol, Indiana 46507.

We had a request from Martha Chambers Evans for information regarding her father, **PVT WILLIAM S. CHAMBERS, 118TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY A**. Her address was not on her letter and the envelope had disappeared. Finally, it dawned on us that she mentioned that her aunt was an associate member, so duh. You can write to Martha: %Martha Herod, 414 Brewer Street, Navasota, Texas 77868.

William J. Geroulo is gathering information from veterans with service connected disabilities who are dissatisfied with the medical treatment or compensation award they received from the VA. He plans to take legal action against the VA. If you would like to have some input contact him at: HC-1, 53-B, Star Toure, Gouldsboro, Pennsylvania 18424.

**HOWARD S. SMITH, 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION, 16TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY M**, is looking for anyone who may have served with him. Write to Howard at: PO Box 908, Greenwood, Mississippi 38935-0908.

**PATRICK J. KEARNEY, 55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION**, writes that Buy Blockmans of the Belgian Tourist Office in Brussels has written two publications for this year's 60th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. The first is a booklet entitled *The Battle of the Ardennes: Down Memory Lane* and the second is a map entitled *The Battle of the Ardennes Belgium 1944-2004*. Members who wish to obtain free copies of these materials may request them from the Belgian Tourist Office, 220 East 42nd Street, Suite 3402, New York, New York 10017.

**HENRY HAUSER, 83RD INFANTRY DIVISION, 330TH REGIMENT, 2ND BATTALION, MEDIC**, would love to hear from anyone who may have served with him in Normandy. Write to Henry at: 935 North Halifax Avenue #402N, Daytona Beach, Florida 32118.

Susan Richardson is looking for information about her uncle, **RENO BERNARDI, 771ST TANK BATTALION, COMPANY D**. He was killed in Belgium on March 23, 1945. If you can provide any information, the family would be very grateful. Write to Susan: c/o Countryside School, 4301 West Kirby Avenue, Champaign, Illinois 61822.

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## POLITICAL AND PERSONAL "STUFF"

If you have sent an article that bears **any** political references, please rewrite it leaving out the political references and resubmit it. We **can't** use it.

Often you send wonderful information and include comments we can't use.

We also get articles which are not too kind to the opinions of others. We don't like to publish this kind of "stuff." A couple of times we have published this type of article, then you have to print the response, and then another response--and it just gets to be too much.

If you want to correct someone--do it politely and we'll print it; otherwise, we won't. ■

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## LOST AND FOUND

Did you lose a lady's watch on a bus at the recent reunion? Some one found it. Please send a description of the watch and we'll be happy to return it to you.



# REUNIONS

**2ND ARMORED DIVISION, 17TH ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION**, August 11-14-2004, Downtown Double-Tree Hotel, Houston, Texas. Contact: John A. Shields, PO Box 106, East Butler, Pennsylvania 16029. Telephone: 724-287-4301.

**4TH ARMORED DIVISION**, August 29-September 6, 2004, Radisson Hotel, Kalamazoo, Michigan. Contact: 4th Armored Division Assn, 6786 West Haskell Drive, Fairview, Pennsylvania 16415-2050.

**7TH ARMORED DIVISION**, September 9-13, 2004, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Contact: Charles Barry, 947 "A" Street, Medville, Pennsylvania 16335. Telephone: 814-333-8051.

**9TH ARMORED DIVISION**, September 8-11, 2004, Ramada Plaza, Ashville, North Carolina. Contact: Robert Peterson, 5634 Nichols Avenue, Mt. Iron, Minnesota 55768.

**10TH ARMORED DIVISION**, September 3-5, 2004, Sheraton National Hotel, Arlington, Virginia. Contact: Tom Bubin, 713 Regency Square, Acton House 104, Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008. Telephone: 269-344-7035.

**11TH ARMORED DIVISION**, August 15-22, 2004, Arlington, Virginia. Contact: 11th Armored Division, 2328 Admiral Street, Aliquippa, Pennsylvania 15001.

**11TH ARMORED DIVISION, 55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION**, September 7-16, 2004, Tisbury, Wiltshire, England. Contact: Patrick J. Kearney, 33-21 172 Street, Bayside, New York 11358. Telephone: 718-762-0342.

**17TH AIRBORNE DIVISION**, October 17-23, 2004, Columbus, Georgia. Contact: Edward J. Siergiej, PO Box 4793, Dowling Park, Florida 32064. Telephone: 386-658-1292.

**25TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 25-October 2, 2004, Tucson, Arizona. Contact: 25th Infantry Division, PO Box 7, Flourtown, Pennsylvania 19031-0007.

**26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 328TH INFANTRY COMBAT TEAM**, October 19-20, 2004, Holiday Inn Boardwalk, Atlantic City, New Jersey. Contact: Ed Hauck, 1117 Wheatland Avenue #H-1, Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603. Telephone: 717-392-4419.

**30TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, June 23-27, 2004, Fayetteville, North Carolina. Contact: Contact: Armored Forces Reunions, Inc., 242 West 22nd Street, Norfolk, Virginia 23517--Attention: 30th Infantry Division.

**44TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, October 25-27, 2004, Holiday Inn Pigeon Forge Resort, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Contact: Albert Gaffney, PO Box 501, Gaffney, South Carolina 29342. Telephone: 864-489-6528.

**63RD INFANTRY DIVISION**, August 11-16, 2004, Fairview Park Marriott, Falls Church, Virginia. Contact: Mrs. Barney Forrest, 360 East 9th Avenue, Collegeville, Pennsylvania 19426. Telephone: 610-489-9523.

**76TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 16-29, 2004, Grand Rapids, Michigan. Contact: Bob Donahoe, 160 Sea Gull Lane, Eastham, Massachusetts. Telephone: 508-240-1201.

**80TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, August 11-14, 2004, Wyndham Pittsburgh Airport Hotel, Coraopolis, Pennsylvania. Contact: Marvin R. Spencer, 2102 4th Avenue North, Texas City, Texas 77590. Telephone: 409-948-4276.

**87TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 6-13, 2004, Valley Forge Hilton Hotel, King of Prussia, Pennsylvania. Contact: Harold Tendam, 9372 Arnaz Circle, Port Charlotte, Florida 33981. Telephone: 941-697-3563.

**90TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 9-12, 2004, Hilton Alexandria Mark Center Hotel, Alexandria, Virginia. Contact: James R. Reid, Sr., 17 Lake Shore

Drive, Willowbrook, Illinois 60527-2221. Telephone: 630-789-0204.

**106TH INFANTRY DIVISION**, September 1-5, 2004, Hyatt Regency Hotel, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Contact: Marion Ray, 704 Briarwood Drive, Bethalto, Illinois 62010-1168. Telephone: 618-377-3674.

**146TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, October 7-9, 2004, Biltmore Hotel, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Contact: Joe Manning, PO Box 239, Chickasha, Oklahoma 73023-0239. Telephone: 405-224-4012.

**150TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, May 12-14, 2004, Falmouth, Massachusetts. Contact: Curtis Shaw, 25 Sagamore Road, West Yarmouth, Massachusetts 02673. Telephone: 508-771-1270.

