

# The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XXXII NUMBER 2

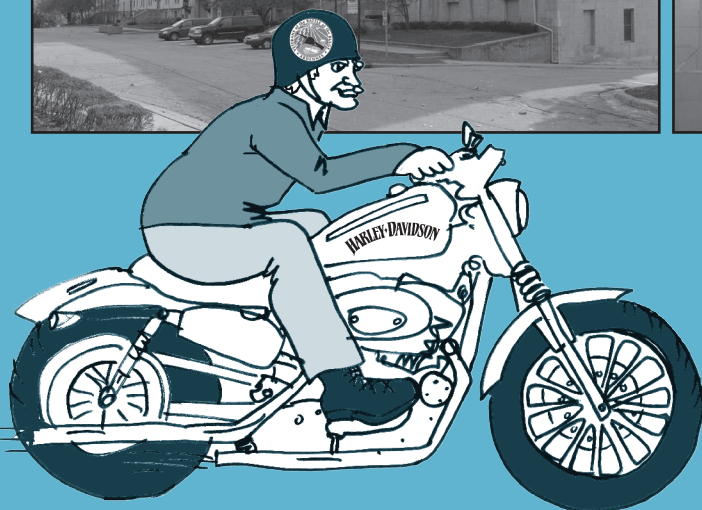
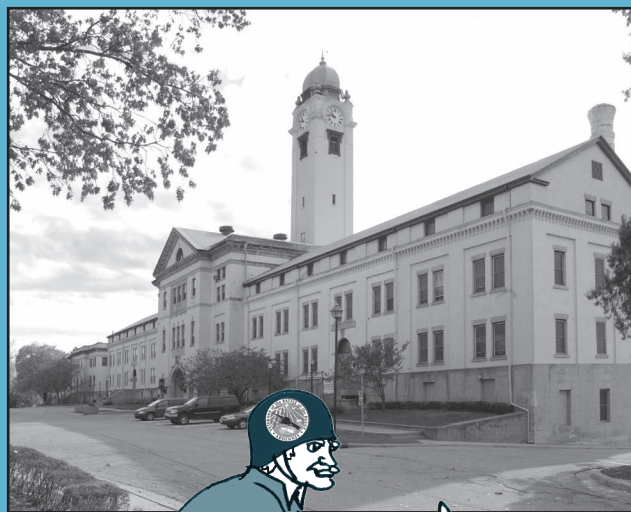
THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

MAY 2013

## KANSAS CITY HERE WE COME!

### VBOB 32nd Annual Reunion

**KANSAS CITY, MO ★ SEPTEMBER 3-8, 2013**



Reunion highlights include:

- Trip to Fort Leavenworth, KS
- Truman Library and Museum
- Harley-Davidson factory tour

See page 16 for complete details

**Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.**  
 PO Box 27430  
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 Published quarterly, *The Bulge Bugle*  
 is the official publication of the  
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### **VBOB WEB SITE:**

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

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

Greetings to all as we begin the Spring of 2013. Although it seemed wintery at the beginning of Spring, we do see Spring coming on and we welcome it.

As the New Year began I also became more active with planning, thinking and starting the coordinating process for the events to be celebrated in 2014, the year of our 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. For such as undertaking planning cannot start early enough. I visualize three events in 2014, the first being the annual reunion to be held in Columbia, South Carolina as already approved by the Executive Council. The South Carolina Chapter has volunteered to coordinate and help plan the event there. As you recall our last reunion in Columbia was a tremendous success.

The second event is presently conceptual as far as a VBOB group trip to Belgium and Luxembourg. However, to initiate the planning process I will appoint a 70th Anniversary Battle of The Bulge Planning Committee. I have mailed letters to the Ambassadors for Belgium and Luxembourg and requested they designate someone to work with our planning committee. I recently met with the Ambassador for Luxembourg and he indicated he wanted to schedule an open house at the Embassy in 2014 to commemorate the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge and would advise our Association of such plans. Being a part of our committee will aid each of us in the planning and coordination of the event. I advised the Ambassador that I certainly plan to be in the Belgian/Luxembourg countries to celebrate the 70th Anniversary. I will keep all advised of our planning progress. The third event would be the annual commemoration in the Washington DC area coordinated by the BOB Historical Foundation.

In January I was honored by an invitation to lunch at the Luxembourg Embassy along with General Abrams of the US Army Historical Foundation. To complete the joint pledge of a donation both the VBOB and the Luxembourg Ambassador had made to the US Army Historical Foundation, the Ambassador presented General Abrams with a check. VBOB had already presented its check. It was an honor to represent VBOB at that luncheon.

On March 17, John Bowen, Mike Levin and I participated in the St. Patrick's Day march in Washington DC. I led the C Division as its Marshall, and John walked, while Mike and I rode in WWII Jeeps. The previous Friday evening John, Mary Ann and I attended a reception at the Irish Embassy, again an honor to represent VBOB.

**Save the Dates -**  
**September 3-8, 2013**  
**32nd Annual VBOB Reunion**  
**in Kansas City, MO!**

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**Check out our Website [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org)**

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### REMEMBERING THOSE WHO DID NOT RETURN

I started a veterans' memorial in the Catholic Cemetery in my hometown of Pittsville, WI in 1994 to honor all those who served and were killed, which includes those who were killed in the battle of the bulge. The monument this was all paid for by my wife and family.

The following appeared in the Pittsville newspaper in recognition of the Fourth of July parade in 2004. "Don Hahn might not want recognition but he deserves praise for reminding others of the sacrifices of veterans who are interned in the Pittsville Cemetery. There is a memorial there for every war since World War II. The last memorial is for Iraq and Afghanistan. Hahn says this is the way people will remember that a lot of others have died. Hahn and went on to say he had a 2001 Jeep Wrangler painted and decaled to look like the World War II military jeep and that he drove in the July 4 parade.

What I want is people to remember all the men who didn't come back. All my medals are nothing compared to what the guys who died there did.

**Donald Hahn**  
28th ID, 112th IR

### THANK YOU

I have been a lifetime member for many years. I paid my \$75 and never thought about it until recently when I realized that I have been receiving the Bulge Bugle for over 20 years. Enclosed is a contribution that I should've sent a long time ago.

I am now close to 92 years of age and I know that there are very few of us who have reached the 90s. I will try to contribute each year and maybe other older guys like me could do the same. My thanks for all your splendid work and the great paper which keeps our membership alive.

I was at Stavelot, Belgium with my crew early on the morning of December 17, 1944. After the war I did part of the commentary in "Part six of the greatest tank battles of all time" that aired on the Military Channel.

**Louis J. Celentano**  
825th TD, Battalion A

### DID YOU KNOW RAYMOND NEFF, 2ND AD

During my investigations and research, in a Belgian Ardennes farm I have found the wood cross of the field grave of the Pfc R.P NEFF KIA Day Christmas 1944. I have obtained the IDPF report of this man, who has been repatriated after war. This soldier was with the 41st Armored Infantry Rgt. The grave and cross were in the village of Sorinnes, near Dinant, Belgium.

I have done some research about what happened to the 41st Rgt during this time... but without success... I should be so happy if I can find any information about Raymond NEFF or about the 41st AIR during this time.

Here is the information I have about him:

Raymond P. Neff  
From Lincoln, Nebraska  
37485813  
2nd Armored Division  
41st Armored Infantry Regiment  
KIA 25 December 1944 near Sorinnes (Celles area Belgium)  
Cross found on his field Grave

Please contact me if you can help.

**Michel Lorquet**  
Lorquet.nibus@skynet.be

### INFORMATION WANTED ABOUT SIEGBURG OR WALDBROL POW CAMPS

My Dad, Jean Henry Dasburg, was in the 4th Division and he was with the Medical Battalion that was attached to the 22nd Regiment. His nick name was 'Moose' but one gentleman in the prison camp referred to him as 'The Big Guy.' Dad landed D Day on Utah Beach and was captured Oct. 7, 1944. He was ultimately sent to Siegburg to the German Military Hospital/Prison Camp for wounded Allied prisoners. He basically ran the Allied section of the Camp until his escape on March 15, 1945. His successful escape is recorded in General Hodge's Diary on March 21, 1945.

Dad was trying to get the Allies to not bomb Siegburg – they had suffered so many bombings because of their location in the industrial Ruhr pocket. My research has revealed that the last bombing Siegburg received was March 6, 1945. During the Battle of the Bulge a large number of the wounded infantry and airmen were brought to Siegburg. I have been doing research on those that my Dad buried because of their wounds and on those that survived. I have attached a letter that my Dad wrote home to the Dad of one of the men that he buried. The gentlemen was buried on 1/6/1945. The nephew of this gentleman has supplied me with a copy of the original letter that they have. They have sent me some photographs of the gentleman. Thank you for all of your efforts on behalf of the Organization and on behalf of all veterans!

I am looking for anyone who was a prisoner or knows anything about Siegburg or Waldbrol, Germany during WW2. The Siegburg location of the POW Camp had many different names but it was NOT the Stalag 6G in Bonn, Germany. Part of the Siegburg Monastery was a hospital for wounded German soldiers. Another part and barracks were used for the wounded Allied prisoners.

In addition to wounded combat soldiers, a lot of wounded Army Airmen were brought to Siegburg when their planes were shot down. When the Airmen recovered to some level, they were sent to Dulag-Luft. From there they went to Stalag Luft 3 or I suppose many different Stalag's. If you have any information, I would really appreciate being able to talk with you.

**Jean D. Jacobson**  
786-768-2288  
e-mail - jeanj@jjworld.com

## TASK FORCE IZELL

by Hal Mayforth, 4th Armored, 25th Cavalry



At Verdon, France, the severity of the Battle of the Bulge was first discussed among top brass at SHAEF's headquarters. In regard to Bastogne, the energetic Gen. George Patten boasted, "I'll make a meeting engagement in three days, and I'll give you a six divisional attack in six days." This evoked laughter. Said Ike, "It can't be done." Patten retorted, "It can be, and I'll prove it. As it developed, his time table was not too far wrong.

Trapped in Bastogne were one Combat Command of both the 9th and 10th Armored Divisions, an Afro-American Artillery unit, and the 101st Airborne Infantry Division. The 101st had been held in reserve in France, and, rather than jumping, they had been trucked into Bastogne. They had been ill-equipped without adequate Winter clothing, and limited in personal ammunition. At first, it was decided to withdraw these troops, but then that decision was nullified when it was realized that Bastogne was the hub of roads used by the Germans in their offensive.

The 4th Armored Division of Patton's 3rd Army began its forced march to the Bastogne area at mid-night of Dec. 19th. Although few knew where we were going and why, we reached our destination 100 miles and 46 hours later. By that time, we had come under the command of Lt. Gen. Middleton of the VII Corps. He had ordered the CO of the newly arrive CCB, Gen. Daggart to send a task force into Bastogne. Daggart immediately saw the fallacy of such an order, but in spite of his objection, he was outranked.

Capt. Bert P. Izell, Executive Officer of the 8th Tank Battalion was selected to head the task force. With him was A company of the 8th Tan Battalion, "C" of the 10th Armored Infantry, and "C" Battery of the 22nd Armored Field Artillery Battalion. They arrived unscathed and unchallenged on their trek to Bastogne.

Shortly after arriving, Capt. Izell reported to Col. William Roberts commander of the 10th Armored Division CCB. As ordered\* he was to receive additional instructions from him. Meanwhile, there was an urgent radio message for Izell. When told he was with Roberts, it said, "Go get him immediately." The task force had been ordered back to rejoin their organizations. Gen. Hugh Gaffey, CO of the 4th Armored, having been belatedly informed of the task force, wanted them back at once so that the division might be solidified.

Again, the homeward trip avoided any direct enemy contact, but they were exposed to many strange phenomena. Along the way they detected tank tracks extending from the fields on either side of, and in the road. From the width of these, it clearly established they were German. Not too far distant, they found an American 6X6 off the road and into a ditch. The driver was still behind the wheel minus his head, which appeared severed by a high velocity shell.

Several miles later, they apprehended a road block, a congestion of field artillery pieces with some of their prime mover still running. There wasn't a soul to be found. Its personnel had either panicked and fled, or had been taken prisoners by the Germans.

The task force retrieved as much of these, and returned to their lines with more than when they started.

An aftermath of this episode, months later, when some 101st parachutists spotted the 4th Armored patch on our apparel, their admonishment would be, "So you're one of those S.O.Bs who deserted us at Bastogne." This so dominated their thinking that they completely over-looked the fact they were eventually liberated by the wearers of that same patch.

## BREAKTHROUGH AT THE SCHNEE EIFEL

by Robert K. Wineland, 106th Infantry Division

The time is December 15, 1944. I am 20 years old, a first aid man with the 106th Infantry Division. We are just now taking up positions along the Siegfried Line - some of us are on the Belgian border, others are dug in amongst the dragon's teeth. We are in rugged mountainous terrain, and snowy grey clouds hang low - It is very cold. Ours is a young, untested division composed mostly of college kids. We have never been in combat.

December 16th, our first day on the line. The captain tells us: "A German patrol has slipped through our lines - let's get em". I was standing talking with two young soldiers. I left them saying I needed to get my hat: One minute later a Tiger Tank came over the hill and fired point blank at them. They were blasted to pieces and I put identification tags on each of them. Then the war really started for me.

December 17th, one day later. There was terrible fighting all yesterday and all last night there were flares floating out of the sky and artillery shells coming in. I learn that our Golden Lion Division, the brave 106th Infantry Division has been wiped out and most of my comrades have been killed or captured. Survivors are wandering, lost like me in the snowy ridges of the Schnee Eifel hiding by day, moving by night. Von Runstedt's Wehrmacht has overrun our thinly held lines and now after just one day of battle my division no longer exists as a fighting unit!

Three days later: I am alone, lost in deep woods somewhere in the mountains. Cold, hungry, feet frozen, I wander into a small clearing in the evergreen forest of the Schnee Eifel. I am so tired and hungry, I am thinking about lying down in the snow and resting a while. I suddenly I see a most wonderful sight. Here are two paratroopers of the 82nd Airborne; submachine guns in their hands and fragmentation grenades hanging about their belts. These guys could stop anything and anybody. The top guy is a colonel. Looking at me, he tells his sgt. "This soldier needs a lift - give him the bottle from the jeep".

