

# The BULGE BUGLE

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

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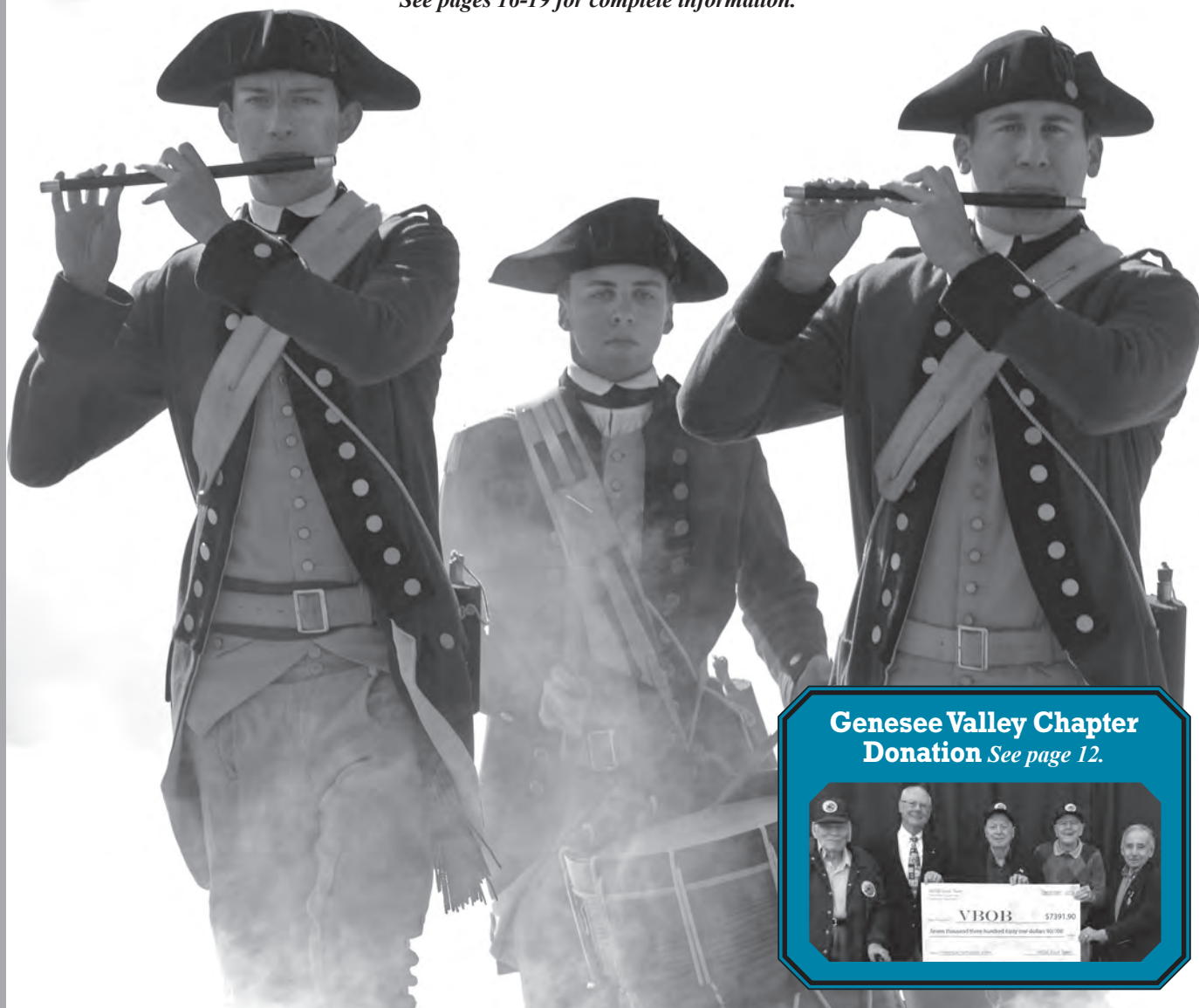
THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

May 2015

## JOIN US FOR THE VBOB NATIONAL 34th Annual Reunion

AUGUST 14-18, 2015 ★ WILLIAMSBURG, VA

*See pages 16-19 for complete information.*



**Genesee Valley Chapter  
Donation** See page 12.



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

PO Box 27430

Philadelphia, PA 19118

703-528-4058

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

**Editor:** Ralph Bozorth,  
Associate

**Historical Research:** John D. Bowen,  
Associate

### **ELECTED OFFICERS**

**President:** Alan Cunningham, Associate

**Executive Vice-President:** Doris Davis,  
Associate

**Vice President Membership:** Barbara  
Mooneyhan, Associate

**Vice President Chapters:** Sherrie Klopp,  
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**Treasurer:** Duane R. Bruno, Associate

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Tom Ingram, 90th Infantry Division

Alfred Shehab, 38th Cavalry Squadron

### **BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION**

**President:** Alfred H.M. Shehab,  
38th Cavalry

### **VBOB PAST PRESIDENTS**

|                     |                  |
|---------------------|------------------|
| Clyde Boden*        | 1981-84          |
| Robert VanHouten*   | 1984-86          |
| George Chekan*      | 1986-88; 2004-05 |
| William Greenville* | 1988-90          |
| Darrell Kuhn*       | 1990-92          |
| William Hemphill*   | 1992-93          |
| William Tayman      | 1993-94          |
| Grover Twiner*      | 1994-95          |
| Stanley Wojtusik    | 1995-97; 2006-07 |
| George Linthicum*   | 1997-99          |
| John Dunleavy       | 1999-01          |
| Louis Cunningham    | 2001-03          |
| Demetri Paris*      | 2008-10          |
| J. David Bailey     | 2010-12          |
| Douglas Dillard     | 2012-14          |

\* Deceased

## **CHAPTER PRESIDENTS**

### **ALABAMA**

#### **Gen G.S. Patton, Jr. (11)**

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Worcester, MA 01609

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[President in transition. No current information as of publication deadline.]

### **Ohio Valley (31)**

[President in transition. No current information as of publication deadline.]

### **Southcentral Pennsylvania ((45)**

[President in transition. No current information as of publication deadline.]

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Telephone 703-528-4058  
e-mail: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)

### **The Bulge Bugle:**

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Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.  
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### **VBOB WEB SITE:**

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



### **FACEBOOK:**

[www.facebook.com/pages/Veterans-of-the-Battle-of-the-Bulge](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Veterans-of-the-Battle-of-the-Bulge)



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

### Alan Cunningham, Associate



Just before Christmas, the new Belgian Ambassador, H.E. Johan Verbeke, requested that we hold a VBOB Commemoration in DC for the 70th Anniversary of the end of the Battle of the Bulge. As a result of the short time available to plan an event, we kept it to only one day. The commemoration was held on 27 January 2015 and included

wreath layings at the World War II Memorial, VBOB Memorial, and Tomb of the Unknowns. After these events, we went to the Ambassador's residence for coffee and cake followed by the premiere U.S. screening of the movie "The Forgotten Angel of Bastogne," which was seen by those who attended the 70th anniversary celebrations of the start of the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium and Luxembourg. The evening was capped by Belgian beer and snacks after a long day. Ambassador Verbeke was so impressed with VBOB that he invited us back for our Anniversary Celebration in December. We will be working with him on this during the year.

We have been working very hard behind the scenes to put together an excellent reunion this year in Williamsburg, Virginia. We are keeping the "official events" to only three days and a reception the first night. This will allow families to plan addition

days if they want to visit Colonial Williamsburg or Busch Gardens/Water Country on their own (the hotel has a shuttle bus that goes to both locations). The three days will include: A day at Fort Lee, center of Army Logistics and home of the Quartermaster and Women's museums; a day to recover and have our meetings and banquet; and a day visiting the Jamestown Settlement and Yorktown Victory Center to cap off our events. *See the full listing of events and reservation form on pages 16-19.*

I mentioned that Members of the Executive Council were going to visit as many local chapters as we could, and we are already in the process of visiting chapters while we travel around the country. In addition, we have awarding grants to the Southeast Florida and Kansas chapters for installing a monument and permanent bench commemorating the sacrifices made by our Veterans during the Battle of the Bulge. Additional grants will be given out based on requests from chapters and approved plans.

To facilitate spreading the word about VBOB, we designed and produced name badges for all of the members of the Executive Council, and made badges available for any local chapter to purchase for themselves. To purchase, go to [www.badgeworksplus.com/orderonline](http://www.badgeworksplus.com/orderonline) and click on the VBOB logo. Badges for the Executive Council are in gold and the badges for other members are in white. The cost is minimal and the quality is good. I encourage members (or local chapters) to purchase badges to wear, when appropriate, while attending functions to assist in spreading the word about VBOB.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our reunion in Williamsburg 14-18 August 2015, and hope you have a wonderful year.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### CHRISTMAS PRESENT FROM BELGIUM



**Leonard J. Fazio,  
1st InfD**

What a wonderful Christmas present my family and I received this past Christmas! We had a guest visitor, the great grandson of a wonderful and brave couple, “Mom and Pop” Meyntjens, the Belgian husband and wife and family who befriended our Dad in the Battle of the Bulge. Sven, their great grandchild, had grown up hearing the family stories of the tall, quiet, and kind American soldier. And so he came to see us, and we spent a few wonderful days this past December, and brought our Father’s story full circle—a circle of love and courage from long ago. How happy our Mother and Father would have been!

You can read this remarkable story by going to the following website: [www.thirteen.org/newyorkwarstories/story.php?id=319](http://www.thirteen.org/newyorkwarstories/story.php?id=319)

**Angela M. Fazio, Assoc. Member &  
Daughter of Leonard J. Fazio, 1st Infantry,  
the Big Red 1, Purple Heart Recipient**

### SOULFUL MEMENTOES OF OMAHA BEACH



**Nicholas Zillas,  
285th Cmbt Engr**

Our father, Private First Class Nicholas Zillas, was a proud member of the 285th Combat Engineers in the Battle of the Bulge. Dad lived his life with a love of God, country and family. Dad instilled a deep degree of patriotism in his four children.

Dad marched yearly in the New York Veterans Day Parade, as well as in the Memorial Day Parade in Douglaston, New York well into his seventies until medical issues prevailed. Dad was also a secretary for many years for the

285th Combat Engineers, as well as the editor of their newsletter.

After the horrific events of 9/11, Dad was upset and saddened by what had occurred, not only to New York, but to the country. Dad began to channel his energy into creating patriotic wooden plaques, which he gave to family and friends. Dad began to create one that he was dedicating to Omaha Beach.

Years prior, a friend of Dad’s had gone to Omaha Beach and returned with some stones he brought back as mementoes. He gave the stones to another gentleman who then gave them to Dad, as he



knew of Dad’s abiding patriotism.

Our mother, Bessie Zillas, related to us that Dad had asked her which of the two stones should he place on the Omaha Beach plaque. Mom chose one of the two and Dad proceeded to create the plaque.

Days later, he brought the completed plaque to Mom and she was startled by what she saw. On the stone was a figure of a soldier complete with both his jacket and helmet. Mom thought that perhaps what she was seeing was a figment of her imagination, but as she showed it to other people, they all agreed there was a figure of a soldier on the stone. Mom feels, to this day, that a soldier left a part of his soul on the stone from Omaha Beach.

Dad passed away on October 14, 2011. Dad was very adamant that he wanted to be laid to rest in a military cemetery and he was. We salute Dad and all veterans both past, present, and future. May God bless them and our country and may their memories be forever eternal.

**Athena Zillas Carr, daughter of Bessie  
and Nicholas Zillas  
(Bessie Zillas, Associate, welcomes callers  
and may be reached at 718-463-1321.)**

### HISTORY OF THE GI BILL INTERVIEWS

The American Radio Works, a national radio documentary unit, is planning to create a documentary on the history of the GI Bill, from its original conception after WWII up to today with the Post 9/11 GI Bill. We are looking to chat with veterans of WWII who used the GI Bill in interesting ways. American Radio Works web site: [www.americanradioworks.org](http://www.americanradioworks.org).

Please contact me if you are interested in telling your story:

**Ryan Katz  
American Radio Works  
480 Cedar Street  
St. Paul, MN 55101  
[rkatz@americanpublicmedia.org](mailto:rkatz@americanpublicmedia.org)  
651-228-4876**

### PAUL FREDERICK ERNST, 10TH AD

*Courtesy of Stein Hospice, Sandusky, Ohio*

Born in 1923, “Doc” Paul Frederick Ernst, D.D.S. spent much of his life serving others. He was a Sherman Tank Commander in the 10th Armored Division during World War II. He fought (Continued)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR *(Continued)*

in the Battle of the Bulge and was awarded two Purple Hearts, serving his country from December 8, 1942 to August 4, 1945, before being shot by a German sniper and honorably discharged. He passed away, under the care of Stein Hospice, on June 14, 2014. Several years back, neighbor and Hospice nurse Ron Brooks helped Paul take advantage of Stein Hospice's Veterans Program by recording a Life Review Memory DVD of his military experiences.

"Paul was very gracious about sharing some of his combat experiences. He wanted the DVD for his family," said Ron Brooks. "It is a chance for Veterans to pass down words of wisdom to their loved ones. It's not just about their time in the military." The DVD is typically a panoramic view of the individual Veteran's life experiences from childhood through present day.

Through a Stein Hospice event, Brooks also encouraged Paul to view a documentary film about the "Honor Flight" program that flies veterans to Washington, D.C., to see the World War II Memorial and other memorials. Paul was so affected by the film that he immediately asked to take the actual "Honor Flight" tour and did so almost exactly one year prior to his passing.

For Paul's son Steve, it was a life-changing experience. "It was one of the most meaningful days I've had with my father," said Steve Ernst, who went through training and served as his father's guardian on the trip. "It meant a whole lot to have that time with him. It woke me up to the fact that my dad wasn't going to be here forever. Every day is a gift."

When Paul fell ill and took a six-month decline in health, his wife Diane, sons Steve and David, and daughter Ann turned to Stein Hospice once again in May 2014, placing Paul in the Stein Hospice Care Center.

Eventually, Paul wanted to go home. Since his symptoms required constant nursing attention Stein Hospice provided continuous care in the Ernst's residence. This allowed the family the opportunity and flexibility to bring Paul back into his own home. Diane felt the move was a blessing. Her husband was made comfortable right in their family room, and everyone, including the family dog,

could come and go to visit Paul with ease. The nursing staff handled all of his needs, allowing the family to focus on spending quality time with him.

"We were treated with confidentiality, kindness and respect. The nurses ... there wasn't one that wasn't totally devoted and compassionate," said Diane Ernst. "The Hospice staff united our family and were lifesavers, physically and emotionally." "I am eternally grateful for the nurses that helped us," added Steve Ernst. "It's courageous what they do for their patients and their patients' families."

Stein Hospice would like Paul's family and friends to know it was an honor to serve "Doc" and to give back to a Veteran who gave so much of himself to others over the years.

**Submitted by Sherry Klopp,  
Vice President Chapters**

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## "MAKING HISTORY PROJECT" CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

I am an oral historian who interviews World War II veterans. My latest projects/trips were to Normandy for the week of June 6th; Dallas, TX for the 82nd Airborne Annual Reunion and to Madison, WI for the Oral History Association annual conference.

