

The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XXXIII NUMBER 4

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

November 2014



DECEMBER 2014 70th ANNIVERSARY of THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

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Three members of an American patrol on a scouting mission cross a snow-covered field in Lellig, Luxembourg on 30 Dec 1944. During the Battle of the Battle of the Bulge, white bedsheets were used for camouflage in the snow.

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.
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or www.vbob.org



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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



Greetings to all. This is my last letter as National President and from the outset, I want to thank all of you for your understanding, cooperation and support of the Association while I was its National President. It has been a distinct honor to have served in such capacity and I have made every effort to honor the office, and represent the Association in a professional manner

with all personalities and/or organizations with which I have had contact. This includes other military organizations such as ours, including meeting with the President and Vice President last November on National Veterans Day at the White House.

While I was President, we shared delightful reunions in Kansas City, MO and Columbia, SC. Local Chapters did great things to make them successful.

Additionally, the Commemoration ceremonies in Washington DC and visits to the Embassies and Ambassadors' Homes for receptions were just wonderful, and we must thank the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation for their sponsorship, especially John Bowen and Al Shehab. I must also thank my very good friend Ralph Bozorth, the glue that has held us together for some time. Also, I wish to thank John and Mary Ann Bowen for their dedication to the cause, and the direct support and advice they gave to me.

Still working is the trip to Belgium/Luxembourg in December of this year. I must apologize—although I have no control on the overall cost of the trip, I have devoted many hours on the coordination of this trip, but the exchange rate Euro v.s. Dollar complicates such travel. I do feel that this will be an historic trip and participants will be very pleased.

I have been able to coordinate with the Department of Veterans Affairs, Public Relations Director, for social media exposure for our Association and hopefully this will be done, along with continued coverage of our 70th Anniversary Trip in December.

I leave you with one thought... I've survived DAMN near EVERYTHING... so what is my new challenge?

My sincere regards to all... AIRBORNE ALL THE WAY!

WE NEED YOUR BATTLE OF THE BULGE STORY!

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

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

You can mail typewritten articles to:

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

Or by e-mail to: ralph@battleofthebulge.org

QUESTIONS? Please contact Ralph Bozorth,
484-351-8844, or by email: ralph@battleofthebulge.org

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

WRITING A BULGE NOVEL

Dear Veteran,

My name is Maurits Huijbrechtse. I'm 16 years old and from the Netherlands. I'm writing a novel about World War II, which is styled as an autobiography of a veteran who fought in the Dieppe raid to the end of the war. I was hoping that you are willing to tell what it was like to live through that hell of a war. The book is written in English.

I would be honored if you contact me. You will be named in the words of gratitude. If you are willing, please contact me.

With respect and admiration,

Maurits Huijbrechtse
Jerseystraat 1
1339TP Almere, the Netherlands
maurits97@gmail.com

DID ANYONE SERVE WITH ROBERT KRACHUN?

My name is Jeff Krachun and I am searching for people who might have served with my dad, Robert Krachun, during WW II. He was in the 1st Infantry Division, 18th Regiment, Company C, through the Nuremburg trials. If anyone can help me find someone who served with him, please contact me. Thank You.

Jeff Krachun, Associate
803 New York Ave.
Raritan, NJ 08869
Tel: 908-725-9252; cell: 908-531-5620

LOOKING TO TALK WITH VETERANS

My name is Anthony Blasi, and I am a high school student from Auburn, Maine. For my National Honor Society project, I am creating a website in which I collect the stories of World War II veterans. I am talking to many veterans, and would very much like to talk to some veterans from the Battle of the Bulge. There is no time limit for this project; I plan on collecting stories until I have exhausted all resources. We could talk by telephone or email, unless you reside nearby and we could meet in person.

You would be contributing to an archive, so future generations will know of the sacrifices made by veterans of the war. If you would be willing to share your story, you can contact me with the information below. It would be an honor to talk to you. Thank You.

Anthony Blasi
53 Valley Street
Auburn, Maine, 04210
(207) 784-0058
anblasi15@gmail.com

DID ANYONE KNOW JOHN P. SCALA?

Did anyone know my uncle John P. Scala, who served in and died in the Battle of the Bulge? If so, would you please contact me at 315-436-1783 or email at jscala1122@aol.com. Thank you.

John C. Scala, Associate
jscala1122@aol.com

2ND INFANTRY DIVISION

The purpose of this communication is to correct information regarding the 2nd division, submitted by Charles R. Posey in the August issue of the *Bulge Bugle*.

Like Col. Posey, I also fought at Elsenborn Ridge. When the war ended I was near Pilsen, Cz. Being young and unmarried I did not have many points, consequently I was sent to the states to Camp Swift TX, with the 2nd Division, where the Division was headquartered. We were not sent to Fort Sam Houston, as stated in Col. Posey's article.

When the war in Japan ended the Division was transferred by train to Fort Lewis WA, which is the permanent home of the 2nd ID.

All due respect to Col. Posey, I am positive that the above is correct.

Donald R. Dillon
I Company, 23rd Reg, 2nd ID

RE: "THE 87TH ID AT BIDDULPH MOOR, ENGLAND," AUGUST 2014 *BULGE BUGLE*

It is of no great importance, but the above cited article is somewhat confusing to me, and I would offer some clarification from my own knowledge and experience.

First, the city on the Firth of Clyde where the Queen Elizabeth arrived was Greenock, not Gournock.

Secondly, I never heard of any ASTP for ASTP participants under 18 years of age, and am dubious. When I entered the Army the minimum draft age was 18, and those assigned to ASTP were ages 18 to maybe 22. Prior to my entry into the Army I took and passed an examination that qualified me for ASTP upon induction, but my assignment was actually based on my AGCT score.

Third, ASTP was primarily, but not exclusively for engineers.

No doubt SOME members of the ASTP were assigned to the 87th and 106th Infantry Divisions, but I understood there were about 150,000 in ASTP when it was terminated — the equivalent of 10 full divisions, so I would believe that practically every infantry division still in the US received some from the ASTP.

I was inducted in September 1943, assigned to ASTP, and did my basic training in the Eighth Company, Fifth Training Regiment, ASTP, Fort Benning, Georgia. The 13 week training began in October and was completed in January 1944, but was extended because Congress was considering its termination, which occurred in late February or early March when I was among 3,000 from Fort Benning ASTP assigned to the 94th Infantry Division.

The article does not cite how many ASTP men went to the 87th and 106th, but the 3,000 sent from Fort Benning ASTP to the 94th Infantry Division, is 20% of the division strength, making it one of the youngest and most intelligent infantry divisions.

We sailed on the Queen Elizabeth from New York on August 6, 1944, and reached Greenock on August 11, spent 3 weeks in England drawing heavy equipment, and landed in France in early September.

Shelby C Trice, Mobile, Alabama
PFC, 94th Signal Company,
94th Infantry Division

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 September 30, 2014, that these members of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. have also recently passed away:

Ahlsen, Merle	106 InfD	Jones, Clifford D.	553 MP
Aleksandrowicz, Frank	769 MP Bn	Kelly, Bernard J.	75 InfD
Allen, Harold	106 InfD	Kyreages, Constantine	26 InfD
Ashby, John	82 AbnD	Lane, William M.	106 InfD
Bickel, Willard	26 InfD	Lock, Leon	76 InfD
Boeff, Frederick	90 InfD	Lyman, Gerald	76 InfD
Capron Jr., Ed	73 FA Bn	Marton, Jerome	387 Engr Cmbt Bn
Cohen, Alvin	90 InfD	Meacham, Edgar	17 AbnD
Connally, W.W.	75 InfD	Miglin, John	17 AbnD
Costa, Arthur	84 InfD	Minto, Joseph	44 InfD
Coward, James	285 Engr Cmbt Bn	Nation, William	887 Ord HM Co
Ferris, Richard	526 AIB	Olin, Eldon	33 Sig Constr Bn
Gamber, Ralph	99 InfD	Reiter, Kenneth	413 AAA Gun Bn
Gardner, Gilbert	253 AFA Bn	Scott, Jr., Thomas R.	87 InfD
Gilliam, Cecil	9 USAF	Solfelt, Eugene	84 InfD
Glandon, Robert	740 Tk Bn	Spiegel, Theodore	776 AAA Aw Bn
Green, Charles	5 InfD	Swett, John	106 InfD
Gugel, Roland	99 InfD	Tangarone, Lebro	731 FA Bn
Hawkins, Elmer B	282 FA Bn	Thompson, Phyllis	Associate
Hudecz, Jr., Charles	28 InfD	Trautman, Frank	106 InfD
Huntzinger, Merrill	2 InfD	Tutwiler, Jonathan	91 Chem Mtr Bn
Hutchins, Johnnie	81 Chem Bn	Whitehead, Charles	28 InfD
Imwalle, Art	535 AAA Bn	Yockey, Kenneth	87 InfD
Johnson, Joseph W.	99 InfD		



DECEMBER 2014

70th ANNIVERSARY of THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

"This is undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war and will, I believe, be regarded as an ever famous American victory."—Sir Winston Churchill, addressing the House of Commons following the Battle of the Bulge

It was one of America's greatest hours in the field of battle, and helped turn the tide of war.

Three powerful German armies plunged headlong into the rugged mountains and dense forests of the Ardennes determined to break the American line of defense, and trap the Allied Forces in Belgium and Luxembourg.

They met fierce opposition the minute they engaged the thinly spread American line. And paid a heavy price for every inch of ground they gained.

The battle raged for three consecutive days until powerful Allied reinforcements arrived to join the fighting, and keep the Germans from breaking through.

The fighting then continued for four weeks in bitter cold and snow, and all the Germans could accomplish was to put a small bulge in the line. And at the end, the line held firm and the Germans suffered a terrible loss of men, tanks and planes.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE FACTS

Where: The heavily-forested Ardennes region of eastern Belgium and Northern Luxembourg.

When: December 16, 1944 - January 25, 1945

Who: More than one million men:

- 600,000 Americans (more than the combined Union/Confederate forces at Gettysburg)
- 3 American Armies and 6 corps (equivalent to 31 Divisions)
- 500,000 Germans
- 3 German Armies and 10 corps (equivalent of 29 divisions)
- 55,000 British
- 3 British divisions plus contingents of Belgian, Canadian and French troops

Casualties: German - 100,000; American - 81,000 including 19,000 killed; British - 1,400 including 200 killed

Equipment: 800 tanks lost on each side, 1,000 German aircraft.

The Malmedy Massacre was the worst atrocity committed against American Troops in Europe during the war.

VBOB COMMEMORATION TOUR

During our December 8-18, 2014 Commemoration Tour, VBOB is proudly following in the footsteps of Generals Eisenhower, Bradley, Patton and Hodges. Commanded by them, we fought hard and were



The 101st Airborne troops move out of Bastogne, after having been besieged there for ten days to drive the enemy out of the surrounding district, 31 Dec 1944.

victorious in America's greatest land battle of World War II, the Battle of the Bulge. This led inevitably to German military collapse, victory in Europe, its liberation from Nazism and the founding of NATO. We begin and end our tour in Brussels, HQ of NATO and principal capital of the European Union, as well as being the lively capital city of Belgium. Here we have our Welcome Dinner and our festive Farewell Dinner hosted by the Belgian Army.

We also stay four nights in Spa, Belgium, HQ of General Courtney Hodges and First Army. This beautiful northern Ardennes town is the original "Spa," made fashionable by the Russian Tsar Peter the Great in

the 18th century who specially came here for its refreshing, healing mineral water springs. Our 4-Star hotel is in the elegant central square of Spa.

Then we stay three nights in Luxembourg City, HQ of General Omar Bradley and 12th Army Group, and of General George Patton and Third Army. We stay in the very same 4-Star hotel used by General Eisenhower, General Bradley and General Patton. The historic photo of them is on display in the hotel. Luxembourg City is in the southern Ardennes. It is extraordinarily split by a mini-canyon and is one of the most dramatically beautiful capital cities of Europe.

Our sincerest thanks go to Patrick Brion of the Belgian Army, Steve Kayser of the Luxembourg Government, Veterans Tour Operator MilSpec Tours and expert Veterans Tour Director Patrick Hinchy for putting together this fantastic 70th Anniversary Commemoration Tour.

For more information about this and other veterans tours, contact MilSpec Tours: milspectours@aol.com, or 215-248-2572.



The tour will include a visit to the Luxembourg American Cemetery.

34TH ANNUAL NATIONAL VBOB MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

The 34th Annual National Reunion Membership Meeting of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. was held 02 September 2014, at the Marriott Hotel in Columbia SC. A quorum being present the meeting was opened at 3:10 PM, by President Douglas Dillard, 82nd AbnD, who chaired the meeting. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, followed by John D. Bowen, Associate who gave the Invocation.

President Dillard indicated that this would be his last reunion meeting as president. He thanked Barbara Mooneyhan Associate and Christopher Carawan, 106th InfD, Chapter President hosts and members of the South Carolina Chapter for the outstanding reunion that they have produced. This resulted in rousing applause. He then introduced Past Presidents Lou Cunningham, 106th InfD and J. David Bailey, 106th InfD and also introduced Chapter President Doris Davis, Associate, of the Golden Gate Chapter in California, George Fisher, 26th InfD of the Southeast Florida and other VBOB National Officers present and introduced Alan Cunningham, Exec VP; Mary Ann D. Bowen, Recording Secretary; John D. Bowen, Trustee; Barbara Mooneyhan, VP Membership; Doris Davis, VP Chapters; Madeleine Bryant, Trustee; Robert Bowles, Trustee and Mike Levin, Trustee.

Reunions:

Alan Cunningham, Exec VP, was introduced and reported on future Reunions. He indicated that he had done a survey of the membership files as to where members lived and found that the majority of members lived east of the Mississippi River. He surveyed potential reunion sites and found that a possible location for next year would be in the Richmond/Williamsburg VA area and in the following year in Washington State in Seattle. He suggested that we hold the reunion next year, a little earlier, in August 2015, to take in the Pride 45 events of the 70th Anniversary of the end of WW II. He suggested that we hold the reunion from 13 - 15 August 2015 so as to encourage veterans and families to bring their children and grandchildren. The location and timing would also allow families to extend their vacation to take in Williamsburg and Busch Gardens. There are loads of places such as Ft Lee close by which has both the Quartermaster Museum and the Army Womens Foundation Museum. The area also has many Civil War battlefields to visit as the 150th Anniversary of the end of the Civil War is commemorated. Alan indicated that it is always helpful to have our reunions where we have VBOB Chapters. The Crater Chapter of VBOB, in VA, would help out next year. He has already approached the Seattle Chapter which indicated that they would help out the following year (2016).

Alan next reported that he has been keeping an eye on our organization make up, which is an IRS 501(c)19 Veterans organization and which puts requirements on how many veteran members we must have. Right now we are sitting at 79%. Over the next year he is planning a committee to look at a long time solution to our Non-Profit status and it may be necessary to change our non-profit status from a 501(c)19 to a 501(c)3 or 501(c)4.

