

# The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XXXIII NUMBER 3

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

August 2014



## VBOB 33rd Annual Reunion

# JOIN US IN COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA



Highlights include (from top): The Fort Jackson Army Training Center and museum (1947 T-30 tank shown), a performance of big band music by the Harry James Orchestra, and a tour of FN Manufacturing, a small arms supplier to the U. S. Military.

Go to Page 16 for full details.  
**See You There!**

### **Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.**

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Published quarterly, *The Bulge Bugle* is the official publication of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.

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**[or www.vbob.org](http://or www.vbob.org)**



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



### Douglas C. Dillard (Col. Ret.) 82nd Airborne Division

First I wish to thank Barbara Mooneyhan and her supporters in South Carolina for the sponsorship of our forthcoming reunion in Columbia... a lot of planning and coordination... well done! If you have not signed up for the reunion, please do so as soon as possible. *[Ed. Note: For full reunion info, see pages 16-19.]*

The other big event for the VBOB, of course, is the trip in December to participate in the 70th Anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge. As I have written earlier, the planning and coordination continues. This is the current status of such planning: The Task Force in Belgium/Luxembourg has prepared and coordinated the itinerary with local authorities for those locations

that we will visit. In September, the in-country Task Force has a scheduled meeting of all of its members to go over the finer details of in-country support.

The VBOB Historical Foundation sponsored a flag ceremony at Fort Meade, MD, the home of the VBOB Historical Room in the Post Library. Al Shehab, John Bowen, Ruth Hamilton, Colonel Foley, the Post Commander, Mr. Paul Goffin and Retired Colonel Menser participated in the ceremony, in which the Belgian and Luxembourg Flags were presented to Col. Foley for permanent placement in the VBOB Historical Room. The flags were presented to Col. Foley by Luxembourg Ambassador Wolzfeld and for Belgium, General Andries, representing the Belgian Ambassador. I did a short briefing about my Parachute Infantry Battalion and its combat actions.

During this event, Ambassador Wolzfeld told me his country had approved our itinerary, had appointed a coordinator and were very anxious to see our trip is successful. The Belgian Defense Attache General Andreis met with John Bowen and I to brief us on his actions in support of the trip. He has coordinated with the Belgian Ministry of Defense, the office of the King's General as far as Belgium is concerned, and he is working at the US General Officer level with our Defense Department to secure, if possible, a US Air Force aircraft to fly the veterans to Europe, since his government has offered a one-way flight from Europe. He also advised us that the ground transportation was approved for use of their buses. As soon as we receive final word about the aircraft, we will send it out to the membership. At this time, I must ask for your patience. *[Ed. Note: See pages 10-11 for more on the trip.]*

Best regards, Doug Dillard

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SEEKING ANY 10TH MOUNTAIN DIVISION

Looking to speak with 10th Mountain Division WW 2 veterans who were present during pre-overseas campaign formation in the 1940's.

I remain, respectfully,

**John Anderson**  
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### REMEMBERING MY FATHER, TECH. SGT. VINCENT A. RELLA

It is hard to believe that 10 years have passed since the World War II Memorial Dedication my now-late mother and I attended with the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. I recalled this experience from that wonderful tribute to the Greatest Generation, and I'd like to share it with you:

The letter written nearly 60 years ago from Belgium after the Battle of the Bulge remained yellowed and faded among my father's Army mementos until his death in 1996.

At one time, I had it translated for him, and tucked it away in an album to preserve it.

And there it stayed until I decided to bring a copy of it with me to display in the Memorabilia Room at the 2004 VBOB Convention with its simple, but caring message, addressed to my father and the three other soldiers who stayed at the Closset Family's farm for one week before returning to the front:

"We often speak about you and the time we spent together. We are well and hope you are too... If you have a couple of days' leave in Belgium, we'd be happy to welcome you (again)."

After visiting Normandy and Belgium with my mother in 2001, and then meeting the Belgian students and veterans at the VBOB convention in May 2004, it haunted me. Was this wonderful family still alive?

I found the answer through the May 2004 issue of the *The Bulge Bugle* – when I spotted the blurb about the U.S. Army Descendents Association (USAD). I then sent a copy of the letter and its translation to the group's headquarters in St. Simeon, Belgium.

Less than a week later, I received an e-mail from Marlyse Larock, secretary of the three-year-old organization she and her husband Jacques founded after he searched for his American father – a U.S. soldier named J.F. Chadwick — and wanted to help others do the same.

It was good news. Marlyse found Marie Therese Closset, who was a teenager when she wrote the letter on behalf of her family (five aunts, an uncle, and a sister). Marie Therese, who was 79 and living with her husband an hour from the USAD headquarters, was delighted to hear from me. She said the family worried about the four soldiers and always wondered what had happened to them. She was glad to hear my father made it home.

With Marlyse as our go-between (aka translator), Marie Therese sent me a photograph of three of the soldiers (my father apparently took the picture) and photographs of the Closset Family's farm near Liege, Belgium. The truck in which the soldiers arrived was hidden



Marie Therese Closset (on horse) with her sister, her aunt, and three other soldiers from the 507th Engineer Company.

behind the farm under a camouflage cover, she said. Seeing these old photographs brought it all to life for me.

In turn, I sent her photographs of my father, a newspaper column I wrote about him and his fellow veterans, and copies of his two entries in the World War II Memorial Registry.

Thank you, *The Bulge Bugle*, for helping me learn more about my father's war experiences and honoring his memory.

Best regards,

**Nancyann Rella, Associate**

(Daughter of Tech. Sgt. Vincent A. Rella, 1st Army, 7th Corps, 507th Engineer Company, Light Pontoon, Combat Engineers)



# WE NEED YOUR BATTLE OF THE BULGE STORY!

### Here's How to Submit an Article for Publication in *The Bulge Bugle*:

Please submit all Veterans' Stories, Letters to the Editor, Chapter News, or other articles of interest in typewritten format, instead of handwritten, whenever possible.

You can mail typewritten articles to:

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.  
PO Box 336  
Blue Bell, PA 19422

Or by e-mail to: [ralph@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:ralph@battleofthebulge.org)

### QUESTIONS?

Please contact Ralph Bozorth, 484-351-8844,  
or by email: [ralph@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:ralph@battleofthebulge.org)

## THE AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE MEMORIAL

Throughout our nation's history, service men and women have gone bravely into battle, risking their lives and livelihoods, sacrificing their safety to defend America. When their duty is done, many return home to life as it was. Sadly, for over 4 million veterans seriously injured in the line of duty, leaving the battlefield does not mark the end of conflict. These permanently disabled heroes often carry home life-altering disabilities – stern reminders of the price of freedom. America's disabled veterans have honored us with their service and selfless duty.

It is now our turn to honor them.

For the first time, America will pay tribute to some of our most courageous heroes – our disabled veterans. The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will celebrate those men and women who may be broken in body – but never in spirit.

Go to: [www.avdlm.org](http://www.avdlm.org) to learn more about the Memorial.

–Submitted by David Bailey, 106th ID



Rendering of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

## AMERICAN LEGION MAGAZINE REPS AT VBOB REUNION



Cover of June 1941 issue, the American Legion Magazine.

Representatives of American Legion Magazine will be accompanying Battle of the Bulge veterans during their reunion in Columbia SC, for a story for the magazine and website.

Henry Howard, the deputy director of the Legion's Media and Communication Division, will conduct the interviews. Brett Flashnick, a Columbia, SC area photographer and videographer, will be handling the photo and video duties.

Howard and Flashnick are willing to work around the reunion schedule. They will be available Saturday and Sunday morning, and other times convenient to the veterans. Battle of the Bulge veterans are welcome to contact Howard in advance to set up a time, or meet up at the hotel. Howard can be reached at 317-630-1289 or [hhoward@legion.org](mailto:hhoward@legion.org).

The American Legion, which is the nation's largest veterans service organization, is dedicated to honoring America's past and present war heroes by sharing their stories in print and online. In the past, Howard has interviewed and written about the Doolittle Raiders, Medal of Honor recipients and survivors of the USS Indianapolis.

## 252ND ENGINEER COMBAT BN by Richard Curts, 242nd CEB



The Combat Engineers during WW II had principal responsibility for construction and wide ranging operational support but also served as infantry when necessary. Serving in the European Theatre Operations after extensive training the 252nd Combat Engineer Battalion undertook every form of mission and performed with distinction. Construction duties began almost immediately in the ETO, alongside support for the

Red Ball Express to safe-guard Allied supply lines, clearing mines and booby traps, road repair, saw mill operations, material transport, light demolitions, water purification and other support missions.

Soon the Allied advance created a demand for bridges. From January 1945 the 252nd built eight bridges at strategic locations including the Maas, Rhine and Elbe rivers.. For the Venlo and Roosevelt bridges the 252nd partnered with the 250th Combat Engineer battalion in record setting performance for size and speed, both units earning letters of Commendation from British and Ninth Army.

After meeting Russian forces at the Elbe River the Battalion joined the Army of German Occupation until receiving orders to

embark for the Pacific Theatre. The Japanese surrender terminated the orders to go to the Pacific Theatre the 252nd was sent to Berlin, Germany as occupation forces joining with Britain, France and Russia.

The 252nd Battalion arrived in Normandy on 19 September 1944. Through Omaha Beach with elements of the battalion having been transferred to form a provisional unit that landed on D-Day. Mine-clearing duties in Normandy presented uncommon hazards and resulted four engineers being killed-in-action, twelve injured and two letters of Commendation from XVI Corp for heroism. The unit undertook support missions for three weeks then the 252nd was ordered to travel north to Belgium.. Being in proximity to the front-line meant even routine assignments were conducted while under artillery fire engaging the enemy. From time to time the battalion assisted in clearing towns of enemy rear-guard and snipers. For seven days in January from January 19, 1945 to January 26th during the Battle of the Bulge the battalion was ordered to relieve the 102nd infantry division at Lieffarth and Wurm, Germany resulting in five engineers killed and fifteen wounded. Later elements of the battalion were again transferred to support assault and crossing of the Rhine River.

This is the final story of the 252 Engineer Combat Battalion. It was redesignated the 252 Engineer Construction Battalion in January 1947 then to the 252nd Service Battalion and finally saw its demise August 15th 1952 at Ft Leonard Wood, Mo.

## B-17S HELPED STOP A GERMAN OFFENSIVE

by Forrest Allgier, Sergeant,  
US Army 8th Air Force

About the time of Pearl Harbor, I had started working at McClellan Air Force Base as an aircraft technician. Everything in this country suddenly changed after Pearl Harbor; the mood was high on the need to join in the war effort. Since I was still not immune from the draft, I went to the Sacramento Draft Board to request joining the Air Force. On January 3, 1942, I joined the Army at the San Francisco recruiting office and was placed on a troop train. We were shipped to New York on the east coast by way of Los Angeles, Texas (Shepherd Field), Georgia (Macon), and South Carolina (Charleston), and New Jersey (Fort Dix). Stopovers along the way varied from one day to about one month. Because of Pearl Harbor, the railroad tracks at the time were filled day and night with trains heading back and forth carrying munitions, supplies, and troops for the budding war effort. At times, our train was required to wait on a siding while the priority munitions/supply trains were given full right-of-way. Most of the bases we stayed at were under construction and there was often snow on the ground since it was winter. We helped in the building of these bases as part of the war effort and played softball every day for recreation.

We remained at Fort Dix for only a short time. One day, thinking we were headed toward the river at Fort Dix, ostensibly to go on weekend leave in New York City (but we had all our gear), we boarded waiting ferry boats that turned in midstream and brought us directly to waiting ships somewhere in New York harbor. We were immediately shipped out instead of going to on leave to New York City. We boarded a troop ship and joined a convoy headed for the high seas. This secrecy was a typical security measure at the time. Normally, troops going to Africa (to fight Rommel and his troops) were issued khaki's for hot weather; instead, on board the ship we were issued heavy winter woools, so we figured we were headed for England. Besides troop ships, the convoy contained many merchant/supply ships, as well as the battleship USS New York. This convoy headed for England in May 1942.

On the trip across the ocean, several of the troops had transistor radios and we listened to whatever we could hear. When approaching England, we spotted a lone German aircraft flying in the distance and scouting our arrival. Soon after seeing this plane, we heard the infamous "Lord Haw-Haw" on the transistor radios saying "Welcome Yanks who are coming to England to shed your blood for the English people," and other German propaganda. One of the ports we passed had several rusted hulks of ships which had been destroyed (while docked) earlier in the war by German submarines. We debarked from the transport ship at the very northernmost part of Scotland in the middle of the night, but the sun seemed like it was shining almost like noon, and we had to pull the shades to sleep. All US transport ships put in at the far northern part of Scotland to avoid German planes.

After debarking in Scotland, we found that new American-built B-17's were in the hangars at RAF Burtonwood field and were already being used by the British pilots to attack German targets. These bombers had been manufactured in Seattle and were flown via the northern route to England, island hopping

as necessary. I was assigned to the Aircraft Electricians School and trained by RAF staff who shared their experiences with us. Afterwards I was placed in charge of a group of fellow recruits. As the war progressed, some airbases grew in size because of the constant need for supply and maintenance facilities. RAF Burtonwood later became the premier supply and maintenance depot in the UK; its size and staffing increased dramatically with these responsibilities.

The US Air Depot Groups consisted of two squadrons, one for repair and one for supply. The Repair Squadron was further broken down into inside hanger workers and outside field workers. My crew generally worked outside on the field where the planes were parked. During the day, the American bombers would assemble from the many small air bases located all over England to form (in the air) into the large groups of planes needed for an attack. During the night, the mechanics repaired the damage to the planes as fast as they could, and then resupplied them with necessary bombs, munitions, and supplies for the next day's raid. The English did their bombing at night, and occasionally the English bombers filled our base up with returning aircraft because the weather had changed and there was no other place for them to go safely.