I sit down with Veterans and preserve their stories through video interviews. Those stories are shared with the Veteran, the Veteran's family, and the archives of the U.S. Library of Congress and the National World War II Museum. More information about this process and my experience is included in the brochure that I provide to Veterans.

Veterans who would like to give an oral history, please contact me and I will be happy to interview you.

**Patrick Russell**

**Tel. (305) 608-2977**

**Email: [patrick@making-history-project.com](mailto:patrick@making-history-project.com)**

**Facebook: [www.facebook.com/makinghistory-project](http://www.facebook.com/makinghistory-project); Twitter: @MakingHistoryPR**

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## 2016 VBOB EXECUTIVE COUNCIL NOMINEES

The following 2016 slate of candidates was approved by the Nominating Committee, and will be voted upon during the 2015 reunion in Williamsburg, VA:

**President:** Alan Cunningham

**Executive Vice President:** Barbara Mooneyhan

**Vice President Chapters:** Sherry Klopp

**Vice President Membership:** Angela Fazio

**Treasurer:** Duane Bruno

**Recording Secretary:** Tracey Diehl

**Corresponding Secretary:** Doris Davis

**Three Year Trustees:** Robert Rhodes, James Triesler, Ruth Hamilton

**Two Year Trustees:** Mike Levin, Bert Rice, Gary Higgins

**One Year Trustees:** Alfred Shehab, Thomas Ingram, Bob Bowles

—Submitted by Doug Dillard, Chairman, Nominating Committee

## ANGELA M. FAZIO

*Angela M. Fazio's name has been placed in nomination for the national position of VP Membership. Here is a brief professional biography, for those who don't know her:*

Angela M. Fazio, a lifelong resident of a town in Queens, New York, is the oldest child and daughter of Leonard J. and Ann Fazio. Her father was in the 1st Infantry, the Big Red 1, fought in the Battle of the Bulge, and a Purple Heart recipient.

Patriotism was a beautiful trait fostered in her life, and so to honor her father and also as a proud American, she has been an Associate Member of V.B.O.B. Chapter #52, Staten Island, for 12 years now, serving as their Recording and Corresponding Secretary.

Angela is an Educator of 44 years in the parochial schools ... a teacher, a principal, and for the past two years, the Facilitator for the Fine and Performing Arts for the Catholic elementary schools in Brooklyn and Queens, N.Y. Part of her belief in a good education is to foster fine American citizenship.

A favorite quote of hers by Emerson is, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm", and hopefully that has been a hallmark of her life. She is honored to have her name placed in nomination.

# 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](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org).

**We have been notified, as of March 31, 2015, that these members of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. have also recently passed away:**

|                          |                          |                           |                   |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Addor, Donald            | 10 ArmDD                 | McKelvey, Jr., Paul G.    | 159 Engr Cmbt Bn  |
| Anderson, Russell G.     | 3 ArmDD                  | McMullan, John J.         | 26 InfD           |
| Babecki, Alfred J.       | 1255 Engr Cmbt Bn        | Mistler, John W.          | 75 InfD           |
| Bailey, Charles E.       | 28 InfD                  | Moore, Glenn E.           | 99 InfD           |
| Behrends, Robert L.      | 106 InfD                 | Morphis, Bert H.          | 1 InfD            |
| Berinato, Frank          | 26 InfD                  | Nelson, Lawrence G.       | 101 AbnD          |
| Black, Jr., Ewell        | 106 InfD                 | Nickell, Carl D.          | 106 InfD          |
| Bloemer, Sr., Raymond    | 518 MP                   | Odekirk, Norman C.        | 75 InfD           |
| Brewer, Jr., Hugh        | 75 InfD                  | Olsiewski, Watson W.      | 26 InfD           |
| Brewer, William          | 80 InfD                  | Pawlik, John              | 87 InfD           |
| Broda, Roman             | 1 Air Cargo Supply Depot | Perdue, Elijah C.         | 2 InfD            |
| Burk, Lewen              | 300 Engr Cmbt Bn         | Peters, Paul              | 87 InfD           |
| Chekan, George           | 9 InfD                   | Pole, Edwin J.            | 3137 Sig Mtr Co   |
| Chilek, Jr, Rudy V.      | 101 AbnD                 | Price, William F.         | 94 InfD           |
| Cimino, Sam J.           | 76 InfD                  | Pulice, Saverio           | 78 InfD           |
| Clampett, Billy H.       | 99 InfD                  | Raley, Melvin G.          | 4 InfD            |
| Condon, Carlyle W.       | 1 InfD                   | Ray, Marion               | 106 InfD          |
| Cooper, Leslie           | 101 AbnD                 | Reed, Russell E.          | 84 InfD           |
| Cresswell Jr, Robert     | 291 Engr Cmbt Bn         | Reese, Robert R.          | 17 FAO Bn         |
| Cunningham, Milton       | 9 ArmDD                  | Rosenzweig, Alvin D.      | 78 InfD           |
| Davis, Dorothy           | 57 Fld Hosp              | Sansom, James F.          | 28 InfD           |
| Deeken, Alex             | 18 AbnD                  | Satterthwaite, Stacy T.   | 90 InfD           |
| Demasi, Vivian           | Associate                | Seitz, Clinton E.         | 12 ArmDD          |
| Dobeck Sr, Frank         | 35 InfD                  | Serkes, Milton J.         | 14 FAO Bn         |
| Elston, Floyd L.         | 106 InfD                 | Seymour, Jack E.          | 8 ArmDD           |
| Evans, William S.        | 90 InfD                  | Sheehan, Robert           | 9 ArmDD           |
| Ezratty, Joseph          | 99 InfD                  | Shell, Carl L.            | 9 ArmDD           |
| Fary, Raymond E.         | 82 AbnD                  | Smith, Orval              | 87 InfD           |
| Fenzel, Hugh             | 26 InfD                  | Smith, Ralph L.           | 160 Engr Cmbt Bn  |
| Fitzpatrick, Robert J.   | 90 InfD                  | Smith, Thomas W.          | 94 InfD           |
| Fowle, Herb              | 4 InfD                   | Stallman, Sr., Edwin      | 101 AbnD          |
| Gallagher, Charles J. P. | 80 InfD                  | Summerlot, Robert L.      | 6 ArmDD           |
| Gowdey, Dwight M.        | 1303 Engr GS Reg         | Thiesen, Kenneth J.       | 106 InfD          |
| Griffith, John M.        | 11 ArmDD                 | Thome, Michael N.         | 106 InfD          |
| Hawkins, Vernon V.       | 953 FA Bn                | Thompson, Homer H.        | 84 InfD           |
| Heppner, Francis J.      | 238 Engr Cmbt Bn         | Tucker, Carl D.           | 3 ArmDD           |
| Hickman, Thomas W.       | 28 InfD                  | Unger, Gil                | 90 InfD           |
| Hicks, Charles R.        | 422 InfD                 | Verzosa, A. Norbert       | 90 InfD           |
| Hyre, John M.            | 202 Engr Cmbt Bn         | Waldo, H. Bruce           | 17 AbnD           |
| Jarntowski, George S.    | 103 InfD                 | Walling, Robert W.        | 1 InfD            |
| Kaprelian, David         | 736 FA Bn                | Waters, George K.         | 796 AAA AW Bn     |
| Katlic, Charles E.       | 99 InfD                  | Wickert, Wayne A.         | 10 ArmDD          |
| Kohlenberg, Stanley W.   | 2 ArmDD                  | Winship, Walter E.        | 10 ArmDD          |
| Kurth, Raymond P.        | 106 InfD                 | Worthington, III, John T. | 295 Engr Cmbt Bn  |
| Lancaster, James G.      | 10 ArmDD                 | Wren, Calene R.           | Associate         |
| Larson, Clifford W.      | 82 AbnD                  | Yanchik, Pete             | 106 InfD          |
| Linnell, Sr., Paul F.    | 75 InfD                  | Zahn, John D.             | 106 InfD          |
| Lufft, Carl H.           | 196 FA Bn                | Zelazny, Jr., Joseph      | 1278 Engr Cmbt Bn |
| MacDonald, William R.    | 7 ArmDD                  | Zolandz, John A.          | 9 AF              |
| Marowitz, Richard M.     | 42 InfD                  |                           |                   |



# GEORGE CHEKAN 1923 - 2015

## Company C, 39th Infantry, 9th Infantry Division

by John D. Bowen, Associate



George Chekan, *Bulge Bugle* Editor and past VBOB President

George Chekan, our friend and *Bulge Bugle* Editor, died on Thursday, 26 February 2015. He was a resident of Huntingtown MD. Born on 30 April 1923 to Andrew and Ann Chekan, in Calumet, PA, George was a 1941 graduate of Hurst High School, in Mount Pleasant, PA.

George entered the service on 30 Jan 1943 at Greensburg Pennsylvania and joined the 9th Infantry Division in North Africa, and participated in the following campaigns: Sicily, Normandy, Northern France, Central Europe, Ardennes and Rhineland. He fought in the Battle of the Bulge and was President of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge twice: in 1986-88 and 2004-05. He was the publisher and editor of *The Bulge Bugle* newsletter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge for over 25 years. His editorship of this newsletter was what bound the organization

together. George was employed by *The Washington Post* for 30 years in their advertising and promotion department.

He was the husband of the late Marion Chekan and loving father of Dennis, Linthicum MD; Margaret Ann (Brad) Land, Huntingtown MD; George Jr. (Carol), Raleigh NC; Timothy (Margaret), South Riding VA; and David, Upper Marlboro MD. He was the Grandfather of Jacob and Rachel Land; Kimberly, Katie and Scott Chekan; Sally and Reed Chekan. George was the brother of Anna Marie Hanich, Roanoke VA; Edward Chekan, Bridgeville PA; Paul Chekan, Munhall PA; Joseph Chekan, Pittsburgh PA; Mary Lou Socher, Beaumont TX; and late brother of Andrew Chekan and sister Margaret Dudas.

George was waked at the Borgwadt Funeral Home in Beltsville MD on Sunday 8 March, followed on Monday 9 March with a Mass of Christian burial at Saint Gregory Byzantine Catholic Church in Beltsville MD, followed by a luncheon and burial service at Cheltenham Veteran's Cemetery in Cheltenham MD.

Charitable donations may be made in George's memory to the Southern Maryland Vocational Industries, 8000 Parston Drive, Forestville MD 20747 or on-line at [epic-smvi.org/donate](http://epic-smvi.org/donate).

**MAY HE REST IN PEACE.**

## VBOB MEMORIAL, HOMESTYLE



This picture shows a memorial set up by Sherry Klopp, VBOB Vice President Chapters, in her home for her father, Staff Sergeant Richard H. Switzer, 99th Infantry Division, 395th Infantry Regiment, Company H. Included in the memorial is the flag she was presented at his funeral, his dog tags, Battle of the Bulge medallions, Army hat, and other assorted items. Also pictured are two homemade army tanks. One tank was made by Richard, and one tank was made by James R. Mooneyhan, 502 Eng Light Co, father of Barbara Mooneyhan, VBOB Vice President Membership.

## WE NEED YOUR STORIES FOR "THE BULGE BUGLE"

A big "Thank You" to those who have submitted veterans' stories and photos for inclusion in *The Bulge Bugle*. Please continue to send us your Battle of the Bulge stories, because we are in danger of running out of stories to print. Associate members are reminded to submit stories about veterans you know who fought in the battle. Guidelines for submitting stories, letters and photos to be published in *The Bulge Bugle* are:

**Stories and letters:** Please send typewritten (not handwritten) text. We reserve the right to edit for length or clarity. Clippings/articles from newspapers or other periodicals should contain the name & date of publication.

(Over the years there have been many stories submitted that were far too lengthy to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*. These stories have been added to the VBOB web site: [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org))

**Photographs:** Please identify the place and/or people in the photograph. Photos will not be returned. (Photos copied on a copy machine are not suitable for publication.) If providing scanned images, scan at high-res (300 dpi.)

Please include your e-mail address or telephone number, in case we have to contact you.

**Send material to:** Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc; PO Box 336; Blue Bell, PA 19422; or by email to: [ralph@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:ralph@battleofthebulge.org)

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



# JOIN THE WORLDWIDE TRIBUTE TO AMERICA'S GREATEST GENERATION, SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2015



**Members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart at the grave site of Senator Dan Inouye, where the final wreath laying ceremony of the 70th Anniversary around-the-world Tribute will take place on Sunday, August 16, 2015.**

The goal of the 2015 "Tribute" is to set a Guinness World Record for the longest continuous wreath laying ceremony in history, with more than 2,000 individual wreath laying ceremonies taking place around the world, all on the same day.

Join us as we honor the World War II generation on the 70th anniversary of their greatest achievements with wreath laying ceremonies at locations around the world - all on the same historic day!

**A Spirit of '45 Day Annual Tradition:** One of the cornerstones of Spirit of '45 Day each year has been the "Tribute to America's Greatest Generation" — a cross country wreath laying ceremony that takes place in hundreds of communities on the second Sunday in August. The number of these community ceremonies has increased steadily each year since 2010, as communities across America take this opportunity to honor the courage, shared sacrifice, can do attitude, and selfless service of the men and women who were the ordinary heroes of the WWII generation, so that their legacy will continue to inspire future generations of Americans, especially the youth of our country.

**Taking the Tribute Around the World in 2015:** On Sunday, August 16, 2015, the Military Order of the Purple Heart (MOPH), with the cooperation of the American Battle Monuments Commission, the VA National Cemeteries Administration, the National Parks Service, and other groups, will be expanding the "Tribute" to include American cemeteries and WWII memorials around the world and all national cemeteries. The public is being invited to organize wreath laying ceremonies honoring members of the Greatest Generation in their local communities.

The 2015 "Tribute" will begin in the Western Pacific with a ceremony organized by the Philippine Scouts at the American cemetery in Manila, Philippines, and continue westward through Europe with individual ceremonies at each of the permanent American cemeteries and memorials that are managed by the American Battle Monuments Commission. The countries where these cemeteries and memorials are located are being invited to participate in this international commemoration honoring those who sacrificed their lives for the cause of freedom.

The "Tribute" will continue across the continental United States and end in Hawaii with a closing ceremony in the National Cemetery of the Pacific (aka the Punchbowl), one of 131 national

cemeteries managed by the Veterans Administration that will have wreath laying ceremonies that day.

**Military Order of the Purple Heart:** National Commander Pat Little is calling on the leaders of all veterans groups to take part in the 2015 "Tribute" to show solidarity in honoring their shared heritage of service and sacrifice. The MOPH is mobilizing its national network of regions, departments and chapters to help organize wreath laying ceremonies in all of its Purple Heart Cities, Counties and States and other affiliated organizations.

**Navy League Members to Pay Tribute to All Seaborne Services:** In July 2014, the Board of Directors of the Navy League voted unanimously to encourage its members to participate in Spirit of '45 Day, who are being asked to organize or participate in wreath laying ceremonies at all of the Navy Memorial's "Lone Sailor" and "Homecoming" statues as part of the 2015 70th anniversary around the ceremony. Members are also being encouraged to support the surviving WWII era ships, a number of which are hosting special events in 2015.

