

The BULGE BUGLE

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

VOLUME XXXIV NUMBER 4

THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

November 2015

THE GREATEST GENERATION *and* THE YOUNGEST GENERATION



VBOB Member A. Wayne Field (center), talks with a young Boy Scout from Troop 155 at Williamsburg Memorial Park during our 34th Annual Reunion. VBOB Associate and Wayne's wife, Marie Field, is at left. See page 18 for a reunion recap and more photos.

Photo by Patrick Brion, Associate

Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. to Reorganize in 2016

See pages 4 and 10 for more information.

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Published quarterly, *The Bulge Bugle*
is the official publication of the
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FACEBOOK:
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Alan Cunningham, Associate



GREETINGS FROM VIRGINIA.

For those of you who were at the reunion this year in Williamsburg, Virginia, I want to thank you for your participation and hope you had a wonderful time. Madeleine Bryant has an excellent summary of the reunion later in this issue. Based on the reviews I received from those who were there, most enjoyed all of the events. As with any major event, there were some hiccups but nothing major. The hospitality suite was always filled with mem-

bers reminiscing and talking with the younger participants. That was one major aspect of this reunion that was a big hit. Auston O'Neill, Jr. and his wife Bonnie, with their Spirit of '45 Day Express, were with us for the entire reunion, promoting the Greatest Generation and the 70th Anniversary of the ending of World War II, which we celebrated on Sunday morning in Williamsburg. VBOB selected the weekend of August 14 – 16 specifically to participate in the 70th Anniversary Commemorative Weekend events. Saturday we had a great day at Fort Lee, and Monday visiting the Jamestown Settlement and Yorktown Victory Center to cap off our events. The food at the hotel was excellent and the banquet was a big hit. Be sure to see the photos of the reunion by Patrick Brion, and the write-up by Madeleine Bryant (*see pages 18-19.*)

At the General Membership Meeting, elections were held and I was again selected at the President for another year. Per the current bylaws, the president can only be reelected once, so next year will be my last. Speaking of the bylaws, the membership approved changing the organization from an IRS 501c19 veteran's organization to a 501c3 non-profit organization (*see minutes of the meeting on pages 10-11.*) This is necessary as a result of the declining number of veterans in VBOB, as we no longer meet the legal requirements for a veteran's organization. With this change, new bylaws and articles of incorporation will be necessary. We will have a busy year as we make these changes.

Don't forget the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation's 71st Anniversary of the start of the Battle of the Bulge. This year the celebration is back to Washington, D.C., 14-16 December 2015. If you have not already registered, I encourage all of you to attend this event, as it is always a good time (*see complete registration information on pages 16-17.*) 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.

Now on a sadder note, just as we were about to go to press with this newsletter, I was informed that one of our strongest supporters, Stanley Wojtusik, passed on. Stan was a long-time president of the Delaware Valley Chapter in Pennsylvania and a past president of VBOB, serving in that capacity twice, from 1995-1997 and 2006-2007. A complete eulogy will be in the next *Bulge Bugle*.

I am looking forward to seeing you at the event in Washington, DC in December for the 71st Anniversary Commemoration. Be well and have a wonderful year.

2016 VBOB BUDGET

INCOME:

Yearly Membership Dues	\$20,000
Life Memberships	\$1,000
Donations	\$6,400
Certificate Sales	\$2,000
Quartermaster Memorabilia Sales	\$4,600
Reunion	\$15,000
Funds from VBOB Savings Account	\$10,050
TOTAL INCOME	\$59,050

EXPENSE:

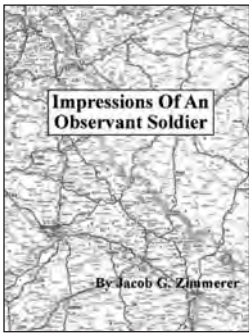
Bulge Bugle Publication:	
Printing	\$11,600
Mailing Services	\$1,900
Postage	\$4,000
Total Bulge Publication	\$17,500
Operations:	
Supplies	\$1,000
Mailing Services Postage	\$2,000
Printing and Copying	\$1,000
Telephone	\$600
Accounting Services	\$3,300
Contractor: Membership, QM Sales, Web	\$13,500
Insurance	\$1,300
Licenses, Permits, PO Box	\$250
Travel	\$500
Miscellaneous	\$1,000
Total Operations	\$23,550
Annual Reunion:	
Annual Reunion Expenses	\$16,000
Travel	\$2,000
Total Annual Reunion	\$18,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$59,050

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LETTERS TO VBOB

I'M AN AUTHOR!



I am very pleased to let you know that my book, "Impressions of an Observant Soldier," has been published. My retirement years have afforded me the time to reflect, remember and document my many experiences and thoughts about my service during WWII, and I'm happy that I'm now able to share them with you.

My book has been published by Northshire Bookstore and is now available for purchase online (\$15) by going to their website: www.northshire.com, then search for "Zimmerer."

I hope you enjoy the book!

Sincerely,
Jacob G. Zimmerer

NOTE: We received this letter via his daughter Cindy Zimmerer. VBOB Member Jacob G. Zimmerer, 26th INF, 39 SIG CO, passed away on 3/7/15.

