



The BULGE BUGLE

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

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VOLUME XXXIV NUMBER 3

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

AUGUST 2015



Highlights to include: The Women's Museum at Fort Lee (left), the Yorktown Victory Center (right), and a wreath laying ceremony with the Spirit of '45 (below).



SIGN UP TODAY FOR THE VBOB NATIONAL
34th Annual Reunion
AUGUST 14-18, 2015 ★ WILLIAMSBURG, VA

See pages 16-19 for updated information.



Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc.

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

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Alan Cunningham, Associate



AS YOU PROBABLY saw in the last *Bulge Bugle*, we have been working very hard to put together an excellent reunion this year in Williamsburg, VA. If you look at the announcement in this issue, you will notice that we have added an item on Sunday morning. We will start the day with a wreath laying ceremony in Wil-

liamsburg in celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the ending of World War II as part of the Spirit of '45 "Tribute to America's Greatest Generation." We will be dedicating one of about 2,000 wreaths around the world. Also, Auston and Bonnie O'Neill, Jr. and their Spirit of '45 Day Express will be culminating their year and a half travels throughout the United States promoting the Greatest Generation and the 70th Anniversary of the ending of World War II. VBOB selected the weekend of August 14 – 16 specifically to participate in the 70th Anniversary Commemorative Weekend events. There is no additional cost to attend the Sunday morning wreath laying, as we have obtained sponsors to pick up most of the costs. The rest of the day will be a relaxing day with our meetings and evening banquet. The other days include: Saturday at Fort Lee, center of Army Logistics and home of the Quartermaster and Women's Museums; and

Monday visiting the Jamestown Settlement and Yorktown Victory Center to cap off our events. To attend our reunion, see the full listing of events later in this *Bugle* along with the revised reservation form. Remember that there are increased access requirements at all army installations now in affect so be sure you have your GOVERNMENT ISSUED IDENTIFICATION. If you have a military ID or "CAC," that is even better, as it reduces the advanced requirements on VBOB.

Also in this *Bugle* is the announcement of the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation's 71st Anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Bulge. This event usually is held in Washington, D.C. over the anniversary of the starting of the Ardennes Campaign, December 16, 1944. Last year for the 70th anniversary, VBOB traveled to Belgium and Luxembourg for the celebration so there was no event in D.C. in December. As a result, VBOB held a shortened 70th anniversary celebration of the ending of the Battle in January 2015, which was a huge success. This year the celebration is back to Washington, D.C. at the anniversary of the start of the battle. I encourage all of you to attend this event as it is always a good time. If you have never attended, ask someone who has what they think and why they come back year after year.

As a reminder, planning is underway for the 2016 reunion, which will be in Seattle, Washington. This will be our first reunion in the northwest, and looks like it will be a memorable reunion as well. The dates have not been selected yet, but will be published as soon as they are firm.

I am looking forward to seeing you at our reunion in Williamsburg August 14-18, 2015 and in D.C. in December for the Anniversary Commemoration. Be well and have a wonderful year.

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VE DAY IN EUROPE WITH VBOB REPRESENTED

by Doug Dillard, 82nd Airborne
and his wife Ute, Associate



VBOB Associate Ute Dillard, camp survivor Nikolai Vosmerik who was liberated by the 82nd Airborne, and VBOB Member Douglas Dillard, 82nd Airborne and former national VBOB president.

As has already been covered in some detail, VBOB visited Belgium and Luxembourg in December for the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. I wanted to report on a continued representation of VBOB by my presence at commemorations that continued to be held, as VE Day approached in May 2015.

My wife and I returned to Europe (Germany) in April and began activities that were interesting and inspiring for the survivors, but exhausting as well. On 2 April, as agreed to with the Jonastal Foundation [Ute's Foundation that continues to research the underground facility that was used to make aircraft parts, and was also being prepared as Hitler's bunker once he decided to leave Berlin], we would meet Petro Mischtschuk, who was originally from the Ukraine and was a NAZI prisoner in several concentration camps, finally ending up at Buchenwald when the War ended. He wore his old prisoner uniform that has been mended many times, but Petro wanted to be seen in it anyway. With our car, Ute and I spent the better part of the week with Petro and his friend taking them to scheduled events such as the City Hall in Amstadt, where Petro and I were made honorary citizens of Amstadt and signed their Gold Book (for VIPs). We attended the service at Ohrdruf Concentration Camp where about five thousand prisoners died or were killed outright by the NAZI SS guards. Then a service at the Jonastal monument to recognize the dead from that underground facility. Joining us for the services was Mayor Durer, who as a small boy in his village, observed the death march of prisoners from Ohrdruf, Crawinkel and Esplanfeld (all small camps subordinate to Buchenwald) who were marched towards Buchenwald to be exterminated as the US Forces approached. He recalls seeing a fallen prisoner begging the SS guard to not kill him, but he did anyway, with a shot to the back of the head. Mayor Durer recalls all the brutal treatment he observed in his village of Liebenstein as the prisoners were marched by.

Later in the week we attended a youth seminar held in a housing area, specially arranged so the youths could ask questions of our group that consisted of me, Petro and Mayor Durer. I especially enjoyed meeting the youths and responding to their questions. The questions were directed more to Wartime experiences. After our week escorting Petro around, we attended the commemoration

event at Buchenwald, the main concentration camp. There we met our old friends, all survivors, Murray Goldfinger, Jerry Kielzweski and of course Petro. The service was well attended with several thousand persons. The US Ambassador Mr. Emerson was present, as well as the Russian representative. I should mention that the Camp Committee that scheduled events, etc are primarily ardent Communists. In the early days after the DDR, or German Democratic Republic, came into existence, signs were displayed that the Russian Forces had liberated the Camp. Soon that did change, but even today there is no display or mention that the US Army liberated the Camp. I was very pleased to meet Goldfinger and Kielzewski again. We have also visited Goldfinger at his residence in New Jersey.

The commemoration at Buchenwald ended the series of services for a while. However, I located a survivor from the Ukraine who was liberated by my division, 82nd Airborne on 2 May 1945, so we had a very great meeting. Unfortunately Nikolai Vosmerik is now blind, but we immediately became comrades. He had to serve in the Russian Army for six month after the war so he was wearing all his Russian medals. We spent about 4 hours in our meeting and as we departed he still wanted to talk. I thoroughly enjoyed that meeting.

With a small break in late April, the day approached to commemorate VE Day. Our Belgian Army friend Patrick Brion and wife Steffi met us in Kahla where the NAZI Jet fighter aircraft was developed in the Marshal Goring underground facility. Thousands of foreign workers were brought in to work on the project, as well as on other aircraft parts, not as prisoners but paid workers from Slovakia, Spain, Italy, Holland and Germany. They were confined to several camps, as were prisoners, and had to work under very grueling conditions supervised by the ever present NAZI Guards. Many of these workers died from pneumonia due to their working conditions and poor healthcare. We made some great friends from Holland, Italy and Slovakia among the relatives of the workers who perished in the camp there. There were several camps located around the city of Kahla and at each former camp site a commemoration service was held. The one that means the most to me was held in Kleinshmidt, where the monument is located by the highway. After the ceremonial speeches were made, we were given a red rose by the children of the village and each child accompanied us to place the rose on the monument. My very young boy was not sure what he was to do, but I had done it the year before, so we had no problem.

I wore my cap with the VBOB insignia, so as the press covered the events their photos will show VBOB was present. I should just comment: the US divisions that fought in the Bulge were some of the Divisions that liberated the camps and made it to the Czech border with Patton's Third US Army. So our VBOB veterans who were there will appreciate this information.

This year, so far Ute and I have been in Germany for 75 days and as you can see we have been very busy. We also continue to do our research on the camps and will be with our German friends later on in Berlin to research WWII underground facilities.

IN REMEMBRANCE

John J. Dunleavy National President VBOB (1999-01)

by J. David Bailey,
National President VBOB (2010-12)



John J. Dunleavy, age 91, was born on August 19, 1923 in Cleveland Ohio and passed on April 28, 2015 in Oakton, Virginia. His parents were both born in Ireland and raised their son in Astoria and Jackson Heights, New York. John graduated from La Salle Academy in 1941, afterwards attending the University of Notre Dame.

His college years were interrupted by the start of WWII, which was a common occurrence for young

men at his age. John served in the European Theatre of Operation, landing on Omaha Beach on July 12, 1944 with the 737 Tank Battalion, Company D, which was later referred to as Patton's Spear Headers.

During his service in Europe John served in five major battles—Normandy, Northern France, Ardennes-Alsace, Rhineland and Central Europe—having a prominent involvement in the Battle of the Bulge. During the closing months of the War, he was his Battalion's highest ranking non-commissioned officer, serving as a Tank Commander. He was later rewarded the Presidential Unit Citation for his action in Mortain, France.

Returning home after the War, he graduated from Notre Dame in 1947, and afterwards had a long and notable career serving the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a Special Agent. After his retirement from the FBI, John served as a Vice President of the Bank of New York. He was an avid Military Historian, and his many other interest included Notre Dame Football.

John was a member of the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI and a member of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. where he also served as National President. He is survived by his loving wife of 65 years, Mary Dugan Dunleavy, four children, four grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

John was a close associate and friend of George Chekan, two-times National President of VBOB who passed February 26, 2015. George and John's Battle of the Bulge Memories were included in the Time/Life 2005 publication "V-E Day, America's Greatest Generation and their WWII Triumph." As a result of poor health, he was unable to attend our meetings. However, George and I regularly contacted John to keep him informed of our current activities.

A personal message from his family stated that John cherished his association with his fellow veterans and looked forward to VBOB meetings and ceremonies. It is important to state that WWII had a profound impact on him during his long and propitious lifetime.



Members In Memoriam

Please notify us when you hear that any member of our organization has recently passed away, so that we may honor them in a future *Bulge Bugle*. Also, kindly notify us of any errors or omissions.

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

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

BORRACCHINI, ANGELO	75 INFD
DELLENBACH, ELMER	143 AAA GUN BN
DUNLEAVY, JOHN	5 INFD
EVANS, ALLEN	76 FA BN
HALVERSTADT, LEE	11 ARMDD
HECKMAN, DONALD	80 INFD
HENNESSEY, JAMES	87 INFD
LEIFER, MILTON	99 INFD
LYNCH, ROBER	9 INFDT
ODLE, JOHN	738 MED TK BN
PARKS, FRED	106 INFD
QUESINBERRY, ROBY	3 ARMDD
STEPHENS, W. KENT	26 INFD
STRANK, ANTHONY	981 FA BN
WALL, JOHN C.	86 CHEM MTR BN
ZIMMERER, JACOB	26 INFD

HONORING MY GRANDFATHER

by Matthew Swedick, Associate,
President of Hudson Valley Chapter (49)



Pvt. John J. Swedick, 2nd Infantry Division, 23rd Infantry Regiment, K Co, Killed in action 12-17-44

In World War II, my Grandfather John Swedick was a private with the 2nd Infantry Division, 23rd Infantry Regiment, Third Battalion, K Company. He entered the Army in March of 1944, at Camp Wheeler in Macon Georgia. Camp Wheeler was an Infantry Replacement Training Center where new recruits received basic and advanced individual training to replace combat casualties. In September of 1944, Pvt. Swedick was shipped off to Europe.

On October 30, Pvt. Swedick joined his unit near Lutzkampen Germany, where his unit spent a month and a half fending off skirmishes from the Germans and building up

defenses in the area. On December 12th, Pvt. Swedick's regiment moved up to Elsenborn, Belgium in a reserve position, again building up defenses in that area, while the rest of the Second Division headed for an attack on the Roer Dams. While in that reserve position on the morning of December 16th, the 23rd Infantry Regiment was called east to back up the 99th Infantry Division, whose lines had just been bombarded by German artillery and were now being penetrated by German infantry. What was first thought of as a local skirmish in response to the Allied attacks in the north toward the Roer Dams, the attack on the 99th Infantry Division's position was but a part of a major German offensive orchestrated by Adolf Hitler himself, now historically known as the Battle of the Bulge. Hitler had a plan to drive his forces west to Antwerp and divide the Allied armies and cut off supply lines. He was hoping to force a peace treaty in the west.

On the night of December 16th, the 23rd Infantry Regiment was trucked into the frontlines, and immediately upon arrival, the unit was littered with artillery shells and sustained some losses. Due to the darkness and the lack of intelligence as to the enemy's position and the terrain, the regiment was ordered to dig in for the night. On the morning of the 17th, the regiment was ordered to move forward to reinforce the line that the 99th Infantry Division was losing. As the 23rd moved forward, the remnants of the 99th were retreating back through their lines. As infantrymen of the 99th came through, soldiers of the 23rd took weapons and ammunition from the retreating unit. (It was the common feeling among the Allies after the D-Day invasion in June that the War would be over by Christmas. As such, many units were not fully equipped with the proper winter clothing, weaponry, or ammunition. As such, much of the unit going in that night were not properly equipped for what the Germans were about to throw at them.)