Chapters:

Doris Davis, VP Chapters, was then introduced and indicated that she would provide a report in the next *Bulge Bugle*. She indicated that last year we had 50 VBOB Chapters but at present we are down to 45 VBOB Chapters.

Membership:

Barbara Mooneyhan, VP Membership, thanked Tracey and Kevin Diehl for handling renewals and membership numbers in our VBOB office. Barbara indicated that we have had a good gain in Associate Memberships but because of the ages of our Veteran members and deaths the gain has not quite balanced our loss. For this year we have had a net loss of 148 in members. Barbara also mentioned the number of attendees yesterday on the Fort Jackson trip was 150 and there will be 172 at the dinner and musical this evening. Suggestions were offered by members that we should be canvassing other members in the family especially grandchildren to join the National VBOB. Another source of members suggested was the Battle of the Bulge Divisions and unit associations that have been disbanding or not holding reunions. Attempts should be made to get to the Presidents or those with the membership rolls so as to invite those members to join VBOB and attend our reunions.

Financial Reports:

President Dillard then presented the Profit and Loss Statement from the start of our Fiscal Year, which is 1 Dec 2013 to 15 August 2014. We have Total Income of \$51,389.36, which consists of \$5,017.50 in Donations, \$1,448.58 in Interest Income, \$27,630 in Dues, \$4,917.45 in Quartermaster income, and \$12,375.83 in Reunion income. Total Expenses to 15 August 2014 is \$31,634.34 for a Net Gain of Ordinary Income of \$19,755.02. The biggest expenses are printing the *Bulge Bugle* and Mailing costs. Total Assets are \$188,175.29 of which \$101,438.56 is in a Certificate of Deposit and \$40,182.70 in Pentagon Federal Money Market, the remainder is in the Operating Checking Account.

2015 BUDGET: President Dillard then presented and reviewed the proposed budget for the next fiscal year 2015:

INCOME:

Donations	\$ 6,400
Life Memberships (70+)	\$ 1,600
Yearly Membership Dues (2,300 @ \$15.00).....	\$ 34,500
Certificate Sales	\$ 1,000
Quartermaster Memorabilia Sales	\$ 5,700
Funds from VBOB Savings Account.....	\$ 7,950
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 57,150

EXPENSE:

Bulge Bugle Publication:

Other Services.....	\$ 2,500
Postage	\$ 7,700
Printing.....	\$ 11,800
Total Bulge Publication.....	\$22,000

Operations:

Supplies	\$ 1,000
Mailing Services Postage.....	\$ 2,000
Printing and Copying	\$ 3,000
Telephone	\$ 900
CPA Financial Reports, 990 Form, etc.....	\$ 3,900
Contractor - Membership, QM Sales, Web.....	\$21,100
Insurance	\$ 1,500
Licenses, Permits, PO Box.....	\$ 250
Travel-related.....	\$ 500
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,000
Total Operations	\$35,150
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$57,150

(Continued)

34TH NATIONAL MEETING MINUTES (Continued)

A motion was made by Tom Ingram, 90th InfD, to approve the 2015 Budget. The motion was seconded by Mike Levin, 7th Armored Div. and approved without dissent.

Minutes of 2013 Membership Meeting:

John D. Bowen, Associate, previous acting Recording Secretary, at the last Membership Meeting, in 2013, rose to present the minutes of that 33rd Annual Membership meeting. Copies had been distributed earlier in everyone's packets. The previous meeting had been held at the Embassy Suites Airport Hotel in Kansas City MO, on 7 Sep 2013. John Nolan, Associate, moved that the Minutes be accepted which was seconded by Mike Levin, 7th Armored Div and was approved without dissent.

December Trip to Belgium/Luxembourg:

President Dillard reported on the 70th Anniversary trip to Europe. He indicated that we had met with the Belgium Ambassador and Military Attache early in the year to request a free air flight to and from Belgium. No decision could be immediately made because the Belgians would be having elections in May 2014. Subsequent to the elections we were offered a one way flight from Belgium to the United States. Most of the summer, intercessions were made, by the Military Attache, with the Minister of Defense and the King's General, to secure a round trip flight to no avail. Because the cost of a one way commercial flight is much more than a commercial round trip it was necessary to decline the Belgium offer of a one-way trip. The Belgium Government will however provide three passenger buses and a medical unit to accommodate our trip. The Luxembourg Government will also be picking up costs [for WW II veterans] of events in Luxembourg. The itinerary has been put together by a committee of Belgium & Luxembourg communities & museum heads, chaired by Patrick Brion, who also helped out with the 2004 tour.

The trip will be from 8 - 18 December 2014 and will accommodate 100 people. Patrick Hinchy of MilSpec Tours who has handled tours of the Bulge and Normandy over the last 20 plus years will be our tour guide.

Doug indicated that the cost of the Land portion is still being determined and will be available about 15 September. Alan indicated that he has priced air fare from Richmond VA to Brussels and cost is about \$1020 round trip. He said that air costs however would vary depending on your originating point.

Doug has brochures about the trip and itinerary available for anyone who wanted one or could find it on the VBOB Web Site www.battleofthebulge.org under Tours or by calling MilSpec Tours at 215-248-2572.

Nominations:

Alan Cunningham, Associate, Chair of the Nomination Committee presented the Nominating Committee's recommendations for 2015 as follows:

President..... Alan Cunningham, Associate
Executive VP Doris Davis, Associate
VP Membership Barbara Mooneyhan, Associate
VP Chapters *
Treasurer..... Duane R. Bruno, Associate
Corresponding Secretary Madeleine Bryant, Associate
Recording Secretary..... Tracey Diehl, Associate

Three-Year Trustees:

Ruth Hamilton, Associate
Robert Rhodes, Associate
Jim Triesler, Associate

Two-Year Trustees:

Gary Higgins, Associate
Mike Levin, 7th Armored Division
Bert Rice, Associate

One-Year Trustees:

Thomas Chambers, 9th Armored Division
Tom Ingram, 90th Infantry Division
Alfred H. M. Shehab, 38th Cavalry Squadron

All Past Presidents of VBOB are automatically members of the Executive Council:

George Chekan, 9th Infantry Division
William Tayman, 87th Infantry Division
Stanley Wojtusik, 106th Infantry Division
John Dunleavy, 703rd Tank Battalion
Louis Cunningham, 106th Infantry Division
J. David Bailey, 106th Infantry Division
Douglas Dillard, 82nd Airborne Division
Meetings are now held by teleconference.

Nominations were then opened from the floor. It was pointed out that the By-Laws require that each nomination from the floor needs five people to concur in the nomination.

*Sherrie Klopp, Associate, was nominated from the floor, by Barbara Mooneyhan, for the position of VP Chapters. Five seconds of this nomination was received from the floor. Hearing no further nominations from the floor it was moved by Tom Burgess, 87th InfD, 345th Inf A, to close Nominations and that the Secretary cast one vote for the slate proposed by the Nominating Committee plus the nomination from the floor. The motion was seconded by John Mohor, Associate and passed without dissent. The Recording Secretary then cast the necessary ballot to elect the nominated officers.

Alan Cunningham then requested that we verify the location of the next two reunions. He asked for a vote of those in favor of the Richmond area in 2015, which passed without dissent. He then asked for a vote of Seattle Washington in 2016, which passed without dissent.

For the Good of the Order:

George Fisher, 26th InfD rose to compliment the reunion organizers for the marvelous reunion that we have had here in South Carolina. He indicated that his South Florida Chapter will be having their 70th Anniversary Meeting and Banquet on Sunday, 14 December 2014. They will be showing a video "When Weather Made History" about the Bulge. Also, on 16 December 2014, they will have a tribute to Glen Miller and will unveil a monument to the Battle of the Bulge for which they are now raising funds. Donations are welcome as they must raise about \$7,500 for the monument. The meeting on 14 December 2014 will be held in the West Palm Beach, Florida Embassy Suites Hotel. Everyone is invited. The Governor of Florida will also be issuing a Proclamation on the Battle of the Bulge.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ann D. Bowen, Recording Secretary

National Archives to Recognize 70th Anniversary of Battle of the Bulge from Veterans Day to End of Year at Washington DC Facility

2014 VBOB REUNION RECAP

For more photos, go to our website, www.vbob.org, and click on "VBOB Reunion Photo Gallery"

Our 33rd Annual Reunion was held in Columbia, SC, August 30-September 3, 2014 at the Columbia Marriott hotel. Over 140 attendees enjoyed events including trips to the SC State Museum, Fort Jackson, and FN Manufacturing, and were entertained by the Harry James Orchestra and the Liberty Belles.



Some of the 35+ BOB vets who attended the reunion gathered for a photo after the wreath-laying ceremony at Fort Jackson.



John Boone, 80 InfD, checking out the goods at the FN Manufacturing Co., where we were treated to lunch, plus goodie bags for the Vets.



J. David Bailey, 106 InfD and VBOB past president, cuts a rug to the sounds of the Harry James Orchestra with Ute Dillard, Associate.



Our esteemed guest, Brigadier General (Air), Johan Andries, Belgian Defense Attaché, spoke eloquently at our banquet.



Our veterans met an eager public, and signed autographs, at the South Carolina State Museum.



We enjoyed just "hanging out" in the Hospitality Room, which was well-run by Barbara Mooneyhan and her fantastic volunteers from the SC Chapter.

SHIRLEY, MA HONORS THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Special 70th Anniversary Dedication

The Town of Shirley was well represented at a special dedication ceremony for the 70th Anniversary of the World War II Battle of the Bulge at the Massachusetts Veterans' Memorial Cemetery in Winchendon on Friday, May 16. The ceremony also included a rededication of the Wereth Eleven Memorial for the 11 black American anti-aircraft unit soldiers who were captured and massacred during World War II.

The memorial to the 11 in Winchendon is said to be the only memorial to them in this country and is mirrored by another in the town of Wereth, Belgium. The unveiling of the two memorial stone markers was conveniently done during a break in the weather by four veteran survivors of the Battle of the Bulge, including Joe Landry from Shirley. They performed the unveiling as civilian, military, and veteran onlookers watched.

The Gardner American Legion Rifle Squad did a 21 gun salute and taps was then played. The ceremony began with Massachusetts State Representative Sheila Harrington welcoming everyone, as did Christian de Marcken who grew up in Belgium during the Battle of the Bulge. The Commander of the Shirley American Legion, Lewis Cress, posted the colors accompanied by the Color Guard from the Gardner American Legion. Shirley's Town Collector Holly Haase sang the National Anthem, as she often does so well for special occasions in Shirley.

An invocation was offered by Father Edmond Derosier of St. Anthony's Church. Shirley's American Legion drummers Steve Holbein and Mike Bulger played drums during the ceremony. Several members of the Shirley American Legion were also present.

From Fort Devens, Commanding Officer LTC Egan and Command Sergeant Major Ortiz-Guzman were also in attendance. Also presenting were several veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Coleman Nee, Secretary of Veteran Affairs of Massachusetts, State Representative Gloria L. Fox, State Representative Stephen DiNatale, Marydith Tuitt, US Navy Veteran. The Master of Ceremonies was Francisco Urena, Commissioner of Veterans Services for the City of Boston.

—Originally published in the "Shirley Volunteer," original article and photo by Charles B. Church, edited by Amy Peck



(L-R) Arthur Hubbard, 110th AAA Bn; William Ford, 107th Evac Hospital; Joe Landry, 776th Field Artillery Bn; and John McAuliffe, 87th Infantry Division unveil the two memorial stone markers.

2015 BULGE REENACTMENT 70th Anniversary Commemoration Battle

TO HONOR VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II & THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

Fort Indiantown Gap, PA
27 Jan – 01 Feb 2015

The World War II Federation invites all veterans to the Battle of the Bulge Reenactment this coming January and will again be honoring the WW II Veterans during the week, with a special Pass in Review for the World War Veterans at 1415 on Friday, 30 Jan 2014, followed by a Reception at 1700 free for WW II Vets.

Veterans may arrive after 1500 hours on Tuesday, 27 Jan 2014. As usual, the Veterans will have a hospitality suite set up in their barracks as well as memorabilia & video displays.

Veterans should bring a pillow, sheets and a blanket (or a sleeping bag) for their bunk as well as wash cloth and towel and shower clogs. Enjoy a week of camaraderie, relaxation, WW II videos, stories and hospitality and a chance to relive your basic training days in updated original WW II Barracks. Enjoy the transformation of the barracks area by the re-enactors to WW II period and enjoy the many restored WW II vehicles. Observe re-enactor's formations in period uniforms and equipment. Meet re-enactors who are interested in learning from WW II veterans about the period as well as the respect that they hold for you.

Wednesday we will be transported by bus to Williams Valley Jr. High School at 0800 with breakfast provided on the bus, for a Vet Program. The Flea Market will open at 1300 hours and will remain open to 2200 hours. Thursday's visit by bus to the VA Hospital in Lebanon PA loads at 0845 for our annual visit, so we can meet with fellow veterans. Lunch will be provided there.

On Friday, the Federation will salute the Veterans with the Pass in Review at 1415 hours. At 1630 hours there will be a Wreath Laying at the VBOB Monument by the Community Club. There will be a free reception there also for WW II Veterans at 1700 hours. As usual there will be 1940 Movies and hospitality in the Veterans' Barracks.

On Saturday at 1030 hrs load buses for Veteran Tour of the Battlefield, depart at 1100 at 1300 Public Battle scenario Area 12, 1700 Buses leave for Community Club, 1800 Dinner, 2000 period entertainment & talent show followed by dancing to 40's big band music. Buses return from the Community Club until 0100 hours 1 February 2015.

The cost of the event is free to WW II Veterans, which includes 5 nights bunk in the barracks, Friday Reception and Dinner and a Period Entertainment USO-type show on Saturday night.

*WW II Veterans will be free again this year, if registered by the extended deadline of **31 Dec 2014**. Contact John D.*

Bowen for registration forms at 301-384-6533,

e-mail johndbowen@earthlink.net or go to

www.WWII Federation.org for registration forms.

COMMEMORATION CEREMONY IN BEDFORD, VA, JUNE 2014



VBOB Member Jessie Bowman (standing just left of sign), 87th Infantry Division, visited the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA (shown below right) with over 100 WW II Veterans from North Carolina and Florida.

Jessie Bowman, 87th Infantry Division, visited the National D-Day Memorial in Bedford, VA on June 6, 2014, to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of D-Day. There were over 100 WW II Veterans from North Carolina and Florida in attendance. The Asheville NC Rotary Club sponsored the trip. The veterans were in a parade through the town of Bedford and were given a hearty welcome by the people who lined the streets and waved to them as they passed by on the way to the Memorial.

Bedford, VA was the community that had the most per capita D-Day losses in the nation. The Memorial is a tribute to the valor, fidelity and sacrifice of D-Day participants. The Memorial is encompassed by the names of the 4,413 Allied soldiers who died in the D-Day invasion.