During the winter, the maintenance crews also had to plow the runways whenever it snowed to permit the aircraft to land and to get their job done. Everyone on the maintenance crew would shovel the snow...starting from the air plane stalls and continuing to the runway to allow the planes to go to the runway or to return. Some of us worked with shovels and some of us worked with plows. Sometimes the maintenance crews would be sent to other nearby bomber bases to help clear the snow early in the morning, allowing the bombers to takeoff for an early morning mission.

I was eventually transferred to the AFB at Bedford (Little Staughton AFB), which was a maintenance base specializing in B-17 bombers; there were about 3000 men based there.

During the Battle of the Bulge, the weather was bad all over Europe. Some of the German planes were flying, but the Allied planes from England were not always. The English planes were helping with the early opposition in the fighting. All air force personnel in England were closely keeping track of the progress of the war, and we wanted to hear anything and everything about the developments at the Battle of the Bulge. We of course heard that the fighting was in jeopardy during these early days of the Bulge. Quickly, the War Department sent out two letters to all the Army Air bases in England. The first letter sent to draftees ordered them to be ready to report to the orderly room with bag and baggage, and to be ready to ship out within 30 minutes if necessary. The second letter was sent to enlisted men like me, setting up an interview with their commanding officer to see if they were willing to volunteer for combat at the Bulge. Meanwhile, the injured were being shipped to all the airbases in England and then send to local hospitals. The weather was still so bad that the fighters could not see; they were still grounded. Some German planes were flying, but the Allied planes from England were usually not.

During these times of relative inactivity; we were usually working on damaged B-17 aircraft from other bases. But about this time, Our crew was very busy installing 50-Caliber machine guns directly in the noses of each of the B-17's. This 50-Caliber retrofit for the B-17 was a relatively new item at the time, and the modification upgraded older B-17 aircraft to the design

*(Continued)*



## B-17S HELPED STOP GERMAN OFFENSIVE *(Continued)*

of the newer aircraft that had already been coming from Seattle. My crew was responsible for aircraft electrical for these modifications. Additional B-17's were also flown from other bases for us to do this work. The procedure we used consisted of installing thick Plexiglas about a foot square into the nose to be used to mount the new guns, bringing in electric power and oxygen, bringing in audio, and establishing just enough space in the crowded nose for an extra gunner. These new guns were designed to shoot straight ahead, primarily, since both the bottom and the top turret guns could not do this very well. During that time of cloudy mainland weather in the Bulge fighting, the support crews at our maintenance field worked day-and-night to get these new guns squared away on the B-17 aircraft. Other maintenance bases were also doing this modification. We had to plow the field to bring these planes in. Afterwards, the new guns, the new gunners at the new gun positions, and the B-17 crews were required to undergo some practice before they were considered to be ready.

Previously, the German planes used their knowledge of the weak spot in the frontal defense of the B-17 to their advantage. They would approach the B-17's from the front by queuing up one-behind-the-other at the front blind spot of the B-17's and approach the lead aircraft (usually with the bombsights) head on. Each fighter would have direct shots at the B-17, usually shooting both the pilot and the copilot so that the B-17 was downed. The personnel losses were high since B-17's had five officers and five enlisted men. At the end of the bad weather during the early part of the Bulge fighting, the B-17's could fly again. However, this time, when the German pilots again came straight at the front of the B-17's (many of which were now equipped with the new nose guns), the lead German fighter and the following German planes would be knocked out of the sky. The German fighter pilots were not aware of these new modifications at first, and the German planes following that lead fighter also could not see what was happening. The losses of German fighters approaching the front of the B-17's on that first day that our bombers used these new guns were high. The B-17's continued to shoot down up to 100 German fighters each day until the German pilots caught on to what was happening.

Major targets for the B-17 bombers when the weather cleared were the new fuel depots in Germany that Hitler had established to support the German Bulge fighting. We all felt that the B-17's helped to stop that German offensive.

Just before the end of the war, I was shipped back to New York Harbor on leave. The war ended and I was eventually discharged at Almagordo, New Mexico...finally returning to Sacramento, California, my home.

—submitted by Leo Zafonte, Associate

## SOGGY THANKSGIVING DINNER

by Robert Shaw, 177th FA Bn

As a forward observer for the 177th Field Artillery Battalion, 3rd Army, I was told that I had to return to our battalion position to get my Thanksgiving dinner in November 1944. In the meantime the battalion had moved to a new position and the only vehicle left at the old site was our kitchen truck.

Since my jeep was used on the front it did not have a top or windshield and since there was no room inside the kitchen truck my driver and I had to leave our turkey dinner sitting out in the rain. Turkey, dressing and cranberry sauce floating in rainwater isn't the most appetizing meal I had ever eaten, but you make out the best you can in situations like this.

## MY EXPERIENCE IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

by Joseph DeCola, 555th Signal AW Bn

We were a Signal Corp. outfit attached to the U.S. Air Force. We could control aircraft from our Radar Trailer. Shortly after the invasion our Air Force bombed and leveled the city of St. Lo. Unfortunately, some of our own troops were accidentally killed. We went to Gen. Omar Bradley's trailer to get permission to go into operation to control aircraft. After our presentation, we were given the authority we asked for.

We used two Radar Vans and within two weeks we controlled the skies at night. German pilots refused to fly at night. We used one Radar Unit to track the enemy plane and the second Radar Unit to control our plane. By knowing where the enemy's position was, we were able to shoot the German Aircraft down. Without the interference of the German planes we were able to concentrate on strategic buildings, railroad yards etc. at night.

During the Battle of the Bulge, we stationed one of our Radar vans to the south of the Bulge and one to the north. The weather was terrible for five days. No aircraft were flying. We finally controlled a volunteer pilot and brought him down over the main center road of the Bulge. He reported back to us that there were eight miles of German tanks and vehicles ready to attack. In this cold, snowing, low-visibility weather, we started to control squadrons of bombers. We first bombed the westerly end of the road, then the easterly end and locked in the German Army. We continued bombing all day long. It broke the back of the German advance and the Battle of the Bulge. Shortly thereafter the war ended.

We were promised a Presidential Citation for what we accomplished, but never received it.



## VBOB Videos—We Want You!

View them on our website at [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org): click on "Veterans' Video Stories." Tell us if your chapter would like to arrange a visit to record your members' 5-minute stories.

For more information regarding VBOB Videos, contact Kevin Diehl at the VBOB Office: 703-528-4058 or [kevin@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:kevin@battleofthebulge.org)





## MEMBERS: IN MEMORIAM

Please notify us when you hear that any member of VBOB has recently passed away, so that we may honor them in a future issue of *The Bulge Bugle*. Also, kindly notify us of any errors or omissions.

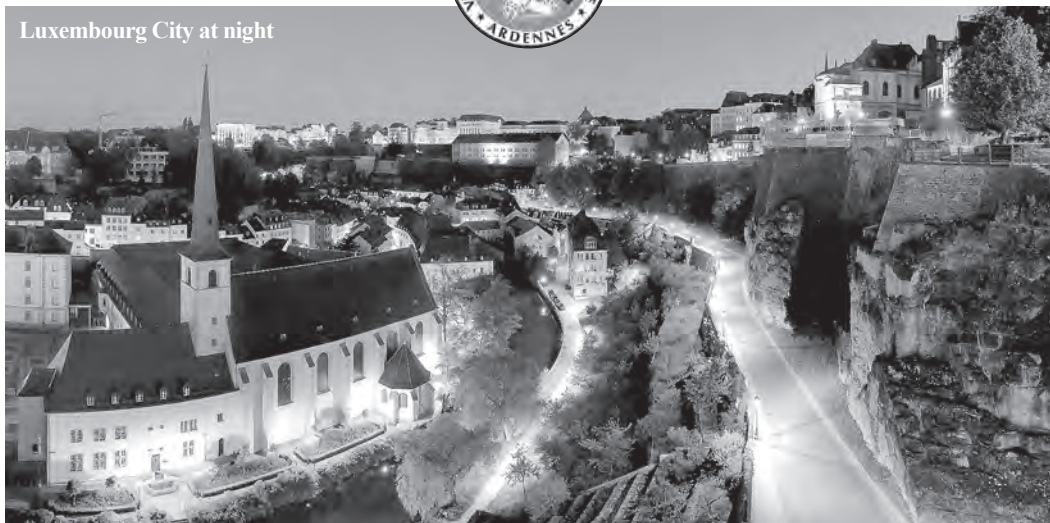
Please send notices by mail to: VBOB, Inc.,  
PO Box 27430, Philadelphia, PA 19118-0430  
by email to: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)  
by phone to: 703-528-4058

**We have received word, as of May 31, 2014, that these members  
of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. have also recently passed away:**

Baron, Robert	106 InfD	Liberto, Joseph	44 InfD
Cherry, James	4 ArmdD	Mueller, Harold	110 AAA Gun Bn
Covello, Henry	82 AbnD	Nash, John	3 ArmdD
Dan, Merrill	30 InfD	Pappas, James	9 ArmdD
Dottore, Oliver	87 InfD	Perry, James	269 FA Bn
Firlick, Leonard	50 Sig Bn	Pettit, Charles	87 InfD
Foltz, Mark	818 MP	Pollinger, Merrill	14 FOB XIX Corps
Gaydos, Albert	4 ArmdD	Prieto, Manuel	87 InfD
Hall, Carl	99 InfD	Rastelli, John	11 ArmdD
Hertz, Daniel	10 ArmdD	Saltzman, Bernard	168 Engr Cmbt Bn
Hill, Eugene	78 InfD	Scanlan, Robert	372 Engr Cmbt Bn
Hoffman, Leo	9 ArmdD	Schrammen, Leo	11 ArmdD
Jennings, Charles	106 InfD	Scodari, Nicholas	26 InfD
Keenan, Robert	9 ArmdD	Walter, Robert C	99 InfD
Laursen, Anna	Associate	Weber, Robert	70 InfD
Leesemann, Jr., William	26 InfD		



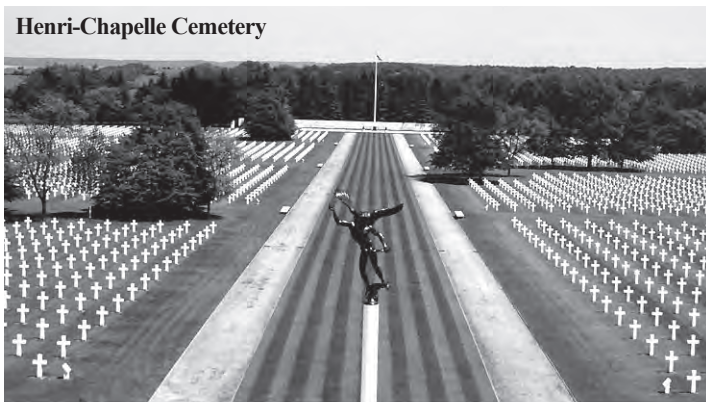
Luxembourg City at night



## DECEMBER 2014

# VBOB TRIP TO BELGIUM AND LUXEMBOURG IN HONOR OF THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Henri-Chapelle Cemetery



This is an interim outline of the VBOB trip to Belgium and Luxembourg to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge.

Please understand this is a proposed brief outline of the Itinerary that is still evolving, so please bear with us as we attempt to finalize the trip. *[Ed. Note: See President's Message, pg. 4, for planning updates.]*

**09 December:** Depart U.S.A. and arrive in Brussels.

Bus to Spa, Belgium hotel

**10 December:** La Roche-en-Ardenne, La Gleize and Trois Ponts

**11 December:** Baugez Memorial & Museum and Wereth 11 Memorial

**12 December:** Vielsalm, Parkers Crossroad and Rencheux

**13 December:** Bastogne: Bastogne Barracks, new Bastogne War Museum, ceremonies, Mardasson remembrance

**14 December:** Henri-Chapelle Cemetery, Thimister-Clermont Remember Museum, Luxembourg City and transfer to hotel in Luxembourg City

**15 December:** Diekirch-National Museum of Military History, Clervaux ceremonies and reception at the castle

**16 December:** (70th Anniversary date) travel to Ettelbruck (Patton Museum), Wiltz (crossborder ceremony), reception/dinner

**17 December:** Visit Hamm Military Cemetery, afternoon free time in Luxembourg City

**18 December:** Check out of hotel, travel to Brussels for return to U.S.A.

**19 December:** Arrive in U.S.A.

*Note: no doubt some revisions to this plan will occur.*

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT  
MILSPEC TOURS  
WHO ARE ARRANGING OUR TRIP.**

*See their ad, opposite page*

# VBoB 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour

## 09-18 December 2014



What was good enough for these guys...  
is definitely good enough for VBoB!

Following in the footsteps of American generals & GIs during the Bulge, *VBoB's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Tour* is now duty bound for Europe in December 2014, targeting Gen. Hodges' 1<sup>st</sup> Army HQ in Spa, Belgium and Patton's 3<sup>rd</sup> Army/Bradley's 12<sup>th</sup> Army Group HQs in beautiful, historic Luxembourg city.



Enjoy luxury hotels, first-class museums, formal ceremonies, military honors, sumptuous meals, European shopping and all the best our loyal allies in Belgium and Luxembourg have to offer VBoB veterans, families & friends.

**EARLY BIRD DISCOUNT**

### Online:

[www.vbob.org/tours](http://www.vbob.org/tours)

### Contact:

*MilSpec Tours*

[milspectours@aol.com](mailto:milspectours@aol.com)



# ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE

by Donald Schoo, 633rd AAA AW Bn



December 16, all hell broke loose: the start of the Battle of the Bulge. The Germans were everywhere. They hit us with 1900 heavy artillery, 250,000 soldiers, 100 large tanks, and other assault weapons. On an eighty-mile front we had 75,000 men in this area: the Ardennes. The weather was very cold, 10 to 20 below zero, heavy wind and snow. The sky was overcast so our Air Force could not come to help. Everyone had frozen feet, hands or faces. We were low on food, ammo, gas, and our heavy winter clothing had not arrived. Most of our communications were knocked out. "We were all on our own fighting as single units. We found other units and organized into a unified fighting force as best we could. The Germans at this point were desperate. They were using every combat unit they had left to try to stop the Allied drive into mother Germany.