The 23rd's position was on the northern shoulder of the Bulge and played a crucial role in Hitler's drive towards Antwerp. The 23rd was burdened with the role of holding off the German

offensive in that area until the remaining regiments from the 2nd and 99th Infantry Divisions could be brought back down from the Roer Dams to reinforce the line. For hours, individual units of the 23rd Infantry Regiment repelled attacks by the German Tiger tanks and infantry. However, the 23rd was outnumbered and outgunned, having only two tanks and a limited amount of anti-tank guns at their disposal. Finally, on about the sixth or seventh attack, the Germans started pushing forward, and the 23rd started to sustain major losses. The order to retreat came through to the individual units, my Grandfather's included. However, he and six other infantrymen of the platoon ignored the order and chose to stay and cover their retreating unit. As the German tanks approached they fired point blank into the foxholes with artillery and machine gun fire.

My Grandfather, Private John Swedick exited his foxhole with fixed bayonet and rushed towards the German infantry. When last seen, he had closed with the enemy and was engaged in bitter hand to hand combat. After that time, mid-afternoon December 17, 1944, my grandfather was declared missing in action and presumed dead. His body was recovered some days later as the Allies pushed back through the lines towards Germany. His death along with the six others was chronicled in a January 1945 Stars and Stripes newspaper article.

While the Siege of Bastogne is often credited as the central point where the German offensive was stopped, the battle for Elsenborn Ridge was a decisive component of the Battle of the Bulge, deflecting the strongest armored units of the German advance. The attack was led by one of the best equipped German divisions on the western front. Historian John S.D. Eisenhower wrote, "... the action of the 2nd and 99th Divisions on the northern shoulder could be considered the most decisive of the Ardennes campaign."

For my grandfather's "heroic and self-sacrificing decision to hold his position 'at all costs'" and allow the remaining platoon and company to safely withdraw that fateful day of December 17th, my grandfather was posthumously awarded the Silver Star Medal, the United States third highest military decoration for valor awarded for gallantry in action against an enemy of the United States. He also was awarded the Bronze Star, Combat Infantryman Badge, Purple Heart, WWII Victory Medal, Belgian Fourragere, Honorable Service Lapel Pin and the European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with two Service Stars (Rhineland Campaign and Ardennes-Alsace Campaign). For his regiment's extraordinary heroism in action in those opening days of the Battle of the Bulge, the 23rd Infantry Regiment was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation along with the Belgian Fourragere.

At the time of his death, my grandfather was living in Watervliet and worked as a chauffeur for the Atlantic and Pacific Tea Co. in Albany. He left behind a wife and two children, one being my father. This year marks the 70th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge, a battle which took nearly 20,000 American lives in about a month's time, but a battle which depleted the German war machine and put the Allies on track to end the war three months later.

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**

RETRACING TRACKS BY A YOUNG AMERICAN

by Ute Dillard, Associate

On April 14, 2013, we introduced the American documentary, "16 Photographs from Ohrdruf" in the women and family center in Arnstadt. My husband Douglas Dillard helped me with the translation so that all visitors could understand. About 20 interested ladies came, as well as two gentlemen. We were cordially greeted by Mrs. Schmidt. The press also was present.



The film shows Mathew Nash retracing his grandfather's steps as he took 16 photos, made shortly after liberation. His grandfather, Donald Johnson, took the photos while he was a medic during the liberation of the Ohrdruf camp. He kept them stored away, and many years later, after his death, Nash found them and broke the silence.

Together we watched the movie, and sometimes it was very quiet in the room. Witnesses, veterans and historians came to speak in the film. The camp, the survivors and the horror in the photos, which were shown throughout the movie, were very present. After the viewing, a discussion with witnesses took place. The silence of the grandfather in the movie also found some parallels.

A lady among us explained that her grandson is currently serving in Afghanistan and that he doesn't speak about his experiences either. Jürgen Ludwig from Arnstadt and a community worker from Gehren talked about the S III camp, the construction sites and emphasized that many questions were still open.

Almost every visitor knew about the Jonastal, as they came from the region around Arnstadt. I explained, as member of the Jonastal Association, the work of our association and that the documentation center can be visited.

Critical questions were also asked, especially as to camps in our current history. Why does Guantanamo exist? Why is there so little information to be found about the Jonastal in the American archives? Even when we were not able to answer all questions, it felt good to know that the documentary touched the viewers present.

Our presentation in the women and family center showed, once again, that people haven't forgotten the events during the war and that they have a keen interest in events that are happening now. This is a good thing.

If you want to know more about Mathew Nash and his movie, you can visit the documentation center of the Jonastal Association in Arnstadt.

MY FATHER'S BELGIAN STORY

by Angela Fazio, Associate

On September 8, 2002, Leonard J Fazio, 1st Infantry Division, my father passed away. He was 85 years old, but forever young at heart. My father was the finest person I have ever known. The first man I ever fell in love with, and still the best. All the qualities of a true gentleman, a true hero, he embodied. He was a caring, quiet, brave, strong, selfless, and a giving man. He was finely tuned, just like the violin he played in his youth. He stood tall and straight and always looked so distinguished and handsome and well-dressed. Growing up, my girlfriends had 'secret' crushes on him. My dad taught a daughter how a real gentleman treats a lady. He was a man of faith, and a faithful husband and father. He was talented and a lover of the fine arts. I know I get all of that from him. I am grateful. His smile was beautiful, and had a light of its own - everyone always said that. It was a smile that radiated goodness. He was a successful businessman, treating people fairly and kindly, a success, even though he never really learned the art of the deal. He didn't care. He could never say no to a request, and sometimes people knowing that, could take advantage. But that was okay because he knew it, and chose to help anyway. Maybe he died on that Sunday because, oh maybe, his wonderful heart just wanted to rest now. Maybe his mission had been completed. He had fought heart disease so valiantly and for so long, much like the way he lived - quietly, strongly, never ever complaining, not giving in but with an inner understanding, and yes, even a kind of acceptance. I know he still wanted life, but it was not to be. And our family misses him beyond any reality we know. Our hearts weep.

This story, his Belgian story, is to honor him. My dad was a disabled World War II Veteran, 1st Infantry Division, PFC., Anti-Tank, fought in D-Day, Northern France, Battle of the Bulge, Rhineland, recipient of the Purple Heart, EAME Service Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Good Conduct Medal.

For all of his life since the Battle of the Bulge, my father had a deep love and respect for the Belgian people. For a couple of months he was with the Meyntjens Family, a relationship that ended up lasting a lifetime and touching many lives. On the outskirts of Antwerp stood three small houses next to one of the bridges by the strategically crucial locks. The Meyntjens lived in one of those houses. There were Mom & Pop, their three daughters, Angeline, Alida, Maria, and little eleven-year-old, Frans. Their oldest child, Peter, in his early twenties, had been taken away by the Nazis. My father had been gravely injured in France, and after being released from a hospital in England, was sent to Antwerp to recuperate. He was to stay for a couple of months guarding those Antwerp locks. He was stationed near the bridge. My father's leg injury did heal, but he sustained permanent hearing loss that continued to deteriorate to over 90%. When he came home, and for the rest of his life, he wore a hearing aid. It was a large box positioned in a halter that went around his shoulders and his back, and hung in the middle of his chest. The ear mold was connected to a tube which connected to a wire to the hearing aid box. He also relied a lot on lip reading. This old-fashioned hearing aid, and the only model that could even help my dad at all, was his connection to a hearing world. Not ever, ever was there a word of complaint, not ever was there self-pity. I think a lot of men were like that from that Generation. Ordinary people called upon to be extraordinary. The men who really saw the hardest action of the War seemed to remain the quietest about it. No bragging.

During this three month time, my father bonded forever with his Belgian family. The Nazis were all around, always looking for Americans, and so they would regularly have to hide. Mom & Pop (that is what my dad always called them) hid my father in different spaces in their little house, at risk to their own lives. And always around him, staying close, protecting him just the way a little boy would want to do, was Frans - always Frans. The Nazis didn't give up - bayonets poised, shouting in German, threatening the Belgians, always searching - but they did not find those Americans guarding that bridge. The Meyntjens shared their home, their food, their



Leonard J. Fazio, 1st InfD

lives with my father. He was their tall, quiet American. How little Frans loved and clung to him! He wanted to always stay with him; I guess he so missed his big brother. The family didn't speak English, and my father of course didn't speak Flemish, but it did not seem to matter. Their understanding of each other was somehow not just about language. It was about the need for family, to feel cared for, to have a little of the gentleness and love left behind at home in America. Frans did learn to say, 'my brother', in English to my father. That was enough. Not ever did this family think of themselves. Perhaps Mom and Pop felt that if they

couldn't help their son, they would help another mother's son. And so my dad became like theirs. How brave they were! No matter what their fear of the Nazis, it never stopped them from watching out for 'their American'. When my dad did get some free time, he stayed at home with them. He could have, but chose not to go to the local night spots.

So the weeks of guarding the locks and of his own recuperation passed. It had been about three months, and the time had come to go back to the frontlines. My father always told me that day of leaving his Belgian family was one of the hardest. As the trucks pulled away and my father was looking out from the back of one of them, they began running after him crying aloud and screaming his name over and over. Little Frans kept calling for, 'my brother, my brother!'. They were losing him. The War went on, and my father was back on the frontlines. When he did get a furlough, he visited. And then the War was finally over. My dad went home to my mother. His ship, the USS Washington, braved a huge and ferocious storm at sea to be one of the first ones home. Its captain did not turn back when other ships decided they would. He said these men had seen the fiercest fighting, and deserved to go home as fast as the ship could take them. They had earned the most battle stars which meant they had earned their place to be the first 'batch' home. Their captain said they'd make it, they'd been thru too much not to, and they did - Christmas Eve. My mother had moved back home with her parents for the duration of the War, and on Christmas Eve 1945, the doorbell rang. There stood my father! My aunt screamed out his name, and my father walked thru the hallway, and there he saw my mother. It was a kiss that had been waiting for years to be delivered. He was safely home. Merry Christmas, everyone! And life went on. I was born in 1948, my sister, Donna

Lee, in 1958, and my brother, Leonard, was born in 1963.

My father always wanted to go back to Belgium to the Meyntjens to thank them, to see them again. Thru the years, there were cards, letters, and Christmas gifts. I can still remember my Belgian doll they had sent me one year. The families communicated as best as they could. My dad so loved anything Belgian, that when the New York World's Fair opened in the early 1960's, we would go as a family every Sunday, and guess where we would always end up? Yes, at the lovely and authentic-looking Belgian Village, sitting at a table on cobblestone streets, and eating of course, Belgian waffles! My father would sit there with his beautiful smile, sheer nostalgia radiating from his face. Sometimes we'd be there and a Belgian band would begin playing. Then you could see tears glisten in his eyes. He felt Belgium's essence come to him on those happy Sundays. It's a wonderful family memory. In ways of the heart, he was still theirs.

Finally in 1973, my dad and mother, and another couple, who were their best friends, did just that. My dad felt he had to be there right then; it turned out to be quite prophetic. Their visit was so wonderful, three days of somehow stepping back in time, and yet so enjoying the moment. When they entered their house, my parents were overcome with what they saw. All around and on their walls were pictures of my father and their son, Peter. Nothing had changed, my father was still a part of them. Peter had actually survived the War and the forced labor in Germany, only to die one night while taking a shortcut home. He was walking on the railroad tracks and was killed instantly by an oncoming train. The War was recently over, Peter was 26 years old and home. What tragedy!

Their three day visit was very happy, but sad too. No one had ever forgotten the tall, quiet, calm, young American soldier. But Mom and Pop were gravely ill. Mom was bedridden, and my father knew they were both dying. The whole Meyntjens Family had gathered, grown-up now, the three daughters and dear Frans. My parents got to meet their spouses, and some of their children. The visit was all it should be. Dad had kept his promise to return someday with his wife, Ann. He had been given that last chance, a gift to see their faces again, sit down at their table, and embrace them for the last good-bye. Within just a few days of my parents leaving Belgium, both Mom and Pop passed away. From time to time after my parents came home, my father would send cards to their home hoping to reach someone and hear from one of Mom and Pop's children. There might be a card - but only sporadically. Then we never heard from them again. My father sadly thought Belgium was gone for him. We thought so too. And life went on.

