

The BULGE BUGLE

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

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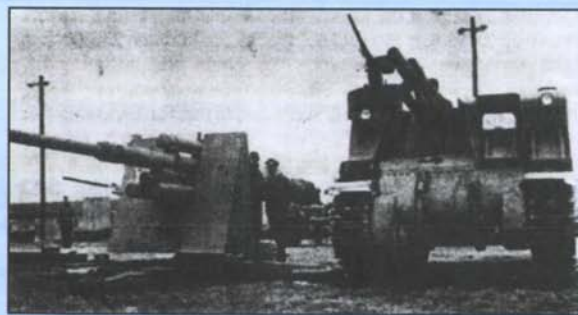
THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

NOVEMBER 2006

The Night Before CHRISTMAS

By Jack T. Pryor, 10th Armd. Div. Medical Battalion - Page 6

U.S. AND GERMAN ARTILLERY IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE



The American 105mm A.A. Antitank Gun, right, and German 88mm A.A. Antitank Gun, left, are shown side by side.

U.S. Infantrymen woefully
uninformed about the
German Artillery and his
own artillery, as well *Page 10*

by Charles P. Biggio, Jr.
99th Infantry Division

VBOB DECEMBER EVENTS

"Remembrance and Commemoration"

Page 16

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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



President's Message

Stanley Wojtusik

Historically the President's message for the November issue of The Bulge Bugle is devoted to comments, compliments and commentary about the annual reunion typically held just prior to publication. Temporarily sidelined due to illness, it was very upsetting to realize there was no way I could attend this year's event. It was tough enough having to break my good track record for attending every reunion but also tough to know in advance the schedule of wonderful activities I would be missing. Ralph Bozorth, an Associate Member of the Delaware Valley Chapter, did an outstanding job in arranging this reunion. He willingly accepted the challenge and 'took the bull by the horns'. His thorough attention to detail, creativity, imagination, and sincere commitment to make sure everyone had a good time is truly commendable. I'd like to thank Ralph for keeping me posted from start to finish, his 'on target' research of the site, many hours on the phone and the cooperation he sought and received from so many, such as Louisville's own Tom Chambers of the 9th Armored. My very special thanks to Ralph and to Ralph's wife Peggy, for her patience and understanding throughout. Likewise to Past President Lou Cunningham performing in my absence and his wife, Charlotte for standing by.

My comments and thoughts are based strictly on 'hearsay' other than from the ongoing updates and discussions with Ralph and an early 'on site' exploratory visit to Louisville with Ralph while planning the event.

Spontaneous calls from Louisville during the reunion and calls upon the return trip from many friends indicate I did, indeed, miss a great reunion. I believe those in attendance enjoyed their time together renewing friendships, reflecting on many stories that had been tucked away for sixty-two years while restoring a commitment to uphold the mission of our national organization.

Thank you to all who appreciate and respect my sincere efforts to successfully perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices involved during the Battle of the Bulge; constantly seeking creative ideas to preserve the historical data and sites relating to the Battle of the Bulge; cultivating and promoting friendships both here and abroad to help bring about international peace and good will. Your confidence in my re-election as your President gives me additional time to complete my passionate pursuit for marks of distinction throughout the country bringing much publicity, educational interest and pride to the organization to insure the world does not forget the impact of this great battle we all participated in ... all important investments in history for which much planning and groundwork is already in place and no time to waste in terms of fulfillment. Thank you for your vote.

Taking the oath of office as your President is certainly an honor, which I take very seriously with passion and great pride. In the spirit of teamwork I look forward to support from the governing body and entire membership as I continue as your representative.

We have been exploring many possibilities in acquiring congressional charter status and are in the process of locating pertinent documents within our executive office file for consideration before Congress. We have the attention of the right people to pursue this procedure.

We have been mulling over sites for our next year's reunion. Strong feeling favors the Middle West (Ohio - Chicago area); however, your input is important and encouraged. Let me know your thoughts as quickly as possible.

And, as always in the past, I encourage you to contact me with your concerns and/or ideas.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I'VE GOT A QUESTION

In the August issue, Thomas Williams, of the 761st Tank Battalion submitted a write up, "Setting the Record Straight." It would be interesting to know who gave Jimmy Carter this information to award the Presidential Unit Citation.

I question only one statement in this citation which states, "One of the most significant accomplishments of the 761st began March 20, 1945, when, acting as the armor spearhead, the unit broke through the Siegfried Line into the Rhine Plain, allowing units of the 4th Armored Division to move through to the Rhine River. The accomplishments of the 761st in the Siegfried area were truly significant as the successful crossing of the Rhine River into Germany was totally dependent on the accomplishment of their mission."

The fact is, the 9th Armored Division, under the command of Brigadier General William Hodges, followed by the units of the 78th Lightning Division soldiers, took the Remagen Bridgehead and crossed the Rhine River on the 7th of March, 1945. This was thirteen days prior to the accomplishments of the 761st.

Ken Garrett
78 INF 310 INF CN

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Belated, but none the less sincere appreciation to Mr. Christian DeMarcken of Paxton, Massachusetts, historian of VBOB Chapter 22 of Worcester, Massachusetts...for his many acts of kindness and assistance to Battle of the Bulge veterans, including members of our Battery B group.

Born in Chicago, but growing up in Belgium where his father moved the family pre-war, for work reasons; Mr. DeMarcken experienced first-hand, the Nazi occupation of that country, including the take-over of his family home by the Germans and the internment of his father in a concentration camp.

With gratitude for their liberation by American forces, Mr. DeMarcken together with his wife, Jeanne has devoted a lot of time and effort in the post-war years, helping veterans retrace their WWII steps through Belgium and Luxembourg, locating people, places and things of memory and interest to them; this the DeMarckens have done from the goodness of their hearts, without fuss or fanfare or reward. They deserve our heartfelt THANKS!

John F. Freckler
110 AAA (GUN) BN B

PROXIMITY FUSES

I was in the 82nd Airborne Division, 319th Glider Field Artillery Battalion, Battery A, and after the end of the war I went to jump school in Berlin, as they wanted us to go to the Pacific area and I didn't want to ride gliders any more.

I am writing to see if you have any more news on proximity fuses. We had 75 mm and the proximity fuses would go off after it left the piece about 100 to 300 yards

from us. We thought it might be from the cold weather. Did any other outfit have this problem that you know of?

I enjoy reading *The Bulge Bugle* and I think a lot of Belgium but didn't like the weather and I hate cold weather now. We got word that Belgium was going to give the 82nd Airborne an award. My battery picked me to receive it as I was sharp as an army sergeant. But they got me to headquarters too late. Well, the division was called to attention and turned over to the Belgian Government and we never got at ease. We couldn't understand what was being said anyway. I never got the award as I was discharged the 3rd of January, 1946.

We had a very bad storm going home as the ship started to break in half. We lost our fresh water and went to the Azores to weld the ship back to make it home.

I want to thank the Belgian Government for the memorial in Arlington Cemetery. It looks very nice.

I'll be looking to see if anybody had trouble with proximity fuses as we did.

Mahlon Sebring
82 ABND 319 GFAB A

BAPTISM OF FIRE

On the evening of December 24, 1944, our first position in Belgium was located behind a huge hill. Our 105 howitzers were put in position and we dug our foxholes around the guns. Next to our guns we dug a slit trench; and after firing our rounds, the Germans fired a V-2 rocket into our gun position about 200 yards away, and everybody hit the foxholes.

By mistake, one of our buddies jumped into the slit trench. To this day I don't know if he ever came out smelling like a rose. I had reminded my buddy, but he had forgotten all about it. The biggest treat we had in the Bulge was where we could heat and heat our "C" rations by heating it on the engines of our trucks. It was like being in a 5-star restaurant.

We also got treated with Red Cross coffee and doughnuts. God bless America!

Hershel Cook
75 INF 899 FA BN A

MONUMENT TO GO UP IN VERMONT

...just received the August edition of *The Bulge Bugle*. You've done a great job on the new memorial at Arlington Ceremony.

I'm a member of Chapter #17 of New Hampshire, Maine and Vermont. I, as an "agent" for our outfit have been elected to create a small memorial in recognition to the members of the Battle of the Bulge to be placed at our wonderful State Veterans Cemetery here in Randolph (VT).

I've talked with the Office of Veterans Affairs in Montpelier and they've asked for a drawing. I have a professional drawing of a proposed monument. [Keep us posted, Gordon.]

Gordon B. Pettingell
26 INF 101 INF G

A GRATEFUL CITY

Re: page 5, August 2006 edition; 44th INFD, 114 INF
A late friend was in this unit and spoke of Luneville and Sarreguemines prior to the Northwind offensive by the German army. He got me involved in an interesting story.

As we know the winter of 1944-45 was brutal. The City of Sarreguemines was isolated and starving of the population was considerable. Major Robert Henderson Bennett, Division G-5, arranged to supply the citizens from army depots in Nancy. For this effort the citizens erected a 9 foot wide stone wall in a part on the side of the Sarre River and placed a 3 foot x 9 foot bronze plaque citing him for "saving the city." Flowers are placed at the base continuously.

Sadly, Major Bennett was KIA a few weeks later. he is buried in The Lorraine American Military Cemetery, St. Avold. As are many from the Yankee Division.

As we know the YD, and 104th, not 44th, were the first divisions direct from USA, sailing 27 August 1944. These two direct sailings were an experiment to check speed of resupply. However, it was not found feasible.

Bill Leeseemann
27 INFD 101 ENGR CMBT BN

REFERRAL TO AN ABSOLUTE AUTHORITY

Letter addressed to Buddy Lovette.

I read your letter in the August issue of *The Bulge Bugle* and possibly can offer some assistance to your inquiries.

In 2001 I went back to Belgium and Germany with my whole family to revisit many of the sites encountered during the war. My outfit was located in Roetgen when the Bulge started on December 16. Our wonderful Belgian friends directed me to a Roetgen native who turned out to be a perfect gentleman, but more importantly he is an historian for the region with tremendous knowledge of the events of WWII in the Roetgen, Hurtgen Forest, and Ardennes areas. His name and address: Gerhard E. Kristan; Faulenbruchstr. 28A, D-52159, Roetgen, Germany. Gerhard is an absolute authority and I believe will be happy to assist you in any of your inquiries.

Robert W. Erskine
78 INFD 303 MED BN D

HEY, NURSE...

The "Perfect Person" who wrote the article in the last *Bulge Bugle* about all the mistakes he has had to correct in the year of his "reign" and all the honors that have been given him...I'm sure if he breaks his arm "patting himself on the back," he will have a hard time finding an Army Nurse wishing to give him a pain pill.

There were many women in the Battle of the Bulge and many wounded men who needed their nursing care. ALL the Army nurses that were in the Battle of the Bulge are very disappointed that we were not mentioned on the new monument that was placed in Arlington this year.

When a wounded soldier was suffering or crying, he didn't call for a soldier, he called for a nurse. So I think we did some work that could have been mentioned.

Ruth Puryear
107 EVAC HOSP

NOMINATIONS FOR 2006-07 EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

On behalf of the Members of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc., I wish to announce election of the following officers to serve the association for the fiscal year 2006-07.

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106th Infantry Division

Executive Vice President:

•John J. Dunleavy
737th Tank Battalion

Vice President, Membership:

•Neil B. Thompson
740th Tank Battalion

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87th Infantry Division

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•Robert F. Phillips
28th Infantry Division

Vice President, Public Affairs:

•Demetri Paris
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Treasurer:

•William P. Tayman
87th Infantry Division

Corresponding Secretary:

•Dorothy S. Davis
57th Field Hospital

Recording Secretary:

•John D. Bowen
Associate Member

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•Frances W. Doherty
Associate Member

•Earle O. Edmonds
26th Infantry Division

•James W. Hunt
1st Infantry Division

Trustees: Two-Year Term:

•Harry J. Meisel

565th Antiaircraft Artillery AW Battalion

•George L. Watson
87th Infantry Division

•Joseph F. Zimmer
87th Infantry Division

Trustees: One-Year Term:

•Richard G. Guenter

511th Engineer Light Ponton Battalion

•Ralph Bozarth
Associate Member

Election of said officers occurred at the General Membership Meeting which occurred on October 13, 2006, at the Holiday Inn Downtown, in Louisville, Kentucky.

Respectfully submitted,
George Chekan, Chairman
Nominating Committee

**Do you know a Bulge veteran
who doesn't belong to VBOB?
Ask him to join...we need his support.**

THE NIGHT BEFORE CHRISTMAS BASTOGNE, 1944

by JACK T. PRIOR
10TH ARMORED DIVISION
MEDICAL BATTALION

[Doctor Prior advised that he wrote this article several years ago for The Bulletin which is published by Onondaga County Medical Society, Inc.]

When my oldest son was a youngster he periodically posed the question, "Dad, what's the most exciting thing that ever happened to you?" It was a question I never remember asking my Dad and I wonder today what his answer would have been--he did not serve in World War I. At any rate my answer to my son, John, was always the same; recounting episodes of the Battle of the Bulge with particular emphasis on Bastogne since I was "in residence" there from December 20th, 1944, until January 17th, 1945. I would often tell the children the depressing story of December 24, 1944, just after I had finished reading *The Night Before Christmas* to them on Christmas Eve, emphasizing that this particular Christmas was neither happy nor merry for many people. For a long time I had promised myself to put this Christmas story on paper and it is some 28 years later that it is occurring:

Much of the detail of this particular period remains surprisingly fresh in my mind and the dates and sequences I had recorded daily in my diary which I carefully kept (contrary to my army directives) and still possess. I have always chuckled over the years to see General after General (one being a past president) publish his memoirs which have to have had origin in a carefully kept record--maybe this rule did not apply to General officers!

I was a member of the Medical Battalion of the 10th Armored Division. This division left Georgia where it had trained too long and arrived in Cherbourg September 23, 1944. The Division first saw action in attacking the outer fortifications of Metz on November 14th and my assignment was to help operate a clearing station preparing patients for transit to the nearest evacuation hospital. Working in a safe climate, free of artillery and small arms fire, I was ill prepared for the baptism that was soon to follow:

On December 14th I was detached to the 20th Armored Infantry Battalion as their surgeon to replace their regular officer who had been evacuated with pneumonia. I had assigned to me a dentist and about 30 enlisted men who were trained as litter bearers and first aid men. Our detachment had armored half-track ambulances and two jeeps and was a well-trained unit. The 20th Armored Infantry was part of a combat team, the latter composed of a tank battalion, an engineer platoon, and a reconnaissance squadron. This team, called "Team Desobry," after its infantry commanding officer, moved through Luxembourg on December 17th on what we believed was an administrative march with eventual quartering of the unit in Luxembourg. I have always been impressed with how little information in the army filters down to personnel at my level from the Army and Corps Headquarters. Perhaps there was

some virtue in this, for our assignment actually was to move into the town of Noville, (seven kilometers northeast of Bastogne). Field Marshal Gerd von Rundstedt could have told us our assignment. As the West Front Commander, he had struck a blow in the Ardennes. He was on his way to override Belgium, Luxembourg, Northern France and penetrate to the channel coast. The little village of Bastogne was in his way since it was the hub of a network of seven spoke-like highways and would need to be taken on the way to his capturing Antwerp, largest supply point for Allied troops on the Western Front. Soldiers of the 9th Armored Division, 4th and 28th Infantry Divisions could also have made our assignment clear since their 95 mile sector was being overrun by the German on-slaught at that moment.

Arriving in Noville at 6:00 a.m., December 19th, we found a sleepy little crossroads. My Aid Station was located in the pub. I found this type of building always best for our purposes since the large drinking area accommodated many litter patients. Within two hours of our arrival the little town had turned into a shooting gallery featuring small arms, machine gun and tank fire on the main thoroughfare. The large front window of the pub was an early casualty and it was necessary to crawl on the floor to avoid being hit as we treated our increasing number of casualties. Someone had selected our backyard as the "ammo" dump and this did not boost our equanimity.

Team Desobry was ordered to hold Noville at all costs and it was not until the Battalion Command Post was hit and Major Desobry was wounded that we were ordered to withdraw to Bastogne. Evacuation of the score of injured had been virtually impossible. We did load four patients into a half-track at one point and just as it lumbered off, it received a direct hit from a tank and burst into flames. The four patients were unloaded and returned to the Aid Station; this under the gaze of the German tank commander. Upon receipt of the withdrawal order we were given ten minutes to move out.