**Senior Living Communities and Care Givers:** Since 2010, the American Society on Aging and the Assisted Living Federation of America have been promoting awareness and participation among its national network of senior living communities and care givers, and is helping spread the word about the 70th Anniversary Commemoration and the "Tribute."

Atria Senior Living has been hosting annual Spirit of '45 Day events at all of its 189 communities for the past three years, receiving the 2012 Spirit of '45 Day National Community Partner Award.

**Major League Baseball:** Teams will be honoring the Greatest Generation at home games during August.

**We Honor Veterans:** Also participating in the 2015 "Tribute" are members of "We Honor Veterans," a joint program of the VA and the National Hospice and Palliative Care Organization, that promotes regional veterans hospice partnerships among hospices that help serve the end-of-life needs of veterans and their families. "We Honor Veterans" has been a strong supporter of the ongoing campaign to encourage public participation in Spirit of '45 Day each year in August.

**America's Funeral Homes participating in the Tribute:** Funeral homes across the country are actively participating in the "Tribute." Dignity Memorial, the nation's largest provider of funeral and cemetery services - have been hosting events in their communities, and donating their signature Spirit of '45 wreaths to groups that organize ceremonies in their communities.

**Bugles Across America volunteers performing "Taps":** Bugles Across America has been supporting the annual "Tribute" by providing volunteer buglers who are recruited through the nonprofit's website which maintains a database of more than 7,000 buglers.

**American WWII War Orphans** have also been actively participating in the annual "Tribute" in communities throughout America as a way to honor their fathers who were KIA during World War II.

**Sample "Tribute" ceremony guidelines** are being produced by MOPH for use during the August 16 ceremony. In the meantime, the Spirit of '45 Day Event Planning Toolkit includes basic instruction on how to organize a "Tribute" ceremony: [www.spiritof45.org/2014%20Event%20planning%20Toolkit.pdf](http://www.spiritof45.org/2014%20Event%20planning%20Toolkit.pdf)

# DONATIONS

We appreciate the generous donations from the following VBOB members and supporters, received January 11 - March 31, 2015:

|                          |                      |
|--------------------------|----------------------|
| Basler, Herman           | 4 ArmdD              |
| Blixt, Timothy           | Associate            |
| Bryant, Madeleine        | Associate            |
| Costales, Roberto        | Associate            |
| Dudas, William           | 2 InfD               |
| Fiorella, Sr., Peter     | 84 InfD              |
| Gaulke, Eugene           | 10 ArmdD             |
| Gormley, James           | Associate            |
| Henderson, Charlene      | Associate            |
| Jones, Jr., Frederick I. | 42 Sig Hvy Constr Bn |
| Kaiser, Elizabeth P      | Associate            |
| Liston, Earl             | 106 InfD             |
| Ludy, James C            | Associate            |
| McKinniss, Robert        | Associate            |
| Neighborgall, Roger      | 5 Ranger Bn          |
| Pagliuca, Frank          | 75 InfD              |
| Pardo, Bridget           | Donor                |
| Potier, Dominique        | Associate            |
| Puff, Paul               | Associate            |
| Rhodes, Robert           | Associate            |
| Rimmelzwaan, Rick        | Associate            |
| Rosborough, John         | Donor                |
| Rosborough, Otto         | Donor                |
| Snow, Paul F             | Associate            |
| Sperry, Jacob            | 75 InfD              |
| Tamas, Pamela            | Donor                |
| Tammara, Randy           | Associate            |
| Wahrsager, Kay           | Donor                |

## AND THANK YOU AGAIN TO OUR PAST DONORS:

From June 2010 to March 31, 2015 we had received 1,102 donations totaling \$40,987.33. Keep up the good work!

**CORRECTION:** In the May 2014 issue, we erroneously listed donor and VBOB member Vernon J. Schaefer as an Associate. He is, in fact, a Life Member, 10 ArmdD, HQ Battery, Div. Artillery. We sincerely apologize for the error.

## DONORS SPOTLIGHT

We often receive donations in memory of recently departed VBOB members. We were overwhelmed by the generosity of the family and friends of Billy H. Clampett, 99 InfD:

Banes, Brent & Ashley  
Banes, Phil & Sheila  
Barron, Thuy  
Cabeza, Phyllis J  
Chevalier, Paris  
Cordonnier, Michael J  
Ehrlich, Ellen  
Gonzalez, Marianne  
& Francesco  
Hamra, Sam & June  
Lathrop, Charles & Angie  
Lathrop, Gene & Sandy  
Lathrop, HC & Betty  
Lathrop, JD & Cindy  
Lovers Lane United  
Methodist Church  
McGovern, Arlette  
& Bobby  
McQueary, Mark L



**Billy H. Clampett, 99 InfD**

Monier, Colleen  
Moses, Debi & Mike  
Ott, William  
Shull Family  
Springer, Bobbi  
Thrasher, David & Barbara  
Wosyk, John L



**Charles E. Bailey, 28 InfD**

Also very generous were these family members and friends of Charles E. Bailey, 28 InfD, who also recently passed away:

Bailey, Roland  
Bott, David & Linda  
Doyle, James R  
Montgomery, Margaret  
Mullin, Daniel  
Ulmer, Edna Mae  
US Transportation Command,  
Legislative Affairs



**LIKE US ON FACEBOOK:**

[www.facebook.com/pages/Veterans-of-the-Battle-of-the-Bulge](http://www.facebook.com/pages/Veterans-of-the-Battle-of-the-Bulge)

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE:**

[www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org) OR [www.vbob.org](http://www.vbob.org)





## DOUG DILLARD INDUCTED INTO GEORGIA MILITARY HALL OF FAME



Past President of VBOB Doug Dillard, 82nd Airborne Division (far right, back row) was inducted into the Georgia Military Veterans' Hall of Fame in a ceremony in November 2014.

## ART MOHOR, PHIL POLLOCK AWARDED FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR

In order to express France's eternal gratitude to those who liberated it from oppression from 1944-45, the Consul General of France in Atlanta, Denis Barbet, bestowed the Legion of Honor upon 11 American WWII Veterans from Georgia on January 27, 2015 in Atlanta, GA.

—Submitted by Duane Bruno, Associate

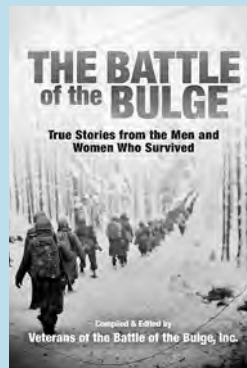


(l-r) John Mohor, Associate (Art's son); Art Mohor, 94th ID; Phil Pollock, 87th ID; Duane R. Bruno, Associate/Treasurer



VBOB member Art Mohor, 94th ID, receiving the Legion of Honor medal from the French Consul General Denis Barbet.

### BUY THE VBOB BOOK OF YOUR STORIES



Now available for \$34.99:

**Barnes & Noble bookstores:** Place an order with ISBN and title\*  
**Online:** Amazon: [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com); Barnes & Noble: [www.barnesandnoble.com](http://www.barnesandnoble.com)

\*To order, provide the ISBN and the title of the book:

ISBN: 978-0-9910962-3-7

Title: *The Battle of the Bulge:*

*True Stories From the Men and Women Who Survived*

**The book is not sold by VBOB.**



## FORMER GENESEE VALLEY CHAPTER DONATES \$7,391.90 TO VBOB



(l-r) Tom Hope, HQ. 19th Corps; David Brookins, USMC/HQ III Marine Amphibious Force-Vietnam, Associate; Jerry Beaudin, 45th InfD/Korea, Associate; Frank Colgan, 87th InfD.; Max Boudakian, 29th InfD, Associate; Michael Riordan, Rochester Institute of Technology.

*This is a letter that was sent to VBOB President Doug Dillard from the Book Committee, Former Genesee Valley Chapter, Webster NY:*

Dear Colonel Dillard;

As you are aware, members of the former Genesee Valley Chapter had formed a committee for the purpose of publishing a collection of veteran's memoirs. As the local chapter had disbanded, it was necessary that an existing entity be found to fill the role of publisher. The committee negotiated an agreement with your organization to serve in that capacity.

The collection of memoirs, which mostly centered on the Battle of the Bulge, was the brainchild of Jerry Beaudin, an associate member, who worked closely with David Bush, an officer of the local chapter. Together, with help from members Tom Hope, Max Boudakian, Frank Colgan, Marcel Blackman (now deceased), and Dave Brookins, along with Rochester Institute of Technology professor Michael Riordan, they produced the hard-copy book *The Battle in Common*. The sales of the hard-copy book are now complete. As was our agreement all net proceeds of the sale of the book are to be transferred to the publisher. That amount totals: \$7,391.90 and is reflected in the attached check. An indirect contribution to The Monroe County, NY Veteran's Outreach Center, was made by allowing that organization to act as a local distributor whereby it received a standard commission on sales.

We thought it fortunate and appropriate, on the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, that we are able to make this contribution. Going forward, with the additional help of Michael Riordan from RIT, e-book formats of *The Battle in Common* will be available through Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Apple iBooks.

Net proceeds from these sales will also accrue to the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. by way of electronic transfer to a special account, under the control of your treasurer, established for that purpose.

Attached you will also find a photograph of our Book Committee. We were pleased to see an article in *The Bulge Bugle* this past February recognizing our efforts. We hope that this photo also finds its way into an upcoming edition of *The Bulge Bugle*.

We expect that our contribution to your wonderful organization will ensure its continued success in service to our veterans and their families.

Sincerely,

Jerry Beaudin, USA Korea

Max Boudakian, 29th Inf Div

Dave Brookins, USMC Vietnam

Frank Colgan, 87th Inf Div

Tom Hope, Hqs 19th Corps

Michael Riordan, Rochester Institute of Technology

## CHAPTERS COMMEMORATE THE 70TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE



### Hudson Valley Chapter (49), NY December 16, 2014 Luncheon

(back row, l-r) Robert Mosall, 75th ID, 289th IR, Co C; Edward Graffeo, 731st FA Bn; Thomas Gatta, 35th ID, 134th IR, Co E; Allan Atwell, 28th ID, 28th MP Platoon; Matthew Swedick, President (Grandfather was KIA 12-17-44 2nd ID, 23rd IR, Co K). (front row, l-r), John Monahan, 731st FA Bn; Mario Checca, 106th ID, 422 IR, Co F; Lillian Yonally, WASP/Airforce; Richard Pearce, 87th ID; Coolidge Copeland, 87th ID.

—Submitted by Matthew Swedick, Associate, Chapter 49 Pres.



### Duncan Trueman Chapter (59), NY December 14, 2014

Crystal Run Galleria, December 14 Commemoration of the 70th Anniversary of the opening of the Battle of the Bulge: (l-r) Dan Depew, Wallkill Town Supv; M/Sgt Mary Kaye Messenger (USMA Band); S/Sgt Jeffrey Wissner (USMA Band); Maj. Shauna Hann (USMA); Eliot Hermon, VBOB 87 Chem Mortar Bn, Chapter 59 Pres; Sen. Bill Larkin, Ralph Osterhoudt Sr, VBOB, 575 FA Bn; Steve Neuhaus (Orange Cty Exec); Vincent Marino, VBOB, 106 InfD.

## TRIBUTE TO FORMER INDIAN RIVER CHAPTER PRESIDENT



Al Babecki, 1255  
Engr Cmbt Bn

Fifty years after the Battle of the Bulge, Al Babecki spearheaded the Indian River Chapter for Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and served as Chapter President for many years.

During World War II, Al served in the 1255th Engineer Combat Battalion. In 1989 he became the original editor of the newsletter for that group and continued writing, typing and even mailing the Bulletin to members across the country.

Al and his wife Dory had moved to Barefoot Bay, Florida in 1986 after he retired from NASA - Goddard Space Flight Center, in Greenbelt, MD.

After a life of service, both military and community, Al passed away on January 17, 2015, at the age of 89. After cremation, Al was put to rest in Arlington National Cemetery with a military service.

Here is a poem Al Babecki wrote about the war in 1994:

#### IN MEMORIAM

This memorial service is a rightful obligation  
For a group like ours to perform with concentration,  
To honor those persons who meant a great deal  
In our young lives when war was unreal.

These were our Friends, our Comrades in arms.  
They came from cities, villages, and farms;  
And, with us, they trained to build and to kill,  
To help our country in its hours of peril  
Brought on by despots in the East and the West  
Who threatened our Freedom, and that of the rest.

These were our Buddies with whom we spent time  
In huts and in tents, on ship and Europe's grime.  
On them we learned to depend for our future.  
And they on us: the Buddy System was super,  
Except for those few who paid with their lives  
So the Battalion, the U.S., and democracy survives.

These were our Pals; they showed us much fun,  
Along with the engineer missions we had run.  
We'll never forget them as long as we live,  
For they had much to offer, and much to give.  
And, whether they died in battle, or later,  
To us their service couldn't have been greater.

And, now as we honor these heroes of ours,  
Let us pause to remember them as among God's stars;  
And, as we prepare for our next year's reunion,  
We should maintain with them a constant communion;  
For what is a man, if he's not remembered  
By his family and friends for all that he's rendered?

Our time, too, will come for certain  
As Life lowers on us its final curtain.  
We hope that those who remain behind  
Will meet like this to keep us in mind.

—Submitted by his daughter, Barbara Jones

## LAMAR/SOUTTER/CENTRAL (22) CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

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

Chapter XXII was created by Doctor John E. McAuliffe, roughly twenty-two years ago. Dr. McAuliffe was a dentist and has devoted his retirement years to educate the general public, not only by writing articles concerning the Fallen Heroes and the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, but also in the past twenty and some years he has been the President of Chapter XXII. He has led his team to hold at least three annual formal meetings a year. He planned and organized special events, which were dedicated to erect Memorial Monuments, such as:

- VBOB Monument at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Agawam, MA.
- VBOB Monument at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Bourne, MA.
- VBOB Monument at College Square in Worcester, MA.
- VBOB Monument at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Winchendon, MA.
- VBOB Monument in Honor of the “Wereth Eleven”, who were tortured and massacred by the German SS on Sunday 17 December 1944 in Wereth, Belgium. Monument was inaugurated on August 20, 2006 at the Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Winchendon, MA.

In the past six months Chapter XXII had:

- A regular meeting at the Museum of Fort Devens, Devens, MA.
- A very special meeting at the Winchendon Cemetery initiated by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts State Representative S. Harrington, attended by five State Representatives, the State Commissioner of Veterans Affairs, and all branches of the Services in uniform.
- A rededication of the Holy Cross VBOB Monument on November 11, 2014 Attended by six State Representatives, one of whom was a guest speaker, the Navy Commander of the Holy Cross ROTC, also Lt/Colonel Ciro Stefano, Commander of the W.P.I. Army ROTC in Worcester, MA., who was the main guest speaker, and the President of the Holy Cross College and many veterans.

