

The BULGE BUGLE

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VOLUME XXVI NUMBER 2

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

MAY 2007

THE MORTARMEN



By Michael Connelly
87th Chemical Mortar Battalion

Each mortar company consisted of two platoons made up of four squads each. The squads were made up of eight men assigned to one mortar. A sergeant was the squad leader with a corporal assigned as the gunner. In addition there were two ammo bearers, two truck drivers, and an assistant gunner. The platoon was usually under the

command of a 1st Lieutenant with a 2nd Lieutenant as the Executive Officer. There was also a platoon Sergeant and eight other enlisted men in the Platoon Headquarters, bringing the total number of men in the platoon to 43. The companies also had separate headquarters, maintenance and ammunition sections.

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VBOB Reunion



LINCOLNSHIRE MARRIOTT
LINCOLNSHIRE, ILLINOIS
SEPTEMBER 25 - 30, 2007

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YOU WILL BE GLAD YOU DID.
IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO START A
CHAPTER IN YOUR AREA, LET US KNOW,
WE'LL SEND YOU NECESSARY DETAILS.

President's Message

As we continue to walk life's path together, each day the inevitable becomes more evident and many footsteps are falling silent in the shadows of the fading sunset. All too quickly and painfully for those of us committed to honoring the memories and wishes of our "never will be forgotten" brothers and sisters.

Phones are buzzing and pencils are in action in preparation and plans for our them, "Triumph of Courage" to be chiseled in granite on, 'yes' another memorial to Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge to be located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Federal and State Authorities have accepted our initial thought concept and we are presently engaged in 'pro' and 'con' location possibilities. 'Breaking' news will be published as we progress. The well known adage: 'There is strength in numbers,' means your individual strength through thoughts, interest and good wishes, is necessary for another successful event.



Stanley Wojtusik

Many well-wishers assembled at a 'bittersweet' private reception on March 28th in Washington, D.C. The occasion was a happy event for our good friend, Brigadier General Dany E. Van de Ven, who applied for, planned for, and was granted retirement from military service effective April 1, 2007. The lofty conversational atmosphere was not without sadness with Brig. Gen. Van de Ven's actual flight back to Belgium within four days after the event. His exceedingly dignified tour of duty, very broad and noble character, and self-imposed modesty in downplaying the superiority and importance of his position, created lasting friendships with his personal friends, foreign heads of states, dignitaries, government and business officials in attendance.

Additionally of significant importance on March 28, 2007, Brig. Gen. Dany E. Van de Ven was blessed on this day with the title of 'Grandfather' when his daughter, Eva, gave birth to his first grandson, Iarno Daems.

He is very happy with his civilian job in Belgium representing the interests of all Belgian companies, which are members of AGORIA in the professional sectors of defense, security, aviation and space. He sends greetings to everyone.

Assuming the responsibilities at the Embassy as Military Attache is Rear Admiral Willy Temmerman. Both he and the new Ambassador, His Excellency Dominique Struye de Swielande have pledged their support and continued interest in working closely with Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

Periodically I intentionally visit Arlington National Cemetery to check on our national memorial. I am pleased to report that on a recent visit I was happy to see that our American elm tree dedicated on Arbor Day, April 29, 2005, is flourishing. Celebrating one-year anniversary on May 8th, our memorial stands proud in the shadow of healthy bushes of crepe myrtle just about to flower. Invariably visitors are on the site and I enjoy answering their questions about the history and how it came to be. The prominent location at Porter and McPherson

attracts many on foot and those riding the mobile sightseeing tram.

Too often, obituaries are published indicating the deceased served 'in the army' or 'in the Battle of the Bulge' but neglects to mention the unit they served with. Please use your influence in encouraging family, friends and neighbors to include the units. Many have names the same or similar and identification without naming the unit is very disconcerting to those wanting to offer appropriate recognition to the survivors.

I look forward to seeing you at the 2007 Reunion, September 25-30 at the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort, in Lincolnshire, Illinois (North Shore Chicago suburbs).■



FROSTY As the Battle of the Bulge ends, two U.S. soldiers take time out to create "Agnes," an anatomically correct snowman: they're plying her with Camels and a Coke.

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

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

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VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

WEB SITE: www.battleofthebulge.org

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A TREASURED MOMENT TO REMEMBER

For a number of years now, I have been a member of VBOB. In that time I have devoured every issue of *The Bulge Bugle*. The letters and articles are always serious, as they should be. The weather was horrible, and the Germans were vicious (let us never forget that). Even in those dark days, I would occasionally look back on an incident in the pre-Bulge days that momentarily lightened the heavy load levied upon us. In the years since, I have reflected on it with a smile of satisfaction. I would like to share this with you.

From the first day of our induction in June of 1944 we were told that in 13 weeks we would be facing the enemy. We would be replacements in the infantry to take the place of soldiers who had been killed or wounded. What a pleasant welcome that was. We were given our basic training in Camp Blanding, Florida, that summer. As you know, that was tough, with the sweltering Florida sun and the rigorous training. We looked forward to each moment of rest. We would look at the schedule on the bulletin board and see an occasional free hour. Oh, man, that sounded great, but surprise, surprise! When the free hours came, we would be told to get our bayonets and fall in. Then we would be marched to the officers' quarters, told to get on our hands and knees, and cut the grass with our bayonets. This went on all summer.

The day after we took our final overnight march, we were put on guard duty. We were exhausted from the 25-mile march the night before and standing in formation to be inspected. A self-satisfied, superior officer came down the line inspecting us. Dick Hunton was standing next to me. The officer stopped in front of him, pointed at his bayonet and asked, "What's that thing for, soldier." "Without hesitation Dick spat out, "To cut grass with, sir." Needless to say, the officer was so shocked to retort. I treasure this as my most memorable moment in the service. Incidentally, Dick has had a very successful career as Dr. Richard Hunton, in South Carolina.

Bill Hornback
5 INF 10 INF A

25, 1945, "all the units of the VIII, III and XII Army Corps, except the left regiment of the 80th Division were on their final objective, namely the hill mass east of the Diekirch-St. Vith Road." (George S. Patton, Jr., *War as I Knew it* (p.226)

The veterans of the 100th Regiment of the 28th Infantry Division, who read these lines, remember the Diekirch-St. Vith Road as the famous "Skyline Drive."

Or on January 25, 1945, the "Skyline Drive" was only in American hands from Diekirch to Hoscheiderdickt. North of it, from Hosingen to St. Vith the highway and the hill mass east of it was still held by the Germans.

Thus, e.g., on January 26, 1945, the 87th Division took Huldange, the 90th Lieler, the 26th Marnach, the 80th Lellingen, the 6th Armored Weiswampach.

On January 27 the 5th Division seized Consthum, Holzthem, Walhausen and Weiler, the 26th Munshausen and the 17th Airborne Hosingen.

On January 28 the 5th Division occupied Putscheid, on January 29 the 80th Belier and the 6th Armored Kalborn and on January 30 the 17th Airborne entered Roder.

On February 1 the 17th Airborne secured Leithum, on February 2 the 4th Armored Hoesdorf and on February 7 the 4th Armored Bettel.

On February 12, 1945, the upper town of Vianden was liberated by the 1255th Engineer Combat Battalion attached to the 6th Cavalry Group (casualties: 11 KIA, 51 WIA) and on February 22, 1945, the lower town of Vianden was secured by the 28th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron (6th Cavalry Group).

In 28 days after the official end of the Battle of the Bulge, from January 26, 1945 to February 22, 1945 about 30 villages and towns in Luxembourg were liberated by American troops.

The question is: did the brave men, who paid the full price for the liberation of these towns of Luxembourg, give their life for the liberation of Luxembourg during the Battle of the Bulge, or for the occupation of the Rhineland in the "Rhineland Campaign"?

Jean Milmeister
Vice President, CEBA
VBOB Associate Member

WHEN DID IT END?

In *The Bulge Bugle* from February 2007 (p. 27) John Meli raised the question when the Battle of the Bulge ended.

I am glad he did because this questions has preoccupied me for a certain time.

In the same issue a picture shows the Bulge Monument dedicated in New Jersey, which says that the Battle of the Bulge lasted from December 16, 1944, to January 25, 1945.

As a matter of fact, according to the *Army Almanac* the "Ardennes-Alsace Campaign" lasted 16 December 1944-25 January 1945 (p. 635).

Historians agree that the Battle of the Bulge was over when the German troops were pushed back to the front line they held on December 15, 1944.

According to General George S. Patton, Jr., on January

...FROM MR. AND MRS WORCESTER

We wanted to write and let you know what an honor it was to place a wreath on your monument (December 16th). It was equally an honor to be in your company to place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns. Meeting the men and women and shaking their hands was very special for us.

We have many plans for 2007. We are taking 10,000 wreaths to Arlington. We are also extending wreaths across America to 24 offshore cemeteries. Most exciting is that Civil Air Patrol will be taking sponsorships for wreaths. Wreaths Across America is now a non-profit organization. Our goal is to place 500,000 wreaths across the country in 2007. Many people are joining in effort to show you--the veterans--that we do "get it" and we remember.

It was truly a pleasure to be there in December. Thank

you for including us.

Morrill & Karen Worcester

[For further information, the Worcesters place thousands of wreaths on graves in Arlington Cemetery every December. In 2006, they were invited to participate in the wreath laying ceremonies conducted by the Battle of the Bulge.]

STIRRED TO WRITE

The article in the February issue "Patton--A Genius for War" by Carlo D'Estra, stirred me out of my complacency with a desire to express my thoughts regarding Bastogne. Just what part did the defense of Bastogne play in the overall fight to contain and stop the German assault and breakthrough? I had resisted expressing my opinion knowing many would consider it an attack on the bravery, suffering and sacrifice by the defenders who held on and rejected surrender with the word "Nuts" to the frustration of the enemy while injecting a word of hope and pride to Americans during a dark time. However, the successful defense of the town did not win the Battle of the Bulge and I was surprised to see that even Patton expressed that in D'Estra's article. In fact, Patton went further to say they faced inferior forces. Meaning, I suppose, that the main assault forces bypassed Bastogne, leaving it to the follow-up units.

This is my unqualified Monday morning quarterback analysis of Bastogne. Higher headquarters was blinded by their belief that the German army was beaten and incapable of launching a serious attack in the Ardennes. Reacting to the shocking breakthrough of the 28th Division they ordered the elite 101st Airborne Division to plug the gap in our lines. The 101st arrived late in Bastogne after a difficult journey from Paris, probably with only such ammo and supplies as they carried. While their arrival denied the town's road network to the enemy, the German panzer forces bypassed it on the north and south obeying orders to avoid strong points of resistance and press on to the main objective: the bridges across the Meuse. In effect this cut off any supply route to the trapped forces in Bastogne. Now, instead of an asset the 101st became a deficit to be sustained by air drops, half of which would fall to the Germans. Not to mention air crews and planes lost in the effort. Unable to accumulate sufficient ammo and supplies for attack on enemy supply lines, they dug in against persistent attacks.

Now the second error in my judgment was ordering the 3rd Army to relieve the trapped forces in Bastogne. The Germans must have given a sight of relief for they surely must have feared Patton launching an attack toward the Rhine. The German lines had been seriously weakened in order to mass forces for the attack in the Ardennes. Patton was a general they respected and would have shifted units south to oppose the 3rd Army attack, thus effectively ending the Ardennes assault. Probably this would have relieved Bastogne quicker than the ten days it took Patton to reach it. By which time the enemy had been contained and stopped on the north anyway.

It is not important to me whether you opt to print this or not. I was just glad the D'Estra article gave me the

incentive to pull my thoughts together and put them on paper.

Maurice H. Kunselman
106 INF 424 INF HQ SVC

GUARDING A FUEL DUMP

We were guarding a fuel dump near Liege, Belgium, when the Germans broke through. The fuel dump was bombed by four air planes. Our 90 mms and 50 cal machine guns were in action day and night during that time. Christmas and New Years day were hell after we moved up to a position further up front. *[Charles adds that he and Johnny Michael Balamoti served in the same unit.]*

Charles Kizina
135 AAA GN BN B

A FEW QUESTIONS

I have a question about the World War II statistics on page 7 of the February issue.

I'm a WWII vet and my memory isn't all that great. However, it runs in my mind that I've read where we had around 11,000,000 to 12,000,000 total with battle deaths around 400,000 to 500,000.

Would appreciate your comments. Thank you.

Harold M. Fruetel
106 INF 424 INF HQ SVC

BOXES FOR THE TROOPS

Dave Saltman and I recalled how welcome paperback books were in WWII to fight boredom, cold feet or a missing mess truck. He sent a box of books to a friend in Baghdad who would tell when it arrived. This was in late 2003 and it took four weeks despite the army telling us it would take eight months and that you had to be a blood relative of the addressee.