Since I had no functioning vehicular transportation and no litters I decided I would stay and surrender my patients to the Germans. I asked for volunteers to stay with me but the silence was deafening! It looked as if only myself and the tavern owners (an old lady and her husband who said their rosaries aloud for two days in their cellar) would remain behind.

At this point my first sergeant seized the initiative and ran into the street, shouting at the departing tanks to swing by the Aid Station. The tankers ran into our building and after ripping off all the doors from the walls, strapped our patients to the doors, and tied them to their vehicles. The column then moved down the road to Bastogne where I assumed there was a hospital and fresh defenders! It was not until after the war that we learned that Team Desobry had stopped the entire Second German Panzer Division which had assumed it was opposing a much stronger force. Outnumbered by ten to one, the Noville defenders knocked out 31 enemy tanks in two days.

Even the trip back to Bastogne turned into another fire fight. In a late afternoon fog the column was stopped by the enemy who knocked out our tanks and harassed us with small arms fire from the flanks. We treated serious injuries in the ditches as we waited three hours for the column to move again. Lying in the ditch and having sniper fire chip away at a fence post beside me was a terrifying experience. I was head to head in the ditch with my dental officer. He did not wear a helmet with the bright red cross and suggested mine was a sniper target and should be shed--a suggestion I resisted.

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BASTOGNE, 1944

(Continuation)

Many of our enlisted men demonstrated great bravery on the road, pulling tankers from their blazing tanks, driving jeeps with the injured on the hood to our Aid Station. Many of these aid men were soldiers whose reputation in the unit would have given no clue to the fact that under stress they could meet this challenge. This observation was to be pounded home again, time after time, in the months ahead. I have never learned who to predict will be a hero!

I have often thought I'd still be in that ditch on the Bastogne road if had not been for the arrival of a Parachute Battalion from the 101st Airborne Division. This division had been hastily summoned from a rest area and rushed to Bastogne without sufficient weapons and suitable warm clothing. They were instrumental in getting the remnants of Team Desobry back to Bastogne on December 20th by routing the enemy.

Bastogne on this date was an intact but somewhat deserted city. The sight of the residents dragging their belongings with them on little carts, leaving as we entered was recognized as a bad omen--"rats leaving the sinking ship." Many of these people faced the difficult decision of whether to retain the American flag over their door or to put the Swastika back up.

My Aid Station was initially in a garage on one of the main streets. Two days later I had to move into a larger area in a private three-story home as the casualties increased and because I could not heat the garage adequately--the weather was very cold and there was about a foot of snow on the ground. My diary indicates we worked 24 hours a day in the Aid Station, that the plasma froze and would not run, that we had no medical supplies and the town was continually shelled. It was a major decision whether to run up the street a block to the Battalion Command Post.

We in Bastogne never had any idea of the importance of this battle thinking it was just another town. Its importance did not dawn upon us until one day we hooked up a radio to a vehicular battery and heard the BBC in London paying tribute to the "gallant defenders of Bastogne." They compared this battle to Waterloo, Gettysburg and Verdun. The news that we were surrounded also had a curious effect upon our men--such remarks were heard as: "they've got us surrounded, the poor bastards," or "surrounded, good--now we can attack on all sides." I can never remember considering that we were going to lose that fight or that help would not eventually arrive. German artillery fired propaganda leaflets into the town, urging us to surrender. These were regarded by the GI's as humorous and were collected and swapped like baseball cards. One of these had a photograph of a little girl and her letter to her daddy.

Dear Daddy,

Today I went to the birthday party of Jean, but I didn't have a good time because I was worrying so about you. Last night Mummy cried and cried because we haven't heard from you for so long. Jean got a letter from her Daddy. He is a prisoner of war. Jean says he will be sure to come back home now. Oh, Daddy, you just got to come home. We miss you so

Loads of Kisses,

Winnie

Living in a city without electricity, water, food and medical supplies was a challenge. My men scrounged pork steaks, ham and jam from the vegetable cellars of deserted homes. The combat units sent whatever food they found to the Aid Station

and any medical supplies in deserted doctors' offices found their way to us. Civilian physicians were always scarce in towns we took. I never remember seeing a civilian physician in all of Germany. The only explanation for this I can offer was that many physicians were members of the Nazi party and that they took to the road before we arrived. Jewish physicians had either left the country or were in concentration camps. This of course, had serious implications in that the civilian population descended upon our Aid Station as soon as the Red Cross flag was hoisted--I even did a delivery! The water problem was serious--melted snow was some help but champagne filled a big gap. Very few people have shaved and bathed in champagne as I did!

On December 22nd the German Commander sent a major, captain and two enlisted men into the town with a white flag--it was quickly rumored that they had come to arrange our surrender. Many of our defenders took this lull to shave, wash or visit the straddle trenches. What followed is well known--we were given two parts to surrender the garrison or face complete destruction. The German Commander, Lt. General von Luttwitz, listed one Artillery Corps and six heavy A.A. Battalions as ready to annihilate us. General McAuliffe's reply of "Nuts" posed a problem for their interpreters. The best they could do with the translation was: "Go to Hell." We were advised that a heavy shelling would occur--it did but I cannot recall it being any different from the usual.

Now, in regard to the care of the wounded in Bastogne, I have always believe and still do that this did not constitute a bright page in the history of the Army Medical Department. I operated the only Aid Station for the Armored Division Combat Command although there were at least three other Battalion Surgeons with the armor. I was holding over 100 patients, of whom about 30 were very seriously injured litter patients. The patients who had head, chest and abdominal wounds could only face certain slow death since there was no change of surgical procedures--we had no surgical talent among us and there was not so much as a can of ether or a scalpel to be had in the city. The extremity wounds were irrigated with a preciously slow supply of hydrogen peroxide in an attempt to prevent gas infection. I attempted to turn my litter bearers into bedside nursing personnel--they were assigned by the arrival at our station December 21st of two registered female civilian nurses. One of these nurses, Renee Lemaire, volunteered her services and the other girl was black, a native of the Belgian Congo. She was "willed" to me by her father and when we eventually left Bastogne he was most distraught with me for refusing to take her along.

They played different roles among the dying--Renee shrank away from the fresh, gory trauma, while the Congo girl was always in the thick of the splinting dressing, and hemorrhage control. Renee preferred to circulate among the litter patients sponging, feeding them, and distributing the few medications we had (sulfa pills and plasma). The presence of these two girls was a morale factor of the highest order. This decaying medical situation was worsening--with no hope for the surgical candidates, and even the superficial wounds were beginning to develop gas infection. I never did see any tetanus develop during the entire siege. It was at this point that I visited the acting Division Surgeon of the 101st Airborne Division and requested that he make an effort to bring medical help to us.

I had not visited the Airborne area up until this time, December 23rd. Their headquarters and

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BASTOGNE, 1944

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hospital area was in a former Belgian barracks compound. Major Davison, their surgeon, listed as I detailed our hopeless situation, and he assured me it was impossible to bring a glider surgeon team into the area because of the weather and because the Germans would knock down anything that tried to fly in. He also stressed the fact that his paratroopers were used to being cut off (Normandy and Holland), and this situation was the expected. He then brought me to a riding hall where I saw the unbelievable! There on the dirt riding floor were 600 paratroop litter cases—I can not recall the number of walking wounded or psychiatric casualties. These patients were only being sustained as were mine. I did see a paratroop chaplain (armed with a pistol and shoulder holster) moving along the dying. While I was there someone accounted that General Patton was only a few miles out and that the road in would be opened momentarily. This evoked loud cheers and whistles from all those in the riding hall. Gas gangrene was rampant there, aided and abetted, I'm sure, by the flora on the dirt floor. Major Davison did drive into the German lines later with a white flag in an attempt to arrange a truce for medical evacuation. He proposed to take out one German wounded to two Americans but this was refused by the ranking German medical officer.

I returned to my Aid Station very depressed—it is ironic but surgical help did arrive in the person of a Major Sorrell on December 26th. He came in via a Piper Cub to care for 60 patients—a mistake in decoding from the Airborne headquarters had occurred and the figure of 600 hundred surgical patients was interpreted as 60. Major Sorrell had a basic instrument kit and a few cans of ether. When he saw the riding hall and the mass of patients needing surgery he was overwhelmed. His decision was to take care of the gas infected extremities first, feeling that he could save more lives this way as against the time it would take to do one belly, one chest or one head case. On December 23rd hundreds of C-47's droned over Bastogne and multicolored parachutes fell to earth—each color representing a various category of supplies. Food, ammunition, blankets, medical items were eagerly gathered. There was no attempt at central collection and each unit corralled whatever fell in their vicinity. Many parachutes fell in German territory, and we later learned that they relished the famed "C" rations. Even the parachutes were utilized as bedding in our hospital. I can recall Renee Lemaire leaving her duties and rushing into the back yard to get a chute. She wanted the silk for a wedding dress. She invariably was beaten out by a soldier and always returned empty handed.

December 24th was another day of constant shelling. General McAuliffe sent his famous Christmas message to the troops asking them, "What's merry about this Christmas?" He added that they were cold and hungry and not at home but that they had stopped four Panzer divisions, two Infantry divisions and one Parachute division. He concluded his message saying that we were giving our loved ones at home a Merry Christmas and that we were all privileged to take part in this gallant feat of arms.

At 8:30 p.m. Christmas Eve, I was in a building next to my hospital preparing to go next door and write a letter for a young lieutenant to his wife. The lieutenant was dying of a chest wound. As I was about to step out the door for the hospital, one of my men asked if I knew what day it was, pointed out that on Christmas Eve we should open a champagne bottle. The two of us filled our cups. The room, which was well blacked out,

became as bright as an arc welder's torch. Within a second or two we heard the screeching sound of the first bomb we had ever heard. Every bomb as it descends seems to be pointed right at you. We hit the floor as a terrible explosion next door rocked our building. I ran outside to discover that the three-story apartment serving as my hospital was a flaming pile of debris about six feet high. The night was brighter than day from the magnesium flares the German bomber pilot had dropped.

My men and I raced to the top of the debris and began flinging burning timber aside looking for the wounded some of whom were shrieking for help. At this juncture the German bomber, seeing the action, dropped down to strafe us with his machine guns. We slid under some vehicles and he repeated his maneuver several times before leaving the area.

Our team headquarters about a block away also received a direct hit and was soon in flames. A larger number of men soon joined us and we located a cellar window (they were marked by white arrows on most European buildings). Some men volunteered to be lowered into the smoking cellar on a rope and two or three injured were pulled out before the entire building fell into the cellar. I estimated that about 20 injured were killed in this bombing along with Renee Lemaire. It seems that Renee had been in the kitchen as the bomb came down and she either dashed into or was pushed into the cellar before the bomb hit. Ironically enough, all those in the kitchen were blown outdoors since one wall was all glass. I gathered what patients I still had and transported them to the riding hall hospital of the Airborne division.

At about 2:00 a.m., Christmas morning, the bomber returned and totally destroyed a vacant building next to the smoldering hospital. I have often wondered how the pilot picked this hospital as a target. There were no external markings but, as some of the men said the bomb must have come down the chimney. Many tanks and half tracks were parked bumper to bumper in the street in front of the hospital so it seems probable he simply picked an area of high troop concentration. Before our unit left Bastogne we dissected the hospital rubble and identified the majority of the bodies, including Rene Lemaire. I brought her remains to her parents encased in the white parachute she so dearly wanted. I also wrote the following commendation for her and forwarded it to our Commanding General:

*Medical Detachment
20th Armored Infantry Division
APO 260, U.S. Army
2 January 19435*

SUBJECT: Commendation for Rene Bernadete Emilie Lemaire (Deceased)

TO: Commanding General, 10th Armored Division; APO 260, U.S. Army (Attn: Division Surgeon) thru channels.

As Battalion Surgeon; 20th Armored Infantry Battalion: I am recommending a commendation for Renee Lemaire on the following evidence.

This girl, a registered nurse in the country of Belgium, volunteered her services at the aid station, 20th Armored Infantry Battalion in Bastogne, Belgium, 21 December, 1944. At this time the station was holding about 150 patients since the city was encircled by enemy forces and evacuation was impossible. Many of these patients were

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seriously injured and in great need of immediate nursing attention. This girl cheerfully accepted the herculean task and worked without adequate rest or food until the night of her untimely death on 24 December, 1944. She changed dressings, fed patients unable to feed themselves, gave out medications bathed and made the patients more comfortable, and was of great assistance in the administration of plasma and other professional duties. Her very presence among these wounded men seemed to be an inspiration to those whose morale had declined from prolonged suffering. On the night of December 24 the building in which Renee Lemaire was working was cored with a direct hit by an enemy bomber. She, together with those whom she was caring for so diligently, were instantly killed.

It is on these grounds that I recommend the highest award possible to one, who though not a member of the armored forces of the United States, was of invaluable assistance to us.

JACK T. PRIOR
Captain, M.C.
Commanding

Renee Bernadette Emilie Lemaire
Place du Carre 30
Bastogne, Belgium

I have never learned what action was taken on this commendation.

Lt. Col. Abrams (now General Abrams and awaiting confirmation as Army Chief of Staff) opened the road on December 26 and elements of the 4th Armored Division poured into Bastogne. I spent the next few days assisting Major Sorrell in surgery, and, on December 27th a Glider Surgical Team arrived. This was a highly organized unit and they worked as teams on the abdomen, chest, etc. It was their role to prepare as many casualties as possible for evacuation to the rear. The Germans continued to shell the town day and night and the bombers continued their activities several times a night until January 2nd. It was not until January 17th that Team Desobry left Bastogne.

The most spectacular battle of the World War II was over. More than 56,000 Americans were killed in this winter blitz. The Germans had thrown 500,000 crack troops and 1,000 thousand tanks into their last stand. They had used 800 Luftwaffe planes in the Ardennes battle. They now reluctantly withdraw, battered and bleeding, and the wounds of that fight never healed. ■

BELGIANS CONDUCT MEMORIAL CEREMONY

By DEMETRI PARIS
14TH TANK BATTALION
9TH ARMORED DIVISION

The orders were to defeat the Germans and force them out of Belgium. We did this as a combat operation to defeat the Nazi threat. But the Belgian people considered this action to be a liberation from Nazi occupation.

Then, on December 14, 1944, in his last desperate gamble, Hitler's army fiercely attacked to the surprise of the Allied high command. Once again the German aggressor entered Belgium and Luxembourg and, this time, committed massacres and atrocities against both Allied soldiers and civilians. Despite heavy losses in both wounded and killed, the U.S. troops held and again forced the German army to retreat.

We considered these to be combat operations against the Nazi enemy. Not so with the Belgians. They insist we liberated them from the Nazi occupation. **Not once but twice liberated them.**

Now, 62 years later, they continue to remember and acknowledge their gratitude. In a letter to VBOB Secretary John Bowen, member M. D'Haese modestly writes: "Concerning the activities of the 5th Bon, I send you the enclosed pictures taken on Memorial Day of 27 May last at Henri-Chapelle U.S. Cemetery with the Ambassador of the U.S. Mr. T. Korologos and also with Lt. General E. Hanlon, Jr., USMC Military Representative NATO."

Their pride in having served alongside the U.S. Army is evidenced with their official letterhead which has:

1st U.S. Army 1944-1945

**ARDENNES
ALLEMAGNE**

The letterhead also has the following information:

**Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge
(VBOB)**

Chapter XXXVIII 5th Fusiliers of Belgium

Members of the Battle of the Bulge can be truly grateful to the 5th Fusiliers for their sincere admiration and continued public appreciation of our combat actions in these times when so many other nations no longer admire nor respect us.



Belgian Fusilier M. D'Haese with U.S. Ambassador Korologos and Lt. General E. Hanlon, Jr.

The Belgian Fusiliers have participated in all of the VBOB visits to the Bulge battlefields and with other veterans' organizations in their tours. They have also had members participate in our ceremonies in the United States. ■

U.S. & GERMAN FIELD ARTILLERY IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE AND SOME FACTS ABOUT THE GERMAN 88

Recent articles in military periodicals on the Battle of the Bulge remind us that many of the U.S. Infantrymen who fought in the Bulge were woefully uninformed about the German Artillery--and his own artillery as well. This is not surprising, since the military training of most GI's had not included any formal instructions on the artillery weapons, organization, or tactics of the German or the American artillery.

What he picked up on his own about the artillery was sometimes misinformation based on myth, rumor, unreliable press articles, and "common knowledge." As a result, many infantrymen developed a distorted view of the artillery of the two nations. Often, these views exaggerated the power of the German weapons (especially the German 88mm gun)--and tended to disparage the American Weapons as obsolete and qualitatively inferior to the Germans.