The Sgt. reaches into a canvas bag, hands me a tall bottle of green liquid. I take a long pull, and then several more. It bums all the way down and when I return the bottle it is more than half empty. But I am no longer cold or tired. I study a map with the colonel, then turn and head off alone into the woods. Several days later I link up with some of my comrades. Together we make our way back to the lines just as Gen. Patton's Armored Division, come up to stop Von Runstedt.

Ever since that meeting deep in the forest of the Ardennes, I have kept a bottle of green chartreuse in my closet in memory of that snowy encounter and the two paratroopers who helped me keep going.



## 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; or by e-mail to: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org); or by phone to: 703-528-4058.

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

Alexander, Roland	75 InfD	Jamiel, Morphis	7 ArmdD
Allen, Boyd F	3 ArmdD	Johnson, Carl R	3 ArmdD
Barrett, William	10 ArmdD	Lowe, Harold E	100 InfD
Baum, Abraham	4 ArmdD	Myers, Gerald V	80 InfD
Beck, John L	254 FA Bn	Patterson, Eugene	10 ArmdD
Bergquist, Carl	346 Ord Depot Co	Robinson, John M	78 InfD
Campbell, Raymond	4 ArmdD	Schoepf, Glenn	168 Engr Cmbt Bn
Colegrove, Henry	99 InfD	Siino, Frederick	7 ArmdD
Corrigan, Charles	106 InfD	Simms, Charles	90 InfD
Cragg, Robert	26 InfD	Sommer, Arthur	80 InfD
Faherty, Martin	6 ArmdD	Switzer, Richard	99 InfD
Frascello, Salvatore	75 InfD	Tedesco, Joseph	4 InfD
Gateman, Walter	28 InfD	Tomlin, Harold	7 ArmdD
Geske, Everett	188 FA Bn	Turchik, Paul	11 ArmdD
Green, James R	75 InfD	Walker, Ernest	9 InfD
Guzzo, Dante	17 AbnD	Watts, John C	30 InfD



# 10TH ARMORED CCB TRAINS EVADES GERMAN ARMORED COLUMN

by W.C. (Dusty) Schulze 10th AD

Anyone who served in World War II no doubt has at least one major unforgettable experience which transcends all others. For me this experience took place over a two day period in the Battle of the Bulge on December 21-22, 1944.

The Battle of the Bulge has been characterized by some as one of the biggest land battles in the history of warfare. Sir Winston Churchill described it as "the greatest American battle of the Second World War and it will, I believe, always be considered as a great American victory." To give much deserved credit to Combat Command B of the 10th Armored Division for saving the strategic transportation hub city of Bastogne, Brig. Gen. Anthony McAuliffe, in command of the 101st Airborne Division while its Commanding General was temporarily away, stated that "without the sacrifices of the 10th Armored CCB, there would not have been a Bastogne to be defended." The basis for this comment was that it is well known that CCB of the 10 Armored Division arrived in Bastogne eight hours before the arrival of the 101st Airborne Division. I personally remember well seeing their arrival on trucks that night. By the time the 101st arrived on the scene CCB had already set up defense positions at the three primary road approaches to the City. This opinion was confirmed to me personally by our guide, a member of the local Historical Committee, during my visit to Bastogne in December 2004 on the occasion of the 60th Anniversary Celebration of the Battle of the Bulge. General McAuliffe was the author of the now famous "Nuts" response to the German demand that the City surrender.

Thirty three US Divisions with 840,000 men and 200,000 Germans in twenty-five divisions participated in this battle. US forces suffered approximately 90,000 casualties. German casualties were estimated to be between 81,000 and 103,000. The battle raged from December 16, 1944 to January 25, 1945. (From "Ardenne-Alsace" by U. S. Center of Military History)

During this time I was serving as Company Commander of Service Company, 20th Armored Infantry Battalion, 10th Armored Division. The bulk of our battalion was a part of Combat Command B, one of the three Combat Commands of an Armored Division. On the night of December 16 our division was in the process of reorganizing after a holding action on the Siegfried Line when we were alerted to be prepared to move north where the Germans were about to launch a surprise attack along the Belgian/Luxembourg border with Germany. Our entire 10th Armored Division traveled nearly 100 miles to the vicinity of Luxembourg City under blackout conditions during the night of December 16.

On December 17, 1944 CCB of the 10th Armored Division was separated from the rest of the Division and was ordered to proceed to Meri on the western side of Luxembourg City and bivouac there for the night. The next morning it was to proceed to Bastogne to assist in the defense of this transportation hub city so vital to the success of the surprise German Blitz.

CCB was the first unit to arrive in Bastogne. Late that evening Service Company of the 20th Armored Infantry Battalion, along with personnel supporting other companies, selected Institute

Saint-Joseph, a Roman Catholic School to billet the troops. The headquarters for CCB, commanded by Col. William L. Roberts was set up in Hotel Le Brun in the center of the city. With combat defense teams in place at the three key approaches to the city, we felt that we were located in a relatively safe location with German forces headed in our direction. During the next 2 or 3 days Service Company personnel carried out support services to the extent possible under the circumstances. Constant sounds of gunfire gave notice that the German forces were closing in on the city. Furthermore, the developing situation was such that a full encirclement was entirely possible.

Col. Roberts was no doubt receiving frequent reports that such encirclement was developing. So in the late afternoon of December 21 Col. Roberts sent word for me to report to his headquarters immediately. Upon arrival in the dimly lit basement of the Hotel, along with another trains officer, it was obvious that he was about to issue an urgent message. I have distinct recollections of Col. Roberts peering over those familiar looking horn rimmed glasses uttered these words, "Get those \_\_\_\_\_ vehicles out of town before the Germans destroy or capture our supply vehicles." The tone of his voice left no doubt about the urgency of the situation. We rushed back to our CP and spread the word for Service Company and all attached personnel to be prepared to leave immediately. By the end of the day Bastogne was indeed totally surrounded.

In short order we had all 150 or so unarmed vehicles lined up ready to move out. While no destination was specified in the order to move out, simple logic would dictate that we would depart in a westerly direction. We made a hasty map study of the road network in the area and chose a route that would lead us westward toward the town of Tillet. Our ultimate destination for that night could have been altered if dictated by the ever changing situation. Tillet was some 6 to 8 kilometers from Bastogne, which would give us ample time to arrive before dark and find shelter from the severe winter weather for over 200 men. This turned out to be no problem as nearly all the residents had fled the scene with knowledge of the rapidly advancing Germans.

So far, all seemed to be going well. Early the next morning Mess Sergeant Douglas Grogan from Texas and his kitchen staff had coffee ready with a hastily prepared breakfast. It was then time for us to ponder our next move. The urgency of this decision was suddenly cast upon us when we heard the sounds of automatic weapons coming from different directions. Here we were, charged with the task of saving 150 unarmed vehicles from falling into the hands of the enemy with no armor to protect them. Aside from our side arms, carbines and rifles we had one armored car equipped with a 37 mm gun.

I called a hasty meeting with the other officers present. We spread our map on the hood of my jeep to consider options available to us for a quick exit. We concluded that we had perhaps three options. Two kilometers or so to our west were cross roads one of which would take us toward the southwest through Libramont and on to the city of Neufchateau, far removed from the enemy where the vehicles and the men would be safe. This route was clearly the option of choice. The other two options would lead us directly to the main highway from Bastogne to Neufchateau but more to the southeast. One of these routes passed through the town of Sibret and the other, more desirable, by way of the towns of Gerimont, Magerotte and Morhet. Both would (Continued)



take us closer toward Bastogne, now completely surrounded.

Having heard gunfire to our north we thought it best to send a reconnaissance patrol west to the nearby cross roads before exposing our entire fleet of vehicles to potential danger. The patrol was led by our armored vehicle. We asked for volunteers to accompany Lt. Heeran and his jeep driver, Dwight Walker. One of the two volunteers was to man a bazooka and the other to handle the bazooka rounds. When we asked for a bazooka volunteer Otto Nerad raised his hand and replied "I saw one once." So he became the man of this critical hour.

The patrol departed on its mission. All went as planned. There was a sigh of relief when they neared their destination and spotted American Vehicles; that is, until German occupants fired one shot that missed. At the same time the jeep occupants jumped off and dispersed to return on foot to our location. They all fled with the exception of "volunteer" Nerad, who had jammed his knee when he jumped off to set up his bazooka and driver Walker. Dwight Walker did not want to leave Otto Nerad in his impaired condition, but he was quickly overruled when Otto assured him that he would follow as soon as he could. But this was not to be. The pain lingered on so he crawled under low hanging branches of pine trees patiently waiting for American troops to come by. More American vehicles did come by but again occupied by the enemy. Otto was taken prisoner and for the next four months he was touring Germany from one prison camp to another.

Over the ensuing years I expressed many times to my wife Del my concern over the fate of our lone casualty that day. This concern ended abruptly when in 1978 at our Hartford, Ct reunion someone came up to me asking if I remembered him. I knew immediately it had to be Otto. All of this is now history. We became good friends and attended reunions thereafter.

Back to our exit from Tillet. When plan A was aborted we hurriedly turned our attention to what we believed would then be our next best route of escape, the route through the towns of Gerimont, Margerotte and Morhet to the Bastogne/Neufchateau highway, our ultimate destination until we could rejoin CCB.

This leg of our journey was by no means without incident. It was not unusual for stray vehicles, perhaps fleeing from the enemy, to join our caravan from side roads. Mess Sergeant Grogan told me later that he stopped to let another truck pull out in front of his kitchen truck. This newcomer was then hit by an incoming artillery shell destroying the vehicle and killing the assistant driver. Also, T4 Walter Winship, driver of our M4 Tank Recovery Vehicle slowed to let a 6x6 truck pull in ahead of him. That vehicle then turned a corner and was also hit by an artillery shell killing the driver. Some of our group reported sighting enemy troops and vehicles a short distance off to the side of our column from whence the artillery firing must have come.

The surrender demand delivered on December 22, 1944 to the American troops on the outer perimeter of now surrounded Bastogne listed the towns already "taken" by German units on December 22. It reads in part that they had "... reached St. Hubert by passing through Hompres - Sibret - Tillet. Libramont is in German Hands." We had considered two possible roads that would take us directly to Bastogne-Neufchateau highway, one from Tillet through Sibret and the other route from Tillet through Gerimont, Margerott and Morhet. Luckily, we chose the latter. I

say "luckily" because the German Surrender note infers that on December 22 German troops appeared to be moving in a north-westerly direction from Hombes to Sibret to Tillet (our point of departure that morning) while on a nearby parallel road, our column was moving to the southeast from Tillet through Morhet.

So we finally made our way to Neufchateau where we found shelter from the frigid cold and snow for our men in a large church complex. In spite of the harassment from enemy troops over the past two days all had remained calm. Our losses had been minimal but could have been considerably worse. We felt that our mission had been accomplished. We had truly experienced the fluidity of the situation surrounding Bastogne as Les Nichols described it in his book "Impact" as follows: "No longer was this combat with the usual front and rear. Almost at the beginning the 101st Division's hospital was captured and some of their trains were lost. CCB's trains were sent out on the 21st and with great luck, these trains managed to evade the great trap." Call it "great luck" if you wish but add to the mix a generous portion of providential guidance. As Technical Sergeant George B. Ridge of the maintenance section of Service Company expressed it later, "The only thing I can say was the good Lord was with us and brought us back."

At that particular point in time little did we realize how close we had come to a potential disaster. Many years later it became quite clear that we had indeed narrowly averted a major catastrophe. This conclusion was reached from information gleaned by reading accounts by different authors in books detailing the events of the Bastogne operation and through information gathered by discussions with members of the local Bastogne historical committee during my December 2004 visit to Bastogne for the celebration of the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge; and by relating all of this newly acquired information to a map study of the respective routes taken by our column and by the German armored column proceeding in the opposite direction on the nearby parallel road. The rapid advance of the Germans as well as towns captured is noted in the "Nuts" surrender demand note. Had we by chance taken the same route taken by the Germans we would have met head-on with no choice but to surrender. Any attempt to defend ourselves and our unarmed vehicles would have been futile. As to the fate of our personnel that is a scary thought. In the highly publicized incident in the Malmedy area when the Germans did not want to bother with prisoners, the American prisoners were massacred on the spot. We were truly blessed when you consider what might have been. I have found it extremely difficult to erase this experience of December 1944 from my book of memories. However, the reality of the presence of providential guidance throughout this entire experience will remain forever.

## MY MEMORIES OF WW II

by Paul R. Millett, 168th ECB, Co C

I'm honored to pay my tribute to my buddies and comrades who died for their country, including one that I had never met - my wife's (Ann) brother John. Immediately after graduating from high school in June of 1943 I was inducted into the Army. We went straight to Fort Devens, MA and then on to Camp Carson, Colorado Springs, CO. The 168th Engineer *(Continued)*

## MY MEMORIES OF WW II *(Continued)*

Combat Battalion was originated and made up mostly of 18 to 20 year old men. The battalion consisted of approximately 700 men. We went thru all our training and then went to New York Harbor for debarkation.

Coincidentally, while in New York at the Port of Embarkation I met my brother, Elwin Millett who was also departing for Europe. He was with the 774th TD (Tank Destroyer) Battalion. I also have another brother, Lewis Millett, who was an aerial photographer in the Marine Corp. I have one other brother, Woodrow Millett, who fought hard to get in any part of the service, but, unfortunately they refused him because of his Polio, he would have made the best soldier of all.

We boarded ships and headed for Europe. There were many ships in the convoy with aircraft overhead guarding us. We landed in Bristol, England in May 1944. For a short while we billeted in private homes in Wrexham, Wales. Then we went to a wooded area where we bivouacked until it was time to cross the channel to Normandy. We landed on Utah Beach on July 14, 1944. We were in five major battles which were:

The Normandy Campaign. Northern France Campaign. Central Europe, Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge). This battle was fought between Dec. 16, 1944 and Jan. 25, 1945. The 5th battle was the Rhineland River Crossing on March 26, 1945.

My most memorable experience was at the Battle of the Bulge in St. Vith, Belgium. The Germans had concentrated everything they had to this area where we were dug in at the Zeigfried Line. I was a truck driver and at the time my truck was having a 50 caliber machine gun mounted over the cab. So, I was temporarily assigned to a kitchen truck. I volunteered to drive a jeep to the front lines, which was a short distance away, with coffee and blankets. While I was there an officer asked to borrow my jeep. I never saw it again.