The SS were inhuman at this point, they killed everyone; old men, women and children. They burned everything and shot POWs. This was the only time I saw American troops kill German soldiers that tried to surrender. If they wore black uniforms of the SS, they were shot. At Baugnez, Belgium, the SS shot over 100 American POWs. This was called the Malmedy Massacre because there was a sign at Baugnez pointing to Malmedy, which was two or three miles down the road.

I cannot describe the cold, hunger and atrocities that the Allied troops were subjected to in the Battle of the Bulge from December 16, 1944, until January 25, 1945. We fired and ran, Bred and ran, until we were out of ammo and gas, then we looked for American tanks and trucks that were disabled and took what we could use from them. One day we got lucky, several boxes of K rations were on a truck. With very little food we would heat water (from snow) and drink that.

Our last fire mission in the Battle of the Bulge was to support the 4<sup>th</sup> Armored Division and the 318th Infantry of the 80th Division, break through, and relieve the 101st Airborne at Bastogne, Belgium. When the Battle of the Bulge ended, 81,000 allied and 125,000 Germans were dead. This battle broke the back of Hitler's army. We met only pockets of resistance after this battle. Christmas 1944 we were still in the Battle of the Bulge just outside of Bastogne, Belgium with snow knee-deep and cold as hell. We had cold K rations for dinner. I would have given anything for a hot cup of coffee and a pair of dry socks. We were hit by mortars and heavy artillery all day. I was sure it would be my last Christmas, but thank God I lived to see the New Year come in. Between Christmas 1944 and New Year's Day 1945, we were under fire, in fact, we were being shelled continually, until the middle of February 1945, by German tanks and infantry mortars.

After February 1945, the war changed and we went on the offensive. One day when I was on guard duty, I went out to my half-track to relieve the man on guard. He couldn't get out of the gun turret. His overcoat was wet when he got in and it froze so he couldn't get out. The day I froze my feet, hands, and face, our half-track hit a land mine and blew the right front wheel off—it was below zero, windy and snowing. We went into a woods looking for shelter. We

didn't find any so we cut some branches off the evergreen trees to make a windbreak. I went to sleep and when I woke up I didn't have any feeling in my feet or hands, and my face was gray. It was daylight so we started a fire. Most of the crew had frozen parts. The fire saved us. I know several soldiers froze to death that night.

The next day we destroyed our machine guns, set fire to the half-track, then we walked until we located our outfit, 633 AAA, in a town. There, we got another half-track that had bad luck also, but that crew was all killed. We fixed two flat tires and we were back in action. Two days later, we helped liberate the 101st Airborne at Bastogne, Belgium, near Pont-a-Mousson, France, on the Moselle River. We heard a very odd sound. This was the first time I saw one of Hitler's buzz bombs. It went directly over us at about three hundred feet. It was noisy but not as bad as the German screaming meemies. They sounded like a thousand teenagers at a rock concert in a small room.

War is hell—hot and cold. Normandy was hot hell—the Battle of the Bulge was cold hell. You are always cold or hot, it is raining or snowing, you are thirsty, tired, have diarrhea, your feet are sore, you are dirty, itchy and you stink. You hurt all over and chafe, afraid because a few miles away, an enemy artilleryman is about to kill you, or just over the next hill an enemy infantryman is going to try to kill you before you kill him. Before the firefight starts you can step on a mine and blow your legs off. Your buddies are always getting injured, your hands are sore and bleeding, Ups chapped; there is no privacy. Everyday happenings are twisting an ankle, smashing a thumb in the bolt of a weapon, cutting a hand on a ration can, chipping a tooth, tearing off a fingernail trying to shore up the ceiling of your underground hold. You get rheumatism from living in wet foxholes and sleeping in cold water and mud. No one said anything about how you smelled because everyone smelled bad. These are some of the joys of combat living. Get careless and you die. Combat soldiers are very close, they will risk death to save another soldier and think nothing of it.

## MY EXPERIENCE WITH THE 2ND DIVISION 9TH INFANTRY M COMPANY

by Charles R. Posey, Ch. Col. USAF Ret.

I became a machine gunner replacement the day after the Battle of the Bulge. I was billeted at Camp Chesterfield in France when we were told one group was moving to the front line. I did not know the German offensive had begun. Apparently word had reached headquarters of a need for rapid reinforcements. I was blessed to be driven in a truck to provide replacement in the M Company 2nd Division 9th Infantry, a seasoned battle unit. We drove all day and arrived at Elsenborn Ridge on the Northern shoulder of what became the "Battle of the Bulge". The Second Division and the 99th Divisions had stopped the 6th Panzer German SS elite force from penetrating Belgium.

I survived at night during an artillery bombardment. I learned later that an artillery duel is primarily directed at the Infantry troops trying to kill them. During the day before my machine gun section had lost four of its gunners. They needed replacement. I had been trained at Camp Walters, Texas in both the water cooled 30 caliber

*(Continued)*

## 2ND DIVISION 9TH INFANTRY M COMPANY *(Continued)*

machine gun and 81mm mortars. That night Capt. Hall talked to me personally and afterward I crawled into a foxhole. His words were so reassuring and I was exhausted. In spite of incoming artillery shells I went to sleep.

The next day I learned of the vicious battle that had resulted in numerous casualties but that finally the German tanks and infantry had been stopped and our division was holding on this natural defense line on the ridge in a densely wooded area.

A machine gun section had four guns. The guns were placed on the edge of the forest with considerable space between them. Our gunners took turns at the well-fortified gun emplacement. We were protected by K Company riflemen. Each gunner had to take shifts. This often meant going to the position at night. The rifleman were crack shots, some had even been squirrel hunters before going into the service. We often made verbal code so they did not shoot us.

Not long after my arrival the German planes dropped five German soldiers dressed in American uniforms. They were dropped at night. We heard 5 or 6 rifle shots. In the morning five German parachutists were laying around our foxholes. One was still barely alive. Fortunately if given a couple hours a foxhole was not only dug but covered with logs and frozen dirt. Pine branches made a dry place to sleep on. Actually it even added a little spring for sleeping and kept me up off the ground. I had crossed the ocean with Perry who had been sent from the stockade to be sent overseas.

In a day or two I found another foxhole because he was afraid to get out of the foxhole so he relieved himself in the foxhole. The next day I learned in detail how the 2nd and 99th Divisions held against the onslaught of German tanks and infantry. In later articles I read about the precision of field artillery that supplied very accurate support. Apparently in the thirties the field artillery had learned to direct the fire of several guns on the spot, which was in many cases a German tiger tank.

Also General Eisenhower had released time-release shells that rained hell from the air on the German infantry accompanying the tanks. Even later just a year ago I was told the very heavy German tanks were built to attack the Russians on the solid ground on the steppes of Russia. Mud and ditches provided a defense for our infantry equipped with bazookas. At any rate, under the direction of General Robertson who had drilled the division in organized retreat in Ireland, using consecutive lines of troops that held the sixth Panzer unit from driving into Belgium. However Elsenborn Ridge was now the front line.

A sergeant greeted me and said if I could learn fast and he could keep me alive a month, I would have a chance of staying alive. First he said four or five soldiers grouped together make a good target. He said I had to learn to recognize the sounds of different weapons. Also don't relieve yourself in the snow because the German fighters could see it when flying low.

I didn't realize how good the German triangular listening devices were. They could hear sounds of banging mess kits. Later I learned that Belgium had one of the coldest winters and heaviest snows on record. Artillery shells were bad enough but tree bursts could send shrapnel in every direction. Although we had a tent in the area with a potbellied stove there was some risk in going there. I don't know how I slipped a Bill Mauldin Cartoon in one of my letters but it described our situation when we went on the attack. Joe and Willie had scraped back the snow. The ground was so hard they couldn't dig a foxhole. Tree bursts were sending shrapnel in every

direction. Underneath was the caption:

"Willie this makes me miss that warm summer mud."

Fortunately the K rations were replaced with C rations. It had a small amount of food that tasted good and a candy bar or something extra. Each one had cigarettes but I didn't smoke. Sometimes we were furious when we got a K ration that had been slit open and some of the food had been removed. The smokers were really angry when the cigarettes were gone. The Division tried to get a mimeograph sheet which gave us some idea of the events of the battle, apparently the fresh 106th Division that had replaced the Second Division had tremendous losses and I learned later had surrendered. In a book "My Way" Andy Rooney described being on the front when the 106th replaced the 2nd Division and he could immediately see the difference between the hardened combat soldiers of the 106th and the untested soldier.

Many do not know that 2nd Division was actually in an offensive move into the Ruhr Valley when the Germans began their attack. Col. Hirschfelder immediately recognized the danger and requested permission for our 9th Regiment to be allowed to retreat.

Several significant things happened as we held out against the German offensive against Elsenborn Ridge. One night a huge rocket drove deep into the middle ground right in our ring of foxholes but didn't hit any of them. There was a tremendous explosion, which shook the earth. No one got out that night. The next morning we witnessed a huge hole about half as big as a pyramid tent of course dirt covered all the surrounding trees. All of us were grateful to be alive. The hole nearly filled with snow in a day or two. Then something funny happened - a jeep from headquarters ran into the hole. The driver had to promise us candy and cigarettes etc. from headquarters if we pulled him out. Later I saw a Bill Mauldin cartoon where a jeep got stuck in a ditch the caption said the troops made him promise a lot of loot to pull him out of the ditch.

On Christmas they managed to ship a wonderful meal for the troops however about the time we had our mess kits all full of turkey and dressing and our cups with coffee or hot chocolate a Messerschmitt decided to strafe the area. I managed to dive in my foxhole without spilling my food and drink when I heard a buddy scream. He had been hit by a machine gun bullet. I set my food down and scrambled out to help him. He was grabbing his leg and screaming. Another guy and I removed his pants and yelled for a medic. To our amazement his leg was black and blue but not wounded. We found a spent tracer bullet that had hit sideways. The medic came but we were all relieved that he did so well. I climbed back in my foxhole and finished my Christmas dinner. I guess the Nazi's did not declare a truce like they did in WWI where they paused on Christmas Eve and sang Silent Night.

Around Christmas the Chaplain with the 2nd Division came to have a worship service. The ferocious Battle of the Bulge was still raging. We also got word of the Germans lining up and shooting the soldiers at Malmedy. He had a simple service with a Christmas carol and prayers. He based his sermon on the 8th Psalm. He emphasized the scripture based on the creation story in Genesis. "When I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him the son of man that you are mindful of him. You made him a little lower than heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor." He made it clear to all the soldiers under that tent that we are loved by God and have worth and value. His message made it clear

*(Continued)*

## 2ND DIVISION 9TH INFANTRY M COMPANY *(Continued)*

that every soldier was of great worth and cared for. Although shells were exploding not too far away no one left the service. They received a message of hope in spite of the battle raging all around us.

Little did I realize that message of hope from the Army Chaplain laid the seed that took me from a major in organic chemistry, into the ministry two years later during the Korean War, when I was accepted into the chaplaincy.

I had mentioned earlier that we had lost 4 machine gunners in the initial onslaught of the Germans. One was nicknamed Whitey and his friends saw a German tank run over him and his machine gun. However because he was in a foxhole he ducked beneath the tank. Unknown to us he was immediately taken prisoner and put in a prisoner of war camp.

When VE Day came our unit was in Czechoslovakia. Those of us who did not have 50 points were selected to be part of the second wave on the invasion of Japan. Before that we were sent back to the states. We were supposed to get two weeks leave in route. We were taken back to the United States and sent to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, which has been the “home” of the 2nd Division for many years. We were taken to the processing center to my amazement several of the unit saw Whitey. Although a German tank drove over him and smashed the machine gun, he lay flat and the tank passed over him. He was immediately taken as a prisoner of war and placed in a detention camp. Later an army unit overran the prison camp and he was first sent to the hospital, later back to Fort Sam Houston, not long ahead of us.

All of the 2nd Division troops were transferred by train to Fort Sam Houston Texas. To our amazement “Whitey” was there ahead of us. We had a celebration! There was a wonderful reunion between our guys and the living soldier.

## SISTER MEETS BROTHER IN BATTLE OF THE BULGE

by Ann T. Miletich, 46th Field Hospital



I received a letter dated December 26, 1944, from my 18-year-old kid brother, Matt, saying, “I’m on this side of the pond. It would be nice if we could visit each other, but I doubt if we’ll be that lucky.” I did not know whether Matt meant we just could not expect to have such a privilege, with the war raging at a fever pitch, or whether he meant, what with his being an infantry rifleman, “something might happen to him.”

I know now he meant it in the privilege sense. But way back then, I was determined to find a way to visit him, and I said so to others at the hospital. It was unusually bold for me to try to do something like that!

We treated many 84th Division Railsplitters. When wounded men were brought in, I would always look at their faces to see if it were Matt or Joe, our brother in the 9th Air Force in Belgium.

Joe and I visited each other a few times in England while waiting for D-Day. But circumstances were much different in January 1945, with the Battle of the Bulge raging at fever pitch.

Matt arrived at the 84th Division Replacement Depot at Givet,

France, on Christmas Day. Now, a month later, on Sunday, January 28, 1945, I went for a walk in the morning, even though the snow was very deep. I went to pray for help to find Matt. I saw two officers walking and I thought they were from Camp Lucky Strike. I asked them if they knew the location of the 84th Division. They gave me the approximate location and said I could get specific information at First Army Headquarters in Spa, Belgium.

When I told others at the hospital that I learned the location of the 84th Division, they told Colonel Dell F. Dullum the 47th Field Hospital Commandant. While we were eating lunch, Colonel Dullum stood by the chair, and with a smile on his face he said, “I am giving Millie a jeep and a driver so that she can find and visit her brother.”

The driver, a corporal about as young as Matt, and I took off in early afternoon. At Spa, we found First Army Headquarters in a large house guarded by a big, barking dog. It was frightening.

I had to wait quite a while before a tall officer came out. Then he and another officer asked me which unit I was with, and other information about myself. Then they gave me directions to the 84th Infantry Division.