I then went to the January meeting of the Patchogue VFW Post 2013 and asked for their support in sending books. They promptly made me chairman of a one man operation. I got some addresses of men overseas from friends and VFW members, consulted the post office on paperwork, obtained boxes from a supermarket and picked up book donations from a local bookstore and the Patchogue Library. By April, I had lots of help and we included hygiene items, snacks, CDs and movies. We got new addresses from the internet, set up an assembly line in the lounge of the post on eight tables and developed a network of reliable donors and volunteer packers.

The local AMVETS post sent hundreds of ditty bags to us along with a hundred dollars a month for mailing costs. The American Legion Post sends items and money for mailing each month. The library collects not only paperback books, but also movies, CDs and games. Boy Scout troops have collected pickup truck loads of donations and helped pack, Girl Scouts helped pack during a Christmas rush as well. A few weeks ago, 80 high school kids used our assembly line, boxes and trucks, delivering to the post office to bring their donations that filled 150 of our large sized boxes. Local TV covered this operation.

Each Wednesday our regular packers from WWII, Korea and Vietnam do the paperwork and packing while telling war stories or making up new ones. We get 40 or more new addresses each month and send at least 50 boxes. We have received hundreds of letters and e-mails of thanks and requests. The letters go to the Military History Institute in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, for future researchers.

George Egan is co-chairman and picks up needed items as well as delivering boxes to the post office. Quartermaster John Purtz keeps careful records of cash donations and expenses. His books are open to inspection at any time. The cost of mailing 700 boxes in 12 months from Patchogue to New York City was \$2,800 for the 50 miles. His records led to a large grant from VFW National Headquarters.

As of December, 2006, we have sent 2,000 boxes to over 1,600 individuals in Iraq and Afghanistan. The other boxes were second boxes that we send to anyone telling of the safe arrival of the first box.

[What great work. Hal also send a very humorous page relating to contents of "care" packages. Space did not permit that we print it.]

Hal O'Neill
83 INF 83 SIG CO

GETTING IT RIGHT

Today I received my *Bulge Bugle*.

Joseph Doherty's article on page 27 is right on target.

Today's news media gives nothing but disheartening news when reporting today's war news. Nothing positive, always finding fault and criticizing. They ought to show every dead terrorist instead of a running account of U.S. casualties.

My division, the 35th, suffered 2,751 casualties in the month of January, 1945. They included 370 KIA, 1,189 wounded, 680 frostbite and 487 MIA.

Give them hell, Joe.

James G. Graff
35 INF 134 INF C

CLOSE CALL

Of the many close calls that I had during WWII in the ETO, one event came to mind as I read the article on German 88's.

One night in Elsenborn while helping a 6 x 6 driver unload a trailer load of 155 mm howitzer shells, an artillery shell landed just beyond the pile we had just unloaded. The incoming shell did not explode as it probably had a defective fuze, perhaps assembled by German slave laborers. However, it dug a deep hole 12/15" in diameter. It had to have come in over our heads at a lob angle and landed practically straight down, probably a 105 mm/4.20" in diameter. Certainly not an 88 with a flat trajectory.

Primarily, I was a radio operator with a forward observer spending a lot of time with the infantry.

V. William Jarvi
2 INF 12 FA BN A

GET OUT THOSE PENCILS

So little appears from the 508th, 2nd ABND.

We left Sissone, France, December 1944, in trucks. It was cold and snow was falling. We went through Bastogne on the way north. We watched as American troops passed us. Many of us didn't have overcoats. We fought through forests, dug in on a hill, and engaged various German troops. We held ground and stopped an advance. We fired a continuous small arms machine gun. I was hit by shrapnel—in the right ear and mouth and was evacuated to the Paris General hospital in February.

I would like to hear more from our group. At age 82+ my memory is a bit hazy so I would like to see some better detail than I have offered. Come on, you guys, write in. It seems like we were never there.

Allan H. Stein
82 ABND 408 PIR 2 BN F

BIG MISTAKE

...I would like to point out what I think is an error in the article that appears in the November 2006 issue of *The Bulge Bugle*.

This error is on page 9 in the last paragraph where Capt. Jack Prior states that "More than 56,000 Americans were killed in this winter blitz." The more accurately accepted figure for this battle is 19,000. [Editor: A typographical error. The figure used by this organization is 81,000 casualties with 19,000 of those killed.]

The article about artillery was one of the most interesting and educational of any article that I have seen in *The Bugle*. Being an old infantryman, I knew nothing about artillery so this article gave more information than I have ever read. I would like to see a similar article about tank comparisons in WWII.

Finally, I would like to recommend highly a book by Peter Schrijvers, titled *The Unknown Dead*. This book describes in great detail and accuracy, the plight of those unfortunate residents living in the BoB sector of Belgium during this epic battle. It is very informative and I would strongly encourage every VBOB to read this book.

Beldon Peters
75 INF 289 INF AT

MEMORIES BROUGHT BACK

The November 2006 issue of *The Bulge Bugle* article entitled "U.S. German Field Artillery in the Battle of the Bulge," by Charles P. Biggio, et al, brought back memories of both our and German artillery pieces that I had encountered in the winter of 1944-45 in Belgium.

My unit was the 563rd Antiaircraft Artillery Automatic Weapons Battalion and we entered the Bulge on December 20, 1944, four days after the Germans attacked the Elsenborn Ridge and broke through the 99th Infantry Division just as it was relieving the 106th Infantry Division in that sector.

My assignment was as a non-com in charge of a squad of men whose mission was to observe and report not only enemy aircraft but also ground armor and infantry and to notify our battalion headquarters by radio so that our 40

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

millimeter cannons (we had 32 of them) could be alerted and be prepared to open fire. In the course of our mission we were either with or in advance of the American howitzers and 155 guns--they were known then as "Long Toms." We would hear the whine of the guns' shells when they fired over our heads as they continuously bombarded the enemy.

We ran into the deadly German 88's on December 24 when, after our aircraft had been grounded for two weeks or more because of snow, rain and fog, the weather finally cleared and sunny blue skies appeared on that Christmas Eve morning. Suddenly at 8:00 a.m. a flight of five B-17s came in low to bomb the enemy positions. No sooner had they passed over our heads when German 88 Flakens (where the expression "flak" comes from) opened fire on them and, as we stood and watched in amazement, ALL of our planes were shot down--wings, fuselages and engines began to rain to the ground near our position. We could not believe what we were witnessing. Maybe some of your readers saw this also.

When the 88's stopped firing a flight of German Me 109 fighter aircraft began to strafe some of the few parachutes that had dropped from our stricken planes. One parachutist floated down near us. Not knowing whether he was an American or a German because our AAA also opened up on the fighters and one seemed to have been hit, we took our rifles and cautiously approached him. As we got close we saw that he was an American Air Corps sergeant, a side or near gunner from one of our B-17's.

Because of the cold December air through which he had fallen he had lost his voice and could not respond to us. We took him back to our position, wrapped him in blankets and made him hot coffee from our rations. I radioed our battalion command post and informed them that we had the sergeant and they eventually sent a jeep to pick him up.

After the war our unit held annual reunions and I sent a letter to our Colonel, A. S. Baron was his name, asking him what had happened to the downed sergeant. The colonel replied via our newsletter (which I still have) told me that he broke out a bottle of Scotch, gave the sergeant a couple of drinks to get his voice back, contacted the Air Corps and got him back to England so he could fly again.

**Bill Stevenson
563 AAA AW BN**

**REUNIONS ARE SUCH A
WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE--
TRY TO MAKE THE VBOB REUNION
LINCOLNSHIRE, IL
SEPTEMBER 25-30, 2007**

WHY A REUNION?

*[The following article was written by **GEORGE FISHER**,
26TH INFANTRY DIVISION (and former VBOB Vice
President for Chapters) but space didn't allow for it to be
published in a timely manner. Since we have a reunion
coming up, this was an ideal time to use it.]*

What is it that binds combat veterans together? It isn't friendship...we all have friends. You can go to a high school or college reunion and you will not feel the same emotion in the air as when you attend a reunion of combat veterans.

Maybe it's the fact that we were all in hall and back...maybe it is the knowledge that we all lived through that terrible war. At these reunions, we all open our wounds and cleanse them. All the memories that were buried for years now come to the surface. "What ever happened to" or "Remember when" are repeated over and over. There is something binding with your buddies who lived and fought beside you.

I have attended many reunions over the past few years, and I still get a lump in my throat and a tear in my eye when it's time to leave. Sure, we may have less hair on top and a few more inches around the middle, but you could still recognize everybody.

Combat was hell and you have many terrible memories of death and destruction...but the memory of total camaraderie with men who shared that hell will forever be embedded in your heart. There is no friendship like that of combat buddies. It is something that lasts forever.

I am most fortunate to still see my buddies from the 26th Division and the Battle of the Bulge. Our wives get along well and we share enjoyable times together.

OBITUARIES

Many years ago, the Executive Committee elected that this newsletter would not carry obituaries. I can remember our Founder, Clyde D. Boden, saying, "One of these days, there would be nothing else in *The Bulge Bugle*." Over the years, we have held to this policy--we have had many founders and officers pass away, but we have not broken with the policy.

We would appreciate receiving copies of obituaries as we will keep them in our archives.

As nearly as possible, the pages of this newsletter are dedicated to the stories of those who served in the Battle of the Bulge. The stories are your stories and we will publish them and save them for future generations to learn of your experiences.

So, please don't be upset that an obituary you have sent was not published and we thank you for your understanding. □

THE MORTARMEN

by Michael Connelly
87th Chemical Mortar Battalion

[The following are excerpts from Michael's booklet entitled "The Mortarmen" which relates the experiences of the 87th throughout the war in Europe. Also included is a chapter regarding the perspective of a German soldier.]

They were the redheaded stepchildren of the Army, considered by many at the beginning of the war as an archaic kickback to the days of siege warfare. Their weapon was the 4.2 inch, 107 mm mortar, the heaviest of the mortars in the modern military, but these were widely considered to be generally useless in the days of fast moving armored thrusts supported by heavy artillery and air power. After all, the days of the Civil War when fortifications had to be reduced by siege warfare and captured, and the similar static trench warfare of World War I were long past.

There seemed to be little need for such weapons as large mortars for which they could lob shells with precision into fixed sites, appeared to be useless against moving targets such as tanks. What was needed in World War II was the awesome power of the tank and mobile artillery. At least that was the common perception at the beginning of the war.

The perception was wrong. The men of the 87th Chemical Mortar Battalion proved it over and over again as they fought their way through the major battles of Europe from D-Day to Cherbourg, to the Hurtgen Forest, to the Battle of the Bulge. They bled, they died, and they proved their worth and the 87th became one of the most sought after fire support units in the European Theater of Operations (ETO). *[Ed: They spent 326 straight days in combat.]*

The companies of the battalion were not widely separated from each other, but were operating independently as usual. There was enough distance between them though that they could not support each other and therefore Companies A, C, and D were unable to come to the aid of Company B when the sky fell in on them on the 28th of December (D plus 205).

The Village of Sadzot was a small, non-descript town that at the time didn't appear on most maps of Belgium. It consisted of approximately fifteen houses and some out buildings stretched along one side of the gravel road that ran from Manhay through Erezee. Behind the village were the thick woods of the Ardennes. The mortarmen quickly dubbed the village "Sad Sack" in homage to the cartoon character by that name that appeared in the *Stars and Stripes* newspaper.

Despite the size however, the people welcomed the men of B Company warmly and opened their homes to them. Because the weather was horrible, temperatures were below freezing most of the time and the ground was covered with snow, Capt. Marshall decided to do something unusual. Both of the mortar platoons and the Company Command Post were set up inside the town so that the men could make use of the warmth of the houses.

It was not unusual during that winter of 1944 for GIs to die of exposure, and frost bite was rampant among the troops who had to spend all their time in cold, wet foxholes. Therefore com-

manders took advantage of every opportunity to billet their men in available buildings. The mortarmen were not completely alone in the town. A tank destroyer unit was also sharing their accommodations.

The 87th was supposed to be in a position behind the protective defensive barrier formed by the 1st and 2nd battalions of the 289th Infantry Regiment. Unfortunately for those in Sadzot, the untried troops of the 289th and virtually the whole 75th Division were not up to the task. Even most of the senior officers had never seen combat before and no one seemed to understand the danger of the situation. When the two battalions moved into their positions they were supposed to maintain contact with each other and form a solid defensive line. This never occurred and a gap was left which the Germans quickly discovered. The mistake would prove to be fatal for many of the men in Sadzot.