But we were wrong. Happily, Belgium was still to be a part of our lives. After about 27 years, in late March 2002, just a few months before my father passed away, a phone call. Imagine! Someone named Luc DeRoeck had been searching thru various internet search sites looking for the phone number of the American he had always heard about. He finally found my father thru a service of The New York Times - some kind of computer search site that traces people. Little did he know then that my sister and brother-in-law both work for the newspaper, and had he just looked under our last name, he would have found us quite easily. So Luc located a number of an office where my father had worked, the lovely lady and friend who took the call from him then called my mother, who then called me, and I had the number of a Belgian named, Luc DeRoeck, who was looking for the American soldier named Leo or Leonard. I called. Luc spoke perfect English.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE SURVIVORS GATHER; RECALL SNOW, ENCOUNTERS WITH THE FOE

by Helen McCaffrey; reprinted with permission from the *Cape May Herald*

Trish Hebert put it best when she said, “It’s important to remember everybody who served and the lives that were lost saving our country.” On Dec. 19 that is exactly what a group of over 40 did when they gathered at Mad Batter restaurant to honor the survivors of the Battle of the Bulge.

The famous battle that stopped the last massive push of the Nazi army occurred between Dec. 16, 1944 and Jan. 25, 1945. It involved American, French, British, Canadian, Belgian and German troops. When it was over, the official list of American casualties was 80,987 including 19,000 killed.

The Battle of the Bulge, as contemporary media named it, was the bloodiest battle of World War II for the Americans. The German casualties were numbered at 84,834. In the end, the Nazi counter-offensive failed and the Allies went on to liberate Europe. The outcome was not assured, however, when the Nazis made their surprise attack.

Arlette Michaelis was a child of 15 living in a country occupied by the Nazis. At the time of the battle, her parents Maurice and Georgette de Monceau, along with her brother Guy, were all in prison. They had been put there by the Nazis for resistance activities.

“I had to take care of my younger sister, Jilette who was 13,” recalled Michaelis. She remembered how frightened the Belgian people were that the Germans would have resurgence. The snow was so bad nothing could move and the clouds so thick that the planes could not fly,” she said.

The Germans finally ran out of gas – literally. Michaelis said the biggest lesson learned was how precious freedom is and how any country could lose it just like Belgium did. “That is my big fear,” she said. She recounted it all in her book *Beyond the Ouija Board*. “We will always be grateful to the Allies and the Americans.”

Ed Steinberg serves as the president of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge – South Jersey Chapter LXI. Steinberg is the son of Albert, a Bronze Star recipient and survivor of the battle. He received the baton from Gus Epple who was present.

Epple asked that any World War II veteran share one story. He told of his own “Baptism of Fire.” That first night of engagement, Epple was asked by his sergeant to go with him across the field of battle to search for the wounded and take them to safety. It was one wounded man at a time all the while dodging Nazi strafing. “That night I learned what was meant by ‘dead weight.’ That was my first day of combat.”

A young Al McGorsky had a message to deliver on Christmas Eve. As he drove across the open field, his jeep broke down in the muck. “What the hell are we going to do?” he thought.

The 18-year-old prayed. The message got delivered. “Bastogne is the word that describes the rest of your life,” he declared. He also recalled running into three young German soldiers who were leaving the battlefield. “They had enough. They were quitting. My buddy wanted to kill them but I said, ‘No put ‘em in the jeep.’ We



Bulge veteran Harry Kulkowitz met President Obama while at the remembrance event in Normandy.

did and turned them over to the French.” He said he got in trouble for not killing them but added, “I couldn’t. It was against my rules to shoot ‘em in cold blood.”

James Dougherty traveled all the way from Ashland, Va. to honor his late father-in-law, Ted Kerwood. William deWald, accompanied by his companion, Debbie Longo, presented a check to honor the memory of his father Nicholas B. deWald who died in May 2014 at age 97. He expressed gratitude for all he had learned from his father and the other brave men who fought that frigid winter.

Rev. Ted Osler of First United Methodist Church in Court House delivered the invocation. Retired U.S. Navy Cmdr. Mike Gross gave the keynote speech. Gross came equipped with a treasure trove of photographs taken by a 16-year-old soldier Louis Glaven.

Two days before Glaven died he passed on the invaluable photos to Gross. They had been hidden in his attic for nearly three quarters of a century. Glaven used a Kodak Brownie camera to take dozens of pictures of the landing on Omaha Beach.

“The albums are destined for the Navy War College. This is a story that should be told, must be told and is being lost,” said Gross.

Joseph Hebert, Navy captain, retired, is engaged in reaching out to young people to make sure they know their history.

The event was hosted by owner of the Mad Batter, Mark Kulkowitz. His father, Harry, fought in the battle when he was 19. For his exceptional bravery Kulkowitz was awarded the Legion d’Honneur Medal by the government of France. Mark recently took him to Normandy for the remembrance there and he was greeted by the heads of state, including President Barack Obama.

Alex Jackson told the Herald that fewer school principals are inviting veterans to tell their histories. “They say they can’t fit it in. I’d like to see that change. Ask your local school to host these men – these brave warriors. We owe them and our children to keep this going,” Jackson added. —Photo provided by Mark Kulkowitz

KANSAS CHAPTER (69) ANNUAL REUNION

The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge – Kansas Chapter held their annual reunion at the Eisenhower Presidential Library and Museum in Abilene, KS on January 24, 2015. Twenty five (25) Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and another six (6) WWII Veterans attended. According to newspaper reports, there were approximately 350 people in attendance. Chapter President Mark Collins had 175 registered, but the weather cooperated and there was excellent media coverage. The Kansas Chapter provides a free 8x10 photo of each WWII Veteran (also his family if there). Following individual and group photos, a panel discussion was held before moving to the Presidential Library for a buffet lunch.

The Kansas Chapter also dedicated a bench, which sits directly across from Ike's statue and is centered between the library and museum. "It is the best location that we could have asked for," said Chapter President Mark Collins. Over 150,000 visitors visit the Eisenhower Center each year. The granite bench will be there for years and allow people to sit in the rose garden and look at Ike's



statue. The Kansas Chapter will be trying to get another bench on the state capitol grounds in Topeka. It was a very successful 70th anniversary in Kansas!

—Submitted by Mark Collins, Past President

FRANK VETERE, 1104TH CEB AWARDED FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR



Mr. Frank Vetere was awarded the French Legion of Honor by the Honorary Consul General of France, Mr. Jack Cowan, in Seattle, WA on April 11, 2015 at the annual meeting of the Northwest Chapter. Many family members and friends were among the 100 + attendees.

Frank was initially trained as a Bridge Builder Combat Engineer in 1943 and on July 24, 1944, he and his Battalion arrived on Utah Beach. He saw combat in France, Belgium, Holland, Germany and Luxembourg. On December 16, 1944 (the day that the "Bulge" began), he was in the Eupen Forest. He remembers being in Brand, Germany (just outside of Aachen). His Battalion held Germany in check at Monchau. They constructed bridges over the Roer, Rhine, Weser, and Elbe Rivers. Prior to receiving this medal, he had been awarded 2 Overseas Bars, American Campaign Medal, and a European African Middle Eastern Theater Medal with 4 Battle Stars.

—Submitted by Doris Davis, Associate

VBOB SE FLORIDA CHAPTER (62) SPRING LUNCHEON, APRIL 19, 2015

by Betty Thomas, reprinted with permission from *The Condo News*

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge FL Chpt (62) held their spring luncheon Sunday, April 19th at the Hilton Hotel Palm Beach Airport.

Their special guest was Ms. Sherry Klopp, Vice President of the National VBOB Chapters. She brought greetings from National and a surprise for the local chapter -- a check for \$500.00 as compensation for the VBOB memorials the chapter has sponsored.

Guest speaker was S/Sgt Brian Mast who retired from the U.S. Army's Joint Special Operations Command (EOD) or Bomb Tech, following the amputation of both legs while serving in Afghanistan. He honorably served



L-r: Bunny Mathison, Muriel & Harold Berkman and Bob Erskine, founding members of the VBOB chapter.

his country for 12 years, has been named an honorary member of the 75th Ranger Regiment for his many life-saving actions while assigned to them, and has been awarded numerous medals for Valor, Merit and Sacrifice. He gave an eloquent speech praising the

WWII Veterans for their sacrifice and service to country, and described his ordeal when he was wounded by an improvised explosive device (IED), and the sacrifice his wife and family made during his service.

George Fisher, Chapter President, announced that the Christmas meeting would be at the Hilton. —Photos by Jimmy Shirley

EDITOR'S NOTE: *The Condo News* print newspaper, in its 44th year, circulates within the condominium communities of Palm Beach County, Florida, from Delray Beach in the south to North Palm Beach in the north, and along the beach on Singer Island, Palm Beach, and South Palm Beach, west to Royal Palm Beach. The newspaper contains many articles about our veterans and can be ordered by emailing info@condonewsonline.com

DELAWARE VALLEY CHAPTER HOPES TO ERECT BULGE MEMORIAL

by Erin Arvedlund, *Philadelphia Inquirer* Staff Writer and David Maialetti Staff Photographer



Stan Wojtusik, 106th ID; Doreen McGettigan; Norbert McGettigan, 69th ID.

A dwindling group of elderly Philadelphia veterans wants to build a Battle of the Bulge memorial in Washington Square, a site within the city's Historic Mile they believe is a fitting place to remember the key World War II confrontation.

In the process, they are fighting a new battle - against bureaucracy and time. They need money, political will, and permission from local and federal government agencies.

"We're the only major city in the country that doesn't have a monument to the Battle of the Bulge," said Norbert McGettigan, 89, who grew up in Overbrook and lives in Woodside Park. He was wounded three times during World War II.

The Battle of the Bulge, waged from Dec. 16, 1944, until Jan. 25, 1945, was a major turning point of the war in Europe. It gained fame for later generations via the 2001 miniseries *Band of Brothers*.

Philadelphia was home to thousands of veterans of the Bulge, including Stanley Wojtusik, a native of South Philadelphia who now lives in Torresdale. He graduated from John Bartram High School in 1943 and immediately joined the Army. He was wounded and taken prisoner by the Germans during the Battle of the Bulge.

Wojtusik founded a local Bulge veterans chapter in 1989. Today, there are fewer than 200 members.

"We were all 17, 18, 19 years old when it happened," said McGettigan. "And Philadelphia had one of the largest contingents of Battle of the Bulge vets living here."

"As in Vietnam," he added, "there were a lot of African American veterans in the battle from here in Philadelphia."

The battle marked the first time the Army desegregated during World War II, when, in an effort to repel attacking German forces, the Allies turned to thousands of African American GIs. (Officially, the U.S. military didn't desegregate until 1948.)

To gain their proposed monument a Washington Square location,

Wojtusik and McGettigan approached U.S. Rep. Robert Brady, the influential chairman of Philadelphia's Democratic Party, and City Councilman David Oh. The veterans also need permits from the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior, as well as funds.

So far, "no one has actually stepped up to help," said Doreen McGettigan, Norbert's wife.

Preliminary designs call for an 8-by-8-foot stone monument. Washington Square is already home to the Revolutionary War memorial.

For the vets, aging is the enemy today, Norbert McGettigan said: "We survived the war. Now we need to survive long enough to build this."

The worst part "was the living conditions," he recalled. "We didn't shower or change clothes for four months. I went from 160 to 125 pounds."

Much of his division, the 106th, was captured or killed in the fighting. He was reassigned to the 69th Infantry, which went on to liberate prisoners at a Nazi concentration camp.

Wojtusik, 89, also served with the 106th Infantry and was captured.

Using a walker, Wojtusik last week addressed American Legion Post 405 at the Union League. "We really need foot traffic, we need young people to walk by this and see this," he said.

The battle took place during an exceptionally cold winter, as German forces attacked American soldiers defending an 80-mile front in the Ardennes forest of Luxembourg and Belgium.

German troops "bulged" through the line, although 610,000 U.S. troops ultimately repelled the threat. It was the Army's largest World War II land battle, with 89,000 casualties, 19,000 of them deaths.

Thus far, the veterans group has raised only a few thousand dollars for the monument, which members estimate will cost \$120,000 to \$140,000.

Andre McCoy, an Iraq and Afghanistan veteran and Post 405 member, leads the monument committee. "It's long overdue to acknowledge the battle. It could have changed the course of the war," he said.

Meetings of the local chapter of Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge are at 12:30 p.m. the last Wednesday of every month at the Coast Guard Station, Columbus Boulevard and Washington Avenue.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more information on the Delaware Valley Chapter, or to make a contribution for the Bulge Memorial, contact Chapter President Stanley Wojtusik at (215) 637-4191.