**159TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, September 9-12, 2004, Hilton Knoxville, Knoxville, Tennessee. Contact: Russell W. Ruch, 709 North 7th Street, Pottsville, Pennsylvania 17901-1606.

**248TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, September 16-19, 2004, Cleveland, Ohio. Contact: Fred Mone. Telephone: 216-252-1603.

**264TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**, August 19-21, 2004, Florence, Kentucky. Contact: Bob Latz, 148 Vicary Hill Lane, N.E., #1, Canton, Ohio 44714-1265. Telephone: 330-493-4657.

**275TH ARMORED FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION**, November 5-6, 2004, Hampton Inn, Jackson, Tennessee. Contact: Kenneth Stevens, Box 143, Bolivar, Tennessee 38008. Telephone: 731-658-3361.

**281ST ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, September 27-29, 2004, Holiday Inn Pigeon Forge Resort, Pigeon Forge, Tennessee. Contact: Albert B. Cline, PO Box 501, Gaffney, South Carolina 29342. Telephone: 864-489-6528.

**285TH FIELD ARTILLERY OBSERVATION BATTALION**, August 19-21, 2004, Crown Plaza, Pittsburgh International Airport, Corapolis, Pennsylvania. Contact: Bruno Toia, 213 Forest Green Drive, Moontownship, Pennsylvania 15108. Telephone: 412-262-2296.

**291ST ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, June 10-14, 2004, Radisson Downtown Hotel, St. Louis, Missouri. Contact: Joe Geary, 70 Linden Drive, Kingston, Rhode Island 02881. Telephone: 401-783-9155.

**296TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, September 22-24, 2004, Sturbridge Host Hotel, Sturbridge, Massachusetts. Contact: Joseph Civitillo, 9 Ireland Road, Wethersfield, Connecticut 06109. Telephone: 860-529-2652.

**300TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION**, June 3-6, 2004, Holiday Inn Select, 11350 LBJ Freeway, Dallas, Texas 75238. Contact: Randy Hanes, 6490 Ridgemont Drive, Dallas, Texas 75214.

**328TH INFANTRY COMBAT TEAM**, October 19-20, 2004, Atlantic City, New Jersey. Contact: Ed Hauck, 1117 Wheatland Avenue #H-1, Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603. Telephone: 717-392-4419.

**526TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION**, September 15-18, 2004, Salt Lake City, Utah. Contact: Sherrie Morrison, PO Box 456, Yolo, California. Telephone: 530-662-8160.

**602ND TANK DESTROYER BATTALION**, August 6-8, 2004, Best Western Saddleback Inn, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. Contact: Raymond J. Young, Box 4573, East Lansing Michigan 48826. Telephone: 517-420-1517.

**773RD TANK DESTROYER BATTALION**, September 7-9, 2004, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Contact: Edward H. McClelland, 4384 West 182nd Street, Cleveland, Ohio 44135-3862. Telephone: 216-251-0445.

**SHAEF/ETOUSA VETERANS ASSOCIATION (ETO)**, October 8-10, 2004, Westin St. Francis Hotel, San Francisco, California. Contact: Charles W. Long, 1626 Hicks Drive, Vienna, Virginia 22181-2058. Telephone: 703-938-2527.

*(Continued on page 29)*





*Embassy of the United States of America*

U.S. Embassy Belgium  
Regentlaan 27 Boulevard du Regent  
B-1000 Brussels

U.S. Embassy Luxembourg  
22, Bd. Emmanuel Servais  
L-2535 Luxembourg

July 19, 2004

Dear veterans of the Battle of the Bulge:

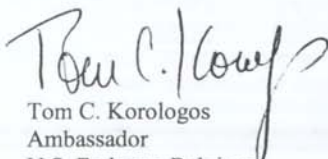
As you may know, this year is a very special one for Belgians and Luxembourgers who have not forgotten your courage and sacrifice during the greatest battle of World War II. The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge will be observed this December with appreciation and friendship by hundreds of thousands of Belgians and Luxembourgers. Preserving the collective memory of those dark days is critical to the Belgian and Luxembourg people.


We are aware that some of you have considered or are returning to the Ardennes in December 2004 with Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Association (VBOB) for the many commemorations hosted by your Belgian and Luxembourg friends. As every effort is made by Belgium and Luxembourg to welcome you for the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary, we would like to encourage those of you still uncommitted to the December trip to join fellow veterans here for Night Vigil 2004. Please also consider coming over for other 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary events throughout 2004-2005, including VE Day on May 8. The Belgian and Luxembourg Royal Families will be participating in several events.

Please contact VBOB for further information: e-mail them at [vbobbulge60@att.net](mailto:vbobbulge60@att.net) or call (703) 528-4058.

Together with your Belgian and Luxembourg friends, we look forward to welcoming and meeting you and your families. It is our joint hope that by bringing your families here, you will help future generations understand the sacrifices that you made and the gratitude that remains. Let the torch of remembrance continue to shine and guide future generations.

Sincerely,

  
Tom C. Korologos  
Ambassador  
U.S. Embassy Belgium

  
Peter Terpeluk, Jr.  
Ambassador  
U.S. Embassy Luxembourg



## 28TH SIGNAL CORPS IN THE BULGE

*[The following memories were sent to us by Associate Member Gerald L. (Jerry) Puff. The memories were written by ROBERT W. (BOB) EICHNER, who was a signal man in the 28TH SIGNAL CORPS with the 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION. Thanks, Jerry.]*

### MEMORIES OF SIX DAYS BEFORE CHRISTMAS, 1944

Our Division Headquarters was stationed in a little town called Wiltz, Belgium, after taking quite a beating in the Hurtgen Forest trying to get to the town of Schmitt, Germany. Many casualties so we needed replacements and re-organization.

Since I was with the T&T (telephone and telegraph) Section of the 28th Signal Corps our duties required us to install, maintain and operate communications telephone and telegraph service.

Wiltz was a town built on the side of a mountain. As I remember the angle was close to 60 degrees. At the bottom of the hill was a tannery. The main road was made of old cobblestones. Homes were built off the main road and approximately half way up the hill was the town business section. Not much there, a beer garden, nick knock store, etc., but the main building was the Post Office. Our switchboard was installed and maintained in the Post Office. The Post Master and his family were allowed to stay in the basement of the Post Office even though the little boy (about five years old) did sneak up the stairs to get some goodies of candy and cookies that were sent to us for the holidays.

When we weren't on duty operating the switchboard and had time off, we went to the beer garden for some good German (cold) beer and a little singing. A couple of our guys played instruments. I remember a guitar, sax and home made bass which consisted of four about 1/4" diameter each telephone wires strung across a huge can that used to hold cooking grease that was slotted and a mop handle anchored to the can with strings attached. It was played and sounded real good. Snow was on the ground and (it) was real cold.

On December 17, I was scheduled for night duty on the switchboard. Our code name was Holiday--the Division Headquarters switchboard. Other smaller type switchboards were in three Infantry regiments and in field artillery and calls were initiated through small switchboards to ours then to Corp Headquarters or Army Headquarters higher.