The purpose of this paper is to dispel some of those misconceptions--and to provide my fellow veterans with a factual account of the artillery of both sides in the Battle of the Bulge.

American Field Artillery in 1944-- Obsolete or Modern?

Perhaps a brief review of the changes made in the U.S. field artillery between the Great Wars will best answer this question.

During World War I the artillery arm of the AEF was equipped entirely with French (mostly the famous French 75mm gun) and a few British pieces. At that time the French weapons were technologically superior and were plentiful.

After the war, the U.S. decided to equip its peacetime army with the French WWI weapons. However, even before the war ended, some American artillery officers found defects in the French guns--and the U.S. Field Artillery School at Ft. Sill, Oklahoma, took the lead in calling for the *motorizing* of the U.S. field artillery--and the replacing of all foreign weapons with improved weapons of American design. In response, several War Department Boards examined the question--including, among other things, replacing the French 75 with a new 105mm howitzer as the main division artillery piece.

In the 1920's, progress on the modernization project was slow due to limited funds, pacifism, and conservative tendencies in the army, and the availability of surplus weapons. Despite these obstacles some progress was made on designing a new 105mm howitzer and other weapons. In the 1930's, the Field Artillery School kept pushing for the new weapons and the pace of modernization increased despite the effects of the Great Depression. However, there was continued resistance from conservative senior officers to replacing the 75 with a 105 howitzer. As late as 1939, General George C. Marshall still opposed it because of the cost involved. Nevertheless, with encouragement from the Artillery School, innovative artillery and ordnance officers continued in the 30's to experiment with new gun designs--and by the end of the decade prototypes had been developed for the howitzers and guns which saw action in WWII. Also in the 1930's after much debate, a decision was made to begin *modernizing* the field artillery (which was horse-drawn)--and by the end of the decade 75% of the division artillery had been motorized.

In May 1940 the Germans easily defeated the French and British with a new type of mobile armored warfare--and including the 105mm howitzer as their main division artillery weapon. In June the U.S. War Department finally announced that the U.S. division artillery would be armed with the new 105mm howitzer and the 155mm howitzer. And in 1942, the decision was made to fully motorize the U.S. field artillery. When the first American combat troops landed in North Africa in Algeria in November 1942, the First U.S. Infantry Division was armed with the new 105mm howitzer, M1. Moreover, all of the division's artillery was motorized.

By the Battle of the Bulge (hereinafter referred to as the Bulge) in December 1944, *all America artillery units had been equipped with new American weapons.* The new weapons entered the service on the following dates:

- 105mm howitzer in November, 1942
- 155mm howitzer in July, 1943
- 155mm gun in December, 1941
- 4.5 in. gun (originally of UK design) in 1942
- 90mm gun in 1943
- 8 in. howitzer in 1942
- 240mm howitzer in 1943
- 105mm howitzer (self-propelled) in 1943
- 155mm gun (self-propelled) in 1944

Thus, in the space of just over two decades and against formidable obstacles, the U.S. Army had managed to replace all of its WWI artillery pieces with new, modern howitzers and guns--and to convert from horse-drawn to motorized artillery. Ian Hogg, the noted British expert on WWII artillery believes that the U.S. was so successful with its weapon program because its total focus was on *creating new weapons.* In contrast the German designers tried to overhaul current service weapons while designing new ones--thus not giving full attention to the new ones.

The American artillery weapons in the Bulge were not retrograde pieces of WWI vintage, but were virtually new--and in fact newer than many of the comparable German weapons of that day. How these new American weapons compared in quality with like weapons in the German Army will be discussed later in this paper.

Artillery Weapons and Organization in the Bulge

In order to keep this paper reasonably short--and to facilitate comparisons of the artillery of the two nations, the discussion will be limited to the artillery which participated in the Battle of Elsenborn; i.e., the artillery of 6th Panzer Army on the German side and artillery of the opposing American V Corps (-).

The Tactical Situation, Elsenborn Sector, as the battle begins on 16 December, 1944.

For his counteroffensive Hitler decided to attack with three armies in the thinly held Belgian Ardennes. The main effort would be made on the right by the tank heavy 6th Panzer Army in the Elsenborn Sector between Monschau and Losheim--where the Germans expected to counter only one infantry division (the 99th) and a light cavalry group. Sixth Panzer Army included four SS panzer divisions, four infantry divisions, and a large artillery force--supported by a parachute drop and Skorzeny's Special Operations Group. The four SS panzer divisions were charged with exploiting the gaps opened up by the infantry

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divisions--and making a lightning dash to the Meuse River, Liege, and Antwerp. They expected to easily penetrate the 99th's widely dispersed defenses.

Much to their surprise, the Germans soon learned that they had failed to detect the presence of a second infantry division (the 2nd Infantry Division) in the 99th's sector. Moreover, the Germans had not anticipated that the Americans could reinforce the area with two additional divisions (the 1st Infantry Division at Butgenbach and the 9th Infantry Division at Monschau) by 19 December.

The German and American Artillery "Order of Battle"-- Elsenborn, 16 December 1944

As the Battle of Elsenborn began on 16 December 1944, the German artillery of 6th Panzer Army greatly outnumbered the guns of the opposing U.S. V Corps elements--1222 to 314. (Thus belying the myth that the American artillery always outnumbered the Germans.)

For details on the weapons and organization of the artillery at Elsenborn see Chart A, for German Order of Battle (OB) and Chart B for the American OB (Charts appear at end of article). These charts present a picture of the *weapons* involved (by caliber, type, nomenclature, and assignment), and the artillery *organization*.

An analysis of the two charts presents some interesting insights:

a. The division artillery of the German and the American Infantry Divisions were surprisingly similar--both in weapons and organization. Both opted for a 105mm howitzer as the main close support weapon and for a medium howitzer of about 150mm.

b. At the Corps level there were noticeable differences in both weapons and organization. The Germans had a greater variety of cannon (including some Russian) and a much larger number and variety of rockets and very heavy guns. Organizationally, the Germans had no Corps Artillery Headquarters as such--and their non-divisional artillery was grouped into Volks Artillery Korps (VAKs), Werfer Brigades, and Very Heavy Batteries.

c. Re: the 88s: Chart A shows that the German 88mm guns were obviously not the main close support weapon in the German Army--(that function belonged to the 105mm howitzer). In the entire 6th Panzer Army there were only 216 towed 88s out of a total of 1,222 pieces--and most 88s were Flak guns whose main mission was anti-aircraft defense. And note that there were no 88s in any of the German Infantry Division (VGD's).

One of the most notable advances in artillery weapons technology in WWII was the *proximity fuse*. In both of the Great Wars, the fuses available for achieving air bursts were quite unsatisfactory--requiring daily registrations and settings at the guns. Needed, was a fuse that would explode the shell when it arrived in the proximity of the target--without registrations and individual settings. The U.S. put some of its best electronic and engineering experts on this very complicated problem. By 1944 the U.S. had built an operational proximity fuse for use against ground targets and the artillerymen called it *Pozit* or VT (variable time). It consisted of a tiny battery and a transmitter/receiver which sent and received electronic emissions until the shell reached the optimum distance from the target--at

which instant it detonated the shell.

When the German offensive began on 16 December 1944, General Eisenhower quickly released the new fuse for use in the ETO--and at Elsenborn it was first used on 19 December at Monschau. The new fuse was employed tentatively at first because of fears that it would endanger friendly troops and aircraft (it could not discriminate between friend and foe). Therefore, the fuse was not fully exploited at Elsenborn during the Bulge. Nevertheless, the Pozit Fuse was one of the great technological achievements of WWII. (Note: Over the years, the U.S. field artillery resolved the safety problems and during the ongoing war in Iraq, the Pozit fuse has been used with excellent results.)

QUALITY OF THE WEAPONS--A COMPARISON

Since many Americans believe that the German artillery weapons firing at them were superior in quality to those of the Americans, we shall compare the close support weapons; that is, those guns which did most of the firing against enemy personnel--of both nations by assessing their respective characteristics.

See attached Chart C for a detailed comparison. Since this study focuses mainly on the close support weapons, only the principle light and medium pieces of the divisional artillery will be considered.

Chart C indicates that there is not much difference in the *quality* of the divisional weapons of the two sides. The American pieces have the edge in shell power, range, elevation and transport--while the German weapons were slightly lighter (desirable for close support missions) and had more on-carriage traverse. In many cases the American weapon was as good as its counterpart in the German Army--and in some cases were better. The notion that the American guns/howitzers of the division artillery were somehow inferior to those of the Germans in the Bulge is without merit.

THE THREE BASIC ARTILLERY FUNCTIONS.

A significant aspect of the American artillery's performance in the Ardennes (and elsewhere) was not so much in the number of its tubes, but in its excellence in performing the three basic functions of the field artillery: *Shoot, Move and Communicate*.

a. The "Shoot" or Gunnery Function.

The American called the shooting aspect of their mission *Gunnery*. This function involved all of the activities incident to placing artillery fire on the target. Gunnery in WWII was the area where the American artillery made its most significant contribution--and particularly its use of massed fires.

(1) Massed Fires:

As a result of experiences in WWI, the major power had seen the need to improve their abilities to mass the fires of their division artillery. However, most nations were bound by tradition and habit and were slow to make the necessary changes to bring this about. Only the U.S. was willing to make a clean break with the past and to restructure its entire artillery command and control structure in pursuit of a mass fire capability. Leading the way for the Americans was the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where in the 1920's a group of far-sighted, innovative young officers became convinced that achieving such a capability should be a top priority. After much deliberation, they decided that in order to mass the fires of a division, it would be necessary to make two major structural changes: (Continued)

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First, fire control within the battalion would have to be centralized at battalion headquarters rather than remain decentralized to the firing batteries. Hence the battalion commander would exercise fire control instead of the firing battery commanders. This idea caused great dismay among older artillery officers who liked the old arrangement and adamantly opposed diluting the authority of the firing battery commander. Despite high-level opposition to their ideas well into the 1930's, the officers at Fort Sill knew that centralization was key to their success--so insisted on this change.

Second, provide the battalion commander with the means to control the fires of the three batteries. Fort Sill created a Fire Detection Center (FDC) on the battalion staff to be manned by highly trained gunnery experts. All requests for fire would be funneled to the FDC where they would be processed, and fire commands relayed directly to the firing battery exec at the howitzer position. By 1934 Fort Sill had developed a prototype FDC and in 1940 an innovative new Graphical Firing Table was invented to help the FDC speed up its calculations. (Boyd, Dastrup, *King of Battles*.)

With war looming in 1941, the War Department finally approved the FDC system for the divisions--and FDC's were installed throughout the artillery. Refinements in the system continued to be made at Fort Sill and in the units from 1941 to 1943. One of the most notable refinements was the Time-on-Target (TOT) mission in which many guns are massed on a single, and the projectiles are programmed to arrive at the target at *nearly the same moment*.] Hence, enemy personnel in the open are engulfed before they can take cover.

Subsequent combat operations proved the value of the massed fire and TOT techniques. In the Bulge, American divisions had no problem massing the fires of their 48 organic pieces of artillery. Although the massing of fires was normally limited to the fires of one division, at Elsenborn, by 20 December, there were four divisions defending the critical hinge of the northern shoulder. The V Corps Artillery Commander, Brig. Gen. Helmick, seized the moment and authorized the 2nd Division artillery to coordinate the fires of all four divisions. On 22 December, the fires of three divisions (129 available guns) were massed by the 2nd Infantry Division on a single target. (It never became necessary during the battle to mass the fires of all four divisions.) On the 22nd, the 2nd Division fired 63 TOT's--mostly with 44 guns per mission.

The distinguished military historian, Trevor N. Dupuy believed that the U.S. FDC system was perhaps the most important reason why the U.S. artillery, by the end of WWII was "best in the world."

The Germans too were aware of the advantages of massed fires and tried to develop a capability during the Russian Campaign. By February of 1944 their system had failed and they decided to design a new one. The new system involved a "fire control battery" to be attached to and to control the fires of each Volks Artillery Korps (VAK's). This system got its first test in the Bulge but ran into problems at the start. For example, there was only one fire control battery available in the 6th Panzer Army during the entire campaign--and it was not particularly effective. It was readily apparent to experienced American artillerymen that the Germans at Elsenborn were not massing their fires effectively in support of their attacks.

(2) Air Observation:

Another aspect of the gunnery was observation. Artillery fire is most accurate when it can be adjusted to the target by a trained observer. To ensure that they had good observation during WWII, armies employed both ground and air observers. Air observation had the advantage of being able to see deeper into enemy lines (and better detect targets like enemy artillery)--but the disadvantage of being limited by weather. An artillery air observation capability was desired by all armies of that period.

In June 1942, the War Department decided the field artillery should have an air observation capability, and two Pipe Cub planes were authorized at battalion and higher levels.

In the Bulge, whenever the weather permitted, the American artillerymen made maximum use of their observation planes--with excellent results. German General Thoholte later noted that American artillery directed by air observation was "exceptionally good" and fire directed by air observation "usually knocked out" its target.

On the German side at Elsenborn, the situation was quite different because they no longer could fly cub planes in daylight because of U.S. air superiority. Therefore, the artillery of 6th Panzer Army had *no air observation capability* in the Battle of the Bulge.

b. Mobility

In addition to being able to shoot, the field artillery must be capable of moving--and mobility was especially desired for the close support units of the division artillery. Mobility is required not only to transport the howitzers from one position to the next--but also to resupply the units with ammunition, fuel, and food. As noted earlier, howitzers are not much use if they cannot be supplied with ammunition.

In WWI, field artilleries were horse-drawn. In the 1920's the reformers at Fort Sill began urging that the U.S. field artillery be motorized. Despite considerable opposition to the idea, by 1935 the U.S. Army had begun to replace its horses with trucks. When the Germans demonstrated in 1940 that could be accomplished with highly mobile forces, the U.S. Army accelerated the pace of its motorization. By 1942, all American field artillery units had been fully motorized.

At Elsenborn, the excellent mobility of the artillery of the 99th and the 2nd Infantry Divisions enabled them to minimize their losses when Col. Peiper's Panzers broke through on their right flank.

The mobility of the German artillery was quite another story. Americans have been led to believe by WWII film documentaries that the whole German Army in the Bulge was highly mobile. However, in the 1930's, the Germans decided *not* to motorize the infantry divisions. Hence, for most of WWII the *artillery of the German infantry divisions was horse-drawn*. In 1944, some of the light battalions were provided with captured and other vehicles--but the *150mm howitzer units remained horse-drawn, as well as a couple of the light battalions of the VAK's*. Some VAK units possessed only a single prime mover for every three or four pieces.

In the Bulge, an acute shortage of gasoline further reduced the mobility of the German artillery. Because of the lack of transportation and fuel, the German field artillery was notable to keep up with the advancing Panzers. For example, it took the 388th VAK four days to move its six battalions to the next position--a distance of only 12 miles.

(Continued)

ARTILLERY

(Continuation)

And only about half of the German Corps Artillery was able to follow in the wake of the offensive. (Danny Parker)

During the Offensive, both armies at Elsenborn faced the problem of resupplying their firing batteries with ammunition and fuel. The Germans were unable to solve their ammo resupply problems--while the Americans, thanks to their superior mobility, were able to solve theirs quite handily.

c. Communications:

To perform its shooting (gunnery) function the field artillery must be able to communicate with higher, lower and supported units. When the FDC System was being developed it became evident that in order to exercise the control necessary to mass fires the FDC would have to be provided with an elaborate, redundant and reliable communication network involving the forward observers, FDC, and the gun batteries. Moreover, it should be an independent artillery system which did not rely on the infantry for wire links.

In WWII the primary means of communications was by phones--in the infantry divisions. Radio was considered a "back up" means. During the Bulge, the American communication system generally performed well. During the first few days, there were some disruptions to wire lines cut by shell fire--but these were usually repaired with dispatch.

Regarding German artillery communications during the Bulge not much information is available at the division level. We do know that the Senior Artillery Officer of 6th Panzer Army did not have independent artillery wire/radio links to his subordinate units--such as those available to his counterpart in U.S. V Corps, Brig. Gen. Helmick.

THE GERMAN 88mm GUN

Introduction:

The German 88mm gun is the best known artillery weapon of WWII. American combat veterans of the ETO have strong feelings about this particular weapon because they firmly believe that the 88 was the artillery piece that did most of the firing against them. Veterans tend to describe the 88 as the "super gun," "terrifying," "pervasive," and "scourge of the battlefield." By the Bulge, the 88s had attained an almost mythical aura with the GI's, and almost all German incoming artillery rounds, regardless of caliber, were referred to as "88s" by the troops.