KEEP THE MEMORIES ALIVE

Enclosed is my check in payment of my dues, which will be due on July 3, 2015—when I will celebrate my 96th birthday. (Plus, my contribution to our great staff—to be used as they see fit.)

You folks do a real great job in keeping the memories alive—for those of us who were there. I know—because there ain't many of us left.

Keep up with your great efforts—God bless you all!

Phil Melleno, 955 FA BN

WWII WRITER SEEKING HELP

My name is Ashley Engleford and I am a part-time freelance writer who, aside from having articles published, writes a blog dedicated to telling the war stories of the world's WWII Veterans. I am seeking to place another notice in *The Bulge Bugle*—I did so several years back and it was a huge success—requesting Vets (& civilians who have many memories to share from that era) to contact me to be interviewed and have their story published on my blog: wwiwartimememories.blogspot.com.

Contact me at: aengleford@gmail.com or 912.663.1641. Interviews conducted by phone, mail, email, etc. Every story is worth telling and will be published

Ashley Engleford

PATRICK RUSSELL, ASSOCIATE WILL INTERVIEW VETERANS

I just joined VBOB as an Associate Member, as I conduct oral history interview of Veterans. In fact, your inclusion of my information in the May 2015 *Bugle* resulted in several telephone calls

from Veterans to conduct interviews.

This is a non-profit enterprise and passion for me as I share and preserve the video oral history interviews with the US Library of Congress, National World War II Museum and the University of Florida Samuel Proctor History Project. I have been to Normandy three times and to Bastogne once and most of the other places in between.

I would like to work directly with VBOB and its local Chapters to interview as many Veterans as humanly possible. These interviews could be added to your membership video archive as well.

If you are interested in setting up interviews, please contact me: Tel. (305) 608-2977; Fax (305) 842-3610; email: patrick@make-historyproject.com

**Patrick Russell, Associate,
2 S. Biscayne Blvd., Suite 3760
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AUTHOR HONORS FRANK FORTH



VBOB member Frank Forth and donor Debby Giusti with her book, *Stranded*.

Enclosed is my donation for the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, given in honor of Frank Forth, a great American hero who fought and was injured in the Battle of the Bulge. Frank's valor then and life of service since that time inspire all who know him. With humor, a ready smile and warm concern, Frank reaches out to all those he meets. He uplifts, affirms and encourages young and old alike. A

man of goodness and compassion, Frank is a blessing to his community and to this nation.

I am an author and dedicated my novel, *Stranded*, a military suspense that features a wounded warrior, to Frank Forth. Proceeds from my local book signing, which Frank attended, are earmarked for the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge and are enclosed. Please accept my donation along with my heartfelt thanks to all who served and for all you do to perpetuate their memory. God bless you, and God bless the USA.

Warm regards,
Debby Giusti

REMEMBER S/SGT TOM WARD, 75TH INF?

I would like to hear from anyone who remembers my father, Staff Sergeant Tom Ward, 75th Infantry Division, 289th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Battalion, Headquarters

**Tom Ward, Associate
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EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to a production error, the end of this story was inadvertently cut off in the August 2015 issue. Therefore, we are reprinting the story in its entirety below.

MY FATHER'S BELGIAN STORY

by Angela Fazio, Associate

On September 8, 2002, 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



Leonard J. Fazio, 1st InfD

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 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 front lines. My father always told me that the day he had to leave 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 front lines. 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.

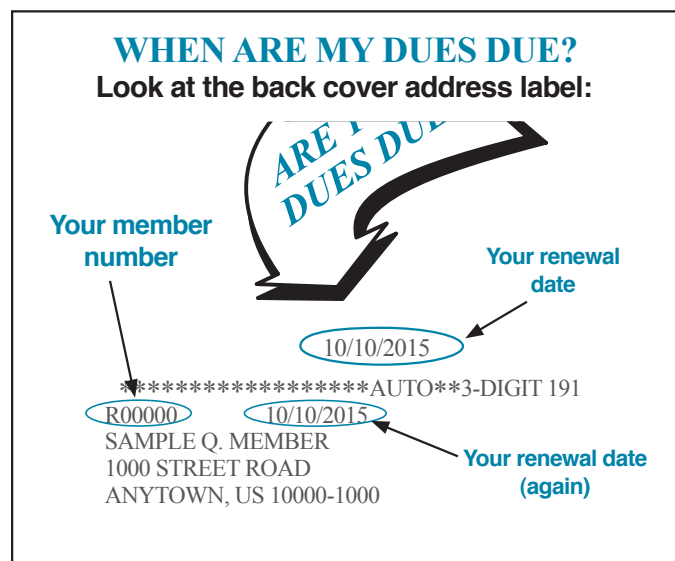
Finally in 1973, my dad and mother, and another couple, who were their best friends, did just that. My dad felt he had to be there right then; it turned out to be quite prophetic. Their visit was so wonderful, three days of somehow stepping back in time, and yet so enjoying the moment. When they entered 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 through 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 ... and my father had back his beloved Belgium. Luc's search was over. Luc had found his American.