Beside the above the Secretary of Chapter XXII was invited by the Junior Air Force ROTC to participate in five question and answer sessions pertaining to the Battle of the Bulge; each session lasting an hour, these were held at the South High School on Apricot Street in Worcester, MA. On March 4, 2015 Chapter XXII was asked to participate in a question and answer session by the West Boylston Historical Society. Twenty eight members asked questions from 7:00 to 8:45 PM. On Friday, March 20, 2015 Chapter XXII will be at the Fort Devens Museum to answer questions from the students of the eight grade class of the Brookline High School, who will be coming from Brookline, New Hampshire. In the last two years Chapter XXII members have attended ceremonies and high school programs at:

- South High in Worcester, MA
- Shirley, MA High School
- Ayer, MA High School
- Paxton, MA Junior High School

- West Boylston, MA High School
- Littleton High School

*Note from the author:* As a young U.S. citizen, I was in Belgium all through WWII. I am a retired Manufacturing Manager, Tufts University Mechanical Engineer 1960, U.S. Army veteran.

## A BELGIAN MOTHER’S FLAG

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

The picture below was taken five years ago in our living room. It shows the flag Mother sewed during World War II in our temporary home in Bierges-lez-Wavre, Belgium.

Mother, Alix U. de Kerchove, was a Belgian. She married Gustave R. de Marcken, who was raised and educated in Chicago, Illinois. They had nine children, all born U.S. citizens and registered at the U.S. Embassy in Brussels, Belgium.

Mother knew that our flag had forty-eight stars and thirteen stripes. However, Dad was already in a German concentration camp and could not tell her that the stars should be pointing up. Mother sewed the flag piece by piece at night, when the German guard was asleep. She would hide the flag under the floor in her bedroom, where she had loosened a floorboard, and had pulled a small piece of furniture over the board, so as to hide her work from the German SS, who would at times come to search our home.

None of us knew that she was making this flag. We only heard about it on September third (3rd) 1944, when she heard that the American troops were approaching our home.



(l-r) Herbert H. Adams, 82nd AB, 504th PIR, Co D; Helen Najarian-Rusz, Nurse, 59th Evac Hospital; Francis J. Gaudere, 30th ID, 119th IR, HQ Co; John E. McAuliffe, 87th ID, 347th IR, Chapter 22 Pres.

## VBOB Videos—We Want You!

View them on our website at [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org):  
click on “Veterans’ Video Stories.”

Tell us if your chapter would like to arrange for us to visit  
and record your members’ 5-minute stories.

**For more information, contact Kevin Diehl:**  
**703-528-4058 or [kevin@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:kevin@battleofthebulge.org)**



## WHAT A NIGHT FOR STATEN ISLAND CHAPTER!

As the song says ... “Oh, what a night.. .” and it surely was for nine members of V.B.O.B. Chapter 52, Staten Island, NY. To honor the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, the Consul General of Luxembourg invited us for dinner on March 19<sup>th</sup> at the Consulate in Manhattan. This former home of the famous songwriter Irving Berlin was beautiful, overlooking the East River, and it surely was a wonderful night for all. Thank you, Luxembourg!

—Angela M. Fazio, Secretary, Chapter 52, Staten Island

**WANT FACE-TO-FACE TIME WITH MEMBERS IN YOUR AREA?**

**SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL CHAPTER!**

**Go to pages 2-3 for the list of active chapters, and call the president nearest you to see if they hold regular meetings.**

## VBOB MEMBERS FEATURED IN VETERANS AFFAIRS NEW VIDEO WEB SERIES “LIVING HISTORY”

On the 70th anniversary of the end of WWII’s Battle of the Bulge, the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs debuts a new video web series. *Living History* is documentary-style web series where Veterans of different wars and generations discuss their experiences before, during and after war with each other.

The first web series features four American Veterans who fought and lived through World War II and the Battle of the Bulge. They met in November 2014 in the WWII History Room at Ft. Meade, Maryland. Surrounded by personal artifacts, uniforms and military memorabilia, they reminisced about their younger days and the brutality of the Ardennes campaign.

Produced by VA’s digital media engagement team within the Office of Public Affairs, *Living History: Battle of the Bulge* will be released in four parts on the Vantage Point blog, and VA’s social media channels, including YouTube and Facebook.

*Living History: Battle of the Bulge* features 4 VBOB members:

- Douglas Dillard was born in 1925, and grew up in Atlanta, Ga., during the Great Depression. He was 16 when he volunteered to join the U.S. Army on July 3, 1942. After training, he was sent to Company A of the 551st Parachute Infantry Battalion. Douglas made his first combat jump on August 15, 1944, in the South of France.

- Alfred Shehab was born in 1919 and grew up in Cape May, N.J. The son of Lebanese immigrants tried to join the free French Army when WWII broke out in Europe, but was stopped by his father. He later joined the U.S. Army in New York and graduated from OCS at Fort Knox in August 1942. He was assigned to the 37th Armored Regiment, 4th Armored Division.

- Mike Levin was born in Nebraska, and lived in Brooklyn, N.Y., and Vermont before joining the Army in 1942. He served as a lieutenant and artillery forward observer in the 7th Armored Division at the Battle of the Bulge.

- John Schaffner was born in Baltimore, Md., and was drafted right after high school at the age of 18. He served in the 106th Infantry Division beginning in March 1943 until it was reorganized in March 1945. The 106th saw some of the fiercest fighting of the



**BEHIND THE SCENES AT THE VIDEO SHOOT:** VBOB members featured in *Living History: Battle of the Bulge* videos are (seated, counter-clockwise from front left) Al Shehab, John Schaffner, Douglas Dillard, and Mike Levin.

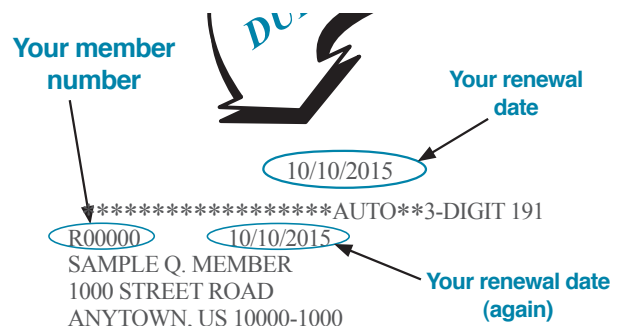
Battle of the Bulge, with two of its three regiments being overrun and surrounded during the first three days of fighting.

*Living History: Battle of the Bulge* was produced with the assistance of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge.

To watch the videos, go to: [www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com) and search for “Living History: Battle of the Bulge.”

### WHEN ARE MY DUES DUE?

**Look at the back cover address label:**





# WELCOME TO WILLIAMSBURG, VA

## VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE 34<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL REUNION

August 14 - 18, 2015

### HIGHLIGHTS AND SCHEDULE INFORMATION

#### REGISTRATION FEE

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

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 14

Registration and complimentary Wine and Cheese Reception.

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 15

A visit to **Fort Lee, Virginia**, home of the Army Combined Arms Support Command (CASCOM). Beyond its primary mission of training sustainment Soldiers, Fort Lee is a community, a workplace and a home to hundreds of military families.

In addition to the Combined Arms Support Command, Team Lee now consists of the Army Logistics University, the U.S. Army Ordnance School, the U.S. Army Quartermaster School and the U.S. Army Transportation School. Its tenants include headquarters elements of the Defense Commissary Agency, Kenner Army Health Clinic, a Military Entrance Processing Station and the Defense Contract Management Agency.

We will start the day with a visit to **The Aerial Delivery and Field Services Department** to watch parachute riggers in action. Some attendees will have the opportunity to participate in a simulation. We will then have **lunch with Troops** in a dining facility located in the Ordnance area. This will be followed by a "wind-shield" tour of the installation to see all of the schools and training areas including the Army Logistics University (ALU) and the largest

1,000 room lodging in the Army on our way to the museums. After splitting into two groups, we will alternate visits between the **Quartermaster and Women's Museums** where Major General Steven R. Lyons, CASCOM Commander, and his staff will provide a welcome and history of the post. Additional information can be found at: [www.lee.army.mil/](http://www.lee.army.mil/).

After completing our museum tours we will participate in the **official wreath-laying ceremony** with invited dignitaries and guests across the street at the Headquarters Clamshell/Flagpole. This will consist of Chaplain remarks, laying of wreaths, taps, a 21 gun salute, and retreat. After a long day, we will return to the hotel to relax and have dinner on your own.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Beginning in spring 2015, Fort Lee will vet all persons (over the age of 18) requesting entry who do not possess the appropriate military issued credentials (e.g., military ID card, CAC, Retired ID card). We will need to give an attendee list to the Visitor Control Center (VCC) prior to the day of the event, to avoid background checks at the VCC when we arrive. **You will then need to bring a valid driver's license/photo ID on the bus for entry to Fort Lee**, which will be checked against the list provided in advance.

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 16

This will be a relaxing day with **meetings** scheduled for Chapter Presidents or their representatives, an Executive Council meeting, and General Membership Meeting. The day will be capped off with a **Reception** with cash bar and our **Banquet** consisting of Seared Filet of Beef Tenderloin or Crab Imperial Stuffed Flounder for your entrée.

#### MONDAY, AUGUST 17

This is our historic day with visits to **Jamestown Settlement**, including lunch, and **Yorktown Victory Center**.

Jamestown Settlement tells the story of 17th-century Virginia; from the arrival of English colonists in Jamestown in 1607 to the cultural encounters and events that planted the seeds of a new nation. The world of Jamestown, America's first permanent English colony, comes to life through film, gallery exhibits and outdoor living history. Expansive gallery exhibits and



Historical interpreters at the Yorktown Victory Center prepare to fire a brass battalion gun.

an introductory film describe the cultures of the Powhatan Indians, Europeans and Africans who converged in 17th-century Virginia, and trace Jamestown's beginnings in England and the first century of the Virginia colony. Climb aboard replicas of the three ships that sailed from England to Virginia in 1607, and explore life-size re-creations of the colonists' fort and a Powhatan village. In the outdoor areas, costumed historical interpreters describe and demonstrate daily life in early 17th century Jamestown. Included is an expert guided tour and lunch at the Jamestown Café.

Experience the entirety of the American Revolution at the Yorktown Victory Center. This center is near the battlefield where allied American and French forces won the decisive battle of the American Revolution in 1781, the Yorktown Victory Center chronicles the Revolutionary period, from colonial unrest to the formation of the new nation. The story of America's evolution from colonial status to nationhood is told through films, exhibits and participatory experiences inside a new museum building and outdoor living history at a re-created Continental Army encampment and Revolution-era farm. After a two-hour guided tour, we will return to the hotel to relax and enjoy fellowship.

Additional Jamestown and Yorktown information can be found at: [www.historyisfun.org/](http://www.historyisfun.org/)

#### TUESDAY, AUGUST 18

After breakfast at the hotel, you can stay for additional days to visit **Colonial Williamsburg** and/or **Busch Gardens**, or depart for home.



At Fort Lee, we'll see many interesting army-related exhibits at both the **Quartermaster Museum** and the **Women's Museum**.

# VBOB REUNION REGISTRATION FORM DEADLINE: JULY 24, 2015

**There are two options for registering for the reunion:** Complete this form OR register online: [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org), click on "Attend Reunion" and fill out the registration form. Either type of registration form must be received by VBOB no later than **July 24, 2015**. Hotel rooms may not be held past that date, so reserve your rooms early. There is not a penalty for canceling up to the day of arrival. *Go to page 19 for separate hotel registration information.*

**The VBOB registration desk at the hotel will be open on Friday Aug 14 from 2 pm – 6 pm, as well as Saturday Aug 15th, 8 am - 5 pm; and Sunday Aug 16th, 8 am - 2 pm.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Check box if Associate Member ☐ Signature \_\_\_\_\_

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

| IMPORTANT: Please indicate No. of People attending <i>free</i> events as well!<br>We need to know for room capacities. Thank you. | No. of People | Cost per Person | Total Cost |
|---|---------------|-----------------|------------|
|---|---------------|-----------------|------------|

|  |       |      |       |
|--|-------|------|-------|
| <b>Registration Fee</b> ( <i>all attendees must register</i> ) | _____ | \$35 | _____ |
|--|-------|------|-------|

## Friday, August 14, 2014

|                           |       |      |       |
|---------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| Wine and cheese reception | _____ | free | _____ |
|---------------------------|-------|------|-------|

## Saturday, August 15, 2014

|   |       |      |       |
|---|-------|------|-------|
| Trip to Fort Lee ( <i>including bus and lunch</i> ) | _____ | \$40 | _____ |
|---|-------|------|-------|

## Sunday, August 16, 2014

|                             |       |      |       |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| Chapter Presidents' Meeting | _____ | free | _____ |
|-----------------------------|-------|------|-------|

|                           |       |      |       |
|---------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| Executive Council Meeting | _____ | free | _____ |
|---------------------------|-------|------|-------|

|                            |       |      |       |
|----------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| General Membership Meeting | _____ | free | _____ |
|----------------------------|-------|------|-------|

|           |       |          |       |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|
| Reception | _____ | cash bar | _____ |
|-----------|-------|----------|-------|

|   |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|
| Banquet ( <i>choose entrees below</i> ) |  |  |  |
|---|--|--|--|

|                                 |       |      |       |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| Seared Filet of Beef Tenderloin | _____ | \$54 | _____ |
|---------------------------------|-------|------|-------|

|                                |       |      |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| Crab Imperial Stuffed Flounder | _____ | \$44 | _____ |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|-------|

## Sunday, August 16, 2014

|                                |       |      |       |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|-------|
| Trip to Jamestown and Yorktown | _____ | \$60 | _____ |
|--------------------------------|-------|------|-------|

*Includes admission fees, tours, bus, and lunch*

Select from the following choices for lunch (included):

|                    |       |
|--------------------|-------|
| Angus Cheeseburger | _____ |
|--------------------|-------|

|                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| Brunswick Stew | _____ |
|----------------|-------|

|            |       |
|------------|-------|
| Chef Salad | _____ |
|------------|-------|

|                   |       |
|-------------------|-------|
| Barbecue Sandwich | _____ |
|-------------------|-------|

**TOTAL** \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail this form and check (payable to VBOB) to:** Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc., PO Box 27430, Philadelphia, PA 19118  
**Or, to pay with a credit card, register online at [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org), click on "Attend Reunion"**

(Refunds for cancellation, will be honored in whole or in part, depending on availability of funds)





# VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE, INC.

## 2015 VBOB REUNION IN WILLIAMSBURG, VIRGINIA

August 14 – 18, 2015

### REUNION PROGRAM

#### FRIDAY, AUGUST 14, 2015

|              |  |
|--------------|--|
| 2 pm – 6 pm  | Registration (Newmarket Hall)                      |
| 2 pm – 10 pm | Hospitality Room open (Newmarket Hall)             |
| 6 pm – 8 pm  | Free Wine and Cheese Reception in Hospitality Room |

#### SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 2015

**NOTES:** *You will need to bring a valid driver's license/photo ID on the bus for entry to Fort Lee, which will be checked against the list provided in advance. (See pg. 16.)*