All of a sudden the German 88 shells started to fly. Pete Bregolli hollered at me and said, "You'd better get in this foxhole with me." I said, "There's hardly room". But, a couple seconds later I dove in as the tree branches started flying. In the middle of the night a messenger came from foxhole to foxhole informing us that we were going to hold hands and form a human chain, which we did. That night it was cold, with a wet snow, and we walked on and on. As daylight approached we found ourselves on top of a hill in the woods. It seemed like there were thousands of men there. The officer that spoke to our group told us that we were completely surrounded. He advised us, if we had any weapons, to dismantle them and throw them away. He also advised us to go in groups of 6 to 12 men, "Go and Good Luck!"

We started out with about 12 men, but, somehow, the next time we looked, there were only 6 of us. The first thing we did was to look in foxholes for K-Rations and blankets. We found enough blankets for each of us to have one, but little food. We started walking and as we approached the road we saw the Germans coming so we hid in the bushes not too far from the road. There were many Germans and also many, many, Americans that



**Paul R. Millett, 168th  
ECB, Co C**

they had -taken prisoners. After it turned dark we started walking again. As we crossed the first field there were thousands of rifles on the ground. The first night we walked right into a German bivouac area. The guard hollered at us and I said to myself, "Oh, my God! I'm dead". But it so happened that Capt. Pliske was the leader of our group and to my surprise he spoke back to the German guard in perfect German. He said we were German officers. I was in Co. 'C' and I don't know which company he was but was sure glad he was with us as he saved outlives. The German guard then apologized and we were on our way again. We had our blankets folded over our shoulders and I suppose, in the dark, they looked like German officer capes.

We came across a railroad and walked down the tracks. I saw a German body lying on the ground. I wanted to make sure he was dead so on the way by I kicked his foot. He was stiff. My French class in high school paid off. As we came by any houses I would go and ask for bread and directions to Bastogne. One of our men happened to have a compass which helped. We walked at night and hid in barns in the daylight.

On Christmas Day we went into a barn, climbed up into the hayloft and pulled the ladder up with us. Capt. Pliske read a little from a small pocket Bible and we shared one K-Ration between the 6 of us. Later, three Germans came into the barn, talked for a while, relieved themselves and left. Thank God we pulled the ladder up with us. Night came and we walked again. While walking thru a field I saw a pile of dirt, which had some turnips buried in it. I dug one out and ate it. It was frosty, but it was food.

During the 8 nights we were halted several times but Capt. Pliske got us thru each time. The 8th night we walked into a German area again and were halted as before, but our fearless Capt. Pliske told the guard we were German officers and again we got thru. While walking over foxholes I stepped on a German Soldier (He must have been dreaming of home). We walked on and before long we were halted again. Capt. Pliske said, "We're Americans." I said to myself, "He's giving up after all this?" When the guard said, "Advance to be recognized (in English) I was ecstatic. Capt. Pliske had a keen sense as he seemed to sense we were right on the front line.

After proving that we were Americans we were taken to a building that looked somewhat like a hospital and were given some C-Rations. Being dirty, unshaven and hungry, that food was like heaven. We had walked about 55 miles in 8 nights - from St. Vith to Bastogne. How good it was to be on the American side again. To my knowledge, the 6 of us were the only ones to escape without being killed, or captured. We were later interviewed by a radio newsman and our story was aired on the Sunday Army Hour.

After losing so many men we had to get replacements. 'Our next battle was at the Rhine River Crossing (March 26, 1945). Again we lost many men. I had to stay with my truck and when the mortar shells started flying I laid under the truck. A piece of shrapnel flew up in front of my head and went thru the oil pan and I lost the oil. I was later towed back to headquarters. I remember, as the shells were coming in hot and heavy, I heard John Hagen holler, at the top of his lungs, profanity at the Germans. I thought he must have been hit.

When the German war ended we were preparing to go to the Pacific, but, the Atomic Bomb changed our plans. So, in Dec. 1945 we were shipped back to Boston, MA. My *(Continued)*

## MY MEMORIES OF WW II *(Continued)*

army experience was completed which was a total of 2 1/2 years.

After 40 years of trying to locate Bill Porter, who was one of the six of us behind the lines, I got a phone call about 3 years ago.. The lady said, "Are you Paul Millett?" I said, "Yes." She asked, "Were you in the 168th Eng. Combat Battalion?" I said, "Yes." She then told me she was June Porter, Bill's wife. Thru several phone calls we arranged a reunion that was a surprise to Bill. What a wonderful reunion it was.

We have had some real great Battalion reunions thanks to many dedicated men like Col.

Holland, Bob Linkous and many others who make all the arrangements. But, our outfit is slowly diminishing. I would be remiss if I did not mention how kind Sgt. Bob Linkous was to us when we arrived at Camp Carson and were quarantined. Bob nearly ran his legs off going to the PX for candy, etc.

I wanted to be in the Air Corp real bad. But, in thinking about it, I couldn't have been in a better outfit than the 168th Engineer Combat Battalion.

God was good to me all thru my life and has richly blessed me. I have a beautiful daughter and a son who is a Lt.Col. now serving in the Pentagon (Lt. Col. Richard G. Millett).

I'm proud to be an American. I love my country. I love my flag. I love God.

## THEY TOOK GOOD CARE OF ME by Richard R. Richards, 99th ID, 395th IR, Co C

We were on the crest of high ground at the edge of a forest A sportsmen's club was there, with a chain-link fence all around. Our company commander set up his headquarters in the building, and the medics, that was their place too. When we looked out, we could see this little German town in front of us — Steinhardt. That's what we were going after. It was the town the Germans were shooting at us from. We were supposed to have support on both our flanks, but there were no other outfits with us — a goof on somebody's part. You never saw a bunch of guys dug foxholes so fast as we did that morning with shells coming our way. But it was quiet in die afternoon from about 2 o'clock on. And it was a nice day — clear, not cold.

We were supposed to have support on both our flanks, but there were no other outfits with us — a goof on somebody's part. You never saw a bunch of guys dug foxholes so fast as we did that morning with shells coming our way. But it was quiet in die afternoon from about 2 o'clock on. And it was a nice day — clear, not cold. I was equipped with a sound-powered telephone that I could keep in touch with the guys in charge. I got this message to come over to die building, and I went over and they gave us the orders for what we were going to do that night. Get into groups and set up a guard.

Then I went back to where the guys were dug in, about 20 different places, and I told those guys what the boss wanted them to do. After that, I went back to my hole to relax for a while. It was about 4 o'clock. I didn't relax too long. I sat down with my back against the dirt wall, completely underground, pushed my helmet back and lit a cigarette — I believe it was a Lucky Strike. I don't know if I even had tone to put the lighter down. That's all I remember till I came to and found myself on my hands and knees

outside of my hole, blood flying everywhere. My blood. I looked up and one of the closest guys to me — about 50 feet away — ran over and said: "Stay put, don't move. I'm gonna get an aid man." He came back with one in a hurry. The aid man said, "We gotta get you out of here." Both of them took a hold of me and we went aver to die headquarters where die captain and die medics were. I wasn't in pain, I had no problem walking. And I could hear and understand what they were saying. But I couldn't answer them. My lower jaw was gone.

There was just one big open hole, and I was bleeding all over. The interior of my mouth was all busted out Half my tongue was gone, and all but three of my teeth that were all the way back in the upper right. It was shrapnel that got me. An artillery shell shattered in the trees. It happened so fast this fella who was the closest one to me, Oakley Honey, said it burst right overhead when: I was. He told me the Germans put a few shells over the top — they were realty chopping roc trees down — but no one else was hit. I expected to see you going around to make sure everybody was OK," Honey said. "I didn't hear anything out of you, so I got up and I was on my way over and there you were on your hands and knees." He said he heard some noise like a chicken squawking, and it was me.

The Germans must've had an observation post out there someplace and were watching us. I think they saw me go over to that building and then go around to where the other guys were dug in. They must've figured I was some kind of a leader and thought there's a guy we need to hit. At the first aid station, I was hurting. They gave me something for the pain and bandaged me. The medic, Fred Tate, took one look and came over, and there was a chair, and he told me to sit down. He said to take my hands on both sides and press my fingers behind my jaw, put pressure on the arteries and the bleeding will stop. I had to do it, he said. If I didn't, I was going to bleed to death. That was the first I realized how bad it was.

The captain was there and I can hear him yet. "I thought you knew better to keep your head down," he said I knew he was kidding me. He laughed when he said it. I couldn't answer but I thought: Yeah, keep my head down, but that's where I had it. Tate said I only stood one chance of getting out of there, and that was walking out—he knew how robust I was, and in good shape. They had 16 or 17 casualties waiting to be taken out by vehicle and they couldn't do that because the Germans had us covered in the rear,

He told the captain there wasn't much choice if I wanted to live. "If we don't get him out of here, he's not gonna make it" The captain asked me: "You want to go?" I nodded. Tate reminded me to keep my fingers on the two points behind my jaw. "I'm gonna send somebody with you," he said. "If you get back to when; we took off from last night, you'll be OK. Now get going!" The way we went the night before was like starting out in Easton and coining all the way up to the top of Morgan's hill in Williams Township. That was a couple miles.

An aid man went with me and we got at least halfway back when we heard a motor. "Stay right where you arc tin I get back," the aid man said. He took off and intercepted this guy who had one of these jeeps with a rack to put the wounded guys on. The driver had two people aboard, not badly hurt. "C'mon," they said, and grabbed a hold of me on each side and boy we took off We went back across me Rhine on a pontoon *(Continued)*



## THEY TOOK GOOD CARE OF ME *(Continued)*

bridge. My hands were getting numb from pressing the back of my jaw all the time. The only thing that kept me going was that my life depended on it.

We came to a pretty big field hospital, and they got me in there. I'd been holding the points behind my jaw for about an hour. The bleeding had eased up somewhat I got a shot that knocked me out for three days. When I came to, I was bandaged up and had tubes going up my nose. Then they loaded me up and sent me back to another hospital, a real one. A nurse took me for walks outside for exercise. The doctor told me, "You don't know how lucky you are."

I got shipped across the Channel to England, and that's when they first really did some work on me. But they weren't equipped to do what they needed to do and decided I was better off going back to (he States, so they flew me to New York. From the time I got hit till when I came home was 30 days.

I couldn't talk for the better part of a year, but I could write. One day at the hospital where I was staying in New York, a lieutenant told me I should pack up my things because I was going to another hospital, and I wrote down: "Where?" This fella said, "These papers say you're going down to Mississippi." I wrote, "NO WAY" He said, "Why?" Another fella had told me, "If you go to Valley Forge General Hospital, you won't be far from home." So I wrote "Valley Forge" on the papers. The lieutenant said, "It's filled up, but I'll see what I can do,"

My wife and my dad and my sister's husband came to see me. They were talking to me in my room when the lieutenant came in and said, "I've got news for you. Does Valley Forge ring a bell?" That's where I ended up. I was there for two years and seven months. It was a good hospital. It had everything you needed, and they took care of you in getting you fixed up. But for a while they were afraid they weren't going to be able to do much of anything for me. My lower jaw had to be rebuilt. They had to do little things in steps. The main thing was to put the framework in first, and that meant replacing the bone So they took chunks of two of my ribs and fastened them to the bone I still had on both sides, and it all grew together. That bone graft took quite a while.

It was something to go through, a little tiresome, and sometimes I wonder how I ever did it But I was good and healthy at the time — I was a country boy. The doctor I had, I wouldn't exchange for anything. He was so good and kind and would do anything for you. He had a lot of help from his father, who was a doctor too, and did a wonderful job putting the jaw together—I know what it looked like because I'd looked in the mirror. I'll tell you how nice a guy the doctor was. He would schedule an operation or whatever he was going to do for Monday morning, first thing.

And by the time Friday came, if I felt well enough I could go home for the weekend. Believe it or not, in the beginning I hitchhiked home. I looked awful, all bandaged. People would stop and ask, "Where are you going?" And I had a pad and I'd write down where. They'd say, "I'm going to such and such. You want a ride?" They were nice people that treated me half-decent. Other people would look at me and say, "Man, what happened?" "You can't talk? I feel sorry for you." And some would shake their heads and walk away. All the while, anything I ate had to be liquid. For the longest time, that liquid was going into my stomach through tubes down my nose. That's the way I ate for the first

year. It was even longer than that before I could sip out of a glass.

They couldn't do anything about teeth, so I don't have any — the three way in die back weren't around too long; they went bad. To this day, I can't eat any solid food. It has to be soft. I can't chew anything. Oatmeal is what I eat for breakfast. Lots of time for lunch, I'll have soup. If I want to eat any kind of meat, I have to grind it up. As far as my not being able to talk, my wife, Betty, was terribly concerned about that and it bothered her a whole lot when I was in the hospital- But I wrote that the doctors had a good hope that I would regain my speech.

It was a year-and-a-half before I could start to hold a conversation. Oh, I could talk, but it was a crazy type of thing — I couldn't pronounce things right, but people could understand what I was saying. It took years before I could speak like this. Betty told me once that she hadn't expected to see me looking the way I did. She said it took her the longest time to accept that that's the way it was going to be. And she said she knew that I could go on, and she was going to help me however she could. She couldn't do enough for me. My mom and dad helped me all they could, too.

I was never afraid for the future because Betty was here and my daughter Linda was here. I had the feeling that I would have to get to the point where I could take care of them. I felt that I had that responsibility. And as long as the VA was helping me get back to where I wanted to be, I was going to do it.

## VETERAN RECEIVES LEGION OF HONOR AWARD

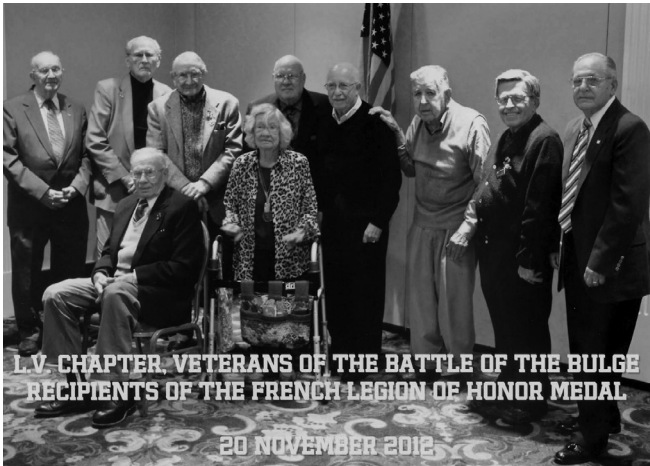
Mr. Richard E. Gile was awarded the French Legion of Honor from the Consul General of France, Mr. Jean-Claude Brunet, in New Orleans on September 29, 2012. Mr. Gile served in the US Army from July, 1944 to March, 1945. He fought in Luxembourg in the Battle of the Bulge. He entered the service in the 3rd Army Special Troops but most of his service was with the 26th Infantry Division, 104th Infantry Regiment.