—Pictures courtesy of Jessie Bowman, article written by Doris Davis, Associate & President of VBOB Golden Gate Chapter



EXCERPTS FROM “COMBAT ENGINEERS IN WW II”

by Wesley Ross 3rd Platoon,
146th Engineer Combat Bn

About 10 December 1944, as a nervous tag-along member of a six man patrol from a 38th Cavalry troop, forward of the front and east of Bullingen, Belgium at the German border, we found plenty of German activity across the bottom of a tree-filled canyon. Trees were being cut down with saws and axes, and tanks and other heavy motorized equipment were moving around over straw covered trails, to muffle their sounds. While watching this activity from a concealed position two hundred yards away on the opposite side of the canyon, we listened to the big tank engines for some time and sensed that “something unusual was afoot”.

When information regarding all of this German activity was sent to army headquarters, their response was “this is just a feint to trick us into pulling our troops away from our planned offensive

near Schmidt in the Hurtgen Forest.” If it had not been so serious, an almost comical ploy was our leaders attempt to enhance our perceived troop strength in the Ardennes, in order to draw more Germans troops from the front further north at Aachen. They conjured up a non-existent infantry division to further promote the ruse. (Heard, but not verified—WR)

As a result, our high-level commanders were not suspicious when the Germans began bringing in more and more troops prior to the Bulge. This is exactly what our leaders had hoped, and they happily believed that their scheme was working to perfection. There were a few red faces when the axe finally fell! We at the lower levels, were unaware of these machinations, but were kept alert by the persistent rumors that were floating around. On our return trip from our canyon viewpoint, the cavalry used pull-igniters on three Tellermines left by a German patrol that had been chased off the previous night. Several enemy were killed when they tried to reclaim their AT mines.

While I occasionally had patrolled in areas forward of our front lines, I had never patrolled with the audacity of (Continued)

COMBAT ENGINEERS IN WW II *(Continued)*

these 38th Cavalry troopers. They were fearless and not concerned that might bump into German patrols. They probably would have welcomed the opportunity! My 3rd platoon had laid AT mines along the road shoulders near Bullingen a few weeks earlier, but that was probably done to deter small-scale penetrations. Bullingen was on the route to be taken by Kampfgruppe Peiper and where his forces captured a large quantity of our gasoline, before heading west, towards Huy on the Meuse River. On 14 December, the 2nd Infantry Division launched an attack from the Elsenborn Ridge to capture the Roer River dams, to keep the Germans from flooding the Roer River plain and foiling our advance at Aachen. The “Indian Head Division” was making good progress in a flanking action, thus gaining ground that had been denied us in the September to November frontal assaults in the Hurtgen Forest.

V-Corps called off the attack on the second day of the Bulge, to keep our forces from being decimated by the massive enemy infantry and armored forces that were attacking there. The Bulge was considerably more than a feint—it was a giant leap beyond what any of us could have imagined, and it caught everyone by surprise—even those of us at the lower levels, who suspected that “something unusual was afoot”!

On the morning of 16 December, the well-orchestrated German attack in the Ardennes—that they called the “Wacht am Rhein”—was launched. The name was a subterfuge to hide their offensive intentions behind a pretended defense. Hitler suspected a security leak within his Wehrmacht and so he limited disclosures of the attack plans to only his most trusted generals. He was unaware that the British had broken his Enigma Code, even though some of his advisors had suggested that this may have happened. “Impossible” said der Fuehrer!

There were so few radio intercepts concerning the upcoming Ardennes offensive that our top level commanders were caught off guard, even though many of us at lower levels were antsy about all of the enemy activity nearby. In general, the Wehrmacht followed the mandated secrecy orders, but there were enough slip-ups by their air force and civilian transportation units to have given our commanders sufficient insight had they not been so supremely overconfident. The 14 6ECB was bivouacked at Mutzenich Junction, three miles west of the front at Monschau, which was at the northern shoulder of the German build-up. The 38th Cavalry was also at the northern flank of the Bulge at Monschau and just north of the 3rd Battalion, 395th Regiment, 99th Infantry Division, who managed to hold their ground even though the remainder of the division was badly chewed up, and much of their command was shifted to the 2nd Infantry Division.

For several days this small cavalry force, plus 3rd Platoon, A-Co, 112ECB; A-Co, 146ECB; and their attached 105mm and 155mm artillery, fought off several attacks by vastly superior enemy forces. Several times artillery fire was called in on their own positions to thwart the attacks. Canister rounds—a cannoner’s shotgun—were used with devastating effect when they were about to be overrun. For their stout defense, all three units were awarded the Presidential Unit Citation, the nation’s highest unit award. According to “Cavalry on the Shoulder”, the 38th Cavalry was the only cavalry squadron to be so honored in WW II.

The 146th Engineer Combat Battalion had received a Presidential Unit Citation for their D-Day demolition mission on Omaha Beach, so an oak leaf cluster was added to A-Co’s PUC. The

battlefield success of the 38th Cavalry Squadron in the Bulge, was due to a number of elements, including a seasoned cadre that had fought from Normandy. But probably the most important factor was their commanding officer, Lt Colonel Robert O’Brien, a 1936 West Point cavalry graduate. He was a fanatic in his dedication to patrolling the area forward of his lines, to the extent that his Cavalry Squadron eventually came to own that area! Initially, this was not the case but came to pass after several fierce firefights that inflicted heavy casualties on enemy patrols.

This type of aggressive action was repeated often in the Monschau sector, causing enemy patrols to avoid contact and allowing cavalry patrols to make increasingly detailed reconnaissance reports and sketches of enemy positions. More importantly, it left the German commanders ignorant of the details of the cavalry’s defensive positions. The cavalry’s weapons were carefully positioned, so as to provide interlocking grazing fire along all of the likely enemy avenues of approach. They were further tied into obstacles of concertina wire and personnel mines along these likely avenues. Further, extensive use was made of trip flares to provide early warning of enemy approach. Flares were preferred because they prevented friendly casualties in case of mistakes, and they did not give the false sense of security be associated with an extensive minefield.

All of the weapons were dug in, with overhead cover to survive artillery attack, and they were carefully concealed so that an attacking enemy had to literally be on the position to recognize it as a machine gun position. Finally the positions were integrated into the squadron command and control telephone net. A final point on the preparation of the Monschau defense was a typical characteristic of defense common to the United States army: the thorough integration and abundance of artillery support—105mm and 150mm howitzers, augmented by their organic 60mm and 81mm mortars. “The effectiveness of the artillery support was later verified by a German prisoner. He reported that German troops in the Monschau sector were forbidden to leave their bunkers and foxholes during the hours of daylight. They were reduced to observing their sectors through the use of mirrors in order not to attract rapid and deadly artillery fire.

This dedicated defensive preparation was tested at 0545 on the morning of 16 December 1944, when the intense German artillery barrage announced the start of the Battle of the Bulge. On the night of 16/17 December 1944, the 1,500 man parachute force, under Lieutenant Colonel Frederick-August von der Heydte, dropped into the Hohes Venn in “Operation Stosser.” His group had fought several vicious engagements with the 101st Airborne Division in Normandy and again in General Bernard Montgomery’s flawed Market Garden offensive in September 1944, as portrayed in “The Band of Brothers.” The Hohes Venn is a swampy area on the headwaters of the Roer River. In November, three of us tried to cross through this swampy area. With our Jeep flat out in four wheel drive, we traveled about 50 yards, before dropping it down to its axles. We then had to jack it up out of the mud and build a corduroy road to get back on solid ground.

The paratroopers were a day late because of glitches in getting their gasoline delivered and in getting the troops assembled. They were scattered for 25 miles from Malmedy to Eupen because of inexperienced pilots and the minimal advance notice regarding the mission—dictated by Hitler as a security measure. The unsynchronized twin Jumbo engines of their planes generated an interesting

(Continued)

COMBAT ENGINEERS IN WW II *(Continued)*

slow beat-frequency sound. Many parachutes were found after the drop. I rescued an undamaged white one, and also a large section from a brown and green camouflaged model. Both appeared to be silk. The camouflaged silk made fine neck scarves and several still reside in my dresser drawer to be worn occasionally, but I finally gave the white one to the Salvation Army, after it had taken up closet space for more than twenty years.

General Dietrich's 6th Panzer Army, the main German force in the Bulge, included four Panzer Divisions with the latest tanks, weapons and infantry. It included the 1st SS Panzer Division, Leibstandarte S S Adolph Hitler. The lightning strike to the Meuse River near Huy, Belgium was to be led by Joachim Peiper leader of Kampfgruppe Peiper, from this division. They then would move north to Antwerp and enveloping our northern armies, similar to the 1940 French and British defeat there! In the planning, Dietrich's forces were to have reached the Baroque Michel crossroads, midway between Malmedy and Eupen, on the 16th, which was to have been captured by the paratroopers by then. The 38th Cavalry's stand at Monschau blunted that effort, so Dietrich's forces were directed south toward Elsenborn, Bullingen and Malmedy.

Had Dietrich been able to force his way through Monschau, he very well may have rolled up our front and then captured the large gasoline dumps near Eupen. Had this come to pass, their armies could then have moved almost unimpeded north to Antwerp. Despite all of the negative opinions about the stupidity of launching the Ardennes offensive and taking troops and materiel away from the Russian front, honesty must conclude that with a few fortunate breaks, the Bulge could have been a phenomenal German success and Hitler would then have been trumpeted as a great tactician!

At 1520 hours on 16 Dec, V-Corp's Colonel Pattillo called Major Willard Baker, our S-3 and ordered 146ECB to furnish a company of engineers to serve as infantry, to be attached to the 38th Cavalry Squadron at Monschau. A-Company was in the line at 1700 that evening, where they furnished support for the outnumbered troopers. At 1525 Hours, Colonel McDonough, the 1121st Engineer Combat Group commander, called our headquarters and ordered another engineer company to be deployed as infantry. The three B-Company platoons moved into position the next morning and for several days formed a barrier line, a short distance behind the front between Monschau and Elsenborn. Our purpose was to slow the advance of the Panzer Army, should they penetrate our lines. The 3rd Platoon covered a 1,000 yard front in the snow, until relieved on 23 December.

We set up three 50 caliber machine guns in defensive positions and patrolled between them, but being in a semi-wooded area we had inadequate fields of fire and would have been captured or bypassed by any enemy attack in force! Several men manned daisy-chain roadblocks on nearby roads. These are AT mines roped together, so they can be pulled across the road at the approach of enemy vehicles, but they are not effective unless they are adequately supported by covering fire. Trees had explosives strapped to their trunks in order to drop them and form abatis, at the approach of enemy vehicles. Engineers have only occasional needs for machine guns, but we had both the WW I vintage water cooled .30 caliber Brownings and the newer air cooled version, as well as the .50 caliber Brownings that were normally ring-mounted on our truck cabs for anti-aircraft fire. Our .30 caliber Brownings were light-years behind the vastly superior German MG-42. In the early hours of the

parachute drop, one of our water-cooled Brownings fired one round only and then sat there mute. The water in the cooling jacket had frozen, jamming the action!

While on outpost duty, the 3rd Platoon had no clue as to the enemy's intentions, or what was actually taking place nearby at the front. We were located in a sparsely woody area away from our headquarters, but the wealth of rumors and the actuality of the paratroopers and reports of Skorzeny's men in American uniforms kept us alert. Unconfirmed rumors abounded! Anyone moving around was challenged. This included even our easily recognized generals. Lt Leonard Fox, now a C-Company platoon leader, was taken prisoner by a patrol from the 38th Cavalry Squadron. He had not received the password for the day. After six hours, while his legitimacy was being confirmed, he was released. Lt Refert Croon led a patrol of Joe Manning, Marvin Lowery, Warren Hodges and others, looking for the paratroopers. Lowery was killed in an ensuing firefight that killed two Germans and wounded several more—the rest surrendered. Nine paratroopers were killed and about sixty were captured, all by C-Company and HQ-Company, as A-Company and B-Company were deployed elsewhere as infantry. Fred Matthews was captured by the paratroopers, but he managed to escape during another firefight.

The 291st Engineer Combat Battalion set up roadblocks near Malmedy. Even more important than establishing the roadblocks was their contribution in slowing Kampfgruppe Peiper by blowing a number of bridges and thwarting his intended drive to the Meuse River. Some of the bridges were destroyed just as Peiper's tanks arrived on the scene. I believe that their stout defense was a major factor in blunting Kampfgruppe Peiper's drive to the Meuse River at Huy. The 291st Engineers, along with the 30th Infantry Division, were bombed three times by our 9th Air Force during their days in Malmedy. Misdirected air strikes were not too unusual an occurrence when mists and clouds mask events on the ground, or when the front is poorly defined. These fatalities were related by Colonel Pergrin, the unhappy commander of a battalion of combat engineers.

Julius Mate, whom I had not seen since before the Bulge, related the following at our annual battalion reunion in 1993: "Early on the morning of 17 December, Sergeant Henri Rioux sent Nettles and another radio man to the battalion headquarters for breakfast. When the radio operators had not returned as expected, Rioux told Mate and James France to go to breakfast and to see what had happened to them. Later we heard that the paratrooper's planned assembly area was this battalion radio shack, several hundred yards from our bivouac area, located away to keep from drawing artillery fire on our headquarters." On their way, they saw a parachute with an attached bag hanging in a dead tree. Seeing evidence of the paratroopers was not surprising since they had heard the planes overhead the previous night and our men had seen their green recognition lights. Mate attempted to recover the chute by pulling on the shroud lines, but the rotten tree broke and the trunk fell across his ankle, pinning him to the ground.

After working free, they continued toward the headquarters and breakfast and then saw Nettles up ahead acting very strange. When they ran up to ask what was happening, six paratroopers with machine pistols stepped out of hiding, took them captive, disarmed them and then threw their M-1 Garand rifles into a nearby creek, where they were found later that day by a patrol led by Lt Refert Croon. Nettles and Mate were directed to make a double-pole support to carry a paratrooper who had compound fractures of both

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COMBAT ENGINEERS IN WW II *(Continued)*

legs. At the end of the day, Mate's ankle was swollen and painful, so France and Nettles carried the wounded trooper. This small group kept moving during the day and slept under fir boughs at night. After wandering about for two days, they joined the main body of about 150 paratroopers and were then interrogated by a German officer who spoke impeccable English. He had studied at a Texas university and so not only knew the language, but also the American idioms and customs.

They were combined with twenty others who had been captured from a laundry unit near Eupen. At night they slept in a tight pile to keep warm, as it was very cold. After a time when the body parts against the ground were growing cold, they all turned at a given signal. They kept up a running conversation to keep telling of the importance of moving toes and fingers to avert frostbite.

One of the captives, who understood German, heard their captors discussing how they should dispose of the Americans by throwing grenades into their midst while they slept. When a patrol from the 1st Infantry Division engaged the paratroopers, the captives ran up waving their shirts and yelling "Don't shoot. We're Americans." Early in the Bulge, Earl Buffington, from C-Company, was riding in Blaine Hefner's truck, as they won the race with a German tank to a crossroad near Malmedy. The tank halted and began firing at them as they scurried away.