About 3 or 4 a.m. I received a call from Infantry Regiment switchboard calling for me to get G-1 up. Nobody wakes up Colonels in the middle of the night but I did ring and get him up. Suspecting something was up; I didn't close my off/on switch so I could hear what was going on. They talked in code but I still had an idea something big was going on. I figured out Germans were gathering and going to make a push.

G-1 called the rest of the G's and the rest of the headquarters was soon alive with calls.

I was relieved from duty and went to eat a hot meal. Coming back, a huge map was on the board indicating where our troops were and the Germans. All of our replacements weren't there yet so we were still vulnerable to attack. Our Infantry Regiments were covering large areas. Since we were in

mountainous terrain with forests and sharp mountains nobody thought tanks could be detrimental but here they were coming through the forest and fast attacking our regiments and still coming. Our parking lot that stored our Company vehicles was under fire.

Our division headquarters was in danger of being captured so everybody knew we would be infantrymen again as we were trained in the beginning.

Our lieutenant (the so and so) picked me to detail 5 men to stay behind and man the switchboard. Others were told to do likewise in all sections of Headquarters, typewriter boys, police, medics, and engineers. Knowing what they intended to do, I refused to pick guys to stay while the rest took off to save their hides. Lieutenant then said he would court martial me. I told him to shove his stripes but he was the guy to pick my buddies. "Col" House was one. (An explanation is needed: Wendel House was a T-Sgt--Colonel was his nickname.) One night in France, Wendel was on teletype duty. A colonel came to him for directions. Wendel showed him how to go. The colonel followed Wendel's directions and fell in a dugout trench. Following that, the nickname "Col." stuck with Wendel.) Vehicles were loaded as soon as possible and convoy was on its way out. Since we have left approximately 1,000 men back with a few lucky officers, we had to set up to make battle. Communications were gone. All alone!

All of the anti-German town people left but some stayed indicating they favored the Germans and would betray us if possible. We flushed them out. Food was now a problem. So from house to house we went to see what we could find. Opening cupboards we saw a brand new German officers uniform. We checked a little further and found the cupboard was false and led to a tunnel to the forest behind. We chopped up the uniform. Found coffee, tea, etc. Started guard duty. Lucky me, I got the two hour night shift walking a lonely road that was pitch black about 1/2 mile to the other post. I was scared! Knowing I was asking for trouble cause my footsteps would be heard. On the other hill our reconnaissance plane--a little Piper Cub--was on fire.

Germans started artillery fire. It kept up quite a while--even hit the Monastery that was on the top-side of mountain Wiltz.

Approximately two days went by and orders came we (approximately 1,000 men) were going to make a run for it. We were completely cut off from any support units. We figured out how many men and vehicles needed. Disabled rest of vehicles by breaking spark plugs, dirt in gas, set fire, punched tires, etc.

Some of our reconnaissance men had found out that our only road out was guarded with two heavy machine guns. Engineers were to set dynamite charges to eliminate the machine guns. Two groups of engineers went out to silence the machine guns.

We all piled into the trucks, standing up only. I had only one leg in the truck body. The convoy started up the only exit out in the dead of the night. How much noise the convoy made! On we came and awaiting the blasts from the engineering to let us out of the trap. No sound; no blast came. Then silhouetted was a "tiger tank" in the middle of the road. It lowered its "88" and let go. The jeep up front was a direct hit. Just like the "4th of July." Then machine guns opened up. I didn't wait for any invitation to leave. I got the hell out and quick. Made for the woods. Firing was all around. Germans sent a flare up. It lit the place like daylight. We were told during training if this ever did occur to stand still.

(Continued)



## MEMORIES

(Continuation)

Movement is what they would see. When it burnt out I headed for the deep part of the forest.

Along the way GI's were found in the same fix so we grouped ourselves and tried to get as far away as possible. "...couldn't see where you'll go in the woods," heard the guy in front say. When creeks were found, we walked in them so no footprints in snow. Mountains were sharp and we had to slide down on our butts going down and used trees and stumps to pull us up going up. Came up on a German tank unit. Got out quick!

When daylight appeared, we spotted railroad tracks and knew they would go somewhere. We had walked for miles and figured we would make better time walking on them but also figured Germans would be using them so we went back in the forest. We had about 20 in this group. We also knew we had to head southwest toward Paris approximately 100 miles.

Climbing up one mountain with brush and trees breaking, a German challenged us but when so much movement was involved and no answer received, they took off. Our break! Our cloths weren't warm. We didn't have time to get goulashes or the heavy GI coats, gloves, extra socks or inner hat liners. I had only GI Eisenhower Jacket as an outer garment and it was cold. No time to sleep. Afraid to sleep; too cold. Germans are near. The 23rd Psalm--"...valley of death, I fear no evil"--is what kept me going.

Made our way to a clear area and could see a field. No Germans visible. Saw a snow cone shaped pile in the field. Knowing these people pile sugar beets this way and being hungry; figured we'd chance it. We dug with our bare hands and got some. Couldn't bite into them--frozen with snow, but still better than the snow, which we lived on. Then headed in a southwest direction by way of the sun and somebody had a compass for direction. Our group was now five people--more chance of some of us getting out.

From then on we were really hungry, tired and cold. We slept a little. Guys with overcoats on the ends, guys without slept body to body to keep heat. No fires as it would tell where we were.

Came to a cleared area where we had to cross a road and pass a small bridge further down the road guarded by a German. There were two Germans guarding a bridge, they march toward each other, just pass the bridge, stop a second looking away from each other, then do an about face and march toward each other again.

We (the five men groups) got as close to the road as possible without being seen and laid in a ditch beside the road and waited to get the rhythm of the guards. Then when the guards would be looking away from each other, we would dash across the road one by one. We regrouped on the other side of the road in the wood patch. Woods are in patches as well as large areas. We made a dash through wood patch then to a larger wooded area. Another road to cross! Heard a truck! Kept quiet, lying down on ground and snuck up on our bellies to have a look. Here it was a German wire-laying truck laying telephone wire. Watched--wanted to booby-trap the line with a hand grenade but we decided against this. Then the truck left but just behind it came the troops. Broad daylight--had to lay in the snow on the ground for 8-10 hours watching German troops going up to fight. I had a cold and was sneezing but I couldn't sneeze now. I stuffed a hanky in my mouth so I didn't. Finally the Germans stopped and we were on our way again.

On top of a hill we came upon a little town. Looking down tried to figure how to get something to eat as it's been days since we had a thing. I even tried eating my home made leather cigarette case. Saw a lone, old German soldier and captured him. We then went back into woods with him. We didn't know what to do with him cause he would give us away. We tried to find someone who could dispose of him. Nobody had the stomach. The German was trying to tell us he was hungry and we, after 3-4 days without food, got mad. One guy smacked his fist right in the German's mouth. He was crying, showing us pictures of his family knowing we were deciding his doom. Soft hearted us (the group) agreed to release him if he brought us some bread and wine. He was sure grateful to be spared--so we thought! After releasing him, we moved to another location, not really trusting him. It wasn't too long and from our vantage point we saw about 15 German troops making their way where we were--after us. Footprints can be followed so in the woods we traveled and bypassed the town.

