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THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

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★ **DECEMBER 2014** ★

**VBOB Trip to Belgium and
Luxembourg in Honor of the
70th ANNIVERSARY of
THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE**

See page 21 for updates.



News on the upcoming book of your stories: "THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE — True Stories from the Men and Women Who Survived." Please turn to page 19.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



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

Greetings for the New Year. As we enter the New Year there are many subjects that must be addressed early in the year so plans and coordination can be completed. Areas such as increased and renewed Associate Memberships are critical to perpetuate the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge (VBOB), associated with membership are financial conditions for the health of the VBOB. Therefore, the Executive Council must address these challenges. Additionally, the September reunion in Columbia, South Carolina requires more attention and advice to support Barbara and her efforts to make it another great

reunion. Also our planning and coordination with the Embassy staffs as well as identifying a Tour director and stateside coordinator for air travel is absolutely necessary and must be done as soon as possible. Transportation and hotels in Belgium and Luxembourg is another requirement that perhaps the tour director can arrange, to date we do not have a commitment from either Embassy. I would anticipate an early meeting again with the Embassy staffs to try and finalize dates, etc. I also realize traveling family members will be concerned so they may arrange vacation time, what the cost to them will be and a few other items that a family must make before the commitment. The foregoing matters are very important so I wanted to devote most of this message to these matters.

Now for social talk... fortunately I was invited with my wife to the National Veterans Breakfast at the White House, a beautiful occasion and also the meeting and handshake with the President. Later on 20 December the National Veterans Committee members were invited to tour the White House. These invitations are offered to the VBOB National President as an Associate member of the National Veterans Committee, and I was honored, but also privileged to represent the VBOB. The December Commemoration event was well received by the attendees with two visits to the Luxembourg Embassy for Lunch and an evening reception. Wreath placements at the Memorials, in spite of the cold weather, were well done. At these events, we were able to say goodbye to the Belgian Ambassador who has now returned to Belgium...end of tour. John and Mary Ann, as usual did a great job!

Best regards to all for great New Year.

Doug Dillard

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

I'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please contact me if you served in the 489th AAA Battalion, Battery B

I can be reached at:

John S. Kovach
13317 Dean Dr
North Huntingdon, PA 15642
Telephone 724-237-2527

DID YOU SERVE WITH GEORGE TAMMARA IN THE BLUE SPADERS?

Dear VBOB,

I tell my kids that WWII veterans saved the world.

Your Nov 2013 newsletter shows a new member Robert Pidcoe from the 1st infantry division. Would you publish and/or please forward him this correspondence:

My grandfather was PFC George Tammara 1st division, 26th regimental combat team. He wore the Big Red One. He was a replacement rifleman and went through rifleman training in Florida from July 1944—Oct 1944.

I have done significant research on George Tammara and his unit, The Blue Spaders in WWII. George Tammara was killed in March of 1945 after fighting in the Northern Shoulder of the Battle of the Bulge and crossing at the Remagen bridgehead. I worked hard to get all of his medals awarded posthumously and have compiled much information regarding his WWII service.

I am looking to find anyone who knew George Tammara during WWII. I would very much like to speak with and/or meet anyone who knew my grandfather.

More information on George is found at www.wwiihero.com.

Thank you to all the WWII veterans for saving the world.

J Randolph George Tammara
215 880 8536

LOOKING FOR INFORMATION, 802ND FA BN

My name is Roy Hiller and I am interested in contacting anyone who may have served with my father, Nathan Joseph Hiller, from late 1942 to October 1944 in the 802nd Field Artillery, Battery B, or at XII Corps Artillery HQ from then until the end of the war. In particular, I would like to connect with anyone who would have witnessed the events of mid-June 1943 at Fort Benning, GA when there was a muzzle blast that killed 2 and injured several others. My father was a prolific letter writer and I have read and scanned over 360 letters written during his time in the Army. I also have several pictures of him and others in his unit in a number of places. Any information would be greatly appreciated.

My home address is

521 Cold Stream Place,
Nashville, TN 37221
My email is royh1983@comcast.net

RE: THE STORY "A ROUTINE RECON PATROL"

I knew Jim Harris during the summer of 1950 in Salem Massachusetts. He hadn't been out of the Army too long and was still struggling with physical problems. He had dropped behind enemy lines and it was a while before he was back in American hands during that horrific early January of 1945

He didn't talk about the war; just mentioning that his obvious scars were from encounters with the "Krauts". Before losing touch with him after I had moved to California he gave me a copy of a story he wrote entitled *A Routine Recon Patrol*, which is now in this issue of the Bulge Bugle.

My husband Dustin 10th Armored Division, 55th Armored Engineer Battalion was wounded in Deauville, Luxembourg before Christmas 1944. In August 1994 we went on the 10th Armored Divisions battlefield tour to Belgium and Luxembourg. He hadn't talked much about the war until then. To be honored in Bastogne and other towns meant so much to him. It was a very emotional experience. Dustin passed away in January 12, 2011. He spent several years speaking to high schools history classes about war.

I hope we can continue to educate our students about the sacrifices their grandparents made for them and of the love they had for their country and their knowledge and understanding of how easily evil crept in on little cat's feet.

Sincerely,
Madeline Aughenbaugh

BELGIAN MAN INTERESTED IN HEARING FROM BULGE VETERANS

I have been writing to a young Belgian man, Jan Jasper, who lives in Essen, Belgium, up near the coast of Antwerp. He is interested in hearing from veterans of the Bulge. He is an aficionado of the Bulge veterans—very sincere!

He is married with 2 young boys ages 2 and 5. He drove from Antwerp all the way to Liege, Belgium to meet me at the "Remember Museum" 2 years ago.

He would like to hear from veterans who served in the Bulge—He does NOT sell your stories—He is very sincere!

His address is:

Jan Jasper
Hofstraat 7
2910 Essen
Belgium

Many Thanks,
John McAuliffe
87 INF
Central Mass. Chapter VBOB

THE GREAT ST LOUIS FIRE

Most of you know about the fire that started July 12, 1973 and destroyed millions of military service records. A new facility has recently opened and the story can be found in the September 2013 issue of the VFW magazine.

Go online to the following link to the VFW magazine:
<http://digitaledition.qwinc.com/publication/?i=171767>

submitted by Dee Paris, 9th AD,
14th TB (now deceased)

69TH BULGE COMMEMORATION

The 2013 69th Anniversary Commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge was held at the DoubleTree Hilton Crystal City, in Arlington VA, from 14 – 17 Dec 2013.

written by John Bowen, Associate



Centered, in the back row, is the Belgian Ambassador to the United States Jan Matthysen and Mrs. Matthysen. Lower left, front row - LTC Alfred Shehab, Retired, Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation President, following the Sunday evening banquet [15 December 2013].

The 2013 69th Anniversary Commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge, was held at the DoubleTree Hilton Crystal City, in Arlington VA, from 14 – 17 Dec 2013.

As always attendees were waiting to pick up their packets in the wonderful hospitality room! Over the years this has become a “home” to the VBOBers.

Vickie Rafel, our new Treasurer, had the check-in table all in order so that people could easily get registration packets. Candie Schimming in her usual smiling style, set up the “Salute to Bulge Veterans” Christmas Tree for the Veterans to decorate at the appropriate time (4:00 PM). Millie Sholly assisted the veterans with this event. This event is an honor for these Bulge Vets to have an opportunity to participate in the decorations, and, as always, they enjoyed looking at the pictures to see if they could find a buddy. In short order what was essentially a bare tree, soon began to sparkle as the Vet photos were added as well as the unit insignias.

After the tree trimming, folks either went off to dinner on their own or headed for the snacks and refreshments in the Hospitality Room and to renew acquaintances and meet new friends. The Hospitality Room as always was well stocked with snacks and refreshments. The Room was decorated for the Holidays with an ample supply of books, maps and memorabilia about the Bulge, spread out on tables lining the walls of the room. The Hospitality Room was a lively place until it had to close at midnight.

On the following day, the 15th of December, we were the guests of the gracious Luxembourg Ambassador, Jean-Louis Wolzfeld, at the Luxembourg Embassy, for a delicious buffet luncheon and viewing of a movie about (Grand Duchess of Luxembourg) “Charlotte: A Royal at War.” This documentary explored how the Grand Duchess, after being exiled from her country of Luxembourg, in 1940, led the campaign to free her people from German occupation. She instilled hope to her nation through her charm and the

power of the radio to inspire them in their darkest hour. Her husband Prince Felix and son crown Prince Jean in Oct 1942 joined the British Army. The film showed the important role she played in WWII history.

Between the movie and lunch a beautifully framed 47 by 52 inch map of the Bulge front-line area and previously signed by Bulge veterans at the place where they served was presented to Ambassador Wolzfeld by Mike Ciquero of Pennsylvania, who had designed it. A VBOB Certificate of Appreciation for the Luncheon and Reception and a boxed VBOB Challenge Coin was also presented to the Ambassador by Pres. Doug Dillard and BOB Foundation VP, John Bowen.

After an enjoyable Luncheon, we returned to the hotel at 2:30 PM so folks could relax a bit and get ready for the evening Commemorative Banquet and the reception preceding it at the hotel Washington Ballroom. The Banquet opened to the stirring beat of the Fife and Drum as the 3rd Inf Bn Color Guard posted the Colors; the anthems of Belgium, Luxembourg and the United States were played. And the Pledge of Allegiance was said followed by Taps.

Five toasts were rendered by Dan Santagata 5th InfD – “To those who served in the Battle of the Bulge;” by Athance “Joe” Landry 776th AAA AW Bn – “To Belgium & Luxembourg;” by Francis Chesko 7th ArmdD 33 AIB – “To all the men and women serving worldwide;” by Mike J. Levin 7th ArmdD 489th Armd FA Bn – “To the ladies and our guests;” and by Robert Phillips 28th InfD 110th Inf - “To our fallen comrades.” Master of Ceremonies, BOB Fndn President Alfred H M Shehab then introduced Guests, Veterans and children prior to Dinner being served

After a wonderful dinner Belgium Ambassador H.E. Jan Matthysen was introduced who brought greetings and thanks from the government and people of Belgium. These were special greetings for after 5 wonderful years as Ambassador to the US (Continued)

BULGE COMMEMORATION *(Continued)*

he and his wife would be returning to Belgium at the end of the year. We will miss them a lot for their kindness to the Vets; and all who came to know and honor them.

Deputy Chief of Mission Olivier Baldauff, representing Ambassador Jean-Louis Wolzfeld of Luxembourg, brought greetings and thanks from the Luxembourg people for their liberty and freedom by you Bulge Veterans. He also shared his thoughtful words relating a personal family story of thanks to our Bulge Veterans. (A very touching time for all of us present!)

MG Jeffery S. Buchanan, the new commander of Military District of Washington spoke about the true importance of the "soldier" and what they mean to the US Army. He also related the story of Belgian Congo nurse Augusta Chiwy who tended to our wounded in surrounded Bastogne, which will be featured in a later Bulge Bugle.

Our main speaker, MG James A. "Spider" Marks, USA Rtd, gave a very interesting talk on the condition of the US Army which he says is well discipline and well trained. Following his talk, the Belgium Ambassador assisted by his Military Attaché, BG Mike Delobel and MDW MG Buchanan made awards of the special Belgian Award, the Fourragère 1940. These veterans were part of units cited twice in the Daily Orders of the Belgian Army for heroic actions during the Battle of the Bulge. Accepting the Fourragère 1940 at the Banquet in person were Jarvis Taylor, 99th Inf Bn (Separate); Hyman Slavin, 106th InfD 424 Inf; and Carole Bieneman, daughter accepting for Clyde E. Roller, deceased 4th InfD.

The following others could not attend and their awards were accepted in their names by VBOB President Douglas Dillard for them:

Cecil C. Berry, 99th InfD 394th Inf AT Co; Harold Bagdanoff, 99th InfD 393rd Inf B Co; Clarence E. Crawford; George Fisher, 26th "Yankee" InfD 328th Inf; Stanley D. Levine, 82nd AbnD 325th Glider Inf; Norman D McCutcher, 2nd ArmdD 17th Armd Engr Bn; Nathaniel Mc Parland 99th InfD 393rd Inf; Philip C. Montgomery, 99th InfD 394th Inf.

The Historical Foundation Award to the Battle of the Bulge Person of the Year was announced. Robert G. Rhodes, VBOB Trustee and Associate, was selected for his promotion of BOB and its history and his work in planning, promoting and instituting a campaign to recruit 500 new members was honored for his continuous and significant contributions to maintaining the memory and history of the Battle of the Bulge. VBOB Certificates were given to our guests in appreciation and the Battle of the Bulge Commemorative Plates provided by Glenn Yarborough and the Belgian/American Association were given out to all new attendees to our Banquet. Veterans received large coins with the Bulge front lines pictured on it. As parting remembrances for their kindness and service to the veterans, a beautiful mantel clock was given to Ambassador and Mrs. Matthysen. Also, BG Mike Delobel, Belgium Military Attaché, who also was leaving and retiring in a few days, was given a VBOB Certificate and VBOB walnut boxed VBOB Challenge coin in appreciation of his friendship, kindness and splendid cooperation with our organization and veterans. He will be sorely missed!

The banquet was a genuine good time such that many of the attendees and guests retired to the Hospitality Room for another couple of hours of conversation and camaraderie.

The next morning, on the 16th of Dec, everyone was up early for wreath layings in Arlington Cemetery and later at the World War II Memorial. There was a definite nip in the air. We had to have our wreath laying ceremony at 9:15 AM at our VBOB Monument so as

to not interfere with a burial to be held at 10:00 AM in our same location. VBOB President Dillard was joined at our VBOB Monument by Ambassador Matthysen of Belgium and Ambassador Wolzfeld of Luxembourg, each laying a wreath and paying respects. We then proceeded to the Tomb of the Unknowns for a 10:15 AM wreath laying. Because of the nip in the air the Tomb Guards performed an abbreviated service so everyone could get back to a warm area. President Dillard laid the wreath as all paid respects at the tomb of the Unknowns. We then proceeded to our original VBOB Monument in front of the amphitheater and laid another wreath there.

Since the ceremony was abbreviated, we were at the WWII Memorial early and the National Park Ranger there was very accommodating and suggested two locations to take group pictures of the Bulge Veterans, at the front entrance steps and by the "Battle of the Bulge" words on the European side of the memorial. It is here where Richard Whalen laid the last wreath... We were extended every courtesy by this Park Ranger this year as she also described various aspects of the WWII Memorial.

It was now time to head back to the DoubleTree Hotel for the VBOB Luncheon, in the Jefferson Room, on the 14th floor, with its commanding view of the City of Washington. The warm soup hit the spot as did the turkey or chicken sandwiches.

Following lunch and remarks by President Douglas Dillard, he installed the elected officers of VBOB for 2014.

We now had about three hours to relax and prepare for the evening's reception at the beautiful Luxembourg Embassy from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Ambassador Jean-Louis Wolzfeld was most gracious again to honor the Bulge Veterans and their guests with this beautiful reception.