During the total darkness of the moonless night of December 28th German scouts from two companies of the 25th Panzer Grenadier Regiment found the gap and began to look for an approach into Sadzot. The ultimate objective was to breakout across the Erezee-Manhay road. The scouts had found a creek bed that offered a near perfect approach to the edge of the village. Actually one of the scouts had run headlong earlier into one of the Company B Troopers on guard duty at the edge of the woods, and as a result Capt. Marshall had ordered more outposts around the village where it met the thick forest. However, after being assured by area infantry commanders that there were no large concentrations of enemy troops in the sector he moved most of the guards back into the comfort of the buildings.

This was the opportunity the Germans were waiting for. After giving the Americans time to fall asleep several scouts slipped into the houses and quietly slit the throats of the GIs nearest to their point of attack. At 1:00 a.m. on the morning of the 28th the two companies, supported by some German paratroopers, burst from the woods, howling like crazed Indians according to many of the mortarmen....

[William A.] Cummings was outside on guard duty when the Germans first emerged from the woods and despite the bullets whizzing all around him, he immediately bolted for the houses where his comrades were sleeping. The first house he came to was the 1st Platoon CP where he threw open the door and shouted, "Get up, there's krauts all over the place!" His next stop was the 2nd Platoon CP where he quickly alerted the sleeping men. Then he ran out of that house and headed for the one next door. A burst of automatic weapons fire dropped him dead into the snow....

...Lt. Gordon Byers launched a counterattack of sorts. When the initial fighting had broken out he had emerged from the house where he was billeted near the center of the village. Byers had already been awarded a Silver Star for bravery a few weeks earlier, but what he did on this night was truly incredible. He quickly sized up the situation and knew that quick action was needed. The 3rd Armored Division had several light tanks in the area of the village and Byers spotted one of them parked on the other side of the road. He climbed on top and banged on the hatch until the tank commander finally stuck his head out. Byers ordered him to enter the village to support the beleaguered mortarmen, but the sergeant refused, citing his tank's lack of armor. He had a valid point because the army's light tank was almost a joke among combat troops. It was armed with a 57 mm gun that was useless against German armor and its own thin skin made it

(Continued)

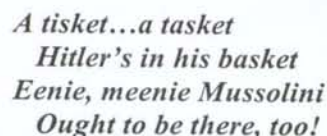
(Continuation)

However Byers was in no mood to hear about the technical deficiencies of the light tank while his friends were being shot down in the village. He issued the order to the man one more time, and when the sergeant refused again the lieutenant calmly drew his .45 and pointed at the soldier's head. That finally convinced him and Byers manned the machine gun on top of the vehicle, blazing away at every German he saw. The Germans returned fire, but somehow the counterattack continued with Byers unscathed. When he finally ran out of ammunition, he dismounted and returned to the Company CP that had become an initial rallying point for the men who could get there. The quick action by Lt. Byers caused such confusion in the German ranks that a number of men were able to escape the houses they were trapped in....

However, after regrouping with more of the men of the 509th

A second effort to break through was made by the Panzers and it came closer to succeeding, but heavy and concentrated artillery and mortar fire again proved to be the difference and the enemy finally withdrew. However, the fact that a small number of infantrymen had managed to infiltrate the American lines made for another sleepless night for the defenders.

[Copies of "The Mortarmen" can be purchased direct from the author, Michael Connelly; 3440 Timberglen Road, #239; Dallas, Texas 75287. Cost is \$25.00, including handling and postage.]



WWII Ditty



REUNIONS

2ND ARMORED DIVISION & 17TH ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION, September 12-16, 2007, Columbus, Georgia. Contact: John A. Shields, PO Box 106, East Butler, Georgia 16029. Telephone: 724-287-4301.

5TH ARMORED DIVISION, August 16-19, 2007, Canton, Ohio. Contact: Jeffrey C. Smith, 404 West 12th Street, Dover, Ohio 44622. Telephone: 330-454-5000.

17TH ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION--see 2nd Armored Division.

17TH AIRBORNE DIVISION, October 4-7, 2007, Hampton, Virginia. Contact: Edward J. Siergiej, PO Box 4793, Dowling Park, Florida 32064. Telephone: 386-658-1292.

26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, June 12-14, 2007, Groton, Connecticut. Contact: 26 INFD, c/o Robert R. Raney, 27 Forest Street, Peabody, Massachusetts 01960-4138.

35TH INFANTRY DIVISION, September 27-30, 2007, St. Louis, Missouri. Contact: 35th Division, PO Box 5004, Topeka, Kansas 66605.

38TH SIGNAL BATTALION, September 27-30, 2007, Eatontown, New Jersey. Contact: Bill Foiles, 2208 Dunvegan Drive, Columbia, South Carolina 29209-3012. Telephone: 803-776-1114.

75TH INFANTRY DIVISION, August 29-September 1, 2007, Kansas City, Missouri. Contact: Jim Warmouth, 6545 West 11th Street, Indianapolis, Indiana 46214.

84TH INFANTRY DIVISION, August 24-26, 2007, Springfield, Illinois. Contact: Troy Mallory. Telephone: 217-223-9062.

86TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION, held its reunion April 11-15, 2007 in Fort Leonardwood, Missouri. Write to them at: 86th Chemical Mortar Battalion, 818 West 62nd Street, Anniston, Alabama 36206.

300TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION, June 7-10, 2007, Dallas, Texas. Contact: Randy Hanes, 6490 Ridgemont Drive, Dallas, Texas 75214-1619. Telephone: 214-363-3826.

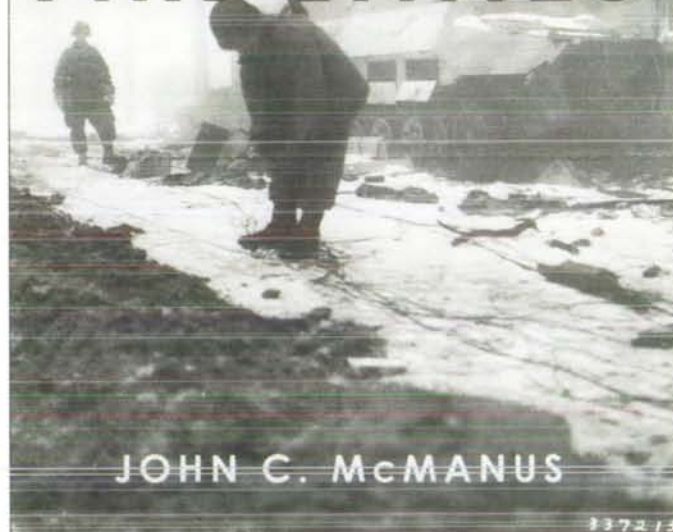
526TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION, August 29-September 2, 2007, Cody, Wyoming. Contact: Sherrie Morrison, P.O. Box 456, Yolo, California 95697. Telephone: 530-662-8160.

JUST CAN'T DO IT... AGAIN!

We stated in the last issue that we would try to include Charles Biggio's charts on the artillery in the Bulge in this issue. However, as you can see with the things that **must** be included in this issue, again there was no room. Please send us a self-addressed, stamped (.39 cents) envelope marked "Chart" on the outside and we'll mail you one. Sorry we couldn't get it done. ■

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE
AMERICAN SOLDIERS WHO MADE THE
DEFENSE OF BASTOGNE POSSIBLE

ALAMO IN THE ARDENNES



At last, the full story of the turning point in the Battle of the Bulge. In December 1944, the Belgian town of Bastogne was a key objective of the Germans' surprise offensive in the Ardennes--and they had to take it quickly. For five crucial days, small groups of American soldiers from the 28th Infantry Division, 9th and 10th Armored Divisions and 101st Airborne Division, slowed the German advance and allowed Bastogne to be reinforced. At times, these beleaguered defenders were outnumbered ten-to-one. Theirs is a tale of last-ditch efforts, incredible courage, and impossible odds. This is their story....

The author, John C. McManus, advises dozens of VBOB members contributed to his research in writing this book, whether through personal interviews, networking, or documentary material they provided.

The book *Alamo in the Ardennes: The Untold Story of the American Soldiers Who Made the Defense of Bastogne Possible* will be released March 5, 2007, and will be available at Borders, Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com or just about anywhere books are sold.

NOT ALWAYS... JUST US AND THE ENEMY

[We don't normally reprint articles by non-members as we receive so much from the members who support us, but we found this soul searching. It was written by TOM DAVIS, 87TH DIVISION, 346TH INFANTRY REGIMENT.]

No one who has ever fought in combat can really forget the images of death and destruction associated with war. While time will dim some of the images there are always a few you never forget.

While serving with the 87th Infantry Division during the Battle of the Bulge we were on a night patrol at a small village just outside St. Vith, Belgium. The village was no more than a crossroads with less than a dozen buildings. It was customary for the Germans to randomly fire artillery at points along the front just to harass us.

In the middle of the night they decided to pour a few shells into our area. There were only four of us in the patrol—our job was just to be able to alert our unit if we spotted any German movement or activity. When the first artillery shell went over, we scattered and headed for cover. I dove into a small barn and up against the wall on the side of the incoming fire. The other members of the patrol did likewise. The typical farm buildings were solidly built with stone walls often a foot and a half thick. One of the shells hit an adjacent building and it started to burn.

As it became lighter in my barn due to the flaming building, I realized that next to where I was laying on the dirt floor was a pallet of boards on which lay a body under a canvas tarp. Against my better judgment, I pulled back the tarp revealing the body of a young girl of perhaps 10 to 12. Who she was I never knew, nor how she died, but that image was the one that stayed in my dreams for a long, long time. Perhaps I got used to seeing dead and wounded soldiers—as you would expect in a war—and strangely we didn't see a lot of civilians during combat as they hid wherever they could find shelter. When you are in combat you tend to think that it is only about you and the enemy...it is often shocking to find out that it isn't. ■



**“Something big must be coming up;
I haven't heard a rumor in three days.”**

KEEPING WARM

Donald Schoo

80th Infantry Division

633rd Antiaircraft Automatic Weapons Battalion

In December, I sewed a pair of wool sox together and wore them around my neck like we did in the winter of 1944 to keep them dry and warm in the Battle of the Bulge.



Everyday, we would change sox to keep from getting trench foot. Now I wear them to remember the longest, coldest winter of my life! ■

IT'S NEVER FORGOTTEN

[In the March 2007 issue of the Northern Indiana Chapter newsletter, Incoming President Carroll Austin, 3519th Ordnance Company, made the following observation.]

...Our recent wave of cold weather reminds me of the snow and sub-zero temperatures of that long ago time of 62 years. It is something that does not become erased from your memory. Even though I personally did not experience the actual fighting because of my good fortune of being attaching to a service company, I still remember the snow and the bitter cold temperatures. Only after the Battle of the Bulge ended and we entered Bastogne and saw the many frozen bodies of American and German soldiers did I realize the suffering. ■

An elderly American gentleman arrived in Paris by plane. At French Customs, he fumbled for his passport.

“You ‘ave been to France before, monsieur?” the customs officer asked sarcastically. The old gent admitted that he had been to France previously.

“Zen, you should know enough to ‘ave your passport ready for inspection.”

The American said, “The last time I was here, I didn't have to show it.”

“Impossible. You Americans always ‘ave to show your passports on arrival in France!”

The American senior gave the Frenchman a long hard look. Then he quietly explained, “Well, when I came ashore at Omaha Beach in ‘44, I couldn't find any Frenchman to show it to.”

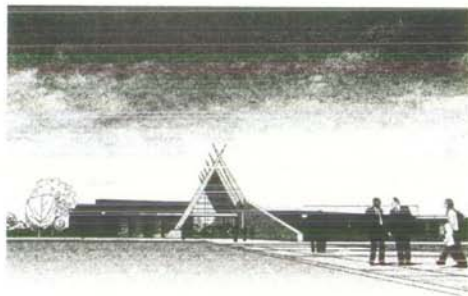


The Army Heritage and Education Center & Army Heritage Center Foundation



The United States Army Heritage and Education Center (AHEC), a component of the National Museum of the U.S. Army, sits on 56-acres adjacent to Interstate-81 in Carlisle, Pennsylvania. The Center when fully developed will include five major components --

- Military History Institute - the Army's archives for soldiers' letters, diaries, and photos
- Visitor and Education Center - a venue for educational programs and reunions
- Army Heritage Museum - "Telling the Army's Story -- One Soldier at a Time"
- Army Heritage Trail - Living history programs that bring Army history to life
- Conservation Laboratory - Preserving the legacy of soldiers' service.



**The Visitor and Education Center
will support veterans and education
programs for the public**

The AHEC will honor the service and sacrifice of soldiers and their families by sharing their personal stories; preserving artifacts and archival materials; and educating and inspiring visitors, especially school children in grades 5 to 12. The development of the AHEC is a unique public-private initiative. In 2004, the Army constructed a new building for the Military History Institute (MHI). The Army is now developing the Army Heritage Trail with Army structures from the past, such as a WWII company street, and large artifacts such as a Sherman Tank. The Trail will support living history programs that reach out to the American public. Finally, in 2009 the Army will construct the Conservation Laboratory that will preserve archival materials and objects for the Army Heritage Museum.