But these beliefs do not represent an accurate assessment of the 88 as a field artillery weapon.

Development of the 88mm FLAK Gun:

In 1925, the German Luftwaffe anticipated the need for a heavy *anti-aircraft gun*. Because of restrictions of the Versailles Treaty, the first gun was not produced until 1933 as the 88mm Flak 18. As war loomed in the mid-30's, efforts were made continually to upgrade the Flak 88s--and new models were introduced in 1936, 1939, and 1942. As anti-aircraft guns, these weapons were placed under the Luftwaffe--with the mission of defending against enemy aircraft in both the Homeland and on the battlefields. During WWII, Flak 88s were built.

a. The 88mm Flak 18: Entered the service in 1933. The gun featured a single-tube barrel on a pedestal, and an ingenious semi-automatic breech and a cruciform platform carriage.

b. The 88mm Flak 36: Entered the service in 1936. Because of flaws in the Flak 18, the Germans redesigned the weapon and

produced the Flak 36. This gun had a new three-piece barrel so the section near the chamber could be replaced separately. The basic mounting was changed from an octagonal to a square shape--and the piece was provided a new carriage.

c. The 88mm Flak 37: Entered the service in 1939. It employed a new proved data transmission system for finer control. And a simpler barrel construction of only two segments.

d. The 88mm Flak 41: Entered the service in 1942. This version of the Flak 88 was designed to enhance the weapon's capability as an anti-aircraft weapon by significantly increasing its maximum range. The Flak 41 could reach almost 9,000 feet higher than the Flak 37. It also had improved ballistics, an increase in the rate of fire, a new, longer tube, and new mounting and ammunition.

Uses of FLAK Guns--1936-1945.

The German 88mm Flak gun was originally built to be Germany's main heavy anti-aircraft gun. During the Spanish Civil War in 1936-39 it was discovered that the 88 was also useful as an anti-tank gun. Later Rommel used it very effectively in North Africa as an anti-tank gun--and it was as an anti-tank gun in North Africa that the 88 earned a world-wide reputation.

Later the Germans made the 88 into a multi-purpose weapon; that is, the same piece could be used as an anti-aircraft, anti-tank and/or a field artillery piece. By 1943 the 88 added to its reputation during the large tank battles in Russia. During the Battle of the Bulge, most 88 units were organic to the panzer divisions and had the primary mission of protecting the tanks from enemy aircraft. In a few instances in the Battle of the Bulge, the 88s were used as an anti-tank weapon--and only occasionally was it used as an anti-personnel weapon.

A New 88-

By 1943, the Germans had developed a new 88 caliber gun to be used *exclusively* as a heavy anti-tank/field gun. In the Bulge, the 6th Panzer Army had two battalions of these new 88mm anti-tank guns--a total of 54. The old 88 Flak gun was kept in service for anti-aircraft purposes.

The Myth of the 88.

The Myth was born in North Africa with Rommel's great success with the 88 as an anti-tank gun. At that time the Germans had plenty 88s while the U.S. and the UK had **no** comparable heavy anti-tank gun. German propaganda publicized it as an all-conquering super-weapon. The U.S. and UK infantrymen somehow came to believe that the 88 was a major threat not only to tanks but to the infantry as well. In 1943 reports from the big tank battles in Russia extolled the prowess of the 88s as the only anti-tank gun that could stop the new Russian T-34 tank. By the Bulge in 1944, most U.S. combat infantrymen were fully persuaded that the 88 was their main nemesis on the battlefield--and they invariably yelled "88s" upon hearing an incoming round. Ian Hogg, the noted English expert on the artillery of WWII, noted this tendency in his book on the German artillery of WWII. And I, personally, noticed it as a forward observer at Elsenborn.

Myth vs. Reality.

The American infantrymen who fought in the Battle of the Bulge believed firmly that the

(Continued)

ARTILLERY

(Continuation)

German artillery piece being fired at them were mostly 88s--and many GI's still believe that to be true today. The average GI was not trained on how the German artillery was organized. Had he been trained on that subject he would have known that the main weapon of the German Division Artillery was the 105mm howitzer--not the 88. The Germans, like the Americans, had chosen the 105mm howitzer as their main close support, weapon because it was a better anti-personnel weapon than the 88 or the 75. The 105 had several advantages over the 88: (1) the 105 was lighter (4,980 lbs vs 10,992 for the 88) and the shell of the 105 was larger and more lethal (4.81 lbs of TNT vs only 1.91 lbs of TNT for the 88), (2) the 105, as a howitzer, could lob shells behind hill masks while the 88, with its flat trajectory and high muzzle velocity could not.

In the German Army, as in ours, the weapons that were used primarily to fire at enemy personnel were the pieces of the division artillery. Note in Chart A (Charts appear in this issue) that the main artillery pieces in the German division artillery, both infantry and panzer divisions was the 105mm howitzer. In the Bulge, the 88s were used mostly for anti-aircraft protection of the tanks in the panzer divisions, because the Americans and British had air supremacy.

Therefore, the evidence is overwhelming. The 88s were simply not the main weapon that was targeting the American infantry-man in the Bulge. The fear that the infantrymen had toward the 88s was very real--but it was not based on fact. Nevertheless, this was probably one of the greatest myths to come out of World War II.

CONCLUSIONS

1. The U.S. Field Artillery in WWII:

There is no merit to the allegations that the U.S. Field Artillery fought WWII with obsolete weapons of inferior quality. All of the American howitzers and guns were virtually new and compared quite favorably with those of the Germans--and they were more highly motorized. In the area of artillery technology, the American proximity fuse was an achievement unmatched by the Germans, though the Germans were ahead in missile technology.

In the area of artillery operations, the Americans were noticeably more effective at controlling the fires of the artillery by mastery of the massed fire techniques.

2. The German 88s:

Early in the war, the American Infantry were misled into believing that the 88 was more dangerous to men in the front lines than was actually the case. A myth developed and spread widely--and by the Battle of the Bulge, the U.S. Infantrymen were persuaded that just about every artillery round fired at them were 88s. Actually the 105mm howitzer was the German's main anti-personnel weapon--and fired many more rounds at the infantry than did the 88s--and with a larger shell.

Acknowledgments: My deep gratitude goes to the following for their assistance: Richard C. Anderson, Jr.; Danny Parker; Dan Rosen; Sue Thompson; Margaret A. Weaver; Ian Hogg; Boyd Dastrup; Rich Boyland; Dan Crowley; Charles Biggio, III; and Lt. Gen. (USA-Ret.) David E. Ott.

Special thanks to:
CHARLES P. BIGGIO, JR.
99TH INFANTRY DIVISION
for submitting this informative article



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.

CHRISTMAS GREETINGS - 1944



This is a picture of the Christmas Card issued to the 80th Division, shortly before their "Quick March to the Battle of the Bulge."

2007 BULGE REENACTMENT 62th Anniversary Commemoration Battle TO HONOR WORLD WAR II VETERANS

Fort Indiantown Gap PA

23 Jan – 28 Jan 2007

The World War II Federation invites you to their Battle of the Bulge Reenactment this coming January and they will be honoring the World War II Veterans during the week, with special events scheduled for Friday, 26 Jan 2007.

This is a great week for veterans which allows you to relive your initial days in the Army, living in genuine GI bunks in original WWII barracks. You need only bring a set of sheets and a blanket or sleeping bag and your pillow. All sleeping is on lower bunks. It gives you an opportunity to enjoy the camaraderie of fellow veterans, enjoy WWII videos, peruse material on the Bulge and partake of the hospitality. It will also give you an opportunity to visit the reenactors barracks which they will have transformed back to the days of WWII and be able to interact with them.

You are their role-models and they are trying to learn about what it was like back in the 1940s. They do this to honor you.

Veterans may arrive after 1700 hours on Tues 23 Jan 2007. The Veterans Barrack will be Building 12-15. At 2000 hours, on Tues, they will be showing 1940 Movies in Bldg # 12-15. As usual, the veterans will have a hospitality suite set up in the barracks as well as a memorabilia display.

On Friday, the Federation will salute the Veterans with a Tactical Battle Briefing at 1230 Hours in the Community Club followed by a free luncheon for Veterans at 1330 hours (others may attend at \$6.00). At 1700 hours there will be a Wreath Laying at the VBOB Monument and 21 gun salute. As usual there will be 1940 Movies in Bldg #12-15 and hospitality in the Veterans Barracks. For Bulge veterans they are offering a discount coupon of \$15.00 from prices of Option A & B below. Contact John Bowen for the coupon.

On Wed, 24 Jan the Flea Market will open and continue through Sat.

Registration hours are Tue, 1700 to 2000 hrs; Wed & Thu, 1000 – 1200 hrs, 1400-1700 hours and 1900-2100 hours; Fri, 1000-1200 hrs, 1400-2300 hours; Sat, 0600-0700 hours.

On Sat, troops will move into the battlefield at 0900 hrs. Veterans will be transported by bus for a tour of the battlefield 1030-1200 hrs. At 1800 hrs dinner will be served in the Community Club and at 2100 hrs there will be an Evening of Period Entertainment during which the Veterans will act as judges for the 1940's Talent Show.

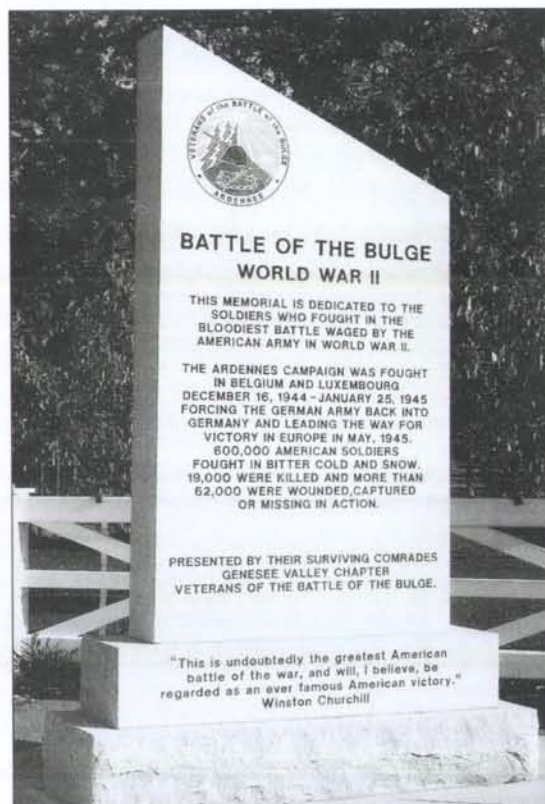
Option A with a bunk in the barracks and with Dinner on Saturday will be \$67 for the 6 days. **Option B** with a bunk but without meal will be \$47.00. **Option C** at \$22 is for Veterans only and is for the Dinner Meal & Entertainment only, for those not staying in the barracks.

If you would like a Registration packet send a self-addressed stamped envelope to John D. Bowen, 613 Clichester Lane, Silver Spring MD 20904-3331, e-mail johndbowen@earthlink.net or go to www.wwiifederation.org

Deadline is 31 Dec 2006.

GENESEE VALLEY CHAPTER DEDICATES MONUMENT

John D. Foy, Secretary of the Genesee Valley Chapter, provides us with the following photo of the monument dedicated in October, 2005, at the entrance of Ontario Beach Park in Charlotte, New York



WESTERN MICHIGAN CHAPTER MEETS WITH GOVERNOR

In August, 2005, Chapter 23 was invited to attend the annual Governor's Review of the Michigan National Guard at Camp Grayling, Michigan. Seven members of the Michigan Chapter attended the meeting and reception.



With Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm are: left to right: Jim Wibby, Richard Rizzio, Fred Kore, Wayne Mentier, Maury Cole, Tony, Stefan and William Nemecek. ■

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION
Invites You to Join Your Friends for the
"EVENTS OF REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"
OF THE 62nd ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE
December 14, 15 and 16, 2006
Metropolitan Washington, DC

The DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City, by Hilton, 300 Army-Navy Drive, in Arlington VA22202 has been selected, with its panoramic view of our Nation's Capital, as the site for activities commemorating the 62nd Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, December 14 - 16, 2006. This hotel, just off Route 1 in Crystal City is a 7 minute drive from Reagan National Airport and a 2 City block walk to the Pentagon Metro Station and the Pentagon Mall. It provides easy access to Washington DC and has just recently completed a major renovation for great accommodations, at a reduced rate of \$99.00, single or double occupancy plus taxes. Parking is Complimentary. This rate is available for any night(s) between December 13 and December 17. For room reservations please call the DoubleTree Reservations (1-800-Hiltons) or 703-416-4100 by **December 1, 2006**. Mention that you are attending the **BATTLE OF THE BULGE** events for the special rate and ask for a room with a View of Washington DC.

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2006

- 2:00 PM – 6:00 PM Registration (Hospitality Suite, Jackson), receive name badges, Banquet/bus tickets, and information. (If you are only attending the Banquet, you may pick up your tickets at the DoubleTree by 6:00 PM Dec 15th.) Plan ahead with your friends to be seated at the same table (rounds of 10 per table).
- 3:00 PM – 10:00 PM Hospitality Room/Exhibits, scrapbooks, John Bowen & Bob Phillips, Battle of the Bulge Historians will be the hosts. A private area in the Hotel restaurant has been reserved for supper from 6:30 – 8:00 PM for the Battle of the Bulge Veterans (payment is on your own). A time to renew friendships & visit w/old friends.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2006

- 8:00 AM – 9:00 AM Registration open/Receive name badges, Banquet/bus tickets, Jackson (Hospitality Suite).
- 9:00 AM Charter buses depart hotel.
- 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM We will be visiting the brand new US Marine Corps Museum at Quantico VA which opens for the first time on Veterans Day 2006. Compare Marine Basic. Lunch on your own and at your leisure at the Museum. Those wanting to do some quick & unique Christmas Shopping at the Pentagon Mall will be dropped there on our return from the Marine Museum. We will leave the Museum at 2:30 PM for return to the hotel.

BANQUET AT THE 15th FLOOR JEFFERSON ROOM, DOUBLETREE CRYSTAL CITY

- 6:00 PM Social Hour/Cash Bar.
- 6:45 PM Seated for Dinner.
- 7:00 PM Color Guard/Members of the Fife and Drum Corps/Ceremonies.
- 7:15 PM Dinner served.

BANQUET ENTRÉE

The choice of entrée for the Banquet is:

Medallions of Beef Tenderloin

OR

Chicken Piccata with lemon caper sauce

Program:

- Greetings from Dignitaries.
- Speaker: To be Announced. The Military Then and Now.

After Banquet Hospitality Room open, Jackson Suite, at DoubleTree Crystal City.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2006

- 9:30 AM Bus leaves from DoubleTree Crystal City Hotel to Arlington Cemetery
- 11:00 AM Impressive ceremony and placing of wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, Arlington Cemetery.
- 11:30 AM Ceremony of Remembrance, Battle of the Bulge Memorial, across from Amphitheater.
- 12:00 PM Ceremony of Remembrance, Battle of the Bulge Memorial, Porter Avenue, Arlington Cemetery
- 1:00 PM Buffet Luncheon, Hosted by VBOB, DoubleTree Crystal City Hotel
- Swearing-in of new VBOB officers.
- Comments by VBOB President.
- Farewell.

Notes: Free Airport shuttle provided by the DoubleTree Hotel every half hour, 3 miles from Reagan Washington National Airport. Free Shuttle from DoubleTree Hotel every hour on the half hour to Pentagon City Metro (Blue/Yellow Line) and Pentagon City Mall Skydome Lounge the area's only revolving rooftop lounge for a spectacular view of Washington at night. Cover & music applies after 9 PM Friday & Saturdays. The Café Restaurant open 6:30 AM to 11:00 PM

RESERVATION FORM

"REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION"

OF THE 62nd ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

December 14, 15 and 16, 2006

Metropolitan Washington, DC

Return form and check by **December 1, 2006** to:
Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation
PO Box 2516,
Kensington MD 20895-0181

Questions:
 John D. Bowen, 301-384-6533
 E-Mail: johndbowen@earthlink.net

Name: _____ Telephone: _____

Spouse/Guest: _____

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

Battle of Bulge Unit: _____

E-Mail Address: _____

RESERVATIONS:	<u>Number Attending</u>	<u>Cost/Person</u>	<u>Total</u>
Registration Fee	_____	\$10.00	\$ _____

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2006

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

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2006

Chartered Bus, 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM \$30.00

9:00 AM – 2:30 PM Visit to US Marine Corps new Museum at Quantico VA
 2:30 PM Return to Hotel dropping off shoppers at Pentagon Mall

Commemorative Banquet, DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City \$55.00
 6:15 PM – 10:00 PM Jefferson Room 15th Floor – Beautiful view of Washington under the lights
 Please make your Main Course selection(s):

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medallions of beef tenderloin | (Name _____) |
| OR | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Chicken Piccata with lemon caper sauce | (Name _____) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetic Meal | (Name _____) |

Plan ahead with your friends to be seated at the same table. Tables are Rounds of 8. Please indicate friends with whom you would like to sit: _____

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2006:

9:30 AM	Chartered bus to Arlington Cemetery	\$15.00
10:00 AM	Drive-by WWII Memorial	
11:00 AM	Ceremonies: Tomb of the Unknown Soldiers and VBOB Monument	No. Attending: _____
12:30 PM	Bus Return to DoubleTree Crystal City Hotel	
1:00 PM	VBOB Luncheon & Installation of Officers	No. Attending: _____ \$10.00*

*Total Cost of Luncheon is \$28.00 of which VBOB will fund \$18.00 for active VBOB National Member & Guest.