An open bar and delicious finger foods were served prior to remarks expressing thanks by the Ambassador, of his country's gratitude to our Veterans for liberating them not once but twice during World War II. One of the longest friendship and love affair between



Battle of the Bulge veterans adjacent to the Atlantic Victory Pavilion, World War II Memorial. Current VBOB president, Douglas Dillard directly behind wreath. [16 December 2013]

our veterans and the people of Luxembourg.

What made this Reception especially pleasing was that the Belgium Embassy Staff and the Luxembourg Embassy Staff were there for us to express our gratitude to them all and be able to say our personal best wishes to Ambassador Matthysen and General Delobel as they depart.

A great time was had by all and we are most grateful to Ambassador Wolzfeld and the Luxembourg Embassy Staff for their graciousness and hospitality.

188TH COMBAT ENGINEERS IN BELGIUM

by Wilfrid R. Riley, 188th CEB

In mid December the Battalion was performing all the tasks that are peculiar to being a combat engineer. However work on all of these projects ceased when we were ordered by Third Army Headquarters to join the other units that were ordered north to stop the massive German penetration of our lines in the First Army area.

We departed from Keskastle in the Saar Valley on the morning of December 20th and joined the thousands of American soldiers heading for Belgium. Several times during the move north we had to move to the side of the road and permit armored units to pass through us. Armored units were apparently needed ASAP. During one of these halts I was asked about our final destination and said that information had not been given to me before our departure. The look of concern on his face told me that he was very concerned. I told him: someday "Grif" if we survive all of this we will be sitting in our rockers with our favorite libation in our hand and we will smile as we remember moments like this. I hope he did because I have.

We stopped for a day in Longuyon, France and then on to Martelange, Belgium on the borders of France and Luxembourg. Martelange was to be the base of our operations in the Battle of the Bulge. That night B Company was given the assignment of outpost-ing Martelange as the next town north, Bigonville was held by the Germans. A company to build a Bailey Bridge across the Sure River to provide two way traffic across the river. C Company was to be held in reserve.

My platoon moved out of Martelange toward Bigonville with the arrival of darkness and as we neared our assigned location to set up a defensive position we were commanded to halt. In the darkness I could not see the source of the command. Then a voice commanded the soldier wearing the long coat to move forward. That was me and after a few steps I was again ordered to halt. Then there was the request for the password followed by questions about cities in the USA and questions about baseball etc. When the challenger was satisfied he told me to advance once again. I did as commanded and very soon I saw an American battle tank sitting next to a small building under a tree, well concealed for such a large unit. Looking up I saw the muzzle of the cannon and in my minds eyes it was at least twenty four inches in diameter. The voice coming from the tank said "Soldier if I was in your shoes I would get rid of that long coat you are wearing because in it you sure as hell look like a German soldier" In the freezing weather I could not discard the coat so I tucked it into my waist and inquired if that looked better. An affirmative reply was received. (Our supply sergeant gave me a mackinaw coat to wear the next day after I told him the story). I was given permission to move on by the voice that I never did see.

We moved on to our assigned location which was close by and the platoon was soon located in the best positions to defend the area around the road crossing. Nothing unusual occurred during the night but at first light a column of tanks approached us from the East and stopped when they saw us. Up went the hatch on the lead tank and an officer asked our identity after identifying himself. He asked if we had seen or heard anything during the night. He was told that we heard a lot of vehicle movement in Bigonville during the night. With that the hatch closed and tanks proceeded toward Bigonville. In a very short time the sounds of battle were heard. We remained

alert for whatever might happen.

The first group of prisoners the armored infantry brought out of the town included an officer, a captain. He was dressed in a dark red uniform and wearing an overseas cap of the same color. He seemed to be dressed for a classroom rather than a battlefield. All of the other prisoners were in battlefield gray uniforms and wore a steel helmet or were bareheaded. Other groups of prisoners were brought out of town and into the midst of the area we were defending where they were thoroughly searched by the Fourth Armored Division soldiers. Later they were loaded into trucks and taken to a collection point and that is an assumption on my part. They did not say and I did not ask. In mid afternoon the town was in the hands of the 4th Armored Division and our mission was finished and we returned to Martelange for the night.

On December 24th., Christmas Eve the 188th. Engineers and the 249th. Engineer Battalions were placed in the line east of Martelange. The 4th. Armored Division had progressed nearly to Bastogne and was ready to breach an opening in the German defense. The two Engineer Battalions and two Artillery Battalions were to take the positions now occupied by the 4th. Armored Division. When the Engineer and Artillery Battalions were in place the 4th. Armored units would move back thru them and move east and sweep around the left into Bastogne.

We began the process of digging in which was very difficult if almost impossible as the snow was thigh deep and the ground was frozen solid. Where is the TNT when you really need it? All night the friendly fire from the Artillery was reassuring and especially when the familiar sound of incoming whistling shells was not heard throughout the night. However the Germans did launch flares all night long and they illuminated the area as if it were daylight. We froze in place to avoid detection. The Germans did not attack and we were perfectly satisfied to hold our position. At noon on Christmas Day we were relieved by elements of the 6th. Cavalry Division. We moved to an area in the rear where our mess personnel had a wonderful Christmas dinner prepared for us.

The maneuver of the 4th Armored Division of moving out as we moved in was a successful one. The next day December 26th, they smashed thru the German defenses and the siege of Bastogne was ended. On that day we were briefed on our next assignment, but that is another story for another time.

BONNE RUE, BELGIUM

by Harry Wintemberg, 87th ID

As was always the case, the foot soldier never was informed of anything beyond what he was supposed to do in the immediate area. We rarely knew where we were located and, more importantly, where the enemy was located and in what strength. Our world was limited to what we could see and when it was snowing, that wasn't very far. Following our arrival in Belgium, we were separated into separate combat units and given very vague details about what our objective was to be and the time frame in which we were to accomplish our mission. On either 12/27 or 12/28, our entire regiment (347th) moved out across snow-covered fields in a northeast direction. A battalion of Sherman tanks had been assigned to work with us.

What happened during the next few days could easily fill the pages of a book. We had not traveled very far when we came in contact with a large enemy force consisting of infantry and many German

(Continued)

BONNE RUE, BELGIUM *(Continued)*

Tiger tanks with 88mm guns. For a couple of days (and nights) there were intense artillery barrages, tank battles, rifle fire and machine-gun bursts. The weather prevented any air support. Within my immediate area, we lost 3 tanks from 761st Tank Battalion and countless casualties. Losses on both sides were heavy and we paid dearly for the little ground we gained.

It was either January 1 or 2, 1945 that we occupied a small hamlet of several hundred people, known as Bonne Rue. We did not learn until days later why this little village was so important and so viciously defended by the Germans. It was located adjacent to a highway that ran east and west from the area of Bastogne to St. Hubert, which was a main supply line for the advancing German forces in their drive to capture the main Belgium port of Antwerp and divide the British and American forces.

Little did we know what a hornet's nest we had stirred up. As long as we held Bonne Rue, the Germans had to use longer and secondary routes to funnel their supplies to their advancing troops. We were truly a most unwelcome thorn in their southern flank. After occupying Bonne Rue, there was a continuous attempt to push us back south of the highway. Somehow, we managed to hold the little town. We had a large force of infantry foot soldiers around the town that repeatedly repulsed German attacks. We had 3 of our 57mm AT guns set-up plus a number of bazookas to counter any tank attack.

On the morning of Jan. 6th, we heard the unmistakable sound of approaching tanks. We had the AT gun set up in a small barn yard so that it could not be seen until a tank was within 20 yards. We manned the gun, as we heard a tank coming down the street. I stood behind the barn door with a Thompson sub-machine gun about 10 feet from the gun. We sent two guys around back of the barn with a bazooka. As the approaching tank came around the corner of the barn, his progress was stopped by a disabled German assault gun sitting in the street. In order for the tank to get around it, they would have to make a sharp maneuver through the barnyard. It stopped and one of German tankers opened the hatch cover and stood up so that his whole upper body was exposed. I waited for our guys to fire the AT gun, but nothing happened. All I heard was the G—d thing won't fire.

With that I opened up my machine gun and emptied a whole clip at the tanker. He fell from sight. The tank started to backup. I ran to the hay loft and looking down from above could see I had a perfect opportunity to lob a hand grenade in the open turret. It exploded, the tank stopped for few minutes and then slowly began to back off. Obviously there must have been a survivor. Behind the barn and house, we heard a couple of loud explosions. Our two guys with the bazooka (Walter Cassidy & Arthur Goldschmidt) had caught a tank broadside, destroying it. (Note: That tank sits there today as a memorial to our squad and that battle.) Later I learned the reason our gun would not fire was due to the fact they forgot to release the safety on the firing mechanism.

In hind sight, it was probably a blessing because at such close range the exploding shell from our gun could well have injured or killed us with flying shrapnel. Our other two 57mm guns were destroyed by tank fire with a number of casualties. We were surrounded by infantry, but when one tank was destroyed and another seriously damaged, there was a general withdrawal to several hundred yards out of town. We had stopped a major attempt to reach the highway. The two men (see above) who destroyed the tank with the bazooka were awarded the Silver Star and given promotions to rank of sergeant. I was awarded the Bronze Star. After things had

quieted down and we realized just what we had been through, we all experienced an after shock of severe shakes that lasted for several hours some people call it combat fatigue. During the engagement, you never think about the danger you are facing. It is only after the fact that you realize that it could have been your final moments on earth. Under cover of darkness, we were relieved and took off to St. Hubert. We arrived about the same time as the Free French Forces of The Interior (FFI) and shared in the liberation of St. Hubert. We were elated that none of our squad of eight was injured or killed.

Footnote: As of today, the residents of Bonne Rue remain grateful for what we did in liberating the town for their parents and grandparents. One local citizen is writing a book about the events of those winter days in 1944-5. I have had the pleasure of exchanging information with him via e-mail and regular mail. It is gratifying to know our mission has not been forgotten after all these years.

COLLEGE BOUND, SEPT 1943-MARCH 1944

by Sheldon Tauben, 75th ID, 289th IR, 2nd Bn HQ

A precursor to the post war "G.I. Bill" that remarkable and exemplary legislation that enabled veterans to obtain low-cost home mortgages and gave thousands the opportunity to secure a free college education, the US Army, in the summer of 1943, began a new educational endeavor, "The Army Specialized Training Program." With its distinctive shoulder patch, a gold oil lamp of knowledge on a blue background, this special unit directed thousands



of soldiers fresh from basic infantry training including air force cadets washed out of flight school and other services, to collection depots for testing and eventual assignment to colleges and universities throughout the United States. The Citadel, a military school in South Carolina renown for its officer training and tracing a proud heritage back to the early 1800's, was the major depot in the Eastern United States. All of the soldiers selected for this assignment had one thing in common – an "AGCT" score of 130 or higher. Upon entering the service each person underwent an extensive written examination with the final score prominently entered on his manila service file. The "Army General Classification Test" was an I.Q. exam used to direct personnel into jobs (MOS) or military occupation specialty that would be most appropriate for his on her level of intellectual ability. I had just completed 15 weeks of basic training at Seymour Johnson Field (Air Force) in Goldsboro, NC when I received orders to report to the administration center at the Citadel for further assignment.

After a week or so of inactivity (we did some sightseeing in Charleston, SC) everyone received new orders directing them to any of the dozens of educational institutions within the program. By luck of the draw I was assigned to the Polytechnic Institute of Brooklyn, a renowned school of engineering located in the heart of downtown Brooklyn. A few days later I arrived in Brooklyn just in time to begin the fall term in September Of 1943. We were housed in the Fort Green housing project, a brand new Federal low cost development and were the first tenants. Bunker beds, desks, chairs and bookcases were provided – two men to a room. If not for the *(Continued on pg. 11)*

MEMBERS: IN MEMORIAM

Please notify us when you hear that any member of our organization has recently passed away, so that we may honor them in a future *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

by phone to: 703-528-4058



**We have received word, as of December 31, 2013, that these members
of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. have also passed away in 2013:**

Bott, John H.	294 Engr Cmbt Bn	Pare, Clayton A.	666 FA Bn
Boullack, Robert F.	3450 Ord Maint	Paris, Demetri	9 ArmdD
Brenner, Melvin C.	87 InfD	Purcell Sr., Woodrow F.	101 AbnD
Bubin, Thomas F.	10 ArmdD	Raulins, J. W.	612 TD Bn
Condon, Edward L.	87 InfD	Reed, William H.	44 InfD
Connolly, William S.	94 InfD	Richard, Joseph E.	94 Sig Bn
Esposito, Vincent F.	8 InfD	Robles, Richard E.	115 AAA Gun Bn
Fischer, Alfred H.	6 ArmdD	Ruch, Russell W.	159 Engr Cmbt Bn
Giambroni, Andrew F.	6 ArmdD	Schemanske, George W.	838 Ord Depot
Gracy, Roy E.	7 ArmdD	Shank, Merle J.	99 InfD
Green, Willie T.	90 InfD	Sharp, Sam H.	7 ArmdD
Houseman, Billie E.	561 FA Bn	Sitney, Lawrence R.	94 InfD
Johnson, Carlton R.	508 PIR	Spear, Howard E.	90 InfD
Koutzoukis, Anthony	776 AAA AW Bn	Stein, Russell A.	413 AAA Gun Bn
Leone, Albert N.	94 InfD MP	Stinchcomb, Charles R.	17 AbnD
Lorenz, Glen W.	10 ArmdD	Swift, Charles	80 InfD
Lufkin, Sr., Kenneth V.	75 InfD	Tallent, Ernest C.	106 InfD
Lynn, David H.	11 ArmdD	White, Lavern A.	87 InfD
Merrigan, James P.	280 Engr Cmbt Bn	Williams, Benjamin B.	78 InfD
Newhouse, Floyd O.	3 ArmdD	Young, Rose Dewing	130 Gen Hosp
Olson, Donald G.	10 ArmdD	Zimmer, Joseph F.	87 InfD

COLLEGE BOUND *(Continued from pg. 9)*

G.I. uniforms, it appeared much like a typical college dormitory. But the comparison ended just there. This was a military unit and run by the book.

6:00 a.m. reveille followed by formation in ranks by battalion in the courtyard, roll call and then dismissal for breakfast. 7:00 a.m. we formed up again by battalion and marched off in a sprightly military manner, each “student” carrying an over-the-shoulder musette bag-books! Our route took us from the project down Schermerhorn Street and then to 99 Livingston where we lined up in the street in front of Polytechnic some 25 minutes later. Initially, it was a novelty to early morning Brooklynites and we were observed closely. Who doesn’t love a parade?

Formations broke up as we headed to our assigned classrooms for lectures in the usual freshman engineering curriculum plus some liberal arts courses in English, History and Geography. At 12 noon the entire unit again fell into ranks and marched back to the project for lunch. By 2 p.m. we were back at school ending the day with a 5:30 formation and return to our quarters for dinner. All meals were cafeteria-style served and eaten quickly, and no K.P. The basement of one of the buildings was converted into a cafeteria and served about 300 men at a time. After dinner we were expected to study the work assigned. AS I remember there was time for playing cards and craps. As long as we kept reasonably in order we were not bothered by “management.”