*There will be ample rest opportunities throughout the day.*

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 8 am – 5 pm         | Registration (Newmarket Hall)   |
| 8 am – 11 pm        | Hospitality Room open (Newmarket Hall)  |
| 8 – 8:15 am         | Load Buses for trip to Fort Lee   |
| 8:15 – 9:30 am      | Buses travel from Hotel to Fort Lee on historic Virginia Route 5  |
| 10 – 11 am          | Rigger school briefing, demonstration, and simulation   |
| 11:30 am – 12:30 pm | Lunch at dining facility with Troops  |
| 12:30 pm            | Buses depart dining facility, travel past Army Logistics University; Visit Quartermaster and Women's Museums (to include Welcome to Fort Lee) |
| 4:15 - 5:15 pm      | Flag Ceremony to include: Chaplain remarks, laying of wreaths, taps, and 21 gun salute; Retreat by Fort Lee Soldiers                          |
| 5:15 – 5:30 pm      | Load Buses for return to the hotel  |
| 5:30 – 6:45 pm      | Buses travel from Fort Lee to the hotel<br>Dinner on your own   |

#### SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2015

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 8 am – 2 pm  | Registration (Newmarket Hall)                                 |
| 8 am – 11 pm | Hospitality Room open (Newmarket Hall)                        |
| 10 – 11 am   | Chapter Presidents' Meeting (Jefferson Davis Amphitheater)    |
| 11 am – 1 pm | Lunch on your own   |
| 1 – 2 pm     | VBOB Executive Council Meeting (Jefferson Davis Amphitheater) |
| 3 – 5 pm     | General Membership Meeting (Jefferson Davis Amphitheater)     |
| 6 – 7 pm     | Reception (cash bar) (Richmond Hall)                          |
| 7 – 9:30 pm  | Banquet at the hotel (Richmond Hall)                          |

#### MONDAY, AUGUST 17, 2015

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| 8 am – 11 pm        | Hospitality Room open (Newmarket Hall)                                   |
| 8:15 – 8:30 am      | Load buses for Jamestown/Yorktown tour                                   |
| 8:30 – 9 am         | Buses travel from hotel to Jamestown Settlement                          |
| 9 – 11:30 am        | Formal tour of Jamestown Settlement to include ships and demonstrations  |
| 11:30 am – 12:30 pm | Lunch at the Jamestown Settlement Café                                   |
| 12:30 – 1 pm        | Buses travel from Jamestown to Yorktown on historic Williamsburg Parkway |
| 1 – 3:30 pm         | Formal tour of the Yorktown Victory Center                               |
| 3:30 – 4 pm         | Buses travel from Yorktown to the hotel<br>Free time, dinner on your own |

#### TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 2015

|              |   |
|--------------|---|
| 7 – 10:30 am | Breakfast at the hotel and depart or stay longer for sightseeing, on your own |
|--------------|---|

*See "Highlights and Schedule Information" on page 16 for more details.*



## FORT MAGRUDER HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER

6945 Pocahontas Trail

Williamsburg, VA 23185

website: [www.fortmagruderhotel.com](http://www.fortmagruderhotel.com)

Phone: 757-220-2250

**RESERVATION DEADLINE FOR  
GROUP RATE: July 24, 2015**

# VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

**August 14 – 18, 2015**

(Our VBOB group rate is good from August 10 – 21, 2015)

## Hotel Information

Boasting an enviable location within blocks of Colonial Williamsburg, the College of William and Mary, Busch Gardens and Water Country USA, the newly-refreshed, historical Fort Magruder Hotel and Conference Center is also convenient to the area's wide (and growing) selection of outlet shopping options.

During the Civil War, Fort Magruder was an earthen fortification commanding the junction of two roads leading up the Peninsula to Williamsburg. Redoubt #3, an authentic Civil War earthwork, is located here on our grounds around the gazebo. Historic artifacts on display on the hotel property include musket balls, uniform buttons, a Union Army belt buckle, and a hand-stitched original 1850 quilt.

This hotel has a smoke-free policy. The room rate is \$119 per night, single or double occupancy, plus 11% tax and \$2 occupancy fee per day. This includes the buffet breakfast each morning for two.

Check-in time is 4:00 pm; Check-out time is 11:00 am.

## RESERVATIONS

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

**1. By phone:** call 1-757-220-2250 and say you are with the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge group. Handicap rooms are available, but you must call the hotel to reserve one.

**2. Online:** Go to: [www.fortmagruderhotel.com/](http://www.fortmagruderhotel.com/) and click on "reservations". You can enter the dates on the next screen after you put **VBOB** in the Group Code Box. Change the Availability Box to August and then you can click the arrival and departure dates.

We suggest you guarantee your reservation with a charge card. **Reservation must be made by July 24, 2015 to guarantee you will get the group rate. After July 24, reservations will be made on a space-available basis.** If you need to cancel your reservation, please inform the hotel by 6 pm on the day of scheduled arrival (earlier is better).

## HOTEL AMENITIES

- Full service restaurant and lounge (Veranda dining room)
- J.B's Lounge for cocktails and tasty meals
- Room service offering complete entrees, handcrafted pizza and a children's menu
- ATM (Near Guest Registration)
- Business Center
- Complimentary high speed wireless internet access

- Compact refrigerator & lighted makeup mirror in every guest room
- Indoor Pool w/hot tub; Outdoor Pool w/Kiddie Pool
- Fitness Center (Room key required for 24-hour access)
- Game Room
- Sundry Shop offering beverages, snacks and sundry items
- Complimentary Guest Parking
- Shuttle Service to and from Colonial Williamsburg, Busch Gardens/Water Country, and the local Amtrak Station

## DIRECTIONS TO THE HOTEL

Easily accessible from the entire Mid-Atlantic region, Richmond International Airport and Williamsburg-Newport News International Airport are both close by.

**AIRPORT SHUTTLES:** The hotel does not provide airport shuttle service, but some local ones are (*not endorsements*): Tidewater Coach (757-218-9539, [www.tidewatercoach.com](http://www.tidewatercoach.com)); Carey Transportation (757-853-5466, [www.onetransportationsolution.com](http://www.onetransportationsolution.com)); Williamsburg Chauffeur Service, LLC. (757-927-5049, [www.williamsburgchauffeur.com](http://www.williamsburgchauffeur.com)).

**BY AUTOMOBILE: From the North** - Traveling on I-95 SOUTH toward Richmond. Take exit 84-A on the left to merge on I-295 SOUTH (Toward Rocky Mount NC/Richmond Intl. Airport). Take exit 28-A to merge on to I-64 EAST (Toward Norfolk/Virginia Beach). Follow directions from the West to the Hotel.

**From the West** (Including Richmond Intl. Airport) - Traveling on I-64 EAST toward Norfolk/Virginia Beach, take exit 242A, VA-199 West toward Williamsburg/Jamestown. Go 1.2 miles and exit onto Route 60 (Busch Gardens/Williamsburg). At the bottom of the ramp turn left on to Route 60 West. Fort Magruder Hotel will be found 1.2 miles on the left.

**From the East** (Including Williamsburg/Newport News Intl. and Norfolk Intl. Airports) - Traveling on I-64 West take exit 242A, VA-199 West toward Williamsburg/Jamestown. Go 1.2 miles and exit onto Route 60 (Busch Gardens/Williamsburg). At the bottom of the ramp turn left on to Route 60 West. Fort Magruder Hotel will be found 1.2 miles on the left.

**BY TRAIN:** For Amtrak service to Williamsburg, call: (800) 872-7245 or visit: [www.amtrak.com/home](http://www.amtrak.com/home)



## TOURS PLANNED FOR 2015

**2015 LAFW SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR (June 16 - 24, 2015)** Once again the 'US Veterans Friends of Luxembourg' (USVFL) are planning another fantastic VBOB Luxembourg-American Friendship Week (LAFW) and celebratory Southern Bulge Tour for us. It will be full of special events and celebrations in Luxembourg City, Oetrange, Bastogne, Diekirch, Ettelbruck, Dahl, Grufflengen and much more, including two Medal of Honor dedications. We will join Helen Patton for our Luxembourg National Day celebration. Breakfast and dinner with wine are included every day and some lunches will be free. We and USVFL are doing our best to keep the price as low as possible for you. USVFL will provide transportation to and from Luxembourg Findel Airport.

**"FROM THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE TO BERLIN" (June 24 - July 1, 2015)** This is an extension tour of the LAFW from Luxembourg, but is open to all US veterans, families and friends. From Luxembourg, we follow the tracks of the US soldiers as they smashed the German Bulge and battled their way across the Siegfried Line into Germany and up to the Rhine. See the Remagen Bridge from a Rhine cruise. See the site of Stalag XIIA, known to many Bulge POWs. Visit the US Point Alpha on the old Iron Curtain facing the Soviets, "the most dangerous place in the world" in the Cold War. See infamous Buchenwald Concentration Camp and historic fire-bombed Dresden. Celebrate the end of World War II first in Torgau where the US troops met the Soviets, and then in amazing Berlin reborn as West Berlin after World War II and then rebuilt as Germany's spectacular new capital after the fall of Communism.

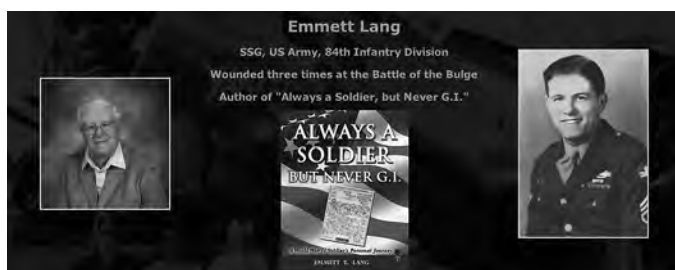
**FOR MORE INFORMATION** about the above tours and/or special customized group tours, contact Doris Davis, President of VBOB Golden Gate (San Francisco) Chapter. Email [doris@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:doris@battleofthebulge.org); Tel (650) 654-0101 (PST).

## VBOB GUESTS AT WWII WEEKEND AIRSHOW

Two members of VBOB, Emmett Lang and Ted Paluch, will be speaking of their experiences at the Mid-Atlantic Air Museum's 25th Anniversary World War II Weekend:

A Gathering of Warbirds  
Reading Regional Airport, PA  
June 5-6-7, 2015

For more information, go to: [www.maam.org/maamwwii.html](http://www.maam.org/maamwwii.html)



Emmett Lang, 84th Infantry Division, 334th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Battalion, Company H



Ted Paluch, 285th Field Artillery Battalion, Battery B

—Images from [www.maam.org](http://www.maam.org)

## WILLIAM J. STRAUSS HONORED BY ARKANSAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



On January 27, 2015, Rep. Joseph Scott Baltz, of the Arkansas House of Representatives (right), presented House Resolution 1003 to honor VBOB member William J. Strauss, 73rd Field Artillery Battalion, 9th Armored Division (left), for his service during WWII and the Battle of the Bulge.

### ATTENTION, ASSOCIATES: MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT!

In order to encourage long-term Associate memberships, we are now offering a discounted 4-year Associate membership for \$50. (Save \$10 off the yearly membership fee of \$15!)

SEE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION ON THE BACK COVER,  
OR GO TO OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.VBOB.ORG](http://WWW.VBOB.ORG)



## A SOLDIER'S STORY: ROGER ACKER

by Edward D. Reuss, reprinted with permission  
from [www.nycop.com](http://www.nycop.com)

Since I retired from the NYPD in October of 1992, I have had the great pleasure of playing golf with a group called "The Early Birds." Many of them are retired cops and firefighters. Some retired from the old AT&T, Con Edison, and other companies. Over the past 15 years since I retired, I have spent many hours on the golf course with my fellow golfers reminiscing about our past careers. I have written about some of the police officers I have known, but I now find the need to write about some of my other friends. I wrote about Bob Branizza who was shot down over Germany in 1944. He did me the honor of retelling his story a few months back. His story was entitled: "LAST MISSION OVER BERLIN."

He spent a year in a German Luftwaffe prison camp before being liberated by the American Army in 1945. Another fellow golfer is a man who was also a prisoner of war but managed to escape. I have found that the men who fought in combat during World War II are not quick to talk about their experiences. For that reason, I was honored to have Roger Acker, formerly Sergeant Roger Acker, US Army allow me to write this account of his service during the war. This is his story.

He struggled to walk in the mud and tried to step in the furrows made by the wheels of the German caissons. The German soldiers riding on back of the horse-drawn ammunition wagons were dozing off as the column of prisoners trudged ever deeply into Germany and away from the pursuing American Army. Sergeant Acker felt the pains in his stomach and for the first time in his young life, he knew what real hunger was. He had been walking in the column of prisoners for weeks since he was captured back at the firefight at the overpass on March 10, 1945.

To the twenty year old Sergeant Roger Acker, a farm boy from Lakeville, Ohio, the furrows made by the caissons seemed like the furrows in the fields of his family farm. How many times had he plowed those fields before he was drafted into the Army? How long had it been since he was inducted? July 1, 1944 was the day he reported. It seemed like so much had happened to him in only a few months of his life. When he reported to the induction center in Cleveland, and then went to Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana for processing, he never envisioned that in a few months he would be a prisoner of war in Germany. He then went to Fort McClellan, Alabama for Basic Training and Advanced Infantry Training. The invasion of Fortress Europe on June 6, 1944 was a success and the American and British Armies were driving the Germans out of France. It looked like the war in Europe would be over soon. That was then. Now, in a few days, Sergeant Acker would spend Easter Sunday as a prisoner of war. As he again fell into line on the roadway headed deeper into enemy country, his thoughts went back to how he had celebrated Christmas, 1944 on the troop train en route from Le Havre. Christmas Eve he was in the packed troop train loaded with replacements headed into the greatest battle in American History. He recalled how he had arrived on the troop ship in Southampton with thousands of replacements. They were to learn that the German Army had smashed into the American lines in what would become known as the Battle of the Bulge.

The new replacements were quickly sent over to France and loaded into trains to get them to the front lines. The Germans had sped into Belgium and Luxembourg in the Ardennes Forest and were driving towards the English Channel. The American Army was in retreat before the blitzkrieg of Panzer Units of the German SS and Wehrmacht. The attack had been successful due to the belief that the Ardennes Forest was impenetrable to such an offensive. At the point of the attack, some of the American troops were new and untried. They had been placed there because it was believed it would be a quiet area. Most of the German troops were veterans of the Eastern Front in Russia.

The winter of 1944-45 had been bitterly cold. Deep snows had blanketed the battlefields of Europe. It was early April now, and he hoped that perhaps the war was near its end. He was fortunate that the Germans hadn't stripped him of his leather combat boots. At least he had footwear during the forced march away from the front lines. His socks had long ago become wet and worn out.



Roger E. Acker, 1 InfD

He no longer had feeling in parts of his feet and toes. He had no idea how far the Germans would take him. The only food the Germans had given him was some black bread and uncooked potatoes. The one nagging thought in his mind was how to escape. He knew that with each passing mile away from the front lines, his chances for escape were diminished. It looked like he would spend the rest of the war in a German POW camp.

On two occasions, the column of German vehicles and American prisoners of war had been attacked by American aircraft as they headed to the rear. The pilots of the fighter planes mistook the column as retreating German soldiers. As the planes strafed the road, the prisoners scattered on both sides to avoid the machine guns of the fighters. After each of the attacks, the German guards ordered all the prisoners back into line on the road. Sergeant Acker wasn't able to escape because the attacks took place in open farm fields and there was no way he could conceal himself from the guards. As he plod along on the road, his thoughts went back to what seemed like an eternity, yet had only been a few months ago.