The Legion of Honor Award was created by Napoleon in 1802 to acknowledge services rendered to France by persons of exceptional merit.



## LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER – FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR

Ten members of the Lehigh Valley Chapter, pictured below, were awarded the French Legion of Honor at the French Embassy in Washington DC on November 20, 2012.



**Front row (l-r)** William Leopold – 75th Infantry Division  
Evangeline Coeyman – 59th Field Hospital  
**Back row (l-r)** Gene R. Nadig – 750th Tank Battalion  
Morris D. Metz – 94th Infantry Division  
John A. Caponigro – 87th Infantry Division  
Jack A. Lippincott – 8th Convalescent Hospital  
Nathan Kline – 9th Air Force  
Roy A. Minnerly – 11th Armored Division  
Frank Maresca – 75th Infantry Division  
Donald W. Burdick – 16th Field Artillery

Two other chapter members were awarded French Legion of Honor, but are not in the group picture  
Floyd Stewart – 702nd Tank Battalion  
Mark Kistler – 4th Cavalry Division



The Ceremonies were impressive, to say the least, recognizing that this award was created by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1802, the Highest French Honor!

**Save the Dates -  
September 3-8, 2013  
32nd Annual VBOB Reunion  
in Kansas City, MO!**

## MA CHAPTER – FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR

Six members of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge who are also members of the Lamar Souter Chapter of VBOB were awarded the French Legion of Honor on October 23, 2012.



**(l-r standing)** Robert Nordgren – 83rd Infantry Division  
Fabien Fieschi – Consul General of France  
Frank Woolridge – 90th Infantry Division

**(l-r sitting)** Armand Descoteau – 80th Tank Battalion  
Edward J. Pizzetti – 75th Infantry Division  
Margaret Hammond Walenski – 16th General Hospital  
Roger Wheeler – 702nd Tank Destroyer Battalion

**Submitted by Christian W. de Marcken, Associate**

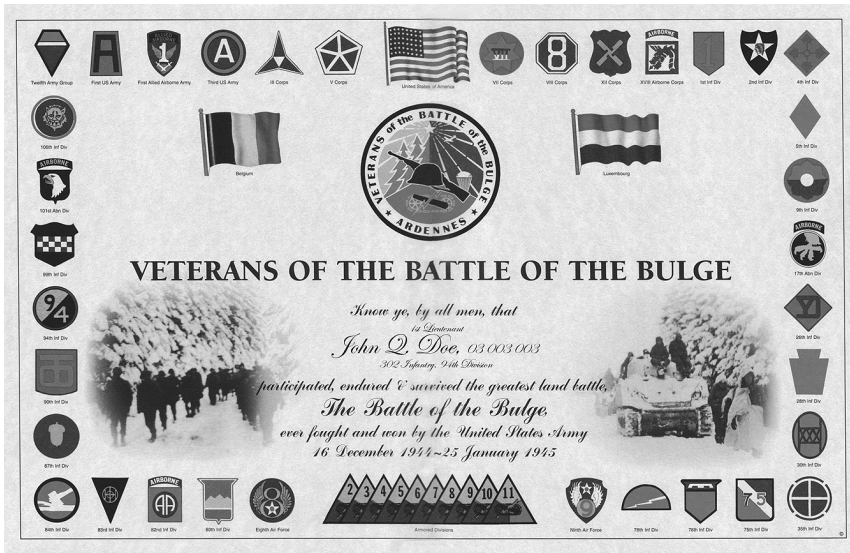
## PRESIDENTIAL WHITE HOUSE RECEPTION HONORS VETERANS



The Honorable Eric K. Shineski, Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Chairman of the Veterans Day National Committee with J. David Bailey, National President of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge (2010 – 2012) at a White House Presidential reception honoring all Veterans on November 11, 2012



# THE VBOB CERTIFICATE: Have you ordered yours?



Over 6,500 certificates have been purchased by Battle of the Bulge veterans. If you haven't received yours, then you might want to consider ordering one to give to your grandchildren. They are generally most appreciative of your service now and they make excellent gifts—also for that buddy with whom you served in the Bulge. The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. is proud to offer this full color 11" by 17" certificate, which may be ordered for any veteran who received credit for the Ardennes campaign. It attests that the veteran participated, endured and survived the largest land battle ever fought by the US Army.

You do not have to be a member of VBOB to order one, but the veteran must have received

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

## Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Certificate Order Blank

*I request an 11" by 17" certificate and certify the veteran named below received credit for the Ardennes campaign.*

*I have enclosed a check for \$15 for the certificate. Please include the following information on the certificate:*

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Serial Number \_\_\_\_\_ Rank \_\_\_\_\_ Unit \_\_\_\_\_

Organization \_\_\_\_\_

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

☐ Killed in Action

☐ Died of Wounds

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### Mailing Information:

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Make checks out to VBOB for \$15.

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

*Questions can be directed to John D. Bowen, telephone: 301-384-6533 or by e-mail to: johndbowen@earthlink.net*



# ODENTON VETERAN AWARDED FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR

by **Brandon Bieltz** - Staff Writer, Soundoff - The online version of Fort Meade's own community paper

As a 25-year-old second lieutenant serving in the forests of Germany, Alfred Shehab didn't realize the scale of the World War II battle raging around him. "As a platoon leader, I didn't have any idea of the scope of the attack," Shehab said. "All I was concerned about was my 1,600 to 1,300 yards."

He also didn't know that nearly seven decades later, his efforts in the infamous Battle of the Bulge would lead to a display case of medals -- awarded by both the United States and foreign countries.

In February, the 93-year-old retired lieutenant colonel and Odenton resident who is a familiar face on Fort Meade added to his collection of medals. The French Embassy in Washington, D.C., awarded Shehab the French Legion of Honor (Chevalier). "The people of France wanted to be sure that those in the American Army that fought for the liberation of France were recognized," Shehab said.

The medal -- the highest honor in France -- has been awarded to World War II veterans whose wartime service records show they played a direct role in the liberation of France. "We are proud to reward the ones that freed us," Col. Jacques Aragonès, deputy military attaché for the French army, said at the ceremony. "They left a part of their youth in France."

Shehab's name was submitted for the award by retired Lt. Col. Ruth Hamilton, Shehab's significant other. "I thought he was deserving of getting the award," she said. "The documentation supported it, and why not go for it?"

Shehab, who grew up in Cape May, N.J., in the summers and in Brooklyn, N.Y., the remainder of the year, was desperate to join the war in Europe, first attempting to fight for the Finnish army and then for France. After both attempts were halted by his father, Shehab joined the U.S. Army in 1942 at the age of 22. "There was a fellow in Japan and another one in Germany," he said as his reason for enlisting. "They wanted to change my life and I didn't agree with them, and the only way we could do anything about it was to fight. So I joined the Army."

After training at Fort Knox, Ky., Shehab was commissioned as a cavalry officer. He later joined the 38th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron in Europe and led a platoon in "B" Troop. The main mission of the 30-member platoon was to scope out enemy troops and report back.

One of the memories Shehab recalled of his time with the 38th was listening to American jazz on the radio of an armored car at night. "You're standing in the middle of the woods surrounded by Germans and you're listening to the songs you listened to when you were dancing on the piers of Cape May," he said.

On Dec. 15, 1944, Shehab's role in the Battle of the Bulge began as his platoon was set up in a hunting lodge near the Siegfried Line. That night, enemy paratroopers were dropped on his location. Shehab said he sat in a chair shooting down the paratroopers as his men then went to pick them up. Turns out,

he said, each paratrooper carried a bottle of rum. "I didn't have any problem getting volunteers to go out and find these fellas," Shehab joked.

The next morning is considered the official start of the battle, which continued until Jan 25, 1945. The major German offensive near the end of the war was to split the Allied line of American and British troops. "We held, but everything below us caved in," Shehab said proudly.

According to an article in the Cape May Star and Wave published May 24, 1945, Shehab's troops defended a "front of 9,000 yards and standing alone between a full-scale German attack and vital road nets leading to Eupen and Leige, [Belgium], this thinly spread force held its ground in the face of five attacks ranging in strength from reinforced battalions to combined elements of two infantry regiments."

Although the Allies won the Battle of the Bulge, there were nearly 90,000 American casualties -- including 19,000 dead. After the war, Shehab remained in the military until 1963. He said his best years in the Army were with the 14th Cavalry Regiment when the unit controlled the border between East and West Germany. "There was a 10-meter strip between East and West Germany," Shehab said. "To look over at the East side, there's a man plowing with a horse and a plow. To the West side, there was a man plowing with a tractor. That was the difference between the two. ... It was two completely different ways of life."

Shehab's 21-year military career also was highlighted with a stint in Lebanon as a special assistant because his cousin Gen. Fouad Shehab commanded the Lebanese army. Fouad would eventually become president of Lebanon. "On the way up to his office he said, 'I'm delighted to see you. How is your family? And why the hell did you bring your whole Army with you?'" Shehab recalled. He later served with the Second Army at Fort Meade, where he retired. Shehab has lived in Odenton ever since.

On Feb. 13, Shehab was joined by several other World War II veterans who had traveled from across the country to the French Embassy for the presentation of the prestigious French Legion of Honor. "I felt a sense of recognition," Shehab said. "This medal represents the appreciation of France for the people of the United States in helping to liberate France. What I see is, 'thank you.'" Although the medal rests in a display case in his den, Shehab said the recognition from the people of Belgium towns and villages means more than an award.

Several years ago, veterans of the Battle of the Bulge returned to Belgium and found monuments to the American Army in nearly every town they visited, said Shehab. "That really helped us understand the American participation in World War II," he said. To this day, Shehab still receives letters from young Belgians asking about the Battle of the Bulge. Shehab said he is glad people continue to remember the battle and World War II. By bringing the war to the public's attention, he hopes it educates those not in uniform on the harshness of war. "We want the country to understand the cost of war and, more importantly, the cost of our liberty and freedom," Shehab said. "That's what the uniform means -- freedom and liberty."



# WELCOME TO KANSAS CITY, MO

## VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE 32<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL REUNION

September 3 - 8, 2013

### HIGHLIGHTS AND SCHEDULE INFORMATION

#### REGISTRATION FEE

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

#### WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4 INDEPENDENCE, MO

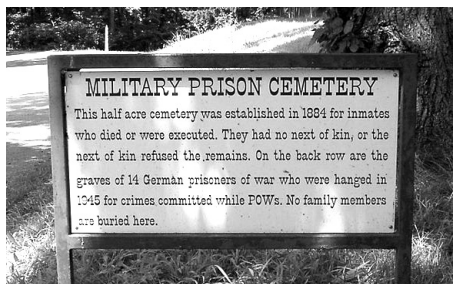
**Truman Library and Museum:** The major issues and events of Harry Truman's Presidency are highlighted in this new 10,500-square-foot core exhibition. Featuring two decision theaters, enhanced audio and video programs, and new interactive elements, this exhibition forms the centerpiece of the Truman Library's ambitious museum renovation.

#### Lunch at Ophelia's restaurant

**The National Frontier Trails Museum** presents the history of the Santa Fe, California and Oregon Trails and the personal trials and adventures of the pioneers who opened the West. An award-winning film takes visitors from Independence to Oregon.



Truman Library and Museum,  
Independence, MO



Sign at Fort Leavenworth, KS

#### THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5 FORT LEAVENWORTH, KS

It is the oldest active United States Army post west of Washington, D.C., having been in operation for over 180 years. Fort Leavenworth has been historically known as the "Intellectual Center of the Army." In addition to a welcome from the commander and a briefing on the history of the fort and current operations, we will visit the following:

Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery,  
where we will lay a wreath  
The Frontier Army Museum  
Buffalo Soldiers Monument  
Lunch with students and faculty from the  
leadership courses

#### FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 KANSAS CITY, MO

**The Liberty Memorial,** located in Kansas City, Missouri, is a memorial to the soldiers who died in World War I and houses The National World War I Museum, as designated by the United States Congress in 2004. Exhibits include The World War, 1914-1919 and Memory Hall.

**Lunch at Harvey's restaurant at Union Station**



The Liberty Memorial

**Harley-Davidson Plant Tour:** Your tour experience begins with an introductory video. Then it's on to the factory floor where you'll witness a wide range of operations from welding, laser-cutting and frame-bending, to polishing and assembly.

*After the tour those who do not wish to attend the BBQ listed below will return to the hotel about 4:00 pm.*



Harley-Davidson plant, Kansas City

**Worth Harley-Davidson Dealership BBQ:** VBOB will be a guest at a BBQ held at this family-owned and operated business since 1978, which carries one of the largest computerized inventories of Harley-Davidson motorcycles, parts, accessories, and Motor Clothes merchandise in the Midwest. Their state-of-the-art performance departments are manned by staff who are knowledgeable in racing and Harley-Davidson products. Return to the hotel about 7:00 pm.

#### SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7

##### Free time

Shop 'til you drop at **Zona Rosa**

**VBOB General Membership Meeting**

**Reception** with cash bar

**Banquet** featuring your choice of salmon or filet mignon entree

#### SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8

**Farewell breakfast on your own**

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

# VBOB REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

**Deadline: August 13, 2013**

**There are two options for registering for the reunion:** Complete this form OR register online: [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org), click on "Attend Reunion" and fill out the registration form. **Either type of registration form must be received by VBOB no later than August 13, 2013.**

**The VBOB registration desk at the hotel will only be open on September 3 from 12:00 noon-4 pm, and on September 4 and 5 from 8:00 am-4 pm.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Division \_\_\_\_\_ Regiment \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Wife/Guest(s) (use additional paper if necessary) \_\_\_\_\_

Airline \_\_\_\_\_ Flight # \_\_\_\_\_ Arrival Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

Departure Date and Time \_\_\_\_\_

	No. of People	Cost per Person	Total Cost
<b>Registration Fee</b> (all attendees must register)	_____	\$35	_____
<b>Tuesday, September 3, 2013</b>			
Wine and cheese reception - no charge	_____	free	_____
<b>Wednesday, September 4, 2013</b>			
Trip to Independence, MO	_____	\$61	_____
<i>Includes Truman Library and Museum, lunch at Ophelia's, Frontier Trails Museum and bus transportation</i>			
<b>Thursday, September 5, 2013</b>			
Trip to Fort Leavenworth, KS	_____	\$48	_____
<i>Includes lunch and bus transportation</i>			
<b>Friday, September 6, 2013</b>			
Trip to Kansas City, MO	_____	\$57	_____
<i>Includes WWI Museum, lunch at Harvey's at Union Station, Harley-Davidson Factory Tour, BBQ at Worth Harley-Davidson dealership and bus transportation</i>			
<b>Saturday, September 7, 2013</b>			
General membership meeting	_____	free	_____
Reception (cash bar)	_____		_____
Banquet (choose entrees below)			
Salmon	_____	\$46	_____
Filet Mignon	_____	\$51	_____
		<b>TOTAL</b>	_____

**Mail registration form and check to:** Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc., PO Box 27430, Philadelphia, PA 19118  
(Refunds for cancellation, will be honored in whole or in part, depending on availability of funds)





# VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.

## EMBASSY SUITES KANSAS CITY-INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Kansas City, MO September 3 - 8, 2013

### REUNION PROGRAM

#### Tuesday, September 3, 2013

Noon – 4:00 pm Registration  
6:30 pm – 7:30 pm Wine and cheese reception  
Dinner on your own

#### Wednesday, September 4, 2013

8:00 am – 4:00 pm Registration  
8:30 am Buses depart for Independence, MO, return to hotel by 4:00 pm  
*Trip includes Truman Library and Museum, lunch at Ophelia's, and Frontier Trails Museum*  
Dinner on your own

#### Thursday, September 5, 2013

8:00 am – 4:00 pm Registration - last day  
8:45 am Buses depart for Fort Leavenworth, KS, return to hotel by 4:00 pm  
*Trip includes Fort Leavenworth National Cemetery, The Frontier Army Museum, Buffalo Soldiers Monument, and lunch*  
Dinner on your own

#### Friday, September 6, 2013

8:45 am Buses depart for downtown Kansas City, return to hotel by 4:00 pm (*if you choose not to attend the BBQ*) or 7:00 pm  
*Trip includes WWI Museum, lunch at Harvey's at Union Station, Harley-Davidson Factory Tour, and BBQ at Worth Harley-Davidson dealership*  
Dinner on your own

#### Saturday, September 7, 2013

Free time in the morning  
Shopping at Zona Rosa shopping center  
Lunch on your own  
2:00 pm – 4:00 pm General membership meeting  
6:00 pm – 6:45 pm Reception (cash bar)  
7:00 pm Banquet seating

#### Sunday, September 8, 2013

Farewell breakfast on your own

**Hospitality Room:** Location and times will be posted in the registration room.

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



## Embassy Suites

### Kansas City-International Airport

7640 N.W. Tiffany Springs Pkwy

Kansas City, MO 64153

Phone: 816-891-7788 Fax: 816-891-7513

<http://embassysuites3.hilton.com/en/hotels/missouri/embassy-suites-kansas-city-international-airport-MKCPDES/index.html>

# WELCOME

## VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

### September 3 - 8, 2013

## Hotel Information

The room rate is \$109 per night, single or double occupancy, plus taxes and includes complimentary breakfast and a complimentary two-hour Manager's Reception each evening. Check-in time is 3:00 pm and checkout is 12:00 noon.

### RESERVATIONS

When making your reservation you have two options, by telephone or online.

**1. By phone:** call 816-891-7788 and say you are with the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge group and also mention the Group Code, which is VBB.

**2. Online:** There is a page on the Embassy Suites hotel website specifically designed for our group, where you can register with our special rates:

[http://embassysuites.hilton.com/en/es/groups/personalized/M/MKCPDES-VBB-20130901/index.jhtml?WT.mc\\_id=POG](http://embassysuites.hilton.com/en/es/groups/personalized/M/MKCPDES-VBB-20130901/index.jhtml?WT.mc_id=POG)

We suggest you guarantee your reservation with a charge card. **Reservation requests received after August 13, 2013 will be confirmed on a space available basis.** In the event you need to cancel your reservation, please inform the hotel 48 hours prior to the day of scheduled arrival.

### HOTEL AMENITIES

- Full service restaurant and lounge
- Complimentary:
  - Shuttle service to and from Kansas City Airport
  - Indoor swimming pool
  - High-speed wired and wireless internet access throughout entire hotel
  - Shuttle within a five mile radius, including Zona Rosa shopping center

### SLEEPING ROOM AMENITIES

- Well-lit dining/work table with a Herman Miller chair
- Refrigerator, microwave and coffee maker
- Two telephones with data ports and voicemail
- Two flat-screen HD televisions

### DIRECTIONS TO THE HOTEL

From I-29 take exit 10 (Tiffany Springs Parkway). The hotel is located east of I-29.



## VBOB & VBOB PRESIDENT HONORED IN OUR NATION'S ST PATRICK'S PARADE

VBOB MD/DC Chapter marchers were a hit again in the 42nd annual St Patrick's Parade in our Nation's Capital, on 17th March.

VBOB Pres. Douglas Dillard 82nd AbnD, was asked to be the Division C Parade Marshal in conjunction with the parade theme, "Honor Those Who Serve." Our marchers again dazzled the on-lookers as they marched down Constitution Avenue.

The Grand Marshal was Admiral Mike Mullens, Rtd., former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, for this year's 2013 parade.

In spite of temperatures in the 40's this year and a threat of rain, this did not deter these marchers nor the crowds, which were larger than last year. The two and a half hour parade was a delight to the children and those who would be for the day as floats, marching bands, drill teams, Irish step dancers and a wide variety of revelers took over Constitution Avenue, Northwest between 7th and 17th Streets.

Again, this year Scottie Ooton, 84th Inf Div, 33rd Inf, Co H, traveled all the way from Effingham, Illinois to carry the American Flag. He was joined by his grandson Scott Dobson, a Fairfax VA Firefighter, who carried the Irish flag. This year our banner carriers again were Griffen Diday and Katie Kilmer. This year we had five WWII vehicles.

Our VBOB President, Doug Dillard, 82nd Airborne Division, led the C Division of the Parade as Division Marshal was in the lead Jeep followed by Mike Levin, 489th Armored Field Artillery, 7th Armored Division rode also to the delight of the crowds. Each of these vehicles have been patiently restored and were driven by members of the Washington Area Collectors of Military Vehicles/Blue Gray Mil Vehicle Trust.

The public was particularly pleased to see the veterans and applauded and cheered the group continuously all along the parade route. Upon reaching the Reviewing Stand, Doug Dillard ascended to the Stand to review the rest of the Parade with Grand Marshal Mike Mullens. The reviewing stand gave our veterans their only standing ovation of the parade.

## CENTRAL MASSACHUSETTS CHAPTER PARADES ON IN WORCESTER MA

The VBOB Central Massachusetts Chapter was honored to march in the Worcester Massachusetts St Patrick's Parade on 10 March 2013. Led by Chapter President John E. Mc Auliffe, 87th InfD, in his WWII uniform, members rode in vintage cars and were warmly welcomed by the Worcester parade goers.

The Grand Marshall for the Worcester parade was Michael O'Brien, City Manager of Worcester. The roads were clear of snow and the sun shown brightly upon the parade. A good time was had by all.



Grand Marshal Michael O'Brien with Jack Judge, 26th Inf "YD" Div and Chapter Pres. John E. Mc Auliffe.

## MY EXPERIENCES IN WWII by Allen Evans, 76th FABn

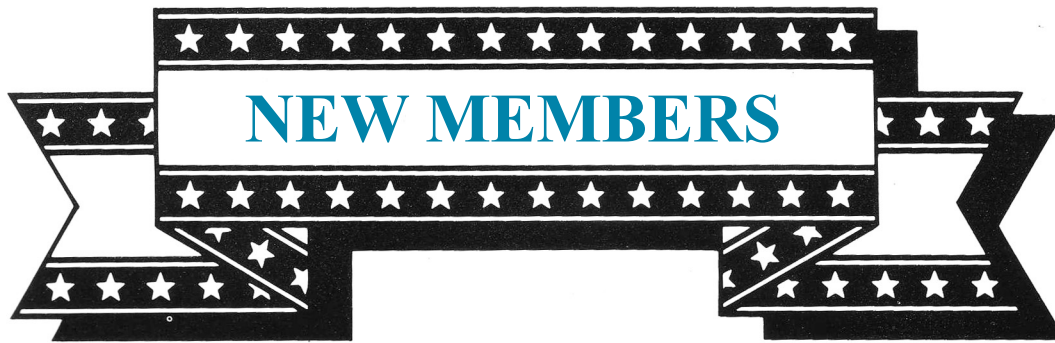
The battalion had a very active role in France during WWI and we were reactivated at the start of WWII. We landed on Utah Beach on August 9, 1944 using 2 LSTS and a liberty ship and rhino ferries. At that point, we were part of the 1st Army. But very soon we became part of the 3rd Army. As a separate Battalion, our role was to be frequently moved from one Army, Corps or Division in order to assist various units in need of artillery support.

In this role, we supported 1st, 3rd Armies; 5th and 7th Corps; 1st, 2nd, 5th Armored; 5th, 28th, 78th, 99th, 30th, 80th, 8th and 2nd Divisions and the 102nd Cavalry Group. There may have been more that I don't remember. In spite of all these transfers, we were quite active with 175,707 rounds expended (we wore out the tubes and had to fire English 25 pdrs for a while) and 189 consecutive days of firing on the Germans.

Do to the rapid retreat of the Germans in France, most of the firing was done after we crossed France. We were in the following positions in France: Briquebec, Argentan (19 Aug, 1944-22 Sept, 1944\*). Me-davi. Sees, Limors. St. Mary Pas Chevrease, Ftenenay en\* Parisis. (Aug 30, 1944-Aug, 1944\*). Chantilly (1 Aug-1 Sept, 1944)\* Sen-lis. Longuel-Annel, Signev L'Abbeve and . Bacilly The \* indicates a battle position.

I was in the Fire Direction Section and was responsible for calculating the Range and Altitude and meteorological effects on the path of the shell. I was a Tech/4 while in France and was promoted to S/ Sgt. We fired approximately 6 thousand fire missions against the Germans and to my knowledge. I made only one mistake in aiming the guns. Fortunately the round went long so no one was hurt.





**VBOB would like to welcome aboard the following people  
whose new memberships started between January 11 — March 31, 2013:**

Anderson, Susan	Pikeville, TN	Associate	Jackson, Jesse	San Jose, CA	Associate
Arleg, Randy	Melbourne, FL	Associate	Jacobson, Jean Dasburg	Miami Beach, FL	Associate
Baker, Henry	Gloversville, NY	75 InfD	Kasun, Frank J	East Troy, WI	84 InfD
Barenkamp, Bill	Knoxville, TN	Associate	Larkin, Lawrence	Rockville, MD	Associate
Barwick, Margaret H	Columbia, SC	Associate	Larson, David V	San Tan Valley, AZ	Associate
Baum, Mrs Abraham	San Diego, CA	Associate	Leonard, Sharon	Greenville, TX	Associate
Beach, Alan C	Lynbrook, NY	Associate	Lucas, Margie	Pasadena, MD	Associate
Boisseau, Gene W	Bremerton, WA	Associate	Malina, Edward	Riverside, IL	Associate
Bowles, Robert	Meridien, MS	Associate	Malone, Leslie E	Little Compton, RI	29 InfD
Burnham, Ludonna	Graham, TX	Associate	Malone, Robert L	Little Compton, RI	Associate
Caba III, Edward	West Columbia, SC	Associate	Marinello, Edward A	Glen Cove, NY	285 FA Bn
Carlson, Keith	Shelbina, MO	Associate	Markiewicz, Diane	Norwood, MA	Associate
Carter, Daniel J	Pleasant Valley, MO	Associate	McClary, Andrew F	Fort Morgan, CO	Associate
Carter, Jacob	Pleasant Valley, MO	Associate	Meaux, Todd	Houston, TX	Associate
Cartwright, Russell B	Lee's Summit, MO	Associate	Miller, Alan	Carrollton, OH	Associate
Cherry, James Leonard	Portsmouth, VA	Associate	Miskelly, James E	Greenwood, SC	Associate
Cherry, William Kevin	Kill Devil Hills, NC	Associate	Molnar, Bonnie	Massillon, OH	Associate
Coelho, Teresa C	San Leandro, CA	Associate	Moody, Janet	New York, NY	Associate
Colegrove, Marjorie E	Lawrenceville, PA	Associate	Moran, Ray	Odenton, MD	Associate
Coleman, Leonard	Bonita Springs, FL	1 InfD	Neill, Ann Marie	Tucson, AZ	Associate
Corbin, Harry	Montgomery, AL	82 InfD	Packer, Lora	Bellefontaine, OH	Associate
Craven, Virginia	Kelseyville, CA	Associate	Powers, William M	Tucson, AZ	Associate
Curtis, Kent	Poway, CA	Associate	Raila, Josh	Brandon, MS	Associate
Cutrer, Ken	Louisville, KY	Associate	Reed, Robert L	Eldon, MO	Associate
Deater, Harry	Frederick, MD	Associate	Scheid, Paul L	Topeka, KS	101 AbnD
Dell, Doris S	Hampstead, MD	Associate	Schell, Sheryllynn M	Acton, CA	Associate
Dillard, Uta A	Bowie, MD	Associate	Schroeder, Dave	Webster Groves, MO	Associate
Dlugolecki, Andrew	United Kingdom	Associate	Smith Jr, Carl N	Greensburg, PA	Associate
Dobinski, Thomas C	Simpsonville, SC	Associate	Smithwick, Cindy	Glendale, AZ	Associate
Ervin, John	Swartz Creek MI	Associate	Smythe, Stephen	Louisville, KY	Associate
Friedman, Frank	Gig Harbor, WA	28 InfD	Squeo, Douglas	Wheaton, IL	Associate
Gallagher, Therese A	Utica, NY	Associate	Stephens, Patrick	Haymarket, VA	Associate
Gaudere, Bill	Hudson, MA	Associate	Sterk, Casey	Grandville, MI	Associate
Geenan, Bernard	Potomac, MD	Belgian Embassy	Stroud, William L	Mountain View, AR	Associate
George, Charleen	Utica, NY	Associate	Tidd, Martin	Junction City, KS	Associate
Gorman III, Robert E	Boca Raton, FL	Associate	Tomlin, Steve	Mason City, IL	Associate
Gunter, Vera H	Columbia, SC	Associate	Tucker, Tom E	North Cantonville, OH	Associate
Guynn, Hugh	Raleigh, NC	Associate	Varda, Jean M	Waxhaw, NC	4 InfD
Hartman III, Robert F	Annapolis, MD	Associate	Warm, Steven G	Baltimore, MD	Associate
Herrera, Alfonso	Guatemala	Associate			
Hossay, Guy	Reno, NV	Associate			
Hunt, Richard M	Cle Elum, WA	Associate			
Jackson, Gloria J	Raytown, MO	Associate			

**★ Ask your family & friends to join today ★**

## 2013 VETERANS TOURS

Remember, these are not just pilgrimage tours for our Veterans. They are also an important and essential service to our younger generations and friends of Veterans who want to learn as much as possible about our Veterans' achievements, so that they can proudly continue to commemorate and honor them over the years to come.