School continued for 5 days per week with weekends off on a pass unless some infraction of the rule caused the privilege to be withdrawn. These were pleasant weekends spent mainly with family as we lived in Jamaica about 1 hour away by train. On some weekends we attended local entertainment conducted by the American Red Cross. No hard liquor but lots of Coke and donuts. The girls that joined us were a motley crew from the local neighborhood, which in those days, close to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, was not exactly Park Ave.

One bright spot was the Commish’s Inn on Myrtle Avenue a few blocks away. It was run by my Uncle Irving, the black sheep of my father’s family, who had operated a speakeasy in Broad Channel during prohibition. Family legend had it that he used a black Cadillac hearse to run booze down from Montreal – passing through customs easily – who wants to bother a stiff? Uncle Irving was always good for a beer and pretzels and I saw him often at the time. I was never at a loss for company as 3 or 4 of my buddies also liked free beer. He kept a live monkey in a cage and had one of the first TV sets in NYC – about a 4” screen in a 6 ft high cabinet. Weekly fights and wrestling occupied a few hours at night. Uncle Irving was my father’s youngest brother. He had no children and took a liking to me, buying me my first baseball glove and a “Daisy” air rifle when I was 10 or 11. The odd name of his bar traced back to prohibition days when many of the NYC commissioners were his friends and customers. “Popularly known as “Brooklyn Poly” the name was changed in 1985 to Polytechnic University relocated from 99 Livingston St. to 333 Jay St. and now upgraded to “#6 Metrotech Center.” I still prefer the old names and address-you knew it was not in the Bronx and it favored important persons in American history!

College Bound Part 2

Going to classes 5 days a week for 7-8 hours a day was a difficult regimen but it took us through about two years of college “hours” between Sept 43 and March 44. After the war I was able to transfer

some of the credits to a BA degree at Adelphi College (class of 49). I really wasn’t interested in engineering but managed to “hang on” while the program lasted. One of my buddies was Ralph Bono. He hailed from the Bronx and introduced us to the pleasures of pizza. Near the Commish’s Inn was a storefront, family-run “pizza parlor,” as they were generally known. Great deep dish, strictly cheese pizza-no fancy toppings but a taste to remember.

George Harris was another GI from New Harmony, Indiana, deep at the southern end of the state. If it were difficult to locate a spot where the south and the north blended it is likely New Harmony would fit the bill. Founded in the early 19th century as an English Utopian Commune, it soon dropped its pretensions and “grew up” as a small southern rural town. George’s family lived in an “honest to goodness” log cabin – outdoor toilets – no central heat and a kitchen pump added only as a recognition of modernity – not 100 yards from the Wabash River.

As fate sometimes dictates, I got to know George’s family well. His mom, Effie, sister, brother-in-law and niece welcomed me months later when I was stationed in Camp Breckenridge, KY with the 75th Inf Div. George had a disability from a poorly set broken elbow which left him on limited duty. He spent the war at desk jobs and while in New York visited my family on the same weekends that I spent in New Harmony with his. That spring and early summer of 1944 hold memories of southern fried chicken, mashed potatoes, iced tea and watermelon served on a wood plank table in the Harris’ front yard. They welcomed me warmly as George’s friend even though they may have wondered privately, what a nice Jewish boy like me was doing in a place like this!

Back to School!

Our Geography professor was a Dr. Fraim who had taught, before the war, at the University of Rangoon in Burma (now “Myanmar”). When the troops learned this esoteric fact they recognized Dr. Fraim’s unique background with a monstrous battalion-sized shout of “RAN GOON” each morning as formations in front of Polytechnic broke up for classes. I think we all received “A’s” in Geography. The course work ran through Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, blueprint drawing etc using text books usually written by the professor. Polytechnic was home to some of the top men in their fields. I never had the nerve to ask but I wondered what they thought of education by the numbers. Eight hours each day—5 days a week!

Through the winter of 1943-1944 we continued the daily grind. However, in mid-March our idyllic military careers came to a screeching halt. While it was all well and good to keep the colleges and universities functioning and give deserving GI’s a shot at college studies, the manpower needs of the army came first. An infantry troop build-up was in the works and the ASTP was shut down except for some very limited programs in medicine and dentistry. We didn’t know it then but plans for the June 6, 1944 D-Day landings in Normandy were well on their way.

Within a few days we were loaded into railroad cars (no Pullmans) and on our way South to Louisiana. Most of our group wound up in 75th Inf Div, then training at Camp Polk where we were assigned to various units. I drew the 2nd Bn HQ Co 289th Inf regiment and remained with them through the extensive training at Camp Polk, then Camp Breckenridge, KY. We departed for Europe in Sept 1944 and wound up in the Battle of the Bulge in Dec 1944. But that’s another story.

One small incident remains in my memory of *(Continued)*

COLLEGE BOUND (Continued)

our days at Brooklyn Polytechnic. During one of our daily “parades” through downtown Brooklyn, on a cold and clear morning we marched in strict military formation passing by a corner drug store. It had 3 steps leading up to the entrance. An older woman, bundled up, stood still, waving her handkerchief to us and called out “hurry back boys” She mistakenly thought we were headed to Bush Terminal, a nearby troop embarkation facility. A smart-ass PFC in the front ranks turned to her and replied so all could hear “It’s ok, lady, we’ll be back right after lunch!”

FALL DAY IN PARIS-1945

by John P. Malloy 291st HQ Co. 75th Division



I waited on the Gare de L’Est Station platform. The train to Rheims would leave momentarily. I stayed at the far end, worried about M.P.’s. I had been AWOL, absent without leave, for two weeks. As soon as I boarded that train I would be safe. There was constant confusion due to troop redeployment. I would just slip back into the crowd at Camp Boston; no one would know I had been gone. The war had ended in August. Thank God, Harry Truman had them drop the atomic bomb. That was one of the greatest things that had ever happened to men in the U.S. military. Like most infantrymen I had expected to die on the beaches of Japan. Millions of Americans were headed home. The redeployment camps shifted into high gear, shipping everyone back to the States. Tens of thousands arrived and departed these camps weekly. This huge shuffle of men and units made for massive confusion and clerical errors. My combat unit, my wartime family, had been deactivated months earlier. We were transferred from one paper unit to another as the army was contracted. We had no duties. You sat in a tent among hundreds of other tents. Some days the weather was clear. More often, as the fall progressed, it was dreary, overcast and depressing. You could sleep all day. You could read, play cards; go to the PX - whatever you chose to do. It was a boring, uneventful life. Due to the constant shuffle of men from one unit to another you knew no one, you had no friends. It could drive you crazy. You waited in limbo. You were in a time warp.

Rather than going stir crazy in camp I had spent recent weeks partaking the joys of Paris. Three-day passes were plentiful. After a while though going back and forth became a nuisance. Why not just stay in Paris? I had nothing else to do but sit in a tent and wait. But how to do it? The answer: liberate a blank pad of passes and write my own liberty passes. Everything was so screwed up who would ever know. As a result I had a wonderful time in recent weeks. Paris sun-lit cafes were full. The company was great, the French girls exciting and accommodating. There was lots of wine and cognac. Money was available through the black market. As the song goes: “Summer time, life is easy and the days are long.” What more could a twenty two year old want? Don’t worry about tomorrow. Live for today. Now I had to get back to camp. I knew I was stretching my luck. Once there I would be OK. My immediate danger was Military Police on the look out for AWOL’s. The train’s engine whistled. It was time to go. I hurried to board. Two M.P.’s appeared — I hadn’t spotted them. “Soldier-let’s see your papers.”

I gave them the pass I had forged a couple of days earlier.

“This says you were due back in Camp Boston at noon today. It’s two PM now. You’re kind of late aren’t you Malloy?” “I’m on my way on that train. I’ll be in camp by four. There won’t be a problem.” The other MP, said to his partner, “He’s absent without leave by his own admission.” The first MP, “I think you better come along with us. We’re going to check you out.”

I got in their jeep. We traveled a couple of miles and arrived in front of an old, forbidding looking, fortress-like, building. It must have been two hundred years old. We went inside. They stood me in front of a tall desk. An older bespeckled GI looked down at me. “What have you got him for?” “AWOL by his own admission.” “Book him.” “OK Sarge.” They took me to another area. “Empty your pockets of everything you got on you.” They searched me. They took my billfold, my watch, my barracks bag and some other things. They sealed them in a package. I signed it. “Take off your shoestrings.” “Why?” “Shut your mouth and do as you are told.” They walked me down a long, dark passageway, the high walls cold and dank. A cell door was opened. They shoved me in. The gate to freedom clanged shut behind me. I entered my cage. There were nine other prisoners. I spotted the spare bunk and climbed into it. What happens now? Here I am. How do I keep it together? All I had were the clothes on my back and the small bag the MPs had confiscated. A Pfc. in the infantry didn’t have much or need much. Uncle Sam took care of him.

The cell was a bleak, barren space. There were eight double bunks. The ceiling was high, the single window barred. There was a sink and toilet stool in the corner — no walls or door. You had to do your job in full view. Three light bulbs, hung from the ceiling, provided light.

We were in a holding tank. The Military Police gathered those violating military law and held them here until transferred back to their unit. Their company commander would confer punishment from minor detention, to a major court martial with prison time. It was clear the key to getting out of this place was to make your unit aware you were held here. Most men would leave in less than a week.

My problem was I had three new company commanders who had come and gone. No one in command at Camp Boston knew me. The turnover among all personnel was constant. No one knew anyone. When men arrived, some shipped out immediately; all had to wait until their number came up. My hope now was that some one at Camp Boston would know me and get me transferred back there. I didn’t know who that person might be. Nothing happened for two days. On the third day a guard shouted through the door. “Malloy, front and center.” A guard walked me to an office. A GI clerk sat at his desk. “Sit down. I want you to tell me what outfit you really belong to. We couldn’t find you in Camp Boston. And don’t lie to me. It will only make it worse.”

I explained I had been transferred in name only to different outfits. That was normal procedure. Soldiers with too few points for discharge were transferred on paper to a new unit. I had given up trying to keep track of all that. I told him, “With all the confusion in Camp Boston the best bet would be to try to track me through my former combat outfit, the 291st Regiment.” I could tell he thought I was lying. Back to my cell, this time for days. Three weeks crawled by and still no word. I felt a terrible isolation. Depression swallowed me. As time passed I fell into the black abyss of despair. Now I understood why they took my shoestrings, (Continued)

FALL DAY IN PARIS (Continued)

they wanted to prevent an attempt at suicide.

As the days passed, I went to the window and pushed my hand out as far as I could—at least part of me was outside this hellhole. Still no word. I lost track of time. I gave up hope. I would rather die than live like this. I heard a bird one day. Oh to be a bird. One day: “Malloy, front and center!” They took me back to the clerk. I signed for my personal effects. They gave me my bag. They told me nothing. “Get in the jeep.” We drove east for two hours. The M.P.’s ignored me. What now? There it was — Camp Boston — home. The M.P.’s turned me over to the company clerk. He signed a receipt for his prisoner. A Captain I had never seen appeared. He looked at me. “So you are Malloy, the guy who has been AWOL for more than a month. You and your buddies have cost me more trouble than you will ever know. I have had my ass chewed out because of the likes of you. I’m going to make an example of you. It will put the fear of God into anyone else who thinks like you.” The Captain called out, “Sergeant Eisenberg come out here.” My God, it was my old First Sergeant from the 291st. All at once I saw hope.

“This is one of that AWOL crowd. See this bum is put under guard. I’ll deal with him when I return from Paris next week.” “Yes Sir,” Eisenberg said. Eisenberg didn’t acknowledge me. I kept my mouth shut. A guard took me to my tent. I knew no one. I sat on my cot. It felt good. Now what? Several hours later a corporal appeared. “I’ll take over,” he told the guard. “Grab your gear, Malloy, all of it.” He had a jeep. We drove for an hour. We arrived at Camp Baltimore. We went to Company Headquarters and found the First Sergeant. “Sergeant I’m delivering this fellow from Camp Boston. Eisenberg said he had talked with you about him.” “OK, I’ll sign for him. Welcome to your new outfit, Malloy. Eisenberg and I are old buddies. He gave me a good report on you.” The Corporal turned to leave. “Malloy keep your mouth shut. Eisenberg said to tell you good luck. He also told me to tell you to walk the straight and narrow from now on.” Army officers give commands but the Army is run by the noncoms. I was free and clear—Hallelujah! After all these years, I still have a special place in my heart for Eisenberg. I still can feel cold fear in my bones when I recall that desolate old French prison. I’ve walked the straight and narrow for more than sixty-five years. I learned recently Eisenberg, like so many of my comrades, had died. Time marches on. *Browse Malloy’s book at Amazon.com “Making John A Soldier.” Contact author: mapj12@gmail.com*

MY BATTLE OF THE BULGE, BEFORE AND BEYOND

by Chester Pokusa, Battery B, 90th ID

After two months training near Birmingham, England we were sent to Newport, Wales where we boarded the troopship “Enochtrain.” We were sent around the cape several miles into the English Channel to rendezvous. At 1600 officers gave us our briefing. As expected, it sent a spark of terror in most of the men. I can say I held my composure fairly well. This was all happening on June 6, 1944, D-Day. Ike called for us follow the 4th Infantry Division as we landed on Utah Beach. I mean truly, I’ve never seen so many landing craft and very large battleships blasting German forts above us. It was a very successful venture when the 90th met the 4th and 82nd. As we drove into Normandy we were very

successful. I was wounded during the fight for St. Lo when a German Messerschmitt dove on us while we were at the base of a cliff. He missed us but hit the rocks above us and I was hit by a falling rock.

I returned to action quickly in time to be part of the trap of the Germans at Falaise. We were very successful when we met the Polish and Canadians to capture the German 7th Panzer Army. After we gave them two opportunities to surrender they refused. The sight and smell was terrible as we completely slaughtered them.

The 90th Division was put on 24 hour watch of ninety miles of front and we enjoyed an early full Christmas dinner in 1944. The very next day General Patton called us up on the line and said he needed one of his favorite divisions to follow his 4th Armored Division to Bastogne and free Gen. McAuliffe who was surrounded there. At that time he told the Jerrys “nuts” to their demand to surrender all our forces to them. It took Patton two days to rout the Jerrys with all of our fire power and help from other full divisions. It had been a surprise attack by the Germans and they caused a lot of damage to men and equipment. We went in and stopped them cold and reversed their onslaught. So it was overpowered on our part.

On one occasion as we approached Bastogne my artillery gun was chosen for “high angle” readiness. After we fired one round and word came back from our forward observer that we had a hole in one - a round right down the turret of the large tank. We had a field day demolishing that German column.

I must tell this true story of my Malmedy. Capt. Johnson called me in for a confab. He directed me to pick three other volunteers. He said we have a weapons carrier ready to take you and the other men to witness the murders of 86 prisoners of war the bastards had of ours. The Jerry commander had our guys line up and he told them he was going to release them because the war was almost won by the U.S.A. Instead, he backed two trucks full of machine guns. He ordered them to fire in-to them and grenade them, our defenseless men. Then they went among the terrible slaughter to shoot anyone that moved. When we got there the bodies were frozen and snow was being uncovered from over them.