The Army Heritage Center Foundation, a not-for-profit 501(c) (3), leads a public-private partnership. Through donated support, the Foundation will fund and construct the public components of the AHEC -- the Visitor and Education Center and the Army Heritage Museum. Once the construction is complete, the Foundation will transfer the buildings to the Army to operate and maintain. The Foundation will then raise funds to provide "margin of excellence support" for AHEC programs. The Foundation also manages an educational program, *Voices of the Past Speak to the Future*, which creates educational content for use by teachers and students. The primary focus of these materials is to support instruction in grades 5-12.

Telling the Army Story – One Soldier at a Time

Leave a Legacy -- Invest in the future of the Army's past!



WWII Mobilization Barracks

The Army Heritage Center Foundation needs your financial support. The Army will fund the operation of the AHEC but cannot, in this time of war, pay to construct an education center and a museum. We need your support to construct the Visitor and Education Center and the Army Heritage Museum and to fund an endowment to provide "margin of excellence" for educational programs and other AHEC activities. Should you be interested in making a gift, please visit our website at www.armyheritage.org or contact Jim Rainey at 717-258-1102, by email at

Donate your materials so that the Army can better tell the history of the Battle of the Bulge. Already home to numerous collections of VBOB members, the AHEC needs additional letters, diaries and photos to ensure the Battle of the Bulge your contributions are fully understood. If you are interested and want information, view the AHEC's website at www.AHEC.org or contact Greg Statler at 717-245-3094, by email at greg.statler@carlisle.army.mil, or by mail at 950 Soldiers Drive, Carlisle Barracks, PA 17013.

jrainey@armyheritage.org, or by mail at PO Box 839, Carlisle, PA 17013.



Elementary School Students at Drill



Civil War Cabins demonstrate how soldiers lived during the Civil War

Telling the Army Story – One Soldier at a Time

INDIAN RIVER CHAPTER REMEMBERS

Information submitted by:

Al Babecki

President

Indian River Chapter (FL)

In commemoration of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge the Indian River Chapter members met in the Plaza of the Liberty Bell Museum in Melbourne, Florida, where they had purchased a plaque which is incorporated into the huge U.S. flag on the exterior wall of the enlarged museum. They also laid a wreath at the memorial.



Members of the Indian River Chapter at the Liberty Bell Museum.

PATIENCE PLEASE

If you ordered the CD mentioned in the February, please be assured that we are making every attempt to provide them. We have run into difficulties with regard to production and would rather take the time to make them better.

First attempts produced a video that wasn't as good as we would like them, so we had to go back to the original source and start all over.

So, patience please. We are making every effort to get them to you. ■

VBOB 2007 REUNION

September 25, 2007
to September 30, 2007
Lincolnshire, IL

**ARE YOURS DUES PAID? CHECK YOUR
MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR DUES DATE.**

GREENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA MONUMENT

We have neglected to mention the monument which is located on the grounds of the Armory in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. The monument was dedicated to the memory of Bulge veterans on December 16, 2000 and now has 160 red bricks with the names of Bulge veterans nestled nearby.



[Thanks to Whitey Schaller for the information. If we have neglected to mention a remembrance monument in your area, let us know. We will make mention of it.]

PASS THE WORD ABOUT VBOB

Again, let me re-emphasize the need for each of us to generate new members. We know there are many more Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge out there. We know they would be honored to be part of this exceptional organization. They haven't learned about VBOB. You can be our best advertising campaign.

Talk to eligible veterans and encourage them to join. It's the only way we can continue to grow.

Especially, talk to those in your chapter who have not sent in their applications. We can need their support.

We are happy to provide you with extra copies of *The Bulge Bugle* for you to use in whetting their appetite.

John McAuliffe
VBOB VP, Chapters

Treaties are like roses and young girls.
They last while they last.
CHARLES DE GAULLE

GUNNER STAYED MUM

[The newsletter of the 17th Airborne Division (Thunder from Heaven), carried this story in its December, 2006, edition.]

All John Hellmann had to say was "ja."

One nod, and the marches through the snow, the hunger, would be over.



He would still be a prisoner of war, but as a kitchen assistant in an enemy field hospital. The head German cook needed a translator for talking to other POW's brought there, bad enough to offer him food, a bed and bath if he stayed.

Hellmann, a 17th Airborne Division corporal born in Germany, could do the job. Here was his ticket out. No more

American planes would mistakenly strafe him. No longer would he survive on just water and morsels of black bread.

An ordeal that began in a Belgian forest during the battle of the Bulge would end. He made his decision.

"I said, 'Look, if you can fix my comrades up with the same deal, I'll stay,'" said Hellmann, today an 83 years of age retired golf course greens keeper in Patton Township.

"Nein."

So off to Stalag 12A they went.

Weeks earlier, they had been with the rest of the 513th Parachute Infantry Regiment as it attacked over a ridge. The paratroopers with the golden talons on their shoulders had missed two historical jumps, arriving in England after D-Day and too late for Operation Market Garden in Holland.

But they were ready when, in late December, 1944, the Nazis made a desperate assault in the Ardennes Forest.

"Word came down that there was a breakthrough," Hellmann said. "We knew we were going for a ride then because they started passing out ammunition and hand grenades and whatnot. We knew we were going some place. And that's when they flew us over to the continent."

After landing in Rheims, France, as the sun set, they boarded open trucks for the front. The last five miles, they marched in darkness to relieve the mauled 11th Armored Division.

Through a foot of snow they scraped out cover.

"The first night, I didn't get a hole all the way down," Hellmann said. "It was just enough that I could crouch down in it. They told us, 'Look, the Germans are right over that crest. Keep down and keep your mouths shut.'"

A machine-gun squad leader in Headquarters Company, Hellmann hunkered down while artillery screamed in from the trees beyond.

"We didn't see a soul until we went into the attack a few days later," he said.

Fog rolled in the morning of January 7, delaying the assault until late afternoon. It didn't get any better. Several rifle companies had heavy casualties by the time Hellmann found himself next to his lieutenant on the crest.

Hellmann rose for a peek. Six German tanks, infantry riding on the whitewashed turrets, clanked toward him. Horrified, he

warned the lieutenant, who hesitated too long as the tanks drew near.

"When they got (within) one hundred feet of me, I looked up and the lieutenant had his hands in the air," Hellmann said. "And I wasn't going to argue."

The infamous Malmedy Massacre, where SS Panzer troops had gunned down dozens of captured GIs a few weeks earlier, flashed through his mind. Instead, the Germans led their prisoners to a barn, took their cigarettes and wristwatches and lined them up for a truck ride.

Just then, a tank pulled up, its commander cursing and waving his arms toward the six Americans. Tied to the front was a slain tanker. Hellmann, who emigrated as a child to New Jersey, didn't need his German to understand.

"I think if he had had his way, we would have shot us all," he said.

When the truck almost immediately ran out of gas, Hellmann began walking. A month later, the hike stopped.

Along the way, the GIs shuffled through snow by day and slept in attics and barns. If they were lucky a single loaf (of bread) kept them going.

Once an American fighter plane strafed the box car that held the prisoners. There were about ten or twelve of us locked in the freight car and the guys started going crazy in there--being locked in. Hellmann said, "If that damned car had caught on fire we would have been roasted."

As they moved deeper into Germany, Hellmann kept his German a secret--until the field hospital, when a guard needed to communicate an order to the prisoners.

But in any language, the Stalag prison camp was miserable.

Guards supplied enough wood and coal to barely warm barracks when GIs slept on cobblestone floors in straw beds, covered by lice-infested blankets. "Some idiot ran out of firewood and decided he was going to break a window frame," Hellmann said. "When he did that, the Germans took everything away from us (for a while). No more wood, no more coal."

"Very foolish, I sold some cigarettes to a Russian for a piece of bread," he said. "And they had diphtheria in their compound. We had been warned not to deal with them, but when you're hungry...."

Then one April day, the guards suddenly disappeared. Soon, two American officers in a jeep drive in through the gates.

The Ninth Army had arrived.

Hellmann had survived 79 days of captivity. Freedom almost finished him. Army cooks, pitying the malnourished soldiers, fixed heaping amounts of eggs and pancakes.

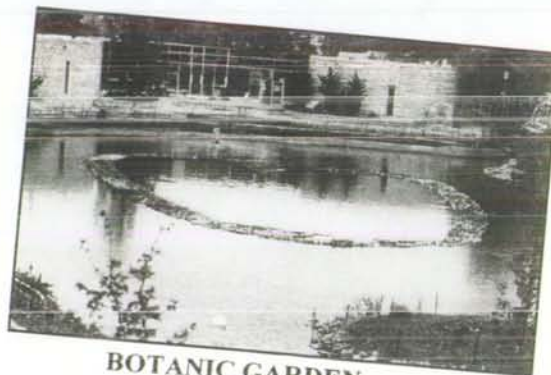
"Everybody got sick," Hellmann said. "Our stomachs couldn't handle it." □



[The newsletter also indicates that their October Reunion will be the last to be held by the 17th Airborne Division Association. We wish you all well and know that you will miss your annual get-togethers.]

Check to see if your dues are due. Save us the cost of a reminder. Thanks.

LINCOLNSHIRE CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS AND SCHEDULE INFORMATION



BOTANIC GARDEN

INTRODUCTION

Our Annual VBOB Reunion will convene at the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort to continue with the 62nd Anniversary celebration.

We have arranged with the hotel for a special rate of \$93.50 per night which includes all taxes. We look forward to a great reunion with a variety of activities.

The Hospitality Room is there for you to socialize and enjoy the many exhibits, photo books and Battle of the Bulge memorabilia. The Hospitality Room hours will be posted in the lobby of the hotel.

Plenty of free parking is at the hotel for your convenience.

REGISTRATION FEE

All who attend the VBOB Reunion must pay the registration fee. Wreaths, nametags, programs, table decorations, hospitality room, etc., are paid for from this fee.

The Quartermaster will also be available for your purchase of BOB items.

•TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2007

• Welcome Wine and Cheese Reception (6:30 pm – 7:30 pm)

Compliments of the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort.

• **Dinner is on your own.** The hotel has three restaurants.

•WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 26, 2007

• **Botanic Garden** – Dazzling fall color awaits you at the Garden! Breathe in the cooler air and listen to the rustling of feather reed grass, Dallas Blues switch grass, and other grasses on Evening Island. Find blazing colors in our gardens, woodlands, and prairie, including lavender asters, bright red and orange maples and sumacs, and the deep gold of yellow coreopsis and goldenrod. The Garden is your autumn wonderland! Put on your walking shoes for a guided stroll through the Garden, or settle in for a narrated tram ride. Either way, you'll be delighted by what you see and learn in our 23 different gardens situated on 385 acres. Lunch included.

• **Volo Auto Museum** - has over 300 classic cars on display - all for sale! BRING YOUR CHECK BOOK IN CASE YOU WANT TO BUY A CAR! The Volo Auto Museum is home to the world's largest muscle car collection and the George Barris TV & Movie Car Collection. In addition there are five antique malls and a World War II "Combat Zone" at Volo. The Combat Zone contains nine displays about the war in the ETO.

• **Lincolnshire Marriott - Italian Dinner (6:30 p.m.)**. Enjoy a luscious Italian Buffet. Cash bar. **Video/audio presentation** – "A Musical Stroll Down Memory Lane".

•THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2007

• **Chicago Tour** - Enjoy a fully narrated driving tour of Chicago with your certified Chicago Tour Guide who will point out the historic and significant sights. You will see the new Memorial Water Wall, a veteran's memorial at Soldier Field and see the beautiful parks along the magnificent Lake Michigan. You will see Navy Pier, a former Navy training center and now the top attraction in Chicago. You will enjoy a cruise on the Chicago River to learn about the architecture of Chicago's awe-inspiring buildings. This is one of the top things to do in the city. You will see its outdoor art, the Magnificent Mile, the stunning new Millennium Park, and the landmark Water Tower that survived the fire. It will truly be a day to remember. Lunch on your own at Navy Pier.

• **Dinner is on your own.** The hotel has three restaurants.

•FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2007

• **Cantigny, Wheaton, IL** – Home of the Robert McCormick estate. We will be the honored guests of the First Division Foundation and will tour the formal gardens, the First Infantry Division Museum and the McCormick mansion. A band along with active duty soldiers will greet us. Lunch included. In summary, the First Division Foundation is going all out for VBOB.

• **Dinner is on your own.** The hotel has three restaurants.

•SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 29, 2007

• **Free time and lunch on your own**

• **General Membership Meeting (2:00 pm – 4:00 pm.)**
Location will be posted in the lobby.