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.

NORTHWEST CHAPTER MEETING, SEATTLE, WA, APRIL 11, 2015



l-r seated, front row: Alvin Ackerman, Robert Meyer, Robert Parker, Ray Pennock, Daniel O'Brien, Robert Eilenberger. l-r standing, back row: Frank Vetere, Douglas Donner, Maurice Schmidli, Don Leonard, Buck Pearsol, Cal Johnson. (Not pictured: Chuck McGuire, Jim Bernovich.)

The Northwest Chapter held their annual Spring Luncheon Meeting at LaQuinta Inn in Tacoma, WA (near Seattle) on April 11, 2015. The program was "Reports from the Field: WW II 70 Years Later". The presenters were Doris Davis, Vice President of VBOB National and Peter Lahmann, VBOB NW Chapter Historian (both Associate Members). Both speakers presented information about tours they had participated in during the last year. Doris' presentation was about the 70th Anniversary Tour to Belgium and Luxembourg in Dec, 2014. Her presentation included pictures taken during the tour as well as a short video that was actual film footage taken during the War. Peter's presentation was about a trip to Bastogne in March 2015 to help with Veterans and family members of the 17th Airborne as they toured Flamerige and other battle sites where the soldiers had entered the line 26 December 1944. There were 4 Veterans and about 40 family members. Frank Vetere, a member of the Chapter, shared many interesting items in a table display. There were also vintage military vehicles and table displays of historic artifacts pertaining to BOB for participants to see. Over 100 people were in attendance at the meeting (14 Veterans). —Submitted by Doris Davis, Vice President of VBOB National; Photo courtesy of Steve Mahler, son of Art Mahler, former President of the Northwest Chapter

WAYNE FIELD, 6TH AD AWARDED THE CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL



VBOB Member Wayne Field, 6th Armored Division (center), received his Congressional Gold Medal in a ceremony this February.

On February 20, 2015, VBOB Member Wayne Field received the Congressional Gold Medal for his efforts in building the Civil Air Patrol. The ceremony took place at the Colorado State Capital Building in Denver CO.

The award was presented by Colorado's Adjutant General, Maj. Gen. Michael Edwards, who oversees the Colorado Air National

Guard and the Colorado Civil Air Patrol and US Representative, Ed Perlmutter and Colorado Wing Commander, Col. William Aceves. The recipients shared their stories during the event.

After Wayne became a CAP cadet during WW II and then joined the Army, he was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge. The Civil Air Patrol scanned the waves for ships, survivors and submarines (all on a volunteer basis). One of their main roles was to spot, harass and attack submarines, giving the nation time to mobilize. They played a major role in restoring security to our coasts and pushing the U-boat menace back out to sea. They trained cadets, patrolled the border, watched for forest fires, lead search and rescue mis-



sions, delivered essential parts and medicines, tested civil air defenses and towed targets in dangerous live-fire and anti-aircraft exercises. By the end of the War, the civilian men and women of the Civil Air Patrol (CAP) had flown over 750,000 hours of missions, and 65 volunteers had given their lives on active duty. Their motto was (and still is) "Semper Vigilans"— they are 'always vigilant' and always ready to rush to the rescue of our country.

The first recipient of this medal was George Washington and this, says Wayne, makes him feel 'quite honored.'

Addendum: Since the War, Wayne has flown many Search and Rescue (SAR) Missions in MA, CT, NY, IL, MO and CO as a mission pilot. He's been a Squadron Commander in several states and he says that he really loves working with the cadets.

THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE HISTORICAL FOUNDATION, INC.

Invites You to Join Your Friends for the

“EVENTS OF REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION” OF THE 71st ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE December 14, 15 and 16, 2015 Metropolitan Washington, DC

We are back this year by popular demand with invitations to two Embassy receptions. Luxembourg Ambassador Jean-Lois Wolzfeld has invited us to the Luxembourg Embassy, on Monday, 14 December 2015, from 6:30 – 8:30 PM and on Wednesday evening we have been invited by Belgium Ambassador, Johan Verbeke, to his residence on Wednesday, 16 December 2015 from 6:30 - 8:30 PM. We will hold our annual Battle of the Bulge Commemoration Banquet, at the DoubleTree Hilton Crystal City, on Tuesday evening, 15 December 2015, between 6:00 and 10:00 PM. Our speaker for the Banquet will be announced in our the November Bulge Bugle. Our bus trip this year on the 15th of December will be to National Archives Museum to view the Charters of Freedom and their Public Vaults Exhibit. The DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City by Hilton, 300 Army-Navy Drive, in Arlington VA 22202 has been selected again, with its panoramic view of our Nation’s Capital. This hotel, just off Route 1, in Crystal City, is a 7 minute drive from Reagan National Airport and a 2 City block walk to the Pentagon City Metro Station and the Pentagon Mall. It provides easy access to Washington DC and has just finished major renovations to the entire hotel for great accommodations. **We have managed a reduced rate of \$119.00**, single or double occupancy, plus taxes, for the evenings of 14th, 15th and 16th December 2015, which is the start of the business week and for those who want to stay up to two days after. For those who want to come in earlier, to relax or enjoy Washington, on the weekend, a \$99.00 plus taxes rate for the evenings of the 12th and 13th of December 2015 has been arranged. Check-in time is 4:00 PM however, any guest checking in after 12 noon will be able to so for no charge, based on the rooms availability. For those driving we have managed a reduced self-parking rate of \$10 per night from their normal \$27.00 per night rate. **We have blocked 35 rooms so it is imperative to make hotel reservations immediately.** For room reservations, please call the DoubleTree Reservations (1-800-Hiltons) or 703-416-4100 by December 6, 2015. Mention the **BATTLE OF THE BULGE** for this special rate.

•MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2015

- 2:00 PM – 9:00 PM **Registration & Hospitality Room open – Harrison/Jackson Room** - Receive Registration Packets with name badges, Banquet/bus tickets. Sign Attendance Books. (If you are only attending the Banquet, (on the 15th this year) you may pick up your tickets at the Hotel by the Washington Room by 6:00 PM Dec 15th.)
- 3:00 PM – 11:00 PM Hospitality Room/Exhibits, Books, scrapbooks, memorabilia, snacks & beverages open everyday. Kent Menser, BOB Vice-President and John Bowen, BOB Treasurer will be the hosts.
- 3:30 PM We will be having our traditional **Tree Trimming Ceremony** “Salute to Bulge Veterans” in the Harrison Hospitality Room. Bulge veterans who are attending should send us a WWII picture of you
- 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM Bus leaves at 5:30 PM for Luxembourg Embassy **Reception**, downtown Washington, from 6:30 – 8:30 PM

•TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015

- 9:15 AM - 9:30 AM Load buses and depart promptly at 9:30 AM for National Archives, Constitution Ave, Washington DC.
- 10:30 AM We will visit the National Archives Museum and view their Public Vaults exhibit, special exhibit on Prohibition as well as the Charters of Freedom in the Rotunda and the Magna Carta.
- 12:00 PM - 2:30 PM We will travel to Union Station for lunch on your own at the variety of eateries and restaurants there and shopping at Mall in Union Station.
- 2:30 PM Return to DoubleTree Hotel to rest and prepare for our annual commemorative Banquet.
- 5:00 PM Hospitality Room Closed till after Banquet.
- 6:00 – 10:00** **BANQUET AT THE DOUBLETREE CRYSTAL CITY HOTEL, WASHINGTON RM, (Lobby).**
- 6:00 PM Social Hour/Cash Bar. Seated for Dinner at 6:45 PM.
- 7:00 PM Color Guard & Honors.
- 7:15 PM Dinner served: *Apple Brandy Pork Tenderloin OR Chicken Piccata*
- Program: Greetings from Dignitaries, Person of Year Award, Speaker.
- 10:00 PM Hospitality Room open

•WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015

- 8:45 AM - 12:30PM Bus loads 8:45 AM leaves Hotel promptly at 9:00 AM for **Wreath layings** at World War II Memorial, large VBOB Memorial, and Tomb of the Unknowns and changing of the Guard.
- 12:30 PM Return to DoubleTree Hotel for annual **VBOB Luncheon** in Windows Over Washington.
- 1:00 PM **Lunch 14th Floor** of hot soup, Grilled Chicken or Smoked Turkey sandwich, beverage and dessert.
- Swearing-in** of new National VBOB officers for 2016.
- 5:30 PM – 8:30 PM Bus leaves at 5:30 PM for Belgium Ambassador Residence, Washington DC, from 6:30 – 8:30 PM.

Notes: □ Free Airport shuttle provided by the DoubleTree Hotel every half hour, 3 miles from Reagan Washington National Airport.
□ Free Shuttle from DoubleTree every hour on the half hour to METRO: Pentagon City (Blue/Yellow Line) and to Pentagon City Mall.
□ Skydome Lounge for dinner, the area’s only revolving rooftop lounge, for a spectacular view of Washington at night.
□ Early departure: If your reservation plans change, please advise hotel at or before check-in of any change in your reserved planned length of stay to avoid an early departure fee (currently \$75.00) for checking out before your agreed upon reserved length. Any special circumstances of Early Departure Waivers will be on a case by case basis and depending on the severity of the situation. 6/5/15

Seq # _____

Chk # _____ Date _____ Amt _____

RESERVATION FORM
“REMEMBRANCE AND COMMEMORATION”
OF THE 71st ANNIVERSARY OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE
December 14, 15, and 16, 2015 Metropolitan Washington, DC

Return form and check by **December 6, 2015** to:

Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation, Inc.
PO Box 4546
Silver Spring MD 20914-4546

Questions:

John D. Bowen, 301-384-6533

E-Mail: johndbowen@earthlink.net

Name: _____ Telephone _____ Cell _____

Name of Spouse/Guests: _____ ; _____ ; _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

Battle of Bulge Unit You Served With: _____

E-Mail Address: _____ Do you have a WWII Pictures to send us? _____

RESERVATIONS: _____ **Number Attending** _____ **Cost/Person** _____ **Total** _____

Registration Fee: Provides for Badges, Programs, Hospitality, Toasts, etc _____ X \$30.00 \$ _____

MONDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2015

4:00 PM Tree Trimming Ceremony Harrison Room _____ X FREE
 5:45 PM Bus to Luxembourg Embassy Reception _____ X \$25.00 \$ _____

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2015:

Chartered Bus: To National Archives & Union Station _____ X \$30.00 \$ _____

9:30 AM Bus Leaves for National Archives _____ X \$59.00 \$ _____

Commemorative Banquet, DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City _____ X \$59.00 \$ _____

6:00 PM - 10:00 PM Please make your Main Course selection(s):
☐ Apple Brandy Pork Tenderloin _____ (Names) _____
☐ Chicken Piccata _____ (Names) _____
☐ Diabetic Meal _____ (Names) _____

Seating is assigned. Plan ahead with your friends to be seated at the same table. Tables are Rounds of 8. Please indicate friends with whom you would like to sit: _____

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 2015:

Chartered Bus: Wreath Layings VBOB Memorials, Tomb of _____ X \$25.00 \$ _____

Depart 9:00 AM Unknowns & WWII Memorial

09:00 – 12:00 AM Wreath Laying Ceremonies: Number Attending: _____

1:00 PM VBOB Luncheon at DoubleTree Hotel Chicken _____ X \$30.00 \$ _____

Turkey _____ X \$30.00 \$ _____

5:45 PM Bus to Belgium Ambassador Residence Reception _____ X \$25.00 \$ _____

GRAND TOTAL (Enclose check made out to BoBHF 2015 Commemoration): \$ _____

NOTE: Checks will not be deposited until 1 Dec 2015 so you can register now.

Permission granted for Hotel to notify BoB Historical Foundation that room reservation has been made.

Signature: _____

NOTES & REMINDERS: Banquet Dress: Business suit/black tie optional (miniature medals encouraged) or military dress uniformRoom reservations must be made for the DoubleTree Crystal City directly, by December 6, 2015 Telephone (1-800-Hiltons) or .Return completed Reservation Form for events to BOB Historical Foundation ASAP but no later than 6 December 2015.

No cancellation refunds after December 6, 2015.

Hotel Reservations based on Availability. Please do not delay.

Please indicate in all places the number & names attending so that we can be advised of the proper number to plan. Thanks!

PLEASE BRING A PICTURE ID (Drivers License, Passport, Mil ID) for the Washington area

6/5/15



WELCOME TO WILLIAMSBURG, VA

VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE 34TH ANNUAL REUNION

August 14 - 18, 2015

REVISED 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 "windshield" 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/.