On the troop train from Le Havre to the front lines, Private first Class Acker learned that he was to be assigned as a replacement in the veteran First Infantry Division. The replacements had been issued factory-new rifles right out of the crates. Acker was issued a Browning Automatic Rifle. The weapon was filled with greasy cosmoline. The cosmoline packing was similar to petroleum jelly and the soldiers hurriedly cleaned the gobs of the sticky substance from the receivers and bores of their weapons. When Private Acker finally got to the front lines, he was immediately thrown into combat with the seasoned veterans of the 16th Infantry Regiment, First Infantry Division, also known as "The Big Red One."

Private Acker recalled the extreme cold weather and deep snow. He never had the chance to change his socks during the continual fighting. The sweat turned to icy cold in his combat boots. He would suffer some frostbite as a result. German infantry and armored units kept the 16th Infantry Regiment under constant attack during that Christmas week of 1944. They (Continued)

## A SOLDIER'S STORY: ROGER ACKER *(Continued)*

fought past the New Year into January of 1945.

House to house fighting in the many villages of the battleground was an especially dangerous tactic. The presence of enemy troops in the buildings of the small towns required infantrymen to enter and clear each house and building. Private Acker was given a battlefield promotion to the rank of Sergeant Squad leader. His Platoon Lieutenant had observed his leadership qualities in action. The high casualty rate among the platoon necessitated such quick promotions. The now Sergeant Acker would be required to lead his squad. The twenty year old Sergeant would have to be the first to enter the house to clear it. He was wounded in the right leg by shrapnel as he did so in one firefight. He was patched up by the medics and returned to duty immediately. For his actions, he was later awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

With air support, the ground troops were able to push the Germans back to the original lines. By January 25, 1945, what would become known as the Battle of the Bulge would be over. Sergeant Acker was awarded the coveted Combat Infantryman's Badge on January 22, 1945. That decoration is awarded only to those who are in combat as riflemen in an Infantry Regiment. Combat veterans wear the CIB with great pride

Sergeant Acker and the 16th Infantry Regiment were fighting continuously from 16 December 1944 to 28 January 1945. But, that wasn't the end it. The First Division wasn't given any rest. The Division then attacked and breached the Siegfried Line, fought across the Roer River on 23 February 1945, and drove on to the Rhine River. The area between the ancient cities of Aachen and Cologne located West of the Rhine River is called the "Rhineland." The Germans built a defensive wall that they called the "West Wall" or "Siegfried Line" to defend this part of Germany. This system of concrete bunkers, pill boxes, and anti-tank "teeth" was defended by the desperate German troops. This battle became known as "The Battle of the Rhineland." It was to be a bloody fight. Time Magazine reported, "The Germans fought for the Roer River, between Aachen and Cologne, as if it were the Meuse, the Marne, and the Somme of the last war all rolled into one."

The 16th Infantry Regiment crossed the Rhine River in landing boats. The Remagen Bridge had fallen into the Rhine after sustaining too much damage. Sergeant Acker's Unit crossed the Rhine and pushed into the surrounding countryside. It was during this time, that Sergeant Acker was ordered to hold a critical overpass near a bridge. The overpass was at an intersection of the Autobahn. The Germans used the multi-laned Autobahn to quickly move armor and troops before the war. The Germans didn't want to give up control of that road. Sergeant Acker only had his Squad to hold the position. With casualties he would be lucky if he had nine or ten men. The Platoon leader told him that a German counterattack was expected. He assured Sergeant Acker that he would receive support. He and the few riflemen dug in under the elevated road and waited for night to fall.

During the night of March 10, 1945, Sergeant Acker and his rifle squad huddled in their foxholes as the fighting raged along the lines. It was a general German counter-offensive in their area. They had no anti-tank weapons. At most, they had about 300 rounds per man in their bandoliers. Just before dawn, German armored units began to fire directly into the underpass. Soon, the enemy infantry appeared in their front and the squad opened up with their M-1 rifles and Browning Automatic Rifles. The "pop-pop"

sounds of the M-1s and the metallic pings as the empty clips flew out of the receivers contrasted with the explosions of the German 88s. They fought as best they could against the advancing German troops. They didn't get any support in the form of mortar fire or artillery. Hand grenades and small arms could not halt the enemy tanks. Sergeant Acker and his squad were overrun as the tanks drove up directly into their position. The Germans had killed and wounded a number of the squad and captured Sergeant Acker. As he surrendered, the German troops stripped him of his weapons and equipment. They took his helmet and he was marched to the rear in the custody of a German soldier. The armor and infantry continued to advance against the American lines. He never saw any of his squad again. As he was marched to rear, other American POWs joined them.

The fight at the underpass had been weeks ago. On April 6, 1945 he had been in captivity for almost a month. Today would be another day spent on the road to the German POW camp. Sergeant Acker put one foot in front of another as the Germans snoozed in back of the wagons. He remembered that at that point in the war, the Germans were drafting young teenagers and older men, age 16 to 60 into the "Volkssturm" or Home Guard. The Germans guarding the column were mostly older men. He noticed that the column was walking through a forested area and there were thick stands of trees on both sides of the road. Suddenly, the German guards shouted an alarm with orders to scatter. It was another strafing attack by Allied fighters. This time, Sergeant Acker ran into the treeline. When the attack was over, the Germans ordered the prisoners of war back onto the road but he remained hidden in the woods and waited until the column was out of sight. Once in the clear, he ran from the roadway further into the forest. He was exhausted and starving, but he had escaped. He only knew that he had to travel at night to evade being captured again. He remembered a raging thirst and drinking from small streams in the forest.

He knew that he had to travel towards the sounds of the gunfire in the distance. The sky would light up with the exploding shells and it made it easy to keep in the right direction in the darkness. He recalled the sounds of the German troops encamped near the roadways. He was able to evade them until the fifth day of his escape.

After four nights of walking towards the front lines, he approached the German town of Jesberg in the area known as Hesse. As he approached, he heard the sound of a battle and later learned that General George Patton's Third Army was capturing the town. He watched from the edge of the forest as the American Army entered Jesberg. As he entered the town, the Germans were fleeing from the advancing American Army. Sergeant Acker was obviously not in any physical condition to engage the enemy. His feet were in bad shape from three weeks walking without rest. His uniform was filthy and he had no headgear. He was physically dirty and unshaven and he had lost about 25 pounds since his capture. He hid himself among the buildings of the town trying to meet up with the American troops. Walking and hiding in "no-man's land" between two armies was obviously a very dangerous place to be.

As he stood next to a building, he heard a woman's voice ask in English: "You look like you are hungry." When he turned he saw a woman named Marie Ide. She turned out to be the Mayor of Jesberg and by a stroke of luck, Sergeant Acker had been standing in front of her house. She recognized his dirty uniform and seemed to know his predicament. She told him to come up to the second

floor and she would give him some food.

He was suspicious of the woman and when he saw some weapons in the vicinity, he was able to arm himself with a German pistol. The situation in the town was total chaos as the townspeople were draping white sheets out of their windows and the American troops were racing down side streets capturing German soldiers. Sergeant Acker was so famished that his caution was overcome by the hunger pains in his stomach. He went up to the second floor and Mrs. Ide had prepared a soft-boiled egg and some oatmeal. When the Sergeant ate the food, the pains in his stomach grew much worse. However, he appreciated the offer of food. He was surprised by the fact that Marie spoke English. Mrs. Ide's daughter Lillian, a teenaged girl, was also at the house.

To protect Sergeant Acker from further harm. Mrs. Ide took him to the town jail and was able to shelter him there until things quieted down in the streets. Finally, Sergeant Acker was able to contact his own troops. When the Third Army troops saw his physical condition, they arranged to transport him by jeep to the rear. He travelled all the way back to France to "Camp Lucky Strike" where he was placed in an Army hospital. It was necessary to feed him intravenously for a period of time.

The war ended shortly after Sergeant Acker escaped from the Germans, and he was sent back by hospital ship to Staten Island, New York. He was treated in Halloran Hospital until his recovery. That same Halloran Hospital building is now the campus of Staten Island College.

When he was well enough, Sergeant Acker was transferred to Fort Wadsworth, Staten Island where he was assigned to the Army Barracks. It was there that he met his wife, Frances. She was in charge of the US Army Post Exchange Store (PX) and Sergeant Acker had many occasions to meet her there. He fell hard for Frances and convinced her to let him take her out on dates. When he was discharged and returned home to his father's farm in Ohio, he would drive back and forth to Staten Island to see her. They eventually married and made their home on Staten Island. After a lifetime career with Consolidated Edison, Roger and Frances Acker still call Staten Island their home.

Sergeant Roger Acker was awarded two Bronze Stars, Purple Heart, and Combat Infantryman's Badge. He was also awarded two battle stars: Battle of the Ardennes, and Battle of the Rhineland.

We are all beneficiaries of that service. We owe much to those who fought in the Second World War as well as the Korean War, Vietnam War, and now the Iraqi War. He struggled to walk in the mud and tried to step in the furrows made by the wheels of the German caissons. The German soldiers riding on back of the horse-drawn ammunition wagons were dozing off as the column of prisoners trudged ever deeply into Germany and away from the pursuing American Army. Sergeant Acker felt the pains in his stomach and for the first time in his young life, he knew what real hunger was. He had been walking in the column of prisoners for weeks since he was captured back at the firefight at the overpass on March 10, 1945.

*Editor's Note:* Mrs. Ide had been living in Grosse Point, Michigan from 1925 to 1931 when she returned to Germany after inheriting property. Her daughter Lillian had been born in the USA. After the war, Mrs Ide and Lillian moved back to Michigan. Years later, Sergeant Acker would meet with them and reminisce about their kindness during the war.

## MY EXPERIENCE IN WORLD WAR II

by J. David Bailey, 106th ID, 422nd IR, Co F



J. David Bailey, 106 InfD

After basic training I qualified for the Army Specialized Training Program (ASTP) and was sent to Alabama Polytechnic Institute for Military Government and to Clemson A & M for Engineering. The goal of the ASTP was that once the war ended the United States would have an available stratum of talent — a pool of available leaders. However ASTP eventually folded, as the Army realized it needed replacements more desperately than it needed future leaders.

I was sent to the newly organized 106th Infantry Division and eventually assigned to Company F, 422nd Infantry Regiment. The 106th landed at Le Havre, France on December 6, 1944 and arrived at St. Vith Belgium on December 10.

The Division went on line the next day at the Schnee Eifel, a wooded, snow covered ridge of the Ardennes Forest covering a 27 mile front that bordered Germany and was just northeast of Luxembourg. The Army at this time used the Ardennes to acquaint newcomers, like the 106th, with some elements of infantry warfare, such as observing and patrolling.

Needless to say and against all odds, in the early morning of December 16th, the Germans launched a surprise attack, outnumbering our troops by a factor of five in terms of armor and manpower. Our Division had only five days of front-line experience and tragically we had no air coverage due to the dense fog, and indeed we could not connect to our supply lines. The Division's 422nd and 423rd Regiments were encircled and cut off from the remainder of the Division by a junction of enemy forces in the vicinity of Schonberg. The regiments regrouped for a counterattack, but were blocked by the enemy and separated from the 106th on December 18. The two regiments surrendered to the Germans on the following day.

## WITHDRAWING TO EISENBORN RIDGE

by Billy H. Clampett, 99th ID, 395th IR



Billy H. Clampett, 99 InfD, and "Skipper" the dog.

The first day, December 16th, of the German Ardennes offensive was a huge success. Up and down the First Army front the Germans advanced as planned. In the Ghost Front area, where the main thrust was made, the 395th and the 394th were hit hard; to their right the 106th was overrun; and, to the right of the 106th, the situation was just as bad. On the 17th the Siegfried Line attack was called off and the withdrawal of the 395th to Eisenborn Ridge began.

Generally speaking, that was the situation. Now, what did soldiers like me know? We knew, (Continued)



## WITHDRAWING TO EISENBORN RIDGE *(Continued)*

first of all, that we were no longer attacking. Secondly, we knew from rumors and bits and pieces of news, that the Germans had launched an offensive of their own and were punishing the 99th and the 106th. Some rumors even had the Germans breaking through and racing for Paris. Next, we knew that the 395th was in a precarious situation; common sense told us that we were beyond the present front line. We did not know, or at least I did not know, that the 395th was carrying out a planned withdrawal. My impression was that 395th was cut off, surrounded, and that we were moving here and there trying to find an escape route. For many years I thought that we had escaped being captured only because the Germans, in their haste to reach and cross the Meuse River, bypassed us.

The four of five days that the 395th struggled to reach Eisenborn Ridge were the worst days that I spent in the Ardennes. Never again was the cold so cold, the shelling so fierce, or the uncertainty so great such specific memories as I have will be shared under their own descriptive headings. At some point, during the withdrawal, the 395th was placed under the command of the Commanding General, 2nd Division.

I have read everything that I could get my hands on dealing with the Battle of the Bulge. So, when I say that in withdrawing to Eisenborn Ridge, the 395th Combat Team utilized the procedure known as leap-frogging, you will already have guessed what I am now going to tell you—that I did not know that leap-frogging was going on until I read about it much later. As I said, my low level sense of the situation was that we were cut off, maybe even surrounded, and were searching for an escape route. Simplified, when leap-frogging unit A withdraws through a defensive line formed by unit B and, having passed through unit B's defensive line, unit A forms a defensive line through which unit B then withdraws—with this going on until the withdrawal is complete.

As I said, I had no idea that we were leap-frogging. I only knew that, endlessly, we were marching, digging in, freezing, getting shelled, and moving out, and going through it all again. Ammunition bearers in a heavy weapons company do not access to the big picture—in the Ardennes in December 1944, this probably was a good thing.

### The Long Night

There was a long night. I endured it. Books say that the long night was the night of December 18th. I do not recall the date, but I do recall the night. What happened can be told in one long sentence. On a bitterly cold night, during the withdrawal to Eisenborn Ridge, the weary soldiers of the 395th climbed out of their foxholes, trudged across the frozen ground of the Ardennes for what seemed like forever, then turned around and retraced their steps, climbing back into the same foxholes that they had climbed out of earlier.

How could such a fiasco happen? One answer, if you can picture those weary soldiers trudging across the frozen ground, will bring tears to your eyes. According to books that I have read, that answer is: The 395th was met with "What Order"? No one there knew anything about such an order. With the 395th out of the defensive line, a gaping hole existed. The 395th was instantly ordered to retrace its steps. The incredible part of the story is—the order to pull out had been received by the 395th over the radio and had been given, probably in jest, by an English speaking German officer. That the order had been blindly obeyed seems unreal.

One battalion commander, I have also read, was sacked because,

his men being exhausted to the point of dropping, he refused to order them back to their empty foxholes. His conduct paints a better picture of the whole episode than lean paint in words. I knew nothing about the mix up, or joke, or whatever it was. As I said earlier, I thought we were surrounded and trying to escape—that this was just more evidence of our plight.

More than sixty years later, I still remember the long night.

### The Tank Battle

One dark, dark night during the withdrawal to Eisenborn Ridge, as our column was stealthily making its way along the edge of a clearing, staying far enough inside the wooded area to be out of sight, the sounds of tanks grinding away on the frozen ground broke the silence. The column halted, for the chilling sounds did not tell how many tanks there were or in which direction they were moving. At that time, remember, Germans were thought to be everywhere.