We came upon one lone house just past these woods and decided, hell or high water, food we will get or else. One fellow spoke French, Belgians speak Flemish--a cross between German and French. So we broke through the back door of the house. Lady in the house is trying to tell us "out" but all we do is look and look for something to eat. She tells this fellow "Alarmen." "German" are in front yard. We check out and--sure enough--there they were. So out the back we went and back to the woods again. With night came snow and full moon.

Another clearing sighted--silhouetted. Hay piled in blocks. Pulled bottom ones loose and crawled on it to get out of the cold and to sleep a little during daylight and moved out at night. Moved on after a couple of hours. At dusk we came on a two story, wood framed house and was going in when someone saw two German motorcycles out front. Made a detour quick. When night came again about five days out we found ourselves having to cross a large field wide open with snow about 4' deep and the moon out full that left beautiful shadows for them. But we must go across. Two roads ran parallel to each other but approximately 1/2 mile apart. We could see their very blackout lights on their vehicles and hear them--our advantage. So we would go on in southwest direction till we heard them then drop down to freeze in that position till they passed. I was ready by then to give up with no food, beat, feet and hands froze, but the guys pressed me to go on and made me go on.

Finally on the sixth day out (December 24), we located tank tracks. We had an engineer with us and he said these are American tracks but we didn't know if Americans were in them. We couldn't go any more and decided to see where they went. There in a field was about 35 Sherman tanks (ours) so we had to take a chance that Americans were in them. So we came out with our hands up. Gone for six days, we didn't know the password and as soon as came out in the open we heard a machine gun click off the lock position (next sound is the bullets). Knowing Germans can't cuss, swear and use vile language we called the guys every rotten name we could. Finally one GI with an automatic rifle came down and took us to their officers for questioning. Who were we? How did we get here? After questioning us and we convinced them we were on their side (Germans took our uniforms from the dead and infiltrated our lines). They asked if we were hungry. Course we were. Gave us a can of dry cheese--just ran out of coffee made from the heat of the

(Continued)



## MEMORIES

(Continued)

manifold tank. Couldn't eat it anyhow. Stomach shrunk too much. Gave us each a foxhole and some blankets and in we went to get some sleep.

Waking up next morning I saw two tanks on fire and asked what happened. Two direct hits from the German artillery. Never heard a sound!

Now we (five) were packed into an armored car. Had a dome affair and we had to stand in this dome, no protection from wind or cold. We were to go to the tank headquarters G-2 to tell any information we had to them. When we got there we tried to tell them where we had been on their map and where to lay artillery fire down on. Air Corps still not used. Due to fog!

Finally, we got to a field hospital. Cut my leggings and shoes off my feet--frozen solid. Feet and hands--no feeling. Got some light food--soup, etc. Then into an ambulance for another hospital in Belgium. Stayed a short while there. Man beside me asked for a cigarette. I got it. He died before he had a couple of puffs. Then on to a train and into Paris. Arrived late at night. Paid French people carried us off the train to ambulance then to another hospital on top floor. About the time we got put, here comes "bed check Charlie." German bomber over hospital then boom. They blasted the Red Cross train I had been on. I tried to write home to stop the "missing-in-action" telegram. I couldn't!

A day or so later left Paris by train to Cherbourg. Was loaded on to a boat by German prisoners and then off to Plymouth, England.

Stayed in a field hospital tent heated with one small potbelly stove and sure cold. Were about six other wounded with me. Doctors came checking every day to see if we had recuperated enough so they could send us right back to fighting again. Was there about four or five weeks. My hands started having feeling by now. My feet started to have feeling but two toes--big toe and one beside--were still as black as ebony on one foot and big toe on other foot was black. Leo Saindon found out he would lose two toes as gangrene set in the way Doc was telling, where to cut? They were waiting to see what my results would be. One day I had feeling, found by putting a needle straight into the big toe. Boy, I was glad. Maybe I wouldn't lose any toes. The color started coming into my toes. By then America was on the offensive and I wasn't a candidate to go back into the fight again.

Good news--I was going home! So off we go by train one night and landed in Glasgow, Scotland, to board a small ship to take us out into the deep part where the "Queen Elizabeth" had her belly open and we were carried to our berths for the trip home. In our berth were approximately eight guys and hot British food next door--even our own "crapper."

The guy next to me had his leg cut off at the knee. His leg was in a cage with weights on it to stretch his skin over the stump. He was a farmer from out West. Another guy had both legs in casts; shrapnel still in legs. This GI's biggest desire was to go on a toilet. Those of us who could move a little lifted him on the "pot." Oh how happy he was and he sat and sat (for what) seemed half a day. No escorts on the trip home. Took three days. Landed in New York and was put in hospital on Long Island. Was going to meet a buddy's folks that lived there but they put me on a train to Colorado Springs, Colorado--the closest hospital to Pittsburgh??? (My hometown).

On our train out to Colorado we stopped in Pittsburgh. MP's

came in so we couldn't go AWOL. A preacher was on the train with us trying to keep us consoled. A favorite saying is--when things went wrong in the Army "they would punch your ticket." Well, the pastor was giving us Pittsburghers a "double punch." Helped a little--not much since this was the first time home in eight months. Finally got discharged from there (after a month furlough and a few months of treatment) on July 7, 1945 on a medical disability even though I had more than my share of points to get out. ■

## UNITED STATES ARMY NATIONAL MUSEUM

[Excerpted from *ON POINT: The Journal of Army History*, dated Spring/Summer, 2003.]

In 2009, the National Museum of the United States Army will open its doors. It will be located at Fort Belvoir, Virginia.

The National Museum of the United States Army will present the U.S. Army in total context, placing the American soldier in his and her rightful position--as an historical cornerstone upon which our country has not only grown and prospered, but survived to exist at all. The Army museum will also serve as the grand capstone among the network of existing facilities across the country that commemorate the Army, Army Reserve, and National Guard.

It will inform and amaze visitors of all ages. It will tell the small, personal stories of combat heroism; it will relate the epic descriptions of our great battles. There will also be many opportunities for hands-on experiences.

