

The BULGE BUGLE

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THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

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VBOB & SPIRIT OF '45

PARTNER TO KEEP THE LEGACY OF OUR VETERANS ALIVE.

See page 8.



Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Alan Cunningham, Associate



For 10 days, 9-18 December 2014, I had the pleasure to attend 70th anniversary celebrations of the start of the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium and Luxembourg. The one thing that impressed me was that everyone there, even little children, knew about the battle and was very appreciative of what the U.S. Army had done to save them from the Nazis. Every town had a memorial dedicated to the units that

freed them. It is a shame that the schools in the United States don't teach the history of the World Wars and the massive contribution the military had made to this country and the world. As they say, freedom is not free. We need to spread the message of the contributions and sacrifices Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge have made to insure that all people in the U.S. can live their lives under the Constitution as free men and women with the rights enumerated in the Bill of Rights. Let's try to help educate those around us to the enormous sacrifices made by our Veterans.

I want to thank our past president, Doug Dillard, and his staff for the tremendous work done to make the 70th Anniversary trip such a success and for his successful two years as our president. His leadership helped us advance the purposes of the VBOB, specifically: 1) To perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices made by

U. S. military personnel during the Battle of the Bulge; 2) To preserve historical data and sites relating to the Battle of the Bulge; 3) To promote friendship among Battle of the Bulge veterans, their relatives and others interested in this historical battle; and 4) To foster and maintain international relations and good will with our fellow Allied countries who were a part of the Battle of the Bulge. We must always keep these purposes in mind with everything we do as an organization.

In addition to the purposes listed above, we will be focusing on local chapter development and support. I am putting in place policies for members of the Executive Council to visit as many local chapters as we can throughout the year. We will also be awarding grants to local chapters who place monuments and other structures (e.g., benches) in prominent places to remind visitors of the sacrifices made by our Veterans during the Battle of the Bulge. These policies have already been approved by the Executive Council and will be implemented immediately. Procedures will be drafted to assist chapters in requesting support for their projects and distributed as soon as they are completed.

This past year has been a very good year for VBOB and I am looking forward to leading the organization in the next year. Thank you for your confidence in me and electing me President.

SAVE THE DATE!

2015 ANNUAL VBOB REUNION
WILLIAMSBURG, VA ★ AUGUST 14 - 18, 2015

Look for full details and registration forms in May 2015 issue

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REQUEST FROM BELGIAN CITIZEN

I am living in Belgium and recently my daughter married Ben Rogers, a nice guy from California who told me that his great uncle was killed in action somewhere in vicinity of Bastogne (Belgium). His name is Gordon E Willis and he served as a Sergeant in Company K, 291st regiment, 75th ID.

We found his grave in the Henri-Chapelle American Cemetery. I am searching documents that are telling me more about the 291st regiment but wonder if some veterans remember Gordon.

Please contact me if you knew Gordon.

Yves Delmotte
47, Rue Colonel Balaince
7332 Neufmaison
Belgium

PATTON PALL BEARER PASSES ON

I wanted to write about the passing of my friend Sherwood Berg. I don't know if he was a member of VBOB, but noticed that he had been a pall bearer for General Patton, so figured that might be worth a mention in *The Bulge Bugle*. He also had crossed the Ludendorff Bridge at Remagen with the 78th Infantry Division.

I was in a statistics class with him at South Dakota State after the war and marveled at his superior intelligence. As I recall there were only seven or eight of us in the class and I was clearly at the bottom. Until I read his obituary, I had no idea that we were so close together during WWII. My 8th Armored Division crossed the Rhine at Wesel, just above Remagen — about ten days later. We had a vets club at South Dakota State and both of us were in it, but I don't recall any of us talking about our war experiences. I guess we had our fill of war.

You can read his obituary online at: www.brookingsregister.com
Yours Truly,

Vernon E Miller, 130th Ordnance Battalion

GRAVE ADOPTION APPRECIATION

I would like to thank VBOB for the two certificates of appreciation given to Michel Lorquet and his students in Belgium for their kind work in the grave adoptions of our fighting men.

I have had the great privilege of having his class adopt my uncle's grave several years ago. It meant so very much to our family.

Mr. Lorquet is a devoted WWII researcher, an associate member of VBOB and has become a great friend. He teaches his students so much about how our men and women saved his country.

Thank you VBOB,

Beverly Pangborn, Associate
Bullhead City, AZ

SILENT HEROES BOOK

Silent Heroes: The Story of the 284th Engineer Combat Battalion during WWII is a book available world wide via Amazon.com. The ISBN is 13:978-1502327062. Starting in basic training through the

end of the war, the book details their journey. It touches on the important events of the unit to include General Patton using them as Infantry in Luxembourg during the Bulge, building the longest Bailey Bridge in the ETO over the Roer under indirect fire, being hit by a V-2 in Remagen and more. All official documents and numerous photographs are also included within the book.

I have dedicated this book to my father Kenneth Shilling, who served in the 284th.

Mikel Shilling, Associate

REMEMBERING MY FATHER

Louis Rowland Roberts, age 92, of Callao, passed away peacefully on November 18, 2014 at Loch Haven Nursing Home in Macon with his family by his side. He was born April 8, 1922 in Callao, Missouri, the youngest son of Charley Ross and Lena Leace Roberts and was raised in Callao, as a teenager. He lived in South Bend, Indiana with his uncle Luther and aunt Alma Roberts, where he worked for several years until joining the army.

He was inducted into the army on November 23, 1942 at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. He was assigned to the 94th division, Company H 376th Infantry, and 2nd Platoon. During WWII he was assigned to General Patton's 3rd Army. He spent time at Campholz Woods, Sins, fought in the Battle of the Bulge and many other battles. Rowland was wounded in a small town after they took the town of Ludwigshafen. He was awarded the Purple Heart, four Campaign Stars, Bronze Star, Expert Infantry Badge, Combat Infantry Badge, Good Conduct Ribbon, and many other ribbons. He was discharged in October 4, 1945 with rank of Staff Sergeant, Section Leader. He was very proud of his military service and had many stories to tell about his experiences.

He was an avid farmer and gardener, member of the Callao Christian Church, Callao American Legion Post #360, DAV and served in many community organizations. He loved spending time with his family, hunting, fishing, and arrowhead hunting.

Janna Craig

DID ANYONE KNOW LT. BILL SARVER, SR?

I am Buck Marsh, past member of Company "A" 36th Armored Infantry Regt., 3rd Armored Division, having joined the Company on 29th December in Belgium, two weeks after the Bulge began. I was assigned to squad "32" which was the second rifle squad of the third platoon. I was very fortunate, making it all the way to Dessau in late April, receiving only a small piece of panzerfaust shrapnel in my knee without lost time on the line.

Recently, I have been contacted by Bill Sarver Jr., whose father, Lt. Bill Sarver Sr., was killed April 5-6, 1945 while acting as a forward artillery observer with our company. He was a member of the 67th Armored Artillery Battalion, having relieved Lt. Hart who had been wounded but was to rejoin our company upon the death of Lt. Sarver. Being the first scout I had worked with both FOs, more especially Lt. Sarver in the terrible battle of Paderborn where our company "A" suffered nineteen casualties, five of whom were KIA.

Lt. Sarver was killed by small arms fire during a night attack by Co A on a German roadblock just east of Paderborn. In reading the April 6th morning report there is mention of an enlisted man, Cardeana, whom I am guessing was Lt. Sarver's (Continued)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR (Continued)

radio man. I am attempting to locate Cardeana, if in fact he is still living, to get a better report on Lt. Sarver's death, which his family is earnestly seeking. I am hoping that by publishing this inquiry in the *The Bulge Bugle*, someone may step forward that has knowledge of Cardeana or can shed more light on Lt. Sarver's activities upon his joining the 67th. His family would certainly appreciate any information we might be able to relate to them about their father and grandfather, Lt. Bill Sarver.

Thanks for your assistance.

Buck Marsh
2425 Pinewood Place
Auburn, Alabama 36830
Phone (334) 745-5971
bmarsh@whiteconst.com

WORLD WAR II REVISITED



Maurice Berry,
26th InfD

My father, Maurice Berry ("Moose") was in the 104th Regiment, 26th ID and fought in the Ardennes Woods where he was injured and the Battle of the Bulge. He has visited and toured some of the battle locations and American Battle Monument Cemeteries with my mother and most recently visited with my husband to photograph all of the grave markers of the men in the 26th who lost their lives in Europe. When he told me in November, 2013 that he wanted to return to Europe, I told him I wanted to go

with him and see some of the places where he fought. We decided to plan our visit to coincide with the Memorial Day Ceremony at the Lorraine Cemetery in St. Avold, France.

Several years after Moose photographed the grave markers and posted his story on a Facebook page titled "26th Infantry Division" we were contacted by a young man named Silvano Thiessen, who adopted the graves of several of the men in the 26th. Silvano is from a small town in Belgium and was anxious to connect with us. We developed a "facebook friendship" over the course of time and were lucky that he accepted our invitation to join us on our trip. The adventure begins after landing in Brussels, Belgium on May 21 and meeting Silvano.

We drove to Liege, Belgium where we spent the entire afternoon with Marcelle and Mathilde at the Remember Museum. This museum is unlike anything I've ever experienced before. Mathilde shared with us during our individual and personalized tour that the museum stood on the farm land in which Marcelle was raised. He was a young child when World War II was fought and started collecting relics that were left behind to tell the story of the experiences of people in the community; the soldiers who fought in the community and lived to tell about it; and the soldiers who gave their lives for the cause of freedom. They have Army jeeps; artillery; tanks; uniforms; food containers – all which were left when the US Army was given orders to leave Belgium and relocate to other parts of Europe. Marcelle and Mathilde recreated scenes to embody what life looked like 70 years ago – how the women used parachutes to make clothing; what the farm looked like and more. Over the years, the children whose fathers never made it home have also visited the Remember Museum. When these "orphans" of the war visit, Mathilde and Marcelle make a special effort to research

and document information about their loved ones so that they can be remembered. Many of those who have visited, sent or left relics to the Remember Museum to display.

Our afternoon ended with a visit to the kitchen which is decorated with thousands of greeting cards thanking the Remember Museum for their work. We were treated to a glass of Belgium beer and homemade Belgium Waffles. This is a different kind of museum from anything you'll ever see because it focuses on memorializing the people instead of the events! Don't miss this if you ever get a chance to go to Belgium.

The next adventure started the following morning when we left our hotel and headed to Eschdorf, Luxembourg to see the village in which Moose spent Christmas during the Battle of the Bulge. We managed to find the street on which the house he was bivouacked was located – but unfortunately we didn't think the house was still standing. Thanks to Silvano, we met and talked to a man who remembered what it was like when the Germans and Americans were both in his village. Tears came to his eyes when he recalled expressed his gratitude to Moose and shared his memories. Seeing how Eschdorf is perched on the top of a mountain – it's easy to understand the importance of that village as a way to defend and protect the Sure River.

Next we made our way through Luxembourg to St. Avold, France where we spent time exploring the town, meeting some of the local citizens and attending the Memorial Day ceremony at the Lorraine Cemetery. We were guests of honor and had seats in the first row of the audience along with our new friends. The ceremony was incredible because it was attended by so many. We met people from all parts of France who came to the ceremony on France's Mother's Day to honor and show gratitude to the Americans who defended their country during World War II. Moose had the pleasure of meeting Helen Patton who participated in the program and he was interviewed by a reporter who was creating a documentary about the Lorraine campaign. We placed flowers on the graves of some of the men with whom Moose was close and we met someone who agreed to say the memorial prayer each year for them. It was truly an emotional day to witness!

One of the new friends we made in St. Avold is Gerard, who has also adopted the graves of some of the men in the 26th ID. He met us in Luneville (our next stop) and helped us find the location where Moose first saw fighting and was injured. The rolling fields and minimal woods showed how vulnerable our soldiers were during the fighting in the Ardennes Woods. There was no place to hide!

Don't think that we didn't have fun while we were in Europe! We ate some amazing food in Belgium, France and Luxembourg. We saw some amazing sites including: Luneville Chateau; Esch-sur-Sure; Market Square in Brussels; Mannequin Piss. I had the chance to take the train to Amsterdam where I spent a cold and rainy day exploring Amsterdam and visiting the Anne Frank House. Moose even got himself a beautiful leather jacket!

In closing, I felt privileged to share this trip with my 90 year old father. I was certainly able to understand more about his experiences as a 19 year old boy during his time in Europe. To see and feel the love and gratitude of the French, Belgium and Luxembourg people we met was incredible. It's a lesson to teach our children and grandchildren!

Susan Miller,
daughter of Maurice Berry
and VBOB Associate

SEARCHING FOR BILL LEWANDOWSKI

My name is Daniel JORDAO and I am from the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg. I'm currently assisting the Dudzinski family to locate former GIs who were billeted in their house in Diekirch in late November 1944.



One of those GI's name was Bill (William?) Lewandowski, with Polish origins, and he was from Wilmington, Delaware. There were also other Polish-descendant soldiers billeted in Diekirch in late November 1944. Four of them attended the wedding of the Dudzinski-Weber family on November 25, 1944.

The exact outfit of Bill Lewandowski was **Bill Lewandowski** "Service Battery – 687th Field Artillery Battalion – VIII Corps." During the time the 687th FAB was in Diekirch, he was attached to the 8th Infantry Division and to the 28th Infantry Division.

He had a picture taken at a local photographer shop in Diekirch where you can see that he wears a wedding ring, so I hope that there might still be relatives living. The Dudzinski family was told that Bill did not survive the Battle of the Bulge, and the last research revealed that he was KIA in Luxembourg on December 22, 1944.

Mrs Annie Dudzinski-Weber is now 90 years old and would

like to find out more about Bill and the other GIs who attended her wedding.

Can anybody help with this research? Does anyone recognize any of the GIs in the wedding picture or know a relative of Bill Lewandowski? Any help is welcome.

Please write to: **National Museum of Military History**
c/o Daniel Jordao
10, Bamertal
L-9209 Diekirch, Luxembourg
Or email to: dcj@jordao.lu



Mr and Mrs Dudzinski-Weber on their Nov. 1944 wedding day with local guest among whom are four GIs, including Bill Lewandowski.

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: VBOB, Inc., PO Box 27430, Philadelphia, PA 19118-0430; or by phone: 703-528-4058; or by email: tracey@battleofthebulge.org.