I found out later that two men escaped - one had his eyes open and didn’t breathe. They shot the man next to him, just to show his importance even though the man was already dead. I traced that man that escaped - he lives in Beaver, Pa. just a few miles from where I live. One of my men couldn’t take it and backed away crying and vomiting at the same time. I cried for two days after this terrible experience. I can say at that time I wound up with a terrible urge to kill every Jerry I would run across. We had a temporary order not to take any prisoners. That order was lifted after about a week. I did not obey that order.

We were part of a contingent that captured Hitler’s salt mine loaded with all his loot of paintings, gold bars, and money stolen from the countries he captured. We did not encounter any watchdogs or guards patrolling the main entrance or any of the other two small hidden entrances. I believe it was called the Merker Salt mine. I was a good spectator.

General’s Eisenhower, Patton, Collins, Lear, and others eventually came to inspect, padlock and secure the mine. My buddy, Cpl. Thompson, and I had the best hillside position overlooking the main entrance about a hundred yards away. My buddy decided to leave and join the rest of our artillery battery. I stayed and witnessed history as it was happening. The Generals stopped as they left the mine entrance and had a

(Continued on pg. 16, col. 2)

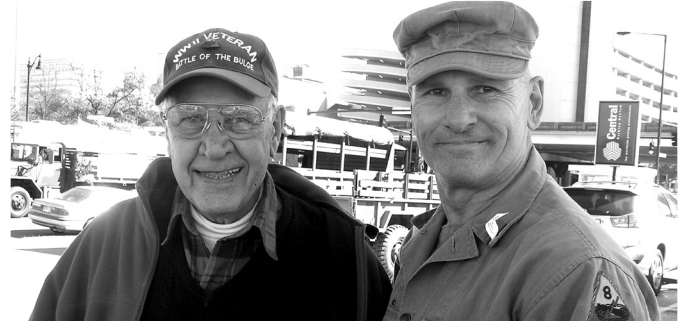
NATIONAL VETERANS DAY PARADE IN BIRMINGHAM, AL

Vern Miller, president of the George S Patton, Jr Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge had the honor of riding in the parade in a WWII Jeep restored by Ronnie Guin, a VBOB member, and of being represented in the parade by WO4 Mike Hipwell, Fort Rucker, AL a helicopter pilot and a WWII Re-enactor, who

returned a month ago from his tour of duty in Afghanistan. Vern was honored to have Mike wear his 8th Armored Division shoulder patch and didn't mind the ribbing he took because neither he nor Mike could come up with a set of T-3 stripes -- so he was demoted to buck private.



L to R Max Herrington, 5th Inf Div; Vern Miller, 8th Armrd Div; & Jack Mullins, 752nd FA Bn, pose before mounting their parade vehicles.



Re-enactor Mike Hipwell (R) and Vern Miller (L) represented the 8th Armored Division.



Mike Hipwell in 8th Armrd "battle rattle" marched behind VBOB's lead vehicle carrying Max Herrington.



WO4 Mike Hipwell takes time out near the end of the parade route.

CHAPTER 53, SOUTHERN AZ MEMBERS AWARDED LEGION OF HONOR



Technical Sergeant Earl R. Liston, U.S. Army
Corporal George W. Mcgee., U.S. Army
Private First Class Marshall W. Baird, U.S. Army
Private First Class Harper Coleman, U.S. Army
Private First Class Robert Kirby, U.S. Army
Private First Class Robert Walling, U.S. Army
Private First Class Maxwell Warner, U.S. Army

On Nov 6, 2013, seven members of Chapter 53, Southern AZ., VBOB, were awarded the French Legion of Honor Medal at a very impressive ceremony.

Mr. Gerrit Steenblik, Honorary Consul of France, residing in Phoenix, traveled to Tucson to make the presentations. Shown at left are the seven members receiving the medal. It was a very eventful day and over 100 family, friends and military personal were present.

CUMBERLAND VALLEY, PA CHAPTER

I have been designated to inform you that the Cumberland Valley, PA Chapter of the Veterans of The Battle The Bulge has closed. We started out with 45 members plus guests attending our meetings twenty years ago and now we are down to four veterans and spouses at a meeting. — John W. Fague, 11th AD, former president

SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER (61)

On Christmas 1944, Gus Epple was at the wheel of an Army Jeep, stuck in a traffic jam many miles long leading to the German lines. Dysentery forced the 19-year-old to abandon his Jeep every 15 minutes to relieve himself along the side of the road. Each time, he trudged through the snow and wrestled with an overcoat, field jacket, two layers of uniform pants and long-johns worn against the bitter cold. That night, his unit started a fire in their stove, a more compact version of a Coleman, to keep warm. Their folly quickly became apparent.

"You couldn't believe how brilliant that little gas stove was," said Epple, now an 88-year-old living in Cape May Court House. "We left it on for five or 10 seconds and shut it down again. It could've given away the position of the entire convoy." Epple was one of an estimated 610,000 Americans who served during the Battle of the Bulge, Adolph Hitler's last major offensive of World War II. By the end of fighting, which began Dec. 16 and ended Jan. 25, 1945, about 81,000 would die. Germany would surrender just more than four months later. And that year became the "winter without a Christmas" for the soldiers who returned home.

Decades later, however, Epple and a group of local vets have banded together due to their shared experience. Their numbers have dwindled and some are now confined to nursing homes, but a hearty few still unite throughout the year, most poignantly at Christmastime. They are the brothers of the Bulge.

It all started in 1999, when a couple of veterans — both deceased now — organized a luncheon for a local chapter of the national Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. At the time, the quarterly meetings attracted a group of about 50 said the 88-year-old Army rifleman. "There's a common bond there that means something to us." The Cape May Court House resident, who lives near Epple, spent Christmas 1944 south of Bastogne in Belgium. The days run together in memory, but he was probably in a foxhole, hoping German soldiers didn't stumble upon his position.

When possible, Umbenhauer would try to dig a trench to lie in, but one night it wasn't possible. Instead, three soldiers huddled together in a snow bank, their warmth and body weight creating a depression in the snow. "I was just lying there in the snow. Several miles away I could hear German Panzer tanks driving back and forth," he said. "If they decided to come after us, I wouldn't be here — we were totally unprotected."

Umbenhauer joined the local group several years after it formed, after reading about it in the newspaper. One of the members mentioned the 8th Armored Division. "Hey—that's my division," he said. Many of the members' experiences intersect. For instance, Ewing Roddy, another survivor, was a machine gunner who flew six missions over the course of the battle. "I like to say they were fighting the Germans on the ground while I was fighting above ground," Roddy said. The 89-year-old now lives in a Linwood nursing home with his wife, but he tries to make the group's annual Christmas luncheon — on Wednesday this year — and stays in touch with other veterans, sharing news and remembrances.

Like most groups, Epple said, the Bulge veterans' numbers

have dwindled with time. Today, about five of them still meet regularly, with several more attending when their health or transportation allows. And Umbenhauer said the remaining active members are always on the lookout for new blood. "If they find a veteran from the Battle of the Bulge, they practically drag you to the meeting," he said, with a laugh. He knows from personal experience, of course.

But a funny thing happened in recent years. Although the ranks of actual veterans have diminished, the group has welcomed relatives of deceased Bulge vets and soldiers from other battles and conflicts. The group's current president, 70-year-old Ed Steinberg, was a New Jersey Army National Guard reservist — he responded to the Newark riots of 1967 — and the son of a Bulge vet who died in 1992. His own father, Albert, was close-lipped about his experiences, but Steinberg enjoys hearing the experiences of other World War II vets. "I would rather connect and sit down with these guys than people of my own generation," he said.

Steinberg, who lives in the Rio Grande section of Middle Township, took over when Epple needed a break from the constant scheduling duties. "I was sort of hoping it would just fold and we'd quit," Epple said. "I didn't think it would last this long."

But Epple added that there's real value in continuing the legacy of the Battle of the Bulge, and remembering the Christmas that never was.

During the battle, Epple and the rest of the soldiers were eventually ordered to abandon their overcoats because they could be too cumbersome if they had to run. Most of the Germans kept their coats. Epple remembers one fled as his crew fired mortars around him. "I'd never seen such a sight," he said. "Trailing out the back of him was the overcoat. He must've gone at a pretty good speed."

Umbenhauer said he likes to tell people that he spent that Christmas in a foxhole singing "I'm Dreaming of a White Christmas." Of course, that quip doesn't reflect the reality he and many of his friends lived that day. They already had more than enough snow. "For us, it was another night," he said. "We couldn't help but think about Christmas, but for us it was another unpleasant night."

by Wallace McKelvey, Staff Writer, Atlantic City Press, NJ

GENESSE VALLEY CHAPTER BOOK

A couple years ago members of the chapter decided to tell their stories, which would appear in a book entitled "The Battle in Common" and be available to the public. A "Book Team" was formed whose purpose was to spearhead the project. Stories were submitted by 19 veterans and four associate members. After being published last fall, nearly all "The Battle in Common" copies have been sold. As of this date we have approximately 60 books remaining. ISBN 978-0-9885762-0-9. Books were distributed free to the sponsors and to veterans associated with the project. All other copies of the book were purchased by the public, sold by three Rochester book stores and the book team. The book has generated more than \$5000 in sales and donations for VBOB National. The limited number of books remaining brought the question of a second printing. After

(Continued)

CHAPTER NEWS

GENESSEE CHAPTER *(Continued)*

much consideration, the Book Team decided to forego a second printing in favor of converting the book to an electronic format ("e-book") at no cost. This decision provides two benefits: 1. There are no production costs, allowing all sales income to go to VBOB National, 2. The book would be available on all electronic systems (all computers as well as tablet readers like Kindle, iPad and Nook) for perpetuity. The conversion of the book content to the new format will be provided pro bono by Michael Riordan, professor of printing at Rochester Institute of Technology who helped with the initial book. Distribution of the electronic books would best be serviced by Amazon, Barnes & Noble and other retailers who sell e-books. To fully enable the book team's decision, National VBOB has endorsed this plan and will work with the Book Team (specifically RIT Prof. Michael Riordan) to set up distribution agreements with distributors such as Amazon, etc. The agreements would be with each vendor, to provide that revenues go to a VBOB Book Account.

The Rochester Book Team will disband after the program is in place. – Tom Hope (for The Book Team) XIX Corps, Headquarters

Kudos to the chapter members and others for an outstanding job, one that will help to perpetuate the legacy of all who served in the Battle of the Bulge.

WA STATE CHAPTER (6) SPRING LUNCHEON

Greetings all! Please save the date, May 3rd 2014 for the WWII Veterans of the Battle Of the Bulge Spring Luncheon. I know it's not even winter yet (although it is beginning to feel like it) however Spring is coming. We hope you will all be able to attend! Please feel free to share this news and invite your friends. Your assistance in getting the word out about this awesome opportunity would be welcomed. We'll have a terrific program and you'll be able to meet some men who've made WWII history by participating in the Battle of the Bulge and also view interesting WWII displays and real restored military vehicles.

Location: La Quinta Inn, Tacoma

Date: Saturday, May 3, 2014

Time: 10:30AM (doors open)

Official Welcome @ 11am

Directions: La Quinta Inn (253) 383-0146

1425 East 27th Street

Tacoma, WA 98421-2200

Thank you!

With God's love,

Beth (and Jim) Pennock

WA State VBOB Chapter Leaders

3006 NW 61st Street, Seattle, WA 98107

telephone (206) 783-0212

or gotweekenders@aol.com

BULGE, BEFORE AND BEYOND *(Continued from pg. 13)*

pretty long sustained talk about their plans, paying no attention to what was going on around them. I noticed a German fighter in the far distance and it seemed that it was turning toward us. He turned once and went around to line us up for a run. I had suspected one box car sitting on the rail siding about 25 yards away was full of explosives so I took it on my intuition to warn off the generals and shouted for them to get down. Gen. Collins ran over to me to question what I was doing there. At first he wanted to arrest me and put me in the brig. After reasoning with him and looking at the German plane closing on us, Gen. Collins decided it was best that the others take cover but he took my name, rank, and serial number and told me that he would have me court marshaled if I was wrong. He then told me to get the hell out of there toots sweet. I just started to high ball it over the hill when I heard the big roar of the jet plane go right over me. It was Germany's new jet and he had angled into the box car with two large rockets. I was in the clear and saw the pilot and I thought I was a goner. As I suspected, the box car was full of explosives. The whole area shook and the ground trembled. Smoke was so thick that it took about 20 or 30 minutes to clear. The pilot must have chosen to spare me. I heard some of our anti-aircraft in the distance and thought they had shot down the plane. The plane was beautiful and red in color. None of our men at the mine entrance were injured.

We, the 90th, cut Germany in two and met the Russians in Czechoslovakia where the 11th German Panzer with all its equipment would only surrender to the 90th Division. I was awarded the bronze and silver star in addition to a Purple Heart and Presidential citation for my service.

FROM METZ TO BASTOGNE

by Ralph Mellman, 10th AD

After I enlisted in the Army Air Corps in 1942 and after the enlisting officers noted that I had a very high entrance exam score, they recommended that I enter a secret weapons program, which I did. The program was to learn how to design and operate radar equipment, which at that time was totally new to the US army. For the first year I learned how to repair radios in Cleveland, Ohio, We were then sent to Lexington, Kentucky to learn about antenna systems. When we had completed the entire course we were then sent into active duty and went to basic training in Miami Beach, Florida. From there we were sent to an ASTP training in the University of Georgia. After all these preliminary studies we were transferred into the Tenth armored Division to fill in this cadre of the Tenth.

I don't know why all the last move were made since they had nothing to with radar and radio repair, but we were still at war and I guessed the upper echelon knew what they were doing. When I entered the Tenth the interrogating Sergeant said I should go into the Signal Company, which is where radios were repaired. OKAY SO FAR, but in the signal company the Sergeant in charge of messengers selected me to be a Jeep driving messenger! This Sergeant was an immigrant from Germany and I still feel that he was a Nazi thinking youth. Since I am also of the Jewish faith I believe he still follows Hitler's feelings about Jews. First he had me help the engineers clear out the hedgerows of the areas of Normandy which was a new feat for me and dangerous also.

When we started across France he made me the *(Continued)*

FROM METZ TO BASTOGNE (Continued)

Division special messenger. I kept this job throughout the war. On the night the BOB started I was awakened to drive the intelligence colonel from Metz where we were to Bastogne where the BOB started. The meeting lasted all night and we drove both ways with our headlights on. I felt sorry for vehicle going the opposite way due to the glare from our headlights. On the way back I noticed our Tenth guys walking north. I knew many of these guys from the ASTP schools. I guess our colonel radioed back to get the tenth guys moving ASAP to the bulge fight.

I guess that I did help to get us into the bulge fight since our CCB save Bastogne from the enemy.

PROXIMITY FUSE USE PRIOR TO BATTLE OF THE BULGE

by Wesley Ross, 146th ECB, B Company

It was at Simmerath, Germany where I first saw the proximity fuse in use by a new type Tank Destroyer. It was larger and distinctly different from any TDs that I had seen. The bogie wheels were larger and evenly spaced. It also mounted a long barreled 90mm gun. Later, I found that this was the M-36 TD.