We drove off through the deep snow. Sometimes the snow was so deep and the road so curving, it was difficult to see the road. We had to be wary about any stray land mines that might have been alongside the road. Our jeep was enclosed, but we had the window flaps open to see our way more clearly. It was very cold, this was Europe’s worst winter in 40 years.

People now couldn’t imagine what it was like then. There were no friendly looking roadside inns with twinkling lights beckoning travellers in for hot coffee and food. Often the road was hilly and narrow and the snow real deep.

God bless that young corporal! I wish I could remember his name so I could thank him now. He did a wonderful job of driving through the Ardennes Forest. The Battle of the Bulge had upset things for the past six weeks, but now it mostly was over.

Finally we drove up to the C.P. of the Third Battalion, 333rd Infantry Regiment, in the village of Nonceveux, Belgium. I spoke to an officer who told me, “You are the first woman ever come to the battalion.” I had to identify myself and show my AGO pass with my picture on it. The officer asked me several questions about my parents, brothers and sisters. She also asked the several questions about Iowa, where my family lived. They had to be certain that I was not a spy. I remember sitting in that warm room heated by a little pot-bellied stove, answering those questions. Then the officer telephoned the Company “I” C.P.

Several minutes later, Matt walked in. He had been in the evening chow line when he was called to the Company “I” C.P. He was flabbergasted when he was told that I was at the Third Battalion C.P. The battalion was out of the front line for a badly needed rest.

After we hugged and kissed each other, we visited in a room for about half an hour. We talked mostly about our family and what we’d been doing. This was the first time we had seen each other since I was home on leave early in 1943.

We both felt it was kind of unreal for us to be together so many thousands of miles from home, and in such strange circumstances. Matt was very tired and dirty, and he apologized for being so dirty. I have a vivid picture-forever imprinted in my mind—Matt—very tired, wearing his helmet, rifle, mess gear, and struggling with laryngitis. He said he was one of a few survivors of his platoon, which

*(Continued)*



## SISTER MEETS BROTHER IN THE BULGE *(Continued)*

was wiped out early in January by a German machine-gunner. Every so often, a face peered in the window, apparently to make sure things were O.K.

I gave Matt toilet articles, new socks, candy bars and some Scotch, though I doubted if he would drink it. Then we embraced and kissed and said good-bye, and I returned to Verviers.

We had enjoyed an experience given to very few in the Second World War. Matt and Joe visited in Germany after V-E Day. We all returned home. We have much for which to be thankful.

Postscript by Matt: With the toilet articles I cleaned up, combed my hair, washed my feet, and put on the new socks. I shared the Milky Way and Snicker candy bars and gave away the Scotch — that was easy!

*Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be)*

## WOUNDED DURING THE BULGE

by John J. Sweeney, 10th AD, 61st AIB, Co A



Our Company “A” on December 18, 1944, was deposited in a very dark, cold and wooded area for the night in the vicinity of Echternach, Luxembourg. We were told to dig in and stay quiet and alert because there was heavy enemy activity in the rear. The night was so dark you couldn’t see your hand in front of your face. The ground was made up of heavy wet clay and our entrenching shovel

couldn’t dig into it, so we had to sleep on top of the ground and take our turns at guard duty and listening posts. It was so cold that the rear echelon brought up some overcoats (2 for every 3 soldiers). We placed one overcoat on the ground and 3 of us lay on it and covered ourselves with the 2nd overcoat. The only one who was warm was the middle guy so we changed place every 20 minutes or so.

The next morning was dark, cold and dreary and we were told that we had to attack through the woods and up a hill to knock out some rocket emplacements. The 1st Platoon was to make the frontal assault and the 2nd Platoon the right flanking movement. We moved out after eating some K-rations for breakfast and we were immediately shelled mercilessly for what seemed like an eternity. When a lull in the shelling occurred (which only meant the enemy was reloading) we started up the hill again, only to be shelled even more mercilessly. Enemy shells hit the trees above us, burst and rained shrapnel from above which was devastating. The casualties were unbelievable and everyone figured he was next. My machine gunner Pfc Willie Wilson was shot in the stomach by a sniper and killed just 10 feet in front of me as we were moving up. I then became the sniper’s next favorite target but the closest he got was an inch or two above my rear end.

Another lull in the shelling and another move up, only caused the shelling to increase. Looking desperately for some cover I jumped into a large tank trap only to find it full of enemy soldiers and other Company “A” men trying to protect themselves from the shelling. When the shelling stopped for a moment or two both the enemy soldiers and ourselves scrambled out of the tank trap and went our respective ways into the woods with not a shot fired at each other. The woods were at this point so thick that if you

went a few feet you couldn’t see each other.

What was left of our platoon started forward and up again only to receive more shelling. It seemed like an eternity in hell with no way out. The screams of the wounded, the noise, the smoke, the awful weather and the feeling of helplessness only confirmed that war is hell and beyond anyone’s imagination. At this time I was hit in the left arm by a piece but it didn’t do too much damage so I bandaged it and ignored it.

All of us were wondering why our artillery didn’t respond to the enemy’s attack and try to slow them down. Someone said there was a strike back in the U.S. and there was a shortage of artillery shells and that our guns only had three shells apiece. We didn’t even hear any of the three shells per gun respond and it left us with a very helpless and abandoned feeling.

Somehow or other after many hours of this unbelievable and awful battle three other men from Company “A” and myself reached the top of the hill. Guess what? No enemy rocket launchers. At this point I had one of my squad’s machine guns but no ammunition as the ammo bearers were either killed or wounded. The four of us congratulated each other on reaching our objective and decided to consolidate it, when we saw a group of enemy soldiers in the valley below us running along the tree line. We all opened up with our M1 rifles but the bullets barely reached the tree line and we hit no one. Then the 2nd Platoon leader arrived and ordered us off the hill even though we tried to convince him otherwise. However, he told us there were enemy tanks behind us and that we’d probably be cut off. We were convinced and immediately left our hard fought position on the top of the hill.

On the way down the hill the shelling had stopped and the silence was very eerie except for the moaning and crying of the wounded. I saw Pfc Pitt, one of my machine gun squad buddies, sitting against a tree obviously seriously wounded and in a state of shock. I tried to talk to him but got no response. All of a sudden an enemy tank appeared about 25 yards away slowly making its way through the woods and headed toward us. I fired my rifle at the tank but it didn’t even notice my shooting at it. I then proceeded down the hill and saw the most horrible sight imaginable — ‘almost my entire company strewn about the hill either dead or seriously wounded.’

When I got to the bottom of the hill there dirt road running alongside it, which was the same roadway we jumped off from. Only this time there was absolute confusion with tanks and half-tracks knocked out and burning, wounded and dead soldiers everywhere, a few ambulances and soldiers wandering about looking for some leadership. The calls for the medics were desperate and heart rendering.

I meet Pfc Santo Falco, another member of our machine gun squad, who looked very worried and perplexed. He said to me that he had to do something about the wounded and the situation. I agreed but had no idea what to do. He told me had found two ambulances and two working tanks and that we could fill the ambulances with some of the wounded and along with the tanks for protection drive them to the Aid Station which was in the town about two miles down the road.

Falco also told me that there was a road block down the road before we got to the town that had to be dismantled and that there were enemy troops all around. I never understood how Falco knew so much and how capable he was under such terrible conditions. It was now late in the afternoon and getting dark and it looked like we

*(Continued on page 20)*



# WELCOME TO COLUMBIA, SC

## VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE 33<sup>RD</sup> ANNUAL REUNION

August 30 - September 3, 2014

### HIGHLIGHTS AND SCHEDULE INFORMATION

#### REGISTRATION FEE

All who attend the VBOB Reunion must pay the registration fee (\$35/person.) This fee covers the expense of name tags, programs, table decorations, Hospitality Room, etc.

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 30

**Registration and complimentary Wine and Cheese Reception** sponsored by the Columbia Marriott.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 31

**Special service at Main Street United Methodist Church** with patriotic music and keynote speaker. The American Legion Post 6 Freedom Riders will line the walk into the church with American flags to honor the veterans. The congregation will host a luncheon following the service in the Fellowship Hall.

The public gets a chance to meet the veterans and get autographs at the **SC State Museum**. Built in 1893 to manufacture textiles, the Columbia Mills' storied stone halls now weave tapestries of knowledge with exhibits on everything from lasers and space travel to South Carolina's role in the Civil War. Again, the Post 6 Freedom Riders will line the entrance of the museum to greet the veterans and public visitors.

End the day with a rousing musical tribute featuring the **Harry James Orchestra**. During the golden era of the big bands, Harry's band helped launch the careers of many pop music stars of the World War II era, including Frank Sinatra and Helen Forrest. Already a celebrity, James' marriage to Betty Grable in 1943 cemented his status as one of the most famous American personalities of his generation.

Back by popular demand from the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, the **Victory Belles** will present America's tribute to the Andrews Sisters. Noted for their close harmonies and synchronized dance steps, The Victory Belles are proud to pay tribute to this



Highlights include a visit to the S. C. State Museum (top left), a performance by the Victory Belles (bottom left), and a visit to the exhibits at the U. S. Army Basic Combat Training Museum, Fort Jackson (above).

talented trio who volunteered so much time entertaining our troops here and abroad!

#### MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1

**A visit to Fort Jackson Army Training Center.** BG Bradley Becker and his Command Staff are arranging for the official wreath-laying ceremony with invited dignitaries and guests at the flagpole of Post Headquarters.

Afterwards, the group will visit the **U. S. Army Basic Combat Training Museum**, which has been totally renovated. Reopened in 2011, the Museum walks visitors through the experience of basic combat training, showing how the individual elements of training have evolved in the past century. Lunch will be served in the Mess Hall accompanied by "Blue-phase" recruits. (These are soldiers in weeks 6 - 9 of their advanced combat training and will be graduating soon.)

After lunch, the group will split up and half go to **Bastogne Range** and the other half to the highly sophisticated combat training

facility, where computer animated scenarios are programmed to test soldier's quick thinking reflexes. (All visitors will visit both locations.)

#### TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2

**Tour of FN Manufacturing, LLC.** One of the most popular events of the 2010 Convention, FN Manufacturing again opens their doors for a tour of their precision manufacturing, unsurpassed quality and cutting edge technology. Because of their military heritage as a major small arms supplier to the U. S. Military, their employees take their work very seriously: Soldier's lives are at stake. Lunch provided on site.

**VBOB General Membership Meeting Reception** with cash bar

**Banquet** featuring your choice of salmon, steak, or chicken for your entrée

#### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3

Farewell breakfast on your own.

You can also register online: [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org); click on "Attend Reunion." And, "Like" us on Facebook!

**NOTE: Revised (LOWER) prices! Use this form, NOT the May issue form, for correct prices\***

## **VBOB REUNION REVISED REGISTRATION**      **Deadline: August 9, 2014**

**There are two options for registering for the reunion:** Complete this form OR register online: [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org), click on "Attend Reunion" and fill out the registration form. **Either type of registration form must be received by VBOB no later than August 9, 2014.**

**The VBOB registration desk at the hotel will only be open on Saturday Aug 30th and Sunday Aug 31, 8 am - 5 pm.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Division, Regiments, etc \_\_\_\_\_

or check box if Associate Member ☐      Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Wife/Guest(s) \_\_\_\_\_

**IMPORTANT: Please indicate No. of People attending *free* events as well!**  
**We need to know for room and bus capacities. Thank you.**

	No. of People	Cost per Person	Total Cost
<b>Registration Fee</b> ( <i>all attendees must register</i> )	_____	\$35	_____
<b>Saturday, August 30, 2014</b>			
Wine and cheese reception	_____	free	
<b>Sunday, August 31, 2014</b>			
Trip to Main Street United Methodist Church, SC State Museum	_____	free	
<i>Includes lunch and bus transportation</i>			
Dinner/Harry James Orchestra/Victory Belles	_____	\$30	_____
<b>Monday, September 1, 2014</b>			
Trip to Fort Jackson Post Headquarters and Museum	_____	\$5	_____
<i>Includes lunch and bus transportation</i>			
<b>Tuesday, September 2, 2014</b>			
Trip to FN Manufacturing	_____	free	
<i>Includes lunch and bus transportation</i>			
General Membership Meeting	_____	free	
Reception ( <i>cash bar</i> )	_____		
Banquet ( <i>choose entrees below</i> )			
Grilled Salmon	_____	\$40	_____
Roasted Chicken Breast	_____	\$40	_____
Grilled Sirloin	_____	\$40	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>			_____

**Mail this form and check (payable to VBOB) to:** Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc., PO Box 27430, Philadelphia, PA 19118

**Or, to pay with a credit card, register online at [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org), click on "Attend Reunion"**

\*Those who registered previously with the May issue form will receive a refund.  
Refunds for cancellation will be honored in whole or in part, depending on availability of funds.





# VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.

## COLUMBIA MARRIOTT

Columbia, SC August 30 - September 3, 2014

### REUNION PROGRAM

#### Saturday, August 30, 2014

- 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Registration
- 8:00 am - 10:00 pm Hospitality Room open (Palmetto Ballroom)
- 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm Wine and Cheese reception (Capital Pre-Function)

#### Sunday, August 31, 2014

- 8:00 am - 5:00 pm Registration
- 8:00 am - 11:00 pm Hospitality Room open (Palmetto Ballroom)
- 10:30 am City bus departs Marriott
- 11:00 am - 12:15 pm Main Street United Methodist Church for patriotic music and keynote speaker
- American Legion Post 6 Freedom Riders flag line
- 12:15 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch at the Church
- 1:30 pm - 1:45 pm City bus departs Main Street Methodist
- 2:00 pm - 5:00 pm SC State Museum, Autograph Session/Meet the Public
- American Legion Post 6 Freedom Riders flag line
- 5:30 pm Buses depart Museum
- 7:00 pm - 10:00 pm Dinner/Harry James Orchestra/Victory Belles (Carolina Ballroom)  
*Music compliments City of Columbia*

#### Monday, September 1, 2014

- 8:00 am - 10:00 pm Hospitality Room open (Palmetto Ballroom)
- 9:00 am Buses depart Marriott (Busy Bee Tours)
- 10:00 am - 10:30 am Fort Jackson Post Headquarters for Wreath Laying Ceremony
- American Legion Post 6 Freedom Riders flag line
- 10:45 am - 11:45 am Visit Fort Jackson Post Museum
- 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm Lunch with the Troops at Ft. Jackson Mess
- 1:45 pm - 4:00 pm Visit Simulation Room/Bastogne Range
- 4:30 pm Buses depart Fort Jackson (Busy Bee Tours)
- Dinner on your own

#### Tuesday, September 2, 2014

- 8:00 am - 10:00 pm Hospitality Room open (Palmetto Ballroom)
- 9:00 am Buses depart Marriott (Busy Bee Tours)
- 9:30 am - 11:45 am Tour FN Manufacturing
- 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm Lunch in FN Manufacturing Cafeteria
- 1:30 pm Buses depart FN Manufacturing (Busy Bee Tours)
- 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm General Membership Meeting (Capitol II Ballroom)
- 6:30 - 7:30 pm Reception (cash bar)
- 7:00 pm - 11:00 pm Banquet at the hotel (Capitol III & IV Ballrooms)

#### Wednesday, September 3, 2014

- 8:00 am - 12:00 noon Hospitality Room open, Breakfast on your own

See "Highlights and Schedule Information" page for more details.



## COLUMBIA MARRIOTT

1200 Hampton Street

Columbia, SC 29201

1-803-771-7000, 1-803-758-2456

1-800-593-6465 – toll-free reservations

Website: [www.marriott.com/caemh](http://www.marriott.com/caemh)

**RESERVATION DEADLINE FOR GROUP RATE:  
August 8, 2014**

# WELCOME

## VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

### August 30 - September 3, 2014

### Hotel Information

The newly remodeled, AAA Diamond hotel is the largest in downtown Columbia and offers a concierge level lounge, airport shuttle (7 am – 10 pm) and convenient location. Newly-refreshed guest rooms and suites feature plush beds, flat panel televisions and warm décor, offering the perfect Columbia, SC lodging experience.

Check-in time is 4:00 pm, Check-out time is 12:00 pm.

This hotel has a smoke-free policy. The room rate is \$109 per night, single or double occupancy, plus taxes.

### RESERVATIONS

To make your reservation you have two options, by telephone or online.

**1. By phone:** call 1-800-593-6465 toll-free and say you are with the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge group.

**2. Online:** Go to: [www.marriott.com/caemh](http://www.marriott.com/caemh)  
Use left sidebar “Check Rates & Availability” to put in desired dates, number of guests, etc. Then scroll down and select “Group Code” button, enter our group code: VBBVBBA. This will take you to our group rate page to complete your reservation.

We suggest you guarantee your reservation with a charge card. **Reservation must be made by August 8, 2014 to guarantee you will get the group rate. After August 8, reservations will be made on a space-available basis.**

In the event you need to cancel your reservation, please inform the hotel 48 hours prior to the day of scheduled arrival.

### HOTEL AMENITIES

- Full service restaurant and lounge
- Complimentary:
  - Shuttle service to and from Columbia Metropolitan Airport (7 am – 10 pm)
  - High speed wireless in the guest rooms as well as public areas
  - Business room including computers, printers and fax

### DIRECTIONS TO THE HOTEL

Leaving the airport, make a left on Highway 302/Airport Blvd. Continue on I-26 (toward Greenville/Spartanburg.) Follow I-26 W and exit 111B (Highway 1 Augusta Road-West Columbia.) Bear to the left at the 3rd light and follow the signs to Jarvis Klapman Blvd. Highway 12. After crossing the bridge in the city, Jarvis Klapman becomes Hampton Street. Go through 5 traffic lights. The Marriott Columbia is on the right at the corner of Hampton and Main.

- Airport shuttle service, on request, complimentary  
Shuttle Phone: 1-803-771-7000
- Courtesy phone available

## WOUNDED DURING THE BULGE (Continued)

were in a very desperate situation. Time was running out, particularly for the wounded.

Between Falco and me, we were able to round up ten other men willing to try and break out of the situation with the two ambulances full of the wounded. We also convinced two tankers with their crews to join us and lead the ambulances down the roadway. Our convoy took off for the Aid Station in town as fast as we could go with the two tanks in front, each with six infantry soldiers riding on the back of each tank. Falco and I were riding on the second tank along with four others. He was on the right side and I was on the left side.

After we traveled about ¼ mile down the road the enemy soldiers started to fire at us from about 100-200 yards away and from both sides of the road with small arms fire and machine gun fire as well as what appeared to be anti-tank fire. The tanks were buttoned up and we were firing our rifles as fast as we could from both sides off the back of the tanks. Our tank was hit by enemy fire and three of us on the back of our tank were wounded including Falco and myself. Falco in the knee, the other soldier in the shoulder and I in the face. The other tank and the ambulances were also being fired on but they appeared to be okay.

Our plans were to dismount when we got to the road block and clear it. However, when the lead tank was about 100 yards from the road block, it didn't look very formidable and we decided to drive right through the road block. We hit it with our lead tank as fast and direct as possible and the tank broke right through it. Hooray! The

rest of us followed safely and we arrived at the Aid Station, which was later captured (so I was told). Confusion in this area reigned supreme, with all types of military vehicles moving in all directions in the dark, and wounded soldiers everywhere. No one would listen to our pleas that our Company "A" lay wounded and dead two miles down the road. I suppose they already knew about it, but didn't have the resources to do anything.

The medics sewed up my jaw and wrapped my head in a large white bandage. I met Pfc Sam Stahlman my closest buddy in the machine gun squad at the Aid Station and we had a joyous reunion. Sam had been wounded in the leg and was hopping around trying to find out what was going on. Eventually, we went that night by ambulance to a field hospital in Thionville (I believe). Sam and I no sooner lay down on a couple of stretchers in what appeared to be the gym on the main floor of a school building right by the rear exit door, when someone ran down the middle of the gym screaming that the Germans were coming through the front door.

Sam and I remembering that the Germans were taking no prisoners at this time, got up from our stretchers and limped out the back door and pulled ourselves into the rear of a moving 2-½ ton truck full of medical personnel escaping capture. I passed out in the truck and the next time I woke up I was laying on my back in a large white hospital ward with the sun shining through the windows and a beautiful nurse standing over me. I thought I was in Heaven! I have never seen or heard of Pfc Santo Falco since that date. Thank you, Santo Falco, wherever you are, you are one brave soldier.

*Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be)*

## VETERANS TOURS PLANNED FOR 2015

*(Where possible, all tours offer participants a chance to visit their veteran's "special places")*



**PILSEN LIBERATION FESTIVAL & PRAGUE (late April-early May, 2015)** Starting in Frankfurt, we'll explore the Nazi Party's Nuremberg stronghold, visit the "most dangerous place on earth" and plunge hundreds of meters below ground in the vast salt mines where Hitler's minions stashed tons of Reichsbank gold and priceless stolen treasures. The highlight of our trip is the Pilsen annual Liberation Festival, concluding with a visit to the beautiful Bohemian capitol of Prague.

**MEMORIAL DAY & NORTHERN BULGE TOUR (late May, 2015)** Beginning in Brussels, we'll attend moving Memorial Day ceremonies at Northern Bulge military cemeteries before launching our adventure in the forests & fields of the rugged Ardennes-Eifel. Visits to numerous key sites around the "Northern Shoulder" will clearly demonstrate the complexity of the massive campaign to repel the German's last desperate counteroffensive.

**LUXEMBOURG-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP WEEK AND SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR (mid June, 2015)** At the invitation of US Veterans Friends of Luxembourg (USVFL), all American veterans, families & friends are cordially invited to a special week of events & celebrations in the lovely Grand Duchy. Civic ceremonies, high mass on the Grand Duke's birthday and personal accounts of the difficult history of Nazi occupation offer one-of-a-kind glimpses into the "Southern Shoulder" campaign. Originating in Paris and ending in Frankfurt, the tour will also include an optional visit to Normandy.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about the above tours and/or special customized group tours, contact Doris Davis, President of VBOB Golden Gate (San Francisco) Chapter. Email [doris@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:doris@battleofthebulge.org); Tel (650) 654-0101 (PST).



## CHRISTMAS DURING THE BULGE

by Russell Kelch, 591st Field Artillery Bn

On December 22, 1944, we made our way from Aachen, Germany to Maffee, Belgium. The road was covered with sleet and snow, and a blizzard had begun. The entire VII Corps was moving southwest.

On December 24, we occupied gun positions at Noiseux, Belgium. Everything started going wrong. We lost three cannoneers almost at once. The first was leading a howitzer into position when his feet slipped on the ice, and the prime mover crushed his foot. A second cannoneer, Anthoni Niznick, "A" Battery, was caught by the breech block and broke both bones in his right forearm.

Then it began to sleet harder. A shell was rammed as the tube was being elevated. The sleet caused the 95-pound projectile to slide out of the breech, and a cannoneer tried to catch it. The projectile turned over and went fuse first right through his foot. Luckily, it was a bore-safe fuse. We had three calls for the "meat wagon" in what seemed 20 minutes!

Everything was going sour. To add to the confusion, buzz bombs were passing overhead. I went to the kitchen truck for coffee. It was 10°F, and as I warmed my hands on my canteen cup filled with hot coffee, I saw trucks bringing clean straw for our foxholes. Then I saw a small cedar tree the young GIs had decorated with radar foil and tin can lids. I realized the next day was Christmas, and things seemed brighter.

Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be)



## THE NIGHT MICKEY DID NOT GET SHOT

by Ralph Schip, 18th Cav Recon Sq



The overall tenor of experience during a period of combat can often be encapsulated in the recounting of a very short term, specific experience, which by its intensity can be vividly recalled in fine detail, even after many years. The title of this vignette, if it needs one, is: "The Night Mickey Did Not Get Shot."

Troop "E" was a compact, close-knit group, a "Fighting machine" of very diverse men who had been "fine-tuned" by our leader Captain "Pappy" Meadows.

Our M-8 assault guns were veritable, mechanized armories, when consideration is given to all the extra armament we managed to acquire by devious means. The assigned equipment consisted of a 75 howitzer 50 cal. Machine gun, bazooka, rifles and grenades of all types. In addition to all this, each G.I. had his own personal preference as to what was needed to do the job at hand. My "extra" weapon, and pride and joy, was a Thompson sub-machine gun, the old "Chicago Typewriter" complete

with cuts-compensator and the whole show. (None of those crazy "grease-gun" plumbers' friends for me!)

I did have to be content with ammunition clips rather than the original style drum. Possibly the Chicago hood who turned the particular gun in for the war effort forgot to include this drum. Anyway, it was a considerable comfort to be able to "hose-down" an area, at night when some unidentified noise or movement, real or imagined, came within the short range of the 45 slugs. I believe the statute of limitations has run its course and I could not now be prosecuted, but I'm not ready, yet, to admit exactly how I acquired this unauthorized weapon.

Anyhow, to make a short story long, one of the accepted functions of mechanized cavalry was to act as "rear guard" when such was needed. To this end, we were assigned the duty of entrenching at a road intersection as "rear guard" while a large number of vehicles and personnel of an armored division task force withdrew and formed a new defense line further to the west. I was then our assigned duty to interdict and delay the onrushing Krauts, emboldened by victory, Schnapps and whatever else was available (pre-crack).

It is a major understatement to say that it was considerably unnerving to watch all this armor and heavy equipment proceeding away from the direction of battle. Unfortunately, such are the fates of combat. Finally, about dusk, the last vehicle had rumbled by, leaving only our "compact", close-knit, fighting machine" to greet and "entertain" the Krauts whenever they elected to make their move.

At dusk, it was decided that no one was to move at night. Also, it was concluded that a verbal challenge would be answered by a potato-masher into the open tank turret or a burst of burp-gun fire. Accordingly, it was decided that the orders of the night were to fire first and ask only afterward.

Ground fog hung close to the snow covered ground. The thick, icy fog alternately lifted and settled, creating all sorts of imagined movement to whoever was on watch. During the bone chilling cold and spine-tingling suspense of a very long night, I was seated on the tank commander's seat in the open turret, wrapped in three G.I. blankets while on my duty shift, with my trusty Thompson to my right and below on a shelf. About 3:00 a.m., as the fog lifted ever so slightly, a lone figure suddenly materialized close in front of me. I reached frantically for the Thompson, but the carrying strap caught on a latch or projection and I was running out of time to deal with the moving figure. This left the only viable action of a verbal challenge, "Who's There?"

From out of the mist materialized a hoarse whisper, "It's me, Mickey. What time is it?"

I never did ask Mickey why he left his foxhole at such great risk to find out what time it was. Nor did I ever tell him how very close he came to being a statistic and how narrow the margin was between vividly remembered experience and grim tragedy. The very next morning I removed both the stock and carrying strap and thereafter fired the Thompson from the hip.

So, Mickey, if you are still out there, here's the story, much too late. Also, if you have not yet purchased a watch, maybe it's time to give some serious thought to such a purchase, and "don't leave home without it." Your very life may depend on it. I have lost contact with all but a half dozen guys from this great compact, close-knit fighting machine and would surely like to hear from any others out there. Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be)

# MY FIVE DAYS IN THE BULGE

by Howard Peterson, 4th AD, 51st AIB, Co B



On December 16, 1944, I was in Reims, France as a member of the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division. On 20 December, 1944, I was in Arlon, Belgium, as a rifleman replacement as part of CCA (Combat Command "A") of the 4th Armored Division "Old Blood and Guts" had ordered Hugh Gaffey to

haul ass up the Arlon-Bastogne road to break the encirclement of the 101st in Bastogne.