Just then, from the flashes of their guns, glimpses were caught of the silhouettes of two tanks. Was one of them a Tiger—one of them a Sherman? We could not tell. But the firing told us that they were after each other, not infantry soldiers. Like two prehistoric monsters, they were locked in a battle to the death. The battle did not last long. One of them burst into flames. Where the two tanks came from, and how they happened to meet, only their crews knew. Was one of them trying to find its way to Eisenborn Ridge? The column moved on, the mystery unsolved.

### The Borrowed Shovel

My army shovel was a small implement. Its small size, however, was not a measure of its importance. On the contrary, in the Ardennes a shovel was of such importance that I took a substantial risk to replace one. One day, while trying to dig in the snow covered, frozen ground, I broke my shovel. I don't remember what broke, just that my shovel broke. The timing could not have been worse. It broke just as Company H began to move. Hoping against hope that artillery fire would hold off until I came across a replacement shovel, I joined the column. As it happened, the column soon passed a dead German soldier whose shovel I could see.

I knew that taking the shovel would be risky. First, his body could have been booby-trapped. Next, we had been warned that being captured with a piece of German equipment was very, very dangerous. Weighing the risks did not take long. Scared to death, I borrowed the shovel. Nothing happened; the column kept moving. I got rid of the shovel as soon as possible.

### Incoming-Outgoing

It seemed to me that artillery fire never let up—and that was not altogether a bad thing. Artillery fire, I am sure, was a major factor in the failure of 6th Panzer Army's to break through the Ghost Front. I was a fan of anything of ours having two or more wheels and a weapon with a large barrel—105, 155, or whatever. All infantry soldiers shared my respect for artillery.

One night, during a particularly heavy artillery barrage, I was in a large dugout with four or five other soldiers. Some of them may not have been from Company H; for there was a time during the withdrawal when members of the 2nd Division and the 395th became mingled. One of two of them could have been from the 2nd Division.

As the shells were passing overhead, one of the soldiers in the dugout kept saying either "incoming" or "outgoing." He seemed to

know from experience how to tell the difference. He probably was a member of the battle-experienced 2nd Division.

My ear was not that good. I never learned to distinguish incoming from outgoing. All sounds to me were incoming. I would say that silence was golden, except that outgoing probably is the reason why the 395th managed to withdraw to Elsenborn Ridge.

## Holding Elsenborn Ridge

The 395th made its way back to Elsenborn Ridge and became a part of the defensive line formed there. The defensive line, which later became known as the North Shoulder of the Bulge, was anchored by the 1st Division, the 2nd Division, the 99th Division and perhaps other units unknown to me. The defensive line held; the 6th Panzer Army did not break through to the Meuse; the Meuse River was not crossed.

When their offensive bogged down at Elsenborn Ridge, the Germans shifted the main thrust of the offensive south to Bastogne. Life on Elsenborn Ridge then eased a little. By January 11th the 395th had resumed attacking and had advanced far enough that I spent the night in a farm house. The night in the farm house ended my part in the Battle of the Bulge.

Strangely, I have few memories of my days on Elsenborn Ridge. I do remember looking out over what we called no man's land and wondering "Are they coming today?" And, of course, I do remember, in a blurred way, the bitter cold, the miserable snow, the too-small foxholes, and the artillery fire that never seemed to let up.

*Editor's Note:* Billy H. Clampett passed away on January 19, 2015. This story was submitted by his son Stephen M. Clampett, Associate, in his memory.

## PROVIDENCE WAS ON THEIR SIDE

by C.G. Cooper, 75th ID, 289th IR, Co E



C. G. Cooper, 75 InfD

Despite the area having its coldest winters on record up to that time, Allied leaders chose not to send appropriate winter clothing with C.G. and the other men, saying that they would only be involved in a few skirmishes. These leaders were wrong and their decision could have spelled disaster for the Allies. Fortunately our men pulled through like the troopers they are. The men were given C and K rations so there would be no need for cooks on the front lines. C.G. was put in charge of guarding the kitchen and

ammo truck on the first night while the other men were enthralled in battle. The driver of a jeep came up to him saying that a German tank was headed his way and not to let it through.

"What will I do?" C.G. remembers thinking back then. Ideas began swirling in his mind...the .45 pistol on his hip...his rifle. He grabbed a carbine, machine gun, bazooka, grenades, and ammo belts from the truck he was guarding. "I was a walking arsenal", he said. The ideas continued in his mind...a grenade...no, that won't work...a Molotov cocktail...no, that won't work...blast it with a bazooka (he recalled watching a training film that showed a bazooka being used to blast the tracks off a tank)...no, I have no ammo

for it. At this point, the tank is right in front of him and his mind is frozen. In the chaos, C.G. slipped falling in the tanks' path due to the slick mud. Providence was with him as the tank rolled right over him, straddling him and continuing on its path.

The next morning he found out that some of his buddies had been killed. C.G. said it was a gruesome sight, the bodies strewn about the battlefield. The Germans had succeeded in surrounding them and they were now cut off from replacements and supplies. C.G. ate dry hog bran from a farm and was happy with that discovery. He also managed to find a turnip in the root cellar. Another group of the Allies eventually pushed the Germans back and rescued the previously surrounded men. They regrouped and received replacements, some of whom were only teenagers. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day 1944, a heavy snow had covered everything and C.G. said it was a beautiful sight to behold. Suddenly all heck broke loose with dogfights in the sky and heavy artillery shelling on the ground. He never forgot that Christmas Day.

At one point, C.G. was sent to the hospital due to his frostbitten toes. This was a common occurrence with the lack of appropriate clothing for the extreme weather conditions. While lying in his hospital bed, the soldier on one side said to the soldier on C.G.'s other side, 'Joe\*, I'm dying. Tell my folks how much I love them.' C.G. later found out that the two men had fought alongside the Russians who had given them poisoned liquor for some reason. (\*After a while, soldiers would call one another Joe because by the time you learned someone's name, it seemed you died or they did.) The soldier who asked his buddy to give the message to his parents, died later that day and his buddy soon suffered the same fate, blind and calling out for loved ones.

From the hospital he hitchhiked back to his outfit. He went to the kitchen truck and told his company commander that he had been on the front lines and knew what it was like. "If you'll give me permission to have a truck and driver, I would like to take hot chocolate and donuts to my buddies in the foxholes." Permission was granted and C.G. began making preparations. "While making up the donuts the tent was hit. There was shrapnel all in the donut mix. I picked it all out and continued on," C.G. shared. He fried the donuts and prepared the hot chocolate, the latter which he put into insulated containers to keep it hot. The refreshments were loaded on the truck and the two men headed to the front lines. On the way there they were caught in the crossfire between both sides. There were bullet holes in the hot chocolate and the truck, with hot chocolate spilling everywhere. C.G. was in the back sliding around with the containers. Thankfully neither he nor the driver was hit.

The driver soon stopped, having taken C.G. as close to the front lines as he could get him. He told the driver it was fine as he knew where the fox holes were located. C.G. carried the refreshments to each of the fox holes and they were sure a welcomed treat. The men would hold out their steel helmets and C.G. would pour in some hot chocolate and throw in some donuts. Mind you, the soldiers' helmets were a versatile tool. Not only did they protect their heads or hold food and drink, but they were also used by the soldiers to relieve themselves so they wouldn't have to leave the safety of their fox hole.

After serving everyone, C.G. made his way back to the truck. The driver said that they were going a different way back since they had come under fire on the way up. It was dark and there was no GPS for them to conveniently use. Suddenly the driver shouted, 'We're behind German lines! Look at all those (Continued)

## PROVIDENCE WAS ON THEIR SIDE *(Continued)*

Krauts! What do I do now?" C.G. told him to push in on the clutch and the gas at the same time to make the engine roar. The driver did so and C.G. threw his arm out the window saluting Hitler and yelling, "Heil Hitler! Comrade, Comrade."

Once again Providence was on their side as the Germans actually allowed them to pass through safely. Eventually the two men made their way back to camp where they told of what happened. Some of their fellow soldiers were unsure whether or not to believe what they were hearing. A few days later, the 75th captured some of those same Germans and asked them why on earth they had allowed the Americans to pass. The Germans response: "We didn't know what you darn yanks were up to."

After awhile, the 75th and others were pulled back from the front lines and billeted in Belgian homes for a rest. At the home C.G. stayed in there was a pot bellied stove. "Oh I could not wait to get my boots off," C.G. said of his delight at having a stove. His feet were so swollen that he couldn't get his boots off. The ladies of the house offered to assist him and were eventually successful after much tugging and pulling. Immediately they saw how black his feet were. They would each get under one of his arms and walk him outside to wash his feet over and over again in the snow. "Thanks to those ladies I still have my feet and toes," C.G. said of their nursing care.

—Source: [wwiwartimememories.blogspot.com](http://wwiwartimememories.blogspot.com)

## IT DOESN'T SEEM LIKE 70 YEARS AGO

**By Headlight Herald staff, reprinted with permission from the Headlight Herald**

Brownlee Bush, 88, of Tillamook remembers the cold, snowy weather that plagued the troops during two months at the Battle of the Bulge. "The weather was the worst, anywhere from two-four feet of snow," Bush recalls. Bush was drafted into the military in 1944 at age 18, and as Bush puts it, "everybody else was there." When the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor in 1941 it drew the U.S. into World War II.

Bush entered a 17-week military basic training camp in California. He was to become a replacement as a frontline rifleman in the U.S. Army's 84th Infantry Division, a 12,000-man outfit that came to be known for high casualties and tough combat. "It was tough training and we were ready," Bush said. "They weren't supposed to send 18-year olds, but my whole group was sent overseas," Bush said. Bush knew his odds of returning home were slim. But, "We had no choice. We had to get the war over with."

"In the infantry, you had a 30-second lifespan. I look at kids today who are 18 and I wonder if they could've made it. Maybe some of 'em, but I don't know," Bush told the Headlight Herald in 2009. "Our world was so different. We were so responsible." Bush eventually landed in England, then traveled by train to France to complete his training.

On Christmas afternoon, 1944, he and 99 others joined the 333rd Infantry Regiment, celebrating with a turkey dinner. "It's surprising how may 18 years old there were," Bush remembers. "It was hard. The older guys there didn't trust you. You had to prove yourself. After you'd been there a week you were an old man."

At 3 a.m. the following day, Bush saw his first combat, deep



**Brownlee Bush, 84 InfD**

in the Verdun Pocket. Thirteen men died and 140 were wounded as the battle raged under blizzard conditions.

"We lost as many men from cold as from combat," Bush said. "But it was 'go-ahead at all costs.' The Germans were all held up in houses thinking no one would be out in that

weather," Bush said. Without winter gear for the first three weeks, Bush tells the story of seeking shelter from the blizzard one night in a barn. "We got in front of the cows because we thought their breath would be warm," Bush said.

In the morning they awoke to a German conversation coming from the loft. Bush and his men took the Germans, who had unknowingly spent the night in the same barn, as prisoners of war. "They checked us all over after the [December] 26th battle. I had pneumonia in the lower lung," Bush said. "Everyone hoped for the million-dollar wound in the arm or leg that would send you home."

The 84th Infantry Division was a key player in the largest battle ever waged. The Battle of the Bulge included 615,000 Allied soldiers. Bush was one of them.

And he survived. After that battle, the 84th moved north, into Germany, to the Rhine River. There, said Bush, he was sent to draw the enemy's fire as a distraction technique. He was buried under a pile of slate that crashed down from a roof overhead when he was fired upon. "I dislocated my neck and dealt with the arthritis for 30 years."

"At that time, it was seven miles to the aid station and if you could walk, you went on ahead. There was no going back. They were short on people." Bush stayed with his unit. The 84th eventually drove on to the Elbe River, fighting all the way. They were there when the war ended on May 8, 1945. Of the 200 original members of the company Bush had joined, only five survived from the time the unit went to war. Bush, a replacement, hadn't earned enough military points to be sent home. He was required to stay another year after the war, as an ordinance wrecker driver, picking up disabled vehicles.

Near the war's end, as the 84th pushed toward the Elbe River, part of the 333rd Regiment's duties was to open concentration camps and free the prisoners held there. "We must have opened the gates on a dozen slave labor camps," recalls Bush. His first slave camp was a shock, that's for sure. "The guys were emaciated and couldn't get out of bed. Some were dead, but the others didn't report them dead because then the SS troops would give them more food."

"I couldn't go into another one after that. The smell was too much."

The largest camp liberated by the 333rd was in Salzwedel, Germany. Bush later learned that many of its inmates had come from the "extermination camp" at Auschwitz, Poland. The 3,000 women held in the Salzwedel camp had been forced to make shell casings for small arms. "Although the Salzwedel camp was not fit for human beings, and the labor was heartless, it was relatively mild, as such things went in Nazi Germany," wrote Lt. Theodore Draper, who fought with the 84th and wrote a book about his experiences. Bush was one of four men who opened the Salzwedel camp's gates. When they got ready to leave, the camp's SS cook attempted to escape. One of the Allied soldiers shot him. That was



a memory Bush would relive.

After his discharge from the military, Bush sought a way to heal. He began to attend military reunions. Here were men who understood his past, his bad dreams, his post-traumatic disorders. "There's a bond between us. You had to be there to know how it feels." It was during a 1998 reunion in Albany, NY, that he heard a woman ask if any members of the 333rd were present. Bush and three other men raised their hands.

The woman was Edith Plakins. She had been one of the Salzwedel camp's prisoners. Her duties there had included cooking for and serving the SS guards. Every meal, her stomach gnawing from starvation, she'd serve the Germans their food, then later sneak out to the garbage pile and eat any dinner remains she could scavenge. Plakins told Bush that when the army cook was shot as the camp was liberated, she stood over his body and spat on it.

Newly freed, Plakins returned to her family's Czechoslovakian farm. Learning that she was her family's sole survivor, she dug up the remains of her mother's dowry that had been buried beneath the family's barn. Later, she married an American and moved to New York. For years thereafter, Plakins wondered about the men who had liberated the camp. Eventually, her daughter suggested Plakins attend a reunion in Albany, NY.

Some of the items she's sent were part of her mother's dowry, buried for so long.

The two have visited in person, too. "When we went to her home, she nearly stuffed us with food," said Bush, laughing. "She said nobody will ever starve in her house!"

And Bush relives his war. "We lost so many men then. And today, there's only three of us from my company that I know of who are left. Our country is losing one World War II vet every two minutes. Seeing what happened there, it made it worth fighting for. To free the people."

—Chelsea Yarnell, *Headlight Herald*, contributed to this article

## JUMPING WITH GLASSES TAPED TO HIS FACE

This very exceptional story was told to us at 2:00 pm on 27 September 2001 by Gerard Baszner and his wife Marjorie, who lived in Whitinsville, Massachusetts.

Gerard (Jerry) Baszner was born in Whitinsville on 8 May 1925. His mother was Aurore M. Lapierre and his father was Edgar P. Baszner, who was the Controller at the Foundry Office of the Whittin Machine Shop, which manufactured textile machinery. Gerard had one brother who was one year older, and one sister ten years younger. Gerard and Marjorie (St. Andre) married on 21 September 1946. They have two daughters, Andrea Mae born in December 1949 and Gail Marie born in October in 1951.