• **Reception (6:00 p.m.)**

• **Annual Battle of the Bulge Military Banquet (7:00 p.m.)**

•SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2007

• **Farewell Breakfast (7:30 am)** - come and say goodbye to all the reunion members at a private breakfast buffet. Don't forget to bring your cameras for last minute pictures.

See "Reunion Program" for bus departure times

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE
OF THE BULGE, INC.
ANNUAL REUNION

LINCOLNSHIRE MARRIOTT RESORT
LINCOLNSHIRE, IL
SEPTEMBER 25 -30, 2007

REGISTRATION FORM

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
Wife/Guest Name: _____
Division: _____ Regiment: _____
Signature: _____
Arrival date _____ Departure date _____

	People	Cost/ Person	Total Cost
Registration Fee (all attendees must register)	_____	\$ 30	\$ _____
Tuesday, September 25, 2007:			
Wine and cheese reception (compliments of the hotel)	_____	Free	
Dinner on your own			
Wednesday, September 26, 2007:			
Botanic Garden lunch included,			
Volo Museum *	_____	\$55	\$ _____
Italian buffet dinner	_____	\$40	\$ _____
Thursday, September 27, 2007:			
Chicago tour/river cruise/lunch on your own *	_____	\$ 55	\$ _____
Dinner on your own			
Friday, September 28, 2007:			
Cantigny, Robert McCormick estate *			
First Infantry Division Museum, lunch included.	_____	\$45	\$ _____
Dinner on your own			
Saturday, September 29, 2007:			
Free time			
Reception (cash bar)			
Banquet (indicate preference)			
London Broil _____ or Salmon _____	_____	\$55	\$ _____
Sunday, September 30, 2007:			
Farewell breakfast	_____	\$10*	\$ _____
*Total cost of breakfast is \$25 of which VBOB will fund \$15 for active VBOB National Members and Guests			
Total amount enclosed (all taxes & gratuities included)			\$ _____

* See Reunion Program & Highlights and Schedule Information Sheets for Details

Mail registration form and check to
Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge • P.O. Box 101418 • Arlington, VA 22210-4418
**REGISTRATION RECEIPT DEADLINE-SEPTEMBER 2, 2007 - AFTER
THAT DATE BRING FORM.**

(Refunds for cancellations, will be honored in whole or in part, depending on availability of funds.)

Photos for video/audio presentation
Veteran interview 20 interviews @ Louisville

Lincolnshire Marriott Resort

10 Marriott Drive – Lincolnshire, IL 60069

Tel. 847-634-0100 – Fax 847-634-1278

www.marriott.com/property/propertypage/chiln

Welcome

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

RESORT RATES

The resort is offering a two-day window before and after the reunion dates at a rate of \$93.50 per night, single or double occupancy. This rate includes all taxes. All reservations can be made by calling the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort at 1-800-228-9290 and saying you are with the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge group. We suggest you guarantee your reservation with a charge card. If you have any problems making your reservation, ask for Tina Beasley, her number is 847-634-0100. Check-in time is 3:00 p.m. and checkout is 12:00 p.m. In the event you need to cancel your reservation, please inform the hotel 48 hours prior to the day of scheduled arrival. Reservation requests received after September 1st will be confirmed on a space available basis.

NOTE: THE HOTEL IS NON-SMOKING AND PETS ARE NOT ALLOWED

Hotel amenities: Indoor pool, fitness center and complimentary shuttle service within a 5-7 mile radius of the hotel, based upon availability. Full service restaurants and lounge. Ample free parking. RV's are welcome, however, we do not have hook-up facilities.

Sleeping room amenities: coffee, tea, and decaf, with coffee makers, irons and ironing boards, hair dryer

Transportation from O'Hare to the resort: The least expensive is **American Taxi** whose current rate is about \$30/taxi. Free courtesy phones are located on the luggage level at Terminals 1, 2, 3, 5 along with the Bus Shuttle Center. Once you have gathered your luggage, go to the phones and dial 15 to request your taxi. The operator will confirm your present location, name and destination. Please feel free to confirm your flat rate. A taxi will be assigned to you and the operator will give you the taxi number. Since all rides are prearranged, only take the taxi assigned to you.

If you fly into Midway Airport expect to pay at least \$60/taxi.

DIRECTIONS TO THE RESORT

FROM O'HARE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (about 18 miles): Take 294 North to Half Day Road Exit. Turn left. Approx. 2 miles to Milwaukee Avenue. Turn left. Turn left at first stoplight into Marriott entrance on Marriott Drive. 1/4 mile south of Half Day Road.

FROM EAST: Take I-80 West to 294 North to Half Day Road Exit. Turn left. Approx. 2 miles to Milwaukee Avenue. Turn left. Turn Left at first stoplight into Marriott entrance on Marriott Drive. 1/4 mile south of Half Day Road.

FROM SOUTH: Take 57 North to 294 North and go to Half Day Road Exit. Turn left. Approx. 2 miles to Milwaukee Avenue. Turn left. Turn left at first stoplight into Marriott entrance on Marriott Drive. 1/4 mile south of Half Day Road.

FROM NORTH: Take 294 South to Half Day Road Exit. Turn right. Approx. 2 miles to Milwaukee Avenue. Turn left. Turn Left at first stoplight into Marriott entrance on Marriott Drive. 1/4 mile south of Half Day Road.

FROM WEST: Take I-80 East to 294 North to Half Day Road Exit. Turn left. Approx. 2 miles to Milwaukee Avenue. Turn left. Turn left at first stoplight into Marriott entrance on Marriott Drive. 1/4 mile south of Half Day Road.

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.
LINCOLNSHIRE MARRIOTT RESORT
LINCOLNSHIRE, ILLINOIS
SEPTEMBER 25- 30, 2007

REUNION PROGRAM

- **Tuesday, September 25, 2007**
 - 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm Registration headquarters Lincolnshire Marriott Resort
 - 6:30 pm – 7:30 pm Wine and cheese reception (compliments of the Lincolnshire)
Dinner on your own
- **Wednesday, September 26, 2007**
 - 12 noon – 5:00 pm Registration headquarters Lincolnshire Marriott Resort.
 - 9:00 am Bus departs for Botanic Garden, lunch included. Visit the Volo Auto Museum and antique malls; return to Lincolnshire Marriott Resort about 4:30pm
 - 6:30 pm Italian dinner buffet at the hotel.
- **Thursday, September 27, 2007**
 - 9:00 am Bus departs for Chicago tour and river cruise, lunch on your own at the Navy Pier; return to Lincolnshire Marriott Resort at 4:00 pm.
Dinner on your own
- **Friday, September 28, 2007**
 - 9:00 am Bus departs for Cantigny in Wheaton, home of the Robert McCormick estate and the First Infantry Division Museum, lunch included; return to the Lincolnshire Marriott Resort about 3:30pm.
Dinner on your own
- **Saturday, September 29, 2007**
 - Free time and lunch on your own
 - 2:00 pm – 4:00 pm General membership meeting
 - 6:00 pm – 7:00 pm Reception (cash bar)
 - 7:00 pm Annual banquet

Saturday evening banquet speaker is Brigadier General John W. Nicholson, USA (Ret) – Secretary American Battle Monuments Commission
- **Sunday, September 30, 2007**
 - 7:30 am Farewell breakfast

Hospitality Room: Location and times will be posted in the lobby

See “Highlights and Schedule Information” sheet for details

"BARRACUDA" RESTORED

The Tank in McAuliffe Square

by Daniel W. O'Brien
11th Armored Division
56th Armored Engineer Battalion
Company C
and
Roger Marquet
Secretary, COBRA

For 59 years, a relic M-4 Sherman tank has guarded the entrance to McAuliffe Square, in the center of Bastogne, Belgium. Symbolically, it represents the relief of the besieged City of Bastogne by General Patton's United States Third Army in December, 1944. The course of history has changed at Bastogne, when the defended city held fast during attacks by overwhelming enemy forces during the Battle of the Ardennes--also known as the Battle of the Bulge. Battle scars on the M-4 Sherman bear stark witness to its untimely end. On its left side, a neat cylindrical hole punched by a German 75 mm. shell remains, and a jagged panzerfaust inflicted wound is visible in the stern.



The aged warrior is now gone from McAuliffe Square. On November 6, 2006, it was lifted from its pedestal, loaded on a heavy equipment carrier, and transported to the Belgian Army Military Arsenal at Rocourt. There, in a project jointly sponsored and financed by the City of Bastogne and the Belgian Army, and with the cooperation of the Cercle d'Histoire de Bastogne, it will be restored to the condition and appearance it was in when it saw action in 1944.

Throughout the years, the sides of the tank were adorned with colorful painted logos, representing the 4th Armored Division and the 705th Tank Destroyer Battalion. These units were prominent in the defense and relief of the besieged Bastogne perimeter. Later, an 11th Armored Division logo was added. Viewed and photographed by thousands of tourists, the tank has been a landmark in the square named for the defender of Bastogne, United States Army General Anthony McAuliffe.

In 1947, a tank carcass remained mired in a marshy pond near the Village of Renaumont, approximately six miles west of Bastogne. After the end of World War II, it had escaped demolition by scrap merchants' torches. The farmer and land owner, M. Denis, would not permit any activity on his property that he feared might contaminate his spring. He finally relented, and allowed a Belgian Army unit to retrieve the tank. By that time, it was the only remaining unsalvaged military tank relic in the area. Restored, fitted with a new turret and repainted, it was presented by the Commissioner of Tourism to the City of Bastogne, and

was placed on display in McAuliffe Square.

In the 1990's, Belgian citizens and WWII history buffs Jacques Degive, Robert Fergloute, and Roger Marquet became interested in searching for the actual story of the Bastogne tank. Through extensive research, they were able to not only determine its history, but also located survivors and family members of the crew. In 1999, they published a book *La véritable histoire du 'Sherman' de la place McAuliffe a Bastogne (The "Sherman" at McAuliffe Square in Bastogne, the true story)*. The researchers found that the tank had been assigned to Company B, 41st Tank Battalion, 11th Armored Division. It had been nicknamed "Barracuda" by its crew.

On the morning of December 30, 1944, the 11th Armored Division was first committed to battle, attacking northerly from positions on the south flank of the Bulge. They attacked into the face of a simultaneous German counterattack intended to close the narrow corridor that had been opened into the Bastogne perimeter from the south. Combat Command B of the 11th Armored successfully liberated the Villages of Lavasalle and Houmont, but suffered significant casualties.

Early in the engagement, "Barracuda," under the command of Staff Sgt Wallace Alexander, and a companion tank commanded by Capt Robert L. Ameno, became separated from the rest of the company. They moved north into enemy held terrain, approaching the village of Renaumont, the command post of Col Otto Ernst Remer, "Kommandeur" of Hitler's elite Führer Begleit Brigade. After being discovered by an astounded Col Remer himself, they came under attack.

"Barracuda," in attempting to turn and escape, became mired in a snow-covered pond. There, it became a "sitting duck" for enemy tank and panzerfaust fire. Tank Commander Staff Sgt Wallace Alexander was mortally wounded, Gunner Cpl Cecil Peterman and Loader Pfc Dage Herbert were wounded and captured. Driver T/4 Andrew Urda and Bow Gunner PFC Ivan Goldstein were uninjured, but captured. Alexander died several days later in captivity. Peterman and Herbert received minimal medical treatment for their wounds, survived, and were incarcerated as prisoners of war in Stalag XIIA near Limburg, Germany. Urda and Goldstein also eventually made it to Stalag XIIA, but only after being treated, not as prisoners of war, but as slave laborers. Goldstein had been identified as Hebrew by his dog tags, and by a letter in his pocket from his mother, reminding him to observe the Jewish holiday, Hanukkah. Goldstein and Urda had already made a pact, vowing to stay together in captivity. They narrowly escaped execution, but were brutally overworked and starved. After their liberation near the end of the war, the two severely emaciated captives spent many months recovering in U.S. Army Hospitals. Andrew Urda never fully recovered from his mistreatment in captivity. He died in 1979. Ivan Goldstein's health was eventually restored. He now lives in Jerusalem. Captain Ameno's tank was also destroyed, killing him and four members of his crew. The fifth crewman was wounded, but died in captivity a short time later.

The refurbished M-4 Sherman tank named "Barracuda" is scheduled to return to its place of honor in McAuliffe Square in May 2007. It will then bear the original historically accurate symbols and markings that identify it as a tank assigned to Company B, 41st Tank Battalion, 11th Armored Division. It will also be the centerpiece of a display which will honor all units that served with distinction in the defense and relief of Bastogne during the Battle of the Bulge.