### LUXEMBOURG-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP FESTIVAL, AND SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR

JUNE 16 - 26, 2013 Arr Paris - Dept Frankfurt. The US Veterans Friends Luxembourg (USVFL) warmly welcomes all US World War II Veterans and their families as guests of honor to the Luxembourg-American Friendship Festival celebrating the Battle of the Bulge. The special requests of our group members will be incorporated into our itinerary as far as possible. We start in Paris, one of Europe's most exciting capital cities and then we travel through the battlefields of World War I to the Bulge. We finish our tour with a grand Farewell Dinner while cruising the World Heritage River Rhine with its medieval castles and vineyards.

### GRAFENWÖHR US BASE AND MUNICH

JULY 31 - AUG 7, 2013 Arr Frankfurt - Dept Munich. Grafenwöhr is the biggest and most important US base in Europe. Many VBOB Veterans served in Europe during the Postwar and Cold War periods, and their families were with them. Many have great memories of Grafenwöhr. We visit at the time of Grafenwöhr's exciting, fun-filled German-American Festival. We'll join all today's serving US soldiers and their families in having a great time. During our trip, you also visit Nuremberg with its huge Nazi Rally ruins and imposing War Crimes Courthouse, beautiful historic Munich with terrible Dachau Concentration Camp in its suburbs, Berchtesgaden and Hitler's Eagles Nest and much more.



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

## LUXEMBOURG REMEMBERS

by Dee Paris, 9th Armored Division

In our visits to the Battle of the Bulge areas, we were impressed both with the reception by the citizens and the beauty of their country. The peaceful tranquility was so unlike when it was a battleground during World War II. Here is a part of that history, based upon a 1985 publication of the Luxembourg National Tourist Office in which they credit the Cercle d'Etudes sur la Bataille des Ardennes (CEBA).

Who would suspect that this is a battle-scarred country? Yet this peaceful landscape has seen men fight and die on average every 40 years for most of its 1,000 year history. In the Second World War the Grand Duchy was invaded on May 10, 1940. The south border area saw fierce fighting and the population suffered badly. Nazi occupation turned the next four years into a continuous nightmare.

Luxembourg was liberated by American troops. Petange was the first town to be freed on September 9, 1944. Then came the capital city on September 10, followed by the rest of the country. The liberators were the men of the 5th US Armored Division (Victory Division) and other elements of the First Army. The Americans controlled the Grand Duchy and the Germans dug in at the Siegfried line.

On December 16, 1944 Hitler launched the desperate attack through the Ardennes. The German divisions made their way across the mountainous northern part of the Grand Duchy trying to reach the port of Antwerp. The heroic resistance of the American forces turned this into one of history's greatest battles: THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE.

The defenders of the Luxembourg territory were the men of the 4th and 28th US Infantry Divisions and of the 9th US Armored Division. General Patton's Third Army, stationed at that moment in the Metz area, was hurried to this front. After the relief of Bastogne the US Army drove the Germans back and carried the fight into the territory of the Third Reich.

Northern Luxembourg suffered twice in the Battle of the Bulge: first during the attack of the Germans and again during their retreating combat. On February 12, 1945 the last enemy had been driven out of the country. At the crossroads of Europe, Luxembourg has seen many battles and the silent witness of those days are innumerable. Luxembourgers know the price of freedom, their friendship for America is sincere and unflinching!

## REUNION!

28th Infantry Division Reunion  
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A compilation of letters written by John E. Rames, 26th Infantry Division, from the time he joined the Army until his death during the Battle of the Bulge. The book was compiled by John's sister Grace Rames Kull, Associate Member, 607-547-8384

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## VBOB Video, Online Now!

VBOB Video, Vince Bellanca

Posted on March 1, 2013 by admin



Our Website, [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org), now houses 15 videos of YOUR Stories. These 5 minute one-on-one stories are first person accounts as told by YOU at last years VBOB annual reunion.

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## A CONSPIRATOR IN PLOT TO KILL HITLER, EWALD-HEINRICH VON KLEIST, DIES

Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist, has died March 8 at his home in Munich. He was 90.

Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist-Schmenzin (10 July 1922 – 8 March 2013) was a German Army officer in World War II, and later worked as a publisher. A member of the von Kleist family, his parents were active in the German resistance against Adolf Hitler. Ewald-Heinrich von Kleist-Schmenzin, who lived to be 90, was the last surviving member of the 20 July 1944 plot to kill Hitler.

Kleist was born on the family's manor Gut Schmenzin at Schmenzin (Smęcino) near Köslin (now Koszalin, Poland) on the Oder (Odra) River in Pomerania. His father was Ewald von Kleist-Schmenzin (1890–1945), also an opponent of Nazism.

Like his father, who had criticized Nazi ideology in print as early as 1929, Ewald-Heinrich loathed Hitler and National Socialism from the beginning. The Nazi murders of 30 June 1934 — the “Night of the Long Knives” — further solidified the young von Kleist-Schmenzin's hatred of the Nazi régime.

In 1940, at age 18, he joined the Wehrmacht as an infantry officer. Kleist was personally recruited for the resistance by Claus Graf Schenk von Stauffenberg. In January 1944, with his father's blessing, he volunteered to replace the wounded Axel Freiherr von dem Bussche-Streithorst in another suicidal assassination attempt against Hitler.

Kleist, the company leader, and his men were scheduled to show Hitler new uniforms that had been tested at the front. Kleist planned to set off explosives hidden in his briefcase. He believed that he might have been able to escape alive, even if the briefcase exploded in his hands. But like earlier attempts, the plan was not carried out, as Hitler kept putting off the scheduled uniform demonstration.

On 20 July 1944, Kleist was one of the many supporters and helpers at the Bendlerblock in Berlin after the attempt on Hitler's life at the Wolf's Lair near Rastenburg in East Prussia. After the plot's failure, he managed to cover up his resistance activities. Proceedings against him were later dismissed for want of evidence in December 1944, thereby sparing Kleist a trial before the Volksgerichtshof, which almost certainly would have ended with a death sentence, as it did for many of his fellow plotters, including his own father. However, he was imprisoned in Ravensbrück concentration camp, and afterwards he was posted to the front for the rest of the war.

After the war he was left homeless when most of Pomerania was transferred to Poland and all Germans expelled. Kleist went into the publishing business, founding his own publishing house, the Ewald-von-Kleist-Verlag. He joined the Protestant Order of Saint John (Bailiwick of Brandenburg), to which his executed father had belonged, admitted as a Knight of Honour in 1957 and promoted to Knight of Justice in 1975.[6] In 1962, Kleist founded the Wehrkundetagung in Munich, later called, in English, the Munich Conference on Security Policy; he moderated it until 1998.



## MY BATTLE OF THE BULGE STORY

by James Graff, 35th ID, 134th IR, C Co

On January 4, 1945 "C" Company attacked the German lines in the snow near Luterbois, Belgium, which is south of Bastogne. They overran the German front line and ended up in a bivouac area. Things went from bad to worse, two men Staff Sergeant Rex Storm from Illinois and Pfc. Dallas Viehe of Indiana killed 30 Germans that day and later received a Silver Star for their actions that day.

The company became scattered and disorganized partly because some 80 of them were recent replacements who had joined the company at Christmas in Metz, France. The result of this action was that 10 officers and 14 enlisted men were killed in action and the company CO Captain William Danny of Missouri and 72 enlisted men were taken prisoners.

Four days later I joined C Company as a replacement. Later in the month namely January 23 we learned that six of the POWs were found shot to death by a small caliber bullet to either the head or to the heart. Needless to say this episode did much to pattern our actions later on.

Only recently have we been able to learn these men's names and the location of their fatal wounds. Three of them also had American first aid bandages on previous wounds before being shot to death. Not all massacres occurred at Malmedy.

I arrived back in the states on September 10, 1945, separated from the service on April 24, 1946 after serving about six months in Company K, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 5th Infantry Division at what is now known as Fort Campbell Kentucky.

## MY LIFE IN THE 55TH ARMORED INFANTRY BATTALION

by Homer Olson, Company B

On December 7, 1941, came the bombing of Pearl Harbor by the Japanese. This changed everything for the whole world and us. Our government rationed many things to the civilians; every thing went to the military.

In March 1942, I went to work for the northern oil pumping wells with Ralph Bennett. That was a good job and we got along well together. Many of my friends were volunteering and being drafted into the military. I don't like water, so I didn't want the Navy. Because of my bad ears, I couldn't get into the Air Force. So I waited for the draft. I turned twenty years on September 15, 1942. I was put in class 1 -A and passed my physical in Erie, Pennsylvania on November 4. I left on the train November 18, from Ridgeway, Pennsylvania because we lived in Elkco. That day, I kissed my mother and hugged my dad for the first time in my adult life. It was a sad day for them and for all of us. Our induction center was at New Cumberland, Pennsylvania. We were there for three days getting our uniforms, shots, and etc. We were put on a train and four days later we were in Camp Polk, Louisiana. It was a big camp, with two armored divisions there. I was assigned to Company B. 55th Armored Infantry Battalion that I stayed in for the next three years. (They broke us up in August 1945 down in Austria).

We took four months of basic training, there at Camp Polk, and

then went on the Louisiana maneuvers for two months. It was pretty rough on most of us - we were busy all the time. We learned to shoot and qualify with the M-1 rifle, all of the machine guns, pistol, mortar, hand-grenade and etc. We did a lot of close order drill and many road marches. The longest was a 30-mile hike, with light packs. I didn't like the bayonet drill and was glad that I never had to use one.

The weather was wet and chilly there and I caught a cold and high fever. They put me in the hospital for a few days. That is where I spent Christmas of 1942. We learned a lot in those first few months. A big thing was learning to live together in close quarters. Most guys were great, but there are always a few "bastards." Some got homesick. I never did, but did get lonesome some times.

About once a month, everyone got kitchen, police, latrine duty and a twenty-four hour guard duty. This is where I learned to clean toilets. On one wall there were three long urinals. Another wall was the sinks and mirrors and on another wall were ten commodes. The showers were back in farther. That place was a madhouse. Every morning, after breakfast, you had no privacy and you couldn't be bashful. Each company had their own bugler and all the calls were with a bugle. Reveilles, chow call for three meals, and work calls at 8:00 AM and 1:00 PM. Retreat at 5:30 PM and lights out at 9:30 PM with Taps at 11:00 PM. We got up at 5:45 each morning and breakfast was at 7:00. In that hour and fifteen minutes you got dressed, stood reveille, made your bed, mopped the floor around your bunk, made sure your clothes were okay and shoes shined, and fifteen minutes of calisthenics. It sure was a different life style, but it went pretty well if you made up your mind to it. I got a ten-day leave and came home in April after the Basic Training was over.

Pay day was the first day of the month. Fifty dollars in cash was what you got paid. After deductions of insurance, bonds, and laundry, \$35.25 was left. Sometimes they would pull a "short-arm" inspection on pay day. This was to check for venereal diseases. The uniform for that hour was shoes and raincoats. A doctor would be sitting on a chair in our day room. We lined up outside and when you got in to see him you opened your raincoat and squeezed your penis. If there was any fluid, you went on sick call and didn't get paid.

In May and June we were on maneuvers in Louisiana and West Texas. Lots of mosquitoes, snakes and dust. When this was over, we moved to Camp Barkeley, Texas near Abilene. I was assigned to a half track there and became a driver. I liked this better, as I always liked to drive anything. That fall, I was sent to Fort Knox, Kentucky to mechanic school for three months. Gene Foster of B Company 55th AIB was also there and we got to know a couple of girls in Louisville. We would see them on weekends, sometimes.

While we were in Fort Knox, the 11th Armored Division moved to the Mojave Desert near Needles, California for desert maneuvers. When we were done with school, I got my papers, train ticket, and also a five-day "delay in route", so I went home for three days. On Christmas Day of 1943, I was on the train headed for Needles. We finished maneuvers in February and went to Camp Cooke, California near Santa Maria. We went to Los Angeles and Santa Barbara some weekends. Usually, we went to Santa Maria. Many of my friends were Italians and we would go to Santa Maria for Italian food on Saturday night and then to the Palamino Bar. If we didn't catch the bus back to Camp, we would sleep in the USO Club on a pool table or a chair.

Early in September, we were put on a troop train headed for Camp Kilmer, New Jersey and then overseas. That was a nice train ride. It was a long train with two steam engines on

(Continued)

## MY LIFE IN THE 55TH AIB *(Continued)*

front and five steam engines pushing in the rear. We went through thirty-seven tunnels, going from California to Denver. There were two kitchen cars in the middle of the train. The front one served the front half of the train and the back car, the back half. We ate well, two times a day. They stopped once a day and we got off to walk and exercise. It took six days and five nights to get to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey. After a few days passed, we went by train to New York and on to a ship, the USS Hermitage. It was an experience, having your name called and walking up the long "gang plank" and knowing that you were leaving your homeland. The duffel bag that we carried was quite heavy. They put us on a deck down below the water line. It was crowded. The bunks were five high. The lights were not bright enough so that we could read a little and play poker and shoot crap. These were on the floor wherever we could find a place to put a blanket down. There were poker games, going on some place, twenty-four hours a day.