Earl's arm was injured by a low hanging tree limb and he was hospitalized near Spa, Belgium. The limb also brushed off his "Omaha Beach Trophy Helmet" which sported two clean 8mm holes. The bullet had passed from front to back nicking his ear and the side of his head. He was not seriously wounded, so he considered that a good omen and he refused to swap the helmet for a new one. However, his Trophy Helmet was never recovered. Soon after Earl and several others were dropped off at the field hospital in Spa, he was told that the Germans were about to overrun the area, so Earl and a group of patients scurried out the back. In a similar fashion Mugg Pawless, Julian Mathies and eight others fled out the back door of a hospital in Malmedy just ahead of the attacking Germans and later ended up at a temporary hospital in the Grand Hotel in Paris.

In November, at Vossenack in the Hurtgen Forest, Mugg was wounded in the heel by an artillery round. After returning from that infantry support mission, the wound was periodically sore and treatment was ineffective, so he was finally sent to an evacuation hospital. When German tanks were heard snorting around nearby, he was moved to another hospital in Malmedy. Before his treatment could be completed, the Germans also cut short that hospital stay. Mugg couldn't don a shoe on his sore foot, so he put on seven socks, slipped on an overshoe and walked out into the snow with his fellow patients. The next morning they wandered into a gasoline dump near Spa that was being evacuated. Mugg and Julian rode atop gas cans to Rheims where the Red Cross fed them doughnuts and coffee and took them to a hospital where Mugg's wound was dressed.

He was sent by ambulance to Paris where his wound was cleaned surgically and he was given penicillin. After a short stop in a Cherbourg hospital where his wound was again cleaned and antibiotics administered, Mugg eventually ended up in a hospital in England. When that doctor asked what the x-rays had shown, Mugg stated that no x-rays had been taken. The doctor was surprised and the follow-up x-rays showed a small artillery fragment lodged in his heel—the cause of the pain that had plagued him for months. It was removed and his recovery was uneventful.

ONE DAY IN THE LIFE OF A FORWARD OBSERVER

by Al Levy, 288th FAOBn



Drafted in to the United States Army in June of 1943 at the age of eighteen, I was a Corporal in the Sound Section of the 288th Field Artillery Observation Battalion. My job was a Forward Observer and I worked one to three miles in front of my unit. If we were being shelled or I could spot enemy tanks or artillery I would then start the process of getting that information and coordinates back to my unit so they could begin our action against it.

The purpose of my unit was to measure sound and flash and spot the exact location of the enemy's tanks and artillery. When the location was determined it was phoned to our Artillery Gun Batteries who then fired... If they got a hit our unit got credit for it!

As my unit moved forward from the villages of Condor and Eschdorf in Luxemburg, we stopped at a house that had already been partially hit by shells. The second story had no roof or walls left. We decided to set up a Forward Observation Post there. I was waiting for the telephone crew to run wires upstairs to my phone that I had attached to a 4x4 post. It was snowing and cold, so I started down the stairs, thinking I would wait in the enclosed bottom floor of the house where it was warmer. I was still on the stairs when a German shell came in and exploded on the top floor where I had just been! The impact knocked me all the way down the stairs and after realizing I was still in one piece, I went up to what was left of the second floor and the phone I had put up on the 4x4 post... was blown to pieces! It then hit me, I could have been blown to pieces just like the phone! I went down stairs and threw up many times!

Later on the same day, in that same house I heard some weird noises coming from the basement. I went down to investigate and found one of the Army Infantry Sergeants, holding a 45 pistol and crying. I asked if I could help him. He kept saying "I can't stand this any longer." I went back upstairs to my First lieutenant, in charge of tagging and sending wounded soldiers back to 1st Aid Stations and asked him if he could send the guy downstairs to the rear lines to get some help. He said "Hell No! If we send everyone back who doesn't want to be here, there would be no one left to fight this f___ war!" I returned back down to the Sergeant in the basement and he finally gave me his gun. I have often wondered what became of him!

My most vivid recollections of my World War II Service include seeing my first American GIs shot dead and lying frozen in the snow banks, the horrible sounds of the shells, mortars and screaming meemies hitting the snow and turning it black. My most haunting memory is the feeling of the bitter cold, snow and heavy rain. I suffered permanent damage of my toes from frostbite, lying in the foxholes in the middle of winter, in the Battle of the Bulge.

I am blessed to have a wonderful wife of 66 years, two wonderful children, four beautiful grandchildren and six amazing great grandchildren. I was in the building business for over forty-five years and retired several years ago. Through all of these years the great men of "A" Battery Sound Section have stayed in my heart, my thoughts, and my prayers. The experiences we shared can never be forgotten!

VBOB CHAPTER STATISTICS

Note: Veterans means WW II Veterans

Chapters with greater than 175 Members

Southeast FL (62):	196	(196 Veterans)
Gateway, MO (25):	204	(115 Veterans)
Delaware Valley, PA (4):	250	(150 Veterans)

Chapters with 100 - 175 Members

Golden Gate (10):	100	(60 Veterans)
Maryland/DC (3):	120	(40 Veterans)
Lehigh Valley, PA (55):	140	(35 Veterans)
Northwest, WA (6):	158	(56 Veterans)

Chapters with 50- 100 Members

So. Calif (16):	70	(45 Veterans)
Rocky Mountain (39):	60	(29 Veterans)
FL Citrus (32):	70	(40 Veterans)
Central Indiana (47):	50	(15 Veterans)
Northeast Kansas, KS (69):	51	(8 Veterans)
Peter F. Leslie, Jr, NJ (54):	60	(20 Veterans)
Hudson Valley, NY (49):	55	(41 Veterans)
Long Island, NY (63):	50	(47 Veterans)
South Carolina, SC (7):	90	(35 Veterans)

Chapters with 20 - 50 Members

Birmingham, AL (11):	24	(7 Veterans)
Meza, AZ (26):	24	(21 Veterans)
Southern AZ (53):	45	(15 Veterans)
Golden Triangle, FL (48):	35	(16 Veterans)
Northern Indiana, IN (30):	33	(10 Veterans)
Lamar Soutter/Central MA (22):	30	(30 Veterans)
Mississippi, MS (33):	20	(10 Veterans)
Fort Monmouth, NJ (56):	35	(11 Veterans)
Ft. Dix/McGuire, NJ (60):	28	(3 Veterans)
Duncan T. Trueman, NY (59):	35	(18 Veterans)
Crater, VA (43):	33	(14 Veterans)
Connecticut Yankee (40):	30	(30 Veterans)
Alton Litzenberger, OH (68):	34	(17 Veterans)
Staten Island, NY (52):	40	(20 Veterans)
South Jersey, NJ (61):	30	(5 Veterans)
Reading, PA (64):	25	(5 Veterans)

Chapters with 5 - 20 Members:

West Michigan, MI (23):	5	(5 Veterans)
Mohawk Valley, NY (28):	12	(11 Veterans)
Blanchard Valley, OH (42):	5	(5 Veterans)
Ohio Buckeye, OH (29):	10	(10 Veterans)
Susquehanna, PA (19):	7	(6 Veterans)
Cumberland Valley, PA (6):	15	(15 Veterans)
Rhode Island (24):	10	(10 Veterans)

No information available for these chapters as of October 7, 2014

Belgium (38)
Ohio Valley, PA (31)
S. Central PA (45)
Tri-State (VT/NH/ME) (17)

Chapters which have closed

CA - Fresno (5)
CA - San Diego (51)
DE - Brandywine (66)
FL - Southwest (67)
FL - Indian River (41)
IA - Hawkeye State (44)
OH - Gen D. D. Eisenhower (35)
PA - Western PA (24)
PA - Cumberland Valley (6)



Southeast FL Chapter (62) with Spirit of '45 Tour, above and below.



A DAY I WILL NEVER FORGET

by Lawrence Nelson, 101st AB, 506th PIR, 3rd Bn

The division was staying at a French army base, near Mourmval De Grande, that we captured from the Germans. It was our resting place for a while. A Day I Will Never Forget.

Then in December we were called to arms and the division loaded onto open flat bed trucks and headed to the Ardennes. Once we were there we unloaded from the trucks, started walking down the trail in single file and then we saw the burning vehicles.

Then came the wounded comrades walking back the trail, it seems like there were Germans everywhere. When we finally reached the area our commanding officer told us to dig in heads down and no noise, it was two men to each fox hole.

The next day the captain said, "Lawrence, pick your three buddies. You're going on patrol to the German front line to observe them and their strength, and report back." I wrote down what I saw, then we started back to our front lines.

We were close so we stopped and looked around. We saw nothing, so we proceeded to leave out to open space and back through the deep snow when all of a sudden a Nazi machine gunner opened fire on us. I got hit in the legs and dropped to the ground. I turned to see my buddies and crawled to them. Two were dead, the other was dead so I called for the Medics and they arrived.

They took us back to medical tent. Once there, the doctor said to me, "Your pal just died, but we will patch you up." Before he started the nurse handed me a rubber duck and told me to bite down hard on the duck. After the doctor finished, he told me to walk to the tent opening with: "You are okay, so it is back to your unit."

The division headed south down to Nancy, France. Then we went across the border to Austria, and Hitler's lair in Berchtesgaden. After a battle we captured the base and they surrendered. Here the war was over and we were transporting the Germans. Suddenly one of them fired his gun and I was hit. So were some others. We were sent to La Havre, France and on to a hospital ship and on to New York.

From New York I was sent to Gardner General Hospital in Chicago, IL. It was here that I met a beautiful lady. We were attracted to each other and one year later we married. We had a wonderful 65 years together till she passed away.

987TH FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION IN WORLD WAR II

(From D-Day in Normandy to
VE-Day in Czechoslovakia)

by Harlan Lincoln Harner, 987th FA BN



The 987th Field Artillery Battalion, minus its 155mm self-propelled guns, left Camp Bowie, Texas 17 February, 1944, and five days later arrived at Camp Shanks, New York, where it prepared for shipment overseas.

On 13 March, the 987th sailed from New York Harbor with several thousand other servicemen and women aboard the

converted French luxury liner *He de France*, bound for an unescorted crossing of the North Atlantic. After outrunning several German U-boats, the *He de France*, after nine days at sea, arrived at Greenock, Scotland on March 22nd.

Upon debarking, the battalion traveled by rail to Camp Bulwark at Chepstow in the south of Wales, where it remained just three weeks before being sent to Clacton-on-Sea, Essex, on the North Sea coast of England. At that location, it worked with the British 50th (Northumbrian) Division, and waterproofed its vehicles, including its M-12 155mm self-propelled guns mounted on Sherman tank chassis that it received on 2 May, all in preparation for the invasion of Normandy, France.

The First Party, 22 officers and 276 enlisted men, the personnel and equipment needed for operations on the "first wave," moved 30 miles to Camp R7 at Suffolk, just north of Ipswich, for preliminary briefing, then on 29 May to R6 12 miles south of Ipswich, and on June 1 to Felixstowe, where it loaded onto four LSTs (Landing Ship Tank).

On 5 June, the battalion's advance party sailed from Felixstowe, past the White Cliffs of Dover and into the English Channel. It arrived on the Normandy coast near La Riviere Harbor at 2000 on D-Day, June 6, 1944. Rough seas prevented landing at H hour plus 12, as originally planned. There was a night of fireworks as two Luftwaffe planes attempted to attack along the beach, were fired on from ships and forces on the beachhead, and a British battleship and other naval craft fired on enemy shore batteries and other targets inland. At daybreak, about 30 captured German soldiers were brought aboard and were guarded by members of the 987th prior to their being taken to a prisoner of war camp in England.

The battalion's first party landed at King Green Beach in the British Gold Beach sector, about 20 miles east of the U.S. Army's Omaha Beach, in late morning of 7 June, and took up its first combat position three miles inland, one mile south of Ryes, Normandy, attached to the British 50th (Northumbrian) Division. The war had begun for the 987th. The rest of the battalion came ashore in the next few days.

The next move for the battalion was to the outskirts of Bayeaux where it was assigned to 5th AGRA (Army Group Royal Artillery), British 2nd Army. The 987th supported the British forces in their effort to capture Caen. On 30 June 1944, the 987th reverted to U.S. Army command and was attached to V Corps, First Army as corps artillery. In short order, temporary assignment to VII Corps sent the 987th racing up the Cotentin Peninsula to the outskirts of Cherbourg. But when informed it was not needed it quickly returned to the V Corps sector.

The 987th supported the 2nd Armored Division in the 27 July breakthrough at St. Lo and its drive southwest to the coast. The battalion then was part of the race east across France in a major effort to close the Falais Gap and surround numerous thousands of German soldiers to prevent their escape. Many thousands were captured, but other thousands were able to flee east toward the Fatherland. Then, it was on to the French capital. On 30 August the battalion entered Paris with the 5th Armored Division to wild celebration by French citizens dressed in their finest. There were bouquets of flowers and kisses from French mademoiselles. German snipers still in the city fired on the parading troops, but they were quickly flushed out and killed or captured.

Once through Paris, the 987th moved northward with the 5th Armored for that division's September push through Northern France into Belgium and then to the

(Continued)

987TH FABN IN WW II *(Continued)*

south and east through Luxembourg and into Germany. With the 5th Armored, the 987th's 155mm self-propelled guns were the first heavy artillery to crack the Siegfried Line. A heavy German counterattack on 19 September forced the battalion, as part of a combat command of 5th Armored and 28th Division troops, from Wallendorf back to Cruchten, where they came under heavy enemy fire, and then back into Luxembourg.

Numerous times the 987th's guns performed direct fire on Siegfried Line pillboxes, well-dug-in, thick, reinforced concrete bunkers manned with machine guns and heavy anti-tank weapons. It knocked out eleven pillboxes in its first penetration of the Siegfried Line, and overall, including a later penetration, the 987th knocked out about 100 of them.

Platoons and even individual guns of the battalion's batteries were often separated, supporting different divisions. For instance, at one time one gun of B Battery supported the 8th Division at Hurtgen, while one platoon of A Battery supported the 104th Division at Eschweiler, another platoon of A Battery supported the 1st Division south of Heistein, and the remainder of the battalion was at Rotgen in support of the 78th Division.

When a German counter-offensive struck on 16 December 1944 in the Ardennes, opening what became known as the Battle of the Bulge, the 987th's gun batteries were separated, supporting various units at Hurtgen, Krinkelt and Elsenborn. On 20 December the battalion moved to a position near Ster, Belgium, the first time the battalion had been together since 8 October 1944.

It was at this time that the battalion sighted the first German "buzz bombs," self-propelled flying bombs, which flew over the battalion's position west of Malmedy on their way to Liege, Belgium. One buzz bomb's motor cut out prematurely and it landed and exploded on a road less than 100 yards from a railroad station being used as B Battery headquarters. The explosion blew out the windows and knocked down the ceilings in the depot, but it resulted in only two persons being slightly injured from flying debris.