The City of Bastogne expresses its appreciation to the following persons who are responsible for assistance and implementation of the tank restoration project: Dr. Michael Staes, Bastogne City Councilman in charge of the restoration; Col. Sosson, Army of Belgium, Commanding Officer, Recourt Arsenal; Adjutant Daniel Libert, Army of Belgium, Recourt Arsenal; Phillippe Octave, Surveyor of the Works, COBRA; Roger Marquet, Secretary, COBRA; Dr. J. Ted Hartman, President, 11th Armored Division Association and veteran of Company B, 41st Tank Battalion; and the 4th Engineer Battalion, Army of Belgium, Amy (for transportation). ■

26TH INFANTRY DIVISION MAKES A QUICK MOVE

[BERESFORD N. CLARKE, 26TH INFANTRY DIVISION, 328TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, ANTI-TANK COMPANY, sent us the following article written by Sgt. Joe McCarthy which appeared in YANK (date not given).]

*With the 26th Division, Luxembourg--*The last fortress at Metz had been cleaned up six days before and the division was resting in the city, looking forward to a few weeks or reorganization and training of its reinforcements before going back into the line.

When the German counterattack began, the Third Army picked up its men, equipment and supplies and within two days went into action. This is how the 26th Division made the quick move up north.

The staff officers were having a pleasant evening in the cafe of their hotel. Somebody had dug up some Red Cross girls and one of them was from Massachusetts, the home of this National Guard outfit. Around 2000 an aide came in and whispered something to the chief of staff. He got up and excused himself and left the room.

It was the corps chief of staff on the phone. The wire was probably tapped; so he had to avoid specific detail.

"Get ready to move north the first thing in the morning," he told the division chief of staff. "I can't tell you now where you're going but it is near a place that rhymes with something that women wear. And you will be prepared to move from there immediately against the enemy in a meeting engagement."

The division chief of staff, Col B. M. McFadyen, of Columbia, SC, called the commanding general, Maj. Gen. W. S. Paul, of Shrewsbury, MA, and they looked at the map. They decided that the destination that corps was hinting at was near Arlon, which rhymed with nylon. Arlon was a good 50 miles away--no small move for an entire division of more than 15,000 men with their equipment, vehicles and supplies. The assistant G-3 was called from the social gathering in the cafe. Then the G-2 and the G-4. The other officers looked at each other and knew that something was up.

"Guess we won't be spending Christmas here after all," one of them said.

That was how the 26th Infantry Division, better known as the YD or Yankee Division, learned on the night of Dec. 19 that it was going to take part in what future historians will probably describe as one of the most important strategic maneuvers of the war--lightning-like shift of the bulk of Lt. Gen. George S. Patton Jr.'s Third U.S. Army from the area around Metz and the Saar Basin to the virtually unprotected front being opened by the new German counterattack at the north around Bastogne and the Sure River. It was carried out; that stopped the Germans from reaching France and spreading down toward Paris, where they

had expected to spend New Year's Eve. In terms of American geography, it was almost the same as if an army, facing an enemy force along the New York-Connecticut border, suddenly heard what a second enemy force from Western Massachusetts and Vermont was pouring through Albany toward the middle of New York State. And then turned away from its Connecticut front, picked up most of its men, equipment, and supplies, and hit the road for the north to smash a second enemy force on its southern flank. The Third Army did this on a few hours' notice, despite the tremendous complications and work involved in moving each of its divisions, reached its new assembly areas less than 24 hours later and went into action against the surprised Germans within the next two days.

The most spectacular role in the move was that played by the Fourth Armored Division, which dashed to the aid of the besieged 101st Airborne Division at Bastogne. The story of what happened during the same time to the 26th Division, which moved up on the Fourth Armored's right flank and tackled the tough job of crossing the Sure River to the east of Bastogne without getting much of a play in the newspapers, is less dramatic but more typical. It gives you some idea of what it was like for the average infantry outfit that was in on this deal during the joyous Christmas season of 1944.

Nobody in the 26th Division can get over the way their part of the Third Army made its move north from Metz. Probably no military movement of such a large scale was ever carried out with more speed and less red tape. The book was thrown out of the window and all the OCS rules about road discipline were forgotten. Each outfit simply tried to get its vehicles on the road as soon as possible and, after they were on the road, to keep moving.

"And them roads was jammed," one of the truck drivers said. "Us and the Fourth Armored and God only knows how many other divisions. We were bumper to bumper all the way. Good thing it was a cloudy day. If the Germans ever had air out, they would have slaughtered us."

Nothing was left behind. An outfit even took a truckload of its German prisoners along with it because it didn't have time to dispose of them through channels before taking off. One GI couldn't believe his eyes when he saw them rolling along in the column behind an ammunition trailer and in front of a battery of Long Toms.

"What are we doing?" he said. "Bringing up replacements for the Jerries, too?"

The MPs were on the roads that day for only one reason--to keep the vehicles from slowing down. There was no stopping for anything. The troops ate K-rations while they moved. There were no urine calls. A rifleman in the 328th Infantry Regiment with the GIs had to sit on the strap across the back of his two and a half-ton truck and let go at 35 miles an hour.

The speed paid off. Despite the apparent confusion, the move was completed in remarkable time. Later in the evening of the 19th, after the chief of staff had received that first warning phone call from corps, the division learned that it was headed for the town of Eischen, to the east of Arlon, about 56 miles away. The recon unit started out shortly after midnight. The infantry regiments--the 101st, the 104th, and the 328th--were all packed and ready to go at 0830 the next morning. There were some delays due to the congestion of the roads. For instance, all the units in the city of Metz and to the south of it had to cross the Moselle River in single file.

(Continued)

26TH INFANTRY DIVISION

(Continuation)

over only one bridge; all the others had been destroyed. There was a shell crater on the main highway beyond the bridge which made another bottleneck. One of the division's infantry columns was held up there for two hours and did not finally get away from the Metz area until 1030. It was late in the afternoon before the last units--ordnance, quartermaster and the headquarters section of the signal company--left the city. But the whole division and all its equipment was in Eischen and the surrounding countryside by 2300 that night.

"Everything considered, it was one of the smoothest moves we ever made," says Lt. Col. Walter H. Lippincott of Philadelphia, PA, the division G-4. "And it should have been one of the toughest. The men were settled and relaxed in buildings. It is always harder and slower to move from a city like that than it is from a CP in the field. We were eating B-rations which had to be changed to combat rations before we could start. And we had no information about supply dumps ahead--we had to assume they had been over-run by the enemy and take everything with us. And after we left Metz, we had to give the Fourth Armored priority on the main highway and take the secondary roads which were longer and narrower. A lot of the trucks that were assigned to move us didn't arrive until 0300 and 0400 in the morning. And, of course, we didn't know how, when or where we were moving until about 10 hours before the starting time."

Naturally the townspeople and the few U.S. troops they found in the north were jittery about the German counterattack and glad to see the division come. Lt. Col. John Cotter, of Lynn, MA, arriving in Arlon with the advance party, found the city in the hands of a small, nervous engineer outfit whose CO assured him that everything was well protected.

"How about the bridges?" Lt. Col. Cotter asked.

"Don't worry about the bridges," the engineer said. "They're well covered. We've got two men on each bridge."

Nobody knew how far away the Germans were and there were all kinds of rumors and reports. The reconnaissance troops, supported by TDs, went probing ahead to find out something definite. The infantry dug into foxholes in the freezing cold forests and waiting for them to bring back the bad news.

They got it the following night. German columns were reported moving across Luxembourg toward Belgium about 20 miles to the north and the infantry was ordered to move out on foot at 0600 the next morning, regiments abreast--the 328th on the left and the 104th on the right--with each regiment marching in columns of battalions. The 101st, less its first battalion, was held in reserve at Steinfort on the Belgium-Luxembourg line.

The engineers went with them to charge bridges with TNT and to put more explosives in the sides of trees which could be blown down to block the roads in case of a retreat. Maj. Gen. Paul called the division signal officer. "If we don't get communication on this meeting engagement," the general said, "I'll grind you into the ground."

The infantrymen walked more than 16 miles that day before they met the Germans. Their move up from Metz had evidently caught the enemy almost flat-footed. Three German Divisions in that sector had been moving westward across Luxembourg toward the region south of Bastogne. The three American divisions of the Third Army driving up to their southern flank, the Fourth Armored, the 26th and the 80th, smashed into them before they had a chance to make a complete left flank and meet their new opposition head-on. They were still wheeling around

to the south on Dec. 22 when the First Battalion of the 328th Infantry went into them and took the town of Hostert les Folschette and the 104th infantry advanced through stubborn resistance to the high ground south of Grosbous.

When Task Force Hamilton went forward north of Grosbous, Easy Company, led the way.

The Second and Third Battalions of the 328th followed the First Battalion on the north toward Wahl and Grevels Bresil and then the regiment ran into real trouble. "There we were on the road in column of battalions," says Maj. Albert Friedman of Bangor, ME, who had charge of the Second Battalion. "I went up ahead and found the First Battalion with its hands full of Jerries. Then I came back and somehow managed to get out battalion to make an about face and start back down the road to Hostert. How the hell we turned around those kinds who had been walking since God knows when and all the vehicles and got them going back to Hostert without a mix-up, I don't know. If the Germans had ever broken through on us while we were turning around there would have been a panic."

At Hostert, the battalion set up a perimeter defense and received word that it was to become a part of a task force, to be called Task Force Hamilton, under Lt. Col. Paul Hamilton of San Antonio, TX, with attached ack-ack engineer and TD units, and tanks from a tank battalion. The Third Battalion was to go up with the First Battalion straight north. Task Force Hamilton was to tackle the dirtiest job of all on the morning of Dec. 23. It was assigned the mission of taking the town of Eschdorf which was loaded with German armor, and pushing on to cross the Sure River and establish a bridgehead for the rest of the division to go on toward Wiltz.

"The boys hadn't had much rest or hot food since we left Metz and they had walked about 20 miles," Maj. Friedman said, "so I wanted them to ride as long as they could. We sent them out that morning riding on the tanks and TDs."

Easy Company under Capt. Vaughn Swift, of Manzanola, CO, went out in front north of Grosbous and ran into strong German opposition on the high ground in front of Hierheck a cluster of houses at a crossroads before Eschdorf. They were pinned down there for the rest of the day. That night Capt. Swift sent a squad over to the road at the left which the Germans were using as a supply route. The squad laid a hasty mine field and as soon as they had finished a party of Germans came down the road in a U.S. jeep and were blown to pieces.

"Just goes to show that mines ought to be issued regularly to the infantry," Maj. Friedman says. "But nobody ever gets them except the engineers. Don't ask me why."

The next morning F Company, commanded by Capt. Reed Seely, of Berwick, PA, replaced Easy Company on the high ground. When I tried to advance, the troops met a large German force on the reverse side of the slope less than 100 yards away. The Germans camouflaged in the snow with white capes opened a murderous rifle and automatic weapon fire. Capt. Seely went back and called for a tank. He led it up the slope, walking in front of it to guide it. The tank was demolished by an 88, firing from a farmhouse at the bottom of the hill. "The concussion," aid Capt. Seely, "knocked me on my can."

(Continued)

26TH INFANTRY DIVISION

(Continuation)

He went back again and this time selected a bazooka man, Pfc. Dominic Giovanazzo of Ravenna, OH. Giovanazzo crawled up the slope, aimed at the 88 in the house below in the valley and knocked it out with one blast. When the smoke cleared, a Tiger tank which nobody knew was there appeared from behind the house trembled nervously for a moment and then waddled off quickly toward Eschdorf and safety.

But it took F Company all that day to get over the ridge and into Hierheck. Meanwhile on the left Easy Company was being held up by 33 Germans in a house. The mortar squad leader of H Company, T/Sgt Bruce L. Mannwiller, of Reading, PA, and a few of his men managed to get a wire from his mortars across a very dangerous stretch of exposed ground to the Easy Company position. He put mortar fire on the house and the Jerries came streaming out of the front and back doors. The men in Easy Company pinned them to the ground immediately with rifle fire.

Then Sgt. Mannwiller opened up on them again with his mortars. After taking this punishment for two hours, one of them came forward and surrendered. An American who happened to be able to speak German persuaded the prisoner to go back and talk the others into surrendering too.

"They did," says Capt. Swift. "So that cleaned the whole area out and made it possible for us to make contact with the outfit on our left flank later without opposition. And this guy Mannwiller almost did it all by himself."

The next step for Easy and F Companies was to attack Eschdorf. They did it in the darkness at 0100 on Christmas morning with men who had been on the move almost continuously since leaving Metz five days before with very little sleep and no hot food. And most of them were not trained infantrymen. They were reinforcements who had joined the companies at Metz, former truck drivers and antiaircraft men. The officers and noncoms had expected to give them a few weeks of infantry training but the march order came too soon for that.