Luc is actually the son of one of Mom and Pop's daughters, Angeline. Mom and Pop were his grandparents. He grew up hearing about my father and looking at the pictures. He wanted this American back in his family. He even still had a \$10 bill in his wallet that my dad must have given someone on that wonderful 1973 visit. Luc is happily married, a man in his forties, with three daughters - so there are great-grandchildren of Mom and Pop Meyntjens. Luc explained that after his grandparents died in 1973, the family drifted apart over family matters, sold the little house by the bridge, and they lost touch even amongst themselves. Sad. That is why we never heard from them anymore. I also had been given another phone number: dear Frans. I called and I was actually speaking to Frans! For the first time in my life, I heard his voice! He still didn't speak English, but somehow I made myself understood that his sister's son, his nephew Luc, had found us again after all these years. Frans has four children, and one of them got on the phone and we spoke a little. Fran's wife got on too just saying hello. Her name is Angela



— that is my name. Serendipitous. And what of little Frans? He is a retired Antwerp policeman, 70 years old. Life had gone on for everyone.

On Easter Sunday, March 31, 2002, I called Belgium for my dad. He was nervous and eager at the same time. First, we dialed Luc. It was a wonderful conversation, Luc speaking to a man he had heard about and always considered an American hero, and my dad speaking to Mom and Pop's grandson. I could see how happy my father's face looked. And then, and then, I looked at my dad, lightly touched his shoulder, and dialed Frans. When I gave my father the telephone receiver and he put it up to the hearing aid in the middle of his chest, he said only one word into it, "Frans". And on the other end, Frans just said, "Leo". My father, always quiet and gentle-hearted, couldn't really speak, the tears were flowing down his face, but his face looked so unbelievably happy. On the other end, I think maybe Frans was crying too. It seemed to be quite possible. And like so very many years ago when he was a little boy, he called my father's name over and over. They spoke together quietly in (Continued)

MY FATHER'S BELGIAN STORY *(Continued)*

halting English for just a few minutes. I touched my father's hand. For all the rest of my life, I shall never ever forget his face of joy and gratitude looking at me. Somehow Luc De Roeck, son of Angeline, grandson of Mom and Pop Meyntjens had given Belgium back to my father. Now, surely, it was a part of me too. Sometimes life helps us to make a circle. Sometimes it gives us a gift.

Since last spring, Luc and I have become good friends. We speak on the phone about once a week, and we are always amazed at all we have in common. His youngest daughter, Evelyn, only nine years old, is now learning my father's Belgian story, and we send little notes to each other and little trinkets that I think a little girl might enjoy. I send cards and notes to Frans, and know some of his children are translating for him. In some ways, maybe their family is starting to all talk again.

We buried Leonard J. Fazio on September 12, 2002. Another veteran of World War II had left us. Our world becomes profoundly diminished with each one of them dying. They were the best. It was a gloriously clear and bright day on September 12th. They say that helps; I do not know. Just a few weeks before we lost my father, Luc had given him another gift. Luc had written his family's story of their wartime experience with my father to the King and Queen of Belgium, King Albert II and Queen Paola. They wrote my father a letter of gratitude and recognition for his bravery and kindness to their country and people during World War II. They even sent their picture! How honored my father felt! He quickly sent me shopping to buy a picture frame. We now have the photo of the King and Queen of Belgium hanging on the wall along with our other family pictures! The Meyntjens Family was very saddened when they received the news of my father. Really he had lived the life he wanted right up to about two months before it ended. He loved us so, even his leaving was done in a quiet way. We shall never be the same again; we shall never be whole again without him. The messages of condolences from the Meyntjens, especially Frans and Luc, we shall treasure always.

My father was such a patriotic American that we knew he deserved some kind of military honors at his funeral. We had to work hard for that, how sad and wrong that it is not easily done any longer for veterans, but we got it. At the cemetery, they played "Taps", albeit on a tape hidden behind a neighboring tombstone. My dad, always a grateful man, would still have appreciated the military song, taped or not, welcoming him to rest now. He had been a good and faithful servant all of his life. The military honor guard was all women. How fitting that also seemed. He had always been so respectful of womanhood, such a true and fine gentleman. My sister and I were blessed; my brother had such a fine role model. Perhaps now it should be ladies to honor his service to his country. The flag that covered his coffin was folded in ceremony and presented to my mother. Inside his coffin were our special family remembrances, special to each one of us that remembered and acknowledged our individual relationships with him. I put some precious songsheets of mine. I knew my musical gift was inherited from him, and I so wanted to thank him for all the years he took me to my musical lessons, and all we shared because of that musical love. Very specially placed were the beautiful letter from the King and Queen, and from Luc, the Flemish flag of Belgium. These two last loving gifts were put next to him, close to his heart — a place where Belgium had always been.

KENT STEPHENS, A GREAT AMERICAN

by Ben Weber



Kent Stephens, 26 InfD, 101 FA Bn, late President of St. Louis Chapter, at the Battle of the Bulge memorial in Jefferson Barracks Park.

Our monthly meeting was almost over when Kent handed me a piece of paper. I read it and turned to him. He nodded. I stood to read his letter to the assembled members of the St. Louis Gateway Chapter of Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. The room became very quiet as members listened to his words. After 20 years leading our chapter, Kent was stepping aside due to health issues. When I finished, everyone rose and gave him a standing ovation. Eighteen months later, May 26, 2015, Kent died peacefully at age 91.