The 987th's activity in the Bulge found it supporting the 1st, 2nd, 9th, 28th, 30th and 104th Infantry Divisions and the 7th Armored Division in the drive to take St. Vith. During December 1944, the 987th's guns fired 7,108 rounds in 271 missions, the most rounds of any month in combat, and nearly 800 more than the previous high in June 1944. The Battle of the Bulge didn't end until January 24, 1945.

Early March, 1945 found the 987th at Remagen on the Rhine River in Germany helping defend the Ludendorf Railroad Bridge to prevent it from being blown up by retreating German forces. On 9 March, one A Battery gun attached to the 9th Division crossed the Remagen bridge, the only heavy artillery to do so and the first heavy artillery across the Rhine. By 21 March, the entire battalion had crossed the Rhine on pontoon bridges.

It was at Remagen that members of the battalion first saw German jet planes, which attempted to knock out the bridge to deny its use to U.S. troops. One of our 50-caliber machine guns helped shoot down one of the enemy planes. The German pilot who parachuted was captured by B Battery members.

After crossing the Rhine, the 987th raced across Germany with First Army, then with General Patton's 3rd Army. It moved as far East as the vicinity of Leipzig in eastern Germany. At Werben, near Leipzig, the battalion received its heaviest shelling of the war when German 88mm and 128mm guns of the Leipzig anti-aircraft

defense ring turned on our big 155s. On 26 April 1945, the battalion's two liaison pilots flew two reporters to Torgau on the Elbe River to cover the meeting of the Americans with the Russians.

From Leipzig, the battalion turned south, and on 5 May, crossed the border into Czechoslovakia. On the 7th, B Battery moved with the 16th Armored Division spearhead to capture Pilsen, home of Pilsner beer and the Skoda Armament Works. It was on the tankers' radios the next day, the 8th of May, that B Battery's men heard the BBC broadcast that the Germans had surrendered, and the war was over. There was no Pilsner beer to be had, but before leaving Pilsen, a number of B Battery men "liberated" a warehouse full of German brandy, backed up a 2 1/2-ton 6X6 truck and loaded up. The battery commander made sure the brandy was shared with the rest of the battalion, which was just outside of the city. The last round fired in combat by the 987th was on May 4th by C Battery on the town of Stiebenreith, Germany.

From 31 May to 1 July, 1945, the 987th was on security guard and road patrol at such places as Mies, Heiligen, Hostice and Horazdovic, Czechoslovakia. It guarded numerous prisoners, including 6,000 members of the SS, and during May, the battalion captured 122 enemy soldiers.

For its part in the war that subdued Nazi Germany, the 987 FA Bn was awarded the Normandy Invasion arrowhead and five battle stars for all the European campaigns—Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland and Central Europe. From 6 June 1944 to 31 May 1945, the 987th in whole or in part, was assigned, attached to, or in support of the following units:

Armies—Second British, First US and Third US Corps—30th British; III, V, VII and XVIII AB US Infantry Divisions—British 49th and 50th, and US 1st, 2nd, 4th, 8th, 9th, 28th 30th, 69th, 78th, 97th, 99th and 104th. Armored Divisions—US 2nd, 5th, 7th, 9th, 16th and British 7th Airborne Divisions—82nd Field Artillery Groups—5th Royal Artillery, US 187th, 188th 190th, 258th, 351st, 406th and 408th.

The 987th traveled some 1,850 miles from the Normandy beachhead to Czechoslovakia, fired 45,058 rounds, including 1,517 captured enemy projectiles, had 9 men killed in action and 74 wounded, and captured 256 enemy soldiers. Air Ops flew 306 sorties totaling 580 hours. One of the battalion's observation planes was shot down by Messerschmidts in France.

Men of the 987th were awarded one Distinguished Service Cross, 11 Silver Stars, 90 Bronze Stars, 77 Purple Hearts, 16 Air Medals, one Croix de Guerre avec Palms (French), one Distinguished Service Order (British), and one Military Cross (British). Two sergeants were given battlefield commissions.

Though it was heavy artillery, the 987th's mobility resulted in its often being on the front lines with the infantry. One U.S. general in the Hurtgen Forest, who had never seen the M-12 with its big 155mm gun that could fire and move quickly, called it our secret weapon after he observed it in direct fire on enemy fortifications.

The 987th Field Artillery Battalion was one of numerous individual units in the European Theatre that fought courageously, with little time out of the front lines but got little of the credit they deserved because they were not part of a specific division. But the men of the 987th were there when they were needed, impressed not only the enemy but also the American units they supported, and they contributed mightily to victory over an enemy that had brutally killed and enslaved millions.

VETERAN DISCOUNTS FOR CELL PHONE SERVICE



Almost all of the major cell phone carriers offer military discounts on cell phone service to current, and former service members. It's not often that veterans are eligible for military discounts, but this is one time when you may just qualify. Here are some of the cell phone discounts available to military members and veterans, and some of the common rules to keep in mind.

Military and Veteran Discounts for Cell Phone Service

Rules and participation will vary by cell phone provider, so be sure to read the fine print, and ask to speak with a manager when asking for a discount. Here are some common things to keep in mind:

- **Most cell phone companies offer 15% discount** to active duty, Guard, Reserves, retirees, and often for veterans as well. These discounts are usually only for the service member, though many cell phone carriers will offer the discounts for multiple lines – as long as the service member's name is the primary name on the account.
- **ID or proof of service is required.** Many companies will approve discounts via email with a .mil or .gov email address. Otherwise, you may need a military ID card, VA issued ID Card, drivers license with a veterans designation, or a DD Form 214.
- **Two year service agreement may be required.** Some cell phone carriers may extend your service agreement for 2 more years if you are already under contract, but not yet receiving the discount. This usually doesn't reset your new phone discount, however, so you may still be able to upgrade on schedule. Keep the extension in mind before agreeing to the terms.
- **Ask for a manager if the customer service rep doesn't give you a discount.** Some customer service reps may not be aware of the discounts, or may not have authorization to grant them. Politely ask to speak with a manager.
- **It may take one or two payment cycles to see your discount.** This is common across all carriers.
- **Be sure to compare offers across all carriers.** Don't assume the company you have been with for years or the popular cell phone provider in your region has the best deals. Call around and see which deals are best for your needs.

For more information about specific phone carrier offers, go to: themilitarywallet.com/military-discounts-for-cell-phones

I FINALLY GOT AROUND TO IT

by Don Schoessler,
1262nd Engineer Combat Battalion

My mother saved all the correspondence that I had written to my parents and family members after I enlisted into World War II. Most of the letters were in the original envelopes in which they were sent. These letters were stored in an old suitcase and saved. My parents moved from our home in Reliance, S.D. to live in an apartment in Pierre, S.D. in the 1970's. Somehow the old suitcase survived and went with them. In subsequent years, the suit case went to Rochester, N.Y. and again to North Oaks, MN. The contents of the suitcase was known but never opened or examined.

On April 20, 2013, I finally got around to opening the suitcase

and organizing its contents. All the correspondence was chronologically collated and organized into a three ring binder. Among the letters was a copy of "General Orders Number 98" issued by G. S. Patton Jr. on 9 May 1945. I was the First Sergeant of Co. "B" 1262 Engineering Combat Battalion. It was my responsibility to post the General Order on the Company Bulletin Board. I also sent a copy to my parents.

A copy of this order, below, is as it was received over 69 years ago. I thought that maybe some old timers might get a kick out of reading it. (For some it will be for a second time.)

9 May 1945 General G. Patton:

**HEADQUARTERS THIRD UNITED STATES ARMY APO 403
GENERAL ORDERS 9 May 1945 NUMBER 98**

SOLDIERS OF THE THIRD ARMY, PAST AND PRESENT

During the 281 days of incessant and victorious combat, your penetrations have advanced farther in less time than any other army in history. You have fought your way across 24 major rivers and innumerable lesser streams. You have liberated or conquered more than 82,000 square miles of territory, including 1500 cities and towns, and some 12,000 inhabited places. Prior to the termination of active hostilities, you had captured in battle 956,000 enemy soldiers and killed or wounded at least 500,000 others. France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia bear witness to your exploits.

All men and women of the six corps and thirty-nine divisions that have at different times been members of this Army have done their duty. Each deserves credit. The enduring valor of the combat troops has been paralleled and made possible by the often unpublicized activities of the supply, administrative, and medical services of this Army and the Communications Zone troops supporting it. Nor should we forget our comrades of the other armies and of the Air Force, particularly of the XIX Tactical Air Command, by whose side or under whose wings we have had the honor to fight.

In proudly contemplating our achievements, let us never forget our heroic dead whose graves mark the course of our victorious advances, nor our wounded whose sacrifices aided so much to our success.

I should be both ungrateful and wanting in candor if I failed to acknowledge the debt we owe to our Chiefs of Staff, Generals Gaffey and Gay, and to the officers and men of the General and Special Staff Sections of Army Headquarters. Without their loyalty, intelligence, and unremitting labors, success would have been impossible.

The termination of fighting in Europe does not remove the opportunities for other outstanding and equally difficult achievements in the days, which are to come. In some ways the immediate future will demand of you more fortitude than has the past because, without the inspiration of combat, you must maintain — by your dress, deportment, and efficiency—not only the prestige of the Third Army but also the honor of the United States. I have complete confidence that you will not fail.

During the course of this war I have received promotions and decorations far above and beyond my individual merit. You won them; I as your representative wear them. The one honor, which is mine and mine alone is that of having commanded such and incomparable groups of Americans, the record of whose fortitude, audacity, and valor will endure as long as history lasts.

G. S. PATTON, JR.,
General

WELCOME ABOARD, NEW MEMBERS!

These new members joined VBOB between June 1 – September 30, 2014:

Bill Allen	78 InfD	Edward Lundeen	Associate	Shameron S Schofield	Associate
Phillip Barbosa	Associate	Florence M Matthews	Associate	Anita Silver	Associate
James E. Barnes IV	Associate	Robert Mazzenga	Associate	Thomas J Spiegel	Associate
Laurie Becker	Associate	William J. McCarthy, Jr.	Associate	Angelo Spinato	99 InfD
Scott E Bird, Jr	701 MP Bn	Robin McLeod	Associate	Wilbur E Streib	125 AAA Gun Bn
Joseph L Bua	17 AbnD	Stephen McManus	Associate	Frank L. Sullivan	Associate
Melody D Burns	Associate	Lawrence J Mellon	Associate	Alfred H Taylor	10 ArmdD
Duane R Bruno	Associate	Jacob Messner	Associate	Thomas Taylor	Associate
Robert Burnette	Associate	Rick Miller	Associate	John A Topaum	45 InfD
William S Cartwright	106 InfD	Joanne Moore	Associate	Joris Vergeest	Associate
Joe Cavey	Associate	Alfred C Morfee Jr	1 InfD	James F Webb	Associate
Craig Charlton	Associate	Rhonda Nelson	Associate	Donald Wolff	8 ArmdD
Joanne Wapinski Child	Associate	Mary Nguyen	Associate	Sally Hellums Wooley	Associate
David Docherty	Associate	Charles G Pefinis	87 InfD		
William E Gast	30 InfD	Betty J Pettit	Associate		
Martha Griswold	Associate	Theodore Podewil	Associate		
Ulrich Hasse	Associate	George Potwin	Associate		
Patricia Hutchinson	Associate	Paris Rebl	Associate		
Robert Kasten	Associate	Gloria Rucker	Associate		
Jean R Kelly	Associate	Robert G Rupp	9 ArmdD		
Lynette Kent	Associate	Jean-Marie Plusquin	Associate		
Judith Kroll	Associate	John Scala	Associate		
Lisa Kruse	Associate	John W Schalles	9 ArmdD		

We certainly are pleased to have you with us and look forward to your participation.

You can help immediately by:

- Talking to people about VBOB and suggesting that they also join
- Spreading the word about our website: www.vbob.org
- Sending us articles to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*

VETERANS TOURS PLANNED FOR 2015

(Whenever possible, all tours offer the participants a chance to visit their veteran's "special places.")



PILSEN LIBERATION FESTIVAL & PRAGUE (April 26 - May 8, 2015) Starting in Frankfurt, we'll explore the Nazi Party's Nuremberg stronghold, visit the "most dangerous place on earth" and plunge hundreds of meters below ground in the vast salt mines where Hitler's minions stashed tons of Reichsbank gold and priceless stolen treasures. The highlight of our trip is the Pilsen annual Liberation Festival, concluding with a visit to the beautiful Bohemian capitol of Prague.

MEMORIAL DAY & NORTHERN BULGE TOUR (May 21 - 31, 2015) Beginning in Brussels, we'll attend moving Memorial Day ceremonies at Northern Bulge military cemeteries before launching our adventure in the forests & fields of the rugged Ardennes-Eifel. Visits to numerous key sites around the "Northern Shoulder" will clearly demonstrate the complexity of the massive campaign to repel the German's last desperate counteroffensive.

LUXEMBOURG-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP WEEK AND SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR (June 15 - 25, 2015) At the invitation of US Veterans Friends of Luxembourg (USVFL), all American veterans, families & friends are cordially invited to a special week of events & celebrations in the lovely Grand Duchy. Civic ceremonies, high Mass on the Grand Duke's birthday and personal accounts of the difficult history of Nazi occupation offer one-of-a-kind glimpses into the "Southern Shoulder" campaign. Originating in Paris and ending in Frankfurt, the tour will also include an optional visit to Normandy.

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

THE 526TH AIB IN THE BULGE

by George Wendt, 526th AIB



On October 26, 1944, the 526th Armored Infantry Battalion, assigned to the 10th Armored Group, was located in the vicinity of Granville, Normandy, France. This battalion claimed the distinction at that time, and still does, of being the only separate armored infantry battalion in the Army. On that day orders came in for the battalion to move to Verdun and become a part of Special Troops of 12th Army Group. From Verdun the battalion departed for destination in Belgium and Luxembourg. From October 30 to December 17, 1944, the battalion was “permanently” stationed with the headquarters at Harze, Belgium.

It was here that the battalion received its first taste of Buzz bombs and V-2's. In one incident a bomb landed 500 yards away from the battalion C.P. and broke windows and damaged the building.

At 1600 hours, Sunday December 17, the battalion was ordered by First U.S. Army to move to Malmedy, Belgium, with Company “A” 825th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached, and to join the 99th Infantry Battalion (Norwegian) at Remouchamps en route. At 1900 hours the battalion was formed on the Aywaille-Remouchamps road and waiting to fall in with the 99th Infantry Battalion at Remouchamps. The 99th Infantry Battalion failed to show up by 2100 so this battalion was ordered to move alone at once, picking up Company “A” 825th en route at La Reid, Belgium. It was during this period that the Luftwaffe suddenly came to life, strafed and bombed roads between Spa and Malmedy.