We have received word, as of January 10, 2015, that these members of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. have also recently passed away:

Alex, Nellie	Associate
Bascour, Georges	5 Fusilier Bn
Brems, Frederick C.	2 ArmdD
Butz, James T.	75 InfD
Chevrette, Alpha	407 AAA Gun Bn
Clark, James A.	301 Sig Op Bn
Clements, Ausby L.	5 InfD
Conboy, Jr., John A.	474 AAA AW Bn
Davis, Leroy	99 InfD
Fitchett, Gerald F	95 InfD
Forcinella, Frank J.	5 InfD
Fulton, Milton L.	75 InfD
Heckman, Ada M	Associate
Kaiser, Norman L	75 InfD
Keating, Lawrence	468 AAA AW Bn
Lapa, Chester	90 InfD

Leonard, Thomas J.	168 Engr Cmbt Bn
Mayfield, James C.	26 InfD
Meltzer, Harvey S.	90 InfD
Merena, Walter	28 InfD
Morancy, Robert W.	17 AbnD
Ragsdale, Floyd D.	106 InfD
Roberts, Louis R.	94 InfD
Rood, Eugene E.	106 InfD
Sauer, Gunther F.	512 FA Bn
Savoca, Dominic J.	28 InfD
Schneck, David	75 InfD
Sponheimer, Jr., Albert	197 AAA AW Sp Bn
Turner, James E.	761 Td Bn
Vander Horck, Karl J.	8 FAO Bn
Welsh, Robert F.	3009 QM Bakery Co
Zak, George K.	106 InfD

SPIRIT OF '45 AND VBOB JOIN FORCES

by Ralph Bozorth, Associate



In 2010, both houses of Congress voted unanimously for a national “Spirit of ’45 Day” to honor the legacy of the men and women of the WWII generation. Spirit of ’45 Day is now being observed each year in hundreds of communities and during Major League Baseball games on the second Sunday in August.

During 2014 I worked closely with Warren Hegg, National Supervisor for the Spirit of ’45, to spread the word about Spirit of 45 among members of VBOB. It is Warren’s strong desire to have VBOB actively involved and for that reason VBOB is in partnership with Spirit of 45.

In 2014 the Spirit of ’45 bus logged over 30,000 miles crisscrossing the country honoring the greatest generation in over 100 towns and cities. Thousands of people turned out to welcome the bus. VBOBers attended in the following cities: Philadelphia: Carmen Guarino, Mike

2015 SPIRIT OF '45 DAY NATIONAL LEADERS CONFERENCE

San Diego, CA February 12-15, 2015

Join the growing family of organizations and individuals who are preparing to commemorate the 70th anniversary of “the Greatest Generation’s Greatest Day” - August 14, 1945 - the day World War II ended and America began an unprecedented effort to assure a better future for the world’s children and their children’s children.

Communities across America are being invited to organize commemorative activities to help honor the service and sacrifice of the men and women who were the “ordinary heroes” of the generation that met the challenges of the Great Depression, fought to preserve freedom and democracy in the world, and then went on to help rebuild the postwar world.

Our World War II generation is now rapidly dwindling — please join us in honoring their service and sacrifice, celebrate their post-war accomplishments, and ensure that their legacy will continue to unite and inspire Americans for years to come.

—Submitted by VBOB representative,
Ralph W. Bozorth, Associate

Ciquero, Kevin Diehl and Ralph Bozorth; San Antonio: Mary Virginia Waller; Palm Beach: George Fisher; New York City: Dan Santagata and Adrenne Hopkins.

To kick off 2015, I will be joining Dan Santagata and Adrenne Hopkins as part of the Spirit of ’45 in Battery Park, NY on 1/25/15 to commemorate the end of the Battle of the Bulge. Dan will be laying a wreath at the East Coast World War II Memorial.

In February 2015, I will be attending the Spirit of ’45 leadership conference in San Diego, CA as the representative of VBOB. The goal is to make everybody aware of the immeasurable contributions made by our greatest generation. More to follow after the conference.

For more information about the Spirit of 45, go to: www.spiritof45.org. Or contact Ralph Bozorth: ralph@battleofthebulge.org

WE NEED YOUR STORIES FOR “THE BULGE BUGLE”

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

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

You can mail typewritten articles to:

VBOB, Inc.; PO Box 336; Blue Bell, PA 19422

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

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

NOTICE: NOMINATING COMMITTEE FOR VBOB OFFICERS FOR 2016

As the past president, I will chair the nominating committee for the election of VBOB officers for 2016. The Bylaws require we have a slate for the election by late spring.

I request the general membership take time to consider members of VBOB they would like to nominate for the year 2016. Please send in the name and why you think the nominee could work to promote VBOB. I will gladly receive such data via my e mail or regular mail. I encourage nominations.

—Doug Dillard, VBOB Past President
12114 Longridge Lane,
Bowie, MD 20715
Coldillard@gmail.com

ANTHONY JOHN CAPOZZOLI, RADIO OPERATOR, 87TH INF

by Mary Jane Capozzoli-Ingui, Associate



**Anthony J. Capozzoli,
87th InfD, 346th, HQ Co**

My father, Anthony John Capozzoli, was 18 when he was drafted into the U.S. Army in February 1943, the fourth son to go in his family. He left his job at Temple Music in Rockville Center, Long Island, New York, and reported to Camp Upton, located in Suffolk County, Long Island, for a few days.

He travelled by train to Camp McCain, MS where he was assigned to Headquarters Company 346th Infantry Regiment for several weeks. "The barracks were made of packing crates with tar paper over them. There were 2 potbelly stoves you were assigned to maintain. It was the middle of winter down there," he explained.

From there he went to Fort Bragg, NC for a few months. "We went out on maneuvers—learning how to fight—going under barbed wire with real machine guns firing over you—role playing as if you were in combat," he told me. He had the job of cleaning the latrines while there, a job that kept him in a warm location.

This training was followed by a 6-month stint at Fort Benning, GA. where he attended school to learn Morse Code. "We would get up about 3 o'clock in the morning, have breakfast, then we went to an area where we sat at a table, put earphones on and practiced Morse Code. We had to read what you heard," he said.

With training in communications as a radio operator, he went back to Fort Bragg to join the rest of his company. He, along with other members of the 87th Infantry Division, boarded the Queen Mary in October 1944 and travelled to Scotland on a 4-day voyage. They stayed in Scotland until their equipment arrived. He drove a big truck down to Dover, England with the rest of the convoy. "I had never driven a truck in my life," he noted.

The 87th Infantry Division crossed the English Channel on a liberty ship and arrived in Le Havre, France, in November of 1944. As part of the 87th, he travelled through France, Luxembourg, Belgium, and Germany mostly by Jeep. The mission was specific, where "whenever we got to a town, we would cut the lines of communication and set up our own." He explained that: "We camped in houses when we took over a town" noting that "our communications people were behind the infantry." They knew they were supporting the troops, but "we did not know what we were sending because it was in code. The message center would decode it after it arrived."

Dad participated in campaigns in the Ardennes, the Rhineland, and in the Battle of the Bulge as part of Patton's Third Army. During this battle, he assisted in keeping wire communications for the 346th HQ Company of the 87th Division. He recalls going as far as Yugoslavia before stopping so that the Russians could come in and occupy part of Germany. At this point, the war in Europe had finally ended.

He went back to Germany where they were assigned to a camp while waiting to sail home. Upon his return to the U.S., he was on furlough for 30 days during August 1945, awaiting assignment to

fight the Japanese in the Pacific. But the war ended.

Because Anthony did not have enough points to be discharged, he was sent from Boston where their ship landed, to Sandy Hook, NJ, which was a reception center for new recruits. Here his job was handing out uniforms. Whenever possible, he went home on weekends by boat to Brooklyn and from there, by train back to Freeport, NY.

After his discharge, Anthony returned home to Freeport, resumed his job, and attended New York Radio Institute in New York City at night. He married Joan Michalicki in 1950. They settled in Merrick 5 years later. Until his retirement in 1989, he owned his own business as a television/radio technician. He moved to Sebastian, FL in 1991. This year he celebrated his 90th birthday there with family and friends.

THE BULGE STORY OF SGT. NORMAN L. KAISER

As recalled by his wife, Betty Kaiser



**Norman L. Kaiser, 75th
ID, 290th IR, Co B**

I met Norm when he was 15 and I was 14. When he was drafted to join what Walter Winchell called "The Infant Infantry," they were all 18 years old. I have every letter Norm wrote from May 1943 to March 1946. We were married on October 5, 1946.

The 290th sailed on 10/22/44 aboard the USAT Brazil, landed in Swansea, Wales and then on 11/3/44 moved to Porthcawl, Wales. They crossed the English Channel on the liner "Monrovia" and then on the channel boat "Invicta", where they debarked on the beach at Le Havre, France.

Two days later on 12/19/44 the 290th left and travelled in bitter weather across France and part of Belgium. They were en route to aid the First Army. Norm was told part of the time he was with Patton and later with the 83rd Division. The worst enemy of our forces was the weather. The men did not have winter clothing or footgear equal to repelling effects of frigid temperature. Norm spoke of blizzard whiteouts, bombing but you could not see the planes or Germans who wore white. They ate "C" rations for days. Just before a shell landed nearby he had ordered an orphan calf shot so his men could have a hot meal. He was removed from the front line with a severe concussion (blood loss from nose & both ears).

Norm was a very humble man and he was most proud of his Combat Infantryman's Badge. He did enjoy receiving France's highest medal the Legion of Honor, which was pinned on him by the Ambassador from France on 11/11/13 in Miami, FL.

Norm joined the Naval Air Reserve in Niagara Falls, NY and was activated in the Korean War. He served on the carrier USS Tarawa, CW40.

It is with a sad heart I say Norm celebrated his 90th birthday on August 9, 2014. He had played golf twice that week and won money. Two days later he became ill and died peacefully with his family near on September 20, 2014.

He always enjoyed reading *The Bulge Bugle*. We had a wonderful time in Luxemburg in 2006 and the reunion in Kansas City in 2007.

VBOB 70TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION TOUR

08-18 December 2014

by Madeleine Bryant, Associate



Some of the VBOB 70th Anniversary Commemoration Tour group at La Gleize, in front of the German Königstiger (Tiger II) tank.

Tour participants gathered from all over the United States. Most arrived in Brussels in cool, damp weather on Tuesday, December 9.

For many of us, our adventure began already at the Brussels Airport as we were warmly welcomed by Belgian Army Adjutant Patrick Brion & Assistant Tour Director Doug Mitchell, as well as Dominique Potier & Erik Grandhenry also of the Belgian Army. Tour Director Patrick Hinchy then greeted us at Bedford Hotel in downtown Brussels.

Veterans and their escorts quickly departed to meet privately with US Ambassador Denise Bauer in her residence. Meanwhile, others rested or walked a short distance to the medieval Grand-Place with its ornate, historic buildings. Just at dark, a spectacular light and music show took place there.

Following a welcome dinner in the hotel restaurant, noted British military historian/documentary film maker Martin King showed "The Forgotten Angel of Bastogne" — the compelling true story of August Chiwy, a bi-racial Belgian nurse who volunteered selflessly at great personal risk in a US Army aid station in Bastogne during Battle of the Bulge.

Wednesday, December 10 —Departed Brussels in two large buses, donated by Belgian Army, for Belgian Army's Camp Elsenborn in the Ardennes Forest. Elsenborn Ridge formed the blocking line for the northern shoulder of the Battle of the Bulge. A fierce 10-day battle here kept the German line from advancing. One of our veterans shared his experiences at this very location 70 years ago. Next stop was Wereth 11 Memorial, which honors 11 black GI's executed by German soldiers at that spot in December 1944. A brief ceremony also took place at the Baugnez memorial, site of notorious "Malmedy Massacre" where dozens of American prisoners were murdered

by SS-Kampfgruppe of Joachim Peiper. Participants then toured nearby Baugnez44 museum. In the evening we checked into the lovely Radisson Blu Palace Hotel in the charming, historic town of Spa, Belgium where we would stay until 14 Dec.

Thursday, December 11 —Today was an extremely busy day. It began with impressive wreath-laying ceremony with color guard, followed by a reception at Stavelot. Mayor Thierry de Bourneville and General Director Jacques Remy-Paquay led the events. Stavelot, scene of heavy fighting, was where over 100 local civilians, including women and children, were murdered by Peiper's Kampfgruppe.

Next stop was the small but extremely significant town of La Gleize. Here the advance of Peiper's Kampfgruppe was halted; their rout considered a principal cause of Germany's ultimate defeat in Battle of the Ardennes. Noteworthy is the German Tiger II tank in the town square. Our group was warmly greeted by Le Magneus deMakeye and moved by the musical tribute by local children singing a song written by Headmaster Marc Mathieu for the occasion.

A highlight of any VBOB tour is a delicious lunch at Auberge du Carrefour at Baraque de Fraiture, known to us as Parker's Crossroads. Bernadette Lejeune, daughter of the innkeepers who aided members of 106th Inf Div 70 years ago, welcomed us all as family. Denise Ogre and Anne-Marie Noel-Simon of CRIBA made presentations; wreaths were laid at the crossroad's memorial 105mm howitzer. Barely 300 US Troops resisted a German panzer division here for 3 crucial days ("Alamo Defense") until all but about 50 were killed or taken prisoner.

On our way to La Roche-en-Ardennes, we passed by Ourthe Valley bridge near Houffalize where Third Army and First Army "closed" the Bulge. In La Roche, we toured the 3-story Museum of the Battle of the Ardennes with its unusual

(Continued)

VBOB 70TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR *(Continued)*

displays of American, English, Scottish & German military uniforms and gear. The soup/sandwich reception was much appreciated on this cold, damp day.

Free time in the evening, enabled us to wander the little streets of Spa and try its local eateries, as well as gather as we did most evenings, in little groups to share stories and experiences.

Friday, December 12 — At Henri-Chappelle American Cemetery (where nearly 8,000 of our military dead are buried) we were welcomed by Superintendent Bobby Bell and US Embassy representative Marc Storella. A stirring “Soldier’s Poem” was read by Mathilde Schmetz. After the ceremonies, electric carts were available for those wishing to brave the snowy weather to pay respects at specific graves.

Another must stop on VBOB tours is M&M’s “Remember Museum” located on the farm where Marcel Schmetz was a young boy during the Battle of the Bulge. He and his lovely wife, Mathilde graciously opened their home and hearts to us, sharing their remarkable stories and collections of artifacts, many of which were left behind by GIs camped on the farm as they fled advancing Germans in 1944. This museum is unique in its huge compilation of individual soldier’s accounts (each of which Mathilde can recite with love), photographs and very personal donated memorabilia. Marcel actually builds and creates every single display.

For those not yet ready to return to the hotel, a visit to the old city of Aachen, first German city to fall to the Allies, with its beautiful, centuries old Dom Cathedral and huge, festive Christmas Market topped off the day.

Saturday, December 13 — The strategic, multi-crossroads town of Bastogne, on a cold, snowy day – how appropriate! This was “Nuts Days” – the annual celebration of General McAuliffe’s famous reply to the German demand that he surrender the totally surrounded town. Military re-enactors throughout town, tanks and jeeps firing up everywhere! Following lunch in the old Bastogne Barracks mess, our veterans were honored at a reception at the 101st Airborne Museum hosted by Helen Patton, granddaughter of General Patton. A ceremony and wreath laying followed at the Patton Monument, with our veterans front and center.