It should be noted that the U.S. Army records are mostly incorrect. They list Gerard J. Baszner as "Gerald J. Baszner." Marjorie Baszner recalls that as young marrieds they could not afford a home, and they lived with his parents. They survived on her "minimum wages" while Jerry was attending the College of Pharmacy at Wentworth Institute in Boston. He pursued a Degree in Pharmacy, thanks to the G.I. Bill of Rights. He later transferred to the Boston School of Pharmacy on Beacon Hill. He graduated from the New England College of Pharmacy in 1950.



Gerard Baszner

Gerard was inducted on 20 August 1943 and entered active service on 20 August 1943 at Fort Devens, Massachusetts. From there he was moved to Camp Grant located in Rockford, Illinois. From there he was sent for further training as a Medic, from 7 January to 1 April 1944, at Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC., where he successfully completed the "Enlisted Specialist Course for Medical Technician."

Then he was assigned to a Rep. Dep., (Replacement Depot.) Unit, which left for England on 29 April 1944. His unit crossed the Atlantic Ocean on the SS Washington.

He was a member of a large group of Medics who were shipped to England, where the Medics were assigned to various U.S. Army units spread all over England. Finally only six (6) Medics were left of the roughly four hundred who had arrived in Liverpool, England. The handful of Medics were kept busy by performing non-medical duties, such as KP (Kitchen Police = cleaning trays, dishes, pots and pans.)

Jerry told his buddy that he had enough of this nonsense and was going to volunteer for the next job, whatever it was. He did not have to wait too long and a call came for a volunteer. At this time it should be noted that Gerard J. Baszner was a very young man, he was not very tall—he could even be called skinny, and he wore glasses.

The sergeant in charge ordered Jerry to gather his gear and get into the back of two and a half ton truck, which the soldiers called "Deuce and a half." Dusk crept in and the truck drove off to "Who knows where?" After quite a while the truck stopped and Jerry was told to get off and jump into another truck. Again he was not told where he was heading for.

Some time during night the truck stopped in front of an "Orderly room", which is usually the main office for a Company. A sergeant ordered Jerry off the truck then opened the door of the Orderly Room, and Jerry faced an Officer sleeping at his desk. As he woke up the Officer looked at Gerard Baszner and said: "What are you doing here?" Jerry responded: "I do not know, Sir. I have no idea where I am, Sir." Gerard was asked if he always wore glasses. His answer was: "Only when I want to see, Sir." The Officer immediately shouted: "No one in my unit wears glasses!"

At that time Jerry realized he was facing an 82nd Airborne Officer, who then asked him what was his MOS (Military Occupational Specialty,) which is the specific number assigned to each and every enlisted man's military skill. In this particular case, it was the MOS assigned to all "Medics." When the Officer heard this number, he immediately knew he was talking to a Medic. It should be noted that very few Medics volunteered to be paratroopers. The Officer's next sentence was: "You are now a paratrooper!"

This of course was not at all what Jerry wanted to hear. The next morning he was shown how to drop and roll, then ordered on a truck, which had the tail gate open. As the Deuce and a half reached the speed of five (5) miles per hour, Jerry was ordered to jump off the truck. This went on in increments of five miles. By the time he successfully jumped out at thirty five (35) miles per hour, he was tapped on the shoulder and declared a "Paratrooper." That was the total extent of Jerry's ground training. Since he never had any formal training, another paratrooper folded (Continued)

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## GLASSES TAPED TO HIS FACE *(Continued)*

the parachute for him. An ingenious sergeant took some good old American "Duck tape" and taped Jerry's glasses to his face.

The criss-crossing of the tape only left two (2) little holes through which Jerry could see. The next thing he knew, he was fitted with a parachute and was told to climb in a C-47 "Dakota" twin engine transport plane. Jerry told us that he was scared to death and was not at all ready to jump out of the plane. He was shown how to hook up to the cable stretched along the ceiling of the plane. This would assure that his parachute would be pulled out as soon as he left the C-47. Jerry went on to say that he was more than frightened and was not about to jump out, when the jumpmaster literally kicked him in the butt—and that really hurt, said Jerry. He was thrown out of the twin engine and fainted. He only woke up as he hit the ground.

This very scary training was repeated another time. Again Jerry suffered through the same exercise. He now was officially a Paratrooper/Medic of the 505th PIR (Parachute Infantry Regiment) of the 82nd Airborne Division. His third (3rd) Jump was early morning (around midnight) over Utah Beach, Normandy on 6 June 1944, also called "D Day." Usually the C-47 flew between 600 and 800 feet above ground level. On 6 June 1944 the German "Flack" (anti aircraft artillery) at Omaha and Utah beaches were so intense that the C-47 planes were flying at 400 feet. Jumping at that altitude is very dangerous. The parachute has barely enough time to deploy before the paratrooper hits the ground.

—Submitted by Christian de Marcken, Associate

## CIVILIAN MASSACRE AT PARFONDRUY

by Charles R. Corbin, 3rd AD,  
391st AFAB, Battery A

On December 20th, 1944, our Reconnaissance Office (half-track), of which I was chief of section of Battery "A", 391st Armored Field Artillery Battalion, passed through Spa, Belgium, and then through a large gasoline storage area in a wooded area between Spa and La Gleize. We set up a communication relay station because radio reception and visibility were very poor.

On December 21st we got orders to report to a task force in Stoumont, but could not get by a column of tanks, and got stuck in a stream when we tried to bypass them on a trail. We then got a call to report to Colonel Lovelady's headquarters as Stoumont was not in our hands. A Captain Peters told us to report to Lieutenant Edmark of "D" Company, 33rd Armored, a task force of CCB, 3rd Armored Division, in the village of Parfondruy, to give artillery support. We were escorted part way and were told to move fast as the Germans had observation on the road. We did move fast. When we rounded a corner and stopped beside the first house on our right, there was a building on fire and lighting up the sky as it became dark. Lieutenant Plummer, our new Forward Observer, said he would go ahead on foot and make contact with "D" Company and make sure it was in our hands so all of us wouldn't get captured. Meanwhile some of the people came out of the house and asked for help as there were several wounded inside. William Whitten, Roland McNiece, and Howard Jenkins went in and began to administer first aid, while the rest of our section stayed on the guns. We had three .30 cal. and one .50 cal. machine gun.

We soon got a signal from Plummer to come on in, as he was

about 1/4 mile away. The guys were reluctant to leave when I came in to get them loaded up. They were bandaging a woman's left arm which had a bullet wound. They left most of our first-aid supplies and climbed over the side of the half-track, as we were only about 15 feet from the door to the side of the road. We passed the burning building on our right and met Plummer at the first corner intersection, and then to Lieutenant Edmark's C.P., who had made room for us in a room there. It was very cold.

We covered the windows and built a fire. I got out my favorite stove, a non-issue blow torch, and heated up some 10 in 1 rations. Lieutenant Edmark came in while we were eating and gave us the lowdown, or the big picture as they used to say. We had nine tanks, a platoon of infantry, and mortars, a few engineers and medics, and we had to hold our position. Lieutenant Edmark had led "D" Company from Petit-Coo to take possession of Stavelot, but was stopped at the edge of Parfondruy on the Coo road by large numbers of infantry and tanks in the afternoon. They had killed lots of Germans and knocked out several tanks and had a few prisoners. The fighting was ending as we arrived.

In the night, instead of sending Bed Check Charlie, the Germans sent a couple of buzz bombs that shook us. The next morning while scouting our position I entered a house and saw a dead elderly couple, bullet holes in their head, their throats cut, lying in their blood. Another house had two women and a baby dead in a crib. One of the women was nude with a bullet hole in her head



Charles R. Corbin,  
3 Arm dD

and part of her left arm hacked off. I was at a corner standing in a yard when two children appeared like out of the fog, and said: "Vive L'Amerique." One of our soldiers stopped them and told them not to enter the house as the people were dead. They said they were looking for their parents and relatives and went in. I went back to our C.P. in a daze. William Whitten and I had just pushed the 20-year age mark less than two weeks ago. It was hard to get our minds back on the war.

All afternoon we could see the German troops across the railroad marching on the Stavelot road toward Trois-Ponts but could not see our artillery shells because of haze and fog. I went upstairs in a house on a hill behind us to observe better. There under our nose was a large German tank in some trees. After telling Lieutenant Plummer and Lieutenant Edmark, we got artillery on it and flushed it out where one of "D" Company tanks had a clear shot at it. And shoot it he did, but three balls of fire bounced off, and it backed away, never moving its turret. It had to be a Mark VI Tiger. It made us all wonder, and I know the tank gunner was shaking his head, feeling helpless, as it backed up the railroad on our left flank. I had seen our 75's bounce off Mark V and VI tanks before, the last time near Roetgen (Germany), where they wiped out several of our tanks.

This tank fire started a lot of fire on us, as the Germans answered back, and some 155's of our own came in on us. It took us a while to get this stopped. A message came in on our radio for Lieutenant Edmark from Colonel Lovelady, as we had the only radio to reach outside. The Coo road had been taken by the Germans and our infantry was ordered out. We were isolated and feared the Germans would try to come through us to get our gasoline supply. We mounted our three .30 cal. machine guns in the windows upstairs and down, and sat up all night waiting. No one slept, but the attack never came.

On December 23rd, we saw a concentration of *(Continued)*



## CIVILIAN MASSACRE AT PARFONDRUY *(Continued)*

enemy infantry and tanks building up as if about to attack. Lieutenant Edmark and Lieutenant Plummer decided to pull Edmark's tank "Dixie" beside our C.P. and use it for indirect fire on the Germans, as it had a 76 gun. I went upstairs to my Observation Post of the day before to observe with Plummer standing on the tank. The tank fired three times, and I could see the Germans head for cover of the woods. They were between two to three thousand yards away. After the third shot, a German tank, probably the one I had observed the day before, fired back either at the tank, or at Plummer or me.

If it was on me, his aim was good but not perfect, as the shell came through the wall of the room just to my right, knocking me down, breaking both hands and sending three pieces of shrapnel into the head. I couldn't get the door open with my hands, thinking another shell was coming, but I got help with a prayer to open it. The medics found me in the snow and helped me to the C.P., patched me up, and said they would try to get me out, as they had another wounded man.

I told the guys in my section that I had two bottles of Cognac in my duffel bag for Christmas. Lieutenant Edmark came in and said good luck, and I said the same to him. They put my P-38 [can opener] on the stretcher. As the medic half-track went across the ridge, the Germans shot at us, with the shells landing close, but they didn't stop until we got to a roadblock of our own empty vehicles. When the door opened I expected to see Germans, but it was our medics checking on us.

We arrived at a large Chateau used as an aid station on the lower left, with the upper right used as a headquarters and having a terrace. I recognized my battery commander, Captain Paul Nelms. I was given a shot. The Chaplain came and said let's pray, and I said I had already done that, and I went to sleep.

Christmas day I was on a train near Paris to another hospital, and someone fed me Christmas dinner — peanut butter and jelly sandwich. I had no regrets, except I left my P-38 in the ambulance, and I didn't get any Christmas Cognac, but the memory of the massacre of Parfondruy I still have. *Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be/](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be/)*

## WELCOME ABOARD, NEW MEMBERS!

These new members joined VBOB between January 11, 2014 and March 31, 2015:

|                            |                 |                           |                   |
|----------------------------|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------|
| Alcorn, Doyle H            | 256 Engr Cmbt   | Kaiser, Elizabeth P       | Associate         |
| Armstrong, Tom             | Associate       | King, Vernon              | 8 ArmdD           |
| Bethe, Paul R              | Tk Destroyer Bn | Kistler, Joseph C         | 26 InfD           |
| Bittner, Lee P             | 75 InfD         | Landis, Nancy K           | Associate         |
| Black, Tana Van Nice       | Associate       | Ledy, Marvin L            | 1 ArmdD           |
| Beckett, Elizabeth         | Associate       | Lewis, Kathleen           | Associate         |
| Boyd, Angela               | Associate       | Ludy, James C             | Associate         |
| Brion, Patrick             | Associate       | MacLeay, Robert A         | 1255 Cmbt Engr Bn |
| Butler, Diane              | Associate       | Marcheschi, Luigi (Louis) | 7 ArmdD           |
| Campbell, Jan              | Associate       | McKay, Timothy            | Associate         |
| Chescavage, Dorsey D       | Associate       | Morris, Karlen            | Associate         |
| Clampett, Stephen J        | Associate       | Moston, Fred              | 317 InfD          |
| Clampett, Stephen M        | Associate       | Motheral, Eva Geren       | Associate         |
| Cobb, David                | Associate       | Mulligan, Timothy P       | Associate         |
| Coombs, Nikki              | Associate       | Palmer Jr, Joseph         | 63 InfD           |
| Del Rosso, John L          | 26 InfD         | Reed, Naomi               | Associate         |
| Delrossi, Anthony          | 629th Engrs     | Rogers, Paul C            | 101 AbnD          |
| Faulconer, Charles         | 80 InfD         | Santopetro, Joseph        | 809 FA Bn         |
| Frens, David W.            | 30 InfD         | Schulman, William         | 258 FA Bn         |
| Gilmore, Alice Katoski     | Associate       | Shropshire, Tammy Hall    | Associate         |
| Gorden, Gary               | Associate       | Sims, Glennie             | Associate         |
| Hanline, Nickolas          | Associate       | Sinigaglio, Bruno         | Associate         |
| Hanline, III, Leonard      | Associate       | Sisneros, Michael         | Associate         |
| Harrell, Mary              | Associate       | Smith, Harold             | Associate         |
| Hiel, Herman               | Associate       | Sorenson, Tim             | Associate         |
| Hoffman, Jr, Mike G        | 35 InfD         | Speranza, Vincent         | 101 AbnD          |
| Horigan, Barbara Pendleton | Associate       | Towson, Treasa            | Associate         |
| Hughes, Walter             | 82 AbnD         | Wouters, Carl             | Associate         |
| Johnson, Mark H            | Associate       | Zaiser, William           | Associate         |

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- Attending our annual reunion, August 14-18, 2015 in Williamsburg, VA (See pages 16-19 for full details.)

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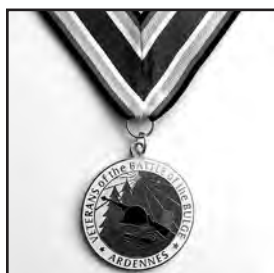


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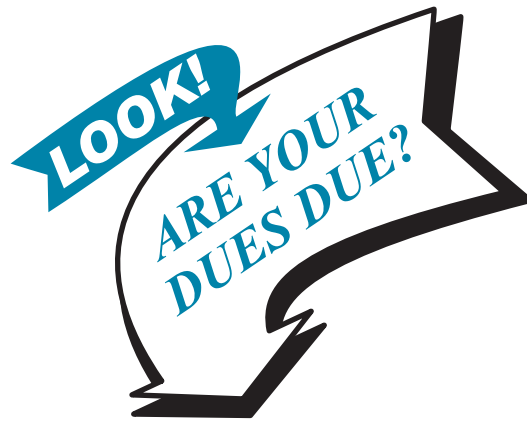
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Your Military Service (if any): Dates \_\_\_\_\_ Branch \_\_\_\_\_

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