The battalion plus Company “A”, 825th Tank Destroyer Battalion, then proceeded on to Malmedy. Road conditions were bad and it was exceedingly difficult to maintain control in the blackout. En route one rifle squad halftrack and one halftrack with a towed 57mm AT gun dropped out of the column as a result of accidents. The 57mm AT gun and halftrack, in following, took position at Trois-Ponts and engaged an enemy column of 18 tanks (Kampfgruppe Peiper), knocking out the lead tank which blocked the advance. However, the 57mm was, in turn, knocked out and four men killed and one wounded. Shortly after midnight December 17-18, a message was received from First U.S. Army that enemy tanks were approaching Stavelot and ordered one rifle company and one platoon of tank destroyers dispatched there to form road blocks and hold the enemy. Company “A” with 1st Platoon, Company “A”, 825th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached was selected for this assignment, and the executive officer was placed in command of the task force.

The balance of the force continued on to Malmedy. On arrival, it immediately began to set up road blocks and defensive positions. This battalion, plus the tank destroyers were the first combat unit to take up positions for the defense of Malmedy. The 99th Infantry Battalion arrived immediately following the arrival of the 526th and took positions in and around the town. The 117th Infantry began to arrive about daylight on the morning of December 18.

Company “A” plus the platoon of tank destroyers, reached Stavelot at 0400 hours, and two rifle platoons with one section of tank destroyers were sent across the river (L'Ambleve) to set up road blocks. At 0500 contact was made with the enemy, and, in the ensuing fight, the town of Stavelot changed hands several times. As

a result of this engagement, the enemy was prevented from going on into Spa or accomplishing his mission.

At Stavelot was a gasoline dump with an estimated three million gallons, and in his drive to the west, Rundstedt had relied heavily on capturing gasoline and other supplies for his forces. Some of this gasoline was destroyed by the task force to prevent it from falling in the hands of the enemy and to form a road block, and the Germans never got beyond this block which was covered by fire of Company “A” weapons. Spa was only about 11 miles away and with no other combat troops to stop the enemy, this one company with the attached platoon was possibly the only force that saved First U.S. Army Headquarters from capture by the Germans. The casualties for this small force were heavy, but the mission was accomplished.

Meanwhile, the situation in Malmedy consisted of strong enemy reconnaissance in force and by fire, but all attacks were repulsed with heavy losses. The Germans were attempting to take Malmedy in order to complete a road net for their spearheads into Liege, but never succeeded in getting more than a few patrols into the city, and they were either captured or annihilated. The assault gun, machine gun and mortar platoons of Headquarters Company were on the lines continuously and fired thousands of rounds.

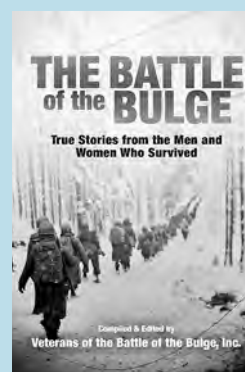
On January 3, 1945, the battalion was ordered to make a limited objective attack on the high ground (Houyire's hill) a few thousand yards to the front. This attack was to be made by one rifle company supported by a platoon of tanks and artillery with a rifle platoon protecting the flank at Baugnez. It was to be made in conjunction with a general attack by the forces on the northern side of the Bulge. Since the battalion was near the hinge of the Bulge, it was a diversionary attack to draw the attention of the enemy from the main attack farther west. The attack was successful in that the enemy drew his reserves away from the main effort in order to meet the push of this point. However, the cost of the attacks was high, and out of approximately 250 men who participated, 65 were casualties. Nineteen were killed and eighteen were missing.

On January 17, 1945, the battalion was relieved from First U.S. Army. The battalion had been in the line for 31 days.

During the period of combat at Malmedy and Stavelot, casualties were: 33 killed, 58 wounded, and 24 missing. The orders were to hold Malmedy and Stavelot at all costs. The two towns were held and the enemy did not gain use of the road nets offered by them. Losses in vehicles were as follows: for the 526th, 2 halftracks, one ¼ ton truck and three 3-inch towed tank destroyer guns.

—Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

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HARMONICAS, ONIONS, AND PATTON

An excerpt from the article "From Minsk, to Hollywood, to Buchenwald" by Joanne Palmer, originally appearing in the "Jewish Standard," reprinted with permission



Harry Feinberg, 4th Armcd 37th Tank Bn

Harry Feinberg spent a few years playing with the Harmonica Rascals. The group went to Hollywood, where they appeared in movies. That was Old Hollywood, the place of black-and-white glamour and dangerous glittery prewar dreams. Mr. Feinberg lived very well there. "I met Tyrone Power. We worked with Mischa Auer, and Mae West. ("She was blind as a bat," Mr. Feinberg said. "Her chauffeur was backstage with her to hold her hand and led her whenever she

was ready to go on stage. But every time she passed me, she'd say, 'Hello, Harry.'")

He never went back to [finish] high school. But in 1940, his parents called him home. The war was coming closer, the harmonica wave had crested, and it was time.

Mr. Feinberg's father and his uncle had become building contractors, and he worked with them. Then he was drafted. That was 1942; Mr. Feinberg was 21. Basic training was in Fort Dix. "It was a cold winter, and we slept in tents," Mr. Feinberg said. "You had to look at the bulletin board every day to see what your duty was going to be the next day. One night I saw that I was on KP. That's kitchen police. I thought that I would have to guard the kitchen with a gun at my side, but it was not that at all.

"We went to the mess hall at 5 in the morning. The sergeant said to the other guy, 'Come with me.' There was a cubicle, and inside it were piles of potatoes, bags and bags of potatoes. The other guy had to peel potatoes all day long. "I went to the next cubicle, and there were onions, bags and bags of onions. Up to the ceiling. And there was a pot of boiling water. "So from 5 in the morning until about 11 at night, I peeled onions. I couldn't see from the fumes. I stunk to high heaven. It was unbearable. My eyes were watery red. "From that day until today, I have never eaten another onion." If all that had changed for him on that day was the acquisition of a lifelong aversion to onions, that would have been enough.

But it wasn't. "The funny thing is that I got drafted the same day as a trumpet player who played with all the big bands," he said. "While I was peeling onions, his name and mine kept being blared out all over Fort Dix. Then, at 11 o'clock at night, I came back to my tent, and one of the guys tells me, and says you'd better go see the first sergeant. As I went to him — they were playing cards at night, they were really rough guys — and one of them picks his head up and says 'Oh yeah, there is some kind of show, and your name was called.'" He was to have been in it, but he missed the call. He was too busy peeling onions.

The show was the review "This Is The Army," written by Irving Berlin. In the movie version, Mr. Berlin sings his own song, "Oh How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning."

Instead of being a traveling [harmonica] player, Mr. Feinberg fought in Europe. He was in the army from 1943 to 1945 — "three years and ten months," he said — and "I was one of General George S. Patton's tankers. "We really spearheaded the European campaign.

I was in all five of Patton's campaigns. We started out in Utah Beach, in France, then Luxembourg, Belgium, the Battle of the Bulge, and on into Czechoslovakia. "I have no idea why I'm alive today." Mr. Feinberg drove a tank.

"We came face to face with Germany every day," he said. "I was a gunner. I had a big gun next to me. I would take a big shell, put it in the gun. I had a telescope right next to the gun. I was in the turret, I would see the enemy, and I would shoot. "I saw heads flying, arms flying. When the dust cleared, I would see bodies all over the place. It didn't look real. Not a thing for a Jewish boy to see. Or actually for anybody to see." He eventually was made a tank commander. "I took a few hits," he said. "I lost two tanks. It was no joke. I don't know how we got out alive. The second tank just burned to a crisp. "When we were hit, I yelled, 'Let's get out of here.' The gunner was such a polite guy that he said, 'Go out. I'll go after you.' I had to pick him up and throw him out, and then I jumped out and ran. I don't know how many yards. And then I looked back and saw billows of smoke.

"It drove me a little nuts. The medics saw me and tackled me, and put me in an ambulance, took me to a field hospital. I was there three days, under a doctor's care. They gave me big blue pills to calm me down. The doctor had a card table, and we would line up. He smoked a cigar. He said, 'Follow my fingers. How many fingers do you see?' I told him and he said, 'You're ready to go back to the front.' I said, 'Please don't send me back,' but he said, 'Sorry. I have to.'

"I went back. "They got me a third tank, and my company commander said, 'Harry, we got a new buggy for you.' I said, 'I can't get into a tank again. It's impossible. My head doesn't allow it.' And he said, 'You're right. You're not getting into another tank. Do you realize that they cost \$30,000 each?' So he put me in a jeep, and made me a corporal.

"I would have to go from company to company with a secret message." It would be on a small scroll of paper that he would hide in a slit cut into his uniform, right next to the zipper. "That was my job until the end of the war," he said. "It was scary. Everything happened at night, and here I was, driving by myself at night. "One night, my first sergeant and I got to a town in Germany, and we smelled something wrong. "He looked at his map, and said that this is a town called Jenna — and I don't think this town has been taken. We were the first Americans there.

"We said that we'd better get the hell out of there. "As we turned around, we saw two Germans standing there in uniform, a major and his aide. My sergeant says 'Stop,' and he runs out and points his gun at them. They both come out with their hands up. He took their guns, and asked me which one I wanted. "I still have it."

Mr. Feinberg spoke Yiddish, so he interrogated some of the Germans the army captured. "They were happy to give up," he said. "I mentioned Patton, and they'd stand up. The name would freeze the blood in their veins. "We were not there to liberate anyone," he continued. "Just to find and destroy. That's what our outfit did. We were a combat outfit. We would get up, eat breakfast, and shoot." After attacks, General Patton would come by, drive in his jeep with the four stars, and call us all over to say, 'Good job, boys. Mr. Feinberg stood close to him at one of these sessions. "I was interested not in looking at him or listening to him, but in looking at the two ivory-handled guns on his belt," he said. "He was big. Tall. His eyes were always bloodshot. I think he drank a lot of booze. "And he shortened the war for us."

(Continued)

HARMONICAS, ONIONS, AND PATTON *(Continued)*

Although his job was not to liberate, his unit — the Fourth Armored Division — liberated a concentration camp, and then got to Buchenwald six days after its liberation. Mr. Feinberg and his unit entered Ohrdruf, a concentration camp near Weimar, Germany, on April 4, 1945.

“We were driving into Germany; we got into Gotha without firing a shot,” he said. “We took over the town. There were no cars, no people, no activity. Of course, everyone was hiding from us. We kept going until we came to the town of Ohrdruf. We had no idea about labor or concentration camps. “We went up into the woods. There were signs on the trees saying ‘Verboten.’” Forbidden. “We came up to the edge of the woods, and we saw fences, and a gate, with only two men there. One was 65 years old and one was 70. They were in German uniforms, with helmets and rifles. As soon as they saw us, they threw them down.

“We saw the ugliest thing that anyone had ever seen, toothpicks walking around. There were bodies in the courtyard, with striped uniforms. We thought that everyone in the pile was dead, but there were barracks. I got off my tank and looked around, with my handkerchief over my mouth. I spooked a man lying on his back, with his head shaved, in a striped uniform, gasping for air. I knelt down, and he sensed that somebody was there. He looks up, and he didn’t have the strength for it but he said, ‘Amerikaner?’ and I said ‘Jah. Amerikaner.’ He didn’t have the strength, but he put his hands together, thanking me for freeing him.” Mr. Feinberg got a doctor and an ambulance for the man, but he does not know the end of that story.

General Dwight D. Eisenhower was there, and so was General Patton. “As tough a guy as Patton was, I saw him go back behind one of the barracks upchucking,” Mr. Feinberg said.

As for Buchenwald, amid all the horrors he saw — the people were gone by then, as were their murderers, but their tools remained — what haunts him most, “what drove me crazy, was a wooden crate with babies’ shoes,” he said. After the war, as part of the Army

of Occupation, Mr. Feinberg helped police towns in Germany. “We were on guard night and day to make sure that there was no uprising,” he said. “They gave me a territory of 13 little towns. They were very quaint. Very cute. It was my job to find the mayor of each town. I would go into the town — the road would be lined with cattle. At 4:30 or so, the kids in town would have the job of bringing the cows back home. The cows knew which house to go to, and the kids would make sure that they didn’t stray, but only went to the house they belonged to. I would interrogate the mayor. I was a tough guy, a tough sergeant. No smiles. I told them that I had to know what was going on. I had to know about all meetings. If they had any guns or ammunition or explosives or hand grenades, they had to bring them to their yards, and we would destroy them.

“The Americans would get up at 2 in the morning and raid their houses. It was cruel, but it had to be done. “The mayor knew I was Jewish. They all knew, and they were frightened of me.

“One day, I saw a girl who said she spoke English; she said she came from Montclair. I asked, ‘What are you doing here?’ and she said ‘My family was in Germany.’ I said, ‘You mean that your father thought that Hitler was going to take over America, so you’d be safer here.’ She put her head down and wouldn’t answer me. But she was a big help to me.”

Last month [November 2013], the French government named Harry Feinberg a chevalier of the Legion of Honor, its highest honor.

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A GI GRIPING by E. Peter Hornburg, 5th Infantry Division, 10th Infantry Regiment, Company F



I got a letter from Uncle Sam
I read in it, to wit:
“You are now a soldier”
I nearly had a fit

I didn’t want the Army
And here’s the downright facts
I didn’t want the Navy
All I wanted was the WACs

Patriotic friends of mine said
“Go make your country free”
I said “That’s all well and good
But why must it be me?”

I marched up to the draft board
And I was seeing red,
I told them I hate war
And I just can’t stand bloodshed

My pleas were all in vain,
I had to face the facts,
I had to leave the Boy Scouts
And I couldn’t join the WACs

I said goodbye at home
And left to board the train,
From now on I was a number
(36837643)
A man without a name

I asked the man behind the desk,
What branch would they put me
With pity he looked and then
he spoke
“My friend, the infantry”

I said, “Oh no, this can’t be true”
He said, “Just wait and see”
I said “I’ve been a good boy
all my life”
He said, “The infantry”

Oh, for the bygone days
When I didn’t have to march
When my back didn’t have a bend
And my feet still had an arch

I suppose you think a soldier,
Lives just like a rat
But there is where your
wrong, because
His life is worse than that

We soldiers gripe a lot, but then,
Our life is very trying
It’s hard to live a normal life
When fellow men are dying

But when this war is over,
I can lift my head, you see
And I’ll bless the man who
once said,
“My friend, the infantry”

MY ARDENNES STORY

by John D. Knappenberger, 28th ID, 110th IR



The Division fought through France and came to the Siegfried Line on or about September 12, 1944. After weeks of battle in this area, we were sent to combat in the Hürtgen Forest near Vossenack and Schmidt. During this battle companies were reduced in manpower by 50% or higher. Replacements kept coming and some did not stay long. The entire Division was reduced. We were relieved of this position on November 15th. The

regiment was sent to Bastendorf Luxembourg for rest and relaxation and again to receive new replacements. It was necessary to train some of these men because they were not familiar with the weapons of our company. Most of them were trained as riflemen back in the United States.