Kent Stephens was an extraordinary man. In 1943 at age 19, he was drafted to serve in the Army's 101st Field Artillery Battalion, 26th Infantry Division. The War in Europe was at a critical stage when Kent went from radio operator to truck driver. He and his buddy drove a gasoline truck 24 hours a day in the famed Red Ball Express to help resupply a stalled army. He later rejoined his unit where he served in the Battle of the Bulge and through the end of the war. Like many of his fellow veterans, he came home and blended into the American landscape, working and raising a family.

Kent once told an associate member he believed he did not do his fair share during the war because he did not fight at the front. Maybe that is why he was driven to start the St. Louis chapter of VBOB. In the early days, he sought out fellow Yankee Division veterans to join him, even going to their homes to recruit. The process was slow and tedious, so he contacted editors of the St. Louis daily newspaper and radio announcers to help his recruitment drive. With an outpouring of support from fellow veterans and the community, Kent established VBOB with a roster of more than 200 veterans.

Under Kent's leadership, the chapter flourished and became an important part of the community. A committee was formed to educate area students and residents about the most important battle of World War II. Over the years, veterans in uniforms with their decorations have conducted over 350 programs for schools, church groups, civic organizations, museums and corporations. Members participated in numerous patriotic events and parades where citizens could see the men who achieved victory in war. Friends and spouses of VBOB members established a women's auxiliary which provided financial aid for chapter activities and veterans' support



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 September 15, 2015, that these members of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. have also recently passed away:

Amor, James	87 InfD	Meli, John	90 InfD
Anderson, Robert M.	75 InfD	Murray, Buford J.	1252 Engr Cmbt Bn
Andrew, Leland E.	172 Engr Cmbt Bn	Page, Lawrence T.	82 AbnD
Ayscue, Vernon E	4 InfD	Paluch, Theodore	285 FAO Bn
Bernas, Frank	94 InfD	Parise, Andrew	312 Engr Cmbt Bn
Bowles, Jr., Robert	26 InfD	Pettingell, Gordon	26 InfD
Branaghan, Sr., Richard L.	99 InfD	Pollock, Philip H.	87 InfD
Dukes, Nell	Associate	Ruth, William B.	3 ArmdD
Fisher, David	Associate	Swiecicki, Frank C.	4 ArmdD
Giarrusso, Joseph L.	87 InfD	Trice, Shelby C.	94 InfD
King, Alvin G.	17 AbnD	Trimberger, Joseph	75 InfD
Kirby, Jr., James L.	87 InfD	Turner, Herbert E.	101 AbnD
Koehn, Donald L.	99 InfD	Tuttle, Jack	4 InfD
Kotrady, Edward	Associate	Van Arsdale, Richard	75 InfD
Leonard, Jr., Joe	113 Sig RI Co	Wenzel, John S.	201 Gen Hosp
Leopold, William E.	75 InfD	Zorn, Jr., Philip J.	159 Engr Cmbt Bn
Malachosky, Charles	2 ArmdD		

groups. Kent and other VBOB officers teamed with members and the community to erect an impressive Battle of the Bulge memorial and bronze GI statue in historic Jefferson Barracks Park. Now all the men and women who served and prevailed in that great battle have a permanent monument honoring their sacrifice.

Our chapter's dedicated members and associates still follow Kent's example of community outreach. Over the years, his work has resulted in thousands of area residents learning about World War II veterans and how they secured our freedom. Kent Stephens did his share. He is a patriot and a great American.

ALFRED H. TAYLOR HONORED WITH LEGION OF HONOR IN PARIS

by Jeff Taylor

My father, VBOB Member Alfred H. Taylor, 10th ArmdD, received one of the rarest honor ceremonies in the world when he was decorated with the French Legion of Honor at the headquarters in Paris in November 2014. The Grand Chancellor, General Jean-Louis Georgelin, addressed my father in English, and I delivered his



Alfred H. Taylor, 10 ArmdD, being decorated with the French Legion of Honor in Paris, and celebrating with champagne afterwards.

response in French. A champagne reception in the rotunda followed.

Investitures at the Palace of Salm are generally reserved for heads of state and other extreme VIPs, so Dad's selection for the distinction is a bit mysterious. On average, only one American is honored there per year.

35TH ANNUAL NATIONAL VBOB MEMBERSHIP MEETING MINUTES

The 35th Annual National Reunion Membership Meeting of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. was held on Sept. 16, 2015 at the Fort Magruder Hotel and Conference Center in Williamsburg VA. President Alan Cunningham opened the meeting at 3:07 pm. Madeleine Bryant, Corresponding Secretary and Associate, led the invocation, followed by Gary Higgins, Two-Year Trustee and Associate leading the Pledge.

President's Comments:

President Cunningham noted that the minutes of last year's general membership meeting were distributed earlier in everyone's reunion packets. Vernon Brantley, 75 INFD, made a motion to pass the minutes of last year's general membership meeting, seconded by John Bowen, Associate, and passed with no objections.

Alan Cunningham then addressed the hotel selection for the reunion. Kingsmill only had 1 handicap unit. Doubletree was nice but had no Hospitality room that we could run ourself—we'd have to use their liquor, their bartenders, greatly increasing that expense. Their Hospitality room was next to the front desk in a high-traffic area, and also their room price did not include breakfast. This hotel provided breakfast and a Hospitality room we could supply with our own liquor, so the advantages won out over the disadvantages. [He noted that the Holiday Inn was an even lower grade hotel.]