After a hellish ride from Reims to Arlon in a "deuce-and-a-half" we loaded in some half tracks and about 1600 hours started north out of Arlon on the Arlon-Bastogne road. Progress was slow and we did not close on the blown bridge over the Sure River at Martelange until about 1300 hours, December 22nd. We had covered about 20 of the 28 miles from Arlon to Bastogne. While we waited for the engineers to finish the bridge over the Sure, we had a feast when one of the guys pilfered a ten in one ration off one of the tanks. I drew guard duty about 0400 hours. It was a bright moonlight night — I thought I would be less of a target if I stood in the shadow of a tree. While leaning up against a small tree I could feel this lump on my back. I found out it was about 10 pounds of TNT wired to the tree with primer cord so that in case of retreat the engineers could blow the trees as a form of a roadblock. I chose some other place to stand to finish out my tour of guard duty. As we were closing on Martelange in the half tracks, as we rounded a curve and climbed a slight rise, as we emerged from a cut in the road, it seemed like were a hundred 105's on both sides of the road which all opened up at the same time. The sky suddenly became bright as day and the noise was deafening. It was at this time that I had the first of my laundry problems. To the uninitiated, that means that I was scared "s——s."

About 0800 hours we got across the Bailey bridge over the Sure and we fanned out. CCA was given the main Arlon-Bastogne road. CCB was on the left flank using the secondary roads as its route to Bastogne. CCB was flanked on its left by the green, newly arrived 76th Infantry Division CCA was flanked on its right by the 'Blue Ridge Mountain Boys' of the 80th Infantry Division. We rode along on the backs of the Shermans. I had on my G.I. "Long johns," O.D. pants and shirt, two pairs of socks, jump boots, four buckle overshoes, knit sweater, banana cap, helmet, "tanker overalls," and extra pair of socks under each armpit, my "K" bar knife, my G.I. gloves, I had thrown away my gas mask, I had an ample supply of toilet paper inside my helmet, and my pockets were stuffed with "K" rations, candle stubs, cigarettes, grenades, and 2-½ pound blocks of TNT complete with fuse to blow myself a hole in the frozen ground, if necessary. I had my good old M-1 with the regulation belt load of eight clips ball and two clips A.P. four and one on each side, bayonet, canteen, first-aid pouch, two extra bandoleers of ammo, and three bazooka rounds.

By now it had snowed and just about everything was hidden by this white blanket. As we rode on the backs of the Shermans, we stood on one foot and hung on with one hand for as long as we could stand the cold, and then we switched hand and foot and tried to get some circulation going in the hand and foot we had just

used. This was made more difficult because the tank turret was being constantly traversed from right to left and left to right. The tank I was riding on and three others fanned out in the fields left of the main road. Suddenly the tank I was on, the lead tank, stopped and the sergeant "volunteered" another G.I. and I to investigate what appeared to be a squad of German soldiers moving along in extended order. "They" turned out to be a row a fence posts, but to this day, I was sure at first, that I had seen my first "Krauts." Another laundry problem. One of the other tanks broke through a barbed wire fence and a strand of barbed wire slapped a G.I. across the face, turning his face into raw hamburger. A G.I., wearing an unbuttoned overcoat, jumped off his tank and when the coat tails billowed out behind him they caught in the tracks and sucked his legs into the bogie wheels of the tank.

Suddenly the tank I was riding on stopped and one of the other tanks fired a whole belt (200+ rounds) of tracer ammunition at a haystack along side a barn about 200 yards in front of us. No sooner did the tracers bounce off the haystack when the other two tanks opened fire and destroyed a German tank that had been trying to hide in the haystack. I guess that the tankers had learned from experience that tracers do not bounce off haystacks. We moved forward about another 20 yards and the tank I was riding on got mired down in a small stream that had become hidden due to the heavy blanket of snow. All I could think of at the time was to get away from the tank and I took off running as best that I could with the way I was dressed, with what I was carrying, and the deep snow. (Oh, yes, by the way, it was a least 20 degrees below zero at the time.) I must have managed about 50 yards when the fire from a German Nebelwerfer began falling around the stuck tank.

They assembled us foot troops back on the road (there were 26 of us in this one bunch) and we started north again toward Warnaco, a wide spot in the road about two miles further ahead. We walked strung out in a line in the ditch on the right hand side of the road so we wouldn't be such good targets for those damned 88's. A little way up ahead was an American 2-½ ton truck nosed down in the ditch and it had a big red Nazi flag with a black swastika on it across the front of the radiator. We had to climb the road embankment to get around the rear of the truck and as I passed by the cab of the truck I could see another good Kraut sitting behind the wheel with the top of his head blown off.

About another 500 yards up the road we came upon three tanks surrounding a farmhouse where they had a sniper trapped. The sniper had already hit three G.I.s and they said the sniper was a woman and by the way that she fired she must have an M-1 with plenty of ammo. The three tanks proceeded to blow the farmhouse into a pile of rubble. I don't know if they ever got the sniper or if the sniper was a woman. Our orders were to "get to Hell to Bastogne" so we took a break in a pig pen to get out of the cold. There were a half dozen pigs and some sheep in this pen about 20' by 20'. There was also a dead pig and two dead sheep in paid any attention. I mean the G.I.'s or the pigs.

The town of Warnaco was where the Germans had set up their command center. If you were passing Warnach in a car and sneezed, you probably would miss it altogether. To enter Warnach, you make a right turn off the main Arlon-Bastogne road. I was walking along behind a tank taking full advantage of the warm air from its radiator when suddenly I had this funny sensation in my ears and the sky turned red. (It was about 0400 hours) Then the same thing happened

*(Continued)*

# WELCOME ABOARD, NEW MEMBERS!

These new members joined VBOB between April 1 and May 31, 2014:

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- Talking to people about VBOB and suggesting that they also join
- Spreading the word about our website: [www.vbob.org](http://www.vbob.org)
- Sending us articles to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*
- Attending our annual reunion, Aug-Sept 2014 in Columbia, SC (See details on page 16.)

## MY FIVE DAYS IN THE BULGE (Continued)

again. A hidden German S.P. gun in an orchard ahead had hit the tank twice and set it on fire. I saw two G.I.'s jump into a ditch along side the tank and start to get one of those new folding bazookas ready to fire. They didn't have much luck and one of them yelled, "Let's get out of here," and they jumped up and ran. I was young but my mommy didn't raise no dummy so I proceeded to 'haul freight,' too. In the process, my feet became entangled in some old chicken wire in the ditch and when I started to run I fell forward on my face. To this day, I don't know how I did it, but my guess is I broke that wire with my hands.

As I ran back toward the Arlon-Bastogne road along a brush filled ditch to my left, I heard somebody yell, "Hey, infantry." I hoped that tanker realized how lucky he was that I didn't shoot him, but he told me he had a fellow tanker man whose right hand had been almost severed and was only hanging by some skin. I put the wounded tanker's left arm over my shoulder and his buddy did the same with the mangled one. We would walk three-four steps and the wounded tanker would pass out. We would drag him three-four steps and he would come to and take three-four steps and pass out again. We managed to get him to a medic.

I got back to my squad who had assembled along side a barn and when I got there I saw about a dozen German prisoners standing with their hands against the side of the building. All but one of the German prisoners were Wehrmacht soldiers but the one on the right end was an SS Panzer soldier dressed in black coveralls. He was a handsome S.O.B. with a head wound and blood running down the left side of his face. None of the Wehrmacht soldiers had guts enough to turn around and ask for some gloves to

cover their hands, but not the SS Panzer soldier. He turned around and in perfect English demanded gloves for his hands. A small American G.I. standing close by said, "I'll give you some gloves you Kraut son-of-a-bitch" and poll-axed the SS trooper. They all turned around and put their hands back on the wall. The G.I. with the Thompson offered to return the prisoners to a POW camp to the rear but they wouldn't let him go because he had just gotten word that his brother had been killed in the South Pacific. Later we watched about 12-15 P-47's doing their job on some German columns. They were too far away to hear but we could sure see them plain enough.

We were told we were going to spend the night here and by the time I got the message the only place I could find to lie down was at the top of the stairs. All I took off were my four buckle overshoes and I used my helmet for a pillow. It seemed like only a couple of minutes but was really several hours when a sergeant came running in yelling that a bunch of German paratroopers had landed to our rear. Everybody engaged in organized confusion (or SNAFU).

It was about 0400 so I sat up on the top step and started to put my overshoes on when I got the damndest cramp in the calf of my leg that I have ever had. But being smart I figured that by the time I got the other overshoe on the cramp would have gone away. When I started to put the other overshoe on, I'll be damned if I didn't get a cramp in the calf of that leg. I beat on them with my fist to no avail and they finally went away. We were told that we were going to attack Warnach again. By the time we got started it was daylight and this 90 day wonder Louie wanted someone to use the .50 cal on top of the tank to rake the roadside and 'scare the hell' out of the Germans. I was getting smarter by the minute and I remembered

*(Continued)*



the old Army adage 'Don't never volunteer for nothing.' After about 100 rounds the .50 jammed and the G.I. bailed down off the tank. As we turned a corner to the right, there in the middle of the road sat one of those German motorcycles with tracks at the back as a sort of a road block. The 90 day shave tail told the sergeant that he would back off a bit and then blast the motorcycle out of the way just in case it was booby-trapped. No sooner did the tank fire when a hidden German S.P. gun to perdition. Suddenly somebody yelled and two Krauts broke out of a copse of trees about 200 yards further down the road where it took a half dozen steps and then retreated to the safety of the trees. The other one ran along the fence for about 200 feet, calmly climbed over the fence just as you or I might do it today, and started to run up the road. Another 20-25 feet and he would have been safe, but all of a sudden he went about ten feet in the air, came down face first and never moved. When the two German soldiers broke out of the trees, we all started to fire at them — M-1's, Thompsons, BAR's, carbines, grease guns, and maybe a couple of .45's, too.

An officer came running over and ordered two other G.I.'s and myself to search this farmhouse. As it turned out, I was the only one with any grenades left and I had bent the pins over to make sure one of them did not come out while the grenade was in my pocket. Because of my cold hands, I couldn't get the pin out so I tossed the grenade to one of the other G.I.'s. He got the pin out, but as close as he was to the door, he should have lobbed it underhand but instead he threw it overhand and missed the doorway. The grenade hit the edge of the door and bounced back into the yard. The G.I. yelled, "I missed the door" and took off. I knew what to do, too, so I hauled ass behind a pile of rubbish in the corner of the yard. It seemed like forever and the grenade hadn't gone off. I stuck my head up to see what was going on just as the grenade went off. I guess I was just plain lucky. I had an M-1, one of the other G.I.'s had an M-1, and the third guy had a Thompson sub. I was second through the door in front of me. The other M-1 emptied his through the door to his left and the Thompson emptied his clip up the stairway to his right, and there we three stood just like the Three Stooges.

As we stepped back out into the yard, a Sherman started to rake the side of the building with .30 cal starting at the eaves and working his way across the building and then down and across again. Then all of a sudden when he was about six feet off the ground he quit and took off. I am almost certain that I managed to hide my whole body under my helmet while the tanker was hosing down the wall of the house. Suddenly, out of nowhere a cow came around a corner of a nearby burning building followed by an old woman who looked to be in her nineties and carrying a switch with which she was chasing the cow. The cow and then the old woman in pursuit disappeared around the other corner of the building and was gone. Where she came from I don't know and where she went I don't know.

I got mine on Christmas Eve; had to wait over four hours to be evacuated. I was supposed to be air evacuated back to England but the friggen fog had come back in so I wound up in a field hospital in Commercy, France on Christmas day, naked as the day I was born with a small Red Cross package sitting on my chest.

The records show that the taking of Warnach cost America five Sherman, 68 G.I.'s killed or wounded. The Germans lost 135 dead on the streets and in the houses with a like number either wounded or taken as POWs.

Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be)

## A 424TH ANTI-TANK CREW SAVED OUR LIVES

by Charles A. Haug, 28th ID, 112th IR, Co B

Frank Jordano and I moved up on line with Company "B" of the 112th Infantry Regiment – 28th Infantry Division on November 11, 1944. We were in the furthest north outpost of the 28th Division on the Schnee Eifel ridge. Each night we would go on patrol and make contact with the Division which was located just to the north of us. I remember the night of December 11, 1944 when we went on patrol and met the men from the 424th regiment of the 106th Division for the first time. There was almost a half mile gap between the very north outpost of our 28th Division and the south outpost of the 106th Division – No wonder the Germans could walk right through us. Our foxholes and outposts were around the town of Lutzkampen, Germany.

Of the 200 men in our Company "B" – 112th Regiment, there was only 25 of us who made it back to the 82nd Airborne on Xmas Eve. – The Germans pushed through "C" Company on our right on December 16th our company lost contact with the rest of our division on that day and we retreated with the 424th Regiment of the 106th Division for the next 7 or 8 days. We lost over 100 men (killed and wounded) the first day and the rest during the retreat.

The 25 of us who survived owe our lives to an anti-tank crew that was with the 424th Regiment of the 106th Division. On December 16th from 5:30 a.m. to noon we lost over half of our men. About 2:00 p.m. about 60 Germans surrendered to us and we sent them back to battalion with 2 guards. However, the Germans had pushed through "C" Company, 112th Regiment, on our right and they ended up recapturing the 60 Germans we had just captured as well as the 2 guards who were with them. About 5:00 p.m. December 16th, the second wave of Germans hit us and they were led by 5 or 6 tanks. The lead tank had a flame thrower which terrified our men. We had only rifles to defend our positions and when the tanks were about 200 yards from the outpost which Frank Jordano, our 1st Sergeant and I were in, we suddenly heard an Anti-tank gun firing from our left. It knocked out all 5 tanks and the Germans coming on foot turned around and did not attack any more that evening. The next day as the Germans started their attack again we began our retreat with the 424th Regiment of the 106th Division

We learned a few days later that the Anti-tank crew from the 106th Division. When the war was over, one of the men who was with us. George Knaphus, decided he wanted to find out the names of the men from the 106th Division who were assigned to this Anti-tank crew. After much research on his part he located one of them – a fellow by the name of Herbert J. Novotny. Herbert told Knaphus the head man or leader of the anti-tank crew was a man by the name of Paul Rosenthal. However, he learned that Rosenthal was killed in a later battle, so we never did get to thank him personally.