Opportunity for a private meeting with King Philippe and Queen Mathilde of Belgium was provided to the veterans. To their surprise, they also had their pictures taken with Tom Brokaw who was delighted to meet veterans of the Greatest Generation. The rest of us

took in further sights in Bastogne. Some of us even shook the hand of King Phillip as he walked past in the parade. We joined throngs waving American and Belgian flags who gathered in front of the Town Hall and we were thrilled to catch a traditional bag of walnuts thrown from the balcony by the Belgian royalty and other dignitaries.

One touching story: an elderly Belgian lady waited hours in the snowy cold simply to give a red rose to each of our veterans. Though we did not share a common language, her beautiful act of honor and remembrance left us all deeply moved.

Sunday, December 14 — Flag of Friendship Ceremony at 106th Infantry Division HQ monument in St. Vith honored four present “Golden Lions”: David Bailey, Dick Lockhart, Herb Sheaner, and Barney Mayersohn. Ceremony was dedicated to veteran Floyd Ragsdale who expected to attend but sadly passed away just days before the trip. An honor guard from Spangdahlem AFB supported the event, while Chaplain Randall gave the invocation and Mayor Christian Krings welcomed vets. The recipients of 2014 Flag of Friendship award were Marcel and Mathilde Schmetz who, in their M&M Remember Museum, perpetuate the history of Battle of the Bulge soldiers.

St. Vith honored the veterans and guests at the Mayor’s reception at nearby Hotel Pip-Margraff.

A convoy of WWII military vehicles (few of us braved the cold to ride in an open jeep) then accompanied our tour buses, following the path of retreat to Vielsalm. On the way, a lunch stop was made at the unique Rodter Biermuseum, displaying thousands of beer bottles from all over the world.

The military convoy continued to Vielsalm-Rencheux for ceremony at C-47/82 Airborne multi-divisional monument. Tribute is paid here to the defenders and crossers of the Rencheux Bridge, where 15,000 soldiers crossed the river to form a new line of defense and later returned to liberate the town. Purely by chance the adult granddaughter of a deceased veteran was visiting this site. Dignitaries honored her as well as the veterans present, a deeply moving scene for all.

Almost 70 years to the day after German forces broke through Allied lines and surrounded the tiny town of Clervaux, local dignitaries, in their 12th century castle where Allied forces had stubbornly held out as long as they could, hosted a reception for returning Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. An impressive photo exhibit by the renowned photographer Tony Vaccaro was the backdrop. A ceremony took place at their unique statue – on of few dedicated simply to the American GI. It was a raw, chilly *(Continued)*



The veterans got to meet Queen Mathilde of Belgium (and the King.)



Wreath-laying ceremony at Schumann’s Eck, Luxembourg.

VBOB 70TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR *(Continued)*

evening and the warm blankets thoughtfully provided to our veterans once again by Patrick Brion were most welcome.

During dinner at Hotel Koerner, a Veterans of the Greatest Generation tour sat with us and most lively conversations ensued. Finally, we had to board buses for The Grand Hotel Alfa in Luxembourg City.

Monday, December 15 — Following a brief, but excellent Battle of the Bulge film by Patrick Brion, veterans participated in a Q & A session with high school students at the Lycee Classique De Diekirch. Lunch at Beau Sejour Restaurant was a treat. Several reenactors were present at our visit to Roland Gaul's impressive National Museum of Military History, with its huge amount of original artifacts and exquisitely detailed dioramas portraying significant events of the Battle of the Bulge. A few of us also enjoyed strolling through Diekirch's pleasant, holiday decorated pedestrian center.

On Christmas Day 1944, in the tiny town of Ettelbruck, General Patton stopped the German offensive into Luxembourg's Alzette Valley. The newly re-opened Patton Museum there displays photos and artifacts from the period of German occupation and the celebration of its liberation by Patton's army.

A delightful change of pace, hosted by Helen Patton, was a nostalgic performance by the Andrew Sisters-style Spitfire Sisters singing swing songs of '40s. Many music fans stayed on to enjoy Thomas Blug Allstars' rock and roll homage to the Greatest Generation.

Tuesday, December 16 — Veterans were invited for audience with Grand Duke Henri and Grand Duchess Maria Teresa of Luxembourg in the Grand-Ducal Palace. The rest of the group enjoyed an official guided walking tour through parts of historical Luxembourg City.

Today's official 70th Anniversary Battle of the Bulge commemorations began with a joint government of Luxembourg and the US Embassy ceremony held, under tents due to inclement weather, at Luxembourg-American Cemetery, Hamm. Speakers included His Excellency Mr. Xavier Bettel, Commander US Army Europe General Ben Hodges and Commander USAFE General Frank Gorenc. Also present were HRH Grand Duke Henri, President of Luxembourg Parliament Mars Di Bartolomeo, members of the Luxembourg Parliament/Government and US Ambassador Robert A. Mandell. School children, with veterans, poignantly placed 70 roses.

The playing of several European national anthems emphasized the unification theme of ceremonies at the National Liberation

Monument, Schumann's Eck, site of another of the war's bloodiest battles. About 30 Battle of the Bulge veterans were present, along with many dignitaries. One wreath was touchingly laid by an American veteran together with a German veteran.

A grand finale dinner, offered by the Luxembourg government in the Grand Hotel Alfa, was enjoyed by all. A keyboard artist, member of Luxembourg Military Band provided 40's background music.

Wednesday, December 17 — Time to return to Hotel Bedford in Brussels. We'd come full circle. Evening ended with Farewell Dinner with the Belgian Army in Peutie Barracks. An extraordinary surprise event took place: Veteran Clayton Christiansen received his Bronze Star and Purple Heart (with his Silver Star forthcoming). It was also announced that Veteran George Merz would be receiving France's highest decoration – the Legion of Honor award. It was an unforgettable event – few dry eyes!

Thursday, December 18 — Our last ride on the comfortable Belgian Army buses with their outstanding drivers, Kurt Gordt and Dirk Van de Velde, brought many of us through rush hour traffic to Brussels International Airport for our flights back to the US. Several veterans pledged to return for the 75th Anniversary in 5 years – and I believe these intrepid, inspirational gentlemen just might do it!

Our ten veterans were overwhelmed by their "rock star" status, even those who had experienced prior trips. All of us were fascinated as their stories unfolded at various locations of special meaning to them. Second & third generation family members who had heard about the unbelievable welcome by the people of Belgium and Luxembourg were often moved to tears to witness it in person. What a treasure of memories – some life changing! Even those of us traveling to honor deceased veterans were overcome with emotion several times a day.

Deep appreciation goes to the many folks without whom this trip could not have happened: Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Association Council, especially Doug Dillard, John Bowen, Al Cunningham and Doris Davis; Adjutant Patrick Brion and his Belgian Army team; Tour Director Patrick Hinchy; local team of Doug Mitchell, Carl Wouters, CRIBA, SEBA and many local community officials, and MilSpec, Inc. which handled fees – and, of course, our valued veterans who provided the "why" of the whole trip!

Please view the many photos and stories available on our website: www.battleofthebulge.org. Click on "70th Anniversary."

—Photos by Patrick Brion, Alan Cunningham, and Joe McFadden



VBOBers at General Patton's grave site at the Luxembourg American Cemetery, with his granddaughter Helen Patton, 2nd from right.



VBOB President Doug Dillard presenting the VBOB gift to Lieutenant-General Clément, Belgian Army.



THANK YOU, DONORS!

We appreciate the donations from the following VBOB members and supporters, received October 1, 2014 - January 10, 2015:

Allen, Bobby L	Associate	Kirtley, Marilyn	Associate
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WWII HISTORY ARCHIVE: PRESERVING HISTORY FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

If you are a WWII Veteran who wants your story preserved and possibly published, or if you know a WWII Veteran who does, please contact:

Mark Zangara

email: ww2historyarchive@gmail.com; phone: (304) 596-1380

website: www.ww2historyarchive.org

Mark lives near Washington, DC and can conduct interviews on site (if feasible) or by phone. (This applies to women who were in the war or in war industries as well. Of course, their stories are just as important.)

The interviews will be linked on the VBOB website, added to the Library of Congress, and the Veteran will get a copy of the interview as well.

MOSELLE RIVER COMMEMORATION

(Summary of past event attended by Dan Santagata, 5th ID and Adrienne Hopkins, Associate)

Seventy years ago saw the beginning of the greatest story of the 20th century. It is a story that would lead to the liberation of France and a large part of Europe, which would finally escape Nazi dictatorship.

As it did in 2004 and 2010, the Association "Moselle River 1944" has decided again in 2014 to pay homage to the greatest

generation, those who crossed the Atlantic to free the homeland of Lafayette.

We will welcome our liberators from Saturday, November 13 to Sunday, November 16, 2014, in order to commemorate with them the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the region of Thionville and the crossing of the Moselle River.

Our commemoration project is supported by the French government and has obtained the support of the largest cities of the region as well as that of the President of the General Council of the Moselle, which is sponsoring the Day of Remembrance in Moselle on Saturday, November 15, 2014.

The opening ceremony will take place on Saturday, November 8. Commemoration events will take place from Sunday, November 9 until Sunday, November 16. Participants who wish to return directly home following the events can plan their return trip starting Monday, November 17. Transfer to Metz will also be organized for those who will be attending the ceremonies organized by that city.

We hope that we will be able to welcome you here [in] November so that we may thank you for the magnificent gift of liberty that you gave us in November 1944.

With deepest gratitude, Pascal Moretti, President
Association "Moselle River 1944"

♪ NEED A BUGLER FOR AN EVENT? ♪

You must submit your request electronically using the Bugles Across America website:

[http://www.buglesacrossamerica.org/
RequestABugler.aspx](http://www.buglesacrossamerica.org/RequestABugler.aspx)



From left to right: Ralph and Nancy Rogers, Addie and Al Teller, Jean and Harry Kirby

104TH VETS TOGETHER AGAIN

by Harry Kirby

I was contacted last week by a guy I went through the war with and haven't seen in the 61 years since. His son, who works in Washington, found my name in the course of some of his research and recognized the 104th Inf. as being his Dad's outfit. He checked with his father, who said he knew me, and mailed him the info. It included the fact I was President of the VBOB Chapter in Eustis, FL. so he addressed a letter to that location.

I haven't missed a VBOB meeting in five years, until our Aug meeting, due to having two teeth extracted the day before. Our treasurer phoned me after the meeting and told me I had a letter there (at the VFW Post) from a "Ralph Rogers." My old army buddy is the only one I know with that name. I told him to read it to me. It began: "You have got to be the Harry Kirby I served with." I immediately phoned Ralph and we wasted no time arranging a meeting.

I phoned another of our guys who lives in the area, Al Teller, and invited him to a reunion lunch today at my house in Ocala, FL. We all played in the 104th Infantry Regimental Band, 26th Infantry ("Yankee") Division. I know the TOO doesn't provide for a Regimental Band . . . but we had one (CP Security in combat)! Al Teller was the band director, I played a trumpet and Rogers was our bass drummer.

Needless to say it was a great time, and I think our wives enjoyed it as much as we did. So over chicken crepes and wine, we shared photos and rehashed old times for about three hours. There will be more get-togethers now that we have made contact.

Source: The "Yankee" Division in World War II

RAMBLINGS OF A RETIRED MIND

To all the kids who survived the 1930s and 40s, the 50s, 60s and 70s!

First, we survived being born to mothers who took aspirin, ate blue cheese dressing, tuna from a can and didn't get tested for diabetes. Some even smoked or might even have had an occasional drink while they were pregnant.

Then after that trauma, we were put to sleep on our tummies in baby cribs covered with bright colored lead-base paints.

We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, locks on doors

or cabinets, and when we rode our bikes, we had baseball caps, not helmets on our heads.

We didn't even have clips to keep our pants legs out of the chain - we might even have been wearing knickers.

We wore no fancy, expensive sneakers - a pair of Keds was two bucks, and we were only allowed to wear them in gym.

Ladies, do you remember those ugly bloomer gym uniforms you wore in High School?

As infants & children, we rode in cars with no car seats, booster seats, seat belts, no air bags, on bald tires and sometimes with brakes that didn't work too well.

Oh, good Lord - there was no air-conditioning in the car! (Or anywhere else, for that matter.)

Riding in the back of a pick-up truck on a warm day was always a special treat.

We shared one soft drink with four friends from one bottle and no one actually died from this.

We ate cupcakes, white bread, real butter and bacon.

We drank Kool-Aid made with real white sugar, and, we weren't overweight.

WHY? Because we were always outside playing...that's why!

We could leave home in the morning and play all day, as long as we were back for meals and when the streetlights came on.

No one was able to reach us all day, and, we survived.

There were no school buses, in the city, at least, so we walked - through snow and rain or shine,

We could spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then ride them down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. After running into the bushes a few times, we learned to solve that problem.

Anybody remember taking an orange crate, a piece of two by four and an old Chicago roller skate, and build on of those scooter things? We even rode those in the gutters without getting hit by a car!

We had no PlayStations, Nintendo's or X-boxes. There were no video games, no 150 channels on cable, no video movies or DVD's, no surround-sound or CD's, no cell phones, no personal computers, no Internet and no chat rooms.

We had friends, and we went outside and played with them!

We fell out of trees, got cut, broke bones and teeth, and there were no lawsuits from these accidents.

We ate worms and mud pies made from dirt, and the worms did not live in us forever.

We were given BB guns for our 10th birthdays, made up games with sticks and tennis balls and, although we were assured it would happen, we did not put out very many eyes.

We rode bikes or walked to a friend's house and knocked on the door or rang the bell, or just walked in and talked to them.

Little League had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't had to learn to deal with disappointment. Imagine that!

Hey, there was no Little League! We just found an empty field in the country or an empty lot in the city, chose up sides and played!

Any of you city-bred remember Ring-O-Levio, Johnny on a Pony, stick ball and the mean old lady who kept your ten cent pink 'Spaldeen' if it went into her front yard?

How about stoop ball? Chinese handball?

The idea of a parent bailing us out if we broke the law was unheard of. They actually sided with the law!

(Continued)

RAMBLINGS OF A RETIRED MIND *(Continued)*

These were the generations that produced some of the best risk-takers, problem solvers and inventors ever. If YOU are one of them, CONGRATULATIONS!

The past 50 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas. We've had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we've learned how to deal with it all.

You might want to share this with others who have had the luck to grow up as kids before the lawyers and the government regulated so much of our lives for our own good. While you are at it, forward it to your kids so they will know how brave and lucky their parents were.

Kind of makes you want to run through the house with scissors, doesn't it?

—Submitted by the Duncan Trueman Chapter

THE DEDICATION OF THE AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE MEMORIAL by J. David Bailey, 106th Infantry Division

On October 5, 2014 The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial was dedicated. More than 3,000 people — many disabled veterans, their families and survivors — covered the grounds of this site, 2.4 serene acres, a bold reminder of the sacrifices still being made daily and the only memorial to honor the disabled veterans of America's wars.