Alan then asked how many went to the wreath-laying service this morning and said it was a very nice event. We had the Patriot Riders, a police escort part way, Boy Scouts, VFW, MIs, Color Guard and a great speaker from Ft Eustis.

The Monday trip to Jamestown will cover Revolutionary times, the First Settlers, and the Yorktown part of the day will cover the Revolutionary times. We'll spend 2 1/2 hours in Jamestown, 1 + hours for lunch, then travel to Yorktown for a 2 hr tour. He noted that the Hospitality room will be open on Monday and that Ft Magruder is built on redoubt, and you can walk around the grounds and see this historic area. There are Civil War artifacts in the lobby.

Colonial Williamsburg has the nice cobblestone streets, but we felt some of our members would find it difficult, so we didn't schedule it but you can do it yourself on Tuesday. The hotel has a shuttle to the Visitors Center in Colonial Williamsburg.

Gary Higgins then remarked that Alan chose the hotel based on the best scenario, and it was a difficult decision. He then stated we should be thankful for our leaders, to a round of applause.

VP/Chapters Comments:

Sherry Klopp, VP/Chapters reported that she has been making phone calls to Chapter Presidents and is trying to get to them all. She has visited the SE FL Palm Beach and Traverse City chapters. She would like to ask all VBOB Members to help spread the word about VBOB. We need to get new members, both Vets and Associates, and many Veterans of the BOB have never heard of us. If you go to American Legion, VFW, or AmVets, please spread the word about VBOB there.

Sherry has taught for 38 years in schools, and 7 years at university, and they are no longer teaching WWII to students in her area. Only 5 US states are teaching WWII. She saw an article in the "Toledo Blade" about 18 high school teachers across the US who are researching the World Wars to come up with a lesson plan. One teacher has visited Europe, meeting people and visiting battlefields and cemeteries. There he found an uncle he didn't know he had. By November there will be a website with the lesson plan and Sherry will share it with VBOB.

Alvin Sussman, 106 INFD, then rose to say that he is a very active chapter member, and goes to local high schools, where he brings his canteen, cup, helmet and other artifacts and speaks about his experience in the Bulge. He thinks other chapters should do the same. He suggests National hire a PR firm to do pro-bono work to get more publicity for VBOB and World Wars in national magazines, on TV, and other media.

Financial Report and VBOB Reorganization:

President Alan Cunningham reported we had income of \$11,000 for July and have probably spent the money. There may be a loss for the reunion. No charge for the buses today, as event was added after registration forms were already out, so that was a big financial hit. It was important to participate in the Spirit of '45 event, as several WWII vets saw it in the newspaper and thus learned about VBOB. We received significant donations of \$700 from the VA Chapter. Wine was a big expense, but we can return unopened bottles. He will sell leftover beer to anyone who wants it. Mary Ann Smith, Associate and VA Chapter President, was recognized for her contributions to the reunion with applause. She said \$200 more in donations are coming.

Gary Higgins then asked Mary Ann to share the story about her father. She said he was in the service from December 42-December 44, and was one of the US soldiers killed in the Malady Massacre. He was in the 285th—she went to their reunion and met his commander. Mary Ann also commended Alan for doing a great job on the reunion and enjoyed it very much.

Alan then continued his remarks on the financial report, noting that we have \$175,000 in our accounts, and we are on a slight downward slope on our income. We'll have a better picture after we figure out the reunion costs, that figure may be more like \$160,000 then. Our fiscal year ends at the end of November, so in December we'll have a better picture of the year.

Moving on to our reorganization, Alan noted we had 78% veteran members as of last year's reunion. Below 75% we lose our current tax-exempt status, and we are now at 72% veterans, as of the end of July. We need to switch to a 501c3, instead of a 501c19 veterans organization. He noted that right now, donations to VBOB are not tax-deductible under the 501c19.

John Bowen made the motion for VBOB to change to a 501c3, seconded by Tom Burgess, 87 INFD. The motion was carried. Gary Higgins wanted the record to reflect that we keep the name Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. Tom Burgess stated for the record that there will be no real difference in the organization, and we want to be known as a veterans organization.

Alan noted that our bylaws and article of incorporation will have to be changed to fit in with the new 501c3 status. Alan will ask for pro-bono help from an attorney he knows who has done similar things for other organizations. Changes to VBOB bylaws will be voted upon at next year's General Membership Meeting. The motion to make necessary changes to VBOB bylaws and articles of incorporation was made by Tom Burgess, seconded by A Wayne Field, Rocky Mountain Chapter President, 6 ARMDD.

VBOB Executive Council Election:

John Bowen reported that Doug Dillard could not be at the reunion. John was asked to thus handle the nominations and vote, open to the

floor. No new nominees were proposed. He read the names and asked each present nominee to stand:

President: Alan Cunningham

Executive Vice President: Barbara Mooneyhan

Vice President Chapters: Sherry Klopp

Vice President Membership: Angela Fazio

Treasurer: Duane Bruno

Recording Secretary: Tracey Diehl

Corresponding Secretary: Doris Davis

He then presented 3 names for new **Three-Year Trustees:**

Bob Bowles, Thomas Ingram, Alfred Shehab

[Two Year Trustees: Ruth Hamilton, Robert Rhodes,

James Triesler

One Year Trustees: Gary Higgins, Mike Levin, Bert Rice]

It was noted that the Officer's terms are for 1 year, Trustees are for 3 years. A motion was made that the nominations be closed. Vernon Brantley made the motion, seconded by A. Wayne Field, and the nominations were then passed without dissent.