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.



Visitors trying on armor at the Jamestown Settlement, which we will visit on Monday.

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

ADDED: We will start the day with a **wreath laying ceremony** in Williamsburg in celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the ending of World War II, as part of the Spirit of '45 "Tribute to America's Greatest Generation." Ours will be one of about 2,000 wreaths being dedicated on that day across the world.

The rest of Sunday 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 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/

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.

VBOB REUNION REGISTRATION FORM DEADLINE: JULY 24, 2015

Complete this form OR register online: 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.*

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you have already registered, please do not register again. We will contact you to see if you would like to attend the wreath laying ceremony on Sunday.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ e-mail _____

Division, Regiments, etc _____

Check box if Associate Member ☐ Signature _____

Wife/Guest(s) _____

IMPORTANT: Please indicate No. of People attending *free* events as well!
We need to know for room capacities. Thank you.

	No. of People	Cost per Person	Total Cost
Registration Fee (<i>all attendees must register</i>)	_____	\$35	_____

Friday, August 14, 2015

Wine and cheese reception	_____	free	_____
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Saturday, August 15, 2015

Trip to Fort Lee (<i>including bus and lunch</i>)	_____	\$40	_____
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Sunday, August 16, 2015

ADDED: Wreath Laying Ceremony	_____	free	_____
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	_____
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Crab Imperial Stuffed Flounder	_____	\$44	_____
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Monday, August 17, 2015

Trip to Jamestown and Yorktown	_____	\$60	_____
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Includes admission fees, tours, bus, and lunch

Select from the following choices for lunch (included):

Angus Cheeseburger	_____
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Brunswick Stew	_____
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Chef Salad	_____
------------	-------

Barbecue Sandwich	_____
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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, 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

REVISED 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 Dinner on your own

SUNDAY, AUGUST 16, 2015

8 am – 2 pm	Registration (Newmarket Hall)
8 am – 11 pm	Hospitality Room open (Newmarket Hall)
8:30 am	Load buses for trip to Williamsburg Memorial Park
9-10 am	Spirit of '45 Wreath Laying Ceremony
10 am	Return to hotel
10:30 – 11:30 am	Chapter Presidents' Meeting (Jefferson Davis Amphitheater)
11:30 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 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
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FORT MAGRUDER HOTEL AND CONFERENCE CENTER

6945 Pocahontas Trail

Williamsburg, VA 23185

website: 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/ 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); Carey Transportation (757-853-5466, www.onetransportationsolution.com); Williamsburg Chauffeur Service, LLC. (757-927-5049, 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



TOURS PLANNED FOR 2016

2016 PILSEN LIBERATION FESTIVAL & PRAGUE (10 days, End of April 2016)

From Frankfurt we travel to Nuremberg and finally to the world famous Pilsen Liberation Festival (see many YouTube reports) in the Czech Republic. Attend this year's iconic 71st

Anniversary celebrations when Pilsen festively thanks America for its May 6, 1945 liberation by General Patton and Third Army. Return from the beautiful Czech capital, Prague.

2016 MEMORIAL DAY & NORTHERN BULGE TOUR (11 days, End of May 2016) Our itinerary is deliberately planned to include as many as possible of your particular wishes and "special places" in the Northern Bulge. Just tell us. Our veterans are guests of honor on Memorial Day in a major Battle of the Bulge US Cemetery, a spectacular, moving, historical experience. Then we continue our WWII pilgrimage via the Siegfried Line, Hurtgen Forest, a Rhine cruise and Nuremberg to the end of our tour in Munich.

2016 LAFW SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR (9 days, End of June 2016) Once again the 'US Veterans Friends of Luxembourg' will plan for us in 2016 another fantastic VBOB Luxembourg-American Friendship Week (LAFW) and tour of the "Southern Shoulder" of the Bulge, full of events & celebrations, including festivities on Luxembourg's National Day, the Grand Duke's official birthday.

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

CELEBRATING 70 YEARS OF VICTORY AT THE WW II MEMORIAL

by J. David Bailey, VBOB, 106th Infantry Division, and Member of the Friends of the World War II Memorial



VBOB Associate John Bowen, former US Senator Bob Dole, and VBOB member Mike Levin, 7th Armd Div., at the event.

Seventy years ago, our forebears helped save the world from the unspeakable horror of global Fascist domination. American troops along with British, Canadians, Free French and other Allied Soldiers earned the non-ubiquitous title - The *Greatest Generation*. Across the Free World people took to the streets in celebration of a hard-fought peace.

The War in Europe was over but not without sacrifice. In the end, the Battle of the Bulge in the Ardennes Forest of Belgium

and Luxembourg was the costliest action every fought by the U. S. Army, and suffered 80,000 losses between casualties and wounded. Winston Churchill later stated.

"This is undoubtedly the greatest American Battle of the War and will, I believe, be regarded as an ever-famous American Victory"

On May 8, 1945 I was in Bad Ems, Germany and five of my comrades from 106th Infantry Division took off for the nearest tavern to celebrate. We never dreamed that there was a cameraman present from the "Stars and Stripes" and that we would appear on the cover page of their Victory Edition. It was a humbling but gratifying experience for all of us.

Today's commemoration co-hosted by the Friends of the National World War II Memorial and the National Park Service was the largest event held at the World War II Memorial since its dedication more than ten years ago. Present was a roster of distinguished guests and representatives from the embassies of nearly 30 European Theatre Allied Nations.

A record numbers of veterans and their families, including World War II veterans, were present for the occasion.

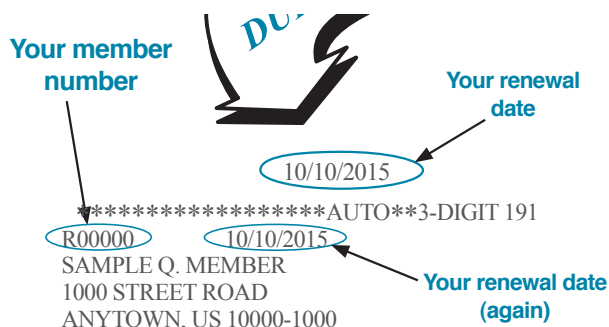
The event climaxed by "A Victory Capital Flyover" which included 56 World War II aircraft flying in 15 historically sequenced war bird formation overhead. For those of us that witnessed this spectacle, it was a moment to always remember.

As we celebrate this landmark occasion, let us not simply commemorate history, let us rededicate ourselves to the freedom to which we fought.

In the words of George Washington: "Freedom when it begins to take root, is a plant of rapid growth."

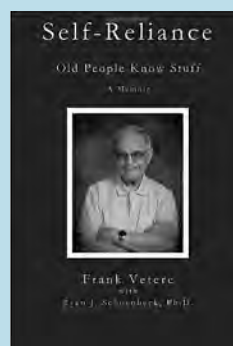
WHEN ARE MY DUES DUE?

Look at the back cover address label:



VBOB MEMBER BOOK

SELF - RELIANCE: Old People Know Stuff



ISBN-13: 978-1482766851
Written by Frank Vetere, of the NW
Chapter in Seattle, WA.

Over 1,000 copies sold thus far!
Available through Amazon and
through Barnes and Noble.
(order online or through their
book stores)
www.amazon.com;
www.barnesandnoble.com

Frank's email address is favetere@q.com. If you send him an email, please include your phone #. Also include your unit if you are a WW II Veteran.

—Submitted by Doris Davis, Associate

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 these 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)

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

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

NEW VBOB MEMBERS

These new members joined VBOB as of May 31, 2015:

BEARISTO, DAVID	ASSOCIATE	KLITGAARD-MANCEL,	
BRESLEND, BRIAN	ASSOCIATE	MARGARET ANN	ASSOCIATE
BUONO, JOSEPH	ASSOCIATE	LYNCH, EVA MAE	ASSOCIATE
CARSON, JR, ALEXANDER	ASSOCIATE	MALOUF, EDWARD J.	78 INF
CLAMPETT, SARAH	ASSOCIATE	REINARD, JACQUES	ASSOCIATE
COWART, FRANCES M.	ASSOCIATE	SMITH, DANA	ASSOCIATE
DIERKER, MILTON L.	ASSOCIATE	SNYDER, CHARLES J.	ASSOCIATE
FRYER, KENNETH D.	ASSOCIATE	TKATCH, JOSEPH	90 INF

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

- Talking to people about VBOB and suggesting that they also join
- Spreading the word about our website: www.vbob.org
- Sending us articles to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*
- Attending our annual reunion, August 14-18, 2015 in Williamsburg, VA (See pages 16-19 for full details.)

MY BUCKET LIST

by Norval (Dick) Williams, Chevalier



Dick Williams preserving the memory with the younger generation.

One morning, as I awoke to the sharp shooting pain in the bottom of my foot, caused by neuropathy as a result of bilateral trench foot known as “frozen feet,” from temperatures 20 degrees below zero during The Battle of the Bulge. Thinking back, if I hadn’t been hospitalized at the 36th General Hospital APO 380 somewhere in France during Feb. 18, 1945 and April 27, 1945 and had continued with my 80th Inf. Division, where would I have ended up on V-E day?

History tells me it would be Czechoslovakia or Austria. This is my bucket list to finalize my quest to continue my tour of duty under the command of General George S. Patton’s 3rd Army and celebrating the surrender of Germany on April 30, 1945.

After some trip planning mishaps, my son Marty and I have arranged a trip to Plzen. My son arrived Sunday night April 26th. Stayed overnight and we are all set to leave the following day on our adventure. Departing 2:00 PM from RSW International Airport on United Airlines with a stop at Newark, N.J. we continue flying all night arriving next morning in Frankfurt, Germany. After clearing customs we continued our journey by train to Plzen by way of Nurnberg, Schwandorf and arriving in Plzen around 5:00 PM. After checking in to our Hotel and having dinner. Two tired travelers were ready for bed.

Next morning, after a restful night and an enjoyable breakfast at our Hotel UZvonu, we were welcomed by our beautiful compassionate smiling Patricia Kraftova, who works tirelessly volunteering her time as coordinator of the programming for the liberation festival and overseeing the escorts and buses for transportation to all the events every day. She is a remarkable lady for the love of the veterans and their families. For example she asked us what we would like to do today and we suggested that we would care to

visit the Pilsner Brewery. No problem, as she called a cab and off we went to visit the Brewery where she had lunch with us in the Na Spilce restaurant (still in the Brewery complex) after which she arranged our guided tour threw out the Brewery and told us she had to get back to work but the cab driver would return to take us back to the Hotel at the end of our tour.

FRIDAY- MAY 1, 2015 We begin our whirlwind of a week of celebration including the dedication and ribbon cutting of a new monument in memory of General George S. Patton made of core ten steel located in the heart of down town Plzen followed by an invitation to City Hall where we were treated like Royalty being honored with gifts, whined and dined, and feasted on a wonderful buffet of food. We also were presented with a shopping bag filled with articles as a cap, tee shirt (with the Czech Republic insignia logo) on them. A ½ liter beer mug engraved with our name including an 18 ounce can of beer. The Lord Mayor really knows how to throw a welcome party!

SATURDAY- MAY 2, 2015 After having a wonderful breakfast at our hotel, we boarded our appointed buses departing around 9:00 AM and were led by a police escort through town non stop at the intersections regardless of the traffic lights, red or green. People along the streets must have wondered what VIP’s were we? Arriving at the main hall of the Mestanska Beseda meeting with the public together with the Belgian veterans-sharing memories and interviews between 10:00 – 12:00 noon plus 30 minutes of signing autographs. Enough to give you writer’s cramp by the time you signed your name, company, regiment, division and 3rd Army that you served in. One of my friends had the right idea as he had a rubber stamp with his signature and outfit on it. I excused myself to go to the men’s room and thought instead of returning to the auditorium I would remain out in the lobby. Well that didn’t work as I had thought because low and behold the T.V. camera spotted me and was interviewing me along with people with cameras wanting pictures taken beside me with their spouses or children. Now I know what it must be like to have the paparazzi chasing after you. At 12:30 our buses depart to Plaza area and military camp, including the presentation of military history clubs, technology, equipment and Municipal Police Plzen presentation including a fly over of jet planes.