Fort Belvoir is only 30 minutes south of Washington, D.C.--close enough to benefit from the year-round tourist traffic that frequents D.C. ■

## ADDITIONAL REUNIONS-- JUST RECEIVED

75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, September, 2004, Baton Rouge, Louisiana.  
Contact: James Warmouth, 6545 West 11th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46214-3537

78TH INFANTRY DIVISION, September 19-22, Biloxi, Mississippi.  
Contact: Tom Streicher, 2411 Cambridge Court, Cranberry Township, Pennsylvania 16066. Telephone: 724-772-4466

## SPIRIT OF AMERICA

Spirit of America is a patriotic, live-action show presented by the U.S. Army Military District of Washington. Performed by more than 400 soldiers of the U.S. Army's elite ceremonial units, the 3rd U.S. Infantry Regiment (The Old Guard) and the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own," this free show features traditional and modern music, disciplined drill and historic narrative as soldiers recap the heritage of our country in an inspiring and entertaining performance. Visit [www.mdw.army.mil](http://www.mdw.army.mil) for more information about shows in Washington, D.C.; Worcester, Massachusetts; and Albany, New York. ■



## MY BATTLE OF THE BULGE EXPERIENCE

*[The following article by THOMAS KATANA appeared in the December, 2001, issue of The Golden Acorn newsletter of the 87TH INFANTRY DIVISION.]*

*As we battled, there was almost always some of us who were wounded. I always wondered how the wounded were treated. That was especially true of the more seriously wounded men. Katana's account (among others) describes the events immediately after he was wounded and then later until he was shipped back across the channel to a hospital. Thank God the success rate of caring for the wounded was the highest ever recorded.*

As I recall it was either the first or second of January 1945 in the Battle of the Bulge and Company C was on the attack at the first thing in the morning. As we crossed the open fields towards the woods, our scout spotted German tank tracks. Company C split into three groups. I was on the left with Bill Petrosky, Crooks, Gilbert, Laird and a Medic. Lt. Lister was in the center with Sgt. Kelly and his bazooka team. Sgt. Arnold VanQuerlberg, Garrison, and his team were on the right. The machine gun squad was in the center. We sure thought we had us a German tank. We were sure of a kill.

We entered the woods into a clearing, the farm house was in front of us. We saw the tank tracks going to the right of the farm house. The bazooka team fired a round at the farm house. It missed the house and landed in back of the house. Then German tanks came around both sides of the farm house. They were firing into the trees above us. We fired at the tanks with rifle fire. That's when Sgt. Kelly, standing behind a tree, was hit with a shell fragment. He was hit in the face around the eyes. He hollered that he couldn't see. He started moving toward the tanks. The German tanks fired their machine guns and cut him down. Laird and Hopkins were also down. The medic tried to get to Kelly but the German tank fire was too great.

We were told to pull back. Our guys kept up the rifle fire. We saw the German tanks pull back. My guys headed back the same way we came in, on the left side. As we came out of the woods, I was surprised to see one of our tanks moving along the outside of the woods. We could see the roof of the farm house, picked up the phone and tapped the tank. The tanker opened up. I asked him to fire a few rounds at the farm house or in that area. He said he was too low on gas. He was heading back.

I saw Lt. Lister. I asked him to ask the tanker to fire. Lt. Lister said we should head back and regroup. The tank was in front of us. Then two more tanks arrived. Major Cornel and his jeep driver arrived. He asked Capt. Wilkens about the delay. Just then we received German mortar fire. We all headed for our holes. I landed on top of Arnold VanQuerlberg and Elmer Zeichner. They were glad I was on top. When the mortar fire was over, the major's jeep driver was killed. He never got out of the jeep. He was hit in the neck.

Capt. Wilkens called me over and asked me to take the patrol back. We were to scout the area for wounded soldiers. As I recall Garrison, Crooks, a Medic and I headed back on the left

side again. When we entered the woods we found that Sgt. Kelly Hopkins and Laird were dead. We left the area.

I reported the dead to Capt. Wilkens. The Major said we should attack again. This time we should follow behind the two tanks. Some of our guys should mount the tanks and fire the 50 caliber machine guns. I remember Gene Garrison was on one of the tanks behind the 50 caliber machine gun. I said to the Captain that I wasn't too happy going up the middle. We started to move behind the tanks. They sure did draw fire. The German tanks started to fire. Mortar rounds landed all around us. Our tanks turned right. There was in an open field. The first burst hit me in the arm and chest. I went down. I was bleeding at the mouth.

I saw Arnold VanQuerlberg get hit and go down. I fired a few rounds. I really wanted to get the hell out of there. I stood up and headed back. About halfway back the second burst landed. I went flying in the air. I landed on my back. My left leg was laying across my cheek. I was looking at my left boot. I thought my left leg was blown off. I picked up my left leg and laid it straight. Then I took all the pills they gave me. Thank God it was cold. It stopped the flow of blood in both my leg and chest.

A friend of mine from Latrobe, Pennsylvania, Claire Beeghly from Company B, 347th Regiment, came by. He said he would send for help and a medic. Pat Gilbert came by to check my wounds. He went back to get some help to carry me. First they tried to carry me with an Army top coat and two rifles. I said that it hurt too much. They found a stretcher from either a Blanchard or Panther Jeep. They laid me over the hood of the Jeep. One soldier saw my new boots. He asked if he could exchange boots. I said "sure." We exchanged boots and then he wrapped my feet in his blanket. The Jeep started back to the aid station. It was getting dark and I remembered that the Germans had planted mines in the area. I was still laying on the hood of the jeep. Thank God nothing happened.

We made it to the aid station. There I was rebandaged by Surgeon Moles. I met Elmer Zeichner. They told me he had lost a foot helping a wounded soldier back with a medic. A shell landed near them. He was the one that got hit. I never saw Elmer again until the 87th reunion.

They sent me to the general hospital in Rheims, France. A catholic priest gave me his blessing of oils, the last rites of the church. German prisoners carried me to the operating room. They set my leg and removed the German steel from my neck. They put me in a body cast. I was in a cast from my neck to my left toe. There was an opening of course in my private parts. I had a nurse who wrote a letter for me. I'm sorry that I did not get her name. I laid here for two weeks.

They were going to send me to an English hospital. It was the 94th General. I was red tagged to keep me from being flown to England. But by an army error I was sent out to an airport. I had to go to England by ship. The U.S. Air Force base 47 carded the wounded to England. While laying on a cot I had to go real badly. All around me were French speaking people. I tried to tell the nurse I had to go. She said "OK." She brought a shaving mug and a straight razor. She soaped my face. I was trying to tell her I needed a bed pan. She said "OK." She started to shave me. Boy I did not move with that young girl holding a razor to my throat. Finally, a ward medic came over and told the girl what I needed. She laughed. Thank heavens for bed pans.

(Continued)



## BULGE EXPERIENCE

(Continuation)

Since I had a red tag warning not to fly, they shipped me by ambulance to the coast, where I boarded a hospital ship for England. While on the hospital ship the wounded were placed in nice bunks. I remember, however, a guy came and stole my knitted hat. I saw him looking for other stuff to steal. I didn't think a guy could stoop so low as to steal from the wounded who couldn't move. We called for help but nothing was done. I arrived at the 94th Hospital in England but that is another story!■

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## INTRODUCTION TO A TIGER TANK

*[The following was submitted by ALLEN GOODMAN,  
517TH PARACHUTE REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM.]*

Once the advance of the Germans was stalled at the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium in January of 1945 our responsibility was to clear any enemy pockets still existing as we traveled east on our final target which was Berlin.

It was cold and miserable with plenty of snow as we trudged along the road clearing each little hamlet or town of any enemy resistance. For the most part, the enemy had departed and was trying to re-group to protect their rear flank as they retreated from the assault of the American and British troops.