There were five thousand of us on this ship and they told us there were sixty ships in the convoy. Each ship was a mile apart so we couldn't see all of them when we were allowed up on the top deck. We had a Navy escort: the Destroyer Escorts. They would zigzag between the ships looking for submarines. I got a little sea sick at times, but not bad. We got fed twice daily and I could usually eat a little. We ate standing up with our trays on a bar. You had to hang on to the bar, your tray, and hit your mouth with your spoon. The ship was rolling in some direction all the time.

We were thirteen days on the ship and landed in Southampton, England around October 3rd. They put us on a train and took us to a small camp between Tisbury and Hinden, about ninety miles from London. We didn't do much training in England, just a few hikes now and then. Over a period of time we got our equipment which consisted of tanks, trucks, jeeps, half-tracks guns, ammunition, and rations.

We were given some two-day passes. I went to Bristol once and London twice. One pass that I had to London, was the day before payday and then payday. An English pound was worth \$4.09 at that time. The first night that we were there, the price for a woman, all night, was one pound. The next night (payday) the price was four pounds. We didn't bother the women that night.

Early in December, we crossed the English Channel. The drivers went with their vehicles, tanks, halftracks, trucks and jeeps in a "landing ship tanks" (LST). The front of the LST opened up and we drove up into it and turned around so that you faced out. This way you could drive straight out onto the beach when they opened up. We were on this ship for twenty-four hours and landed near Cherbourg, France. We drove to fields near Rennes, France. It took three days for our division to assemble there.

That night, out in the channel, there was a submarine alert. They stopped the ship and killed the engines. We were "bobbing" around out there in that flat bottom ship. Each driver had to pull a two-hour fire guard in the tank deck with a guy on each end. My time was midnight to 2:00 am. It was hot down there and very strong gasoline fumes. I got seasick and "threw-up" a few times, until there was no more to come up and I just "gagged". I was sure glad when 2:00 am came so I could lie down again.

After the division got all together, we started to move inland. Then an order came down to change course and go North. When we got up to Rhiems, France we heard about the German breakthrough in Belgium - making what they called the "Bulge". We hit snow and

cold weather up there. From here on things and places are vague and hazy. I know that we spent Christmas day in Belgium somewhere. It was cold.

We were in reserve for a couple of days and then they gave us a small town to take. We didn't get it that afternoon. We had a counter attack that night and the Germans took nineteen guys from our company prisoner. I remember that one guy was taking twelve German prisoners back and one was wounded and couldn't walk fast enough, so he shot him there on the road. I thought to myself "what the hell is going on here? This is terrible". After awhile, you get used to these things and if you want to survive you can become pretty cruel.

The Germans had Bastogne surrounded for many days. Most of the 101st Airborne Division was in there. The 4th Armored got in there first from the south. We got in a day or two later from the northwest. That was a happy day for everyone.

We started moving again, taking small towns, clearing woods, and slowly closing the Bulge. It was cold and the snow was quite deep. There was lots of frostbite on the fingers and toes. We threw away our shoes and cut up GI blankets into strips about six inches wide and wrapped our feet and legs. We then put our feet into four buckle overshoes, which we had. I went to the Aid Station one time and they painted my toes with something. I just lost a couple of nails. At one time, I had on two pairs of long underwear, two pairs of pants, two shirts, a woolen GI sweater, and a field jacket. It is unbelievable what the human body can stand - both mental and physical. Some people are stronger than others are - so some "broke down" - it was nothing to be ashamed of. I know that prayers helped a lot.

Every letter, that I wrote home, I asked Mom and Dad to send gloves, handkerchiefs, and socks. I carried them in my seat cushion, in my halftrack, and gave most of them to my buddies. They nicknamed me "Mother Olson". One time, I asked Mom to send us a chocolate cake with frosting and walnuts on top. She did and it came in about five weeks. The walnuts were green with mold, so we threw them away and made quick work of that cake.

I remember one town near Longchamps in Belgium. We got the hell knocked out of us going in. We cleared the town and stayed there that night. The next day was bright and sunny. We could see some dead Germans laying in the snow, up in a field, near some woods. We found a long piece of rope and went up there. There were twelve lying frozen in many positions. Sometimes the Germans would "booby-trap" their dead. We would tie the rope around a leg and drag them a ways and make sure there were no wires attached to the bodies. Then we looked for watches and pistols. I remember one that I rolled over. His face was gone from the forehead down.

One time, there were several of us "dug-in" along a dirt road, in some woods with lots of pine trees. A jeep came down the road and stopped. It was a Lutheran chaplain from another unit. He asked if we wanted a prayer and communion. Of course we did. We were Catholics, Jews and etc. But it made no difference. We got on our knees in the snow with our helmets on, and weapons slung on our shoulders. He had some bread and bottles of wine and poured the wine in our canteen cup. A few shells landed fairly close but no one ran to their holes. He never stopped pouring the wine. We all felt better after he left.

One time they pulled us back in reserve for a few days. We got some replacements, supplies and hot food from our kitchen. We were "dug in" (two man foxholes). Anderson and I usually dug in together (he was a swell guy). He drove second track and I drove first track. We were getting a lot of artillery and mortar *(Continued)*

## MY LIFE IN THE 55TH AIB *(Continued)*

fire. Also, the Germans had a weapon that fired a shell like a mortar or a small bomb. We called them "screaming mimis". They mostly came at night and scared hell out of you. We were cold, wet and lying in our hole one night when things were coming in pretty heavy. I started to shake and shiver and just couldn't stop. I said, "Andy, I can't stop this shaking." and started to cry. It was all getting to me - especially the cold. Andy held me - lit me a cigarette and we talked. After a while I calmed down. Anderson was a great guy. As were all of our guys. We loved and depended on each other you couldn't make it alone.

One night, at this same place, Andy and I were leaning against my halftrack. We could hear a mortar shell coming (they came slow). We didn't have time to get in our hole, so we dove under the track. The shell landed four or five feet away in the snow and mud. It didn't explode; it was a "dud". The book wasn't open on our page that night. We survived. One afternoon, later on, we had taken this small town and we were getting some machine gun fire from some woods. Our company went to clear the woods and had to stay there all night. They called on the radio to bring up some rations and ammunition. They said the field might be mined. Andy and I gathered up supplies and put half in his track and half in mine. We thought that one of us should get through. We ran side by side and both got through. We tried to follow our same tracks back and about half-way back, Andy hit a land mine with the left track and caught fire. I stopped, he jumped out and ran to me and we made it back.

Somewhere along about this time they had brought up a portable shower unit. They had big tents and many tank trucks with water and it was hot. We went back and got showers and new clothes. Boy, they felt good. We hadn't taken a shower since we left England two months earlier. That is the only good thing about fighting a war in the wintertime. You didn't stink much and the dead bodies didn't stink either because they froze quickly.

We closed the "Bulge" late in January and hit the Siegfried Line in February. The snow was melting and there was lots of mud. I developed a fear and hatred for the snow and cold that winter and it will stay with me forever. After the Siegfried Line, we started the "spearheads" to the Rhine river. Our objective was the city of Andernach, a city north of Coblenz. We cleared the city with help from another unit.

They then pulled us back a few miles to a small town. We were there five days, while the engineers built a "bailey bridge" across the Rhine. Owens found a German motorcycle there. Each morning, he and I would ride it to Andernach and get wine that we had found in a cellar. We gave wine to anyone who wanted some and it tasted good. The house that our squad took over, to sleep in, had a radio and we heard some music for the first time in nearly three months. (American music from Paris)

They built the bridge across the Rhine under a smoke screen and we crossed it in a smoke screen. An experience that I'll never forget. We started the "spearheads" again and one time we were cut off for three days. They dropped us supplies from the air. Gasoline was the big item and we got that in thousands and thousands of five-gallon cans. I saw General Patton twice. Once in the "Bulge" and once on a "spearhead".

We had the Germans on the run now. They were running out of gasoline and food, so they were using a lot of horses to move their guns and supplies in wagons. They were being strafed by aircraft and shelled from our artillery and the roads jammed with dead horses, humans and everything. At times, we could not go around them

and had to run over the bodies. On these "spearheads," we came to and released prisoners from POW (prisoner of war) camps and slave labor camps. These were sorry sights. They were so happy to see us. We knew that the end of the war was getting near, and all of us were praying that we could make it now that we had come this far.

We were in the mountains before we dropped down into Linz, Austria, on the Danube River. A small town, Wegscheid, we came to in the afternoon. Lots of SS there and putting up a stiff resistance. We got some houses burning so we could see better, when it got dark, we used our cigarette lighters on curtains and etc. S/Sgt. Elwood G. Cashman, my squad leader, got it here. We felt so bad with the end so near. We finished clearing the town. The next day they sent my platoon (five half-tracks), out on a mounted patrol, down a dirt road for a few miles. We hit no resistance and found nothing. While we were gone, they shelled the town with artillery. Another guy had pulled his half-track under a tree where I had been. He got a direct hit and the half-track was half-gone. He was lying on the ground dead. I thought to my self "God still has plans for me. That could have been me."

The war ended for us at Linz, Austria, on the Danube river. It was a beautiful city. In spite of the pain and suffering of a war there is a good side. I had many fine friends while in the military and we had many laughs and good times. This friendship has lasted over the years. We can feel it at our reunions. I must say, that we had fine officers as our leaders. Three of them were killed. Most were wounded. Captain George Reimer, our Company Commander, was and is a good man. I think he was wounded four times.

There was a concentration camp near Linz, called Mauthausen. That was a terrible sight and smelled too. Dead bodies all over and the rest were half-dead. They must have killed and burned thousands of people there. We sat in a field for several days after the armistice was signed on May 8, 1945. We started "occupation duty" in a small town, Reid, Austria.

I got a three-day pass to Paris late in May or early June. We went to Munich, Germany by truck and got on the train there. The train was full of GI's going to Paris or Luxemburg. When we got to Paris, they had a place where they gave each one, with a pass, one carton of cigarettes, soap, razor, toothbrush, toothpaste and a comb. Most of us had our own, so we sold those things to French civilians for a good price. We also had German pistols to sell. I had five. The Frenchmen took us to a cafe where we went back in a corner and piled our pistols on a table and ordered a drink. They were looking over the pistols and the fellow across the table from me (one of us) shot himself in the left hand: They called the military police (MP's) to take him to the hospital. We gathered up our pistols and got the hell out of there fast. It was illegal to sell these pistols. We went to a Red Cross hotel, got our room, and we never heard anything about it. I had a little 25-caliber automatic, in a shoulder holster, which I wore under my shirt. We weren't supposed to have concealed weapons, but we weren't too well liked in Germany. So many of us carried something.

The three of us went to a club, that night. Each of us bought a bottle of cognac and a bottle of champagne at \$4.00 a bottle. One of the sergeants got pretty drunk and went with a woman for the night. Baldwin and I went back to our hotel room. We saw the sergeant at noon the next day. He was sick and broke. She had "rolled" him for all his money. We each gave him some money. We saw many of the sights in Paris and had a good time there. One afternoon, I was walking by myself, there was a park and it had benches along the side walk. Two women, professionals, were sitting on a bench. We talked a little and "pidgin English" and I went with the *(Continued)*



## MY LIFE IN THE 55TH AIB *(Continued)*

older one to her apartment. We went through a door, into a hallway, and got halfway up the stairs when the front door opened and a man came in. I thought that it might be a "set-up". I unbuttoned my shirt and took out my little pistol. When she saw it, she got excited and finally got through to me that he lived downstairs. I wouldn't have shot anyone, but I would have scared someone. Everything turned out okay. She was good and knew her business.

When I got back to my company, in Austria, they were loading up the tanks and half-tracks onto freight cars and shipping them back to France. The 21/2 ton trucks they drove back in convoys. I got in on this and there were two drivers to a truck with an officer in charge of each twenty-five trucks. The convoy stretched out for miles. Weaver and I were together and we were three days getting to a racetrack outside of Paris. We got into Paris again that night and caught the train back in the morning. When we rode trains over there, we rode in 40 & 8 (40 men or 8 mules) boxcars. There were no passenger cars this time. We each carried our own bedrolls and rations.

We were then sent to occupy Friestadt, Austria. There was a "displaced persons" (DP's) camp there. (people from other countries that worked for the Germans.) They were being sent back to their own countries. Wally Laudert and I got in on one trip that was hauling DP's to Yugoslavia. There were many trucks and each had two drivers. We went over the Alps into Northern Italy and then into Yugoslavia. Several times a day, we stopped the trucks for "piss call". This was quite a sight. We unloaded the DP's in a field, near a town, there Marshal Tito's troops set up machine guns around the DP's. We stayed there in our trucks that night and were sure glad to leave the next morning. We made this trip early in July and on July 4th we received snow. The first and only time, that I have gotten into a snowstorm in July.

We now were sent to occupy Ebbensee, Austria. There was a big POW camp there and we had ninety thousand German prisoners to guard. They had "work details" outside of the Camp each day and my job, on most days, was to go to the main gate and draw and sign for six prisoners. They would go to the "wood yard" and cut firewood all day. They cooked on wood stoves in the camp. I carried a submachine gun and they didn't offer to run away. They were eating pretty well there. In August 1945, they broke up the 11th Armored Division and we were sent in all different directions to other units. We had been together for three years. Some others and I were sent to Czechoslovakia to a town near Pilsen to the 8th Armored Division where I was there a couple of weeks and then went to

Germany to the 83rd Infantry Division. I was put in a service company of the 329th Infantry Battalion. I was driving a truck again. John Singletary, who was "ration breakdown man", and I would drive to Deggendorf to the railroad each morning. We picked up the rations (food) for the 4th Infantry Company and deliver them to four different towns, that they were occupying. This was good duty. John and I had our room up over the kitchen. The cooks slept there too. So we always had food like oranges, apples, bread and peanut butter in our rooms. Some women would come each night and if they stayed too late, they would stay all night. Civilians had to be off the streets from 11:00 pm till 6:00 in the morning. This is where a woman slept in my bed, one night, when she stayed too late. I never touched her. She looked rough for me. When I woke up, in the morning, she was gone. I have told this a few times and people don't believe it. But it is the truth.