I was intrigued by the consistent height of the air bursts—all appeared to explode about thirty feet above the ground near the Siegfried Line pillboxes at the base of the slope, about 600 yards from our position. When I asked the gunner how he set his fuses so accurately to get such uniform air-bursts, he replied that a magnet in the shell's nose caused it to explode automatically at the desired distance above the ground.

I said that it could not be a magnet—it would have to be done by some type of radio signal. But a radio transceiver (transmitter and receiver) built into an artillery shell—impossible! I had no ready answer and learned only later that my initial assumption had been correct.

Through our binoculars we observed German ambulances making multiple daylight runs to the Siegfried pillboxes at the base of the slope. This appeared suspicious and we thought that they might be bringing in ammunition, food or other supplies in the ambulances, even though this would have been a violation of the Geneva Convention—most German regular army units were usually quite scrupulous in abiding by its dictates. The proximity fuse may well have been the reason for all the ambulance runs that we had observed.

The US began work on the proximity fuse in 1940 and successfully brought it into operation in late 1942. The Germans and British had been working on the fuse for several years, but had failed to develop it. It was first used in the ETO on 12 June 1944 against the buzz-bombs in England and was later in use at Antwerp. US navy gunners had used it against Japanese planes in January 1943, from the USS Helena.

This was well before the Bulge, and should remove all doubt that its use at Simmerath was possible. My belief is reinforced by the explanation of its operation by the gunner, and—although flawed—was a reasonable explanation from an unsophisticated gunner! Because the fuse had been used in England and Antwerp, this Tank Destroyer may have been there and could have carried some proximity rounds to Simmerath. Regardless of how they arrived, I firmly believe they were there and that I had seen the proximity fuse as

previously stated!

It is my belief that we had seen the proximity fuse in use several weeks earlier, even though many WWII authors have stated that it was first used on the continent during the Bulge.

(Google “proximity fuse” for information as to its operation)

THIS WAS OUR FIRST TASTE OF RETREAT

by William MacLeod, 333rd FA Group, 771st FA Bn

We sat leisurely firing on the German positions until about 1400



hours on December 16th when we heard the sound of screaming meemies coming in. We received orders to close trails and march. This was our first taste of retreat. Our first casualties was when one of our prime movers got bogged down and with no time to get it out we had to set it on fire and move out. This vehicle had all the men's personal belongings

in it.

In full retreat, as fast as the snow and ice would allow, we came upon a column of rag-tag soldiers of all mixed units coming toward us. We asked them, “Where the hell are you guys going?” They answered that they were retreating too. That scared the hell out of us and we took the next left turn we came to.

We passed through Wallerode, Commanster, Dochamps, La Roche, Mierchamps, Flamierge and on the 20th of December we arrived at Bastogne. Since we had lost all our 4.5 Rifles a few days before, we were converted to infantry troops and dug our fox holes in a nearby cemetery behind the tombstones. We got our orders to pull out of Bastogne with the equipment we had left and pulled out through Sibret into Matton, France and Messincourt, France and then back into Muno, Belgium where we took up defensive positions around the town on December 23, 1944.

“B” Battery had been on the move 16 to 20 hours a day for 8 days with only the rations and supplies we had when we left Amelscheid. At this point we thought we were the sorriest bunch of sad sacks in the whole army. It was not until later when we got the news about our comrades in Bastogne and at the Malmedy Massacre that we knew just how lucky we really were.

December 25, 1944 will always be the worst Christmas in my memory. We received no mail, no packages and to top it off we could not write home to tell our families that we were still alive. The 771st Artillery was refitted with 155 mm howitzers and got back into action on January 19, 1945 at Vaux, Belgium and then advanced 1031 miles to Ledhovice in Czechoslovakia on May 7, 1945 where the war was finally over.

Soon after we returned to action on January 19, 1945 our unit salvaged 4 German 150mm howitzers, reconditioned them and located a supply of 150 mm ammo. In two days we fired 1700 rounds from their own guns on the German positions.

Source: <http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be/>

CHECK OUT OUR MEMBERS' VIDEO STORIES
GO TO OUR WEBSITE: battleofthebulge.org
CLICK ON: Veteran's Video Stories (on right-hand sidebar)

ALMOST 70 YEARS AGO, STILL NOT FORGOTTEN...

Belgium remembers its Liberators

Patrick Brion, Belgian Army, Brussels, Belgium



At the eve of the upcoming 70th anniversary of the “Battle of the Bulge”, crowds of people started arriving at the famous “NUTS” town of Bastogne, Belgium.

Mid-December 2013, Americans, Belgians, Dutch and people from other countries gathered to commemorate and honor the soldiers of the U.S. army that fought for liberty during the hard winter of 1944 – 1945.

The City of Bastogne started its traditional weekend with the Bastogne perimeter walk, where especially the hundreds of US soldiers, scouts and citizens marched around the city, discovering the terrain and meeting groups of WWII re-enactors, that had taken up positions around the walk.



In the afternoon, the official commemorations took place and in a joint effort of the U.S. Army and the Belgian Army, the honors were given at the General Patton Memorial, followed by a ceremony at the monument for General McAuliffe. A special welcome was given to the new U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium Denise Bauer, who enjoyed the activities, WWII airborne veteran Vincent Speranza (101st Airborne Division) and Helen Patton, granddaughter of General Patton.

The Saturday in Bastogne with the traditional throwing of the nuts, now a true symbol of ongoing resistance against an overwhelming enemy, so many years ago.

But besides Bastogne, situated in the Southern part of the

Belgian Ardennes, the famous “Northern Shoulder” area, near Vielsalm and Sankt Vith was equally very active in honoring the Defenders of Freedom. Various ceremonies were organized by organizations like “CADUSA”, the “C-47 Club” and the towns. Especially the ceremonies around the 106th Infantry Division, with one veteran present were very emotionally.

In Luxembourg, near the town of Clervaux, a large group of Allied and German WWII re-enactors had gathered to display equipment, followed by a mock battle between the participants.

On Sunday, the City of Bastogne received the traditional old-timers driving through the center of the city.

So the 69th remembrance year came to an end. It is now time to reflect and prepare the major commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the “Battle of the Bulge”. Cities, re-enactors and military should interact, work together and enable our treasured remaining veterans the opportunity to return to Belgium and Luxembourg in 2014. It might be, for many, the last possibility to do so. I rethink of what we did during the 65th anniversary and hope and dream that we will be able to welcome the veterans and their relatives in a fitting, honorable and warm way, as they have earned this right.

Looking forward to next year!



ADDENDUM

Addition to an article written by Janet Moody, on page 5 of the November issue. The photo is of the 37th Armored Regiment. Janet's father, John Moody, is the 6th soldier from the left in the front row.



Update on the VBOB book of your stories: “THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE — True Stories from the Men and Women Who Survived”

The purpose for creating and publishing this book is to help preserve the legacy of those brave men and women who served the United States of America during the largest land battle ever fought by the US Army, The Battle of the Bulge.

The book contains stories written by individuals who only knew about the job they were supposed to do, and they did it in magnificent fashion, until the Nazis were defeated. These same stories were previously published in *The Bulge Bugle*.

We can never repay them for their courage and sacrifices; but we can make sure they are always remembered.

We received the following update from the book publisher in January, 2014:

At the present time, the book is a large hardcover at about 460 pages in length, containing 162 stories by 135 authors. After

reading through each story we identified some that should not be included in the book because they have either been published elsewhere or were not written by the veteran (taken from other sources).

We are planning on setting the retail price at \$34.99 for the hardcover book. Most retailers will probably offer it at a discount. It should be possible to have the book available for sale via Amazon, B&N.com, etc. at the end of February.

For questions contact Ralph Bozorth by phone at: 484-351-8844; by email: ralph@battleofthebulge.org

NOTE: To read over 1,000 stories that are in the *Bulge Bugle* newsletters, visit our web site www.battleofthebulge.org. Click on the “Research” helmet and select “Newsletter Archives.”

LIST OF AUTHORS WHOSE STORIES APPEAR IN THE VBOB BOOK:

Addor, Don
Altamura, Michael V.
Alvarez, Alfred A.
Andon, Arma E.
Arn, Eddie
Augenbaugh, Dustin M.
Bailey, J. David
Ballinger, Samuel W.
Barker, William H.
Boisseau, Armand F.
Bordner, Delbert E.
Bowers, James A.
Broadhead, Nathaniel
Buckman, Clarence L.
Bulkeley, Joseph W.
Calehuff, Girard
Chambers, Frank
Chambers, Thomas R.
Christ, Carl M.
Clarke, Beresford N.
Curts, Richard D.
Davis, F. Keith
Diamond, Maurice
DiGiacomo, Alfred
Dixon, David
Dixon, Elmer M.
Doherty, Joseph C.
Edwards, Donald
Edwards, Phillip S.
Fague, John
Fancher, Frank
Flados, Marge
Ford, William R. “Woody”
Franco, Arnold C.

Freese, Frank
Gardner, Gilbert
Gardner, James W.
Gaydos, Albert
Gilliam, Cecil D.
Gomberg, Clarence
Graber, Jack
Gray, Philip Howard
Hagel, Bob
Hahn, Donald
Hammons, James A. “Bob”
Holmes, Arthur G. Jr.
Houseman, Billie E.
Irzyk, Albin F.
Jamar, Andre
Jamiel, Morphis
Karambelas, George
Katlic, Chuck
Kaye, Frank A.
Kazanecki, Eugene C.
King, Lester R.
Klemick, Mike
Klimkowsky, Ben
Kruse, Jack H.
Leopold, William E.
Lindstrom, Harold
Loiacono, Leonard
Lombardo, Samuel
Long, Reuel
LoVuolo, Frank A.
Magill, John F.
Malloy, John
Mar, Kenneth
Mayforth, Hal

McAuliffe, John E.
McAvoy, George C.
McCabe, James
McConnell, Robert T.
McCracken, Henry
Meinhart, Vincent
Meltzer, Harvey S.
Mendelshon, Murray
Miller, Oda C.
Mills, George
Mischnick, Marvin H.
Mistler, John
Morell, Eugene
Moretto, Rocco J.
Morgenstern, Ed
Morphis, Bert H.
Morrison, Ian A.
Nicollela, Joseph C.
Nolan, Katherine Flynn
Olson, Homer
Olson, Ray
O’Neill, Harold J.
Otto, Merle
Paris, Demetri “Dee”
Parker, Oliver C.
Pendleton, James C. Sr.
Pilliteri, Joseph V.
Posey, Charles R.
Reed, Harry
Reiter, Kenneth L.
Rice, Clayton I.
Riley, Wilfred R.
Rizzio, Richard
Rodriguez, Luis R.

Sammons, James E.
Santagata, Dan
Schaller, L.D. “Whitey”
Schober, Milton J.
Schoo, Donald
Schreckengost, Arthur
Shehab, Alfred
Siebert, Oliver W.
Stamos, John J.
Stark, Phillip C.
Storm, Ralph
Strikwerda, Derk
Sweeney, John J.
Swiersz, Gustav
Sylvester, Martin
Tannenbaum, Sam
Tedesco, Joseph
Thompson, Meron
Troxell, Gilbert
Vanlandingham, Dean
Vickstrom, Ed C.
Voigt, Lillian
Walenski, Margaret
Watson, George
Whitten, George
Wilken, Elvin H.
Williams, Joseph F.
Wilson, George
Wineland, Robert K.
Wintemberg, Harry
Woodman, Charles

NOTE: Stories that were first published in another periodical or book, or were not written by the veteran (taken from other sources), could not be included due to copyright issues.

2014 VETERANS TOURS



2014 and 2015 are very important World War II Anniversary years because they will close a great era in our history. The prestigious 1944/1945 70th Anniversary celebrations planned for these years in Europe may be the last great celebrations in which our veterans will be able to participate.

If you are a 2nd or 3rd generation of a Veteran, this would be an excellent opportunity to visit places that were significant to your father, grandfather (or uncle). If you can accompany the Veteran, it would be even more meaningful because he's likely to share actual stories about his experiences on the battlefields. (See the story about Bob Pidcoe, 1st Infantry Division and how his family and friends had an experience of a lifetime in May, 2013. Bob was the Guest of Honor at the Memorial Day ceremony at the American Battle of the Bulge Cemetery at Henri-Chapelle Cemetery.)

DANUBE CRUISE AND PILSEN LIBERATION FESTIVAL. APRIL 27-MAY 8 2014. Arr Budapest – Dept Prague. Historic Bohemian beer-brewing city Pilsen never forgets how General Patton and Third Army liberated them from Nazi dictatorship in May 1945, nor the sacrifice of American soldiers in the cause of freedom. This is the reason for Pilsen's Liberation Festival, Europe's biggest annual celebration of World War II victory and liberation from Nazism. VBOB is invited as honored guests. To start, we enjoy a luxurious, leisurely six-day Danube river cruise from Budapest via Bratislava, Vienna and the Danube's World Heritage Wachau Valley. After the cruise, we will take a day's drive via Third Reich Nuremberg in the steps of Third Army to Pilsen with its spectacular Liberation Festival. We finish in beautiful Prague. Our Danube cruise ship is the upscale 'Amadeus Royal' (www.amadeuscruises.com -> Fleet -> Amadeus Royal). See the YouTube video "The Gate 1 River Cruise Experience". Our cruise ship is exactly the same, only newer.

US MEMORIAL DAY 2014 IN THE BULGE, AND NORTHERN BULGE TOUR. MAY 21-29 (OR JUNE 1) 2014. Arr Brussels – Dept Frankfurt. Especially for Veterans, families and friends of First Army in the Northern Bulge. Memorialize those who gave the supreme sacrifice at the spectacular, prestigious Battle of the Bulge Memorial Day Ceremony in Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery. Our VBOB vets will be guests of honor in the company of US and international VIPs. Then we tour the Northern Bulge battlefields in depth. Let us know your "special places" and we will try to include them in the Tour. We will be including St. Vith, Vielsalm, Grandmenil, Manhay, Parker's Crossroads, Malmedy, Aachen on the tour. Lots of celebrations and ceremonies with the local people. After the Bulge, we also see the Siegfried Line, Huertgen Forest and the Rhine Battlefields. Grand Finale Rhine Cruise.

OPTIONAL EXTENSION TO NUREMBERG AND MUNICH to visit the site of the Nuremberg War Crimes Trials. May 29-June 1 2014.

LUXEMBOURG-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP WEEK AND SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR. JUNE 16-25 2014. Arr Paris - Dept Frankfurt. A special tour for Veterans, families and friends of Third Army and First Army in the Southern Bulge. Its highlight is the action-packed Luxembourg-American Friendship Week when the US Veterans Friends of Luxembourg (USVFL) welcome you all as guests of honor to celebrate and commemorate the Battle of the Bulge. We will tour the Southern Bulge battlefields in depth. Let us know your "special places" and we will try to include them in the Tour. We will be including the battlefields around Bastogne and St Hubert, the Saar-Moselle Triangle, Diekirch (and the Bulge Museum), Echternach and the Luxembourg National Day Celebrations. From the Bulge, we cross the Sauer River and Siegfried Line into Germany and then the Kyll and Mosel rivers to the Rhineland battlefields. Grand Finale Rhine Cruise. Optional Normandy pre-tour.