December 2015 Event:

John Bowen reported that the December Commemoration Event will again be at the Doubletree Crystal City, as it has been for 7 years, and has always been very nice. They will have a Hospitality room and buy their own liquor. Events will go from December 14-16. This year the room rate will be \$119. On the evening of December 14, VBOB is invited to Luxembourg Embassy. On December 15 they will visit the Rotunda Archives. John is asking if they will display McAuliffe's "Nuts" message, which was on display for the 70th anniversary of the Bulge. Their banquet on December 15 will hopefully include the District Commander General. On December 16th are the wreath layings at WWII Memorials and VBOB Memorial in Arlington Cemetery and Tomb of the Unknowns. Lunch at the hotel with a beautiful view of DC, then on to the Belgian Ambassador's residence. In past years they've had great food and great chefs there. We hope you'll attend.

John wanted to recognize Dorothy Davis, who often handled the social events in December, and passed away this year. She formed the Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation and was instrumental in planning and growing the December event. In 1987 she started the reunion sign-in books by unit, which are in the Hospitality Room. John noted that the historical records of events and reunions will go to the Carlisle Barracks library if VBOB, Inc. should ever dissolve.

VBOB MEMBER GEORGE MERZ RECEIVES THE FRENCH LEGION OF HONOR MEDAL

George Merz, 818 MP Co, VIII Corps, was awarded the French Legion of Honor Medal at the 123rd Airlift Wing of the Air National Guard on September 13, 2015 by Colonel Barry D. Gorter, Commander of the 123rd Airlift Wing, Kentucky Air National Guard, at the Louisville International Airport. The event took place during a "Family Day" of the Air National Guard and there were over 500 people cheering for George as he received his medal. He received the medal on July 1, 2015 by the Consul General of France (in Chicago), Vincent Floreani, and it was formally presented to him at this event. He was so proud that many members of his immediate family and friends could attend (almost 20 in total!).

Vice President's Comments:

Doris Davis, Executive Vice President, remarked that the 2016 reunion will be in Seattle, and she is looking for dates in September-October that will give us the best hotel price. The Seattle chapter has sent her a list of suggested hotels, and offered to help with the reunion. She is concentrating on WWII-related places, and maybe a bus tour past places such as the Space Needle and Pike's Market. Suggestions are welcome, and she has enlisted help from the Seattle CVB. She will look for a hotel near the airport with a shuttle available. A. Wayne Field commented that wheelchair transportation is difficult in every major city, and Alvin Sussman remarked that Boeing is a great site to visit.

Closing Remarks:

Alan then asked for suggestions for other locations for future reunions. Springfield, IL and San Antonio TX were named. Alvin Sussman suggested New York, but Alan replied that hotels are way too expensive there. Savannah, Boston, and Colorado Springs were also floated as reunion location ideas. He then opened the floor to other final comments.

Patrick Brion, Associate, Belgian Army, stated that during the 70th Anniversary trip in December, many people in Europe had not heard of VBOB, and that all of our membership and marketing efforts are concentrated on America. We should be marketing in Belgium and Luxembourg for Associate Members, and he suggested a flyer be designed to go into European WWII museums, such as the one in Bastogne. Facebook, our website, and social media are also important tools for spreading the word about VBOB.

Sherry Klopp then stated she would like to ask us all to write to our legislators about returning WWII to the curriculum in our schools.

John Bowen mentioned that registration forms for the December event are available in the Hospitality room.

Patrick Hinchy, Associate, who is involved in the VBOB Tours, agreed with Patrick Brion that we should have flyers in European museums and cemeteries. He said that there's a man in Europe impersonating VBOB, using our logo. We should get a lawyer to file suit over the copyright violation there. Kevin Diehl, Associate, said that Facebook will shut down his VBOB page, and he will follow up on that.

Tom Burgess moved to adjourn, seconded by Madeleine Bryant. The meeting adjourned at 4:45.

Respectfully submitted,

Tracey Diehl, Recording Secretary

tracey@battleofthebulge.org; 703-528-4058



George Merz, 818 MP Co,
VIII Corps

The Legion of Honor Award was created by Napoleon in 1802 to acknowledge services rendered to France by persons of exceptional merit. American veterans who risked their lives during World War II and who fought on French territory qualify to be decorated as Knights of the Legion of Honor. Veterans must have fought in one of the four main campaigns of the Liberation of France: Normandy, Provence, Ardennes, or Northern France to earn the medal.

—Submitted by Doris Davis,
Associate

MISS. CHAPTER (33) SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

by Dr. James W. Hunt, Chapter 33 President

The Miss. Chapter of VBOB is honored and proud to share the successful completion of our Scholarship Program: Hopefully, other chapters in the U.S.A. may want to have their own Scholarship Program.