VBOB Membership = as shown on your last page of the Bulge Bugle

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

NOTES & REMINDERS:

Banquet Dress: Business suit/black tie (miniature medals encouraged) or military dress uniform
 Room reservations must be made with the DoubleTree Crystal City directly, by December 1, 2006 (Telephone (1-800-Hiltons)).
 Return completed Reservation Form for events to BOB Historical Foundation by 1 December 2006, (Telephone 301-384-6533).
 No cancellation refunds after December 9, 2006.

Please indicate in all places the number & names attending so that we can be advised of the proper number to plan. Thanks!

PLEASE BRING A PICTURE ID (Drivers License, Passport, Mil ID) for the Washington area

The WERETH 11

Remembering the Invisible Soldiers of the Battle of the Bulge

Submitted by John McAuliffe
Vice President for Chapters

Few realize that a decisive factor in the defense of Bastogne, during the Battle of the Bulge, rested in the artillery support of the surrounded town. One of the heavy (155mm) artillery units was the segregated 969th Field Artillery Battalion joined by a few howitzers and survivors of the segregated 333rd Field Artillery Battalion. For their actions the 969th FAB received the Presidential Unit Citation, the highest award a military unit can receive. In spite of this meritorious service, participated by black GI's in the Battle of the Bulge, or for that matter in WWII, is not well known or recognized.

Everyone knows of the Tuskegee Airmen and some know of the 761st Tank Battalion and the Red Ball Express. However, the majority of the black GI's in World War II, 260,000 in the European Theatre of Operations, were not forgotten to history, they were simply never acknowledged. They were the "invisible" soldiers of World War II. They include eleven young artillerymen of the 333rd Field Artillery Battalion who were murdered by the SS, after surrendering, during the Battle of the Bulge.

The 333rd Field Artillery Battalion was a 155mm howitzer unit that had been in action since coming ashore at Utah Beach on June 29, 1944. Typical of most segregated units in World War II, it had white officers and black enlisted men. At the time of the Battle of the Bulge, the unit was located in the vicinity of St. Vith, Belgium. Specifically it was northeast of Schonberg and west of the Our River in support of the Army VII Corps and especially the 106th Infantry Division.

On December 16th, German artillery began shelling the Schonberg area. With reports of rapid German infantry and armored progress, the 333rd FAB was ordered to displace further west but to leave C Battery and Service Battery in position to support the 14th Cavalry and the 106th Division. By the morning of December 17th, these two positions were rapidly overrun by the advancing German troops and armor. While many personnel tried to escape through Schonberg, eleven men of the Service Battery went overland in a northwest direction in the hopes of reaching American lines. At about 3:00 p.m., they approached the first house in the nine-house hamlet of Wereth, Belgium, owned by Mathius Langer.

The men were cold, hungry, and exhausted after walking cross-country through the deep snow. They had two rifles between them. The family welcomed them and gave them food. But this small part of Belgium did not necessarily welcome Americans as "Liberators." This area had been part of Germany before the First World War and many of its citizens still saw themselves as Germans and not Belgians. The people spoke German but had been forced to become Belgian citizens when their land was given to Belgium as part of the WWI repatriations. Unlike the rest of Belgium, many people in this area welcomed the Nazis in

1940 and again in 1944, because of their strong ties to Germany. Mathius Langer was not one of these. At the time he took the black Americans in he was hiding two Belgian deserters from the German Army and had sent a draft-aged son into hiding, so the Nazis could not conscript him. A family friend was also at the house when the Americans appeared. Unfortunately, unknown to the Langers, she was a Nazi sympathizer.

About an hour later, a German patrol of the 1st SS Division, belonging to Kampfgruppe Hansen arrived in Wereth. It is believed the Nazi sympathizer informed the SS that there were Americans at the Langer house. When the SS troops approached the house the eleven Americans surrendered quickly, without resistance. The Americans were made to sit on the road, in the cold, until dark. The Germans then marched them down the road. Gunfire was heard during the night. In the morning, villagers saw the bodies of the men in a ditch. Because they were afraid that the Germans might return, they did not touch the dead soldiers. The snow covered the bodies and they remained entombed in the snow until mid-February when villagers directed a U.S. Army Grave Registration unit to the site. The official report noted that the men had been brutalized, with broken legs, bayonet wounds to the head, and fingers cut off. Prior to their removal an army photographer took photographs of the bodies to document the brutality of the massacre.

An investigation was immediately begun with a "secret" classification. Testimonies were taken of the Graves Registration officers, the army photographer, the Langers and the woman who had been present when the soldiers arrived. She testified that she told the SS the Americans had left! The case was then forwarded to a War Crimes Investigation unit. However, the investigation showed that no positive identification of the murderers could be found (i.e., no unit patches, vehicle numbers, etc.) only that they were from the 1st SS Panzer Division. By 1948 the "secret" classification was canceled and the paperwork filed away. The murder of the Wereth 11 was seemingly forgotten and unavenged!

Seven of the men were buried in the American Cemetery at Henri-Chapelle, Belgium, and the other four were returned to their families for burial after the war ended. The Wereth 11 remained unknown, it seemed, to all but their families until 1994.

Herman Langer, the son of Mathius Langer, who had given the men food and shelter, erected a small cross, with the names of the dead, in a corner of the pasture where they were murdered, as a private gesture from the Langer family. But the memorial and the tiny hamlet of Wereth remained basically obscure in a tiny hamlet with no school or shops there were no signs on the roadways to indicate the memorial, and it was not listed in any guides or maps to the Battle of the Bulge battlefield. Even people looking for it had trouble finding it in the small German-speaking community.

In 2001 three Belgium citizens embarked on the task of creating a fitting memorial to these men and additionally to honor all black GI's of WWII. With the help of an American physician in Mobile, Alabama, whose father had fought and was captured in the Battle of the Bulge, a grassroots publicity and fund-raising endeavor was begun, and has had modest success. There are now road signs indicating the location of the memorial, and the Belgium Tourist Bureau listed it in the 60th Anniversary "Battle of the Bulge" brochures. Three families of

(Continued)

THE WERETH 11

(Continuation)

the murdered men have been located, including one U.S. grave site.

Enough money has been raised to purchase the land the current memorial is on and monument construction. Further monies are needed to provide for a preservation. It is believed that this is the only memorial to black GI's of WWII in Europe. Contributions will be greatly appreciated and will go entirely to maintaining and preserving the memorial. The site was dedicated on May 23, 2004 and contributions can be made payable to **U.S. Wereth Memorial**, and mailed to Norman Lichtenfield, 6701 Airport Blvd #B110, Mobile, Alabama 36608.

The goal is to make the Wereth 11 and all black GI's "visible" to all Americans and to history. They, like so many others, paid the ultimate price for our freedom.

Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Winchendon

[John McAuliffe also sent us a copy of an August 17, 2006, Telegram & Gazette article by Jason Feifer from which we have extracted the following information.]

[Excerpts] "...It was a vicious slaying, and one largely forgotten or ignored by history. But that changes this weekend, when the first American monument to those fallen soldiers goes up at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Winchendon.

"The 11 men were from Alabama, and there's no telling if they had a connection to Winchendon. But the monument will be there largely because of the efforts of Paxton resident Christian W. deMarcken, historian for the Central Massachusetts Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, who lived in Belgium when the Nazis invaded.

"American soldiers need to be remembered, he said. That's especially true of those who have been so long forgotten....

"In 2001, three Belgian citizens began working to create a monument to the men and it went up in Wereth in May 2004. About that time, one of the Belgians, a woman named Adda Rikken, began looking for someone to build a companion monument in America.

"Through a series of contacts, she got in touch with Mr. deMarcken, an Army veteran with a thick accent. Because of his heritage and expertise, he was enthusiastic about the project.

"Mr. deMarcken is American-born and of Belgian descent; his family was living in Belgium when the Germans invaded. He was 12 at the time. His father survived despite being captured twice by Nazis, and spent two years in a concentration camp. Mr. deMarcken's wife also grew up in Belgium during the war.

"We know what it is to be cold, to be hungry and to be scared. Scared, especially," he said.

"Mr. deMarcken spent two years working on the project, which was unanimously approved by the Central Massachusetts chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. It had already been planning to erect one monument to honor all Americans who participated in the Ardennes Campaign in Belgium and Luxembourg, but decided to dedicate another one specifically to the 11 men, which will also pay tribute to the 260,000 African-American soldiers who fought throughout Europe."

The daughter of one of the slain black soldiers was located by Mr. DeMarcken and she attended the dedication along with the senior military attache for the Belgian Embassy in Washington.

PURPLE HEART HALL OF HONOR MUSEUM

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is currently under construction at the New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site in the New York Hudson River Valley.

It will collect and preserve the stories of Purple Heart recipients from all branches of service and across the generations in an attempt to ensure that all recipients are represented. These stories will be preserved and shared through exhibits, live and videotaped interviews with the veterans and the Roll of Honor, an interactive computer program preserving the stories of each individual.

The National Purple Heart Hall of Honor is the first in the nation to recognize the more than 800,000 Americans wounded or killed in action while serving in the United States Military.

Proof of the award must be submitted in the form of a DD214, newspaper article, telegram, etc. They would like to have a photograph of recipient both then and now if possible.

For further information or to have your story preserved, you may contact Michael J. Clark, Project Coordinator, National Purple Heart Hall of Honor, New Windsor Cantonment State Historic Site, PO Box 207 (374 Temple Hill Road), Vails Gate, New York 12584-0207. Telephone: 845-561-1765, E-mail: michael.clark@oprhp.state.ny.us.

Visit their website at: <http://www.purpleheart.org>



DON'T FORGET OUR NEW YEAR'S TOAST

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

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

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

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

PLEASE CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR DUES ARE DUE. You'll find the date your dues were due just above your last name on the mailing label. Thanks for your attention to this matter. Dues are \$15.00.

ECHOES OF DISTANT BATTLES

By Jack A. Marshall
80th Infantry Division
317th Infantry Regiment
Company I

All issues of *The Bugle* are good, but some are just better than others. The February (2006) issue struck more responsive chords in my memory than most. Hence, with due apologies to Lewis Carroll, 'tis time to speak of many things--of 'Medica in the Bulge'--'posit' shells--of 'Repple-Depots'--and bayonets--and other things.

Were you ever in a 'Repple-Depot'? (That's Replacement Depot, in case you wonder.)

Come now, many of you must have been. I reported to the Third Army Repple Depot (was there more than one?), December 14, 1944. Though we could hear artillery fire faintly, we were far from the front. The first inkling that all was not well came (I believe) the night of December 17th, when a wild-eyes 2nd lieutenant burst into the officer quarters and yelled out, "Are there any tankers here?" When a couple of officers acknowledged they were, the lieutenant said, "All of my unit is gone...I was the only tank to get out. I just got here from OCS a week ago and I don't know what to do or where to go. I've got a perfectly good tank, and a good crew outside--so anybody who will take over my tank can have it--and I'll stay here!"

Obviously, not quite "by the book" and the offer drew only silence. Then some MP's arrived, told the lieutenant he couldn't stay--they would give him gas from the motor pool--and he would just have to go find some other armored unit.

By the next day, chaos took over. We started moving, moving as we would each day for about two weeks. Men in a 'Repple-Depot' are much like the inventory of a lumber yard--so many of this type--so many of that. For reasons that escape me, the officers and enlisted men were kept separate--perhaps to perpetuate the myth that officers always had extra privileges. Sure they do. As the convoy formed each day to move from one unknown place to another, enlisted men were assigned to trucks (overloaded, but at least told where to ride). Cabs were occupied by Depot personnel. Officers were left to find some space in the cargo trucks. One, two, sometimes three of us burrowed under various organizational equipment to try to get out of the wind and snow--the tarps were not up on the cargo trucks.

After the first day or so, some enterprising officers rigged up stoves to heat whatever warehouse we were dumped in. Several sheets of galvanized iron were used as the base for a fire, and various lengths of stove-pipe rigged to windows to draw off some smoke. Actually, it is a wonder we did not all strangle on the smoke. Cool air near the floor allowed us to breath--provided we crawled about.

Our travels ended in a portion of the Marginot Line--that useless monument of defense--December 31, 1944. We had a shower for the first time in over three weeks--I did not then know it was to be six weeks before I had another! Someone got us a liquor ration, and we built up roaring fires in the small fireplaces, and exchanged stories of our past. After bedding down, a fire broke out in one corner of the room--our fires had been too much for the fireplace, and timbers under the floor caught fire. As his blanket caught fire, a lieutenant yelled,

"Fire...fire...." He jumped up, got a bucket of water--chopped away at the ice on top--and yelled, "Come on--somebody help me!"

I was sleeping near a second-floor window, and I decided if the flames got too bad, I could jump out into the snow. Meanwhile, a major watched the lieutenant scurry about--chopping at the floorboards with his entrenching tool--getting another bucket. The major said, "You're doing a fine job, lieutenant. You'll get the fire out in no time." Which he did. As he crawled under his partially burned blanket he said, "You are all a bunch of SOB's."

And the major said, "Well, lieutenant, obviously you have yet to get to the front. In the next few days you will find out what a minor incident all of this has been. Happy New Year!"

Happily, I kissed the Repple Depot goodbye, January 5, 1945, to take command of Company I, 317th Infantry, 80th Division. It was a good company. They were all good companies--but mine was special.

My Executive Officer, 1st Lt. Selmer, and First Sergeant Kuti were part of the story--as were my medics--and as was the platoon sergeant of my Weapons Platoon.

Immediately after I introduced myself to the company, Lt. Selmer took me aside to say, "I want you to know, Captain, you are very welcome. You are the fourth C.O. I have had. One killed, one wounded, one fatigue--so I don't want to be a C.O." As I soon found out, Selmer should have been C.O. He first went into combat with the 80th in August. He was smart, and he was quick to offer me suggestions to improve on attack orders.

Similarly, First Sergeant Kuti, know the capabilities of the older men in the company and was my strong right arm for picking patrols and other assignments. Though I regularly gave Kuti the opportunity for leave, and even rotation, he always said, "Give it to one of the guys that have been on the line the longest." Of the 22 men who part of the original I Company, about half out by rotation--and the other half? Well, they disappeared via dead, wounded or MIA, so that by the end of the Bulge, Sgt Kuti and Sgt Jensen, the weapons platoon leader, were the last of the original company.

Did you ever see a full rifle company? In theory it was about 220 men (the table of organization varied a bit over time). I never went into attack with more than 110 men. Usually it was less than 90, and at one low point I went to colonel Fisher, 317th C.O. screaming, "What do you expect me to do with a company of 68 men?" And he replied calmly, "I expect you to attack, Captain, and if you can't, I'll damned-well find someone who will!" Today, we hear huge outcry about the lack of adequate armor for our men in Iraq--and I agree they are entitled to every possible help they can get. But in "our day" there was no such outcry over deficiencies. When I gave my first attack order to I Company, I finished with "fix bayonets before moving out." Sgt Kuti broke the silence, "Fix bayonets? With the possible exception of the mess sergeant, I haven't seen a bayonet for over a month--they were picked up to send to the Pacific!" I don't know how many units gave up their bayonets--but we had none in the 317th for the Bulge.