Twelve men of Company "B" who survived the Battle of the Bulge held their first reunion in 47 years at my home in June 1992 and in our memories of the war we all recalled the night we were saved from the tanks by the men of the 106th Division.

At 9:00 p.m., December 16, 1944, a few of us from "B" Company, 112th were still in our positions near Lutzkampen. Our 1st Sergeant Ralph McGeoch, sent Frank Jordano and myself on a patrol to go up to the 5 burning German tanks and see if we could find any of our men who were still living. As we approached the

(Continued)

## A 424TH TANK CREW SAVED OUR LIVES *(Continued)*

burning tanks, we could smell the awful smell of burned flesh. Most of the men in the tanks were not able to get out when they were hit by the men of the 106th Division. We saw several of the charred bodies hanging from the turrets of the tanks. We found a few of our men who were wounded and still living. We helped them back to a building near our CP, but the next day when we retreated all of our wounded (about 50 men) were left behind and captured by the Germans. I do not know what happened to them. We had no way to bring them to the rear as our rear reserves had all been driven back or captured by the Germans.

*Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be)*

## MY ARRIVAL WITH THE 951ST FA BN IN THE BULGE by Leo McCollum, 951st Field Artillery Bn

We had been in Germany since 14 September 1944. The Battle of the Bulge began on 16 December, 1944. On 19 December, while in position near Grosshau, Germany, we were ordered back to Belgium. The weather was extremely cold, and a blizzard had formed over the Ardennes in Belgium. It took us four days and nights to make the 108 mile trip on roads covered with ice and snow. On 23 December, we went into position 1 ½ miles south of Maffé, which is on the northwestern part of the Bulge. This was an area of the deepest penetration made by the Germans on their way to Antwerp. They hoped to reach that objective to cut off our supply lines. We were in the Battle of the Bulge.

In a day or so, I was sent to a firing battery as the Exec Officer. Fire Direction called after dark and gave us a fire mission to fire harassing fire on an important road junction. I told them that we had very few rounds left, and I would like to keep at least two rounds in case we were attacked by enemy tanks. HQ Battery said, "No, fire all of them," so we did. Fortunately, we weren't attacked that night by tanks, and our ammo trucks re-supplied us before the next mission.

A couple of days later, I was sent out as a Forward Observer. I selected a barn which had a large door with a good view of an opening in the forest about 100 yards wide and almost a mile in length. A young Belgian boy, about 10 years, came to visit with my driver, radio operator and me. His home was a short distance from the barn. He spoke very good English, and we certainly enjoyed talking with him. We always felt sorry for the families who were caught in such dangerous situations through no fault of their own. We were glad that we were fighting on foreign lands instead of defending our own soil. (Two World Wars... and most Americans have no idea how horrifying it was.) Early that evening, an infantry squad came by the barn, then went out on patrol and returned with a negative report. Later that night, we heard a tank, estimated to be ¾ mile away, then it shut off its engine. I estimated the range, and we fired one round. There was no more activity the rest of the night. The infantry checked the next morning. They found the tracks, but the tank was gone.

On 31 December 1944, I had been in Fire Direction Center for about five months. It is one of the most comfortable and safest jobs in combat artillery. Of course, I had other jobs occasionally to give me a change of scenery. On this day, Lieutenant Morris White was killed and Lieutenant Marlin Stopfel, the observer, was severely

burned in an artillery observation plane crash ½ mile southeast of Somme Leuze, Belgium.

An L-4 observation plane from another Battalion had made an imperfect takeoff, crossed a tree line, and came down on our airstrip due to lack of speed. At Lieutenant White was taking off, he gained very little altitude when he had to make an extremely sharp turn to avoid collision, and he crashed into the ground.

Since we were now short an observer, I told Lieutenant Colonel Carl Isenberg that I would like to be assigned to the Air Section. On my first flight, we took off on a sheet of ice and flew to the area of our front lines. Visibility was fairly good, so Lieutenant Walter Gerving, the pilot, gained altitude to the stalling point so we would have a better view in the distance. We observed no activity, and in a few minutes, the engine vapor locked and died. He pointed the plane straight down to spin the propeller, and the engine started when we were about 200 feet above the tops of the forest of pine trees. That was an interesting initiation flight! Lieutenant Gerving and I flew together throughout the rest of the War.

The 951st Field Artillery Battalion fired 15,798 rounds of 155 mm ammunitions (149 tons) during the Battle of the Bulge (an average of 508 rounds per day). That intensity represented lots of hard work for the howitzer crews and the men delivering the 95-pound shells. Snow, fog and clouds, limited the visibility. Forward Observers on the ground conducted most of the observed fire missions because visibility in the air was very limited. The reasons the Germans commenced this massive attack during the worst part of the winter was because they knew the US had air superiority. If the weather had been clear, the Germans would have been stopped by our units before they entered Belgium. The German strategy was an excellent plan, but misjudged our ability to shift our forces to stop them. The Bulge ended on 24 January 1945.

After the Bulge, the 951st Field Artillery was billeted in Emptinne, Belgium and several other small towns in that area to rest and perform maintenance on the equipment. Lieutenant Gerving and I stayed in a hotel reserved by the Army in Liege for three days.

On our way back to the 951st Field Artillery, it was late in the afternoon, so we landed near a small town in a field close to a nice residential area. By the time we got out of the plane, at least 20

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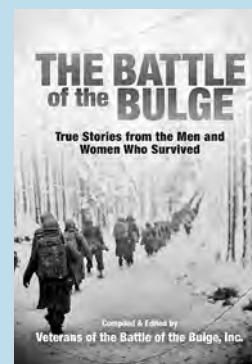
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people came out to meet us. We told them we needed a place to spend the night. A man and his wife came forward, and they said they would like for us to stay at their home. They had very nice two-story bedrooms, which was first class. We had an excellent dinner and a long visit with the couple that evening. They knew enough English to make the conversation pleasant. They brought coffee to our rooms the next morning, and they had a nice breakfast prepared for us when we joined them. They would not accept money, but we gave them all of the hard chocolate bars we had, which were out of our "K" rations. That was a real treat for them because chocolate was scarce in Europe at the time. To our surprise, our hosts were the Mayor and his wife. When we arrived back at the plane the next morning, at least 50 people were there. We found that many of them had spent the night with our plane to be sure that it would be protected. When we left, it appeared like the entire population was there.

While we were still in Belgium, we were about out of gas and stopped at a temporary airfield for our fighter planes to fill our tank. One of the P-51 pilots was visiting with us. When I lifted the tail of our plane to move to the direction of takeoff, he said, "The Army couldn't pay me enough money to fly one of those planes." We had no idea where the 951st Field Artillery would be in position, but when we passed Aachen, Germany, I started calling them on the radio. They were in position near Stolberg on 3 February 1945. That is about 10 miles from the position we occupied before the Battle of the Bulge. Our paid vacation was over, but it sure was great!

*Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be)*

## THE LAST MISSION

by Charles Haskett, 8th Air Force, 487th BG



It all began on Saturday December 16, 1944. The fog moved over our base like a blanket and you could not even see a few feet in any direction. The fog lasted over a week and even the trucks that carried us to the mess hall were grounded. We knew the Allied troops were in dire need of air support or the Battle of the Bulge would be lost. So, for once, our crews were anxious to get

into the air so they could help our men on the ground stop this move by the Germans to recapture Belgium.

Finally, on the evening of December 23, the fog lifted and the alert light was on at the squadron office, meaning we would go the following morning. We knew it would be rough because the Germans were throwing everything they had at us. I wrote some letters home and to my girlfriend thinking they may be the last I would write. I had a feeling that sooner or later our luck would run out, and this might be it. We all knew that our chances of surviving our tour of duty were slim anyway.

At briefing, we were told to expect heavy fighter opposition from the Germans, as they had moved many new groups into the area from other fronts. Also, as our group, the 487th, would be leading the whole 8th Air Force in, we could expect plenty of action. This was the understatement of the year! Due to some mix-up, we missed our fighter escort, leaving us wide open for the Luftwaffe. And here they came!

We had just passed over Liege, Belgium, when a group of

Messerschmitt 109s came at us head on. General Fred Castle was in the lead plane (the Germans may have known this) and his aircraft was hit immediately and severely damaged. Our plane was hit up front and I believe our pilot, Lieutenant Kenneth Lang, was killed at this time. About this time a large group of Focke-Wulfe 190s lined up behind us and attacked – all hell broke loose. With their 20mm cannons, they began firing at us just out of range of our .50 caliber machine guns. I thought at first they were using rockets because I could plainly see the smoke from the projectiles as they came toward our plane.

The first indication that we had been hit was when I heard a loud "whump". Looking to my right, the left side of the plane, I saw the fire coming from the engines. I had been firing my guns alternating from one to the other to save the barrels but when the holes began to appear along my right side, I thought "To hell with the barrels" and squeezed both triggers and held dead aim on the plane coming right at us. I saw a piece fly off, then it exploded, I exclaimed "I got him!" but while firing I heard our ball turret gunner, Bob Yowan, say "I'm hit!" Also at this time, I heard the top turret gunner, Jim Weber, say "Hit the silk, boys, she's burning like hell".

This was the first and only order to abandon ship. That is one reason I believe our pilot was already dead, since he normally would have been the one to do this. I know the co-pilot, Lieutenant Howard Miller, was still alive at this point, because I heard him call my name about this time. Everything was happening so fast that it is difficult to say just in what order things did occur, but this is the way I remember it.

I was feeling woozy – I think my oxygen lines had been severed. My right gun's ammunition was completely gone and only a few rounds remained in my left, in spite of my taking extra ammunition on board that morning, anticipating these attacks. The Plexiglas window on my right was broken and I had been showered with fragments from it. I could no longer see behind us due to the flames from the left wing, so I began to disconnect the electrical lines attached to me and prepared to bail out. I pulled the emergency release handle on the escape hatch but it did not work the way it was supposed to fly off, but it didn't, so I had to force the door open with my left hand and dive through it. Somehow I made it and the prop wash from the two right hand engines, that were still running good, grabbed me and flipped me over, like doing a somersault in mid air. Then I began to fall away from our burning plane, at first it seemed very slowly. The plane was still flying straight and level. The co-pilot must have still been at the controls. His last word that I heard was "Chuck", my nickname, but when I tried to answer him, my line was dead, either from gunfire or I had pulled the plug. I believe he should have received some commendation other than a posthumous Purple Heart. Maybe his story has never been told until now, but I'm sure the other survivors of our crew would agree that someone was keeping that aircraft level, when all common sense would tell us the plane should have gone out of control with both left side engines in flames.

Once I had stabilized my fall, I soon learned that by manipulating my arms and legs, I could determine my position and I soon decided it would be best to fall with my back toward the ground. A thought all at once occurred to me "I'll be damned, I forgot my parachute". But without realizing, I had somehow grabbed it off the catwalk behind me where I always kept it, and snapped it onto the harness which we always wore.

*(Continued)*





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### THE LAST MISSION *(Continued)*

We had been told to make a delayed opening when bailing out over enemy territory, to minimize the chances of being seen from the ground. We had also heard that enemy fighters sometimes attacked aircrew hanging below chutes. So I kept watching the ground while trying to pull my left glove on, which was dangling from the electrical cord attached to my flying suit. The glove had probably been torn from my hand when going out of the escape hatch. After I reached what I thought was about 2,000 ft I pulled the ripcord. My first sensation was that I had suddenly stopped and reversed direction and went back up. The straps cut into me and when I snapped into an upright position, I almost lost consciousness. And at that instant I hit the ground.

A sudden pain shot up my leg and I knew I had broken it. The ground was frozen with a light snow and my chute had folded up in a neat pile beside me. Luckily, there had been little wind at ground level and I had missed the trees. I had fallen into a small valley with a wooded hillside, and a small ravine that came down the hillside. I felt lost at this point, not being sure just where I was or who controlled the territory. I could hear gunfire, both small arms and larger guns of some sort and figured I must be in enemy-held territory. I thought at any time, someone would appear and either shoot me or take me prisoner, so I crawled up on my parachute, lit up a cigarette and thought "Let them come, I'm waiting".

After a short while without seeing or hearing anyone nearby, I thought I'd better head for home. While sitting on my parachute, I did see pieces of planes falling and a few parachutes off in the distance. None near enough to me that I could get to, especially with my leg broken. I always carried a Bowie standard Colt 45, and I used it to cut myself a crutch from a small tree. It was high noon and I figured the sun to be in the south at that time of year, so I headed west, hoping to find friendly forces somewhere. There was light snow on the ground, so I traveled in the small stream bed to keep from leaving tracks.

Avoiding all sounds of gunfire and sounds of vehicles, I kept heading west as much as possible. On the 27th, as I was going up a hill I suddenly saw an old lady with a dog coming down the hill toward me. We saw each other at about the same time. Knowing that the Belgian people were mostly friendly, I waved to her with my right hand. She immediately dropped the dog's leash and ran back up the hill and out of sight. I later learned that she had thought

I gave a Nazi salute and that I was a German paratrooper.

A short time later, I saw four soldiers coming over the hill toward me. Assuming they were Germans, I crawled into a brush pile that was lying in the ravine I had been staying close to. I could hear their voices as they approached but could not understand what they were saying until they were very near to me. One of them said, "I wonder where that S.O.B. went to?" Upon hearing those words in plain GI language, my first impulse was to jump up and exclaim, "Here I am!"

However with four guns waving around, I thought better of that and I pulled my handkerchief from my pocket, tied it to a stick and poked it up through the brush, spotted it and immediately four of the largest guns barrels I had ever seen pointed right at me. After I had finally convinced them that I was American and not a German paratrooper, they began to take care of me. Luckily for me, they were not trigger-happy like many of our troops were at that time because of the way the enemy were doing at this time – infiltrating and causing confusion all around.