14:25 buses departure to Patton Memorial (museum): *Reflex* magazine photographing veterans and after visiting thru the museum we again departed to the Republic Square –restaurant Comix. Friendly dinner with Belgian veterans and Deputy Mayor, Martin Baxa. Municipality of the City of Plzen invitation list of WWII veterans from the USA and Belgium. The restaurant was closed to the general public during the dinner other than family members, guests and escorts. When we came out the door of the restaurant there were crowds of people on both sides of the sidewalk clear to the street waiting to photograph us. Because the jeeps were waiting to take us to the main stage in the Republic Square for a big swing party with the Melody Makers from 19:00-20:00 including folk celebration in dresses of 1945, dancing in the square, tasting limited edition of pilsner “Liberation beer.”But we ducked around the corner and walked back to our hotel.

SUNDAY-MAY 3, 2015 Again, another full day of celebration. After breakfast we boarded our buses at 8:00 AM and proceeded to Husova Street for a wreath-Laying Ceremony at the 16th Armored Division Memorial. Also a Wreath-Laying Ceremony at the monument of Czechoslovak soldiers fighting on the Western Front. At

9:45 AM a Wreath- Laying Ceremony at the 2nd Infantry Division Memorial in Chodske Square. After the ceremony your escorts show you to your jeep(with your name tag on it) only WWII veterans with one closest family member ride in jeeps. All other quests and all escorts to observe the convoy of Liberty from the VIP platform near the Opera House. The Parade lasts from 10:50 until 13:00 ending up in the Republic Square meeting the public once again for autographs. Thousands of people lined the streets cordoned behind fences along the curb.

I autographed flags, helmets, empty shell cases, pictures, books and you name it until I said to Patricia, "You've got to get me out of here." So she threw Marty and me in the back of a police car and told the police Officers to take us down to the hotel for lunch. 14:00 Helen Patton – in concert with The Mole's Wing Orchestra & The Spitfire Sister-Republic Square and as always with reserved chairs in front of the stage for our group. Helen Patton and Dick Williams:

MONDAY MAY 4, 2015 Called a Free Day including a memorial match of 1945-football (soccer) game between old guard of Victoria Plzen and American soldiers-members of historical military clubs reserved 30 seats for our group or by invitation by the Foyes family to their Frisova villa for the society of honor reception including a buffet lunch of which we attended. Later the same day by invitation meeting at the Marriott Hotel 200 guests gathered for an evening of entertainment, movie, and dinner provided by the George Lavickas family. They have been entertaining the American troops including their families every year at their home until the number of people became more than their house could accommodate and now they had to move it to the hotel. They do this in appreciation for the liberation and freedom that the American troops had given them in 1945. We were fortunate to be seated at the same table with Rob Gilbert and his father, Col. Robert I. Gilbert who will be 100 years old in June of this year.

TUESDAY MAY 5, 2015 Buses depart for Dysina. A ceremony was held at the Gen. George S Patton school. Students performing dance and song. Returning back to Plzen Republic Square for The George S. Patton Scholarship of Honor Award. Also, Medals Awards by the Czech Army. It was followed by the Gustav Brom Big Band.

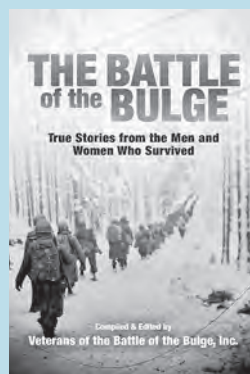
WEDNESDAY MAY 6, 2015 @ 4:00 AM it's time to leave behind our dream vacation and arrive at the airport for our flight home. It was a pleasure bonding with my son for a week but I don't think he ever realized what a hero his Dad was, until the way that these people accepted us as their heroes. My son Marty quotes: "It was a trip of a lifetime."

And I have to agree it was fabulous, exciting and beyond my expectations.



Helen Patton and Dick Williams

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'GREATEST AMERICAN BATTLE OF WWII': VETERAN RECOUNTS BATTLING GERMAN PUSH

by Bill Ruffy, reprinted with permission from www.theledger.com



**Minot Richardson,
26 ID, 243rd CEB**

Seventy years ago today, 200,000 German soldiers and 1,000 tanks went across a 75-mile stretch of land in Belgium, Luxemburg and France, catching off guard four divisions of the U.S. Army. It was the last attempt by the German high command to defeat the Allied forces in the west. The battle lasted until Jan. 25, although Hitler gave the order to withdraw sometime near Jan. 7.

Minot Richardson, a combat engineer from Oshkosh, Wis., lasted unscathed until Jan. 4 after being told to turn in his equipment, pick up his rifle and join an infantry unit.

The Battle of the Bulge was named for the "bulge" of the German army into American lines along the Ardennes Forest, which was thought to be a quiet, back area. Allies later said they thought the war was almost won and were caught unaware. Historians write that it was the last time Germany could have given a major defeat to the troops in the West. The plan was to rush through the front across Luxembourg and Belgium, splitting the British forces to the north and the Americans on the south.

Richardson, now 89 and a resident of Lakeland since 1996, was eager to get into the war and be a pilot. "I went down to Milwaukee with a friend in 1943; we were going to be pilots. They took him but said I was partially color blind and rejected me. Two weeks later, I was drafted into the regular Army," he said.

At 18, Richardson was trained and assigned to the 248th Combat Engineer Battalion, which landed in France on July 27, 1944, while Allies were just coming out of Normandy. The unit cleared mines, planted mines, built bridges, blew up bridges and did most of the front line work in support of infantry and tank columns.

Throughout the waning summer and the fall, the Allies pushed deeper and deeper into France with the 248th supporting George S. Patton's 3rd Army that was pushing almost to the German border.

On the morning of Dec. 16, German troops came across the borders in heavy numbers. Richardson and others in his unit piled into trucks and headed to Metz, a city in the northeast of France, on Dec. 17. The unit was then attached to the 26th Infantry Division, which had been headquartered in the city to rest and was caught off guard by the Germans.

"We began patrolling, crossing the (Moselle) river, and the captain said, 'Richardson, climb the bluff and see if any Germans are there.' There weren't, and then we went on patrol. We were pretty well organized overall, but our patrol of 13 was hit. Three of us got back, and I was the only one not wounded. "Over the next ridge, they were in force and a shell killed the senior officers," Richardson said. "The ground was frozen. You'd lie down on the ground, and you'd just bounce across when the shells came in and hit."

No Christmas Cheer

On Christmas Eve, the unit spotted German soldiers moving into a small town and engaged them. There was no Christmas cheer and

no singing. The battle was life or death, and it was occurring all along the front.

The U.S. Army Battle of the Bulge web page describes the battle as "arguably the greatest battle in American military history." It also cited a quote by then British Prime Minister Winston Churchill: "This is undoubtedly the greatest American battle of the war and will, I believe, be regarded as an ever-famous American victory."

But it was a victory with costs even greater than the D-Day landings. In the end, 610,000 American troops were involved in the battle, with 89,000 injured and 19,000 killed. Had the Germans succeeded, Hitler thought he could reach some kind of peace settlement with the western Allies and then turn on the Soviet forces to the east.

In the weeks that followed, the German tank column was stopped and then it turned back. The advance of German ground troops began to falter. "We were still concerned," Richardson said. "We were out front, sometimes a half-mile apart from the 80th Division, sometimes miles apart."

It had been a rough three weeks, and Richardson, as evidenced by commendations later, had done his job. "On Jan. 4, we found the Germans," Richardson said. "The lieutenant said, 'Minot, you and your friend over there are going to be the right flank.'"

"We began moving out. I had on rubber galoshes and a heavy coat. Your mind is going fast, but the feet wouldn't go. We fell down, and I fired off two grenades with my rifle launcher. The mortars started," he said.

'Not Critical'

"The first mortar shell hit, and I must have blacked out. I regained consciousness, and I heard my buddy yelling he was hit. I yelled, 'I will help you. Just a minute until I get up.' Then I started yelling." The mortar shell had torn through Richardson's upper legs, groin and abdomen. Medics got through the tangled vines, cut off his pants and took him to a hospital in Luxembourg.

"When I got to the hospital, I was told, 'You are not critical, you will have to wait,'" he said. He waited from the morning until 10 p.m., he said, then he was sent to surgery and "put together" with tape. "Stitches were too dangerous because they could pull apart in transport so they waited until you got to a rear area," he said.

Richardson said his survival in the field after being wounded was largely because of the cold. "It was three below (zero), and the blood just sort of hardened. Once in the Luxembourg hospital, I lost a great deal of blood," he said.

He was taken with other wounded to Paris the following day because it was too late to fly across the channel to England. "Any plane crossing in the dark was assumed to be German, and they would shoot you down."

Waiting in bed to be transferred to England the next morning, Richardson said he had a comforting experience, once again restoring his belief in the human spirit. "Everything was blacked out. I felt someone tapping me on the face, and it was a very elderly French lady and she had a straight razor. Someone said, 'She wants to give you a shave. It's OK; she is very good,'" he recalled. "That was her contribution. She wanted to help in some way and show her gratitude to American soldiers, and it was indeed a very good shave."

When Richardson got to England, orderlies couldn't get him off the stretcher. "It was 10 below. I had bled again and was stuck to the stretcher." Richardson was in a hospital in England for three

months and then sent by ship back to the U.S. He was in a hospital in Chicago for another three months.

After recovering, Richardson returned to Oshkosh looking for work. "I couldn't get a job right after. Nobody wanted anything blown up," he said with a laugh. Richardson began a job that led to highly skilled work in mechanics and hydraulics. And he did become a pilot, he said. He took private lessons at the insistence of his late wife, Betty, and their three children.

Of the hundreds of thousands of soldiers who stopped Germany in the Battle of the Bulge, perhaps no more than 50,000 remain alive 70 years later.

Richardson is president of the Polk County chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. The chapter also includes friends and children of Battle of the Bulge veterans, but actual veterans of the battle number only 18, Richardson said.

He said World War II was absolutely necessary and those 16.4 million who went into the military to fight all over the world saved it, no matter what their jobs. "They all did their bit. Some fell hard. Some were gravely wounded, some lightly, some not wounded at all, but they all did their job, and God bless them all," he said.

"We had to eliminate the German and Japanese empires for the world's survival."

RAGE KILLS

by Thomas M. Barrick, 106th ID, 424th IR



The Battle Of The Bulge was raging full force and swirling all around us. "I" Company, 424th Infantry Regiment was holding a blocking position across a small valley on the edge of a river. The company was spread from the high ground on the right of the line, down to and across a road leading to a critical bridge on the left. We were holding the bridge to enable friendly forces to withdraw through our lines to the next blocking position.

A series of strategic withdrawals had been forced on us by the massive assault launched by three German Armies on 16 December. Engineers were preparing the bridge for destruction in the face of imminent attack. Wild Bill Hissong and I were the company Sniper Team, sent to the river's edge to cover the engineers as they placed explosives under the bridge. As bad luck would have it, a two-man, German scout party on motorcycles came roaring around a hill and made it to the bridge just as Bill and I got into position. "Bill, you take the guy on the right, I'll get the other one." I said quietly. With two shots we dropped them. The engineers continued their work. About ten minutes later an American half-track came around the hill and up to the bridge where the scouts were sprawled out. A head emerged to survey the situation. It was a German officer. Apparently, he thought the road ahead was clear since the scouts had not reported any enemy. "Take him, Bill! I'll get the driver!" Two shots rang out. The officer dropped dead and the half track swerved and stalled on the hillside to the right. I had put a bullet through the driver's 4 X 8 inch side vision aperture--a direct hit to the head. The engineers finished setting the explosives and ran the detonating wires over the road to our position. All was quiet for a while. I don't recall how long we stayed there but it was nice to have some quiet

for a change. We took turns surveying the valley from where the scouts and half-track had come. We snoozed, taking advantage of the opportunity, since none of us had much sleep over the past week. About noon a small, open German Volkswagen "jeep" came around the hill cautiously, followed by two large trucks with troops and several larger trucks loaded with heavy equipment. Obviously, it was an engineer detachment sent to repair bridges over the river, wherever they found them damaged. We took them under fire. The "jeep" spun around and darted behind the trucks. The troops poured out of the vehicles and spread out. The engineers blew the bridge. Our job done, we dashed back up the hill to our prepared positions to await an attack. No attack came. However, the enemy bombarded us all afternoon and all night with artillery and "screaming meemies," a particularly loud and scary high trajectory weapon that dropped shells in scattered patterns. We never knew where they would hit next. My dugout was large enough for three, covered with logs and dirt, and had two openings each about three feet wide and nine to ten inches high. Through these apertures we could observe and shoot to the left and straight ahead. My companions were armed with a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) and an M1 semi-automatic rifle. I had my sniper rifle with telescopic sight. No attack by foot soldiers came, while all the shelling continued, so we took turns on watch allowing two to try to get some sleep. The sub-freezing temperature made it difficult, even when snuggled up against a buddy. We shared one thin blanket. At dawn, I was on watch. I looked out the two firing apertures, and was surprised to see eight inches of new snow. The shelling had stopped. It was so quiet it was eerie. Fog hugged the ground, concealing everything beyond sixty to eighty yards. Since all seemed quiet, I sneaked out the back of the dugout, stepping carefully over the two huddled at the bottom of the hole. I kicked around in the snow looking for an empty ration can to fill with dirt, so we could pour a little gasoline in it to warm water. It was now light and a fire wouldn't give away our position. Suddenly, a dozen bullets snapped and cracked around me. I dove head-first into the dugout's front aperture. I'll never know how I squeezed through that slit. Thank God, I had lost a lot of weight. As I squirmed through, my right foot caught against the center post. As I rolled to the ground my right knee twisted severely. How dare they shoot at me? I took it very personally. I jumped up, grabbed the BAR and looked for the assailants. I'd make them pay. Enemy bullets struck all around the parapet in front kicking up frozen dirt, rocks and snow. One rock hit my forehead, another just above my right eye. It hurt like hell and blood streamed down my face. Thank God, I wasn't hit above the left eye, since I shot left handed. I paid no attention to the wounds. A twelve man patrol had sneaked up on us under cover of fog. I aimed the automatic rifle down the hill to where I thought the shots had come. Nobody there - nobody! Then I remembered a terrace below us in the open field. The bastards were hiding behind it. I fired a few shots in their direction kicking up dirt and snow above them. Then, I saw the backs of men running hunched over along the terrace heading down-hill to our left. I couldn't get in a good, clear shot. Then I recalled a cut in the terrace for wagons to go up and down the hill. The Krauts would be exposed crossing that eight foot wide space. Now I had them. I laid the rifle on the left side of the cut and waited. My trigger finger itched, my head throbbed and my blood boiled. One by one they ran across the opening seeking safety on the other side. And one by one I shot them. Four (Continued)