But worse than equipment was the replacement system--including me. I first served in combat with the British Commandos in Africa. With my left foot mangled by accidental grenade explosion by one of my men, I remained on active duty as "limited service"--and had to get custom orthopedic shoes at my own expense at that. Long before the Bulge, in the fall of 1944, the shortage of line officers led for a call for volunteers--and I responded. From a desk job in Paris, I went to a combat company. I had never been in a field exercise as company commander. I had never even seen a bazooka until I saw it used in the Ardennes!

And then there was that relentless parade of replacements from the States. They came 10 or 15 at a time. Sometimes they arrived at night. I spoke to them in the dark, and they went into combat before we received written orders with their names. About a third disappeared as MIA before we saw their orders. After a few days another third were in the hospital--wounded or trench feet. ■

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY WELCOMES VBOB REUNION OF VETERANS AND FRIENDS

October 9, 2006--Welcome

As veterans, their family members and friends arrived at the Louisville Airport, they were greeted by an electronic sign that carried the following message: Welcome Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

Registration was hot and heavy as approximately 200 people from 29 different states attended the reunion which was headquartered at the Holiday Inn Louisville Downtown. In addition to the good food and friendly service, everyone was pleased with the large hospitality suite which seated about 120 people. Displayed therein were many items of memorabilia and six poster sized battle maps.

In the evening the hotel provided a complimentary wine and cheese reception which was enjoyed by all.

October 10, 2006--Tours

The day was filled with tours and activities which the members seemed to enjoy very much: Louisville Slugger Museum (we each came away with a small replica of the bats made there); Frazier Arms Museum (sure was enlightening re: the trials of our forefathers); Glassworks Factory; and a lovely Italian dinner together back at the Holiday Inn.

October 11, 2006--Fort Knox

After clearing security at the Bradenburg Station Gate our three tour buses cruised directly to the post side entrance of Armor park and then to keys Park where we found some 12 or 14 reenactors standing in the drizzle saluting. They were there to display a Sherman tank, a half track, a command reconnaissance car and a weapons carrier.

For various reasons, a Fly-By of WWII antique airplanes had to be cancelled. On the runway of Godman Army Airfield we waited (in increased drizzling rain) for the sight of a C-130 Globemaster from the Kentucky Air National Guard which was bringing four paratroopers for a jump. Following the jump, the C-130 taxied up to our location and we had the opportunity to inspect this tremendous airplane of box-car proportions.

We loaded the buses again and made our way to the post Leaders Club for a wonderful lunch. Lou Cunningham, 106th Infantry Division, gave a short welcoming speech. Dee Paris, 9th Armored Division, awarded Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge certificates to General Tucker; Colonel Mark Needham, Garrison Commander; and Arthur Smaagaard, Manager of Godman Army Airfield.

Following lunch we went to the Patton Museum which contains vehicles of armor and armored cavalry. A theater gives a detailed account of the life of General George S. Patton. Toward the end of the day, it provided a welcomed place for tired feet and legs to sit down for a while.

Many, many thanks go out to Tom Chambers, of the 9th Armored Division, for making this a interesting and memorable day for all.

October 12, 2006--High School Visit, Handcrafted Stoneware & the Cruise

Male High School--Our visit to Male High School was one of the highlights of the reunion. In attendance for the school's Annual Patriotic Day Program were: 1,700 students, the faculty, guests and VBOB. The school chorus (boys in tuxedos and girls dressed in black evening dresses) sang "The Pledge of Allegiance," "The National Anthem," and "The Battle Hymn of the Republic." A "Salute to Patriots" was performed by the orchestra, "America the Beautiful," was sung by Mendy Cumberland, a faculty member.



Male High School

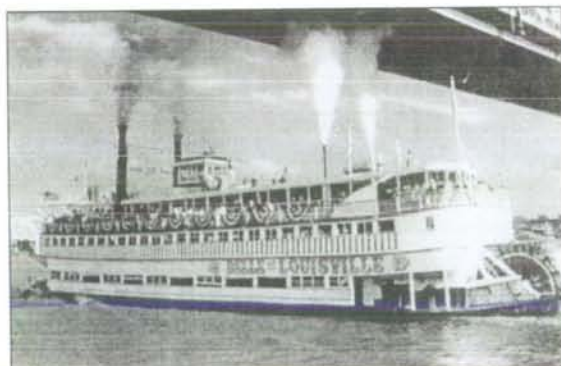
Principal David E. Wilson introduced Lou Cunningham, who received a standing ovation. Lou described the events leading up to the Battle of the Bulge and introduced an audio/video presentation which featured battlefield scenes and "then and now" photos of the veterans.

During the presentation, Heather French Henry, from Louisville, Miss America of 2000 and a champion for homeless veterans, read General McAuliffe's Christmas message to the surrounded troops in Bastogne. The band played "Stars and Stripes" and "God Bless America."

At the conclusion of the program, Lou was presented a bushel basket containing several hundred thank you cards written by the students to the veterans in appreciation for all they have done.

Louisville Stoneware Company--A trip to the Stoneware Company delighted all who attended and was very informative.

Belle of Louisville--The dinner cruise aboard the Belle of Louisville was certainly an entertaining evening.



Belle of Louisville

VBOB had the entire boat for our own use during the two hour cruise on the Ohio River, which included a good dinner and great music from the 40's. Many of the old-timers displayed their agility on the dance floor and one veteran danced with his walker.

October 13, 2006--Churchill Downs, WWII Wreath Laying & Banquet

Churchill Downs--What an amazing opportunity to be on the inside track. The panorama at this facility really gave you the feeling of being "up and ready." The gift shop also gave those of us who have Kentucky Derby Day celebrations the opportunity to purchase some unique items to display along with recipes for the mint juleps.

Wreath Laying at WWII Memorial--George Watson, 87th Infantry Division, conducted a wreath laying ceremony at the World War II Memorial.

John Bowen, Associate Member, offered a prayer.

Also participating in the ceremony were Bill Leopold, 75th Infantry Division, Dwight Reed, 221st Quartermaster Battalion, Headquarters.



Laying the wreath were ladies we couldn't have done without: Hope Kirkendall, 16th General Hospital; Katherine Nolan, 53rd Field Hospital; and Rose Young, 130th General Hospital.

General Membership Meeting--In the absence of Stanley Wojtusik, the meeting was conducted by Louis Cunningham, Past President of VBOB.

President Stanley Wojtusik, 106th Infantry Division, was re-elected to office and the remaining slate (listed elsewhere in this newsletter) were voted into office.

Other items of interest to the members were: the fact that many chapters do not enforce the bylaws by insisting that members within their chapters do not belong to national and the fact that VBOB should have reunion plans for two years in advance.

Tom Chambers, 9th Armored Division, gave an outstanding presentation about constructing a VBOB museum, including a video of the battle. The members voted that a committee be formed to evaluate the project and report back to the General Membership.

Banquet--John McAuliffe, 87th Infantry Division, served as master of ceremonies. The Male High School ROTC presented and retired the Colors. The Belgium and United States anthems were played. BG Dany Van de Ven was presented with a framed photograph of Belgian miners donating money to help GI's during the Battle of the Bulge.

Photo shows Belgian miners donating to help the GI's who were participating in the Battle of the Bulge.



Toasts were made by Lou Cunningham; Robert Thomas, 90th Infantry Division; and Will Temple, Jr., 106th Infantry Division. Katherine Nolan, 53rd Field Hospital, led the group in the "Pledge of Allegiance."

Several of the 10th Armored Division, who recently joined VBOB were in attendance.

Guest speakers were from the U.S. Mint Police and they discussed the gold depository at Fort Knox.

Tom Chambers was presented a VBOB certificate for his dedication and hard work in organizing the trip to Fort Knox.

The banquet concluded with the playing of the video/audio tribute prepared by Robert Rhodes. This tribute was prepared as a result of the trip to Belgium and Luxembourg for 50th Anniversary observances in 2004.

Miscellaneous--Several requests were made for copies of the video/audio program shown at Male High School and the tribute prepared by Robert Rhodes. The Male High School program would necessitate being converted to DVD format. If one or both of these items become available, it will be announced in a future issue of the newsletter.

All in all, it was a wonderful gathering and we hope that all will be able to attend next year. ■



VBOB at Louisville Veterans Memorial

Rose Young, Hope Kirkendall and Kate Nolan (all Army Nurses) in foreground.

Excerpts from:
**THE TWO LIBERATIONS OF
THE COUNTRY OF
LUXEMBOURG
1944-1945**

by le Lt-Colonel E. T. Melchers

Translated from French and submitted by:
**FREDERIC H. HARF
9TH ARMORED DIVISION**

September 11, 1944, is known by the fact that the three divisions of the Fifth Corps crossed the German Border. To the north the 4th Infantry Division made progress along the route Baraque-Fraiture-Houffalize. At the center, the 28th Infantry Division with its 110th Regiment in the lead, passed through Bastogne, crossed the border of our country [Luxembourg at Oberwampach, followed the main highway through Asselborn and Troisvierges, and no later than the very evening its advanced elements crossed the German border at Wemperhardt. To its right, the 109th Regiment of the same 28th Division advanced from Martelange to Wiltz, Clervaux and Heinerscheid, to cross the German border at Lieler. To mention also, that while the two infantry regiments liberated the north of our country, three combat commands [of the 5th Armored Division] fanned out in the northern and eastern cantons of the Goodland [the part of the country of Luxembourg south of the Sauer (aka Sure) River].

Here is the situation at the end of September 11. General Oliver [CG 5th AD] had located his Hq in a grove along the road to Luxembourg, outside of Bascharage. From here his messengers crossed the country. CCB detachments were in Schlindermanderscheid, Hoscheid and Michelau, CCR was located in Ermsdorf, and CCA was in Hemstal and Biwer. The 112th Infantry Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division, stationed in Ernzen, was charged with the defense of the City of Luxembourg, along with the 85th Cavalry Squadron which sent out patrols toward the Moselle River.

The area Bettembourg-Mondorf was liberated by the light armor of the 43rd Cavalry Recon Squadron, commanded by Lt. Col. Polk, which was part of the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment. This squadron had occupied the Stromberg [near Schengen] on September 1. During these reconnaissances, advanced armored vehicles made a much expected entry into Bettembourg, Hellange and Frisange.

A jeep, driven by three soldiers, symbolically liberated Mondorf at the very instant when a group of German soldiers was still very close at Ellange. A scrimmage broke out, three Germans lay dead on the ground. Promptly in a short but moving ceremony, the three GIs were declared honorary citizens of Mondorf.

Again on the 11th, at 15:30, the first allied soldiers of WWII to penetrate into German soil crossed the border at Stolzembourg. A reconnaissance patrol from CCB consisting of a sergeant and several soldiers was given the mission to determine whether the fortifications of the Siegfried line on the German side of the river were manned. The patrol found only empty bunkers and connecting tunnels, and passed unopposed

three kilometers beyond the border. Because this historic event took place on our border, it is considered only fitting that the name of the soldier who performed this remarkable exploit be honored: he was S/Sgt Warner W. Holzer, of Troop B, 85th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. He laid down his life five days later in the area of Wallendorf. A member of the French Army, Lt. A. Delille, accompanied the platoon as interpreter.

When the patrol returned, the news of the Allied invasion of Germany was broadcast throughout the world, a message of which the 5th Armored Division is justly proud....

On September 12 only limited operations took place. The 28th Infantry Division, without the 112th Regiment, regrouped its forces around Binsfeld and crossed the German border at Dasburg. Further south CCR and CCB of the 5th AD were fully engaged with patrolling the German side of the Our River to determine the disposition of the enemy. The accumulated observations of these reconnaissances are highly interesting, particularly those made at Stolzembourg, where a patrol recorded the reoccupation of the Westwall....

Let us complete the story of the events of the 12th of September by following the retreat of the German 80th Corps in its retreat toward the Reich. These troops pulled back without any rear-guard combat. The Corps HQ first installed at Echternach crossed the border on the next day to locate at Wolfsfeld, midway between Echternacherbruck and Bitburg. They did not however evacuate the small bridgeheads of Wallendorf, Echternach and Rosport so as to facilitate the retreat of their units toward the Westwall.

One could say that the defense of Trier evolved in the country of Luxembourg. This is evidenced by the battalion placed on a line Flaxweiler-Canach and the bridgeheads at Wasserbillig, Grevenmacher and Wormeldange. This disposal would protect the ancient Roman city from any surprise.

All considered, the German corps commander, General Dr. Beyer, was satisfied with the retreat of his units. He had fulfilled to his best the hazardous mission to bring back behind the borders motley beaten units, harried by an enemy several times superior in manpower and materiel. The experience acquired in the course of five years of battles had also well served these men in the profession of war. They soon understood the procedures of their adversary: the air reconnaissance preceding every advance, the protection and air cover of their modernized columns, the fact that attacks always took place at the same hour, the systematic progression along secondary roads avoiding major highways. They also learned to exploit to a certain degree the methodical procedures of the advancing Americans. However, the German forces were not aware that they owed their temporary salvation to a lack of gasoline needed by the excessively motorized American columns. With all their skill they could not have resisted to the powerful American war machine if it had been provided with sufficient fuel. At that moment the American command was tied hand and foot; it lacked completely the means to make a jump of 100 km and to cut off the retreat of the embryonic German formations, by which it could have changed the war at that stage....

At any rate this unexpected interruption in the allied advance will raise comments as long as men will seek to define aspects of this past war. For example here is what General Dpeidel (German Army high command) wrote in his book *Invasion 1944*: "Here occurred an unexpected element, a German variation of the

(Continued)

Miracle on the Marne in France of 1914, the fiery pursuit of the allies slowed suddenly. This slowdown could not have been caused by the lack of assured supplies or a decrease in the strength of the offensive...one must find the essential reason in the method applied by the supreme command of the allied forces...perhaps the imagined power of the word 'Wall of the West' had an effect on the adversary? If the American-British formations had stuck to their adversary, they could have executed a pursuit 'to the last breath of horse and man' and so ended the war a semester earlier."

After this intermission, let us return to the happenings of September 13.

To the north the 4th Infantry Division resumed its advance. It forced its way through mine fields and strongly defended roadblocks to install itself some days later on top of the Schnee-Eifel (alt. 680 m) from where roads lead to Bonn, Remagen, and in a general sense, the Rhine Valley.

The 28th Infantry Division occupied the sector Burg-Reuland at Heinerscheid; its lines pass through Habscheid, Eschfeld and Dahnen on the German side of the Our River.

The sector of the Fifth Armored Division extended from Vianden along the Our, sure and Mosselle Rivers to Wormeldange...

The Truth About The Wallendorf Penetration 14-22 September 1944

"In September 1944 the most dangerous position of the entire western front was the Moselle Gap of Trier.

It was the major concern of Rundstedt."

--Heer in Fesseln, Gen. Siegfried Westphal

On the evening of 13 September the 5th Armored Division received the order to cross the German border near Wallendorf and to occupy the heights at Mettendorf located at 9 km from the border. According to the reckoning of General Gerow, 5th Corps commander, those were only intermediate objectives. The final objective had to be the City of Bitburg, a communications center located beyond the Westwall.

Because CCB of the 5th Armored Division was stationed in the north of the Country of Luxembourg, and CCA was engaged along the eastern cantons, only CCR was available.. Consequently this armored unit was charged with the mission of penetrating through the fortified positions of the Westwall.

This was an extraordinary mission full of pitfalls! Only a mission guided by surprise and rapidly executed could have succeeded. To reduce the risks of the mission the small armored unit was reinforced with infantry, artillery and engineers¹.

¹ Composition of the 5th Armored Division's Combat Command R: 10th Tank Bn, 47th Armored Infantry Bn, 93rd Artillery Bn, Co C of 626th Tank Destroyer Bn, Co C of 22nd Arm Engineers, Troop D 85th Reconnaissance Squadron-- Attached units: 1st Bn 112th Regiment of 28th Inf. Div, one Co Engineers, 400th Artillery Bn, one battery of 987th Bn Artillery (155mm).

Everything considered, the American command could demand such an undertaking from its troops, because the enemy seemed to retreat in the entire sector of the 5th Corps. It is true, however, that since the preceding evening the American advance had been slowed considerably, enemy resistance had grown, but the question remained whether the defeated, disorganized and demoralized enemy was still capable of temporarily stopping the allied forces.

However, it is rather exceptional to demand that an armored division pierce a fortified position. This is an effort contrary to the very essence of an armored and motorized formation. Such units are especially equipped for missions of exploitation and rapid progress rather than for digging out and slow and methodical conquest of concrete bunkers, arranged by an enemy in appropriate defensive positions. Therefore the job of making a breach in a fortified position is generally assigned to the infantry. Nevertheless, in the operation reported here, one must consider that at the start of the operation the chosen objective was neither occupied in force nor provided with sufficient fire power.