The Rangers arranged transport for me to an aid station where I was given some first aid. They had no X-rays or any other equipment, so about all they could do was try to make me as comfortable as possible, which they did by administering generous quantities of cognac. It wasn't long until I was sleeping like a baby – I will never forget these fine people. The aid station was set up in an old inn located on the main street of the town of Aywaille, and the people there were very much afraid that the Germans were going to move in. The owner of the inn and his small daughter were very friendly, especially when they learned I was one of a bomber crew that had killed many "Boche".

I spent the night there thinking that the next day, we may all be prisoners of war. The Germans were that close. Next morning, I was taken by ambulance to Verviers, Belgium. From there I was put aboard a train to Paris, where I spent the night and was then taken to Cherbourg, ship to cross the English Channel. This was New Year's Eve and there was a party atmosphere on board, so a few drinks were had by all. Just before I was taken aboard, an English soldier or medic came to me and asked if I needed anything. Jokingly, I said, "bring me a beer".

He disappeared for a while and when he returned, sure enough he had two quart bottles of beer and placed them alongside of me on the stretcher I was on. I was very grateful to him and we drank a toast to him at midnight to celebrate the New Year.

I was taken to a US hospital somewhere in Lincolnshire where I began to receive treatment for my injuries and from there, to a rehabilitation hospital near Coventry. It was here that I got to meet some of the English people, learn their customs and get a feeling of what their life had been like during the last few years. Their patience and courage were remarkable – they had gone through hell, and were still pleasant and courteous. It gave me an entirely new outlook on life and why we were over there. Up to that time, I had only thought of the Nazi threat to the USA and it had never dawned on me that we needed anyone else to win this war. About April 22 or 23rd, I was declared fit for duty and returned to my bomb group but by this time the war was over for the heavy bombers, so I never flew another combat mission. It was just a matter of waiting until things were wrapped up and we could return home. We flew back to the USA in July, 1945, and with the war in the Pacific over, I was discharged from military service on October 12, 1945.

*Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be)*

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The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. is proud to offer this full color 11" by 17" certificate, which may be ordered for any veteran who received credit for the Ardennes campaign. It attests that the veteran participated, endured and survived the largest land battle ever fought by the US Army. (There is also a version worded for those who were killed in action or died of their wounds. Be sure to check the appropriate box on the form.) If you haven't ordered yours, then you might want to consider ordering one to give to your grandchildren. They are generally most appreciative of your service, and the certificate makes an excellent gift—also for that buddy with whom you served in the Bulge. You do not have to be a member of VBOB to order one, but the veteran must have received the Ardennes credit. This beautiful certificate is produced on parchment-like stock and is outlined by the full color World War II insignias

of the major units that fought in the Battle of the Bulge, starting with the 12th Army group, then followed numerically with Armies, Corps and Divisions and the two Army Air Forces. We wish that each unit insignia could have been shown, but with approximately 2000 units that participated in the Bulge, it is impossible. However, any unit that served in the Bulge would have been attached to or reported through one of the unit insignias depicted. You may want to add one of the veteran's original patches to the certificate when you receive it. **Please allow approximately 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.** The certificate will be shipped rolled in a protective mailing box. **Please be sure that you write the name, service number and unit as you would like it to appear on the certificate.** The unit name should be as complete as possible, because you want someone reading it to understand what unit the veteran was in. We will abbreviate it as necessary. It is important that you type or print this information and the unit must be one of the 2,000 units authorized for the Ardennes Campaign credit that is in the Official General Order No. 114 for units entitled to the Ardennes Battle Credit and will be the basis for sale of the certificate. **The cost of the certificate is \$15 postpaid.**

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# THE 87TH ID AT BIDDULPH MOOR, ENGLAND

by Girard Calehuff, 87th ID, 345th IR



OCT-NOV 1944: The 87th Infantry Division was a relative newcomer to the US Army. Most of the Officers, commissioned and Non-commissioned, were new to the Army and the soldiers were primarily of young college age as the result of a change in approach on the part of the army in which the participants in a program designed to train engineers for the Engineering Corps were transferred to the Infantry when demand for the latter skill intensified as the result of the German Invasion of France. The Engineering Training Program was known as the US Army ASTP with many of the participants underage (less than 18 years of age) for the regular army and were carried in a reserve category known as the ASTRP. The end result was a division with a preponderance of very young soldiers with most 18 years of age. The 87th and probably the 106th Divisions were probably the youngest soldiers in the US Army.

Members of the ASTP completed their Basic Training at Fort Benning, GA and then were assigned to the 87th [and the 106th] when the ASTP was discontinued. The 87th left Fort Jackson in mid October 1944 and were received on the Queen Elizabeth and the H.H. T Pasteur for the trip to England. We arrived at Gourock Scotland on the Firth of Clyde on 22 Oct 1944 and were transported via train to the Biddulph Moor area to regroup and reequip. During the 23-27 November period the 87th departed for France and eventually combat with the German Invaders. We had a great month with the people of Biddulph!

During our sojourn in England prior to being shipped to France, D Company- 345 Infantry (my company) was billeted in an old stone velvet mill on the moors outside of Biddulph. There were no sanitary facilities except for an outside latrine. At night, everyone kept a #10 can underneath one's bunk to use for middle of the night nature calls and it would be emptied in the morning when you went to the latrine for the AM activities. Some unfeeling scoundrels would use their neighbors can and occasionally would fill it to the point where the rightful owner would find it full when the need arose at 100 or 200 AM. Needless to say, the language that ensued could not be described in polite terms as the latrine was a good 100 yards outside and it was overcoat weather.

The velvet mill also lacked shower or bathing arrangements and we were transported to a nearby coal mine to use the shower facilities. About 20 or so of us soldiers would position ourselves under the shower heads and the water would be turned on and off from a central spigot. There were no individual controls. It was strictly a case of wetting down, soaping up and then showering off after a quick wash up. It worked!! Any alternative was not in the cards and we managed to keep clean especially for the Saturday Night Dance back in Biddulph that the residents arranged for this young group of soldiers. We appreciated the effort and we hoped that the young ladies also received some gratification.

The bus route from town terminated at a crossroads pub (The Rose & Crown) about a mile cross country from the mill and most of us would get a cone of chips in town prior to boarding and have

them with a pint or so of good English beer before commencing the trek on foot back to the mill. We had ample opportunity to restock our bladders with this arrangement. The people were very friendly in the Town of Biddulph and I keep fond memories of my sojourn there. I was especially intrigued by the narrow canal boats that hauled coal to the nearby potteries and pottery back.

The canal's were very narrow. I understand that most of these boats have been converted to tourist use.

We were sorry to leave in late November as the people of Biddulph has been so kind to we young soldiers. A number of us returned following the war for a visit and especially a ride on the converted Canal Boats that became so very popular during the post war period. My Wife Carol and myself took advantage of the opportunity later in the 1970's when we undertook a driving tour of England and Ireland. Biddulph was just as I had remembered it and the Canal Boat ride was wonderful.

I will always have a fine memory of Happy Days in Biddulph.

## DONATIONS

We appreciate the generosity of those who made donations between April 1 and May 31, 2014:

Barone, Patrick	635 AAA AW Bn
Black, Joe	Associate
Burdick, Donald	16 FAO Bn
Bush, Darrell	75 InfD
Bush, Kenneth	2 InfD
Caulfield, John J.	Korean War Vet
Cosgrove, William	Associate
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Elliott, Donald	385 AAA AW Bn
Ervin, John	Associate
Garson, H. Neil	10 ArmD
Gaulke, Eugene	10 ArmD
Glenn, Michael J.	Associate
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Kaiser, Norman L.	75 InfD
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Orth, Herbert	528 FA Bn
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Spriggs, William S.	83 InfD
Vanhoose, Spurgeon	10 ArmD
Woychik, Leroy	11 ArmD
Zafonte, Leo	Associate



### DONOR SPOTLIGHT

The award for largest donations this time go to:  
Associate Member Leo Zafonte,  
and Donor Michael Rubens.





## THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF D-DAY

**World leaders and veterans gathered on Friday, June 6, 2014 by the beaches of Normandy to mark the 70th anniversary of D-Day.**

The Normandy landings, codenamed “Operation Neptune”, were the landing operations on June 6, 1944 (termed D-Day) of the Allied invasion of Normandy in “Operation Overlord” during World War II. The largest seaborne invasion in history, the operation began the invasion of German-occupied western Europe, led to the restoration of the French Republic, and contributed to an Allied victory in the war.

## GERMAN RAILROAD GUN AT ELSENBORN

by Curt Whiteway, 99th ID, 394th IR, Co E

ELSENBORN BELGIUM. We dug in, on the fields in front of the town, with F & G companies in front of us. My company was in reserve as we only had 18 men left. There were lots of our artillery setting up around Elsenborn and behind it. Came a time when the Germans down in the heavy woods began to fire a large railroad gun at prime targets and our artillery. Word was put out for everyone to search for the railroad gun. Artillery planes were out looking, and we infantry were sent out on special patrols, looking for railroad tracks, but still the railroad gun would set up and fire one or two shells, then disappear again.

One day, I was given a patrol setting up on radio silence, and an artillery officer named RED was to stay on my radio circuit all the time we were out. My company officer gave me certain orders as to where we were to search in the enemy lines and no man’s land. The snow was quite deep and I took only 7 men and no B.A.R.s so we could move fast if necessary. We searched the first area, but no tracks or signs of that gun, as artillery oftentimes flew over looking too. There were no roads, nothing but very hilly country and heavy woods. I ordered the scouts into another section and our planes left to look elsewhere. As we moved in a line through the forest, I saw a German combat patrol coming down well behind us and I told the men to start moving fast, as I pointed to the scouts where to go.

I noted that there was an officer and his radio man among the enemy patrol and knew that we were in trouble. He would try to push us into a second patrol waiting in ambush. We zig-zagged as much as possible and they chased us through the snow, but they were slower, as there were too many men to handle. Thus we stayed well ahead. They chased us up over a hill into the open and we stopped briefly to get our breath while I searched around us with my binoculars. Then I scanned down below us in a sharp valley opening, facing Elsenborn.

Suddenly there was the railroad gun. They were slowly moving it into position, using many slaves to clear a dirt road ahead of evergreens, while others were picking up a set of track behind it and coming around the gun to place the tracks in front of the gun, like you could do with toy trains. It was one very big gun. There were piles of fresh-cut pine boughs that others had in the rear been removing from on top of the gun. I broke radio silence and called “RED”. I found the railroad gun and he came to life. I quickly gave the co-ordinance and could hear one gun of the artillery back in Elsenborn. It landed pretty close. I corrected quickly and could hear lots of artillery coming in and we took off like a striped-assed bird for home.

As we began running, I took a last look down there and all the slaves and German soldiers were beginning to run, but they didn’t have a chance. There was no place to go, as the ground around them was very steep. I do not know how much damage was done to the railroad gun or the slaves & Jerry’s, because we were headed down for home as fast as we could run. But I do know that we never had any more trouble from it and that enemy combat patrol was trying to head us off. We reached our lines before they did. Red sure threw a lot of artillery down in there and I assume that our artillery planes checked it out later.

After the war—perhaps 45 years or so—the Belgian historians sent me a photo of that railroad gun. It had been brought in from around Bastogne. I’ve often wondered about the German cleverness with that railroad gun and moving it about that way. Then one day in 2002, I was reading an archaeology magazine and came upon a very interesting article. It told about, in the 1880’s, the American and Europeans liberated the obelisks from Egypt and North African countries: how they brought a 220-ton obelisk to NYC and engineered how to move it down through NY city streets of 5th avenue and 82nd street by taking a set of tracks from behind the obelisk and, placing it carefully in front, moved it slowly forward, a track at a time, to Graywacke Knoll and erected it in place. My mystery was solved, though it was too late to tell most of the veterans who were at Elsenborn in those days. But there are still a few of us around.

# VBOB QUARTERMASTER ORDER FORM • AUGUST 2014

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** QM prices are sometimes changing, due to increasing manufacturing and shipping costs.

Therefore, we will no longer accept old QM forms from previous issues of *The Bulge Bugle*.

Please complete **this form** and send your payment to the address listed below.

Please ship the selected items to:

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#1. VBOB logo patch 3" \$4.75  
#2. VBOB logo patch 4" \$5.50



#3. VBOB logo enamel lapel pin 1/2" \$5



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#7. VBOB gold bolo tie \$16  
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#10. Challenge coin 1 3/4" (gold tone with colored enamel) \$10



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#2. \$5.50	x _____	= \$ _____
#3. \$5	x _____	= \$ _____
#4. \$15	x _____	= \$ _____
#5. \$36	x _____	= \$ _____
size: circle one		
S M L XL XXL XXXL XXXXL		
#6. \$25	x _____	= \$ _____
#7. \$16	x _____	= \$ _____
#8. \$16	x _____	= \$ _____
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Total cost of items up to \$5.00, add **\$3.00 S & H**  
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# VETERANS of the BATTLE of the BULGE

P.O. Box 27430  
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August 2014

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VBOB's 33rd Annual Reunion

AUGUST 30 – SEPTEMBER 3, 2014 COLUMBIA, SC

See  
page 16

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



## APPLICATION FOR NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge  
PO Box 27430, Philadelphia PA, 19118-0430

**Regular membership** is for those who have received the Ardennes campaign credit. **Associate membership** is for relatives, historians or others with an interest in preserving the memory of the Battle of the Bulge. Both have the same rights and privileges. **Please check one box below:**

☐ Regular Yearly: \$15    ☐ Regular Lifetime: \$75    ☐ Associate Yearly: \$15    ☐ Associate 4-Year: \$50 (save \$10!)

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**If applying as a Regular member (you are a Battle of the Bulge vet), please provide the following information about yourself:**

Campaigns \_\_\_\_\_

Unit(s) to which assigned during the period 16 Dec 1944 to 25 Jan 1945: Division \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

**If applying as an Associate member, please provide the following information about yourself:**

Relationship to the Bulge Veteran (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Historian    ☐ Other  
(wife, son, daughter, niece, etc. or N/A)

The Bulge Vet's Name and Units \_\_\_\_\_

Your Military Service (if any): Dates \_\_\_\_\_ Branch \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make check or money order payable to VBOB and mail with application to above address.**