I was impressed by the remarks made by the President and the Secretary of the Interior, along with the Secretary of Veteran Affairs and actor Gary Sinise, our national spokesman. Special recognition



Secretary of the Interior Sally Jewell and David Bailey, 106 InfD

should be made to Lois Pope and Arthur Wilson, co-founders and DAV Director Bobby Barrera.

The Memorial pays tribute to the living and the deceased, male and female, as well as disabled veterans across all branches of the military, through all historic, current and future conflicts. Unlike the six-war tribute on the National Mall, this memorial sits in the shadow of the Capitol, a purposeful reminder that the cost of military conflict lingers far beyond the battlefield.

In granite slabs, glass panels and a single flame atop a solemn reflecting pool, the memorial tells the story of veterans from every conflict and from every branch of service who have borne the brunt of battle and lived to carry the visible — and invisible — wounds of war.

Noted: This remarkable accomplishment, a 16-year journey, would not have been possible without the support the DAV received from veteran organizations, foundations, corporations, and more than a million individual contributors.

BREAKFAST AT THE WHITE HOUSE, NOVEMBER 25, 2014



Doug Dillard, [then] VBOB President; General Martin Dempsey, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff



General Joseph Dunford, Commandant of the Marine Corps; Michelle Dillard, Doug's daughter; Doug Dillard

Genesee Valley Chapter Book: *The Battle in Common* **BATTLE OF THE BULGE** **STORIES TO BECOME E-BOOK**

By Caurie Putnam, reprinted with permission
from the *Democrat & Chronicle*



This week marks the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, widely considered to be the largest and toughest battle won by American troops during World War II.

U.S. Department of Defense statistics list 19,000 Americans killed, 47,500 wounded and

23,000 missing in the battle that took place from Dec. 16, 1944, through Jan. 25, 1945 in The Ardennes, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany.

My grandfather, Donald "Poppy" Miner was one of the men who survived the Battle of the Bulge and helped lead the allied troops to victory. He never talked about his experience during the battle, or anything to do with World War II, for that matter. When Poppy died in 1993, he took his stories with him — which is not uncommon.

According to the National WWII Museum, only about 1 million of the 16 million veterans of World War II are still alive, and 555 die per day. Most, like Poppy, never share their experiences during the war, which makes it critically important to listen to and support those World War II veterans who do.

A few years ago, I had the opportunity to interview several Rochester-area World War II veterans for a series of articles about an extraordinary book they made called *The Battle in Common*. The book, first

published in 2012, bears firsthand accounts of 19 local men who fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

The *Battle in Common* did not start out as a book, but as a three-ring binder of first-person stories collected by members of the now-disbanded Genesee Valley Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. Some of the stories were handwritten and rife with grammatical errors; others read like polished manuscripts.

"I remember feeling in awe at the time," recalled Michael Riordan, director of the Open Publishing Lab at RIT's College of Imaging Arts and Sciences in Henrietta, who was the recipient of the binder and felt moved to help the veterans preserve and publish their stories. Riordan and his students helped turn the binder into a book. The first printing was so well received, it is virtually sold out throughout the Rochester area. A handful of copies remain at the Veterans Outreach Center's Flag Store in Rochester, Lift Bridge Book Shop in Brockport and Yesterday's Muse Bookstore in Webster.

Upon the 70th anniversary of the battle, the book's lead organizers decided to create more copies, but this time they are going digital. An electronic version of the book will be released after the first of the year on Amazon, Barnes and Noble.com and Apple iBook.

"We want to keep the stories available to people forever," said Riordan, explaining why the book committee (made up of several of the book's authors and key supporters) chose to go digital for this edition.

Like the hard-copy version, all proceeds from the e-book sales will go to the national headquarters of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

"The fact that the release of the e-book coincides with the big anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge is very appropriate," said David Brookins, a Vietnam War veteran from Webster who sits on the book's committee. "The stories are all heartfelt and true, and it's great to be able to capture them forever." (Photo of book by Michael Riordan)

ATTENTION, CHAPTER PRESIDENTS!

This is a request from your new VP Chapters, Sherry Klopp, daughter of Richard Switzer (deceased, 99th Division, 395th Regiment, Company H. I am asking you to please send me Chapter news for The Bulge Bugle. The following items are suggestions:

- Chapter Newsletters
- Chapter Activities
- Members receiving Awards
- Photos, with captions, of Chapter activities
- Members being covered in local media
- Veterans Stories

I am also requesting the Chapters that have not submitted the dates, times, and location of their Chapter meetings to send me this information.

Typewritten articles can be mailed to:

Sherry Klopp
3060 CR. 13

Burgoon, Ohio 43407-9752

or email me at: osujk@msn.com

You may call me at 419-355-4278 if you have questions or wish to share information.

I will be contacting each of the Chapters by phone in the near future.

—Sherry Klopp, VP Chapters and Associate Member

Central Massachusetts Chapter - 22 **VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE** **COMMEMORATIVE CEREMONY** **DEC. 16, 2001**

They called it the forests of the Ardennes; a gentle timberland of open meadows, meandering streams and tree-shaded country lanes. Long acclaimed for its mineral baths and charming resorts, it drew enormous crowds of visitors every year, offering rejuvenation of body and spirit in some of the loveliest scenery in northern Europe. The Ardennes forest, however, was also a battlefield. In mid-December in 1944, however, it suddenly exploded into battle, when Adolf Hitler staged a massive counter-attack stroke against the Allies. The six-week struggle that followed would turn the woods and marshes of the Ardennes into a forested hell, a wintery purgatory where death came in many forms; by cold, by hunger, or by an unseen shot in the dark from an enemy rifle.

Seldom in World War II did a maelstrom of blood and death hang so heavily over a battlefield, exacting so fierce a price from both the victors and the vanquished. [Donald Cosby SJ]

Today on this anniversary day of December 16, of that epic battle we pay tribute and honor to comrades who died in the woods and marshes and those survivors who have since passed on.

On December 16, 1981, The Veterans of the Battle

(Continued)

CENTRAL MASS CHAPTER 22 *(Continued)*

of the Bulge (VBOB) was organized to make certain that it never would be forgotten. Our Cent. Mass. Chapter was the 22nd of 65 organized across the country. Among our goals -are to perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices involved, to preserve historical data and sites, to foster international good will and peace, and to promote friendship. The VBOB has established a Gallery at the Fort Meade Museum in Maryland, we visit the Ardennes battle area on group tours, we have dedicated a monument commemorating the battle and its veterans in Arlington National Cemetery in Washington. We maintain contact with patriotic groups in Belgium and Luxembourg who are interested in the battle, and in the liberation of their respective countries. Just recently our Cent. Mass Chapt, hosted a reception for Marcel and Mathilde Schmetz, the Belgian husband and wife who created and own the "Remember Museum, 1939-1945" in their home at Thimister-Clermont. Several of our members have been there and made contributions of their war memorabilia to the museum. But mostly M&M have requested these veterans provide photographs of themselves as soldiers and how they appear today. As Mathilde said, "ours is a museum of 'feelings' and not guns."

It is 57 years since the end of the Ardennes Campaign, which took the lives of over 19,000 and 47,000 wounded in battle, American soldiers. The great leaders of the Armies and Divisions have long since passed on, even down to the Company commanders. But the 19 and 20 year olds who fought from the foxholes are here this morning to remember their comrades in prayer, as others are gathered this very hour at the Arlington National Cemetery. In previous years we held our ceremony at square markers around the city, near the former homes of our deceased comrades who fell in the battle. This morning we gather here at the Worcester Armory at the kind invitation of Col. Kondratiuk, the museum's director. It was here in this hall that Massachusetts State Guardsmen of the 181st Inf. drilled and formed part of the 26th Inf. Div. who were the first soldiers to set foot in France in WWI. It was here that our members Frank Wooldridge and Alfred Simmons drilled and later joined the 90th and 26th divisions which played an important role in defeat of the Nazis in the Battle of the Bulge. The armory has a long and proud history of servicing men from Worcester who fought in both WWI and WWII. I am not one of them but I am proud to mention that my grandfather Timothy McAuliffe carved the ornamentation and heads of the two civil war soldiers over the front entrance. And it was the Frenchman Aristede Mian a veteran of WWI in France who posed for the statue at Weaton Square, sculpted by the internationally known sculptor Andrew O'Connor of Worcester. These carvings and statues about our city and everywhere serve as reminders of the sacrifices and heroics of brave men and women of our armed forces in our country's wars. The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge have created a dozen such memorials to their dead in several cities in the USA. The Battle of the Bulge MEMORY ROUTES booklet illustrates more than 100 monuments in Belgium and The Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, the grandest and most popular being the memorial atop Mardasson Hill at Bastogne. The Bastogne Memorial is a token of the respect of the whole Belgian nation to the American Army and its Allies for the part that they played in the liberation of Europe. The memorial was built on the suggestion of the Belgo-American Association, who wished to immortalize the

memory of those valiant young Americans who lost their lives on Belgian soil. Let us remember July 4, 1946. On that day a touching ceremony took place on the Mardasson. A casket containing some soil from the Hill of Heroism was sealed in the presence of the United States Ambassador to Belgium and sent by special airplane to Washington. There it was handed to President Truman in person by four Belgian representatives. The spot from where the soil was taken in the center of the present mausoleum is now covered by a square of local stone bearing the words: LIBERATORIBUS AMERICANIS POPULUS BELGICUS MEMOIR. (IN MEMORY OF THE AMERICAN LIBERATORS, THE NATION OF BELGIUM.)

The box of Belgian Congo marble can be seen at the Truman Library, Independence, MO.

At the 50th anniversary of the battle, in St. Louis, MO, General John Shalikashvili then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed the 2000 veterans and their guests. He had just returned from Bastogne and the ceremony there. He held up a vial for everyone to see and said: "Here is your monument."

It was soil taken from the base of the Mardasson monument. Soil, liberated by the sacrificial blood of American soldiers. You were the heroes Hitler did not account for, he told those aging veterans. Then he made an analogy to the village blacksmith with his powerful arm swaging the blade against his anvil. "You were the unbreakable anvil against which Hitler smashed his armies", he told them. The tenacity and stamina of the American soldier, withstood the powerful thrusts of the German armies. It was not so much weapons that won the battle, the German army had far better; but the sheer stamina of the GI soldier.

Much has been written on the Ardennes Campaign in English, French and German from both the Allied and German viewpoints which tell of the engaging situations of the Armies and divisions. Many treatises which cover the action of those smaller individual units, the so-called "bastard units" which fought here and there and everywhere as needed attached to the Divisions; the tank BNs, the AAA units, the chemical mortar companies, the engineer Battalions; all of which gave support to the front line GI with his M-1 rifle.

Historian John Toland's "Battle, The Story Of The Bulge": "The brunt was taken by men in small units fighting greatly." "A Time For Trumpets" by the late Charles B. McDonald—eminent military historian, he commanded a rifle company in the 2nd Division at the age of 21. "The Bitter Woods" by John S.D. Eisenhower, son of Gen. Ike Eisenhower, the title taken from the poem Dante's Inferno. "The Last Assault" by Charles Whiting, "A Blood Dimmed Tide" by Gerald Astor, "The Deadly Brotherhood" by John McManus ...

And names descriptive of the battle: "December Dawn," "A White Darkness," "Dark Christmas," "The Brave Rifles," "Those Damned Engineers," "A Band of Brothers" ... and so on!!

Re-reading the history of that epic battle is exciting but getting to know the men who fought it and hear their personal accounts is exhilarating. I continue to be amazed. One such story has local consequences. We are familiar with the Univ. of Mass. Hosp. and the UMASS medical school down by Lake Quinsigamond, and its founder Dr. Lamar Souter and how he prevailed to bring those prestigious medical groups to Worcester in spite of hard fought opposition by two Mass. governors. But how many of you know of the surgeon, Lamar Souter with the rank of Major, when in December of '44, he volunteered to fly into the besieged

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CENTRAL MASS CHAPTER 22 (Continued)

Belgian town of Bastogne - then totally encircled by German forces. His objective was to transport emergency medical supplies to 1500 wounded GIs, many of whom were members of the 101st ABRN DIV. and assist in surgery on those that were considered most in need. Flying by glider at a low 500 feet, he experienced German ground fire but landed safely behind a knoll protected from enemy fire. Upon inspecting the plight of the wounded, Souter spoke to the commander of Bastogne's defense, warning that many wounded would certainly die if not moved to improved surgical quarters.

Two days later, the arrival of tank (Creighton Abram's 37th Tank BN and Albin Irzyk's 8th Tank Bn) and infantry elements of Patton's 4th Armd Div of the Third Army opened a door to Bastogne and forced the withdrawal of German troops. For his willingness to volunteer for this daring task, he and a fellow doctor were awarded Silver Stars. To honor Maj. Souter, on November 14 of 2001, our chapter is now referred to as the Dr. Lamar Souter Chapter 22 Central Massachusetts Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

The story of our own chapter member, Gerry Baszner of Whitensville bears mentioning also. Gerry was a medic and called upon to fill the ranks of the 82nd Abn Div which was short of medical personnel. With no previous experience in parachuting he made a couple of jumps off the rear of a moving truck and with a practice jump or two from a plane in England—Laden with 80 pounds of equipment, he parachuted in the early hours of D-Day into combat behind enemy lines in France. He later served in an Evacuation Hospital during the Bulge fighting. These are only two of the extraordinary feats of these ordinary men.

I have met and got to know hundreds of such men in our chapter and from attending the annual national reunions across the country and at the yearly attendance of the Battle of the Bulge re-enactment at Ft. Indiantown Gap, PA where the veterans live together and eat and sleep in the old WWII barracks, for 3-4 days every January. I have returned to the battle sites in Belgium and Luxembourg and have stayed as a guest in the homes of these wonderful people, who lived through the Nazi occupation of their countries and survived the horrors of war in their little towns. I have attended with fellow veterans the wine receptions in the parish and town halls and in the mayor's offices given by these grateful peoples in thanksgiving to their liberators of many years ago.

I have visited the four American cemeteries where 15,000 of our comrades of the Ardennes battle lie in restful peace with their leader Gen. George S. Patton.

I listened to the words of Camille Kohn, the president of C.E.B.A. (Center for the Study of the Ardennes Battle), the Luxembourg counterpart of our V.B.O.B. Standing in the light rain in the little churchyard in Berdorf, he spoke to the visiting veterans in English, in his heavy native Luxembourg accent (and I paraphrase his comments):

"Dear Veterans, on behalf of our citizens, it is with much affection and admiration that I welcome you here today. Almost 50 years have gone by when you had to fight here in Luxembourg and Belgium in the winter of 1944-45. In the most severe conditions in the face of a common enemy you lived the worst days of your young lives. You men had to fight in the Battle of the Bulge in an unknown country, living in foxholes in darkened days. You men suffered for

our sake, you have seen for months only shell holes, darkened forests, damaged churches, destroyed bridges and splintered trees, and the black hulls of destroyed tanks and dead bodies. There is no language that would now describe the devastation you lived through. You are the survivors of that battle and your casualties of 19,000 killed and 47,000 wounded are shocking. You didn't start the war, you fought the war and you finished the war, the worst ever seen by mankind. We consider you a shining example of our deliverance and liberty. We can never, never, make up to you what you did for us 50 years ago. Your bravery and sacrifices will always live in the depths of our souls. Your contribution deserves our everlasting gratitude. We do not consider you as tourists coming from a foreign country. We look upon you as our liberators who have restored our human dignity. You are not only the heros of our liberation, you are the heros of Luxembourg, you are the heros of the 20th century. We will never forget the American soldiers who liberated our country and gave us our freedom. We will always be grateful for what you did for us 50 years ago."