This undertaking, whose unfortunate outcome is commented on extensively in the Country of Luxembourg, has given birth to astonishing fables and deserves particular attention.

A look at the map (next page) suffices to inform us of the difficulties in the terrain chosen by the Americans. The enemy positions were spread out in depth starting at the east shores of the Our and Sure [Sauer] Rivers. From the start the troops saw two major obstacles arise which were: crossing a valley and scale a steep slope, seeded with concrete shelters, to gain access to heights largely supplied with block houses. Besides, that elevation was only a ridge rising between the valley of the Our and a narrow canyon formed by the brook Gay, which flows practically parallel to the Our. This second cut in the terrain is followed by a third, the valley of the Enz. Beyond there the axis of an attack on Bitburg cuts also through the valleys of the Prum and the Nims. This required for the attacking forces to cross the natural access routes perpendicularly to gain the opposite heights through deep and narrow valleys of the individual watersheds. Forced to get around the fortifications disposed along the length of these valleys, the American troops were reduced to fighting in a very difficult terrain. While there was a certain protection from firing from one ridge to the next, this axis of attack was very vulnerable to counterattacks coming from the north or the south along the valleys typical of the mountainous region of the Eifel. Clearly, the few roads connecting the established localities in this area also run from north to south following the valleys; in contrast roads in a north-easterly direction are rare, including bridges and fords. The axis of the attack was flanked on each side by two large forests, each of more than 10 square kilometers. To the north was the Kammerwald, near Vianden, to the south of Bollendorferwald, two inextricable mousetraps, suitable for gathering opposing forces. To conclude this summation, we must add that the high points in Luxembourg (Befortershaide 402 m, Bigelback 390 m, Bettendorfer Niederbieg 416 m) are only slightly higher than the first ridges of the Eifel. These elevations from where one has excellent views on the east shore of the Our and the open plateaus on the German side did not however permit observation into the intermediate valleys described here.

(Continued)

Let me summarize that the terrain chosen near Wallendorf to pierce the Westwall lent itself admirably well to the defense, but was not suitable for tank maneuvers.

We experienced that the Germans kept quiet during the bombardment in the afternoon of September 13. This ruse allowed them to keep secret their positions and batteries. The Americans then were going to attack an enemy of whom they were poorly informed.

Our study would be incomplete without a brief account of the opposing forces. Before telling of the operations, let us briefly penetrate into the German camp. The officers and men of the 80th Army Corps had delivered innumerable rear-guard combats since they retreated from the Marne River and hoped to find at the end of their troubles well prepared positions in the Westwall. But as soon as they arrived in these so renowned lines they became disillusioned. The deplorable state of the installations which offered neither a minimum of comfort nor the necessary security disappointed them cruelly. The dilapidation of the Westwall can be explained as follows: During the years of the great Hitlerian victories maintenance of a fortified system along the borders of the Reich appeared superfluous; the Westwall was declassified and partly dismantled to benefit the Wall of the Atlantic, so named to defend "Fortress Europe."

In September 1944, in the moment where a fortified line was more and more necessary, the new defenders of the Siegfried line found trouble on top of trouble. The mine fields had been removed, barbed wire networks reduced to a minimum, the armaments of the blockhouses, machine guns, mortars and cannon had disappeared, the steel doors to the casemates had been replaced by wooden boards, telephone lines were gone, etc.; this was a spectacle of desolation expecting them. In all this abandonment the only elements remaining intact were the quadruple rows of concrete anti-tank dragon-teeth, which lined the countryside between the innumerable bunkers, well camouflaged by a vegetation of four years. Furthermore, the bunkers, built in 1938 for antitank guns of 3.7 cm caliber, had in the meantime become too small for the anti-tank guns of 7.5, 7.62 or 8.8 cm used in 1944. The condition of the Westwall was then neither ready to be occupied nor capable of withstanding an assault. It is best described, as it presented itself in the fall of 1944, as an excellent field position but not as a permanent fortified installation.

The German 80th Corps had been given the mission to occupy and defend a front of 100 km between Roth on the Our and Remich on the Moselle. Its commander had divided its meager forces in consideration of the importance of the various sectors. Thus the northern sector from Roth to Bollendorf was only weakly occupied because of its minor importance. The central sector from Bollendorf to Mesenich received more troops. The best defensive unit was reserved for the defense of the southern sector, the "Gap of Trier," one of the keystones of the German West defensive system. Besides, the bridgeheads of Echternach, Rosport, Wasserbillig, Grevenmacher and Wormeldange were each defended by a company.

The first wave of the attack by the Americans was started at 11:00 hours somewhat upstream from Wallendorf and encountered violent machine gun fire from the opposite shore of the Our. This column, prevented from crossing the river at the chosen location proceeded south of Wallendorf, where supported by tanks, it could ford the Our. Immediately after the crossing

there was a strong counter-attack originating from the village. The Americans had to direct on it a massive shelling. Some of the building ignited immediately, but the shells had little effect on the buildings constructed of solid masonry. Sheltered by these constructions the German soldiers continued to resist and finally the engineers, using flame-throwers, disposed of the last defenders. Interrogation of prisoners revealed that the bunkers had been reoccupied for three days and that the locals had been drafted to remove the water collected in them during four years of neglect.

The troops had barely caught their breaths after occupying Wallendorf, when the tanks, followed by the infantry, worked their way up the narrow winding road leading to the top of the spur between the Our and the Gay. Before the rising of the evening fog, American patrols explored the Gay Valley to find a place for a tank crossing. They could only determine that the roads on the other side of the ridge were impractical. It became obvious that the heavy vehicles there was only one way to cross the stream, the bridge before Niedersgeegen.

The following day, on September 15, a humid fog reduced visibility to 150 m. As soon as the first tanks were about to cross the bridge at Niedersgeegen, German tanks appeared on the other bank, they withdrew after a short but violent combat. The bridge collapsed under the weight of one tank and the remaining American column had to ford the stream. But it still could get out of the valley at Niedersgeegen and take control of the heights facing Hommerdingen without serious opposition. At the end of the afternoon they occupied elevation 407 to the south of Mettendorf, called in German reports "Freilingerhohe."

A second American column forded the river at the same place, and in its advance occupied the villages of Kruchten, Biesdorf, Nussbaum and Stockem. Better yet, at night-fall they crossed the Enz Valley to position themselves on an elevation overlooking the Prum River to the south of Bettingen.

In the later afternoon the artillery battalion of CCR moved in turn toward the positions occupied during the day. It could cross the Our and pass through Wallendorf without incident; but at the ford at Niedersgeegen, which had fallen back into German hands its advance was stopped by a German counter-attack. Enemy activity did not stop there; the menace to the American rear position was accentuated during the night when German infantry infiltrated into the locality of Wallendorf.

To summarize, the two days of fighting CCR had established a small but greatly important bridgehead. Not only had it successively occupied two successive ridges in enemy territory, but more importantly it had realized a breach in the fortifications of the Westwall by taking the initial objectives of the division on the way toward Bitburg. Let me emphasize immediately that this narrow breach into the German lines presented dangerously feeble flanks.

On the 16th September CCR continued its progress in spite of these latent dangers. The day broke with the arrival of CCB, previously engaged in the north of the Country of Luxembourg. Its mission was to enlarge the bridgehead of Wallendorf and to defend the precarious flanks of the penetration. A part of this combat command pushed on to Hommerdingen, the remainder was positioned around the ford of Niedersgeegen, a crossing necessary for the American troops.

Units of CCR which the evening before were on the western heights dominating the Prum crossed this river during the day at

(Continued)

Wettlingen. But they pushed on. At the price of violent and murderous combats they took elevation 298 on the east bank of the Prum, which point represents the extreme advance of the American offensive.

The enemy reaction occurred during the night from the 16th to the 17th. It began with violent counter-attacks on the American positions, especially Elevation 407; Elevation 298, conquered during the previous day had to be surrendered to a massive push of German tanks, using their headlights for illumination. The ford at Niedersgegen, the important nerve-center, where a detachment of CCB had taken position, was endangered by an enemy infiltration into Ammeldingen, 2 km north of Wallendorf.

The three days of advance into Germany were followed by intense fighting, at their issue the American positions could barely hold out. On 17 September General Oliver Commander of the 5th Armored Division, conferred with the commanders of the two combat commands, Colonels Cole and Anderson, and decided to abandon any progress toward Bitburg. There were no infantry divisions available to consolidate the rear of the armored division, so that to attempt an advance would be pure folly. However, he gave orders to maintain the present positions except for the advance point at Wettlingen.

The next day, 18 September a German infantry and tank attack, coming from Olsdorf was stopped, but Stockem had to be abandoned. While artillery barrages contained the Germans in the CCR sector, the rear line, defended by CCB could not be consolidated during the day. Tentative advanced toward Obersgegen, Kewenig and Huttingen were repulsed by the German forces. The Americans encountered in this section roadblocks made of tree trunks and rocks, sometimes with mines. The combats were particularly violent and close about Huttingen, where the American troops were subjected not only to artillery and mortar barrages of extreme violence, but also to antitank rockets launched by German infantry under cover from the forests.

CCB had in the meantime set up its CP on Elevation 375 to the west of Niedersgegen and was busy on this day to occupy or destroy 35 concrete shelters in the area of Ammeldingen-Gentingen.

Let us, after five days of uninterrupted fighting, crowned by American victories, briefly review the German reaction. A reflection of General Siegfried Westphal on the breakthrough at Wallendorf summarizes to our mind perfectly the German preoccupations at that time: [Translated from the German page 266, Heer in Fesselung (an army in chains):] "Then exploded into all of our worries a bomb-like news that an American armored division had crossed the Sure near Wallendorf to the north of Trier, and in its first assault broken through the Westwall. All available and otherwise not engaged forces were brought into remove the penetration. Despite serious reservations even the sector of Trier was stripped of troops."

Everything considered, the German generals were not too surprised by the victory of the 5th Armored Division. The tank, infantry, artillery and engineer units had struck in a well chosen location by surprise. The attack was accomplished because Wallendorf had never been considered as a probable place of attack, the terrain was evidently too difficult in a sector without a valuable target. The natural entry points into Germany were evidently the Moselle opening toward Trier and the Valley of the Saar. However, the American command rejected these

approaches, they reasoned rightly that it would be relatively easier to take Trier by a detour, making a hook through Bitburg. In fact, the American command repeated this maneuver in February, 1945.

To recall, when the morning fog gave way to a sunny 14th day of September, the Wallendorf sector was occupied by the weakest formation of the entire German 80th Army Corps. This was the "Alarm Battalion" composed of isolated and AWOL soldiers picked up in Trier two days before. It was a heterogeneous unit, poorly staffed with little training and supported by an "Alarm Battery" of similar origin. According to German and American reports the Alarm Battalion defended itself honorably, much better than the battery of the same name. On that very day and the two that followed numerous counterattacks were launched on the initiative of the commander of the mixed combat unit of the Panzer-Lehr-Division and the commander of the regiment of the 5th Parachute Infantry Division. In any case these were isolated actions, maneuvers of harassment, annoying to the Americans, but never capable of stopping the brilliant progress of the 5th Armored Division or to endanger the two armored combat commands. By occupying Elevation 298 east of the Prum River, the Americans had in fact broken through the Westwall. And they were only 8 km (5 miles) from Bitburg. From this position they dominated a region that the German tacticians named the Bitburg Depression. Before them extended a network of good roads which lent itself admirable to an exploitation in depth. A few batteries of the famous anti-tank and anti-aircraft 88 millimeter guns of the anti-aircraft command were the only obstacles on the way to success!

Well, the rest is known....

The failure of this enterprise, started under the best auspices, still haunts the spirits and periodically the same question returns: "Why was the breakthrough at Wallendorf not exploited immediately like it was done six months later when the bridge at Remagen was taken?" There is a simple answer. A tactical success can only be exploited when disposable units are available. But these were missing in September 1944. At that moment the efforts of the allies centered on the progression of the 21st Army Group toward the lower Rhine (Airdrop Operation at Arnhem).

The German high command had no illusion about the seriousness of the menace. It provoked an avalanche of orders and counter orders, resulting in changes and overall growth of the ranges limiting the zones of action of army groups, armies and corps so that some units could be withdrawn from the front and immediately directed to the critical zone. A coordinated counterattack was developed for the 19th of September, considerable forces, about two regiments of tanks and five regiments of infantry, supported by six artillery battalions were massed on the two flanks and before the point of pocket. These countermeasures, somewhat too ambitious, were not executed to the letter, there were considerable delays, due mainly to transport difficulties.

Still, these forces, numerically three times superior to the American troops could only seal off the breakthrough at Wallendorf at the price of incessant combats which stretched out over four days (See map 4).

On the first day the German 108th Tank Brigade suffered a stinging defeat in losing ten tanks when attacking Elevations 407 and 426. But the fate of weapons was more favorable to the

(Continued)

infantry of the 19th Volksgrenadier Division, who approached dangerously toward Biesdorf. At their turn the volunteers of the Panzer-Lehr division, armed with "panzerfaust" destroyed several American tanks south of Nussbaum.

Now let us return to the American side to stay with the GI's during the four hard days which ended by their withdrawal to the Country of Luxembourg.

CCR, installed on Elevations 407 and 426 underwent first the shock of the German counterattack, launched at sunrise of 19 September. It was exposed to the most violent concentration of artillery fire it had ever encountered. (An exploding shell tore the tent of the CP at the moment when Colonel Anderson and his staff were taking a hurried breakfast.)

The German attacks, which grew in intensity throughout the day, were directed against the entire two flanks of the breakthrough. The Americans did their best in repulsing all the assaults coming simultaneously from Bettingen, Wettlingen and Nussbaum, and disabling a considerable number of tanks and enemy soldiers, but it was doubtful that they could have withstood much longer against the continuously renewed German attacks, considering that these concentrated their entire efforts on infiltrating Wallendorf. These efforts were fruitful, because the German infantry managed to take over several houses in the village.

Also, at 1630 hours CCR received an order to break off combat and fall back toward Diekirch. When its retreat ended at about 0400 hours a new battalion of the 112th Infantry Regiment (28th Infantry Division) crossed the border to relieve the 1st Battalion of the same regiment, strongly tested in six days and nights of combat. The new battalion took positions in Biesdorf.

On 20 September, when the light of dawn illuminated the heights and valleys filled with debris, CCB continued to maintain a small bridgehead between Wallendorf, Biesdorf, Niedersgegen and Ammeldingen. The break-off and retreat of this unit would, as we shall see, extend to the morning of 22 September.

On that morning, the Germans, anxious to see if all the Americans had quit their land, sent reconnaissance and infantry into the Valley of Niedersgegen. It did not take them long to find out that a part of the 5th Armored Division held out well. Almost immediately artillery barrages, directed toward Elevation 375 and the Niedersgegen Valley doubled in intensity. Here the bursting shells produced so many losses, that it became known as "Purple Heart Valley," (just as Elevation 407, so tested the night before, was named "Purple Heart Hill" by the men of CCR). However, the divisional artillery batteries installed in the Grand-Duchy, efficiently protected the defenders of the last German ridge occupied by Americans. During the night of 20 to 21, enemy pressure was felt more and more on the last portion of the road held by the American troops between Biesdorf and Wallendorf, and on Elevation 375, now occupied by a detachment of CCB. Enemy shells, launched in darkness, destroyed the bridge at Wallendorf, and the Americans were dangerously close to being completely encircled.

On the following day, the German troops invaded Elevation 375 from all sides. The fighting took place in dense morning fog. The men of the German infantry, attacking the circular defenses of the heights threw themselves on the men of the 5th Armored in hand-to-hand combat, which one could have described as led by furtive and murderous shadows. The Americans counted, as soon as visibly permitted, 52 soldiers of the Wehrmacht killed in

this engagement.

Just like Elevation 375, the road leading to Wallendorf, which to the Americans represented the last and only means of escape, was the object of continuous enemy attacks. It could however be kept safe by sustained patrols. During the same day, infantry of the 47th Armored Infantry Battalion of CCR crossed again the Our River to reach the top of the opposite escarpment and extricate their comrades menaced by encirclement. At the moment when the newcomers were to ford the Our, they were subjected to an extremely powerful bombardment, from German tanks which had slipped into Wallendorf. Yet, these panzers were quickly disabled by the American artillery, positioned, as we have seen, on the heights of the Luxembourg side of the Our.