Can you imagine, with our Miss. Chapter down to our present membership of a “precious few,” that we would be so bold as to initiate a Scholarship Program! This is something that we can do without leaving our home and still be accomplishing something important for young people, which also informs others about the “Greatest Generation!” During the next generations, no one will wonder: “Was the Battle of the Bulge just a story circulated around or was it real — such as the reality of the Nazi prisons’ horror

Message to Scholarship Students

The Miss. Chapter of Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge will be awarding scholarships to six local high school students at the Fall meeting, Thursday, October 16, 2015, at Lake Tiak O’Khata, Louisville, Miss. This is a vital part of the scholarship process, a time when we can get to know each recipient and also share what you have learned about the “Battle of the Bulge”, Ardennes, Belgium. The students will be our guests for lunch at 11:30 AM and the meeting should be over by no later than 2:30 PM.

We hope all will understand the importance of this sharing time because we want to know more about your VBOB relative and the part he played in winning this battle and ensuring the safety of the entire world as we know it. This battle has been called by Winston Churchill “the greatest land battle of World War II.” Tom Brokaw wrote a book entitled *The Greatest Generation*, which has proven to be true. By learning about these brave men, you will be a special kind of emissary to people you know to keep other generations aware of the “whole story” of those heroes. Several years ago, a false story was spread about the Nazis and their Concentration camps during the years of the war, and their total cruelty and destruction of the allied countries of Europe—England, Holland, France, numerous smaller towns and countries. Groups of people in this country were told that all of this was false .i.e.”It never happened,” they were told, from the media and Nazi sympathizers in this country and else where. The truth was that it DID happen.... there are pictures, detailed accounts, personal stories that prove the inhuman and terrible deeds that were done. But as years go by and new generations come along, it is vital that these new generations know the story of the ones who saved civilization from annihilation and from imprisonment of our society under Adolph Hitler, a man insane for power who almost conquered the world.

Now you will understand the importance of our finest students.... YOU... being informed about the true history of those times and why it must never, ever happen again. We each have an opportunity to keep the truth alive and we have a responsibility to do so. You six winners are among the highest and brightest of your generation and your ancestor has been an important, even critical part of our lives today. We live in the greatest country in the world, as well as the safest. We challenge you to do your best to keep it that way!

Sincerely in God’s love,
James W. Hunt, 1st Infantry Division,
18th Infantry Regiment, Company K

stories when people wondered if it was true.

Our Scholarship Program started with left over accounts from our VBOB treasury when we decided to become an informal group and still meet once a year. This One Thousand dollars grew by our members and associates generosity—ending in almost \$9,000, enough to give six scholarships for the 2015-2016 school year, to a college or university of their choice. We received six outstanding applicants who each received a \$1,000.00 scholarship.

We encourage all VBOB chapters to start their own Scholarship Programs. The “rush” of being able to accomplish and be successful in something important, and at the same time let our young people know about the war and the brave soldiers who fought and won, is immeasurably thrilling! The committee that guided this program consisted of: a 100-year-old, a 90-year-old, a 93 and 92-year-old, (one of whom happens to be Judge Fred Wicker, Sen. Roger Wicker’s Dad) and several in their 80’s.

Our “go-to” 100-year-old felt so strongly (along with the rest,) that they have been given so much that they wanted to give back to our young students a little financial help. We feel that we are building future leaders.

The Scholarship award winners will be invited to come to our fall meeting at Lake Tiak O’Khata to tell what they have learned about what Winston Churchill called “the greatest land battle of WWII.” Thus, we can learn from these young students and they can learn about us and VBOB.

Surely, this is a most unusual and wonderful project of giving to others by our WWII Greatest Generation.



Members of the scholarship committee (l-r) James Hunt, 1st InfD; Jane Hunt; Sarah Naugher; David Naugher, 5th InfD

CENT. MASS (22) & SPIRIT OF '45

A “Spirit of ’45” ceremony, which commemorated the 70th Anniversary of the ending of World War II, was held on August 16, 2015 in Charleston, MA at Constitution Plaza. The ceremony commenced at 10:00 am aboard the World War II Destroyer *Cassein Young*, and was sponsored by the Mass. Chapter of The Purple Heart. A wreath-laying took place on both the *Cassein Young* and “Old Ironsides” *USS Constitution*, at 11:00 am. John E. McAuliffe, President of VBOB Central Mass Chapter, was the main speaker.

SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER (61) PICNIC

Members of the South Jersey Chapter (61) of the Veterans of the Battle of The Bulge attended a picnic at Gus Epple's home in Cape May Court House on June 16, 2015.



(L-R) Elmer Umbenhauer, 8th ArmdD, Edward "Mickey" Smith, who served in the U.S. Navy in the 1950s, and Gus Epple, 87th InfD, our host.
—Submitted by Barry Smith, Associate

KANSAS CHAPTER (69) ANNUAL MEETING



The Kansas Chapter of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge held their annual meeting at the Eisenhower Presidential Library in Abilene, Kansas on January 25, 2015.

A part of the program was a panel discussion by four Battle of the Bulge survivors, including Julian Siebert, Jim Sharp, Wallace Jeffries, and Marvin Ledy. The Moderator was Robert Smith, Curator of Ft. Riley Museum.