The fighting in Eschdorf was confused and jumbled. For two days and two nights, there were both Americans and Germans dodging through the streets and in and out of the stone and brick buildings, enemy tanks racing up and down the main drag and our artillery and mortar fire knocking down walls and filling the barn yards with rubble. Some of the things that happened in Eschdorf were strictly from Hollywood.



Tgt. Melvin Foster of Gloucester, Va., hid in barnhouse for 30 hours with his platoon.

Wade Horton, of Richland, VA, Pvt Alfred Kelly, Sgt. Oscar Heaton, of Lock Haven, PA, Pfc Carlton D. Jones, of Alma, MI, Pfc Eddie Janiszewski of Toledo, OH, and Pfc Wilfred J.

There was, for instance, the platoon from F company that went into the town with the first wave of the attack. The men found themselves surrounded by German troops and vehicles and the platoon leader, Lt. Myles Gentzkow, of Minneapolis, MN, with T/Sgt Leroy Vermillion of Keno, OR, T/Sgt Melvin Foster, of Gloucester, VA, Sgt. Harry Butler, of Valdosta, GA, S/Sgt Joseph Feiley, of St. Mary, PA, Sgt. Gilmer Hall of Pulaski, VA, Pvt.

Keller, of Fairforest, SC, hid in a house with a connecting barn.

The rest of the company and the rest of the American troops retreated from the town when they found themselves outnumbered on Christmas morning. But Lt. Gentzkow and his men stayed there, hidden in the barn and in the cellar of the house. The farmer kept them posted on the movements of the Germans who were all around them. And he brought each man a fresh egg and some soup. They remained in hiding in the town for 30 hours. The company commander, Capt. Seely, didn't know they were there until late Christmas night when Feiley managed to slip out of the barn and make his way across the snow to the American CP on the outskirts of the town.

"I'll never forget that farmer and what he did for us," says Vermillion. "I got his name written down here in my book. I'm going to send him a Christmas present and a birthday present every year for the rest of his life."

Capt. Seely, who had been close enough to touch several Germans in the town during the night, led about 30 of his men into a house on the eastern edge of Eschdorf when daylight broke. There was a tank beside the house and one of the German tanks opened fire and destroyed it. A German shell landed in some hay in the second floor of the house and burned it to the ground.

But there happened to be one room in the center of the house with a cement ceiling and cement walls. Capt Seely and his men went into it and stayed there unharmed.

"It wasn't even too hot in there," Capt. Seely says.

From the outside, of course, the house looked like a complete ruin and the Germans thought everybody inside it was dead.

"There was something else at Eschdorf I'll remember," Capt.

Seely says. "One of the sergeants was hit and spent Christmas day laying in a ditch on the side of the road, about a half mile from that burned house we were in. We couldn't bring him back until dark. Well, all day long one of our runners, a pfc. named Paul Hauck, kept crawling up there and staying with the sergeant for a couple of hours at a time. Just giving him cigarettes and laying there talking with him, cheering him up."

When Easy Company pushed into the town, its platoons were cut off and disorganized by the German tanks which were rumbling around the streets like fire engines hunting for a fire. Capt. Swift crawled and ran through machine-gun and small-arms fire back to the rear to get some of our tanks. He brought a couple of them back with him, riding on the side of the first one. When they reached the crossroads on the right side of Eschdorf, he heard a terrific explosion and found himself lying in the snow. The tank, smoking, was 20 feet away from him. It had been hit by an 88.

"Everybody inside it was dead," Capt. Swift said later. "I was riding on the left side of it and the shell got it on the right side. But I didn't get a scratch."

He looked around for the other American tank and it was nowhere to be seen. He picked himself up and ran down the road to a building where he had seen a third U.S. tank a half hour before.

(Continued)



Capt. Reed Seely was unhurt when an enemy shell destroyed a house in which he was hiding.

26TH INFANTRY DIVISION

(Continued)

"It was still there," he said. "But the driver said he couldn't go into the town with me. He was out of gas. So I crawled back and found my third platoon in some buildings. More German tanks were hovering around them. We put the men on the doors and windows and held them off all that day--Christmas Day. One of the boys had a .300 radio set--I don't know where he got it--and we managed to contact the rear and put some artillery fire on their armor. One thing I don't understand. The Germans knew damn well we were in those houses and they must have known we didn't have much ammunition or heavy stuff. And they had plenty of infantry in the town as well as tanks. But the infantry never tried to rush us and get into the buildings. I don't know if they were yellow or what. That night we sweated it out again and the next morning we got relief. God knows we needed it."

The First Battalion of the 104th Infantry came in and helped Task Force Hamilton finish the Eschdorf job on Christmas and the day after. Then the task force was dissolved and the Second Battalion of the 328th rejoined the rest of its regiment which had taken Arsdorf and pushed up to the Sure Rover at Bonnel. The 104th secured another bridgehead on the river further east at Esch-sur-La Sure.

It was then that the 101st Engineer Combat Battalion moved forward to bridge the river. The plan was to put in a treadway

bridge at Esch-sur-La Sure but they had to get some infantry on the other side of the river for protection first. So they decided to have a battalion wade across, then to put in a small foot bridge for another battalion. Cpl. Vincent E. Bunce from Christopher Street in the Greenwich Village section of Manhattan was in charge of the engineers who were to put in the footbridge.

Bunce showed up with his squad and his building material at the appointed time. But instead of a battalion protecting him, he found only five infantrymen on the opposite bank.

A captain called him. "It's pretty hot around here," he said. "Wait until that battalion shows up, before you start putting in the footbridge."

Bunce shook his head. "To hell with the battalion," he said. "Me and the boys will put it in right now. We can't wait around here."

And they did. The next day the treadway bridge was built and a Bailey Bridge was thrown across the river at Bonnel. The 101st Infantry, which has relieved the 328th and the 104th, pushed across the Sure at these two points and moved on toward Wiltz. The division was too busy fighting for the high ground around that battered town on New Year's Eve to be bothered making any predictions or resolutions for 1945. ■

IT WAS MORE THAN "SPOOKING"

By Charles Morris Hunter
16th Field Observation Battalion
A Battery

[Portions extracted from history of service in WWII.]

This was October. We were in the area of the 2nd Infantry Division, which was later replaced by the 106th Infantry Division. Realizing we were in for a winter campaign, we started winterizing. I put some men in pillboxes in the Maginot Line (the French defense line against the German Siegfried line in World War I), some in stone buildings like the command post, and some in wooden huts that the men had built.

During this time, we could hear, but not see, sounds of vehicles at our front...mostly at night, moving about. I reported this to my battalion headquarters back at Bastogne. I received back an intelligence memo saying that the Germans were playing recordings to "spook" us.

Suddenly, however, in the cold, snowy, early hours of December 16th, we received a heavy artillery barrage. I sent a patrol up the hill in Auw and they reported back that Germans in white camouflage uniforms were streaming up the hill and, just as suddenly, we received direct fire on my command post. I even had one mortar round hit in the machine gun pit, which guarded the command post. This stung my driver, Charlton, in

the pit, but didn't hurt him.

Since either the artillery barrage or enemy patrols had cut my wires, I was no longer able to function as a sound and flash unit, so I requested to battalion headquarters to withdraw, which they granted. I was able to gather most of my men and equipment. However, I was unable to get about 30 forward observers back and they were ultimately captured and became POW's, along with many of the 106th that were in the area.

Having been in position since October and knowing the roads, I was able to lead these men on a retreat to an open field in St. Vith, Belgium (about 30 miles), where we joined with Battery B in a "circle the wagons" defense. Fortunately, the Germans, on their way to Bastogne passed us by. We were then ordered to Houffalize, Belgium, and from there to Arlon, Belgium, to join Patton's 4th Armored Division for the push to Bastogne.

The push to Bastogne was a hard fought campaign in the snow and cold, often at night. Upon reaching Bastogne, I saw General Patton in all his sartorial splendor directing traffic at the crossroads. If you've even seen the movie "Patton," this is the scene that was shown. This movie was directed by Frank McCarthy, a friend of mine from VMI.

During this whole engagement, we had no one killed in action. One man, Remke was wounded and received the Purple Heart, 30 men were captured, made POW's. I received the Bronze Star, and one "wire" man was captured and was declared missing in action. He was captured the first day of battle trying to repair the line that had been cut by the Germans.

After Bastogne, I was told to move all my men eastward back through Auw, where we saw a German soldier's grave near my machine gun pit. We went all the way to Saxony, Germany, and there we found out that the war had ended. ■

MD/DC CHAPTER AWARDED BEST MARCHING UNIT TROPHY WASHINGTON, DC

Our VBOB MD/DC Chapter marchers were a hit again in the 36th annual St Patrick's Parade in our Nation's Capital receiving the Best Marching Unit Trophy.

They were preceded by the 55th Signal Company of Combat Photographers stationed at Ft Meade and the Randolph-Macon Military Academy Band and AF ROTC Marching Unit to give a military beat on Sunday, 11 Mar 2007. It symbolized the torch being passed from the VBOB veterans forward. Our marchers, again dazzled the on-lookers as they marched to the outstanding beat of the Randolph-Macon Band

The theme of this year's parade was "Volunteers Weave Communities Together." The Grand Marshal was Nancy McKelvey, Chief Nurse of the American Red Cross. The Gael of the Year was Alice McDermott, author. The weather was a beautiful sixty degrees and there were extra crowds of tourist and local citizens because of the nice weather.

After a minute of two, our marchers had picked up the beat of the drum with their left foot and were off and in step (mostly)! It is amazing how you never forget that training of so many years ago. A tip of the Irish Top Hat goes to Griffen Diday, Morris Schulman (10th ArmD) in his WWII uniform, John Bowen (Flag Bearer), Warren and Marion Chase (38th Cav Rcn), Emmett Lang, (84th InfD), Jack Dederer (87th InfD), Glenn H. Lahman (6th ArmD 68th Inf) & the 8th AF buddies, and Edward Radzwich (26th InfD 101st Inf) who designed the VBOB Certificate.

We were proceeded with our MD/DC Chapter VBOB Banner carried by Morris Schulman (10th ArmD, 55th Engr Cmbt Bn) and Warren Chase (38th Cav Rcn). This year we had three military vehicles to support us and some of our members rode to the delight of the crowds. Each of the restored vehicles, WWII Jeep, WC 52 Weapons Carrier and M35 2 1/2 ton Truck were driven by reenactors Mat Curtis, Robert P. Amos, and Jim & Karen Scott respectively. Also joining us was Calvin Youngblood's Vietnam era Marine Mule with a 105 Recoilless Rifle mounted on it. Also joining us were two Young Marines M/Sgt Casey Scott and Cpl William Grayson.

It was a beautiful in our Nation's Capital for the Irish. The public again was particularly pleased to see these veterans and applauded and cheered the group continuously all along the parade route. The reviewing stand gave our veterans the only standing ovation of the parade. Many of the younger generation were hollering 'Thank You' among the applause which was appreciated.

Any of you with access to the Internet can see pictures of the parade at <http://www.dcstpatparade.com>



LTC Edward Radzwich, Company Commander,
Co I 101st Infantry 26th Infantry Yankee Division



Front: Millie Chase, Griffen Diday, Warren Chase, Jack Dederer, Emmet Lang, Moe Schulman, Mat Curtis
Back Row: Robert Amos, Glenn Lahman, Jim Scott



LTC Ed Radzwich & Mat Curtis in Mat's Jeep
Process along Constitution Avenue

35TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN THE BULGE

Division President's Column John F. Walsh

[The following article was extracted from the "President's Letter" which appeared in *The Santa Fe Express*, the newsletter of the 35th Infantry Division.]

Sixty-two years ago today on December 17, 1944, we were in Sarreguemines, Germany, after a bitter fight taking a pottery plant. Our 3rd Army offensive which had started on November 8th had gone OK, but the weather was terrible with rain and cold fall weather, plus tenacious German resistance, had made progress slow and difficult. At the rate we were advancing it would take us a year to meet the Russians and force a German surrender.

We were part of General Patton's 3rd Army and proud of it. Our early experience in the hedgerows of Normandy in General Hodges 1st Army had been traumatic and we were glad to be with Patton who knew what he was doing. We had little confidence in Hodges.

The new issue of *Stars and Stripes* had arrived and it indicated that the Germans had started an offensive a hundred miles north of us attacking Hodges 1st Army in an area called the Ardennes. Apparently the German attack was making progress and it had forced a "bulge" in the American line. One of the old sergeants was looking at the map and took a wild guess, "bet you they will not be able to handle the attack and we will have to go up north and get involved." We laughed at him, that's ridiculous, we have our own offensive down here and they can handle their own problems.

Each day the "Bulge" in the American line grew bigger and then the word came down from battalion: the 35th was to disengage in our sector and travel north to the City of Metz and then proceed to attack the "Bulge" from the south. The 7th Army was supposed to take over our front as we withdrew from our advance positions. (I guess they eventually did so, but we moved out before a single GI from the 7th Army showed up at our position.)