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; Tel (650) 654-0101 (PST).

"History came to life during our VBOB tour in May, 2010. We were treated like royalty by the communities - receptions, memorial events, dedications. We heard "Thank you for our freedom!" many times. I will hold on to the deep, rich experiences I had from the trip for the rest of my life!" Madeleine Bryant (Father - Fritz Kraemer served in 84th Inf. Division)



★ **DECEMBER 2014** ★
**VBOB Trip to Belgium and
Luxembourg in Honor of the
70th ANNIVERSARY of
THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE**



**The Mardasson Memorial
in Bastogne, Belgium**

2014 is the beginning of events in Europe in recognition of the 70th Anniversary of the Allied Forces invasion and of course the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, December 16, 1944. On September 23, 2013 VBOB representatives Ralph Bozorth, John Bowen, Alan Cunningham and Douglas Dillard met with the Belgian Defense Attache at the Belgian Embassy and discussed our interest in a possible tour to Belgium and Luxembourg in 2014. He asked that we submit a plan and he would also submit it to the Belgian government. Likewise, a meeting was scheduled with the representative of the Luxembourg government.

Essentially, the plan will be similar to the VBOB tour of 2004. We are not sure of the Belgian response, especially since the Belgian elections are scheduled for next May and we possibly must coordinate with a new group of Belgians in their Department of Defense.

It would help us in planning if we had an idea how many people would like to participate in the trip. So far we have only heard from 8 people.

**If you would like to go on this trip, please indicate
your interest to Ralph Bozorth —
by e-mail: ralph@battleofthebulge.org;
by telephone: 484-351-8844;
or by mail: VBOB, PO Box 336, Blue Bell, PA 19422.**

We hope you'll join us on this historic trip!

WELCOME ABOARD, NEW MEMBERS!

We'd like to salute these new members—regular and associate—who joined VBOB between Oct. 1 and Dec. 31, 2013:

Bieneman, Carol	Associate
Boetger, Fred H	80 InfD
Bortz, John	Associate
Boullack, Vera	Associate
Brooks, Roger	Associate
Brown, Richard D	Associate
Carr, Marianne	Associate
Carson, Edward G	Associate
Chernenko, John G	30 InfD
Cohen, Robert J	106 InfD
Condon, Mrs. Edward L.	Associate
Courtney, Lillian	Associate
Cravey, Scott	Associate
DeFoster Jr, Anthony	Associate
Dempsey, Timothy	Associate
Eichler, Richard	Associate
Fillmore, Evan W	Associate
Gallagher, Kevin	Associate
Heider, Lawrence	Associate
Huckabee, Winfred S	Associate
Manchester, Richard	87 InfD
Meroney, Sam	Associate
Miller, Gerald	83 InfD
Miller, Paul Gray	Associate
Mitchell, Doug	Associate
Murphy, Bill	Associate
Murphy, Judith	Associate
Murphy, Michael	Associate
Pilkington, Mary E	Associate
Pokusa, Chester	90 InfD
Price, Virginia	Associate
Roberts Jr, Thomas C	Associate
Ruppert, Elsie E	Associate
Schubring, Janet	Associate
Scodari, Nicholas	26 InfD
Shaughnessy, Joshua	Associate
Shilling, Mikel	Associate
Swift, A.B.	Associate
Swift, Charles	80 InfD*
Vendrick, Brad	Associate
Walters, Clinton E	87 InfD
Wilson, Billy	Associate

**deceased*

We certainly are pleased to have you with us and look forward to your participation in helping to perpetuate the legacy of all who served in that epic battle. You can help immediately by:

- Talking to people about VBOB and suggesting that they also join
- Spreading the word about our website: battleofthebulge.org
- Sending us articles to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*
- Attending our annual reunion, Aug-Sept 2014 in Columbia, SC

SPECIAL OFFER FOR OUR VETERANS! Buy 1, Get 2nd Copy Free! 2 for \$15

THE VBOB CERTIFICATE: Have you ordered yours?



Over 6,500 certificates have been purchased by Battle of the Bulge veterans. If you haven't received yours, then you might want to consider ordering one to give to your grandchildren. They are generally most appreciative of your service now and they make excellent gifts—also for that buddy with whom you served in the Bulge. 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.

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 wished that each unit insignia could have been shown, but with approximately 2000 units that participated in the Bulge, it was impossible. However, any unit that served in the Bulge would have been attached to or reported through one of the unit insignia depicted. You may want to add one of 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 tube. **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.**

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Certificate Order Blank

I request an 11" by 17" certificate and certify the veteran named below received credit for the Ardennes campaign.
I have enclosed a check for \$15 for the certificate. Please include the following information on the certificate:

**SPECIAL
OFFER:
2 for \$15!**

First Name _____ Middle Initial _____ Last Name _____

Serial Number _____ Rank _____ Unit _____

Organization _____

(usually Company, Battalion and/or Regiment and/or Division)

☐ Killed in Action

☐ Died of Wounds

Signature _____ Date _____

Mailing Information: (SPECIAL PRICE SHIPS TO 1 MAILING ADDRESS ONLY)

Name _____ Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Telephone number _____ E-mail address _____

VBOB member: ☐ yes ☐ no (membership not a requirement)

Make checks payable to VBOB for \$15.

Orders should be mailed to: VBOB Certificate, PO Box 27430, Philadelphia, PA 19118-0430

703-528-4058

OR ORDER ONLINE: WWW.BATTLEOFTHEBULGE.ORG

BOB PIDCOE RETURNS TO THE BATTLEFIELD

[The war experiences of 1st ID, 26th Reg. GI Bob Pidcoe were reported in the November Bugle. In this issue we follow Bob as he takes family & friends back to the places where he served. – Ed.]

Veteran Bob Pidcoe, an HQ Co. Corporal with the 1st Inf. Div., 26th Reg. “Blue Spaders”, was awarded 7 campaign ribbons, a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his service during WWII. In 2013, he returned to the Bulge as Guest of Honor at the prestigious Memorial Day ceremony at the American Battle Monument Commission’s (ABMC) Henri-Chapelle cemetery.

Bob made the pilgrimage with his family and friends from other vet’s families, who wanted to honor Bob and his fellow GI’s and hear his about experiences first-hand in the places where it happened.

Today, Bob remains a modest, unassuming 90-year-old with a well-developed sense of humor. After the war, typical of so many of the “regular guys” of the Greatest Generation who achieved so much “over there,” he returned home to Pennsylvania and got on with life. He married and raised two sons “with a firm hand,” he says with a smile.

The 2013 journey was his son’s idea, spurred on by friends whose parents also served in WWII. Working with Patrick Hinchy, an English planner & guide who studied at Oxford and leads groups from Division Associations and organizations like the Marshall Foundation, a customized program was designed around Bob’s tour of duty, as well as key sites where the friends’ fathers had served.

Bob didn’t hesitate for a second when his son Bill, a Vietnam veteran, Bill’s wife Brenda and their close friends Nevin & Deb Dressler – who accompany Bob on trips to DC – pitched the idea.

Nevin’s father landed on Utah Beach on July 13, 1944, serving with the 795th AAA. They defended Ninth Air Force’s “Advanced Landing Grounds” (ALGs) near the front lines, from Normandy through to the Southern Bulge and over the Siegfried Line into the heart of Germany.

Rounding out the group were two more next-generation couples: Jim & Janet Kearney and David & Jeanne Hughes. Jim’s father served with 557th AAA and was awarded a Bronze Star. Jeanne’s father served in the 978th FAB, landing at Omaha on June 25th, 1944.

Just like ’44, Bob’s 2013 tour began in Normandy. During a video at the Caen museum he remarked “there we are” as thousands of American soldiers were shown coming ashore. Enjoying an after-dinner drink, he mentioned how he and his fellow GI’s also “liberated some of the local Calvados,” a famous distilled spirit produced from local apples and a favorite specialty of the Norman region.

At the ABMC Normandy American Cemetery, 9,387 American soldiers rest directly above Omaha Beach – where both Bob and Jeanne’s father waded ashore. After assisting with the flag raising, he laid flowers ringed with pebbles gathered from Omaha Beach. A crowd gathered to meet him and thank him for his service. At the chapel, Nevin read Psalms 91, also known as the Soldier’s Prayer. Bob explained that he’d carried his father’s WWI bible with him during his entire WWII campaign.

A comprehensive tour of the beaches & battlefields took in Point du Hoc, St. Mere Eglise, St. Lo, Cherbourg and a bit of tapestry in Bayeux before the group moved east toward Brussels and on to the historically rich, forested hills and valleys of the Eifel-Ardenne and the challenging terrain of the Bulge. In Brussels, Bob received a hero’s welcome at the National Military Museum, where he recognized

many of the artifacts on display and described how many of them were used.

The BIG day – Memorial Day – began in Brussels and moved through Charleroi, where Bob remembered fighting. A stop in Huy, where Jeanne’s father had fought, was followed by a stop in the important industrial city of Liege, where Bob commented that “NONE of this... was here”.

Just a few miles from Liege is the ABMC Ardennes Cemetery near Neuville-en-Condroz, where 5,323 American casualties stand as a testament to the sacrifices made by so many. Over lunch at a nearby restaurant, Belgian President of CRIBA (Center for Research & Information of the Battle of the Ardennes) Denise Oger greeted Bob and told us all a touching story.

When she was nine, a temporary American R&R camp was set-up outside her town. During a dance, a shy Denise hid in the back. However, a certain GI did notice her and asked her to dance. When they moved out “her GI” even came to say good-bye. Later, she learned he was killed shortly after by a mine. Almost 70 years later, she brought fresh tears to all our eyes as she talked about her GI.

We were also joined by Doug Mitchell, an American ex-pat married to a German girl who lives right on the Bulge front lines today, in the building serving as the 106th ID Recon Troop HQ on the morning of December 16th, 1944. A full-time European, amateur historian and loyal friend of many veterans, Doug enthusiastically fielded a non-stop stream of questions during the rest of the tour.

After lunch we moved to the cemetery, where Bob laid flowers at the headstone of “Blue Spader” Richard Miller in honor of all the 26th Regiment soldiers killed in action. A Japanese man visiting at the same time politely asked to have his picture taken with Bob and also honored him as a hero.

From there, Denise and CRIBA colleague Anne-Marie Noel-Simon joined the group for Memorial Day events at Henri-Chapelle. Located atop a scenic ridge surrounded by rolling green countryside, the headstones of 7,993 soldiers are a sober reminder of why these ceremonies – commemorating service, sacrifice and the living spirit of the Greatest Generation – are so important.

As the only WWII veteran attending in 2013, Bob was truly the VIP, despite all of the generals, ambassadors and other dignitaries in attendance. Who all wanted to meet him and shake his hand. Belgian television even cornered him for an interview. When he was formally introduced during the ceremony, he turned to his son Bill and asked “why the heck are they announcing my name?”

Everyone had successfully kept the secret and Bob was genuinely surprised when he was asked to lay a 1st ID wreath, accompanied by ABMC Superintendent Bobby Bell & his colleague. He was clearly touched by the request. It was a special privilege for us to be there supporting him and also be treated as guests of honor. It is a powerful experience to be a part of such a moving celebration.

Retreating to Charlemagne’s 8th Century capital of Aachen, the group settled in for a few days of touring in the area south of the city – where Bob was wounded – and on into the Bulge, where he rejoined the “Big Red 1” during the counter-offensive. Driving into town, he exclaimed “Oh my God!”, explaining that when he arrived in ’44 what was left of the city were mostly scorched ruins.

At Jeanne’s request, a morning trip to Cologne offered an opportunity to visit an area where her dad had endured heavy fighting in February, after campaigning through the Bulge.

No trip to the region is complete without a stop in Bastogne, site of the magnificent Mardasson Memorial, emblazoned with the

(Continued)

RETURN TO THE BATTLEFIELD (Continued)

names of all 48 states and listing every division serving in the Battle of the Bulge. While we were there, Nevin talked with Kristina and Daniel, a young married couple who asked to meet Bob. She was German, he was American. When they met, she embraced him and said tearfully, "I am not your enemy." Bob's simple reply, "The German people treated us well." Their cheeks still moist, they hugged again and had their picture taken together.

Another morning was invested in the legendary M & M's Museum in Thimister-Clermont, Belgium. 1st ID soldiers were briefly billeted at Marcel Schmetz' family farm late in the war, leaving a huge collection of material behind when they had to bug out in a hurry. Even a Sherman tank!

Marcel was a young boy, but remembers it like yesterday. Today, he and his wife Mathilde have gathered everything left behind and thousands of donated items into a powerful tribute to the GI's in a multi-story renovated barn & stable which they've named the "Remember '44 - '45 Museum."

Fluent in English, Mathilde is an entertaining guide. She told the story of Marcel's family hiding his 17-year-old brother in the walls of the house for 16 months so the Germans couldn't conscript him. In addition to plenty of "hardware", the museum includes personal histories and documents from hundreds of veterans who've visited personally and signed the most unique autograph collection you'll ever see: a genuine Red Ball transport covered with many hundreds of veteran's signatures.

Mathilde & Marcel also have special exhibits dedicated to others who served: medics, African-American soldiers, "Rosie the Riveter," etc. There are dresses made from parachutes. A first-rate craftsman, Marcel's handiwork is everywhere: dozens of handmade mannequins styled from actual war-era photographs. Even a perfect full-sized wooden replica of a V1 Buzz Bomb. A monument outside is dedicated to the animals used during the war: horses, dogs & homing pigeons.

Driving south into the dark heart of the Bulge, we visited Butgenbach and the 1st ID obelisk, just a couple hundred meters from Bob's front line position, joined by local Belgian historian Karl Heinz Heck. Karl guided us around his neighborhood, pointing out areas of heavy fighting, and generously showed us his extensive private collection and the anti-tank gun he uses as lawn decor.

The next day our group was joined by Albert Trostorf, a German historian and loyal friend of the 1st ID and the Blue Spaders, who fought in his backyard during the war. He has guided many a veteran and group back through the area over the last 25 years. The most important stop was Schevenhutte in Huertgen Forest, a place Bob had requested. We found the narrow dirt road up a shallow ravine Bob remembered. Nevin & Doug marched up the path after Bob described what happened there.

Sure enough, the path went uphill and leveled off in a small angled clearing forested on both sides. They reported back: it's exactly as he described. Rendered speechless for a few moments, he points where a German in a foxhole on the right called in German artillery. This is where Bob was hit by a flying splinter from a treetop mortar burst and seriously wounded in the upper leg/lower groin.

All involved agreed this was the highlight of the trip, as the look in Bob's eyes demonstrated that he truly was right back where he'd been nearly 70 years earlier. Bob then wryly remarked, "...but this time the sun is shining – and no one is shooting at me...!"

The final day of the journey was a rolling tour through to the

Rhine river, following in the footsteps of the many thousands of American soldiers who slogged through the cold winter and wet spring on their way to the German heartland, complete with a lunch stop at a rural medieval castle. In the afternoon we boarded a Rhine cruise at Boppard, enjoying a relaxing ride to Bacharach, before the final leg to our hotel at Frankfurt Airport and a marvelous farewell dinner.