In December, we were sent to the Ardennes. Since this was considered a “dead” front the Division was scattered over a lot of territory. The main purpose was to patrol and contain the enemy east of the Our River. This front was approximately 25 miles. Our company was scattered over a ten-mile stretch. The 1st section of the 2nd platoon of which I was a member consisted (about 12 men) and 2 machine guns occupied a village by the name of Heinerscheid in Luxembourg. The second section (the same strength) was located in Marnach, about 5 miles from us. This was about December 10. Also in the village were some riflemen and a squad (6 men) and their 81 mm mortar.

Our group occupied a four or five room house. In one of the back rooms we had a machine gun mounted in the window that was surrounded by sandbags. Outside near the house, our two jeeps were parked in sheds. We blacked out the windows in the kitchen and other room so we could have some light from candles at night. We were told to stay on the street and walks since some of the yards and other grassy areas were possibly mined. It wasn’t advisable to walk around at night since there was a possibility you might get shot since the enemy was not far off and infiltration was very possible, even though there had not been any activity in this area for some time.

At Heinerscheid, our two jeeps in connection with two jeeps in Marnach had patrol duty. A jeep with one mounted machine gun on the dash area and two men besides the driver would go from Heinerscheid to Hostengin and report if everything was O.K. Then backtrack and on to Marnach to do the same. The route covered was about 15 or 20 miles round trip. The route for the men in Marnach was similar. The entire road known as “Purple Heart” Road was under German observation most of the trip. The trip was taken every two hours, the groups alternating from daylight to dusk. Needless to say, you felt like a duck in a shooting gallery because of the sight of blown up trucks and jeeps along the road. Many a driver and crew had a few “Schnapps” beforehand to help out. We were told by intelligence that there were only some “old” men across the Our River and not to get panicky. They may have been old men, but we felt they probably had some young men doing the spotting and firing.

After several days of this duty, we were suddenly awakened on the morning of December 16 and were told that enemy patrols

were seen crossing the river and coming towards us at about 0800 hrs. Every one hurried to get additional ammo from the jeep trailers. The Germans started to attack about noon and gunfire was getting closer. From our gun position we could see the enemy advancing. We asked for mortar fire about 2 PM and were told we would have to direct the fire since they could not spare anyone to do it. Even though I had never done it, I gave the directions by phone for the target. Since they were limited on their ammo, they could not keep up with it. Along about 4 PM the attack seemed to halt. We of course kept on guard at our gun position and the front door of the house. We had short hitches on our guard duty so as to have alert personnel watching for any movement. Our other darkened room was lit by candles and there the men came in after guard duty and drank coffee that was made on a small gasoline stove issued to us and smoked cigarettes by the pack. Everyone was jittery and knew the odds for the next day.

While I was on duty with a buddy, we saw in the distance huge searchlights, not shining up, but they were horizontal. We could hear trucks and tanks moving about in the valley and knew they were getting organized. We also could hear the Germans in front of them—they were hollering and laughing and we could see them lighting cigarettes. They were about 500 yards from the house. We didn’t dare fire at them since they would have seen our position and that would have been it for us. We called our Company Headquarters and told them these happenings. All they said was “sit tight—something is brewing at Regimental.” We felt that if we could pull back a ways where more men might be located, we would stand a better chance. Since the riflemen had gone, we were now in a jam. In a way we were glad to see daylight after a dreaded dark night. We felt sure that some of the Germans went around us. About 8AM, we heard tanks and thought they were Jerry’s, but we saw they were ours. As they went by our house towards Fischbach, we counted about 25 light tanks. We were happy as we now had hope. Soon firing began by our men as Germans were spotted near the house. We then heard a tank coming and we yelled as it was retreating from Fischbach. The commander hollered, “This is the only tank left.” Our hope was fading fast. Our Sergeant told me I could take some of the men in my jeep and go back where there were more troops. I told him it was impossible because we were cut off from my jeep by several Nazi machine guns. He didn’t seem to believe me, but when he looked out the front door, bullets were chipping off bricks above his head. He agreed with me this time.

The situation was getting worse by the minute. Just then, one of our men hollered and said that there was German tank up the road headed our way. We knew we could not go out the front door and the rear door was in the direction of the push. We tried a locked door going to a side room that we had never been in before. We used an axe that we had to chop open the door. There we saw another door that would lead us out the side of the house. We got it open and the Sergeant said “Every man for himself.” We ran across the yards of other houses. A wire fence about 4’ high was no obstacle. I had on a long overcoat and 4 buckle arctic boots and I cleared that fence with no problem, like a track star. When you’re scared you can do strange things and this was one of them. Soon we had to run on the street and went zigzagging, since machine gun bullets were zinging off the pavement.

We ran through an orchard and a 88mm shell hit nearby, wounding one of the men. We ran into a barn where we found three

(Continued)

MY ARDENNES STORY *(Continued)*

other comrades. We went back for the fallen man and brought him to the barn and gave him first aid as best we could. Tanks again!!! This time they were American. There were three of them, but two turned and left, the third one was hit by a Jerry tank destroyer. One man jumped out and came in the barn. He was wounded and said he was the only one left. Again a temporary patchup was necessary. We then decided to destroy our weapons and just as we did, were noticed several Germans passing by the window, and a Tiger tank turned its gun into the window.

The only thing left to do was to hold up a white handkerchief by the window. A couple of the Germans appeared to be 15 or 16 years old and very cocky. It really teed us off to be captured by a couple of kids. Of course their comrades were older. They searched us and marched us up the road and soon we were joined by other men from our outfit. As we went on we saw that most of the houses were shelled and burning and "our" house was really a mess. We sure were glad that we had gotten out of there when we did. When we walked past Fischbach it was the same shape, shot to hell. Next they took us behind a building and searched us again. This time they took cigarettes, matches, lighters and any type of food that you might have on you. They next told us to line up against a wall with our faces toward it. We all thought that this was the end of our existence. But, we lucked out, as they just searched us more thoroughly.

Once more we started walking along "Purple Heart" Road and we were in a column of threes. I was one that was in the last row. The guards stopped us and then motioned to us to go to the front of the column. Shortly we were on our way again when a mortar shell hit near the rear of the column where I had been moments before. We then ran to ditches until it was over. We felt that it was American mortars mistaking us for Krauts. A few medics came and helped those who were wounded. Others were left there. All along the way we could see more Germans, Mark V and Tiger tanks moving up. It was an eerie sight.

As we walked along the road, I noticed a jeep with two German soldiers in it driving past us. They had the windshield up and there painted on the windshield was "KNAPPENBERGER." It was my jeep that I had to leave behind in the shed. It sure made me mad to think of the enemy driving it. We endured numerous shelling from our artillery along the way. They marched us to Marnach and put us in a crowded room in a house. There they searched us again. We figured they were looking for maps or other information that we might have. They took our watches and mine was a new one that my Mother and Father had sent to me a month or so previous. One German soldier tried to take a fellow's wedding ring, but the only thing he got was a sock in the jaw from a German officer. Evidently this officer had some feelings. I had a few photos in my wallet of family and a friend, but they didn't take them. They also let me keep my pocket-sized New Testament that I always carried in my shirt pocket.

During the night, our Platoon Commander, a Lieutenant, was brought in and he was surprised to see me, as someone told him that I was killed. He had a few chocolate bars on him that he managed to keep somehow and he gave them to a couple of us and said "You need these worse than I do." We really appreciated it since we had not eaten for about a day and a half.

The next day they started us marching toward Germany and our future "home."

A CHRISTMAS STORY

by **Lionel J. Rothbard, 305th Med Bn, Co B**



Of the many incidents that happened to me while serving in the U.S. Army in World War II, one evening stands out with great clarity. On December 24, 1944, I was a Second Lieutenant, Medical Administrative Corps, commanding a platoon of ten enlisted men, equipped with ten ambulances and one jeep. Our company, the 587th, had spent a period of rest and recuperation after working in the

Alsace region of France, north of Luneville. We received orders to move out and proceed to Luxembourg City.

A few days before we left I had observed very heavy traffic going north. Also, much to my surprise, the vehicles were being driven with their headlights on. Previously we had always driven under blackout conditions using cats eye illumination. Our company consisting of headquarters and three platoons left the area north of Luneville on December 24 arrived in Luxembourg City in the early evening and reported to a medical battalion headquarters. It was freezing cold!

Having been through more than a few Windy City (Chicago) December blizzards, I immediately located a Quartermaster store and bought an army trench coat to go with overshoes I had received from the company supply. The trench coat came down below my knees and I had to roll up the sleeves. I wore an O.D. shirt, an O.D. sweater, a field jacket, the trench coat, G.I. Boots, socks, a helmet with liner and was ready to travel in a jeep with the top down. My platoon was assigned to begin evacuating casualties from the Clearing Station of the 80th Infantry Division at Esch Sur Sur. (Not to be confused with another Esch in the south part of the Duchy.) One of my men of the Catholic faith had found a church and decided to attend Mass that evening. The entire platoon waited outside the church and watched as large flakes of snow started to fall. When Mass was over we began motoring north to our destination.

Security was very strict everywhere as there were rumors that the Nazi enemy was infiltrating the American lines with Germans dressed in American uniforms speaking English. Supposedly one of the Germans was Otto Skorzeny, Hitler's favorite commando. At every village we approached, and there were many of them, we encountered sentries coming out of the darkness with loaded weapons challenging everything and anything. All of them had itchy trigger fingers. At one village, I was sitting in the passenger seat of my vehicle and as we stopped the driver was challenged with the usual sign. That evening it was "eagle" and it was to be answered by the countersign of "nest." To my amazement my driver forgot both the sign and the countersign and froze speechless! The sentry kept repeating the sign louder and louder, all the while poking his rifle through the window closer and closer to me. I finally yelled, "You S.O.B. It's NEST! NEST!" And he allowed us to proceed.

It bears mentioning at this point that the 587th was an unusual and unique U.S. Army formation. It was one of the few medical units composed of all black, now known as African-American, enlisted men commanded by all Caucasian, or white, commissioned officers. One of which was me! The Germans may have been masquerading as Americans but they sure weren't black! The snow-filled roads were treacherous but we finally arrived at the clearing station, located in a Castle, in the early hours of *(Continued)*

A CHRISTMAS STORY (Continued)

December 25, 1944. Tired and ready to carry out our assignment, but not too tired however to refuse when the cooks offered me a nightcap. They had “found” some medical alcohol (normally used to make cough medicine and other liquid medicines), mixed it with some powdered lemon and Viola, a cocktail. It was the best cocktail I have ever had. I proceeded to find a space on the floor of the castle spread out my bedroll and fall asleep.

Christmas Day. We were treated to a traditional repast of turkey with all the trimmings. The weather had cleared and when we looked up we could see airplanes. To our relief they were American airplanes. The Eighth Air Force B17s flying east to bomb the Germans. After a few weeks in Esch Sur Sur evacuating all kinds of wounded we moved up to Wiltz. Subsequently, we were ordered back to somewhere in France, assigned to what was left of the 28th Infantry Division and continued with our job of moving patients from Clearing Stations to Evac Hospitals.

It was a most memorable Christmas Season. I would like to pay tribute to the junior officers and enlisted men who by their bravery and perseverance won the battle, despite the miscalculations of higher headquarters.

30 HOURS OF HELL AT STAVELOT 17-18 DECEMBER 1944

by Jack J. Mocnik, 526th AIB, Co A



Dressed in Class “B” uniform, I was returning to Grimonster in time for supper. I had been visiting a Mr. Hauptman and family. The reason for the visit: Mr. Hauptman had five very pretty daughters, and one of them was mine. Mr. Hauptman had a mill and small cafe. I was nearing the chateau and saw all the halftracks moving out. As the maintenance halftrack was going past me someone yelled, “Get your a—in here!” I ran and climbed into the halftrack. I asked what was up, and was told some German paratroopers had landed near us and we were on our way to take them on. GI rumors you can believe, but never the brass. German paratroopers, my a--! Although we did not know it, we were going to run into the leading elements of a couple divisions of German SS Panzer divisions led by Colonel Joachim Peiper. I don’t know how many men we had but I guess less than two hundred. You talk about some s--- odds.

Well, as I mentioned before I was in Class “B” uniform—no helmet, no weapon. Somehow I had both by the time we got to Stavelot. We drove most of the night, stop and start, darker than hell and arrived sometime after midnight in Stavelot. I was Lieutenant Rogers’ jeep driver, but had no idea where he was or where the jeep was, so I stayed with the maintenance halftrack, figuring that sooner or later someone would come and get me.

It was still dark when the firing started but not at us. I believe that Dale Nelson got on the ring-mounted machine gun and was fighting like hell to our right front. It was getting a little lighter and we could see the Germans down toward the bridge over the Ambleve River. I remember that he fired the 50 caliber until it got so hot and burned out the barrel that we had a hell of a time getting the burned-out barrel out and a new barrel installed (this problem is called “head space”).

I was laying down behind a small rock wall looking to see what

was going on. We were really giving the Germans hell because where we were parked, the German flank was exposed, and pretty soon the Germans located us and MGs and mortars were hitting all around us. You talk about starting out a day wrong—hell, it spoiled the whole weekend!

When the MG’s and mortars started falling on us all the men from the maintenance halftrack except for Lou Belezzuoli, Nelson, and me hid in the cellars of the houses where we were parked. It was then that Captain Mitchell came and got me to drive his jeep for him and I drove for him until we ended up in Wiesbaden.

By this time the Germans had Stavelot completely under fire and it was very easy for your parents to receive \$10,000. Old Mitchell and me, “scared as hell,” were wandering around like tourists visiting the different squads, goddamn pipe in his mouth like it was a Sunday stroll. I knew what bullets sounded like when they passed near your ears and I thought that maybe crawling on our bellies was a better mode of transportation. I know now why Captain Mitchell acted like he did. He had the responsibility of keeping the GIs from running, and him walking around like that had a calming effect on the men. It took lots of guts—damn sight more than I ever had. It’s impossible for me to write everything that happened, such as little old Jim Seldom on the radio calling Battalion Hqs, asking for help while sitting in a hail storm of bullets, mortars. I saw some GIs standing by a schoolhouse and I told them to get their rifles and get down by the bridge and help us. Last I saw of them.

I think that Captain Mitchell got permission to pull back and regroup. By this time the German armor had crossed the bridge (that’s the bridge that the engineers neglected to blow, which allowed the German tanks to run over us). Captain Mitchell, Lieutenant Wheelwright and me drove out of Stavelot, up the road to the gasoline dump. There were two Belgium soldiers (dressed in English uniforms) at the beginning of the gas dump. I think that Wheelwright spoke some “bedroom French” and tried to explain that when we came up the hill from Stavelot, when the halftrack passed them, they were to light the gasoline. We then went back in Stavelot and started getting all the people and tracks to move out of Stavelot up the road to Spa. What actually happened is that all but two halftracks went back to Malmedy on the river road. Mitchell and I drove and walked where we could, trying to get everyone out of Stavelot. It was a damn mess—the German tanks were on our side of the Ambleve River by this time and when Mitchell and me were getting out, you could hear those damn tanks all around us. I had that jeep locked in 4-wheel drive and the transfer case in low range and going as fast as I could, one block left, one block right, hoping no tank would get behind us because they would have hosed us down with their MG’s. That jeep in 4-wheel drive and low range would do a little more than 50 mph. As we went up the hill where the gas dump was, we came upon the two halftracks. The men were firing .50 caliber and .30 caliber but the gas never caught on fire. The GIs jumped out of the tracks and started going up the hill opening 5 gallon gas cans and finally got one damn good fire going. Mitchell then told me to go on. As we got to the far end of the gas dump we met Major Solis for the first time that day. We burned about a quarter mile of gas, damndest fire you ever saw, the cans would explode and fly through the air like a rocket, trailing fire and smoke.