Pres. Camille Kohn and Sec. Tilly Kimmes have greeted hundreds of veterans and presented them the Liberation of Luxembourg medal.

But I think the words of the Belgian writer, Andre Defer, sums up best why we are here this morning at this memorial ceremony. Speaking before a group of veterans and his countrymen, said: and I have repeated his words many times: "There is one thing you dare not forget, and must keep eternally engraved in your heart. It is the memory of those men, who came from far away, from overseas; who"clung to the ground fighting one against ten, falling down under bombing and shelling in the name of LIBERTY; and when you will pass before a military cemetery, and see the little white crosses that adorn the tombs of the soldiers of Baugez, Stoumont and Rochefort, and of so many little villages in the Ardennes forests. Cry out to them, THANK YOU! Cry out to them, THANK YOU! from the depths of your heart. WHEN YOU SEE THE LITTLE WHITE CROSSES AND THE STARS OF DAVID ... CRY OUT TO THEM, THANK YOU!!"

"Somewhere in the Ardennes Forest in a snowy, muddy hole with a small pool of slushy water at the bottom, an American soldier paused and collected his thoughts for a moment. Then he hoisted his weapon, left the dubious comfort and safety of his hole, and advanced towards his enemy while enduring machine gun, small arms, mortar and artillery fire. He moved forward as he had dozens of times before and would dozens of times again if he wasn't killed or wounded."

--from "The Deadly Brotherhood" by John C. McManus

Almighty God, we commend to you the souls of our many comrades who served you and our nation so well in the Ardennes Campaign from December 1944 to January 1945. By our presence here today we attest to the fact that their courage and dedication will be remembered for as long as this nation itself survives.

We thank God for the quality of men who served their nation during WWII, but most especially those of our comrades who served during the Battle of the Bulge, the Ardennes Campaign. May they rest in the eternal peace reserved for those who have given their lives and of themselves for our great nation.... Amen.

—John E. McAuliffe, Pres. Dr. Lamar Souter Chapter; Cent. Mass. - 22, Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.

LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER CHRISTMAS PARTY



Members at the meeting, shown above, front row: Nathan Kline, Pauline Minnich, Clem Reed, Louis Vargo. Back row: James Binder, Morris Metz, Joseph Motil, Carl Schroeter, Willard Fluck, Lionel Adda, Donald Heckman, Harold Kist, Donald Burdick.

At the annual Christmas party held on December 9, 2014 at the Best Western Inn in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, Battle of the Bulge veterans were presented with certificates honoring their service during World War II, particularly during the Battle of the Bulge. The proclamations were from United States Senator Pat Toomey. The chapter also received a certificate commemorating the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge.

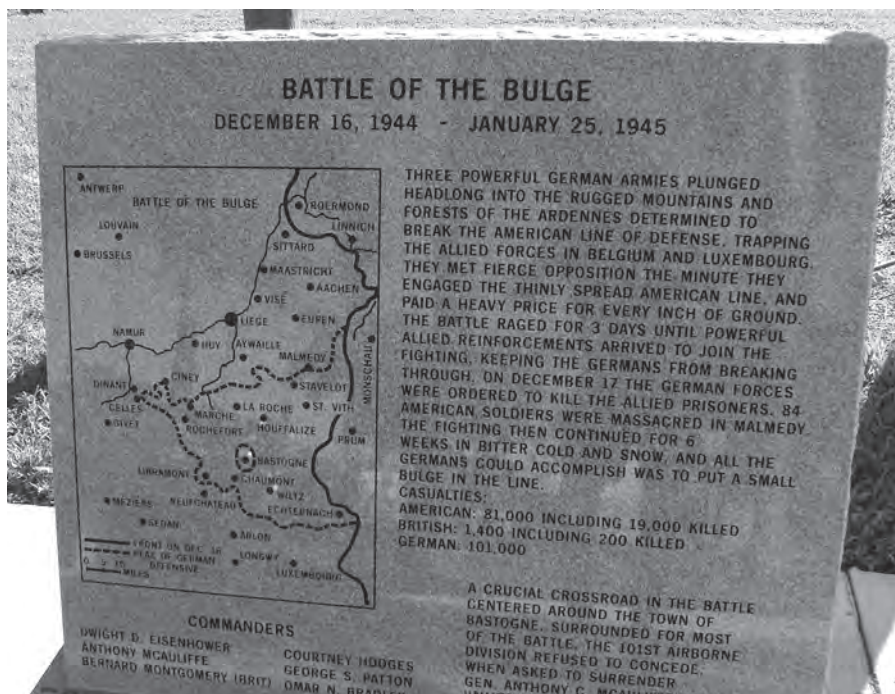
In addition, new officers were voted in for the Chapter. They are President: John Kuhn, Vice President: Richard Musselman, Board Members: Lionel Adda and Frank Maresca.

The chapter would like to thank President Emeritus, Morris Metz, for all his years of service as president of the Lehigh Valley Chapter since its inception in May of 1998.

Nine other members not present were also honored. They are Evangeline Coeyman, Raymond DeRaymond, Gordon Fenicle, Laverne Gildner, Mark Kistler, William Leopold, Frank Maresca, Richard Smith, and Ray Brong.
—Submitted by Steve Savage, Associate

SOUTHEAST FL (62) CHAPTER MEMBERS ATTENDED BOYNTON BEACH BATTLE OF THE BULGE MONUMENT UNVEILING

Photos submitted by Duane Bruno, Associate



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VETERANS TOURS 2015

2015 PILSEN LIBERATION FESTIVAL & PRAGUE (April 27 - May 8, 2015) Enjoy a beautiful Rhine cruise and then a visit to Nuremberg with its Nazi Rally Stadium and War Crimes Courthouse. The highlight of our tour is the world famous Pilsen Liberation Festival (see many YouTube reports) in the Czech Republic. 2015 is a fantastic year for Pilsen. It is also staging a huge program as 2015 European Capital of Culture, together with the special 70th Anniversary Pilsen Liberation Festival celebrating its May 6 1945 liberation by General Patton and Third Army. Arrive in Frankfurt and return from the beautiful, historic Czech capital, Prague.

2015 MEMORIAL DAY & NORTHERN BULGE TOUR (May 21 - 31, 2015) Our itinerary is deliberately planned to include as many as possible of your particular wishes and "special places" in the Northern Bulge. Just tell us. Our veterans are guests of honor on Memorial Day in a major Battle of the Bulge US Cemetery, a spectacular, moving, historical experience. Then we continue our WWII pilgrimage via the Siegfried Line, Hurtgen Forest, a Rhine cruise and Nuremberg to the end of our tour in Munich.

2015 LAFW SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR (June 15 - 25, 2015) Once again the 'US Veterans Friends of Luxembourg' will plan for us in 2015 another fantastic VBOB Luxembourg-American Friendship Week (LAFW) and tour of the "Southern Shoulder" of the Bulge, full of events & celebrations. Start in Paris and finish in Frankfurt, with an optional Normandy pretour.

"The VBOB Luxembourg American Friendship Week (LAFW) and Southern Bulge Tour in June, 2014 proved to be a trip of a lifetime..." said VBOB Assoc Member Mike LoPiano. *(Read his account of the trip at right.)* Our 2015 tour will be very similar, but the itinerary will be specially planned as far as possible for your particular wishes and your 'special places.'

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

VBOB SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR

June 15 - 25, 2014

by Michael LoPiano, Associate

The VBOB Luxembourg American Friendship Week (LAFW) and Southern Bulge Tour in June, 2014 proved to be a trip of a lifetime. I completed a personal vow that I'd walk in some of the towns and villages where my father (131st Armored Ordnance Battalion - 9th Armored Division) fought in the Battle of the Bulge. Although, he would never discuss his experiences in the Battle of the Bulge, my father would jokingly grouse that the Nazis screwed up his chance of getting a birthday weekend pass on that historic day of December 16, 1944 - the day the battle began. As a 1st generation American, my father loved this country deeply, and upon his military discharge in 1946, he spent the next 36 years as a Master Sergeant and proud member of the Army Reserve's 331st General Hospital unit based at Fort Devins, MA

On Sunday, June 15th, under the superb guidance of Patrick Hinchy (our tour guide & historian), a group of us (Harry Whisler, a highly decorated medic with the 10th A.D., his family, and I), made our way out to the Normandy region. On the way, we stopped at the massive Chateaux de La Roche-Guyon, used as the HQ of Field Marshall Erwin Rommel while he built-up the Normandy coastal defenses. Not only did the chateaux serve as the HQ of Rommel's Army Group B, but it was also the meeting place of several very high ranking German officers, including Rommel's Chief of Staff, General Speidel, and other conspirators as they plotted to remove Hitler from power in July of 1944.

From our hotel "HQ" in Bayeux (Normandy), we toured the D-Day Museum (Musee Memorial Battaille de Normandie), and saw the famous Bayeux Tapestry, a remarkable 900 year old, 230 foot long hand embroidered panels showing Normandy's William The Conqueror, sailing to England to defeat Harold at the historical Battle at Hastings in 1066 A.D. The following day, June 16th, we walked on the beaches - Arromanche, Port en Bessin, Omaha, Utah, and saw Pointe du Hoc. We peered out of the concrete bunkers and over the edge of the cliffs, and saw the perspective that the enemy had as they fired on the Allied troops. It's amazing that any of the GIs made it past the beaches or up over those cliffs as they dodged the gunfire. With bomb craters evident everywhere, the entire area is a vast permanent monument to the courage and sacrifice of men who arrived on Utah and Omaha Beaches on D-Day. From there, it was short trek to the solemn Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial Museum at Colleville-sur-Mer. It was then on to see the famous Parachute Memorial at the Church *(Continued)*



The tour group enjoys Luxembourg City.

VBOB SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR *(Continued)*

of St. Mary in St. Mere Eglise - the very first village in France liberated by mixed units of the 82nd & 101st Airborne.

We returned to Paris on June 17th to meet up with the rest of the tour group, boarded a high speed train to Luxembourg, and then on to our hotel in the wonderful little village of Gonderange, just north-east of Luxembourg City. That evening we all enjoyed a hearty dinner with a most friendly group from the US Veterans Friends of Luxembourg (USVFL). The following day, June 18th, we took in the sights, sounds, and smells as we walked through the vibrant & historic center of Luxembourg City. At the Foundation Pescatore, General Patton's HQ in Luxembourg, the entire group watched as each of the veterans (87th Divisions' John McAuliffe - 347th IR, Charles Pefinis - 345th IR, Ken Yockey - 336 FAB, as well as Harry Whisler - 61st Armored Infantry of the 10th AD, and Ike Refice - 80th Div. 319th IR) were honored at a special ceremony, with each veteran presented medals and citations.

Next on the agenda was quick visit to the VBOB Monument across from the Pescatore, followed by a very solemn 70th anniversary wreath-laying rededication at the US Cemetery at Hamm attended by Carolyn Turpin, Public Affairs Officer from the US Embassy. Flowers were placed at the grave of Gen. Patton, and Ike Refice located the grave of Sgt. Day Turner, also of the 319th IR, who was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for his heroics at the Astart Farm battle in Dahl, Luxembourg. Just a short trip down the road was the German cemetery with its mass grave of unknowns and plain grey granite headstones - a very stark contrast to the gleaming white marble headstones of the US cemetery. That evening, we attended the Celebration of the Four Chaplains and a festive dinner in Oetrange, Luxembourg. Several toasts were offered, including a rather poignant account by a former German soldier who was captured during the Bulge and was a POW at Ft. Devins, MA until 1946. He recounted that it was there that he came to know the true meaning of freedom & respect for America - a profound experience that changed the rest of his life.

On June 19th, we went to a local high school in Diekirch and had a Q&A session with the students. They were spell-bound as the veterans, in response to the students' many thoughtful questions, recounted some of their experiences in the Battle of the Bulge. Following the discussion, our tour group and several representatives from USVFL enjoyed a wonderful lunch ceremony in the 'student restaurant.' Jeffry Olesen, the U.S. Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission, was in attendance and gave a wonderful testimonial to the accomplishments of the vets. After lunch, we visited the National Museum of Military History in Diekirch. Our bus then crossed over the Sauer River into Germany to Wallendorf and Ammeldingen. We made a quick stop in Medernach at the 9th Armored Memorial, that honors its three combat commands (CCA, CCB, and CCR) in Bastogne, St. Vith, Clervaux, Ermsdorf, Waldbillig, Troisvierges, Longvilly, Medernach, Larochette, and Werbomont. That evening, we joined many of the USVFL members for another hearty dinner and sampling the wonderful local wines.

On June 20th, after visiting the George Patton Memorial, the Wiltz Defense memorials to the numerous units of the 3rd Army at Schumman's Eck and then experiencing goose bumps while stepping into the remnants of various foxholes in the surrounding woods, we spent the majority of the day in and around the town of Bastogne. We saw the Memorial du Mardasson - a truly impressive memorial. Climbing to the top of the Memorial offers a 360 degree



Bastogne Ceremony in Gen. McAuliffe's Bunker, l to r: Col. Olivier D'Hoop, Ike Refice, Ken Yockey, Charles Pefinis, Harry Whisler, John McAuliffe, Commander Eric Lemoine.

panoramic view of the countryside where the battle for Bastogne was fought. We visited the Bastogne War Museum on the same grounds as the Memorial and saw numerous multimedia exhibits that helped explain that epic battle for Bastogne. After a quick stop at the 10th Armored Memorial, the tour group arrived at the Bastogne Barracks. It was here on Dec. 22, 1944, when General von Lüttwitz, commander of the German forces surrounding Bastogne, demanding the surrender of US forces, that General Anthony McAuliffe famously responded "Nuts." When the barracks' commanding officers (Colonel Olivier D'Hoop and Commandant Eric Lemoine) realized there were 5 WWII veterans of the Battle of the Bulge standing at their gate, they pulled out the stops and guided our group to a private tour of the facility. The veterans were treated royally, as they were asked to sign a special veterans guest book and had their photos taken for the 'Wall of Honor' in McAuliffe's bunker. On the way back to the hotel, we visited memorials to the 87th ID in the towns of Tillet and St. Hubert, and discussed the action there with 87th ID veterans Charles Pefinis & John McAuliffe (no relation to the General!).