Our platoon had slowly cleared this one particular group of buildings possibly a family farm at one time, and was moving on to clear a building 50 to 60 yards up the road when we encountered enemy rifle fire. The final building turned out to be their last defense and they had some of their riflemen, with snow uniforms, laying out in the fields behind cows that had been shot but were still breathing, so you couldn't pick up the breathing of the German riflemen. This made it almost impossible to realize they were there.

Once we left the protection of the buildings of this little hamlet and advanced to the open roadway heading toward this remaining building--the enemy opened fired on the targets we provided. Our advance scout, Hubie Ford, from Chicago, was shot in the head and laid out there on the road crying for help while the rest of the platoon went for cover. It was only then that we realized where the rifle fire was coming from and we were unable to go to the aid of our lead scout. We did return heavy fire at the enemy and they finally retreated to the protection of their stronghold.

In the meantime we finally reached Hubie but it was too late. I might just mention at this point that Hubie and I were quite close--because while in training back in Georgia we both enjoyed the big band sound and it's vocalists--so when the Hit Parade came on with Frank Sinatra--we were the only two who would stay in the barracks to listen, in spite of the squealing of the teenagers. The rest of the platoon would vacate the barracks.

At this point, with resistance still forthcoming from the building up the road, we withdrew to the hamlet that we had just cleared and settled in for the night. We were assigned to different stations and told to keep on the alert for any further attack by the enemy. A big barn presented shelter for many of us, some in the hayloft, others on the main floor. I ended up alone in the harness room on the second floor with a view of one

flank that I was to pay heed to for further enemy action. Night came on and many of us fell asleep--and then it happened. What looked like a giant tank--which it was. A Tiger Tank--top of the line in the way of German armor. It quietly rolled its way over a hill to our front and opened fire on the barn. Talk about an alarm waking one from his beauty sleep. It blew about half of the barn away and sent most of us scampering for a way out. All this brought most of us to the center courtyard of this little hamlet and our first reaction was to take off as fast as we could run, away from the shelter we have been in. It just so happened that the two officers with us had already retreated to safety to some rear position and we never saw them again.

We have one non-com, a mortar sergeant (Pete Lockhart by name), who stopped us all and said, "I'll shoot the first \*\$%# who leaves the shelter of these buildings--our safety is here, hiding in the buildings and attacking the tank if it dares to come into our midst. Once, we leave the protection we have and enter the open fields, we're like shooting ducks!" We did stay and by doing so we discouraged the tank commander from entering what would have been our trap. The tank withdrew and we were safe.

Sgt. Lockhart, once the story was told, was given a battle field commission and became our platoon commander. Further up the road we were quartered in another barn and I was sent back for more ammunition with another man.

As we approached the side entrance to this barn a sniper opened fire on us. My buddy was closest to the door and should have been the poorest target while I was more exposed but fate would have it--he was shot in the stomach as he turned to enter the barn. At first it didn't appear to be fatal but on turning him over we saw the gaping hole in his back and he was gone within minutes. That was the closest I came to leaving this earth and it made me realize how lucky a person could be.■

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## QUICK MOVE TO BASTOGNE

*[The following was received from QUINTON LEATHERS,  
JR., 6TH ARMORED DIVISION 212TH ARMORED  
FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION, BATTERY A.]*

I believe it was Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, we got orders to close stations march order. We missed our Christmas dinner.

We left Ipppling, France, for the Bulge and drove two or three days and nights in all kinds of weather. We were with General Patton's Third U. S. Army, coming up from the south.

The roads were iced over. Some vehicles slipped into the ditches. We stopped outside Bastogne in firing position. Then, General Patton came by and continued to and through Bastogne. Then we moved through the city while it was being shelled.

We were in or near Margit and other villages on the other side of Bastogne when we found that our 105th (mounted on m-7) were too close to them--88 mm. We moved back through Bastogne in firing position in a clump of trees on the side of the road, firing round after round. Shell bursts from an 88 in the trees wounded our battery CO and an enlisted man.

War was going on all around--everywhere--with all kinds of weapons.■



## In the snow and cold, heeding cries for help

[Following is an article which appeared in *LOCAL: THE MORNING CALL* on December 26, 2002, based on David Venditta's interview with **JULIAN BARKIS, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION.**]

It was cold, darn cold, and there was a lot of snow. We were asleep in our foxholes at St. Vith when the shelling started early in the morning. It was like being in the middle of the Fourth of July fireworks. We had no idea what was going on.

I was in a hole with an infantry guy. Shells were exploding above us in the top of the big spruce trees. Shrapnel and splintered wood were flying everywhere. Some of the trees were on fire, that's how hot they were.

Sometimes a shell would hit a hole and splatter the guys all over the place, and that was the end of them. They never knew what happened.

The guy who was with me said, "I wish I was home for Christmas." I'll never forget that.

Some guys heard shooting, then everybody started shooting. They didn't know what they were shooting at. They didn't see anybody because all the shells were coming in. But they knew there was something coming, so they all started firing. There were bullets flying all over. I just kept my head down.

Our side started shelling too. That's what really stopped the Germans. We had tanks that were assigned to the 2nd Division that were behind us, firing away. They were dug in the ground to stay.

When there was a lull, we waited for word that somebody was hit, that somebody needed help. First aid men and regular GIs would help carry the wounded. If their buddies got hit, they'd crawl out on their bellies and haul them into a hole.



Courtesy of Julius Barkis

*Barkis as a medic: The troops always wanted us with them in case they got hurt.*

There were guys who were hit in the head, in the face, in the feet, every damn wound you could think of. Some were screaming and hollering. We'd just patch them up the best we could and inject them with morphine to kill the pain. Then we'd try to get them to the aid station not far behind us.

The shelling didn't stop for days, but we didn't move. We were all dug in and ready for anything. My regiment, the 23rd Infantry, stopped attack after attack.

### Blowing holes in houses

It was rough, but we had it rough even before the Bulge. On the day after D-Day, we landed on Omaha Beach, which was still under intense fire. That's where I treated my first casualty, a second lieutenant who fell right in front of me, shot through the leg by a sniper. ....

### Shells don't discriminate

Four or five weeks before the Bulge, we were all supposed to get new boots, but we never got them. So to keep our feet warm and dry we wrapped our boots with any kind of cloth we could find—a towel or jacket or underwear.

We had big overcoats. That's the thing that saved everybody—that long overcoat. We looked like Germans in it. Underneath we had fatigues and heavy socks and anything else we could get to wear. A lot of guys had sweaters. I had an insulated jacket.

The guys who were at the front doing the fighting, the only thing they had on was their regular battle outfits. No overcoats. They really took a beating.

There were about 20 guys in my regiment's medical detachment, including a doctor and a dentist. The dentist had two aides who were also medics. Boys with toothaches were glad he was around.

We medics carried two first aid packs, slung over each shoulder, in addition to a backpack. The aid packs had splints, slings, aspirin, cold medicine, throat lozenges, sulfanilamide powder that we treated every wound with, morphine, all kinds of bandages. That was about 35 pounds of gear.

But we were lucky; we never had to dig a hole. The troops always wanted us with them in case they got hurt. They'd call out from their holes, "Hey medic, hey doc, over here!"