Thank you again Bob, for your service and for so generously sharing your experiences during the war. The privilege of making the journey with you made it the adventure of a lifetime for us all.

– Written by Doug Mitchell, with special thanks to Bob Pidcoe, Doris Davis and Deb Dressler for sharing her trip journal.

A LETTER FROM LUXEMBOURG, 14TH OF NOVEMBER 2013

Dear Mr. Santagata,

I hope you are doing well and that everything is well over there. I will introduce myself, my name is Patrick from Luxembourg, I am 28 years old and I am very interested in WWII since I was a young boy. My grandfather was also in WWII, he was forced by the Germans into war but he died very early and I had never the chance to hear his war stories, so I started collecting stories of the still living Veterans before it is too late. I have also a small collection of WWII items of US and German soldiers, that I started since I was a young boy. I found an article of you on Internet and I wanted to know more about you, so I decided to write you a letter.

The last few years I had the chance to be in contact with a few Veterans of WWII and I have many stories collected through email or snail mail. I am very interested in your WWII experiences and hope that you will share your story with me. I wanted to know with which Company and Regiment you fought with? I wanted to know where exactly you fought (France, Luxembourg, Bulge, Germany?), what missions did you had, which medals that you earned and what your "job" was during WWII? I am very curious if you have fought here in the Battle of the Bulge in Luxembourg. Did you took part in the crossing of the "Sauer River" in Diekirch in January 1945? I know that it is not easy to speak or write about WWII experiences because there are surely more bad memories than good ones, war is always cruel and I hope that a war like that will not repeat itself again that is why your experiences are so important for the generation like mine and the younger people. We have to preserve the freedom and liberty that you gave us back almost 70 years ago.

I also started since 2 years to collect recent pictures and WWII pictures with a signature of the Veterans in front of them who I met in Normandy, Luxembourg and Bastogne and I would be happy if you could also be a part of my "memory wall" at home. I wanted to know if you could send me some WWII and some recent photos of you through email, I wanted to know if I could print them out with your permission and send them with another letter to you for getting signed in front of them by you with your rank, first name, name and Unit in order to frame them. Do you think we could manage that, it would mean a lot to me? I will frame the photos and put WWII photos at left and recent photos at right, in the middle I will print the Red Diamond patch with your name and underneath a summary of your WWII story so you will get a place of honor in my home and I would be honored if you could be a part of it. In my next letter I will also include a coupon that you can give to the post office so you haven't to pay for the shipping costs for sending the (Continued)

A LETTER FROM LUXEMBOURG (Continued)

photos signed back! I didn't put one in this letter now because I am not sure if the letter reaches the right person.

Unfortunately I never had the chance to meet you in Europe, have you been back since the end of the war? Do you plan perhaps to come over again in the future? I am also in good contact with Frank Forcinella and Don Hemphill of the 5th Division perhaps you know one of him? Is there any annual Reunion of the 5th Division in the USA?

If you have perhaps written your experiences down somewhere, I would be very interested in them. If you have some other stuff to add, please feel free to do it. If you know other buddies of yours of WWII who want to share their story to with me you can give them my email address and mailing address, I would be happy to get in contact with more Veterans before it is too late to collect their stories. I am looking forward to your returning letter Sir.

Thank you very much your service, your help and time.

Best wishes from Luxembourg

Patrick Dax

Patrick Dax

11, rue Jules Wilhelm

L-2728 Luxembourg

Luxembourg

Email: golf2_power@yahoo.fr

INCOMING AT SCHOENBERG

by Clarence L Buckman, 106th ID, HQs

Let's start when I left Boston Harbor in October 1944, on the USS Wakefield I cruise ship, (Manhattan), destination Liverpool, England. I am trying to recall dates from my memory, but I do recall not staying in Liverpool for long. We picked up our equipment and we left England, were put on that a landing craft infantry and headed for Europe. The English Channel was a little rough and land mines were a float, so we were delayed while mine sweepers were called in to clear the way.

We landed in France and went by trucks to an area outside of St. Vith, Belgium, and we set up our two man tents for the night. It started to snow about 11:00 PM and sometime in the night we were greeted by a German patrol, as they left a note on our tent (written in the snow) "Welcome 106th to the front". The next few days we were sent to St. Vith to our headquarters, which was set up in a Catholic Church. Lady was the only person in family to survive at 105 attacks by our division artillery. She was saved by a German trooper who fell dead on top of her. She was only seven (7) years old at that time. Her name is Johanna Gallo and her husband is Hubert. As Johanna told us her story, it inspired me and to this day, she has only the highest regard for troops and vets.

To continue with the story, my wire crew was sent to Schoenberg, Belgium, where we set up in a home near four (4) corners of the town on a river. This was around the 10th of December, 1944. We conducted our operations from here. Laid wire for the division on the evening of the 15th, from 11:00pm to about 1:00am. We were bombarded by a V-2 rocket, which landed about 300 yards from where we were working. The explosion was so great that it blew us and the truck we were working with, off the road and into the ditch. No one in our company or any trucks was hurt or

damaged. When we returned, I was told to get some sleep, as I was to operate the switchboard early in the morning around 4 am.

When I started my watch, the Germans were shelling the City of Schoenberg. The commander in St. Vith called and told us that we were under attack, but we were to hold our position until 5 am. We stayed until 6 am at which time our Sgt. told us to start packing the gear and shut down operations.

Now as we were leaving for St. Vith a German tiger tank was coming down the hill, with his gun pointed directly at us. A 81st engineer Sgt. climbed onto that tank and put a grenade down its turret and stopped them from firing. We then proceeded to St. Vith and arrived at our headquarters. That same night we were surrounded by the Germans! Army headquarters sent the Airborne Troops to get us out. Note: My life and many others will always be thankful for their help.

I was later sent to the North into the Netherlands with six (6) new 2nd Lieutenants (field commissioned). Our F/Sgt. from headquarters was one of them. Later I went to Velamen, then to Stuttgart, Manlier, Wenham, Frankfurt, and onto Paris, France. I was assigned to the 17th base Post Office (parcel post and rewrap). When Germany surrendered and the shooting ceased, I was able to see a lot of Germany and France, while traveling for and with the Army.



In order to encourage long-term Associate memberships, we are now offering a discounted 4-year Associate membership for \$50. **(Save \$10 off the yearly membership fee of \$15!)** If you are not a member yet, we encourage you to join us. If you are already an Associate member, you can renew for 4 years at the discounted rate. The membership application is on the back cover of this newsletter, or you can join/renew on our website at: www.battleofthebulge.org. (Click on "Join VBOB" or "Renew Membership.")

**SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT VBOB
TO YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

We appreciate your support!

SIX WEEKS OF INTENSE BATTLE

by Carmen Guarino, 75th ID, 291st IR

Midnight one evening we were marched the six miles or so to the Haverford West train station. This was the first leg of our trip to the combat zone in Belgium. I recall putting on my long john underwear. I am glad I did. We were brought to a seaport in Southampton, England and we boarded a transport ship.



There was a storm in progress so we could not be unloaded easily to the waiting LCI's. There were no usable docks in Le Havre, France. We were starving on board. They had not anticipated we would be on board long. Some of the men were so hungry that they broke into the bakery for something to eat. The British who were operating the ship considered it a mutiny. We were warned that an inspection would be

held and if anything from the bakery was found in our possessions that person would be court-martialed.

We disembarked the ship at midnight by going over the side of the tall ship with all our equipment and down a long rope ladder. We were several miles away from the shore. It was a long climb down to the LCI. Since the sea was still rough we did not make the final jump into the LCI until we were told by an attendant on the LCI to jump off the rope ladder. If you jumped too soon you would be crushed between the LCI and the ship. The LCI was banging against the side of the ship because the seas were rough due to the storm.

It is strange but I don't remember being afraid. It was a slow process and we were packed in the LCI standing. I estimate it took about 2 hours to load the LCI. We were brought by the LCI directly to the beach and unloaded right on the sand several hours pass midnight. We were eventually transported from there by train and truck to the front lines. As we passed over each bridge we saw soldiers attaching explosives to the undersides of the bridges. They were preparing to blow up the bridges perchance the allies could not stop the German advance.

The Germans evidently knew that the 106th Infantry Division was new and many of their weapons were still covered by Cosmo-line and not ready for use. A part of their division was taken prisoner. A week or so ago I had breakfast with Bill Elliot a friend who works for Bechtel. He told me his father was in the 106th. I asked him immediately if his father was taken prisoner. His answer was yes. It can be a small world. We were also a new division. One of us had to go first. As luck would have it the 106th was chosen to go in first. One wonders what would have happened if we went in first instead of immediately behind them.

There were cases where they simply lined up American soldiers that had been taken prisoner and shot them. I have forgotten that division or unit designation. When the Germans attacked the 106th Division, a new entry without any combat experience they broke through the allies' front line and many of the U.S. units could not retreat fast enough and were captured. The "break through" on a map looked like a bulge in the allied forces front line. Hence the name "Battle of the Bulge. It was officially called "The Ardennes Battle". It was here that I had my first experience with death on a large scale.

Cannon Company was equipped with 105 mm Howitzers. The objective of this company was to give close support to the rifle and heavy weapons companies. Excluding sniper fire we were not

subject to much rifle fire. However, since we had the most damaging support weapons we would be subjected to considerable artillery and mortar attack.

In contrast to rifle as well as heavy weapons personnel, firing the short-range cannons (the barrels were about 4 feet long) required a minimum of three men to be out of their foxhole or slit trenches and at the guns. When the shells start to come in (you will not hear the shells that might hit you) you would be permitted to dash for your foxhole. In combat it seemed to us that the German always knew where we were. They must have had good forward observers. They were probably directing fire from one of the German homes in the area.

Our first combat experience was in the Battle of the Bulge. This was one of the major battles of WWII in Europe. The only other battle of great importance was the invasion at Normandy. Hitler's war was not going well so he ordered General Von Rundstedt to launch a major offensive against the allied forces in Belgium. It would be in the Ardennes. The Germans hit with all their strength. They dropped American speaking paratroopers behind the Allies lines in American uniforms to confuse the Allies in the German's advance and used their elite SS troupers that had the reputation of seldom taking prisoners.

It was a terrible battle, during which, to blunt the German offensive, the Allies would attack every morning. There was a terrible loss of life. It was very cold and a lot of snow had fallen. The snowfall prevented the Allies from using their aircraft to give support to our troops. There were heavy casualties on both sides. I said many "Acts of Contrition" during the "Battle of the Bulge". It is strange looking back. On some of those very cold nights, when we shivered the entire night I had thoughts that if I was home I would build a fire in the corner of our living room. The extreme cold evidently can give you crazy thoughts. We were not permitted to make a fire. It would have drawn enemy fire.

Some soldiers just had bad luck. One group of soldiers in another company unluckily in daylight built a fire over a buried land mine (explosive). They were either killed or seriously hurt.

When you see a jeep from WWII you can rapidly tell if it was a combat jeep. The Germans would string strong steel wire across a road, if the windshield was down it could decapitate the passengers. If the windshield was up it would damage the jeep and depending on the speed of the jeep knock it off the road. To limit damage we would weld an angled steel bar to the front bumper in line with the windshield with a 45 degree bend at the top that hopefully would catch and cut a steel wire if strung across the road.

I guess we have all heard of combat fatigue. This doesn't necessarily take a lot of time in combat. We were in combat perhaps a week and under continual artillery fire; the type of artillery that would continually shower your foxhole with dirt and debris from close hits. We noticed that one of the men was walking around our position silently, strangely carrying his rifle in front of him. He had a strange look in his eyes. He was a great athlete and was always an entry to the boxing matches we had, particularly in England but evidently he could not take the constant artillery fire. He was taken away and we never saw him again.

This battle lasted about 6 weeks. We lost all our officers but one. I don't believe they were killed but they were either wounded or became sick, were taken away; only one returned. When the weather cleared, our aircraft gave great support to our advancing forces. During that time I dug many foxholes and *(Continued)*

SIX WEEKS (Continued)

experienced many artillery barrages. Typically you would have to dig through the a few feet of snow before you could attempt digging a foxhole. The ground was frozen solid. Someone in the squad always had an ax. The first thing I would do was ax out the outline (top) of the foxhole. When you chop into the frozen ground it sounds like you are chopping wood.

There was no opportunity to wash. You were happy to survive. We did not have special clothing or shoes for the cold, snowy weather. We had the same clothes that you would have been issued in the States. Once again I was glad I had enough sense to put my "long johns" on before I left England. Many soldiers got trench feet. When the battle (Bulge) was over and General Von Runstead was stopped, the American forces reorganized and they arranged for us to take showers and change clothes. We were in the same clothes that we wore when we left England more than six weeks before. That last evening while we were in England we were told to dress warmly and prepare a backpack and place the rest of our belongings in a green barracks bag. These bags were stored in a barn in France and we did not see them again until the war was over.

838TH ORDNANCE DEPOT COMPANY HISTORY

**submitted by Ronald J. Regan,
Associate, in Memory of George W.
Schemanske (at right), 838th Ord
Depot Co. Deceased 11, Nov 2013.**



Reprinted from a 838th Ord Depot brochure

Officially we got our start as an army unit on May 1, 1943, at Camp Bowie, Texas. We, of course, mean the men of the 838th Ordnance Depot Company. By the first of June most of the men had assembled from their various induction stations. We found it rather hot in Texas, but we didn't realize then just how hot it could get under a Texas sun. During the next thirteen weeks we did more sweating than ever done in our lives. Yes, we had thirteen weeks of Basic Training with all the trimmings.

By the middle of September we were hard at work operating a depot at Camp Bowie and servicing Third Army units. Two months later, November 13, 1943, we left Camp Bowie, Texas for the Louisiana Maneuver Area, now known as Fort Polk. The work that followed, the 838th company endured three months of cold, rain, mud, etc., while participating in maneuver problems. For one month after, training ended the 838th company operated a Base Depot at Camp Polk, Louisiana. By this time we were good overseas material and were placed on alert for movement on March 13, 1944.

On March 30, 1944, eleven months after activation, the organization departed from Camp Polk for Camp Kilmer, N.J. late in the evening of Easter Sunday, 1944, we boarded the ocean liner "Queen Mary" and the following morning we saw the last of the Statue of Liberty as we sailed out of the harbor into the Atlantic Ocean. The trip overseas was uneventful except for a little rough weather, then April 16 1944 early in the evening we dropped anchor in the Firth of Clyde, Scotland. The next morning we were deployed ashore at Greenock, Scotland, where we boarded a train bound for England.

Late that night we arrived at Camp Northway, As church Gloucestershire, England. While in England we were assigned to

provide Services of Supply and worked at the U.S. General Depot G-25, Ordnance Supply Section. The work was hard and the hours long but now and then we got a day off and so were able to see some of England's scenery.

On June 2, 1944, we were relieved from Services of Supply assignment and assigned to the Third United States Army although we did not leave G-25 and Northway behind us until July 19 when we went to Stanton, England. Once in Stanton, England the 838th et al began to prepare for movement to the Continent. Our convoy left Stanton, England on August 2, 1944 en route to the marshalling area two days later on August 4, 1944 all units embarked from Weymouth, England. August 5 1944 part of the organization arrived in France and the rest August 6, 1944.