On Saturday, June 21, Daniel Reiland, Pres. of the USVFL group and I went off to tour Schoenfels, Lintgen, Mersch, Nospelt, Savelborn, Troisvierges, and Clervaux - many of the local towns & villages where the 9th Armored Division units fought in the Southern Bulge sector. The rest of the tour group went on to the Saar-Moselle Triangle where the vets were honored at the re-dedication of the 94th ID monument by several dignitaries including Helen Patton, granddaughter of George Patton.

On Sunday June 22, the group attended a very solemn re-dedication of the 10th AD memorial in Berdorf, where the mayor led a gathering of towns people in the ceremony along with a special presentation honoring Harry Whisler, as his battle exploits were recounted by his son-in-law, Jim Jones. We then traveled up to the West Wall Museum, a Siegfried Line bunker complex in Irrel known as the "Cat's Head", set into the hillside in the South Eifel region. It was the 2nd largest fort of its kind on the West Wall, and was an amazing complex containing MG34 gun turrets, a 500mm grenade launcher, a flame thrower, and 45 rooms underground that housed up to 80 soldiers. It was then on to Echternach and a stop at the 3rd Army memorial and a visit to the impressive St. Willibrord Basilica in Echternach with its stunning frescoes and white marble sarcophagus, containing the remains of St. Willibrord. Built in 698, it was nearly completely destroyed during the Battle of the Bulge, but rebuilt after the war and celebrated its 1300th anniversary in 1998. That evening's dinner was served up at a *(Continued)*

VBOB SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR *(Continued)*

wonderful winery in Ahn, Luxembourg, a picturesque village along the Moselle River – just outstanding food & wines.

On Monday, June 23, after celebrating Luxembourg's National Day with church services at St. Vincents in Dahl, it was on to the Sgt. Day Turner memorial at the Astert Farm. Here, Ike Refice recited the story of the battle that his friend Sgt. Turner and his squad fought here on January 8, 1945. For 4 hours the savage fighting continued, some of it hand-to-hand. There were 11 dead and many other wounded Germans, and with only three in his squad unwounded, Sgt. Turner brought an end to the battle and rounded up 25 German prisoners. For this heroic action, Sgt. Turner received the Congressional Medal of Honor, posthumously however, as Turner was killed in action attacking a West Wall bunker in Wallendorf on February 8th, one month to the day of the battle at the Astert Farm.

Following a wonderful lunch at Aflamm's with Lucy Leners of the Astert Farm, the group proceeded to a rededication of a memorial to Alfred Etchevery, a GI killed in action in Goesdorf. That evening, at the bon voyage dinner at the hotel in Gonderange with many of the USVFL representatives, there were many toasts with the highlight being the grand toast by Helen Patton, and then leading everyone in songs & tributes to the veterans.

On Tuesday, June 24, the tour group left Gonderange and enjoyed a leisurely motor coach ride through the picturesque Mosel River Valley, with a stop to tour the famous 'picture post card' wine town of Bernkastel. In Koblenz, we visited the famous statue of Kaiser Wilhelm located on the point where the Mosel & Rhine rivers intersect. This was the same statue that Ken Yockey's 87th FAB were ordered to shell & destroy as the GIs approached Koblenz in '45. It was also here that a couple of GIs in Charles Pefinis' unit found a champagne cellar, drank too much, threw a hand grenade and inadvertently captured a few dozen or so Nazi soldiers for which they received medals. Here the group boarded for cruise down the Rhine to Boppard where the group was met by the current & former mayors of the town. We enjoyed a wonderful lunch & sampled the several wines as guests of the Sylvia the "Wine Queen" at Bopparder Weinkonigin. It was then on to City Hall, where the Mayors honored the vets, followed by a rededication ceremony of a stone memorial to the 87th Division, where on the night of March 24th, 1945, they finally crossed the Rhine River.

The tour group spent that night in Frankfurt, and the next day caught flights home full of priceless memories. This recounting is dedicated to those veterans who made this 70th Southern Bulge Anniversary trip so special, to my father and all the other men & women of the Greatest Generation who experienced firsthand the Battle of the Bulge, and especially to Ken Yockey, who unfortunately passed away on July 4th – 10 days after returning to his home in Ohio from the trip.

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**For more information, contact Kevin Diehl:
703-528-4058 or kevin@battleofthebulge.org**

A FRIEND IN NEED IS A FRIEND INDEED

by John P. Malloy, 75th ID, 291st IR

I worried and wondered if my best friend, Dean Lusjenski, had survived the recent vicious fighting at Grand-Halleux. Dean was with L (Love) Company in a machine gun section, in the 291st heavy weapons company. That company had sustained serious casualties in that battle. I decided I should find his company and see if he was still ok.

Dean and I had been called to duty on the same day in March 1943. He was a senior at Creighton University in Omaha, and I was a junior there. We had spent the entire war together and had become fast friends. We looked after one another, as soldiers often do. Now I wondered, and worried, what had happened to him during the vicious battles along the Salm River.

The 291 st Regiment had played an important role in counter attacking the retreating German forces. The GIs had suffered severe frostbite and trench foot because of the cold and snow. Huddling for days in a wet, cold, foxhole wore men down. This suffering, combined with battle wounds, had taken a severe toll.

I was lucky I was able to track him down. My job, as wire crew chief, gave me considerable independence and freedom of action. I knew my crew would handle any problems while I was gone. Earlier that morning the Third Battalion, Dean's unit, had attacked a heavily defended hill—casualties were heavy. I knew the current action was centered in a small village about a quarter of a mile to the east. I took our jeep and headed that way. As I approached the village I stopped and proceeded on foot. When I reached the village center, I could see the German defenders had been forced back, perhaps five hundred yards. There was confusion. Medics evacuated wounded. Tanks slowly ground forward. An artillery spotter moved his vantage point.

Infantry units continued the attack. Apparently another unit had just been relieved. Those men were half hidden in doorways. Others hunkered down, waiting, hoping. They were a disheveled, bearded crew. They were exhausted. Most had not been out of their clothes for days. They hadn't had a truly hot meal for some time. Artillery fire had devastated the area. Buildings were smoking shambles. Some still stood, in others, men sought what shelter they could find. An improvised aid station was operating. Medics treated bloody wounds. There was the awful smell of cordite—a reminder of death.

A winter sun shone weakly on the chaos. Just a month ago a pristine snow had drifted down, providing a beautiful blanket, covering this remote countryside. Now, brown replaced white. Brown clad warriors brought brown tanks, brown trucks, and brown cannon. Brown buildings burned. Dirty, brown soil lay exposed. It was an ugly place. This was not an unusual sight across France and Belgium. Our War Machine destroyed what little the Germans left when they fled.

There was occasional incoming mortar fire now; this was not a safe area. I tried to identify the units present. I could see that some Third Battalion Companies were involved in the fire fight but I could not find L Company. I decided my efforts were futile. I couldn't find my friend so I decided to return to my outfit. I retreated towards my jeep. The late afternoon light was turning to dusk. I worried about the drive. Driving in pitch black darkness was dangerous. I worried I might encounter a trigger happy GI. He would shoot first and ask questions later.

(Continued)

A FRIEND IN NEED (Continued)

Then I saw him. He was slumped in a ruined doorway.

"Dean, Dean is that you?" He looked at me. I moved closer. He had an unfocused, zombie-like, gaze. He stared vacantly.

"Lusienski-Lusienski it's me, John." His only comment was, "I'm cold, I'm cold."

"Dean I'm taking you with me. You need rest and a hot meal inside you." He mumbled, "I can't. I've got to get back to my platoon."

"You are coming with me and that's that. Don't give me a hard time."

I walked him to the jeep. We took off. A commandeered farmhouse served as the Regimental CP. The wire section's sleeping bags were on a dirt floor in an adjoining barn. I got Dean out of his overcoat. I removed his boots and put him into my sleeping bag. I covered him with an extra blanket. He slept eighteen hours. I brought him a hot meal. He slept again. When he woke he was a different man. We had a good conversation. We exchanged news. He had another good meal. Then it was time to go. His dry clothes and boots were ready. He got into his overcoat, put on his helmet, slung his weapon over his shoulder. I returned him to his company.

I didn't see him again for several weeks. After the Bulge, the Division headed south and east to Colmar France near Strasburg. There we continued kitting Germans. Dean, in the weeks following the battles in the Ardennes and Colmar, was promoted to Staff Sergeant and awarded the Bronze Star for his leadership in operations in the Rhine River area.

Epilogue: After the war Dean Lusienski returned to his home in Nebraska. He married and had a family. He used the GI bill to earn a PhD in Educational Psychology at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln. He served for many years as Principal for the world famous Boy's Town. In later years, I occasionally traveled to Omaha from my home in Milwaukee. Dean and I would have dinner together. We talked about the early years. Dean died several years ago at the age of seventy.

Dean Lusienski was an outstanding example of Brokaw's "The Greatest Generation".

I still miss my best friend.

FINALLY READY TO REMEMBER by Curt Meltzer, Associate



Harvey S. Meltzer, 90 InfD, 359th Reg, Co F

On October 11, 2014 my father, Harvey S. Meltzer, then living at the Asbury Methodist Village in Gaithersburg, MD, with his wife Phyllis, and feeling just fine, went to take a nap in the afternoon so

he would have energy for dinner out that night. He never woke up. He was 88 years old, and died as peacefully as a man could. His life was less peaceful, and his experience with the 90th Division, and in the Battle of the Bulge, went to form the core of his life in so many ways.

It started when he turned 18 and went to opt for accelerated induction in the town he grew up in, Worcester, MA. He was told there wasn't anyone listed under the name of Harvey Meltzer and when he went home to ask his parents what was going on, he was told by them that his real birth name was Seymour Harvey Meltzer, not Harvey S. Meltzer. A neighbor had teased him as a child, so his parents decided to switch his 2 names, forgetting to tell him! Despite that shock, he nevertheless got to register, and kept his Harvey S. Meltzer name for the rest of his life.

Ultimately, he was assigned to the 42nd Infantry Division until the night he had his memorable Christmas 1944 dinner in Strasburg. Until that moment he had never been close to combat. But back in camp after dinner that night, his outfit was ordered to wake up and told to board trucks, in which they were driven all night, and then told to get off the trucks. Not much else was told them (sound familiar to you fellow infantrymen?) As it turned out he was at that moment being transferred to the 90th Division in Patton's 3rd Army and headed north into the Battle of the Bulge. He was part of the 359th Regiment, Company F.

His first experience of combat that he remembers was that his new outfit was ordered into the woods in Luxemburg to relieve the 26th Yankee Division (he believed), who had to that date been unable to dislodge the Germans from a key point in that sector. His first taste of combat was a night attack into those woods. He remembered little of that night, other than the tracers and noise and neberlwerfer shells and death and shooting—all as an 18 year old.

He survived, made it through the Battle of the Bulge, was awarded a purple heart after being hospitalized twice for frostbite of both his feet, and survived the rest of the war, helping liberate the concentration camp Flossenbug, in Czechoslovakia, in the process.

For many years after the war, he awoke every night with screams and cries and nightmares, but refused to talk about it. He also refused to visit or return to Europe until middle age, because he could not face his nightmares there.

Then VBOB came along and he went to one of the VBOB reunions in Europe—I believe the 40th—and it transformed him. All of a sudden, he became aware that he was not alone anymore. He met so many other veterans who "understood" and who shared his pride and his pain. And he fell in love with Europe and afterwards vacationed there often.

He attended the 50th VBOB anniversary too, and I had the honor of taking my father to the 60th Anniversary, where we had one of the best weeks of our lives together. I got to meet so many wonderful veterans, and I got to see the battlegrounds and meet the people of Belgium and Luxemburg, who treated all the veterans as if they were liberators that very week. It was wonderful.

I also got to discover, first hand, where my dad's first night of combat occurred. It is now a national park in Luxemburg called Shumann's Eke. My dad's outfit, and others, DID push the Germans out, and that was the start of their withdrawal out of Berle, Luxemburg. He was honored there during our trip, as were others, at the monument located outside the famous woods and by the people of Berle, who carried the torch of memory and thankfulness into our present.

As his son, I wanted to write this remembrance to honor my father, and his service during WWII. Thank you all for showing my dad he was not alone. Thank you all for your friendship and caring and understanding, and for the honor to yourselves and our country that you all have brought with your service. God bless you.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

by Thomas Stack, 291st CEB

From the time I joined the 291st in late January 1944 and throughout most of that battle I was assistant S3 to Major Ed Lampp. All during this period the battalion was commanded by Lt. Col Dave Pergrin. Due to a transfer of Major Bradovich, the battalion was operating without an Executive Officer so that most of his normal duties were being carried out by Lt Col Pergrin and Major Lampp.

On the 17th December, 1944 word was received from Lt. Frank Rhea, commanding a platoon of "B" Company that there was very heavy enemy activity to the East of the small crossroad town of Malmedy, Belgium. Major Lampp was left in charge of Battalion Headquarters at Haute Bodeux (?) and I was directed to accompany Col Pergrin to Malmedy with the thought of establishing a forward Command Post for the Battalion in that town. At this time, communications between the line companies and Battalion Headquarters was extremely difficult because of the distances that separated the companies. In almost all cases, the platoons within each Company were at some distance from their own Company Headquarters.

Upon arrival in Malmedy, a forward Command Post was established. We learned of enemy action to the north, east and south of town. Col. Pergrin decided to set up a defense of the town and to get the rest of the Battalion into position as quickly as possible. However, before an order to the rest of the Battalion could be dispatched, the sound of firing was heard to the East.

A wounded GI was brought into town from the vicinity of Baugnez, a very small community existing only because it was the junction of three roads, which led to it's local name of Five Corners. It was from this wounded GI that the news of what has since been called the "Malmedy Massacre" first became known. After hearing the wounded man's story, Col. Pergrin directed me to accompany him to the site for verification and to look over the territory in order to better plan our defense in that direction.

Just before reaching Baugnez, our command car was stopped by 3 GIs who popped up from the roadside drainage ditch. These three, although not wounded, were also members of the Field Artillery Battalion that had been ambushed and slaughtered. They were in a state of shock and their wet and cold clothing did nothing to help their state of mind. They gave us more details of the massacre and told us of large numbers of German troops and vehicles that were pivoting to the south toward St. Vith. We loaded the 3 nearly hysterical survivors into car and returned to Battalion Headquarters at Malmedy. The three were fed and given a chance to clean up. I was ordered to return to Major Lampp at our rear Headquarters to inform him of developments and to bring all available Headquarters personnel, weapons and explosives to be transferred to Malmedy.

At Battalion Headquarters I sent for Sgt John Scanlon our communications chief and told him to put me in contact with the Battalion Headquarters of the three shocked survivors. Considering the extremely heavy communications traffic, Sgt Scanlon got me hooked up in a remarkably short time. I spoke to the Adjutant of Executive Officer of the Battalion and almost tearfully broke the news to him of the disaster that had befallen his unit. I distinctly remember one of the longest periods of silence in my life as his stunned reaction. I then passed the field telephone to each of the three men who in turn identified themselves and assured the officer of the

correctness of my statements and elaborated on them with personal details regarding both the known slaughtered and the known survivors which were pitifully few. While this was taking place; Lamp had been issuing the necessary order to supply Col. Pergrin and the men of "B" Company under the command of Capt John Conlon with all available men and supplies.