We had the red cross on the helmet and the medic patch, so nobody was supposed to shoot at us. But when the artillery came, it didn't pick out the patches. It just came.

### An altar on a hood

At the Bulge, we lived in foxholes and ate the best we could. They passed out K-rations for breakfast, lunch and dinner all at one time. The rations had powdered eggs, cereal, meat, coffee, chocolate bars, cheese, cigarettes, chewing gum. The meat and cheese came in a round can. We'd heat the meat with the small sterno that came in the ration box. If we didn't have a sterno, we lit the wax-covered ration box, which burned longer and hotter than sterno. That's how we made our coffee and tea. We used the snow for water and held the cup over the burning box.

We talked a lot about home. We were always talking about what we were going to do when the war was over. "If I ever get out of here, I'm going to do this or I'm going to do that." My ambition was to be a big league baseball player. I carried a baseball glove in my medical pouch and used it as a seat and a pillow in the damp cold.

Anytime you had a chance, on a Sunday or even a Saturday, you could go to Mass. They's set up the altar on the hood of a jeep, and the priest would give you communion. Some people left there and got hit the same day, but at least they got communion.

(Continued)



All the time, you were so damn tired, you had to sleep, but oh, it was cold, and you were worried about staying alive. Sometimes you went three, four days without sleep, too darned scared from incoming fire and too busy taking care of the wounded to fall asleep.

## Anger born of treachery

In our foxholes, we heard about our guys surrounded at Bastogne, in the heart of the bulge. What they went through!

We heard about the massacre at Malmedy. The Germans loaded these guys on trucks and said they were taking them to a prison camp somewhere. They they said, "Now we'll take a 15-minute break." When the prisoners got out, the machine guns on the trucks just cut them down.

Some of the guys survived, and that's how word spread about what happened. We found out in no time. It made everybody mad, and they got psyched and shot at anything that moved.

But that wasn't the first time something like that happened. A couple of times the Germans came out and were ready to surrender to our outfit, and they'd fall down, and the Germans behind them opened fire and shot the hell out of us.

After they couldn't take Bastogne, the Germans just took off. From our foxholes, it was amazing to see all these planes after the weather cleared up. Heading toward Germany all day long. Huge squadrons. Everybody got out of their holes and started hollering, "Yaaay, yaaay, yaaay! cheering the bombers on. ■

Jim Barlow, member of the VBOB Maryland/District of Columbia Chapter (MD-DC). At the State of Maryland Catholic War Veterans Convention in Ocean City, Maryland, in May, 2004, Jim was named the Catholic War Veteran of Maryland for the year 2004. Jim was nominated for this award for his volunteer work in the community, services to his parish, services to veterans' organizations, and services to a Veterans Affairs hospital and home. Jim served with the 467th Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion in WWII, landed on Omaha Beach on D-Day, and saw action in the Ardennes Campaign (BoB). Jim is also the Commander of a VFW Post in Baltimore, Maryland. Congratulations, Jim, to a well deserved award.



VBOB, Inc. is non-partisan. It encourages candidates of all political persuasions and incumbents to support legislation important to: National Defense and to Active, Reserve, National Guard, retired members of the uniform services, other veterans, their families, and survivors.

# DELAWARE VALLEY CHAPTER HONORED



On a hot muggy, afternoon, Thursday, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004, Delaware Valley Chapter was honored at the Philadelphia Phillies inter-league baseball game at the new Citizens Bank Park, Philadelphia, PA.. Delaware Valley Chapter was honored to present the "Colors" at home plate with the playing of the National Anthem. DVC Honor Guard, wearing VBOB over-seas caps and VBOB sport shirts, included Rocky Cosentino, Mac McConnell, Al Babacki (American Flag bearer), Dan Iannelli, and Marty Sheeron. Seventy DVC members, associates and friends were in attendance, seated in the Terrace deck with a picturesque scenic view of the ballpark and the skyline of Philadelphia.

In honor of their service to the country, each DVC member received a red, white and blue lapel ribbon with a plastic white dove attached. The Phillies were victorious with a 6-2 defeat of the Detroit Tigers in their inter-league game. The Phillies win added to the honors of the day for DVC members.

Marty Sheeron, 53rd Fld. Hosp.



## Club Meade Luncheon

May 27, 2004

Reciting the Pledge of Allegiance filled the room with emotion  
For the privilege to do this, they fought with fierce devotion  
With pride we all sang The Star Spangled Banner  
Many eyes shining with tears, when sung in this manner  
A movie "The Enemy Strikes," after lunch was shown  
I'm sure plunging these veterans into memories of their own  
Showing the war as it was, graphic in content  
Engrossed in the battle scenes; too moved to comment  
We honor those who came home, we remember those who died  
"God Bless America" is our battle cry of pride!

(At the actual dedication ceremony, which was a beautiful sunny day)

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## 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION 38TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

*[The following Stars and Stripes article by Paul Caldwell, dated Saturday, February 3, 1945, was sent to us by CHESTER P. SLOAN, 2ND INFANTRY DIVISION.]*

### 38th Regiment Bags 78 Tanks in Four-Day Bulge Battle

With Second Infantry Division--In no sector of the First Army front did battles rage more furiously and savagely than to the mud-bogged Monschau area held by the 38th Regiment, when the counter-offensive began December 17.

Doughboys who had punched their way well inside the Ruhr were forced to fight just as bitterly on the way out of the rapidly closing pocket over the same bloody ground they had taken that morning.

Then for three days and nights they beat back vicious thrusts, gave ground reluctantly, threw the German offensive off-schedule and finally stopped the elite German troops miles short of their goal.

#### Bags 18 Tanks

Seventy-eight of Rundstedt's tanks, armored cars and trucks were destroyed or disabled in the bitter fighting. His dead and wounded ran well into the four figure mark.

The story of the 38th at Rotherath and Krinkelt is one of unit and individual heroism.

Aiming first at vital division supply and communication lines, the German drive forced Lt. Col. Frank T. Mildren, Las Vegas, Nevada, to pull his First Battalion back three miles, and begin a desperate two-day seesaw struggle.

During the fierce four day battle two officers from battalion headquarters improvised ways and means of dealing with the Germans. 1/Lt. Sidney B. Dane, Chicago, used cattle to effect a road block against enemy tanks, and 1/Lt. Howard Emmrich, Cincinnati, dropped anti-tank grenades from a building onto the turret of an attacking tank.

#### Americans Rescued

In one of the grimmest battles of the border, two platoons from Capt. Edward D. Rollings', Company C, pushed back an enemy attack led by 11 tanks. In this single engagement 50 Germans were killed, and *[figure vague but looks like 25]* American soldiers were rescued from enemy hands.

Members of D Company, commanded by 1/Lt. Michael E. Matuako, Hadley, Massachusetts, fought with rifles, carbines and pistols, and seven men who had been captured by the Germans overpowered sentries and escaped to rejoin the fight. So rapidly did houses and barns change hands during the battle that S/Sgt Paul Hepler, Nebraska, leader of a .30 calibre machine gun crew, was twice captured and twice escaped within 24 hours.