The roads north were crowded with the 4th Armored and 6th Armored Divisions also on the move. It turned cold, but we had 100 miles to go and no stops to warm up until we reached the big City of Metz.

Metz was part of France, but the people all spoke German as the city had been in German territory after the 1870 war until 1918 when the French took back the city at the end of WWI. We were still in France, but it looked and felt like a German city.

General Patton was pleased with our dramatic move and since it was December 24th he ordered that the 35th should stay in the city and be fed a warm Christmas dinner before heading for combat in the "Bulge."

That Christmas eve we sang songs, had a hot meal, and slept in houses abandoned by the Metz population. A solitary guitar player female singer from a small USO contingent played and sang for us.

The next day we headed for Arlon, Belgium, and started

toward the Town of Bastogne where the 101st Airborne was surrounded. The 4th Armored broke through to Bastogne and some of our 134th Regiment guys also got into the city, but most of the 35th was in the fight to keep the Arlon to Bastogne road open. Unknown to us the Battle of the Ardennes was to become the largest land battle in history.

The 35th Division suffered many casualties in the Ardennes. Germans were close to their border and they were well supplied with artillery and mortar ammunition. For the first time, we heard the "screaming meemies," a multi-barrel rocket launcher. Many rounds hit trees resulting in tree bursts which sprayed shrapnel over a wide area. German fire was the heaviest since our battles in the hedgerows. The GI's of the 35th Division paid a heavy price.

My lieutenant, Maurice Knott, got yellow jaundice and looked sick and felt terrible, but no one was evacuated for that type of illness as all units were short of soldiers. Lieutenant Knott was a battlefield commissioned officer and he earned his pay in the Bulge.

Dr. John Kerner [author of *Combat Medic* published by Creative Arts Book Company] of the 110th Medical Battalion had stateside training in the treatment of frostbite and had been successfully treating a number of casualties and was preparing them for evacuation to the rear area. A colonel walked into his aid station to inspect the patients and made the determination that the men were sufficiently cured and ordered Dr. Kerner to release them for duty. Dr. Kerner politely, but firmly declined and indicated that the patients would probably lose hands or feet if returned to duty prematurely.

The colonel threatened Dr. Kerner with a court martial, but still the doctor would not release his patients. Eventually the colonel left the aid station and no action was taken against Dr. Kerner.

The colonel was not a heartless officer oblivious to the pain of injured soldiers. He was desperately seeking riflemen to man the thin line of GI's who held the frontline fox holes. Casualties in the rifle companies far exceeded replacements and the colonel was doing his utmost to avert a potential disaster. Both officers were doing their jobs to the best of their ability.

Looking back, we all did our jobs--sometimes under impossible conditions.

Ask a 35th Division soldier if he was a hero and he will invariably say "No." If you ask, did you serve with heroes, he will probably share a story of a man who he admired and who deserves to be remembered....■

PLEASE CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR DUES ARE DUE

Dues reminders are costly and take their toll on our funds. Take a look at the date on the first line of your mailing label. If the date is prior to today's date, your dues are due.

Annual dues are \$15.00
Life Membership is \$75.00 for over 65 years of age.
Life membership for under 65 is \$125.00.

GOOD USE FOR VBOB CERTIFICATE

Bill Ruch, Secretary of the 159th Combat Engineer Battalion, sent the following photo of their presentation of a VBOB Certificate to a local business man for outstanding service to their Broad Mountain Chapter.



We can personalize the certificate to fit your needs. ■

Crimes of Kampfgruppe Peiper

At the start of the Battle of the Bulge on December 16, 1944, Combat Command B of the 9th Armored Division was in the St. Vith area. The main German attack was by the 6th Panzer Army which included the combat team led by Colonel Joachim Peiper.

On December 12, 1944, Fuhrer Adolf Hitler called a meeting of his corps and division generals and informed them of an offensive that he believed would split the British and American allies and reach the port of Antwerp. His plan indicated the attack would be a "no holds" barred and executed without shame nor pity. German prisoners claimed their orders were not to be concerned with American prisoners which, they insisted, meant don't take any prisoners.

The attack by the 6th Panzer Army was led by 29 year old Obersturmbannführer Jochim Peiper who had established his cruelty in the Russian campaign by burning two villages and killing the inhabitants. Peiper's Kampfgruppe was guilty of inhuman acts in violation of war "ethics" during the first few days of the battle.

On the second day of the attack, 17th December, Peiper's task force had reached the villages of Honsfeld and Bullingen where they captured many American soldiers. Although these soldiers had surrendered, they were shot.

The Malmedy massacre actually took place at the crossing in Baugnez on the same day. About 71 American prisoners here herded into a field near a café and mowed down with machine guns on the German tanks and other vehicles. The Germans then moved among the fallen bodies, shooting anyone who showed any movement.

In Ligneuville, a few kilometers south of Baugnez, 22 American soldiers were captured and taken into Hotel Du Moulin. Eight of the men were shot in the head. A memorial has been placed at the site.

Advancing to Stavelot, a German tank crew machine-gunned two Belgian civilians on the Rue Dewalque. Later, on the Rue de Trois-Ponts, two SS foot soldiers following a tank shot the 14 year old son of the family Genoux only because he was leaning out of his family home window. Later, they killed another Belgian named Gonay who was stand- in this doorway.

At 23 Legaye, 23 more Belgian civilians were killed, including children ages 4 to 9. Three more civilians were murdered between Stavelot and Trois-Ponts.

Another nine civilians were killed including children in the area of Petit-Spai and Ambleve. Another in Les Forges. Jean Minguet was shot in his home. On December 20 in the village of Stockeux, seven civilians were killed by being shot in the neck. Three more were killed with hand grenades. Two days later, five more Belgians were killed in the same village.

Also on December 22, the SS shot into a house and wounded three civilians and three other escaped injury. A minister was murdered on December 30.

Following is the number of the American soldiers who, after being captured and becoming prisoners, were murdered by Peiper's troops:

71 - Baugnez	31 - Cheneux
50 - Bullingen	46 - Stoumont
58 - Stavelot	10 - Trois-Pont
17 - Honsfeld	11 - Petit-Spai
41 - La Gleize	

There were other civilians murdered by the S.S. troops following Kampfgruppe Peiper. Between December 21 and 24, 1944, a total of 58 civilians were killed, including four seminarians.

The crimes against American soldiers were by the Peiper SS troop. There were no similar crimes by the Wehrmacht soldiers. SS troops were under Reichsführer SS Heinrich Himmler but could be placed into other German troop units.

Source: Camille P. Kohn, President CEBA
Cercle D'Etudes sur la Bataille des Ardennes
in a letter dated 24 November 1995 to
Al Price who was researching unreported
Battle of the Bulge Massacres.



"And furthermore, I think your last picture stunk!"

GOLDEN GATE CHAPTER MEMORIAL MEETING

Veterans Of The Battle Of The Bulge (VBOB)
Golden Gate Chapter
Memorial Service — 16 December 2006
Ft. Miley (SFVA Medical Center)
San Francisco, California



TRI-STATE CHAPTER VERMONT-NEW HAMPSHIRE-MAINE

GORDON B. PETTINGELL, 26 INFANTRY DIVISION, 101ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, COMPANY G, has provided us with the following photograph of a monument erected by the Tri-State Chapter in the State Cemetery in Randolph, Vermont.



The chapter has run a little short of money and if you can make a donation to help defray the costs, it would be very much appreciated. Please send any donation to Gordon at 4990 Vermont Route 14, East Randolph, Vermont 05041.

They are planning dedication ceremonies in the spring of 2007. ■

HIS GERMAN SAVED HIS LIFE

[The following was excerpted from an article in the VBOB Gateway Chapter Newsletter. The original article by Tim Bryant appeared in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch on November 12, 2006. It relates an experience by ROBERT T. GRAVLIN, 3RD ARMORED DIVISION, 23RD ARMORED ENGINEER BATTALION.]

One bitter night, as he manned an outpost, Gravlin believed his feet were in such danger of freezing that he took the ladder to a ruined barn's hayloft, where he could remove his boots and rub his feet to regain some circulation. He burrowed into the straw to get some sleep. In the night, he was awakened by the whirring sound of German soldiers using their flashlights, which they powered with tiny, trigger-operated generators.

Gravlin said he kept his finger on his rifle's trigger but remained still as about a dozen Germans crowded into the loft. In the morning, the German squad leader gave the order to move out. Gravlin, replied, in German, that he was getting up.

"They all left and, of course, I didn't follow them," Gravlin said.

He said later in an interview that as a boy he learned German while attending St. Henry Seminary in his native Belleville.

He said he had no choice but to respond to the Germans because enemy soldiers were between him and the only ladder.

Fortunately, I was under the straw, so they couldn't identify my uniform," Gravlin said. ■

*"Old age is like a plane flying through a storm.
Once you're on board, there's nothing you can do."*

— Golda Meir

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 _____	
		not a requirement			
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, 201 384-6523, Certificate Chairman.					

Travel By Tank To POW Capture

By Harry Hankel
14th Tank Bn – 9th Armd Div
Submitted by Demetri Paris

When the Bulge attack began on December 16, our battalion was part of Combat Command B of the 9th Armored Division but not under Division control. We were in the area of St. Vith, defending crossroads and bridges against German attacks for the first two days before the arrival of the 7th Armored Division.

On December 20, 1944, we were ordered to advance to make contact with the enemy. I was the commander of the third tank. We received an order to change which made me the leading tank. I slowly advanced to the crest of a ridge to see what was beyond this hill. That's when the tank received a direct hit. Of course I had my head and shoulders out of the turret and the blast blew my helmet off my head.

The tank started moving forward and I tried to contact the driver on the intercom but there was no response. I figured the hit has destroyed the system. We advanced about a quarter of a mile into enemy held territory before we hit a tree and stopped.

That when I checked and found we had been hit with a panzerfaust (German type of bazooka). Both the driver and bow gunner (assistant driver) were killed. When the driver slumped forward, his foot pressed the accelerator and, since the tank had an automatic transmission, the tank moved forward. The round had cut our wiring so neither our communication nor tank gun would operate.

We started back but were captured by Germans who interrogated us and took our overshoes and overcoats. We spent that night in a house that was shelled by American artillery.

My gunner was George Kelley. We did get any food the first few days. After about a week we were taken to Stalag 4-B with about 300 American and English POWs. We were moved in a few days and in the four months as a prisoner we were in three POW camps, staying only a few days in each camp. At one point we were locked in a train box car for five days with nothing to eat nor drink. The train traveled only about 50 miles since our airplanes were bombing and blowing up the tracks.

Another time we were on a train that was attacked by two British fighter planes who hit the engine and first two cars, killing the prisoners in the cars. I was lucky since I was in the third car.

In the four months I was a prisoner, we were bombed and strafed almost every day by American and English aircraft.

Some days we were fed with three slices of sawdust bread and a small bowl of soup with a few string of horse meat. We received one Red Cross parcel which had to be divided between four men.

We also walked about 400 miles during the four months. Men dropped along the way, unable to go any further. I often wondered what happened to them.

On April 16, 1945, we were liberated by English troops at Munster, Germany. Up to this point, Kelley and I had been together. I was taken to a hospital in France as I was weak and sick from diarrhea. I weighed in at 96 pounds. My wife and folks didn't know if I was alive until after I was liberated.

After about 10 days, I was transferred to a hospital in Topeka, Kansas where I stayed for three months and was then discharged.

I had a small Bible when I was captured and they did not take it. I read it through twice in the four months. I am sure I wouldn't have made it without the help of God who gave me strength when I felt I couldn't go any farther. I prayed and he gave me strength and the will to go on.



Enjoying an unwritten privilege extended to victorious commanding generals on reaching enemy rivers, Major-General Robert W. Grow adds a little American water to the mighty Rhine at Oppenheim, 25 March 1945./6 Armd Div Assoc/George F. Hofmann

THE CHILDREN OF LUXEMBOURG

The children of Luxembourg talked to me.
They alone could understand.
Only the little ones walked with me
in their tiny, story-book land.

The adults treated me kindly,
though I came from a far-off strand;
but the little ones followed me blindly
and I walked with hands in each hand.

Chattering children, curious friends,
though my days with you were few,
the love of an alien soldier,
I loose on the winds for you.

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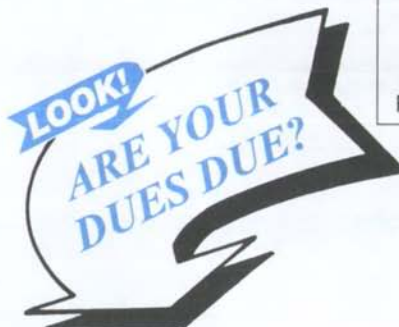
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