It was now well into December 18 and I got into my sleeping bag for what I hoped would be an uninterrupted sleep. But sleep would not come because of my own tenseness. I spent the day of the 18th at Battalion Headquarters preparing to move, but not knowing which direction we would have to go. On the 19th, I was ordered by Major Lampp to return to Malmedy. On the road, I was stopped by MPs of the 30th Infantry Division who refused to allow me to proceed. I demanded to be brought to Division Headquarters and after speaking to one of the staff officers was taken to the Command Post of the Commanding Officer, General Leland Hobbs. He and his staff were surprised to learn that Malmedy was still being held by the 291st and I can't blame them for doubting my story. I learned later that Army Headquarters and the Press also believed Malmedy had been lost to the German forces.

I told (as if a 1st Lt. can tell a General) that I wanted to continue to Malmedy and that he gave me permission I would lead a recon force from his Division to Malmedy by a little used secondary road, N27 which tied into a main road from Eupen directly north of Malmedy. A recon force was quickly assembled and we arrived in Malmedy without incident. Col Pergrin, Capt. Conlon and Capt Moyer of "C" Co who had arrived in Malmedy in the darkness of the 17th were glad to know a strong battle-tested Division was so close and ready to take up the overall defense in the area. I think it was on the 19th that Capt. Moyer was appointed Exec, being replaced as commander of Company "C" by Lt. Rombaugh who I in turn replaced as Commander of the 1st Platoon.

My first assignment as Platoon Commander was the demolition of a railroad bridge over Rt N32, west of Malmedy. To conserve our limited supply of regular explosives, we used as many captured German explosives as possible. It was decided that if we could drop the entire bridge onto the roadway, an extremely effective anti-tank barrier would be the result. To insure this result, we loaded one of the flat bed trailers, normally used for hauling our largest bulldozer, with large logs that we could wedge into the debris after detonation if necessary. The charges were electronically detonated after the members of the 99th Infantry Division who were entrenched along the embankment of the railroad were withdrawn to a safe position.

The result was far better than we had dared to hope for. The piers of the main span were blown inward onto the roadway and the bridge itself dropped straight down to make the road impassable to any type of vehicle, tracked or wheeled. Prior to this, demolitions had been prepared but not executed as we did not know from which direction either the enemy or friendly forces would seek access to the town. By now, the situation was slightly clearer and we now knew that our only friendly support would be from the north along Rt N-28.

On December 20th, the 2nd Platoon effectively blocked the road into Malmedy from the East by falling a large number of shade trees across Rt N-32 east of the Baugnez crossroads. While this type of obstacle was very useful against wheeled vehicles, it left much to be desired against tanks. The next day, the 21st, the 2nd Platoon was assigned the distasteful task of recovering the bodies of the ? Battalion who had been murdered in cold blood in (Continued)

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE BATTLE (Continued)

what had been a peaceful farm. By now the bodies were covered by snow and only by sweeping the entire area with mine detectors were all the bodies located.

From the 24th of March, 1941 when I was inducted, no sight has ever left such a lasting impression. Sickened as we all were by this outrage, I believe that our determination to stick it out could not now be shaken regardless of any course the enemy might take. It is ironic that American activity of the next three days did more to hurt our morale than any deeds of the Germans. On December 22nd & 23rd, the various units now in Malmedy, along with many of its civilians, were subjected to bombing raids by flights of B-17s, the well-known Flying Fortress. On the 24th, our unwelcome visitors were P-47 fighter bombers. The damage to the center of town was great and casualties to civilians and soldiers were large. Capt. Conlon received a serious leg wound and I helped place him on a stretcher for eventual evacuation. His wound was evidently more serious than we realized as he never returned to the Battalion and his "B" Company.

Knowing 'Big John', I'm sure the loss of his company was as painful as his loss of blood. These three days were devoted to constant fire fighting and searching for anyone unfortunate enough to be trapped in the rubble. When one day ended and another began is beyond my recall. Everything just seemed to blend together. No start. No middle. No end. Although there was no activity by friend or foe on Christmas Day, our work of clearing and searching continued. On December 26th, the Battalion left Malmedy and headed West to regroup and continue our more normal work of supporting first line combat units.

At this time, I think a few personal observations are in order:

First, I believe the prompt actions of Capt John Conlon, Lt. Frank Rhea and the men of "B" Company made the defense of Malmedy possible. The quick and decisive decisions of Col. Pergrin in rallying all available support to this key area resulted in denying to the Germans a wide open network of roads to Liege and Brussels.

I cannot fully express my gratitude to Warren Rombaugh for turning over to me a finely trained platoon. Successfully taking over from him at such a critical time was only accomplished because they were a wonderful group of Non-coms. Staff Sgt Melton, the leader of the 2nd Platoon and the three squad leaders Sgt Harrington, Palmer and Hensel. To this day, I am firmly convinced that Sgt Red Hensel was the finest Engineer Non-com I ever met.

I hope that the people and things we missed while in service have been heaped bountifully on all the members of this truly fine Battalion.

HINDRANCE EN ROUTE TO THE BULGE

by Harold Shadday, 75th ID 289th IR

Our company, Cannon Company, 289th Infantry, of the 75th Infantry Division, almost did not reach the Bulge. We left the French coastal area east of Le Havre on December 17. We arrived in southern Holland the second afternoon. We spent two nights there. We were called out of our billets the second night before we got into our sleeping bags, and were told that the Germans had attacked in Belgium, and that we would leave early the next morning for the Liege, Belgium, area to meet the portion of the

division, which came up by train.

We left early the next morning and arrived at a big farm north of Liege in early afternoon. The building was in a large square with the family coat-of-arms over the main entrance. The front and sides were two stories high, and the rear was one story. Both sides, front to back, were stables with haylofts overhead. Some of us moved into a vacant stable on the left side. The rear corner was a chicken house, and then a gate to the outside, then storage space for farm equipment, and then storage area for grain. The owners' home was just inside the main gate, two stories high, plus a basement.

About 4:00 p.m. a motor went directly overhead. It sounded like a motor in a metal barrel. Twelve minutes later another went over, and they continued to come every twelve minutes. Either the, third or fourth was below the very low clouds, and we could see flames coming off the back. That confirmed that we were hearing buzz-bombs.

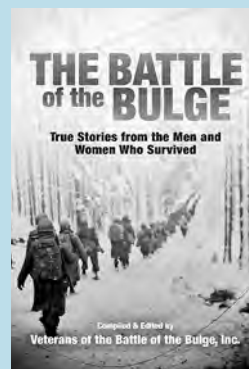
We went out every twelve minutes to try to see another, but they were up in the very low clouds. We had been up all-night the previous night, so most of us were in our sleeping bags by about 7⁰⁰ p.m. I was in mine, but not yet asleep. Suddenly another came very loud for probably two seconds, and there was a huge explosion. The door to our stable slammed against the wall.

We went out to see what had happened. It had blown a lot of the roof off, and some of our men who were bedded down in the haylofts, got roofing tile in on them. No one was hurt, so we went back to bed after the next one, and I don't know how much longer they came. The next morning we went out the back gate. The motor and small amount of the thing which still existed were within a few feet of the back wall. Some of the men said later that they found bullet holes in it, and assumed that was the reason it lost altitude.

One of our men who collected statistics upon everything, said many years later he stepped off 137 yards to where there had been a tree the previous day. All that was left was a stump a little larger than you>-. could reach around, and about knee high. If the tree had not been there, the buzz-bomb would have hit the back wall. If it would blow the roof off from over 130 yards, think what it would have done where I was bedded down probably thirty yards from the back wall, and many of the men were closer to the back wall.

We left that afternoon before the time they had started coming over the previous day, and the guns were on the line before morning. I wrote about the buzz-bomb once, and I went poetic. You know the poem-song, "Trees". My version was: "No forest green, no grove no clump Is half as beautiful as that stump."

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JACK VARUSO, 1ST INF, KIA JANUARY 26, 1945

by Randy Varuso, Associate

My Uncle Jack, like all of the family, was born in New Orleans. At just 18 years old he boarded a train, just blocks from where the National World War II Museum sits today, never to be seen again by his only brother and family until now.

With this winter and Christmas in particular marking the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, I have located in all probability the last film footage of my uncle Jack alive, taken December 26, 1944 in Bastogne Belgium, after a fierce battle with the German's on Christmas the day before.

What makes our story interesting, is since the loss of his only brother, my father Frank Varuso has watched hours and hours of and countless World War II film footage over the past 70 years looking for his brother. Over the years and on many occasions watching the old footage with him, my father would say his brother was out there somewhere. For years he stared at the faces of soldiers hoping for just a glimpse of his brother.

Recently as a gift to my father, my older brother "Jack" (named after my Uncle Jack), and recently retired from the Air Force sent him "THE WAR", a Ken Burns directed and produced DVD set about World War II aired on PBS. On an afternoon visit with my father, I noticed the DVD set and inquired as to where he had gotten them from.

My dad, who served in the Navy during World War II, and always eager to talk about the war and military told me about the DVD's, and mentioned one DVD in particular (*Episode Six – The Ghost Front*) highlighted some of the Battle of the Bulge battles fought under horrific cold and snow conditions in the Ardennes Forest and on Christmas Day in 1944 in the Town of Bastogne Belgium.

My dad knew it would interest me, because like my dad in recent years I had become increasingly interested in my uncle's whereabouts in the war and often wondered how he died. At my Dad's insistence I took the DVDs home, where they sat on my counter for a month, with my dad inquiring every other day if I watched them. One afternoon he again inquired and I told him I would look it that night, so around 9 PM I put *Episode Six – The Ghost Front* in the DVD Player. As I viewed the footage, my initial thoughts were the documentary was done very well, the background music, film footage and narrative kept my interest as the story moved closer to the documented date of my Uncle Jack's death, which was January 26th 1945.

As I continued to watch, there was this sadness I felt viewing the horrific conditions the young soldiers fought in, but it was the footage of soldiers getting a break from the harsh weather and fighting, and taking a moment to erect a small Christmas tree on December 26, 1944 in Bastogne, Belgium that really captured my interest.

The soldiers seemed to be relaxed and it appeared moral was good that day after breaking through the German Army that had surrounded them in the Town of Bastogne the day before on Christmas. With that, the camera panned over to several soldiers standing together, and for a second one of the faces, the last soldier in the clip caught my eye. It seemed to have happened so quickly, I had to re-play it numerous times to finally pause it in the right spot to get a clear picture of that last soldier on the end.

In staring at the soldier for the first few seconds nothing



Jack Varuso, 1st InfD, 26th Inf, Co B, at right in video still.

registered, and then in a confused moment it hit me, it was my uncle Jack. My God, after all these years there he was. As I sat there in the state of disbelief and amazement as to how I found him in this second and a half film clip, my thoughts and imagination could only wonder if it was a sign from him. Being my Uncle Jack's only family member to ever travel to his gravesite at the Henri-Chapelle America Cemetery in Belgium a few years ago, my visit was an emotional honor and privilege, and something I will always cherish.

Standing at the foot of his grave site I sensed this connection and felt I could see him and feel his presence, and now again for a moment the same emotions of this young man's face frozen in time has a message 70 years later. Although tempted to call my dad that night and tell him, it had gotten late, so rather than have him up all night thinking about it, I waited until morning.

The next morning I went to my Dad's home and without telling him why I was there, I placed the DVD in the player and called him over to watch. As he watched the DVD and at the precise moment I paused it, his emotions took over as he realized what he was seeing. Like me the night before, my Dad was in the state of disbelief realizing we found his brother. In looking at the paused still footage of my Uncle Jack with my Dad, we were struck by his expression. My Uncle Jack was smiling, a message and gift for my Dad written on his face. It was his smile that told us he was at peace.

At 87 years old and in failing health, this gift to my Dad was like no other I could have ever imagined, and something else he and I will carry with us always. As to the other men in the footage with my Uncle, it will be interesting to see if any of them are still alive, and can further tell the story of that day in particular.

If there are members out there that were in his Company or in the photo with him, I would love to connect with them. Randy Varuso, phone: 985-966-0274; email: randy@varuso.com

REMEMBERING THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

by Lynn W. Aas, 17th Airborne, 193rd GIR

My first combat experiences occurred in late December 1944. It was as rifleman in the 193rd Glider Infantry Regiment of the 17th Airborne Division. Our first assignment was to defend the perimeter area around Bastogne. This was immediately after the Nazis commenced their Ardennes Offensive, called the Battle of the Bulge. There had been much previous combat in the area and there were numerous dead bodies of young soldiers, both American and German, lying around, and all were frozen stiff. *(Continued)*

THE PRICE OF FREEDOM *(Continued)*

As we dug in our foxholes, the burial patrol made their way into the area and began loading the frozen bodies into two separate military open trucks. One was for the American bodies and the second for the Germans. I watched them stacked like rail ties, one on top of the other. This was my first emotional experience with the real trauma of combat. I was a very naïve North Dakota farm boy and this sight affected me greatly. Those young German corpses I saw resembled the German and Ukrainian lads I had grown up with near Benedict, North Dakota. I had no desire to kill them or destroy them. I was not raised that way. But I knew that I had to condition myself to the task that was obviously ahead of us.

I walked up to one of the dead German stiff and looked at him for some time. He was young, tall, blond, and handsome. I was supposed to hate him and destroy his comrades. I felt a need to do something to build up my hate. I went over and kicked this corpse. I was proving to myself that I could destroy him. He was my enemy. This was war.

On January 7, 1945, we made our first offensive attack. Prior to that time we were in a holding position. The weather was horrible. About a foot of snow was on the ground and a big blizzard was blowing in our face. We had no air or artillery support. We were to continue the offensive to the north and west in a pincher movement to reach the British, Canadian and American troops moving toward us. Our goal was to cut off the large number of German troops that advanced too far and were retreating. This had been the last hope of Hitler and the Nazis. We encountered a terrific barrage from their tanks and artillery. They were fighting to get back at all costs. Our objective was to capture a high-forested hill before nightfall. The Germans, meanwhile, were defending their path for a retreat back to the homeland.

About five minutes before the time for attack, as we were moving forward, our platoon runner tripped over a wire for a “bouncing Betty” booby trap. He fell forward escaping serious injury, but my platoon sergeant, my squad leader and another assistant squad leader were severely injured. Our mortar squad leader was killed. We had 55 soldiers in our oversized platoon, made up of three rifle squads and a mortar squad. Five were taken out of action in that initial incident.

This, of course, alerted the enemy and no surprise attack occurred, even though this was a half-hour before daylight. The Germans threw everything at us and I soon learned what damage the German 88mm cannon could do. After a couple hours of devastating artillery fire, we finally were able to move forward the 300 to 500 yards to the top of the hill and enter the wooded area. The Germans were in no mood to surrender or to retreat. Instead they threw all the firepower they could muster at us. This was no picnic. I was scared to near panic, but I had an absolute desire to survive.