Company F, commanded by Capt John W. Dumont, San Antonio, Texas, fought off three attacks within 24 hours. One attack launched by Tiger tanks and two infantry companies overran the company position, but a machine gun squad from H

Company inflicted heavy casualties. The machine gunners stuck to their gun until the entire crew was wounded. This resulted in 35 dead Germans. The second attack against F Company resulted in 50 dead Jerries.

#### Tanks Knocked Out

Capt. Joseph E. Skaggs, LaCrosse, Wisconsin, commanding G Company, set up a platoon in a perimeter defense around the regimental command post, after a heated fire fight with the enemy. Skaggs' men captured a five-man patrol, and battled tanks consistently, accounting for five with bazookas. A bazooka team composed of PFC Samuel M. DiStefano, Canonsburg, Pennsylvania, and PFC Joseph T. Nemec, Chicago, were credited with two tanks. Another team made up of PFC Eugene X. Gillen, Jersey City, New Jersey, and PFC Albert R. Brunner, Evansville, Indiana, fired two rounds and got two more tanks. S/Sgt Alfred L. Maddux, Trio, Georgia, squad leader, disabled the fifth one.

Meanwhile the AT company, commanded by Capt James Love, Butte, Montana, found itself filling a double role. With their nine .57 mm guns covering im-*[as published]*.

One 57 knocked out two tanks, as its crew and supporting riflemen caused many enemy casualties amounting to the strength of a platoon.

#### Fight With Pistols

Fighting desperately to hold one gun position, Cpl Lewis Turner, San Francisco, and PFC James Siedd, Roanoke, Virginia, although previously wounded, continued to fight the attackers with pistols long after their lines had pulled back. Next morning six dead Germans were found within the shadow of the anti-tank gun.

PFC Isabel Salazar, Houston, Texas, a cook's helper, single-handedly knocked out two enemy tanks with a bazooka at a range of 200 yards, causing a road block on an important road.

All told, the anti-tankers accounted for nine tanks.

Even regimental headquarters was not immune from action. When SS troops infiltrated and enemy tanks lumbered by within yards of the CP, they were engaged by headquarters personnel, organized by Capt Ralph H. Stallworth, Richmond, California. ■

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## NOT TOO LONG, PLEASE

Many of the articles we receive are **extremely** long. While they are very informative and we appreciate your efforts, it takes us a while to be able to use them--space just doesn't permit.

There are a couple of long ones in this issue that we've had for a considerable time--we're trying to get to them.

So, just be patient. We're doing our best to get them in. All of your stories are very important to us and we want to share them with all members.

Also, remember that we try to use only Battle of the Bulge stories. We can't possibly cover all of World War II. We wish we could--we get great stories about Italy, D-Day, freeing POW camps, etc. But, we kinda' have to keep a focus and that focus is the Battle of the Bulge.

We throw nothing away and will keep your stories to be archived at some time in the future. Thanks for sharing....■

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# OFFICIAL VBOB TOUR LUXEMBOURG-BELGIUM 60TH ANNIVERSARY

December 10-20, 2004

The number of persons expressing a written desire to attend the Bulge 60th Commemoration events in Belgium-Luxembourg this December, is now over 300--and growing. Everything considered, a very inspiring response.

As this is being written, the details of the tour are being finalized--first hand--during my visit with government officials, veterans' support organizations, hotels, air and bus transportation, etc. A summary of the results will be included in the official application form which will be mailed during August to all who responded (in writing).

It is intended to accommodate all who desire to participate, however, the increased size of the group and complexities involved with those who cannot function 100% may require separate arrangements for certain groups. There are many practical considerations that may limit the numbers that can be accepted. In the event limits are required, priorities will be established--date of application receipt and veterans' VBOB status will be primary factors.

Due to the typical age and compromised health of many applicants, we are requiring comprehensive medical information so that one's suitability for the tour can be determined--plus having the information immediately available in case of an emergency. We must do everything reasonable to avoid having the tour preempted by personal needs--the common good must prevail--these are "once-in-a-lifetime" events--never to be repeated.

The cost of the tour has not been finalized, it is expected that the subject of free military Airbus flights and buses will be resolved during my visit. Depending on the numbers involved, a group may fly commercial.

A brief outline of the proposed itinerary follows:

- December 10--Depart--possibly Andrews AFB, Washington, D.C.
  - December 11--Arrive Brussels a.m.--bus to Houffalize hotel + rest,
  - December 12--Tour sites in northern shoulder of Bulge--St. Vith, Malmedy, LaGleize, Stavelot, etc.
  - December 13--Tour sites in Luxembourg Bulge area--Ettelbruck, Diekirch Museum, Wiltz, Vianden, Fecternach, etc.
  - December 14--Unscheduled day for personal visits, etc.
  - December 15--Clervaux (Lux) events--G.I. Statute and CEBA + Schumann's Eck.
  - December 16--Night Vigil + Bastogne Mardasson Ceremony + Hamm Cemetery (Lux) Ceremony (Grand Duke).
  - December 17--Houffalize Link-up site + Bastogne sites + CRIBA Baraque de Fraiture Memorial + arrive Parc Hotel near Luxembourg City.
  - December 18--Bastogne events--all day--King of Belgium.
  - December 19--Luxembourg City tour + Sandweiler German Cemetery + Hamm Cemetery personal visit + shopping + farewell banquet at hotel.
  - December 20--Depart for States--arrive same day at Andrews AFB.
- If you have not done so, please return the application form. If you do not have one, write to VBOB and one will be sent to you. Complete information and deposit is needed to make many tour decisions--with VBOB, Belgium & Luxembourg.

Earle Hart, Chairman  
VBOB 60th Anniversary Tour Committee

## LATROBE, PA, HONORS BULGE VETERANS



Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge were honored on July 3, 2004, during a celebration in the City of Latrobe, Pennsylvania. The celebration was being held to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of Latrobe. Veterans of the Western Pennsylvania Chapter 14 were invited to attend the parade. Vehicles were provided by the National Guard Armory in Greensburg, Pennsylvania, for the veterans who couldn't walk. Some members walked in front of the vehicles carrying the Battle of the Bulge banners while the rest rode in the vehicles. We were honored to have our National President, George Chekan, attend and participate in the parade. He was very impressed by the people who were lined up on both sides of the street, and how they welcomed the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. It was a very exciting experience. I hope we can attend many more parades in Latrobe because it is a yearly event.

Joseph A. Folino  
Public Relations

Western Pennsylvania Chapter XIV



After the Parade, Leroy Schaller invited all VBOBers to his home in nearby Latrobe for a delightful picnic. Pictured here are front row (L to R) Peter Talarovich, VBOB Pres. George Chekan, Michael Giannini, John Dibattista, Leroy Schaller and Michael Rudy. Back row (L to R) William Smith, Steve Blasco, Friend, Chapter 13 Pres. Harvey Waugaman, Chester Lapa, and Gust College.





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*All new members, please provide the following information:*

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

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

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

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

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

Applicants Signature \_\_\_\_\_

RECRUITER (Optional)