The entire day of 21 September was marked by violent combats. The infantry men of the 47th Battalion climbed the ridges to help out their comrades engaged on Elevation 375, in the middle of ever more violent artillery fire. In the afternoon American fighter bombers arrived at the very right time to save the situation at the moment where 15 German tanks were ready to cross the famous ford of Niedersgegen. These planes managed to destroy some and disperse the others.

Also at the end of the afternoon a liaison plane brought to the exhausted troops of CCB the order to retreat during the night toward the Country of Luxembourg. They then evacuated Elevation 375, descended the steep slopes to finally cross by the ford at Wallendorf under incessant enemy fire. At 0400 hours they found themselves on Luxembourg soil.

To cover the retreat, the 47th Armored Infantry Battalion, still holding out on Elevation 375, made a final counterattack. This operating, using hand grenades, degenerated into a most ferocious hand-to-hand combats. The opposing Americans and Germans were mingled in the darkness. At a certain moment Lt. Richard Lewis was so close to an adversary that his hand touched the bore of an enemy submachine gun. Whoever of two adversaries reacted most quickly survived.

The next day rose as the last American infantrymen got back to the friendly riverside of Luxembourg between Wallendorf and ammeldingen. (Quoting the 5th Armored history: "Then shortly before daylight the infantrymen walked quietly down the slopes of the hill and waded through the water of the Our River into Luxembourg.")

Thus ended the breakthrough at Wallendorf, an operation which has aroused live discussions at the very heart of the American Army. The American soldier who had fought like a lion to conquer these few acres of German soil could not well understand the reason for the retreat imposed on him. The passage of post-war hears has not changed the mind of the many veterans of the 5th Armored Division who felt that the sacrifices of their buddies, lost by the hundreds on German soil, were poorly exploited. The history of the break-through at Wallendorf fills them with bitterness.

How well is their resentment justified?

The analysis of this unfortunate operation has shown us that it contained all the major elements of great success: there was the element of complete surprise, as well as the daring and quickness of maneuver. The troops performed admirable. To summarize briefly the process of operations, let us remember that an armored combat unit had attacked in a surprise at a well chosen located and achieved a penetration of 9 km through the fortifies lines of the Westwall. this tactical victory was realized in three

(Continued)

SEPTEMBER 1944

(Continuation)

days; the following two days the tanks of CCR, reinforced by those of CCB, successfully resisted German counterattacks. But here already appears the cause of the failure. Because of other engagements, especially the airborne assault at Arnheim, SHAEF was short of units. At this moment they could not possibly liberate sufficient forces to consolidate the breakthrough and attack the rear of the German positions. The inevitable took place. A delay of five days allowed the Wehrmacht to prepare its counterattack. On 19 September, six days after the start of the offensive, the German forces, superior by two divisions, launched a coordinated counterattack against both flanks of the American pocket. The soldiers from across the Atlantic could only understand the facts and retreat. The terrain, poorly favorable to excessively motorized troops, could not long be defended against the ever more furious attacks of the Germans. It is only thanks to the very efficient covers provided by their artillery and their air forces that the American forces managed to extricate themselves without too many losses.

At that time erroneous interpretations and more and more incredible legends abounded on the subject of Wallendorf. The psychological war commands seized on the affair and exploited it skillfully. So, for example an American periodical of the period tells of a woman, dressed in white who attacked the Yanks into a trap by displaying a large white flat at the entrance to a village. *Yank* magazine gives a slightly modified version. The same woman dressed in white--or another--as become, thanks to the imagination of a war correspondent, the "Ghost of Wallendorf" and appears this time on top of a hill to direct the fire of the German artillery. This matter was too tempting for the German propaganda not to seize it in turn. Himmler, in person, alerted his compatriots against the "indescribable" destructions of Wallendorf caused by the invader! Since then a study of German and American documents has made it possible to extract the truth and now, that numerous points of this unfortunate operation have come to light only one questions retains strategic interest: "Should SHAEF have exploited the break-through at Wallendorf? Were they capable to do so?"

The German Army High Command, in its turn, as we have already seen, fully recognized the seriousness of the American attack as a push toward Trier, and even beyond, to the Rhine. According to Field-marshal Model, there were on 8 September only some ten fortress battalions in the fortifications of the Westwall between Aachen and Trier. But a week later all kinds of units occupied the German fortified line....■

VON der HEYDTE'S PARATROOPERS

By ARNOLD C. FRANCO
Detachment B
3rd Radio Squadron Mobile
9th United States Air Force

The 3rd RSM was a secret signals intelligence unit tasked with intercepting and deciphering German Air Force communications. The job of Det. B was to listen to German fighter pilots communicating with each other and their controllers by radio telephone. Once the Luftwaffe was "picked up" on the radio our directions finders would get a fix on their location, direction and

speed. That done, 9th Air Force fighter controllers would be notified by phone and scramble our fighters to intercept.

Since November, 1944, Detachment B had been stationed in the Town of Jalhay, Belgium, just near the Eupen-Malmedy road. Its camouflaged D/F van was situated some six miles away at Baraque Michel (right off the Malmedy road).



Baraque Michel--camouflaged D/F van

At 6:00 a.m. on December 17, Sgt. Bob Siefert, of Bennet, Nebraska, drove the D/F relief crew in his jeep to Baraque Michel. On the way they noticed several parachutes in the woods off the road. When he pulled up to our van the guard whispered to him, nervously, that he had seen soldiers skulking around in the woods and he suspected they might be Germans. (We later learned that the majority of Von der Heydte's fallschirmjagers who were able to land in one piece headed for their rallying point which was between Jalhay and Baraque Michel.) Siefert sped back to Jalhay where he reported his findings to the CO--Major Ted Silverstein. The major was greatly alarmed thinking that the Germans were actually out to capture our outfit. Because of all the information we had gathered since D-Day and the occupation of the Eiffel Tower when Paris was liberated we would be a juicy plum. Silverstein immediately called 9th Tac in Verviers.

They were so confused by the situation they could offer him no guidance. By the end of the day, with enemy air action in the area getting more intense, he finally gave orders to pack up. "B" moved some 20 miles north to join their sister detachment "D" located at the Chateau de la Commanderie in Fouron St. Pierre (now Sint Pieters Voeren) at the point where the Belgian, Dutch and German borders met. When they arrived late at night, they found the boys in "D" in the midst of a fire fight. There had been intense air combat during the night, with searchlights sweeping the sky and machine guns rattling. A guard had spotted a parachute descending in the glare and everyone started firing their weapons into the woods across the castle moat. It was the following morning that a patrol discovered the parachute attached to a slightly wounded German fighter pilot. Since most of the men in Det "D" spoke fluent German he was thoroughly interrogated before being turned over to an MP detachment.

In early January, once the threat of a break through was truly over, Det B returned to the Jalhay area and resumed operations. (The writer, a member of Det A wrote the story of the 3rd RSM in his book *Code to Victory* published in 1998 after their records were no longer classified "Secret".)■

MEMBERS SPEAK OUT

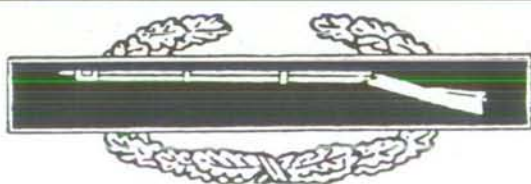
Martin and John Collins are researching a book on hospitals in the Malven area of England during WWII. Were you at any of the following: Merebrook--53rd General Hospital; Woodfarm--55th General Hospital; Brickbarns--96th General Hospital, 231st Station Hospital; Blackmore Park--93rd General Hospital, 155th General Hospital; or 90th General Hospital, 19th General Hospital. If so they, would appreciate hearing from you: 3 Ipswich Crescent, Great Bar, Birmingham B42 1LY, England.

Teresa Todd Lay writes to see if anyone can provide any information regarding her father who was in the Bulge: **GLEN FREDERICK TODD, SR.** She has no information regarding her father's service and would very much appreciate hearing from you if you can provide any information. Write to her at: 3919 North Hills Drive, Austin, Texas 78731.

John Palmisano is trying to find more information on family member who was killed in action on January 6, 1945, and is buried in Henri-Chapelle. His name was: **PVT. PAUL CHIARELLO, 84TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 333RD INFANTRY REGIMENT.** If you can help write to him at: PO Box 1081, South Orleans, Massachusetts 02662.

PATRICK J. KEARNEY, 55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, 11TH ARMORED DIVISION, writes that the people of Tisbury, Wiltshire County, England, erected a plaque at the village's war memorial to honor the battalion's soldiers who were stationed in Tisbury and fought in the Battle of the Bulge. The plaque contains Sir Winston Churchill's quote that the "Bulge" was the greatest battle of the war and will always be regarded as a family American victory.

The RIFLEMAN



The rifleman fights without promise of either reward or relief. Behind every river there's another hill--and behind that hill, another river. After weeks or months in the line only a wound can offer him the comfort of safety, shelter, and a bed.

Those who are left to fight, fight on, evading death but knowing that with each day of evasion they have exhausted one more chance for survival. Sooner or later, unless victory comes this chase must end on the litter or in the grave.

General Omar Bradley

ARE YOUR DUES CURRENT?

RESPONSE TO ARTICLE REGARDING HENRI-CHAPELLE

By **GEORGE CIAMPA**
607TH GRAVES REGISTRATION COMPANY

I just returned from Belgium where I conducted a tour for high school history teachers to teach them the significance of World War II and the cost of freedom. Included in the tour were interviews of civilians who lost their freedom during the Nazi occupation. We visited former battle grounds of the Battle of the Bulge with combat veterans, the Henri Chapelle Cemetery and more. A documentary, called "Let Freedom Ring" covered the tour and is now being edited for airing on TV.

The article in the August issue of *The Bulge Bugle* quoting retired General Leszczynski is incorrect. I was there in mid-August. There is no motion sensitive lighting there, as he states, for one thing. He also alludes to the Meuse-Argonne Cemetery, which is near Paris. It is NOT in the area of Omaha Beach as stated in the article. It is a WWI cemetery and does have a road running through it, which is unfortunate.

I was in the 607th Graves Registration Company and we buried many of the dead at Henri-Chapelle before and during the Battle of the Bulge before moving on to Germany. That temporary cemetery was later disinterred and moved to the present location. Although the American Battle Monuments Commission does a good job architecturally and maintenance-wise, this cemetery was not well-planned in that not only does it have a busy road running through it, there are NO GATES at the entrance or enclosure around the cemetery as other cemeteries have. The ABMC states that they don't want to give it a "fortress-like appearance" that would discourage visitors. This is ludicrous. I can't think of any cemetery that doesn't have gates to secure it at night, especially military cemeteries. Does Arlington Cemetery discourage visitors? I call Henri-Chapelle an "orphan" cemetery. It is a shame. There are other problems that I would like to relate here, but I am limited to space due to a deadline for this issue. Hopefully, I will be able to follow up with more details in the next issue. I can be reached at: 3304 Whiffletree Lane, Torrance, CA 90505. Telephone: 310-539-4345. E-mail: gciampa@sbcglobal.net.



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.

CHECK THE MAILING LABEL USED TO ADDRESS THIS NEWSLETTER TO YOU. THE DATE ON THE FIRST LINE ON THE FAR RIGHT IS THE DATE YOUR DUES WERE DUE.

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE CERTIFICATE



The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Assn is proud to offer a full color 11" by 17" certificate, which may be ordered by any veteran who received credit for the Ardennes Campaign. It attests that you participated in, endured and survived the greatest land battle ever fought by the US Army. You do not have to be a member of the VBOB Assn in order to order one but you must have received the Ardennes credit. This beautiful certificate is produced on parchment-like stock and is outlined by the full color WWII insignias of the major units that fought in the Battle of the Bulge starting with the 12th Army Group followed numerically with Armies, Corps and Divisions and the two Army Air Forces. We wished that each unit insignia could have been shown but with approximately 2000

units that participated in the Bulge it was impossible. However any unit which served in the Bulge would have been attached to or reported through one of the unit insignia depicted. You may want to add one of your original patches to the certificate, when you receive it. Units were researched in the Official General Order No. 114 for Units Entitled to the ARDENNES Battle Credit and will be the basis for sale of this certificate. The unit insignias shown are also those used in the design of the Battle of the Bulge Memorial Conference Table dedicated and on view in the Garrison Library at Ft Meade, MD (open Mon & Wed 12:30-3:00 PM. The requests to date have been overwhelming, therefore we would request that you allow approximately 3-4 weeks for delivery.

A Special Certificate is available to spouses or children of those who made the Supreme Sacrifice in the Battle of the Bulge or who died of wounds received in the Battle of the Bulge. The individual request should have the date and place of death and be certified by the family requestor or by a buddy who was present. Multiple copies of the same certificate may be ordered if you have a number of children/grandchildren. Rank or command during the Bulge is preferred. It will be abbreviated to the WWII or three character standard. The certificate will be shipped rolled in a protective mailing tube. Please be sure to **place your name, service number and unit as you would like it to appear on the certificate.** The unit name should as full as possible as you want someone reading it to understand what unit you were in. We will abbreviate it as necessary. It is important that you type or print this information. The unit must be one of the 2000 units authorized for the Ardennes Campaign credit. **The cost of the certificate is \$15.00 postpaid.**

Unfortunately we do not have any more frames available at this time. John Bowen is presently trying to arrange with other suppliers who will produce these special sizes in quantities of 100. This may result in a higher frame cost. Our previous order had to be for 500 frames which took over three years to sell and resulted in the non use of a garage where they were stored. We will keep you posted.

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE CERTIFICATE ORDER BLANK

I request an 11" x 17" Certificate and certify that I received credit for the Ardennes Campaign during my military service. I have enclosed a check for \$15.00 for the Certificate. Please include the following information that I would like on the certificate:

First Name _____		MI _____	Last Name _____		Serial Number _____
Organization: Company, Battalion and/or Regt, Division _____					Rank (Optional) _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Killed in Action	_____ date _____	Location _____ place _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Died of Wounds	_____ date _____	<input type="checkbox"/> POW _____ dates _____ Camp _____
MAILING INFORMATION:					
Name _____		Street Address _____		Apt No. _____	
City _____		State _____		Zip + 4 Code _____	
Telephone Number (In case we need to call you) _____		VBOB Member: Yes _____ No _____		Signature & date _____	
Make checks out to VBOB for \$15.00. Orders should be mailed to VBOB Certificate, PO Box 101418, Arlington, VA 22210-4418. Questions can be directed to John Bowen, 301 384-6533, Certificate Chairman.					

VBOB QUARTERMASTER ORDER FORM

NOVEMBER, 2006

Please ship the following items to:

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

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

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

Only Cash, Check, or Money Order Accepted

Make checks payable to: "VBOB" - and mail orders to VBOB-QM, PO Box 101418, Arlington, VA 22210-4418

DO NOT INCLUDE ANY OTHER MONIES WITH QM PAYMENT

Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery

Shipping and Handling:

\$0.00 to \$5.00 - \$ 2.00

\$5.01 to \$10.00 - \$ 3.00

\$10.01 and over - \$ 4.00

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

Cost of Items: \$ _____

S&H: \$ _____

Total: \$ _____

Office Use Only - Do Not Write Below This Line

Date Received: _____

Date Mailed: _____

Payment: Cash Check MO

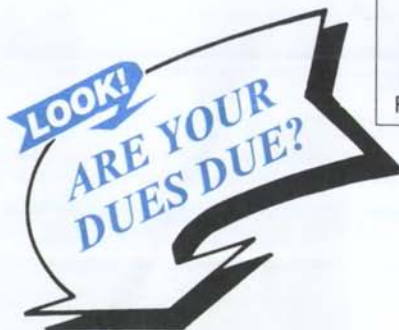
Check No.: _____



VETERANS of the BATTLE of the BULGE

P.O. Box 101418
Arlington, Virginia 22210-4418

NOVEMBER, 2006



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**LET US ALL BE THANKFUL
FOR OUR WONDERFUL COUNTRY AND THE
YEARS WE HAVE BEEN
GRANTED TO ENJOY OUR
LIBERTIES, OUR FAMILIES AND EACH OTHER**

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APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

PO Box 101418, Arlington, Virginia 22210-4418

Annual Dues \$15

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☐ New Member ☐ Renewal - Member # _____

Name _____ Birthdate _____
Address _____ Phone () _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____

All new members, please provide the following information:

Campaign(s) _____
Unit(s) to which assigned during period December 16, 1944 - January 25, 1945 - Division _____
Regiment _____ Battalion _____
Company _____ Other _____

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

Applicants Signature _____

RECRUITER (Optional)