A young farm boy from Kansas was in my squad. He was petrified of getting into combat. I shared a foxhole with this man, Gerald Tidball, the night before our jump-off. We had been alerted and knew that the time had come. Tidball kept repeating, “I know I am going to be killed.” He had often said earlier that he knew he would be killed when we entered combat. Shortly after we entered the wooded area, Tidball and I were lying side by side behind a high mound. Artillery was being hailed at us. I could see that it was being calibrated in our direction and I said, “Tidball, let’s get out of here.” To this Tidball responded that one place was as good as another. I moved about 50 yards. Tidball didn’t. The next barrage

came in and one warhead landed between where our heads were resting. The right half of his face was completely torn away. He died instantly. This happened just three of four hours after we first entered combat.

The Germans were not to be denied. They recaptured the area. We were forced out without attaining our objective. As I was retreating in the general direction of our entry, I encountered a good friend, Ed Morgenstern, in an upright position leaning against a tree. He was pale and in shock. Morgenstern had been with me while attending engineering classes at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in an earlier part of my military life. As I approached Ed, he pleaded, “Lynn, help me, I have been wounded.” I could not help him and had to continue my retreat. For many years afterward, those words haunted me, and I thought he did not make it. Fortunately, a medic truck was able to rescue him. Beverly (my wife) and I met Ed again in 1998 at a 17th Airborne Division reunion in the Pocono Mountains of Pennsylvania and, it was a thrilling moment in my life.

Shortly thereafter, as I was moving into the open as dusk was setting in, a machine gun opened fire. It was less than 100 yards away. I dived to the ground. An 18 year old soldier who joined us just two weeks before was following me. His name was James Miller. Jim also hit the ground. After the machine gun burst stopped, Miller jumped up to move forward. As he moved ahead of me a barrage of machine gun bullets hit him. He fell just three to four steps ahead of me. He was dead.

For about 45 days we continued on the front lines. The winter was horrible, reputed to be the worst on record. By mid-February 1945, we were walking in snow more than knee deep. We were cold, hungry and wet. We were pushing the enemy to the Siegfried Line. Digging a new foxhole about every other night, I recall sleeping inside a building only twice. One was in a Belgian barn attached to a house. Another two nights we slept on the floor in an old beat-up building in a hollow. High above us and to our immediate rear was a battery of large artillery, about 240mm firing all night. We received the muzzle blast all night long and our ears rang for days.

About every two weeks we received new underwear. Because it was so cold we merely put the new ones on the inside. At one time I had 3 pairs of long underwear and 2 pair of trousers on to keep warm. Then we got severe dysentery. You can imagine the problems we encountered. We never shaved, washed or brushed our teeth for about 45 days. We ate mostly K-rations and were always hungry. About February 25, 1945, we were given notice to pull off the line to retreat to the rear. My platoon had 55 soldiers when we entered on January 7th. On February 25, five of us walked out. It was Semington, Madoni, Mynx, Elzey and I. The rest were wounded, killed or gone because of frozen limbs or illness.

Our 193rd Regiment was so destroyed that we were merged into the 194th Glider Regiment and added an equal number of replacements. We were shipped back to the Reims area of France to reorganize for the airborne crossing of the Rhine.

Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

ATTENTION, ASSOCIATES: MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT!

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THE 148TH ENGINEER COMBAT BATTALION IN THE BULGE

by Lawrence T. Page, 148th ECB



The 148th Engineer Combat Battalion was stationed in Stolberg, Germany, East of Aachen on or about 14 Dec. 1944 after the capture of Aachen. On 17 December 1944 we received orders to pack up and move out about 5:00 PM as quickly and quietly as possible.

The weather was cold but clear with no snow at that time. It was getting dark and we travelled using only the blackout lights on the vehicles. We travelled all night on back roads to Maastricht, Hol-

land for our first stop and something to eat. There we were told of the German counter attack starting on 16 December 1944 in the Ardennes area.

From Maastricht we loaded up and moved to Liege, Belgium. Having no sleep since leaving Stolberg we were given pills to keep us awake. We eventually wound up being awake for over 48 hours on the road as we left Liege and travelled to Eupen, Belgium where demolitions were put on a bridge in case the Germans broke through.

From Eupen we went to Verviers, Belgium and set another bridge for demolition and the moved on to Stavelot where we were put on the front lines as infantry troops. The battalion was split up and each of the three companies had an area to lay mines. During this time the 148th ECB was attached to the 82nd Airborne Division to serve as front line troops during the battles of Stavelot, Malmedy, St. Vith, and Bastogne.

After Bastogne was relieved we were sent back to the Meuse River in Liege to practice the design and construction of different types of Bailey bridges in preparation to bridge the Rhine River. After some time in Liege we returned to the area of Stavelot, St. Vith and Malmedy to rebuild the roads and bridges that were destroyed during the Battle of the Bulge. That was the first time we were able to see the ground in that area since in had been deeply covered with snow during the battle.

Many of us had frost bitten feet because we did not have boots, just our regular issue shoes. We were issued boots when we returned to Liege for the second time.

Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

STAVELOT, DECEMBER 18, 1944

by Rudy Mello, 526th AIB



Once into combat, a person has three things enter his mind at least I did. They are fear, humor and sadness. We left Chateau Gri-monster and arrived in Stavelot between 5 and 6 am on December 18th and our squad was told to dig a fox hole on this small hill overlooking the Plaza or Town Square. To dig into that solid frozen ground was impossible, but it did not matter for with in minutes of digging we heard small arms fire

behind us and the sound told us it was not our guns.

Sgt. Huere had us leave the hill and go down into the Plaza where there was a fork in the road he thought the left fork would be the best for us so we headed up the hill then down past the Tannery (I think) toward the Ambleve River then across this small foot bridge turning right staying along the river.

Now and then we heard small arms fire from German guns but could not see them. Between waiting and zig zagging here and there we finally thought, oh boy we are cut off from the rest of the company. Soon we came across another foot bridge once there we waited looked to see if it was safe to cross with out getting shot. The Sgt. said lets go so I went across then another.

Then my good friend Moe Wolf came across, he had on these rubber boots with metal snaps but he left them unstrapped, when he started running across the little bridge the noise of metal sounded so loud in that valley, for sure we knew we would be heard but no all went well. After another half hour or so we came across a bunch of houses, we entered the back yard where again we heard small arms fire. I climbed onto this small roof to see what I could see and the fire came my way ducking I fell off the roof into what looked like an outside urinal, the other guys thought that was funny and let me know.

That broke the tension a little. We then decided to go into the house and out into the street of course running through the house we were surprised to see a family sitting down at their table having a late lunch or early dinner, we just kept running until we got out side. Then we started down the hill only to see Lt. Evans coming up the hill. You could really see tears in his eyes he said he thought we were all dead because no one had seen us for hours.

Lt. Evans then told us more or less what was going, he told a couple men to go with him and the rest toward Lt. Beardsle, which we did. Not much later word got to us that Sgt. Ellery and Lt. Evans had been killed. With all the running up down and about we ended up at the same cross road we had left hours ago. Maybe that why Lee (my wife) says I'm always running in circles.

The medals I received are the Combat Rifle Medal, American Campaign, Europe Theater, World War II, Good Conduct and a few years ago the medal for the Ardennes Battle.

Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be



VBOB flag on display in Bastogne War Museum

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

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

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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:

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Serial Number _____ Rank _____ Unit _____

Organization _____

(usually Company, Battalion and/or Regiment and/or Division) Please check one if applies: ☐ Killed in Action ☐ Died of Wounds

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**Orders should be mailed to: VBOB Certificate, PO Box 27430, Philadelphia, PA 19118-0430
703-528-4058 OR ORDER ONLINE: WWW.BATTLEOFTHEBULGE.ORG**

WELCOME ABOARD, NEW MEMBERS!

These new members joined VBOB between October 1, 2014 and January 10, 2015:

Gerald Caldera	635 AAA Weapons	Joseph P Logan	Associate
Gerard Counihan	Associate	Donna Borrelli Long	Associate
Ray Deveau	Associate	Frank Mahy	Associate
Griffen Diday	Associate	John Massey	Associate
Caroline Dierick	Associate	Curt Meltzer	Associate
Chris Ellis	Associate	Norbert Morb�	Associate
Gerald Fitchett Jr	Associate	Roger Neighborgall	5 Ranger Bn
Royce Foster	Associate	C Daniel Pettit	Associate
Don Fox	Associate	Monte Podewil	Associate
Kevin Fox	Associate	Saverio Pulice	78 InfD
Pauline C Fulton	Associate	Robert E Radspinner	Associate
Suzanne Barvir Godley	Associate	Leo J Ryan	284 Engr Combat Bn
June Grounds	Associate	John Shaginaw	Associate
Leonard "Bud" T Hanline	80 InfD	James M Siler	5 InfD
Eliot S Hermon	87 Chem Mortar Bn	David Traill	Associate
Timothy Hrabinski	Associate	Jack Van Eaton	78 InfD
Ariana Jones	Associate	Kevin Warren	Associate
Walter Keefe	Associate	Paul Wisecup	Associate
Suzanne Lawson	Associate	Richard Wolf	3rd Army

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

- Talking to people about VBOB and suggesting that they also join
- Spreading the word about our website: www.vbob.org
- Sending us articles to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*
- Attending our annual reunion, August 14-18, 2015 in Williamsburg, VA (See details in May 2015 issue.)

THE 1567TH ENGINEER DEPOT CO IN BELGIUM

by John H.K. Masterson, 1567th Eng Depot Co

My WWII outfit, the 1567th Engineer Depot Company, was at Port of the Ile Monsin, near Liege, where I spent nine months with the U.S. Corps of Engineers from December 1944 to September 1945. We operated a huge depot there, sending tons of materiel to the troops on the front lines to build bridges, detonate bridges, pontoons, generators, etc. Directly across the Meuse from our base was a Quartermaster Dump which stocked thousands of meals for our troops as well as petroleum items such as five-gallon cans of gasoline for tanks and trucks, which the Germans hoped to have for their push toward Antwerp to divide the American and British forces.

Our E-514 Engineer Supply Depot contained some 75,000 tons of equipment. We also had a German Prisoner of War camp on the base. They helped load the equipment on trains and trucks for shipment to the front. There were two companies of white troops and one company of black troops on our base.

When word came down that Germans had parachuted behind our lines wearing American uniforms, speaking good English and causing trouble for our military police by turning road signs to confuse our men, we took precautionary measures to counter this. We

set up a perimeter guard around the island in mid-December after the battle had begun. Fortunately for us, the Germans never reached Liege.

But the city area received some 2,000 buzz bombs during the battle, more than London had received, as I have read. Four of the flying bombs (V-1) killed Belgians and destroyed buildings, frequently private homes. We learned to watch the bombs carefully, coming over the hill on the south side of the Meuse, which we called "Buzz Bomb Hill".

If a bomb were on the far horizon, we felt reassured that it would not hit us, but if it came directly over the hill towards us and the motor cut off before it got to us, then we hit the dirt or found a shelter.

Personally, I saw one that I felt had my name on it, but it landed near a barge moored in the basin nearby and caused little damage except to the Belgian barge operators who were cut by flying glass. All in all, we were very fortunate.

During the period we stayed there, I had the opportunity to meet a young lady in nearby Herstal or Jupille, I don't remember which. She introduced me to her family and I began to learn French. Later, after the war, I attended the University of Paris (Sorbonne), where I studied the French language and culture as well as French history. Unfortunately, I have never returned to visit Liege, which I liked.

Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

VBOB QUARTERMASTER ORDER FORM • FEBRUARY 2015

IMPORTANT NOTE: QM prices are sometimes changing, due to increasing manufacturing and shipping costs. Therefore, we will no longer accept old QM forms from previous issues of *The Bulge Bugle*. Please complete **this form** and send your payment to the address listed below.

Please ship the selected items to:

Name _____ (First) _____ (Last)
 Address _____ (No. & Street) _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip Code)
 Telephone number _____ E-mail address _____



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



#3. VBOB logo enamel lapel pin 1/2" \$6



#4. Navy baseball cap with 3" logo patch \$15



#5. Navy windbreaker with 4" logo patch \$36

Item/price	Quantity	Total
#1. \$4.75	x _____	= \$ _____
#2. \$5.50	x _____	= \$ _____
#3. \$6	x _____	= \$ _____
#4. \$15	x _____	= \$ _____
#5. \$36	x _____	= \$ _____
#6. \$25	x _____	= \$ _____
#7. \$16	x _____	= \$ _____
#8. \$16	x _____	= \$ _____
#9. \$10	x _____	= \$ _____
#10. \$1.25	x _____	= \$ _____
#11. \$1.25	x _____	= \$ _____
#12. \$7	x _____	= \$ _____



#6. Large VBOB logo neck medallion with a ribbon \$25



#7. VBOB gold bolo tie \$16



#8. VBOB gold belt buckle \$16



#9. Challenge coin 1 3/4" (gold tone with colored enamel) \$10

#5. \$36 x _____ = \$ _____
 size: circle one
 S M L XL XXL XXXL XXXXL



#10. VBOB logo decal 4" \$1.25
 #11. Windshield decal 4" \$1.25



#12. License frame (white plastic with black printing) \$7



CERTIFICATE \$15 Full-color certificate attesting to veteran's service in the Battle of the Bulge. See page 29 for order form.

#6. \$25 x _____ = \$ _____
 #7. \$16 x _____ = \$ _____
 #8. \$16 x _____ = \$ _____
 #9. \$10 x _____ = \$ _____
 #10. \$1.25 x _____ = \$ _____
 #11. \$1.25 x _____ = \$ _____
 #12. \$7 x _____ = \$ _____

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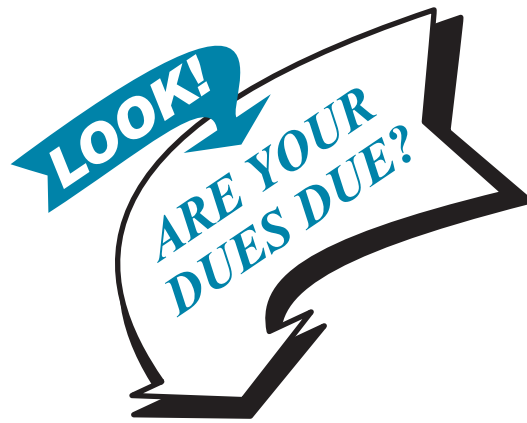
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Regular membership is for those who have received the Ardennes campaign credit. **Associate membership** is for relatives, historians or others with an interest in preserving the memory of the Battle of the Bulge. Both have the same rights and privileges.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

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Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip+4 _____

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

Campaigns _____

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

Regiment _____ Battalion _____

Company _____ Other _____

If applying as an Associate member, please provide the following information about yourself (esp. YOUR military service, if any):

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

The Bulge Vet's Name and Units _____

Your Military Service (if any): Dates _____ Branch _____

Applicant's Signature _____ Date _____

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