RAGE KILLS (Continued)

made the crossing, running shoulder to shoulder behind a buddy. By now our whole defense line was awake and alert. The four remaining Germans sprang from behind the terrace and made a dash into a large culvert under the road near the blown bridge. We had them now. Our men on the other side of the road penned them in. I screamed up the hill *"Pete, bring your bazooka and come down here."* Pete Yuch was our anti-tank rocket gunner, and a damn good one. He ran and I hobbled down the wagon road behind our positions until we were about a hundred yards from the culvert. Had we gone further the angle into the culvert opening would have been too narrow. I was still seething with rage as I loaded a rocket into the bazooka and wound the wires on the electrical terminals. I tapped Pete on the shoulder. *"Ready to fire. Get those sneaky Krauts for me, Pete."* I yelled. The bazooka roared. The rocket struck the ground with a dull boom about twenty yards short, the sound muffled by the snow. I loaded another rocket, wired it and tapped him on the shoulder. *"Up just a hair, Pete and we'll make mince-meat of them."* The bazooka roared, again, the rocket hissed and slammed into the culvert. There was one helluva blast, that echoed back and forth across the valley. *"Good shooting, Pete. I guess we cleaned their clock."* I was still in a rage. Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

BLESSINGS IN THE BULGE

by Patrick J. Kearney, 11th AD, 55th AIB

It was December 30, 1944, and the 55th Armored Infantry Battalion was ready to move out. We had just entered Belgium at Florenville the previous day, and had passed through Jamoigne and Neufchateau before arriving at Eby for overnight encampment.

As we prepared to depart for Vaux lez Rosieres and the front lines, we observed a lone jeep driving the entire length of our column, which stopped at each half-track. When the jeep arrived at ours, we saw that its passenger was our battalion and CCR chaplain, Lieutenant Regis J. Galvin, who was a member of the Order of Friars Minor (the Franciscans).

Father Galvin was wearing his chaplain's stole and helmet, and he greeted us all with a smile and some kind words. He then spoke of the work we were about to undertake, and asked everyone to remove their helmets and to bow their heads. Our chaplain then gave General Absolution to the Catholic soldiers, and a blessing to the Protestant and Jewish soldiers, in our half-track. None of his spiritual sons were forgotten before their "baptism of fire" in the Battle of the Bulge!

But our chaplain's deep concern for our spiritual welfare did not just end on the eve of battle. At lulls in the fighting during the Bulge, Father Galvin drove up to our position on the front lines, donned his alb, stole and chasuble, and celebrated Mass for us on the hood of his jeep. His presence on the battlefield was a great comfort to us – as were his prayers for the souls of our buddies who had been killed in action. August 20 marks the 25th anniversary of the death of Father Galvin. His genuine concern for others was the hallmark of his ministry as an Army chaplain. And his deep regard for others is only surpassed by the high esteem in which he is still held today by those "Thunderbolts" whom he served. Pro Deo et Patria!

84TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN THE BULGE

by Willard Fluck, 84th ID, 333rd IR, HQ Co



My part in the Battle of the Bulge could be said to have started 75 miles north of Marche, Belgium, when my anti-tank platoon was attached to the thinned ranks of G Company, 2nd Battalion, 333rd Regiment, of the 84th "Railsplitter" Infantry Division. We entered the front line into German-dug foxholes on the night of December 15, aided by low light of British searchlights playing onto the sky. I carried a bazooka, but had it knocked from my left hand when a piece of shrapnel hit the bazooka and the tips of my fingers, leaving my fingers numb for hours. We spent three days and three nights in those holes in 38° light rain and mud except to brave snipers and scattered artillery shells in order to evacuate wounded, bring up rations, or whatever. We were shelled heavily twice each day.

Some hours later, early morning of the 16th, Hitler's armies launched their surprise attack through the Ardennes forests of Belgium, taking a heavy toll of our young soldiers. Our General Boiling got word to get the 84th to Marche and to hold the Marche to Hotton roadway "At all costs". Bolling got there by 7 p.m. on the 20th, and the 334th Regiment began arriving by 10 p.m., followed by the 335th, and lastly by my 333rd, which had still been on the front lines near Geilenkirchen on the 18th. We were held in reserve until we got new men and re-organized.

General Eisenhower in his Crusade In Europe said "The northern flank was obviously the dangerous one and the fighting continued to mount in intensity." Author Charles B. MacDonald in his A Time For Trumpets adds that "As General Boiling readily deduced, the Germans needed Marche, for the town was as much a road center as was Bastogne." On the 22nd of December elements of our 2nd Bn., 333rd, were strung out along a sloping road with five 57 mm anti-tank guns, dozens of bazookas, several 50 caliber machine guns, and several 30 caliber machine guns trained on a small bridge which had been mined to be blown if necessary. We were still holding that area on Christmas day and a few days afterward.

The weather had turned terribly cold. Fires were forbidden except for small gasoline burners to heat coffee. Canteens froze solid and burst open. We tried to sleep, huddled together sharing blankets. We learned to keep an extra pair of socks tucked under our shirts to keep them warm and dry. It snowed and got deep. By some accounts the temperature dropped into the low teens. Nights were long, starting about 4:30 p.m. and light came about 7:30 a.m., making guard duty trying and dangerous. Two hours on guard and four off was the usual, causing intermittent sleep, at best. Just keeping warm a problem. Sheets of newspaper slipped between layers of clothing were great windbreakers.

Germans in American uniforms and driving our vehicles were behind our lines. We were ordered to stop all vehicles and question the occupants about things we would know but Germans might not. We worked in pairs, one approaching the vehicle, the other hidden. Colonels and generals found themselves answering who was Mickey Mouse's girlfriend. Then, we heard about the Malmedy

massacre, and in our rage, we swore to take no prisoners. Actually, that didn't hold later on. When we first moved into Hotton, the enemy was close, but we didn't know how close, so motor engine noise was kept low or off entirely and our 57's were manhandled into position without talking and made ready next to one of the houses. Nothing. Next morning as we waited in the kitchen, an artillery shell blew in part of the wall and knocked over the pot-belly stove next to us. No injuries.

At midnight of New Year's Eve Jack and I were on guard nearby with a "daisy chain" of anti-tank mines. Tied about 18 inches apart they were in the ditch on the side of the road, and we had the end of the rope on the other side. If a tank came, we were to pull the mines onto the road, and run. No tanks, but exactly at midnight both our and German artillery let loose with a barrage at the other that was like nothing we had ever heard. Heavy artillery whistled over our heads in both directions. We heard the gun blasts and the explosions on both sides of us.

By the 26th the whole front was quiet, and then the British came into Hotton and took our positions. In his memoirs Winston Churchill wrote, "The wheel of the Fifth and Sixth Panzer Armies produced bitter fighting around Marche, which lasted till December 26, By then the Germans were exhausted, although at one time they were only four miles from the Meuse and had penetrated over sixty miles. Balked of their foremost objective, the Meuse, the Panzers turned savagely on Bastogne....." It took a few days to get re-organized, but on January 3, 1945, the 84th was paired with the 2nd Armored while the 83rd was paired with the 3rd Armored for the start of our counter-offensive to choke off the tip of the German penetration. Our pincer move was to start at Manhay and end at Houffalize where we were to meet the Third Army coming from the south,, only about half our distance. The following days are confused in my mind, for we seemed always on the move from one short stay here or there to another place with a name.

I remember Odeigne. During a lull we walked up a hill to a small one-room schoolhouse and just missed being hit by a mortar shell tree-burst. I took a little time to inspect the classroom. I found many French translations of our fairy tales and cowboy stories. In the cellar of the schoolhouse we found about forty civilians crowded into a space too small for ten. As I came down the path again I stopped to look at a dead G.I. nearly covered with snow. His arm and part of his head could be seen. I wondered whether his mother would ever see the watch still on his wrist. The next day it snowed and kept on snowing. Roads became almost invisible, and vehicles slid into ditches. Tanks made the hard surfaces slick as ice. In a blinding snowstorm our E and F Companies launched an attack to take and secure the La Roche Road. No tank support. The snow was too deep and the terrain too difficult for them.

An F Company patrol secured the vital crossroads where the La Roche Road and the Houffalize Road met. This feat had deprived the enemy of the only two first-rate roads to the east, and has been considered the turning point of the Ardennes operations. The enemy had been taken completely by surprise. It was near here that a patrol of eight of us were sent to bring in a group of about 35 or 40 German prisoners being held by two GIs. I was the third man, sent along as interpreter. We waded through waist deep snow for some distance and then onto bare ground which had been blown clear. The Lieutenant, in the lead, saw the Germans just inside a grove of pine trees and started into the grassy area.. There was an explosion and I felt a puff-of air on my face. The sergeant two steps ahead of

me had stepped on a German Shu mine and lost his foot. I backed out; the lieutenant re-traced his steps and got out. What to do? He ordered two of the biggest men to get the sergeant out. There was another explosion and another foot gone, while the third man had shrapnel up and down his right side. The second man was laughing. He was going back to a nice warm hospital bed. The lieutenant called for a jeep and they were all taken back to the Battalion Aid Station.

We found a path around the mine field and using my Pennsylvania German, I got the prisoners lined up, yelled some bad words at them, and marched them off to the La Roche-Houffalize crossroads, where the MPs took them back. Foxholes were not always safe havens. Just before the minefield incident I vividly recall what it did to one' German. He was no deader than many others, but his torso was frozen solid and half hanging on the edge of the hole. His head was gone, his insides had slid to the bottom of the hole, and his chest cavity was blown open. I couldn't help thinking how nice and clean and pink and shiny the cavity was. In Laroche, our squad found protection in the basement of a building mostly destroyed by artillery and by a fire. It had a concrete first floor and one wall in danger of falling down the stairwell, so we knocked more of it down and descended into the basement. Nice and warm from the heat of the first floor. Then we began to be too warm, so we peeled off some outer clothing. Then our shirts. I don't recall going any farther. Oh, but it was great to be warm for a few hours. Again, we moved a lot.

The war for the ordinary foot soldier is only just where he is and how far he can see around himself. Battle in The Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge) ended officially on January 25, 1945. But the front line was still not back to where it had been before the 16th of December, 1944. So the 84th was put to work again to erase the holdouts east of Houffalize. Beho was our Battalion's last objective to help in that effort. On the way there, through Bovigny, every vehicle in the convoy bogged down in the deep snow. It took hours to get to Bovigny and then start for Beho. There was still enemy resistance, but our slogging riflemen accomplished the task. I can never say enough for those men who walked into the face of the enemy knowing they could be wounded or die at any time. They were the heroes. I was just one of the lucky ones. I can claim nothing spectacular; but I was there.

Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

ESCAPE

by Richard L. Warren, 428th Military Police



I was CPL Richard L. Warren, a member of the 428th Military Police Escort Guard Company. As I write this, it is a few days past the 57th anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge. I will note some things that are forever embedded in my mind. I was attached to the 2nd Infantry Division in Wirtzfeld Belgium, General Robertson was commanding General and Major North was, I think, Provost Marshall and the one I received orders from.

There were two farmhouses about 100 yards apart. We had 19 prisoners in the attic of one and the other was Division CP. On the morning of December 16, 1944, we were awakened when a shell made a direct hit on the (Continued)

ESCAPE (Continued)

house we were in. We scrambled to the basement as the shelling continued. After a short time it slowed down and I went outside. It was very foggy and cold and snow covered everything. The fog seemed to be illuminated, but you could not see through it. This has always been a mystery to me.

I looked at my watch, and it was 6:30. I could hear large machinery starting up and moving out. Soon we started getting tank fire. General Robertson sent word for me to bring the prisoners and men to the house being used as CP and put out a perimeter guard, which I did. There were several cows in the stalls, and we crowded them all into one and put the 19 prisoners in the other. I was able to squeeze in with the cows and enjoy their body heat for a short time. We were expecting the Germans to appear at any moment, but thank God they didn't. I guess they were more interested in the supplies at Bullingen and Butgenbach. A half track with two soldiers pulled up between the house and the outhouse. As one got off and started toward the outhouse he heard a plane and returned to his gun and shot him down. A few minutes later the same thing happened, and they moved on. I don't remember if he made it to the outhouse or not, but he shot down two of the only three planes I saw on December 17. We received word General Robertson had found an opening we might be able to use to get out. This was the first official word we had received. We were cut off and had been for several hours. We were given a choice of waiting for transportation or walking the prisoners to Camp Elsenborn. We chose to walk. There were people in white camouflage coming over the hill towards us. We only carried what we were wearing. We arranged the prisoners and guards so as to be easily identified as both Germans and GI's and started out. The fence posts helped locate the road, as snow was several inches deep. Once a plane came down as if to strafe but just turned away. We met some first Inf. and talked briefly. As we went through Bullingen, there were GI gas cans burning and white flags in some windows. Pieper had already gone through. We saw almost the same thing in Butgenbach. Then, we turned into the woods on a logging road as we had been instructed. As we reached the road that was to take us to Camp Elsenborn, a very unusual thing happened. A truck went by loaded with soldiers. They recognized us and backed up and carried us to Camp Elsenborn. It was Lt. Fahy of our company. He had learned we were surrounded, got some men together, and they were coming to get us. Before he could get to Wirtzfeld he was stopped by a road block and told there were only Germans past that point. They were truly overjoyed in finding us. At Camp Elsenborn we were in a small flattop hut near a forest. The forest had some good foxholes. I learned after the war that Curtis Jones from my hometown of Davisboro, Georgia was an engineer, and his outfit had camped there before the bulge and were responsible for the foxholes. Things seemed to be somewhat confused with reports of English speaking Germans in GI uniforms infiltrating our unit. Therefore, we had lots of I.D. checks, etc. Heavy shelling was continuing. There was a kitchen in one of the large brick buildings that fed lots of soldiers from different outfits, but you had to know the password and have an I.D. Sometimes the shelling would get too heavy to wait in line outside, and the person checking I.D.'s would get overrun. There were not many German planes flying because of the weather, but they seemed to find us. One came over and dropped a bomb a few yards before he got to the flattop house and one just past it, but the next day a shell few in and

we got it dead center. Somehow no one got hurt, but one of those nearby foxholes got used. I dove in one end, and Hollis Anderson in the other. We were facing each other, and I noticed he was barefoot. Ice was protruding from the sides, and I asked if his feet weren't cold. He said, "No way!" When I told him he didn't have any shoes on he was surprised. Going back to the building I looked for his tracks, and he looked for mine. We didn't see anything. There was sunshine on Christmas day, and the Air Force was out for the first time in a long while. We had turkey with white bread. We were still being shelled and a dogfight was going on overhead as we ate. We stayed in Camp Elsenborn until the Bulge was about over, and we went back to Eupen. We had several near misses, but I was never wounded. We landed at Omaha Beach with invasion forces and went on to Berlin where we joined in five major battles.

Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

I WAS WOUNDED AT STOUMONT IN DECEMBER 1944

by Elmer S. McKay, 30th ID, 119th IR, Co E

In December 1944 I was a 19 year old mortar sergeant. My battalion commander was Major Hal D. McCown, later captured between Stoumont and La Gleize, Belgium.

In September 1944 when Hitler announced his intention to attack through the Ardennes and take Antwerp, dividing the American and British armies, it was quickly noted he did not have the resources to do so...particularly gasoline. It would be necessary for them to capture American supplies. The capture of Antwerp and the division of the Allied armies therefore took on secondary roles from day one of the attack. In the many "little" battles, expenditures of time, fuel and troops were spent overcoming the defensive actions of individuals and small units. In retrospect the capture of Antwerp and the division of the Allied armies took on secondary roles, as the capture of enemy supplies, particularly gasoline and finally the capture of routes and bridges en route to the final goal became paramount. Sixty years later, stepping back and looking at a map of Belgium it is apparent all these goals were functions of the northern shoulder of the Bulge: the network of roads at St. Vith, the gasoline dumps at Francorchamps, the bridge at Stavelot, and the villages of Stoumont and La Gleize. These areas stand out as major, intermediate military goals and at the risk of being controversial not Bastogne or any other parts of the southern shoulder fit into this category.

Because time was the most important commodity on the 16th and 17th of December, it could be argued the Bulge was won at the Losheim Gap. The Bulge was won by individuals and by small groups of stubborn, heroic GIs, not only infantry but by engineers, armored troops and artillery men. The stand of the 99th Division at Losheim Gap, the blowing up of the Ambleve bridge at Stavelot, the defensive actions by the 30th Division at Stoumont and the destruction of the armored point of the 1st SS Division at La Gleize stand out as key elements in the defeat of the German army.

I realize my view of the Bulge is myopic at best but in my own defense I have revisited Belgium often (perhaps as many as 30 times) the first in 1952, the latest in June 2004. These visits were augmented by long telephone calls and long visits with M/G McCown. From 1983 until his death in July 1999, I visited him three times in Little Rock, Arkansas and spoke with him (Continued)

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WOUNDED AT STOUMONT *(Continued)*

many times on the phone for a total of perhaps 40 to 50 hours.

The 30th Division arrived in Belgium to a horribly confused mess. The first night my battalion dug in and was told, "There is thought to be one, maybe two Panzer divisions in front of you. If they attack, let the tanks roll over you and shoot as many of the infantry as you can." I told my squad, "Lots of luck, boys." Later, on the 21st, the 2nd battalion 119th, led by Major Mc Cown climbed a steep hill between Targnon and Stoumont and walked in a curving path, arriving at its goal, the road connecting Stoumont and La Gleize. Here Major Mc Cown decided to do a little exploring on his own and was captured. This action by Mc Cown's battalion was important because it convinced Peiper he was in danger of being cut off so he retreated to La Gleize. Mc Cown was kept 90 hours as a prisoner of L/Col. Peiper, commanding the tank regiment of the 1st SS Division, which was the spearhead of the German army. Mc Cown escaped the night of 24/25 December. Mc Cown's debriefing document makes interesting reading and gives one an insight into the character of not only Peiper and Mc Cown but also their troops. On 23/24 December the Germans left La Gleize, crossed the river and eventually rejoined the main body of the German army. After Peiper's troops left, the 30th Division attacked. My company attacked with two platoons, one with 6 men and one with 5. The T/O of these two platoons normally would have been a total of 82 men. Fortunately the battle was no battle. December 24th turned out to be a sunny, almost warm day. No significant burning of German equipment, no Germans stripped of their American uniforms standing naked in the freezing cold, no atrocities. It was a pretty calm, almost boring affair.

Today an interesting museum is in La Gleize and M/G Mc Cown's photograph is on the lecturn in the movie theater and at the top of front stairs on the right is a photograph of some members of the 2nd platoon, Company E 119th Infantry taken in La Gleize about 10 a.m. on the 24th of December.

The final six weeks turned out to be anticlimactic, a slug fest whose final decision became increasingly obvious.

Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

COMBAT AS I REMEMBER IT

by Paul A. Wilson, 17th AB, 193rd GIR, Co A

After completing jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia, I joined the 17th Airborne in Swindon, England, as a paratroop replacement, and became a member of Company "A" in the 193rd Glider Infantry Regiment, taking my one and only and hopefully last glider ride, with approximately 90% of the guys including me throwing up their helmets.

I can still remember, after flying to France, the cold ride via open trucks into Belgium, and going into the front lines around Christmas, 1944.

I'm not sure of my platoon number, but I will never forget January 7, 1945, the day most of my platoon was killed including our platoon leader. Without air or tank support we tried to take a high area that I have now been told, that would forever be called "Dead Man's Ridge", as a result of German replacements that included tanks, 88 artillery and the hill covered with machine gun crossfire. I survived when the Germans opened up by jumping behind a large dirt mound, the only visible cover on an open snow covered field

behind a two man mortar team, one of which I was told by Harold Konter of Coraopolis, Pennsylvania was Sidney Levit of Morris Plains, New Jersey. I called Sidney and was so thrilled to hear he survived, as 88's were hitting the dirt cover when I jumped into a small crater next to the dirt mound created by an 88 artillery shell. I'm still to this day amazed as to how he survived, but the end of this letter will explain it. Harold Konter informed me, this dirt cover was built to store and keep potatoes.

One of the men in my platoon said he was hit in the spine as he was crawling past me toward the rear, when he suddenly jumped up and began to run probably breaking every track record. I was one of the last to leave the hill, as a sniper would fire every time I lifted my helmet with my bayonet, until finally gave up after several hours. As I was running back, all I could see both right and left was the snow covered hill with dark gray color from the 88's, and a large number of dead troopers. Just before I reached the aid station, another buddy and I carried a soldier whose entire body had a yellow blotched look as a result of shock to the aid station, where there was also a huge stack of dead GI's piled very high.

I then joined three or four men from I believe my platoon close to the aid station, as we listened to the sound of 88's constantly ready to go for cover, and realized there were very few of us that survived. In fact, one of the guys suddenly went limp as a result of shock, and was carried to the medics.

After January 16, 1945, we began pursuit of the retreating Germans, who would leave delaying parties to slow our pursuit that I recently read was the 9th and 130th German Panzer divisions, and the 26th Infantry Division. I was made a lead scout during this time and still remember a 1st Lieutenant who was sitting close to me after a delaying party pinned us down with his upper body above ground level, when the Germans opened up a second time and he was killed instantly. We had even run out of food as a result of our kitchen being unable to catch up with us, due to our rapid pursuit of the three German divisions in extremely cold weather. I will never forget finding the tastiest dark bread I had never eaten before or since, left in an abandoned German bunker that provided instant energy. We had great respect for the German soldiers, as we knew most were like Americans, drafted into service. However, It simply proves that tragedies happen often during wartime particularly in combat.

Some time later our kitchen arrived and we had our first hot meal for it seemed, an eternity. A day or two later, the medics had to cut off my boots due to swelling from trench foot, and I was evacuated to a hospital in England, between Norwich and Ipswich.

I was in the hospital during the Rhine River Jump, and later at the end of the war, I was placed with the 194th Glider Infantry Regiment meeting many newer recruits, as there were very few of my original buddies from Company "A" of the 193rd Glider Infantry Regiment still around. I served guard duty at Duisburg on the Rhine River; I was later transferred to the 13th Airborne in France.

I then came back to the U.S.A. by boat with three or four, Black Jack dealers active most of the time, as we all had our back pay in our pockets with nothing else to do on the ship but gamble most of the time. I was then stationed in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, before being discharged February 28, 1946 at Fort Smith, Arizona.

Source: www.battleofthebulgememories.be

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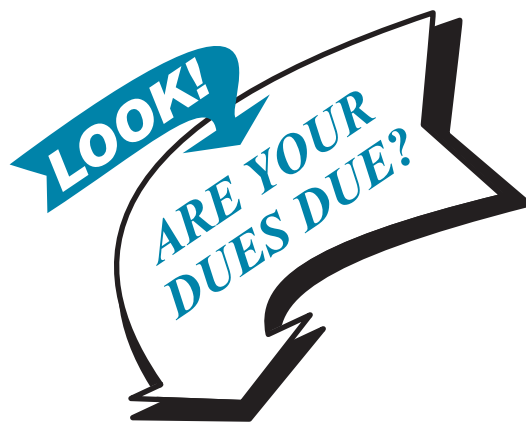
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