We landed on Utah Beach and proceeded on to our first bivouac area near Bricquebec, France. We followed the fast movement of the Third Army across France and were on the jump most of the time until we moved into Nancy, France, where we stayed for nearly six weeks, leaving on November 15, 1944.

After several more moves in France, the combined units crossed the border into Belgium and 'set up at Athus, Belgium Christmas Eve 1944. We all made many friends during our stay in Belgium; we were treated royally by the Belgian people.

However, January 19, 1945 found us on our way again, this time into Luxembourg. We made several moves through this small Duchy, "a village ruled by a Duke or Duchess" and on March 14, 1945, we entered Germany. Our first stop in conquered territory was at the City of Trier, Germany.

The 838th et al, moved on across Germany, crossing the Rhine on March 28, and finally bivouacking near the village of Chamrôles, on April 29, 1945. It was while there that we received the official news that the European War had ended, and we began to dream wildly of coming home.

On May 24, 1945 we moved into German barracks at Deggen-dorf, Germany, apparently to operate a depot there. Our stay here did not last long, however, because early in June 1945 we were again alerted for movement somewhere-whether home or the Pacific we did not know. Finally we received the great news that we were on our way home for a thirty day furlough.

Finally on June 1945 we left Germany by train, arriving at Camp Twenty Grand in France on June 20, 1945. While we there the 838th company went through the necessary processing for shipment stateside. It was a great feeling to handle good U. S. money instead of the foreign "wallpaper" we had been using for so long.

On June 27, 1945 the 838th et al organization boarded trucks and was transported to Le Havre where the Liberty Ship "Tristram Dalton" is moored waiting our arrival. We sailed that day from Le Havre and spent many days looking at nothing but water. On July 9, 1945 we saw the good old U. S. A.

So, after fifteen months away from our native land we again set foot on its soil on July 10, 1945, and were taken to Camp Shanks, N. Y. Our processing there included a fine steak dinner with all the trimmings and we all did it justice. Our furlough papers were most welcome but the most welcome news of all was the end of the Pacific War which came while we were on furlough. Twenty-one months after leaving Camp Bowie, Texas, we again assembled there to await further orders.

The 838th Ordnance Depot Company was officially Deactivated at Camp Bowie Texas, October 19, 1945.

DONATIONS

**We thank the following for their generous donations, received from
September 26 – December 31, 2013:**

Allen, Bobby L.	Associate
Bailey, James D.	106 InfD
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Brown, Wayne	4 InfD
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Gabe, Robert	6 ArmD
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Kaplan, Louis	10 ArmD
Kelly, Bernard	75 InfD
Kirtley, Marilyn	Associate
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**The 280th Engineer Combat Battalion
sent a donation of \$280. Well done!**

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Rader, Jr., Kenneth	177 FA Bn
Regier, Don	106 InfD
Reyno, David A	Associate
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Rizzo, Charles K	Donor
Roberts, John	Associate
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Smith, Henry	292 Engr Cmbt Bn
Solheim, John	75 InfD
Soria, Marshall V.	28 InfD
Spindler, James	Associate
Spomer, Roland	28 InfD
Stacy, Ralph	99 InfD
Summey, Edward	773 FA Bn
Vendrick, Phyllis	Associate
Vereker, Lynn	Associate
Walsh, Philip M	2 ArmD
Welka, Felix	83 InfD
Williams, Craig J	Associate
Wolman, Francis	9 InfD

THE AGING HEROES AMONG US

(The following is a letter John McAuliffe, President, Central Mass Chapter 22, sent to the Worcester Telegram & Gazette in response to an article they published.)

The Nov. 11 article "Fading memories: Reunions poignant for aging veterans," [in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette] related to declining numbers of World War II veterans, noted that when Battle of the Bulge veterans gathered in Kansas City this summer, only 40 came. I am proud to have been one of the 40. One million served in the Ardennes campaign.

I recently visited Henry D. Covello of Worcester. Henry no longer attends reunions. A former soldier with the 504th Parachute Regiment, 82nd Division, his wartime-injured knees from a lifetime 300 jumps and fractured pelvis now fail him.

Henry served in the Naples-Foggia, Market Garden, Ardennes,

Rhineland, and Germany campaigns. During his 25 years in military service he served 2 hitches in Korea with the 25th Infantry Division, receiving four Battle Stars, and later in the 1965 invasion of the Dominican Republic with the 325th Regiment.

In these three wars he was awarded three Purple Hearts, the Bronze Star, and three Combat Infantry badges, the coveted award of the U.S. infantryman. For the failed Market Garden campaign, the division was awarded the Militaire Willems-Orde from the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

One of the most decorated veterans of Worcester, Henry lives with his charming wife, Isabella, a member of the Auxiliary of the Vernon Hill American Legion Post, who serves her delicious homemade Italian cookies at veterans' events.

Approaching 90, Henry still has perfect recall and his history books. About his life, he remarked, "I have all my memories, I don't need more awards."

FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR, THOMAS CREEKMORE, 79TH ID



Legion of Honor ceremony, Atlanta, GA September 24, 2013:

"You entered into active service in September 1943 and you were a part of the C-Company of the 315th Regiment in the 79th Infantry Division.

You were sent on April 7, 1944 to the European Theater Operations. You fought and aided in the liberation of the French towns in Avranches, Cherbourg, Fougères, Laval, Le Mans, Saint-Armand, Joinville, and Luneville in Lorraine.

For your active participation in these combats, you were awarded the Bronze Star Medal along with the Good Conduct Medal and the World War II Victory Medal.

As a witness to the sacrifice of American combatants during the liberation of Europe, you were, at the end of the war, the only surviving member of C-Company to have landed in Normandy on June 12th, 1944.

Sergeant Thomas H. Creekmore, au nom du Président de la République française, nous vous remettons les insignes de Chevalier de l'Ordre National de la Légion d'Honneur."

HOW TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE FOR PUBLICATION IN THE BULGE BUGLE

Please submit all Letters to the Editor, Veterans' Stories, 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 you may e-mail typewritten articles to:

ralph@battleofthebulge.org

NOTE: Please do not submit clippings from newspapers or other publications, as we cannot reprint it without permission from the publication in which it appeared.

QUESTIONS?

**Please contact Ralph Bozorth,
Telephone: 484-351-8844,
Email: ralph@battleofthebulge.org**

THE BATTLE STARTED ON 16 DECEMBER 1944

by Clarence Blakeslee, 28th ID, 112th IR, Co M

It seemed like a rest camp after the Hurtgen Forest. We did some training made a few raids to capture German prisoners for questioning. The German prisoners always told us that all that faced us were old men and boys.

I was given the job of sound spotting, we could locate German guns by charting their flashes and measuring the time it took for the sound to reach us.

After a few nights I noticed some new guns on our right front, they had a different sound like they were mounted. Also there was much truck activity and sometimes voices. I was given a citation by Battery "HQ". They said my reports were excellent and detailed but they thought my compass must be off because they had sent a patrol into the area and had not found anything a few days before. The next night I couldn't sleep so I went out where I could watch for flashes. There was no artillery falling near our positions.

Soon the Germans began turning on search lights which criss-crossed over our positions. It was an eerie light that didn't case heavy shadows like moonlight. When you looked at the shafts of light it took a few moments for your eyes to adjust.

I went back to the dugout to warn the boys. I told them to keep their shoes on because something was happening. Switzer told me to quit scaring the h...l out of the men. They were mostly new, replacements for the ones we lost in the Hurtgen Forest. I countered by saying that the Germans weren't lighting up the place just to (be) nice to us and went back out to the perimeter to listen.

Now I could hear the Germans talking, apparently their leader name was Carl because the men kept calling his name. I found our sentry and used his phone to call the C.P. They thought it must one of our "white cow" patrols. I said they were talking in German and their leader name was Carl. The Lieutenant said it would be "hell to pay" if I was wrong and he alerted the company. I said it will (be) worse if I am right and you don't alert the company. He said you stick with them and keep us posted and I will alert the company.

They crossed between our cook tent and mortar positions to an empty German bunker. The sky was beginning to get lighter so I had to crawl to keep from being seen. I could not see what they were doing. Someone from "K" Company heard them and emptied his carbine at them and me, suddenly they came running toward me. I thought they had discovered me but they went by me full speed into the valley behind our position. I had asked for permission to fire on them but the Lieutenant had said just keep track of them.

There was a stunning explosion near me, the blast went over my head, huge chunks of concrete began falling around me. I was scared. They had blown up the big bunker beside me.

Now everyone was alerted for the beginning of "The Battle of the Bulge." We had a front center seat.

Source: <http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be/>

AN INFANTRYMAN REMEMBERS II

by James Powers, 11th AD, 55th AIB

Tonight my home is a hole in the frozen ground.
It was the same last night and the night before.
If I am fortunate, I'll be in another one tomorrow night.
My dinner is cold from a camouflaged box.
My dirty, ragged blanket is almost covered by mud and snow.
While my uniform clashes with the whiteness that surrounds me.
If I had a sheet, I'd wrap in it and be hidden from the enemy.
I am an outpost without friends ahead.
Stretched behind me is the needed support for my fight.
The battle continues on an epic scale, but for me
The epicenter is here, a forsaken, only temporary hole.
We fight in small groups, relying on instinct and prayer,
Unaware of what decisions are being made for us in the rear.
Wars are not won in large scale battles,
But rather in small skirmishes by lonesome dedicated troops
Who sometimes have no clear orders from those in charge higher up.
Hungry, cold, tired, dirty, duty is our leadership.
Some troops farther back have shelter, hot food, a decent bed,
And comfort in knowing that they won't be shelled tonight.
I am fortunate that I lived to tell the story of many of those
Who perished too young to leave their mark.
They are the heroes, the too soon forgotten ones
To whom their country owes a debt of immeasurable gratitude.

THE WRONG ROAD

by Dean Vanlandingham, 26th ID, 328th IR, MP PI

Some day during the first week in January 1945 a Corporal Davis and I were assigned to ride shotgun on a couple trucks of Germans being sent from the line to the P.W. compound in Arlon, Belgium. After delivering the prisoners we decided to do some recon work in the bars and cafes of the city. We were successful.

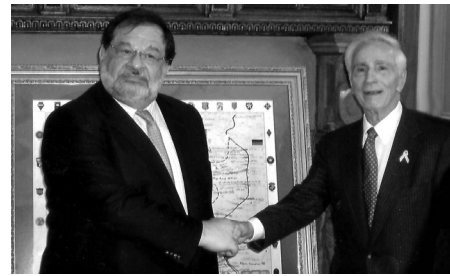
So much in fact we forgot which road to take back to our regimental H.Q. (the 328th of the YD Division). Being adequately filled with anti-freeze we finally asked an M.P. "Which is the road to Groshus?" Maybe we didn't pronounce the name any better than I can spell it, but he pointed out a road. We started down using only the cat's eyes of the jeep for help in keeping on the road.

After about an hour one of us began to sober up somewhat. Some how the road didn't seem right. We should have gone through a small burg named Ell and crossed a stone bridge then a sharp right turn. After some discussion we agreed the M.P. was probably right. We kept on.

Suddenly a "Halt," cracked out at us. Then "You dumb ... turn out those ... lights." A Sergeant came up and stuck a B.A.R. in my face. After some discussion while we tried to explain who we were and what we were doing and going the sergeant said, "You dumb ... drunken ..., you are in Bastogne with the 101st Airborne," that didn't mean a thing to us. So we turned around and returned to Arlon. By that time it was beginning to get light and we found the right road to our outfit.

It wasn't until I was in hospital in England, I was shot through my neck January 20, 1945, that I became aware of the Bastogne situation and realized that Davis and I had driven through fifteen miles of German held territory.

As it is said, "God take care of children and drunk damn fools." He sure he did us that night. (Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be)



THE STORY OF A WW II NAVY SEABEE'S COMMITMENT TO A CAUSE

Mike Ciquero's cause is plain and simple. He supports all veterans in every way possible and goes out of his way to do so. He's like a robot that keeps going and going with no end in sight. Mike has personally met and shook the hands of over 2,000 veterans, mainly because he is never without a cap. In fact he has four caps and one reads Father & Three Sons and has all of the ribbons they earned on it. One example of his dedication to veterans is the Battle of the Bulge signature index map he created to honor his brother Joe who was seriously wounded during the Battle of the Bulge and all his comrades that he fought with.

This map was signed by 105 survivors of the Battle of the Bulge in the exact location in which they fought. Mike knew from the beginning what he wanted to do with the map once completed. It was one of his final wishes, that this map be presented to the Luxembourg Ambassador at the Luxembourg Embassy in Washington DC.

During a conversation with an individual who like himself, is a great supporter of veterans. Mike casually mentioned his map project and the cost of having it framed. The individual suddenly said, "Mike, I would like to pay for the framing no matter what the cost, and then added, "with the stipulation that it remains completely anonymous". Mike was very surprised and thanked the individual and gave his word to abide by their wish. He then mentioned that several people have said to him, "Mike, do you realize the money you can make from the sale of this map?" He stated that he's offended by these remarks and adds. "This is not about money. It's about giving recognition to all who served and defended our country and for those that were left behind".

On December 15, 2013 one of Mike's final wishes came true. His wife Helen, his son Steven and daughter Michele along with two bus loads of veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, their wives and other guests, witnessed his presentation to his Excellency Jean-Louis Wolzfeld, Ambassador of Luxembourg. Mike's final words were. "I have fulfilled one of my final wishes and I thank the Lord for that".

Note: David Peterson, a Navy veteran and president of Bryner Chevrolet in Jenkintown, PA, supplied Mike, at no charge, with a full size van large enough to carry four people and the 38" by 42" map to Washington DC.

KANSAS CITY DONATION

From the Editor: The Embassy Suites Hotel Kansas City-International Airport has made a donation in honor of VBOB to Operation Breakthrough, a social and service agency that serves 400 plus children from low income families in Kansas City, MO. The money will be used to buy winter coats for the children. This is the hotel where VBOB held their annual reunion in 2013. VBOB gratefully acknowledges the donation made on their behalf.

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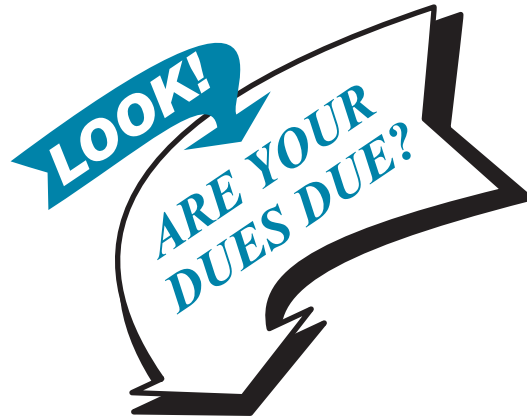
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Look for full details and registration forms
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APPLICATION FOR NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP

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:

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

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Relationship to the Bulge Veteran (if any) _____ ☐ Historian ☐ Other
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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.