We were being sent home on the point system. So many points

for service in the States, months overseas, for each Battle Star (I have three), and etc. Anyway, I had sixty points. The 358th Engineer Battalion was being filled with sixty pointers for going home. So they sent others and me to the 358th in some town in Germany. We did nothing there.

One afternoon, an old man was leading an old skinny horse up the street, followed by some old women, with pails and pans. They went to the town square and killed the horse. They cut it up and divided the meat. I didn't go up to see this - it wouldn't be a pretty sight. I am fortunate and thankful that I have never been that hungry. In this land of plenty, most people will say that they wouldn't do this, or they wouldn't do that. But that is "bullshit." This county would be the worst, because we are used to having too much. They would get on their knees or kill for a piece of bread. On the day after Thanksgiving, we started our journey home. We were taken to the "tent city" camps, near Rheims, France. These camps were named after cities in the U.S.A. There were units coming in and going out every day. I went into Rheims a few times. Rheims was pretty well cleaned up by this time. The Rheims cathedral is a beautiful church and wasn't damaged much. We went in and sat down for a few minutes. We were here a couple of weeks and then were moved to a "tent city" camp near Le Havre, France. This was on the coast. We could look down and see the city and the ocean. These "tent cities" were called "cigarette camps" named after cigarette brands. I'm not sure, but ours was "Lucky Strike" or "Pall Mall". I still had a couple of extra pistols and sold them here. We were allowed to take one home and they were going to pull a "shake down search" on the ship.

All around these camps were signs that said, "one drip and you miss the ship. So if you got the "clap", you stayed there for treatment. We had a "short arm" inspection the day before we boarded ship. One day they told us that our ship was in and we would be loading up in a few days. On the afternoon of Christmas Eve, 1945 we went down and boarded ship. No trouble walking up the "gang plank", this time. The duffel bag was lighter and we were going home. We left that evening and went up into the North Sea and around the north of Scotland. They announced over the speakers that there would be a turkey dinner the next day for Christmas. We hit a winter storm that night and all Christmas Day. So many got seasick and couldn't eat their dinner. I ate some but not much.

This ship was the SS Argentina. It was a nice ship and not too crowded. There were seven thousand of us on it. Our trip lasted seven days before we reach New York on the morning of Jan 1, 1946. Most of us were on the decks so we could see the Statue of Liberty and watch the tugboats pushing us into the pier. It was quiet and no one around because it was a holiday. Later in the day, we were taken off and put on a train to Camp Kilmer, New Jersey again. From there the train sent us to our "separation centers" in our different states. I went to New Cumberland, Pennsylvania again. There, we were "processed out." They told me my gums and teeth were bad and if I stayed a few days they would fix my teeth. I said, "give me that honorable discharge and I will get my teeth fixed at home, myself."

On January 5, 1946, I received my discharge, \$300 mustering our pay and train ticket to Kane, Pennsylvania. This ended my short military career, three years, two months, and one day. I wouldn't take a million dollars for the things that I learned. Things that I saw and did. I learned more about discipline, which we have to have in, our homes our work and ourselves. I rode the train all night to Kane. I got home Sunday morning, January 6.1 surprised Mom and Dad. We were happy and had a good cry.



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## FROM NORMANDY TO GERMANY

by Francis Boyle, 526th AIB

When Francis Boyle returned to Santa Paula from Europe and world war II in January 1946, he became a pastor for the Free Will Baptist Church. "I felt it was pure luck that I was able to make it home," Boyle said. "I came home appreciating life more, and I joined the ministry feeling compelled to do my part for humanity."

While in Germany, he had met a 15 year old German soldier who told him he had been in the army for three years. "At 15 he had seen more horror than I had," Boyle said. "He told me he wanted out, and I just looked at him, feeling sorry for the life he had and the innocence that had been taken from him. So when I got home, I needed to do all that I could to help others."

A little more than three years earlier, Boyle, who attended Santa Paula high school, was drafted. He remembers the day he and 33 other young men boarded a school bus at the post office on Mill Street. The bus took them to Fort Ord and the physicals and paperwork that would get them into the US Army. "after we left Fort Ord, I never saw those 33 guys from home," he said. "We were all separated in the war, but I thought about them and where they were," said Boyle, now 81.

In December 1942, he was sent to Fort Knox, Kentucky, for his basic training. "The first day I arrived I was put on kp duty," recalled Boyle. "They went by last names and the a's and b's always went first, so there! Was with my real first taste of the army. After basic training, Boyle was assigned to the 526th armored infantry battalion and trained as a .50 caliber machine gunner. In May 1944, the 526th boarded a liberty ship bound for Wales. The soldiers arrived on June 4, 1944, and had a brief period of training before they debarked for Normandy."

### Combat in Europe

Boyle's battalion landed on Utah Beach after d-day, "but you would have thought it had just begun," he said. Combat was still fierce, and bodies still covered the beach. I was a scared boy at that point. We just had to start fighting right away." After securing objectives in France, the 526th battalion moved through Luxembourg and into Belgium before becoming part of the battle of the bulge.

"We arrived in Malmedy on the same day as the Germans," Boyle recalled. "We stood our ground and blocked them from moving in. For six days we struggled to keep them back until air support was able to come through and help. I'll never forget the sight of those planes. When they flew over, we just looked up and waved to them. They rolled their wings to acknowledge us. It was the best sight ever."

Boyle was then assigned duty as the driver of an armored halftrack after the vehicles driver was wounded. On one occasion, he was ordered to park the halftrack in a secluded area and line up 10 land mines, then connect each one to a single line of rope. He was ordered to dig a trench to lie in overnight until German soldiers came. He was told to pull the line as they passed through and then run to avoid the explosion. "The Germans never showed up and boy, was I thankful," he said.

By January 1945, the German offensive had failed, and his unit continued to fight it's way through Belgium and into Germany. "In May we got word that the Germans surrendered," he said. "You can't imagine the relief we all felt."

From then I knew what we had already gone through."

Nuremberg and home in June, 1945, Boyle was assigned to guard duty in the prison that held Hitler's pilot, who was awaiting trial in Nuremberg. While not on duty he trained for combat in the pacific. When Japan surrendered, well that was just beautiful to hear," he said. "The war was. Finally over, and I couldn't have been more ready to go home." In December, Boyle was relieved of his guard duties and sent to England, where he boarded a liberty ship bound for Boston. On New Year's day 1946, he was on a train headed back to Ventura County and a career as a Baptist pastor that ended with his retirement in 2001.

### Building a memorial

"We had a dream as WWII veterans to have a memorial built to honor the war, but especially the boys who didn't make it back," Boyle said. When the dream started to become reality, he received a phone call from another veteran who asked for his help in raising money to build the memorial. He joined thousands of other WWII veterans from around the country who made phone calls from their homes, soliciting donations for the memorial fund.

On Memorial day 2004, the \$196 million national WWII memorial was dedicated in Washington DC. In October 2005, Boyle spoke at a reunion for the 526th armored infantry battalion at the memorial. The speaker who followed him was vice president Dick Cheney. "I felt very honored to be a part of that project," he said. "The hardest part of the war was losing all of your buddies and just watching them die. Helping to build the memorial was the survivor's way to not only pay tribute to all of them but to simply say, "thank you."

## RUNNER SAVED AS BOGUS GIN HIT CISTERN FLOOR

by John Manlich, 99th ID, 393rd IR

I joined the 99th Division at Camp Maxey, Texas, having been transferred from the ASTP program at Sam Houston State Teachers' College in Huntsville, Texas.

During the Battle of the Bulge, December, 1944, I was the runner for the 2nd Platoon of F Company, 393rd Regiment; which, after many confrontations with the enemy, was dug in on Elsenborn Ridge. Along with the other platoon runners, I was assigned to the company headquarters, which were located inside an empty concrete cistern. The floor of the cistern could be reached by climbing down a 20-foot ladder.

As a runner, I had to carry both written and verbal messages from the company commander to the platoon commander. One day the platoon commander, by divine luck, received his liquor ration consisting of a bottle of bourbon and a bottle of gin. Much to my surprise, he asked me to take care of them and said he would ask for them as needed. I hid the bottle of bourbon and put the bottle of gin inside my shin. Because of the heavy shelling by the 88s on Elsenborn Ridge, the telephone lines were constantly down. This necessitated carrying the messages and enduring the 88s' shelling. I swear one of the Germans used me for target practice, for as soon as I came into the clearing the shelling would start and follow me along my route.

One day as I took my usual prone position in three feet of snow and after hearing the screaming of incoming shells, (Continued)



## RUNNER SAVED *(Continued)*

while lying there in the snow in below-zero temperatures, I felt the bottle of gin inside my shirt. I decided that under the circumstances a sip of gin would feel good and warming. I took a sip and it tasted like the best dry martini I had ever tasted! However, after several days and several sips, I suddenly realized that the bottle of gin was almost empty and the Lieutenant might soon be asking for the return of his ration.

In order to delay the discovery of my transgression, I filled the bottle with snow so the casual observer couldn't tell the difference between melted snow and gin. Almost on cue, the Lieutenant called for his bottles. With great fear and concern, I gave him back his rations. At this point my imagination took hold and I imagined all sorts of punishments -from a tongue lashing to a court-martial or being shot by a firing squad. While contemplating my fate, my buddy came running up to me and said, "Guess what?" I said, "What?" He said, "The Lieutenant was climbing down the ladder in the cistern with the bottle of gin in his hand. It slipped from his grasp, fell to the concrete floor, and broke into what appeared to be a thousand pieces!"

I felt there must have been divine intervention to save me from my just punishment.

But, more importantly, the lieutenant, unless he reads it here, never knew that he didn't break the bottle of gin, but instead a bottle of melted snow! If the lieutenant (only he and I know his name) will contact me, I will send him a case of gin - that is one bottle plus nearly 50 years of interest!

## THE BULGE

by Merle Otto, 99th ID, 394th IR

Late September, our outfit crossed the English Channel (very rough) and waded ashore at Le Harve France. From there it was days of truck rides to our post in eastern Belgium. In late November our regiment moved up to the front line, to replace another group, near Loshemie Graben on the old Seigfried line. We could see the German pillboxes about two hundred sixty yards ahead.

For about three weeks our outfit stayed here. We were well "dug in" in our "fox holes" and even covered them with logs. It was very cold, snowed off and on one night I woke up, tried to light a cigarette, and "no light". Not enough oxygen in the hole. I was attached to platoon headquarters as a "runner". Carried messages and rations to outposts. Almost every night six to ten GIs were sent on patrol to see what the Germans were doing or try and pick-up a prisoner. I went on a few of these patrols. In the middle of night we could hear German tank movement but I guess the higher ups thought the Germans were powerless.

On December 16th, 1944 at 5:30 A.M. "all hell" broke loose. Heavy German artillery shells were falling all over our defensive positions. Luckily we had those logs over our holes as shells would break in the trees overhead and rain shrapnel down over our positions. Only one of our fox holes had a direct hit with two men killed (our platoon). The artillery fire lasted one and a half hours. Then we heard the men and tanks coming. No direct frontal attack on our platoon but next door was the 106th Division and they were hit directly. Two of our platoons from our company were sent to help the 106th. (all captured, killed, or wounded). The Germans got in behind our platoon so we were trapped.

During the night we joined up with the outfit on our left where an officer led us up through a canyon which was being shelled by our artillery to keep the Germans from advancing. We would set up and run between shell bursts coming (you can hear them coming) then hit the ground during bursts. One time the guy next to where I was lying didn't get up. I kicked him, but no response. He was dead and had been hit earlier. Our platoon and battalion formed up on Elsenborn Ridge where we "dug in" and would hold this ridge for the next ten days against repeated German assaults. Many, many Germans were killed in front of our emplacement.

For this action our battalion received a "Presidential Citation" and a "Bronze Star". We went two days without food or water, except for snow. General Peiper and his soldiers and panzers had been stopped. After three weeks we had taken back the ground lost and moved into Germany. About five miles south of our positions the Malmedy Massacre" occurred when one hundred fifty American prisoners were massacred. A few "played dead" and survived. After hearing of this we took no live prisoners for a while.

Our food during this time and much of the time later consisted of three boxes a day about "cracker jack" size marked breakfast, lunch and dinner. Inside were small cans of scrambled eggs, ground meat, crackers, four cigarettes and two "0" bars. (chocolate). Occasionally, if there was a jeep near we would "bum" some gas, pour it into our steel helmets, light it on fire and heat the rations. A little better that way, but we survived on this type of nutrition. During the months of December and January we did not take a shower or change clothes. Slit trenches were our latrines. The Belgium countryside must be full of them Good Fertilizer!

## WORLD WAR II FACTS

- The first German serviceman killed in WW II was killed by the Japanese (China , 1937).
- The first American serviceman killed was killed by the Russians (Finland 1940); highest ranking American killed was Lt Gen Lesley McNair, killed by the US Army Air Corps.
- The youngest US serviceman was 12 year old: Calvin Graham, USN. He was wounded and given a Dishonorable Discharge for lying about his age. His benefits were later restored by act of Congress.
- At the time of Pearl Harbor, the top US Navy command was called CINCUS (pronounced 'sink us'); the shoulder patch of the US Army's 45th Infantry division was the Swastika, and Hitler's private train was named 'Amerika.' All three were soon changed for PR purposes.
- More US servicemen died in the Air Corps than the Marine Corps. While completing the required 30 missions, an airman's chance of being killed was 71%..
- Generally speaking, there was no such thing as an average fighter pilot. You were either an ace or a target. For instance, Japanese Ace Hiroyoshi Nishizawa shot down over 80 planes. He died while a passenger on a cargo plane.

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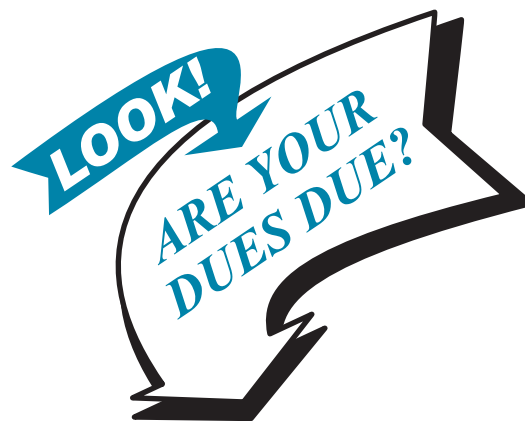
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