When we got together the men set up a roadblock with the 57mm that we had; our total armament was one 57mm anti-tank gun, one bazooka, a machine gun and our personal weapons. If the German tanks could have gotten pass the burning gasoline, (Continued)

30 HOURS OF HELL AT STAVELOT *(Continued)*

the roadblock we set up would have held for about two minutes. The reason that the Germans held to the roads is that the fields were soft and wet and that they would have bogged down, which they did in many areas. If I neglected to tell you, this is the first time I saw Major Solis. Captain Mitchell spoke to Major Solis and told him the situation. The Major told me to take the jeep on down the road some distance and when I saw the Germans break our roadblock, I was to race to Spa and tell [that] the Germans were coming.

After about 15 minutes or less Major Solis called me back from where I saw and sent me with Lt Wheelwright back down the road toward Stavelot to see what the Germans were going. As we were crawling down the right side of the road, the gasoline cans were still exploding and it was very hot from the fire. We didn't see tanks or German soldiers, so we went back to report to Major Solis and while Wheelwright was telling what we had seen, here came the 117th Infantry Regiment of the 30th Infantry Division. I was told to stay with Major Solis and would relay messages back and forth between Company CP and Battalion CP. Captain Mitchell and the remnants of "A" Company led the way back down to Stavelot.

I don't remember how many trips that I made between Solis and Mitchell but on my first trip from Solis to Mitchell, I drove the jeep and when I got to the curve by the railroad track, the Germans let me know that I had to have their permission. Man, I mean I really thought I had bought it. I dismounted the jeep and when the Germans were putting artillery fire on the hill, I crawled and when they let up I would walk. I was learning about combat the only way you can actually learn. On one of my trips from Major Solis to Captain Mitchell I had just gotten to the crest of the hill, when the Germans opened up and I crawled over one of the rock fences and crawled into a depressing face in the dirt. Scared as hell, when the barrage lifted, I saw a small man in ODs, with a black leather jacket and 2nd Lieutenant bars, had shared the hole with me. I wondered about the leather jacket but, hell, some of the men of the 117th Regiment had top hats and other types of civilian clothes.

This second lieutenant was small and I had a grease gun and I felt I could handle him if he wasn't what he seemed to be. He said to me, "look over there, that will put s— in your eye" (exactly what he said) and I looked to where he was pointing on the other side of the Ambleve River and as far as I could see back toward Malmedy the road was clogged with German armor and vehicles. Suddenly there came a roar and about 100 ft above me I saw the P-47's starting their strafing runs on the German column. They strafed for an half hour or so and I had a ring side view. I could see P-47's back toward Malmedy strafing the column. Shortly thereafter, by this time it was late in the evening, someone, American or German, fired smoke into the valley. I never knew what happened to the little second lieutenant. He could have been one of the Krauts that we ran into at Stavelot. I spent the rest of the night going between Mitchell and Solis. I was completely exhausted by midnight and could hardly go—no food, no water, for hours.

During the night Company "A" men kept coming in one at a time. I particularly remember Sergeant Brumfeldt. He had swam the river back to our side. He was soaking wet and shivering like a dog passing razor blades. I was proud of myself and the other "A" Company men. We were green soldiers and had met the best the Germans had and even though we got our asses kicked, we were out-manned, out-gunned, but we did not run. 24:00 hrs, 18 December 1944.

—Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

MY WW II EXPERIENCE

by F. Keith Davis, 16th FAO Bn



I was in the 16th Field Artillery Observation Battalion, Battery A. We were the eyes and ears of the Field Artillery. We fought our way from Utah Beach to the border of Belgium & Germany at a place named Auw, Germany—not a town, just a place. We were there in the winter. Our area was considered a light fighting area. The heavy fighting was North of us at Cologne, Germany and South of us in Southern France.

We were fired on by German artillery and the German infantry was very close.

The Germans fired Buzz Bombs over us frequently. A Buzz Bomb is an unmanned airplane that flew very low and is filled with flammable liquid and shrapnel. We could hear the motor as it flew over us and when the motor stopped, we knew it would crash in seconds. We had three land close to us, but no one was injured. Buzz Bombs killed & injured many Americans.

We were in the Hurtgen Forest in the Schnee Eifel Mountains where the snow was deep, the ground was frozen and we did not have winter clothes. On Dec. 16, 1944 Nazi General Von Runsted made a break through on a fifty mile front. He came through with the 5th Panzer Army, the 6th Panzer Army and the 7th German Army. He had brand new King Tiger tanks, new heavy artillery and thousands of infantry, most dressed in white for camouflage. Auw, Germany was in the very center of this onslaught. We lost much equipment and pulled back to St. Vith, Belgium. We were overpowered there and retreated back to Bastogne where we were surrounded. Many of the American soldiers there were killed, wounded or went insane from the constant bombardment.

When the Battle of the Bulge started, it was cloudy and very foggy. We could hear tank treads coming toward us, but could not tell if it was a Nazi Tiger Tank or an American Sherman Tank. General George Patton ordered the 101st and 82nd Airborne up to Bastogne. They could not jump from planes because of the fog. They were brought up in 6x6 Army trucks and it took them two days to reach us. A paratrooper ask me where the front line was and I told him he was standing on it. Somehow our battery escaped the Bastogne encirclement. Three of us came upon a Belgium farmhouse in the middle of the battlefield. We went inside and there was a father, mother and two children, a boy and girl about 7 or 8 years old. The mother gave us some soup and black bread and we gave them some candy. This was Christmas Eve. We sang Christmas songs that night. We sang "Jingle Bells" and "Silent Night." The words were different, but the music was the same. We were wet and cold, but we dried off that night. We could hear machine guns rattle and artillery shells bursting all night. We didn't get much sleep, but we got warm and dry.

We left the next morning and the family didn't want to see us go. The 16th was badly shot up and the 285th FAOB in the same area was badly shot up. The two Observation Battalions decided to form one unit, so they could be more effective in the war. This did not happen, the Nazi SS Troops captured a Battery of the 285th and herded them into an open snowy field and machine-gunned them down in cold blood. This was not war, this was murder and was known as the Malmedy Massacre.

The clouds and fog started to break up and the *(Continued)*

MY WW II EXPERIENCE *(Continued)*

Air Force flew thousands of sorties over the area. They bombed tank positions, artillery positions and machine-gunned infantry troops and supply lines. We watched C-47 planes fly low over the battlefield and drop by parachute food, guns, gasoline and medical supplies, we were out of everything. We began to hold our own and gradually fought our way back to Auw, Germany.

On January 30th, 1945 we were at the same location we were on Dec 16, 1944. Up to now we were liberators. From now on, we will be conquerors. Over one million men fought in the "Battle of the Bulge"—600,000 Americans, 500,000 Germans, and 35,000 English, French, Canadians and others. This is the largest land battle ever fought by any American Army. We fought our way to Koblenz, Germany, crossed the Rhine River, were at the liberation of the Ohrdruf concentration camp, the first camp liberated on the Western Front, fought through Nuremberg into Czechoslovakia, met the Russian Army and on May 8, 1945 was VE Day. The War in Europe was over. From the time we went ashore on Utah Beach, until we met the Russians, I was on the front lines the whole time. I know that Freedom is not Free!

A TRIP INTO TROUBLE

by Robert K. Pacios, 3rd AD, 36th AIB, Co A

It was the middle of December 1944 and the Company had just returned from its participation in the battle of Echztz and Hoven on the Roer River. We had suffered many casualties and were substantially under strength. We relaxed, slept and cleaned our equipment. A substantial number of promotions were handed out because of the loss of many squad leaders and their assistants.

The quietness was broken one day when strange fighter planes flew overhead. The ack-ack opened up and most squad's .50 caliber machine guns. We were told to cease fire, since these were British aircraft that were flying cover for us, since the US Air Corps was tied up with some German breakthrough that was happening to our southeast in an area called Ardennes.

On the morning of December 19, 1944 we were placed on alert. Our ranks filled by 22 soldiers transferred from Company "G" and 22 from Company "D", but this still left us under strength. In the afternoon we got word that we would have an early supper and move out immediately. We were to head to a Belgium town called Hotton. Having previously packed up, we left Mausbach (Germany) at 1700 hours (7PM) as it was turning dark.

We started out in the usual, led by Company Commander Lieutenant Walter I. Berlin, in his jeep driven by Wally McElhinney. Following were the Company's 17 halftracks with that of the maintenance taking up the rear. Although I'm not sure about it, I believe the kitchen and supply vehicles joined with those of the other Companies of the 1st Battalion of the 36th and the other units in Combat Command Reserve (CCR) of which we were a part.

Lt. Raleigh F (Pete) Colbert and I stood in the ring of the .50 caliber machine gun in track 21. Cal Lockwood, a tall slender man who was an original member of the Company, was the driver. He had his armored windshield down and left just a narrow slit for him to see through. We drove without lights except for the "Cat-eyes" that were basically two small, dim lights in the rear of each vehicle.

There was no moon or stars and a light cloud cover made the night even darker than normal. The drivers had to remain alert and

strain their eyes to ensure they did not collide with the vehicle in front of them. The weather got colder as the night moved on and it became almost painful standing in the ring of the .50 caliber. Those in the rear huddled together to keep warm and were somewhat sheltered. Pete and I took turns standing and then sitting where we were somewhat sheltered.

The roads were narrow and in spots there were steep drop-offs that meant real trouble if you got too close to the edge of the road. Like all vehicle traffic, the column acted like an accordion. At times we had to speed up to stay with the vehicle in front of us (Halftrack 14?). Other time the drivers had to slam on their brakes to prevent a collision.

Suddenly someone noticed the exhaust of flying objects to our left. They were obviously V-1 flying bombs on their way to Liege and Antwerp. They passed by at the rate of one every five minutes for several hours.

Although we did not know it at the time, our route took us through Aachen, Verviers, Bomal and Barvaux to Hotton. We finally arrived at Hotton at 0900 (9PM) after a harrowing trip of 14 hours.

—Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

MORE HONORS FOR VBOBERS



David Martin, mayor of Stamford, CT proclaimed August 23, 2014 as Dominick Daniel Santagata Day in recognition of his 90th birthday. Dan, above, who served in the 5th Division, 7th Engineer Combat Battalion, was also recognized by the state US Senator, the General Assembly and the Governor of Connecticut. Read more about this on the VBOB web site.

—Submitted by Adrienne Hopkins, Associate



Michael Hoff, left, was awarded the French Legion of Honor from the Consul General of France, Philippe Letrilliart, on July 30, 2014. Michael was in the 987th FA Bn and landed on King Green Beach in the British Gold Beach Sector on June 7, 1944. The FA Bn had a 155mm gun mounted on an M4 Sherman Tank chassis. The Bn's 155mm self-propelled guns were the first heavy artillery to crack the Siegfried Line. The 987th supported the First Army and General Patton's

Third Army. Michael's position was as a surveyor and fire control for the Battery B of the 987th. Michael has also received the Normandy Invasion Arrowhead Medal as well as five Battle Stars for serving in all of the 5 major European campaigns (Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes, Rhineland and Central Europe).

The Legion of Honor Award was created by Napoleon in 1802 to acknowledge services rendered to France by persons of exceptional merit. It was presented to Michael for his services in the liberation of France.

—Submitted by Doris Davis, Associate

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

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VBOB ASSOCIATE PARTICIPATES IN NATIONAL MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS IN WASHINGTON, DC



Left: VBOB Associate member Mary Virginia McCormick Pittman-Waller (waving in car) participating in the National Memorial Day parade in Washington, DC on Monday, May 26, in a collaboration with the “Keep the Spirit of ’45 Alive” coalition. **Right:** Ms. Pittman-Waller and a youth volunteer, holding a photo of a fallen WW II soldier, at the wreath-laying ceremony.



VBOB Associate member Mary Virginia McCormick Pittman-Waller, a National Director of the Navy League of the United States, and Greater Austin Council member, represented that organization in the National Memorial Day Parade and wreath laying ceremonies at the United States Navy Memorial in Washington, DC on Monday, May 26. She was part of a special parade unit honoring the fallen of World War II organized by “Keep the Spirit of ’45 Alive”, a national grassroots coalition that is raising public awareness about Spirit of ’45 Day, the annual day that honors the men and women of America’s “Greatest Generation.” Ms. Pittman-Waller was accompanied by Dr. Richard Small, Western States Commander of the Military Order of the Purple Heart and Captain Jerry Yellin, US Army Air Corps, national spokesman for “Keep the Spirit of ’45 Alive” and the pilot who flew the final combat mission of WW II in a P-51 Mustang. They were joined by more than 300 youth volunteers who carried photos of individuals who were posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor in WW II and those who were killed in action during the attack on Pearl Harbor. The Spirit of ’45 Day entry also included a 34 foot motor home that has traveled more

than 20,000 miles throughout the country as part of a national campaign to publicize events planned for 2015 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of WW II.

The Spirit of ’45 Day Express visited the Alamo in San Antonio in February, and will be returning to Texas in the fall to visit several WW II memorials and museums. The wreath laying ceremony took place at the iconic statue of “The Lone Sailor” at the United States Navy Memorial. The United States Navy Memorial honors the men and women of the Sea Services past and present; Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard and US Flag Merchant Marine. For Ms. Pittman-Waller personally, it was a day to remember and honor her own late father, Dr. James Edward McCormick Pittman of Utopia, Texas who was a member of the greatest generation and served as a US Army (Col.) medical officer during the Normandy Invasion and the Battle of the Bulge. He received the Bronze Star for service for gallantry during the Battle of the Bulge. Ms. Pittman-Waller is an Associate Member of the Battle of the Bulge Association.

—Article and photos submitted by R. Glenn Looney, Chairman of the Board, Greater Austin Council, Navy League of the United States

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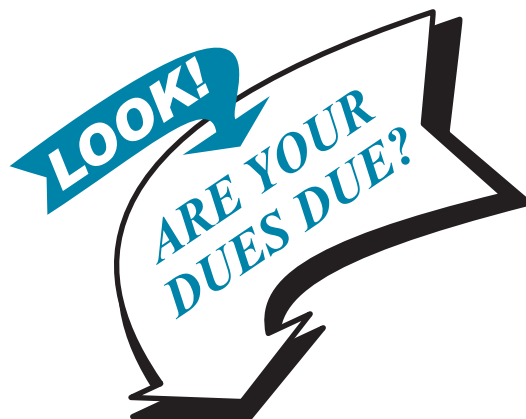
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