In addition, the Kansas Chapter donated and dedicated a memorial bench that was placed 75 feet away, under the gaze of the statue of our leader, General Dwight Eisenhower. Jim Sharp, founder and first president of the chapter, made the dedication for the Kansas Chapter. In the dedication photo, left, Jim Sharp is in the center right and on his right is The Eisenhower Library's Director Karl Weissenback. More than 250 people attended the event, including 26 Battle of the Bulge Veterans.

—Submitted by Jim Sharp, Chair Communications, KS Chapter

MARYLAND/DC CHAPTER (3) PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by J. R. Schaffner, 106th InfD, 589th FA Bn

Reprinted with permission from "The Marcher,"

Maryland/DC Chapter (3) newsletter

On July 4th 2015, I watched the celebration of our nation's birth performed in Washington DC in front of the Capitol. The program, the performers, and marching music were terrific and the overall talent was indeed outstanding. I am proud to be an American. How could we be so lucky to be able to live in this country? Having said that, I want to share with you something that has been a burr under my saddle for a long time.

I discovered this piece quite by accident, but it says what I have

been thinking for a long time. The title is, "Our National Anthem," and the author is unknown:

"So with all the kindness I can muster, I give this one piece of advice to the pop star who is asked to sing the National Anthem at a sporting event: Save the vocal gymnastics and the physical gyrations for your concerts. Just sing the song the way you were taught to sing it in school—straight up, no styling. Sing it with the constant awareness that there are soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines watching you from bases and outposts all over the world. Don't make them cringe with your self-centered ego gratification. Sing it as if you are standing before a row of 89-90 year old vets wearing their Purple Hearts, Silver Stars, and the flag pins on their cardigans, and you want them to be proud of you for honoring them and the country they love, not because you want them to think you are a superstar. Sing 'The Star-Spangled Banner' with the courtesy and humility that tells the audience that it is about America, not you."



LEHIGH VALLEY CHAPTER (55): THAT FAMOUS KISS!



At our recent meeting on August 18th, 2015 at the Best Western Hotel in Bethlehem, Pa., we were able to reenact the famous Times Square kiss from VJ Day at the end of WWII 70 years ago.

Two of our members, married couple Samantha and Frederick Polgardy, were more than happy to recreate the kiss between the sailor and nurse, complete with the sailor's and nurse's caps.

—Submitted by Stephen Savage, Associate, Lehigh Valley Chapter

ALABAMA CHAPTER (11) SPOTLIGHTS BELGIUM

George S Patton, Jr Chapter (Alabama) of VBOB is partnering with Birmingham International Center for a November 15 event spotlighting Belgium. Scheduled for 3 to 5:30 pm at the Southern Museum of Flight near the airport in Birmingham, AL, the program will honor Belgium resistance fighters and veterans who were part of the Battle of the Bulge.

The chapter also will partner with the Dixie Division of the Military Vehicles Club and have an entry in Birmingham's National Veterans Day Parade on November 11. Only three or four VBOB members are expected to participate, but they will revel in the support of the throngs of people saluting them, and the restored Jeeps they'll be riding in. Vern Miller, chapter president, will be in a Korean-era Jeep restored by Alan Moseley, son of the late Smith Moseley, Air Force veteran who was based in England and was Vern's long-time co-worker.

For further information about the Alabama Chapter meetings, contact Vern Miller by e-mail: vernsdarkroom@aol.com or at 205-951-0265. Or write to him at 1409 John Wesley Drive, Birmingham, AL 35210.



Sherry Klopp, VP of Chapters, presenting a \$500 check to George Fisher, Southeast Florida Chapter (62) President, from the VBOB Executive Council. The \$500 award was for the Chapter's installation of a memorial honoring Battle of the Bulge Veterans.

WEST MICHIGAN CHAPTER (23) VBOB MONUMENT

Richard Rizzio, President of the West Michigan Chapter, invited Sherry Klopp, VP Chapters of National VBOB, to Traverse City, Michigan to visit Grand Traverse Area Veterans Memorial Park to see the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Monument. The news media and public were invited to attend. The event began July 22nd at 10: 00 a.m. at Veterans Memorial Park.

Several members of the monument committee, Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, family members, and others were present. It took them seven years to acquire land from the city for their monument and monuments of other wars.



Sherry Klopp spoke to the group, beginning with greetings from the Executive Council of VBOB. She praised them for their dedication, thanked them for their service and talked about her father, Richard Switzer, a veteran of the Battle of the Bulge, who passed away March 8, 2013. The group went to the VFW for lunch after the program.

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.

THE 809TH FIELD ARTILLERY BN

by Joseph N. Santopetro

I completed my basic training in Anti-Aircraft on 90 mm guns at Camp Edward in Massachusetts. Then, I requested a transfer to the Army Air Force, passing the written test and medical exam. A month later, I was notified that the Army Air Force did not need an AA or Air Force pilots, but there was a need for Heavy Artillery Specialists. My entire battalion was then transferred to Camp Butler, North Carolina where we trained to use a 155 mm Howitzer gun.

I served in Battery C of the 809th Field Artillery Battalion. Our Commanding Officer was a West Point Colonel. The Battalion contained about 1000 men divided into four Batteries. The four Batteries were listed as A, B, C, and D referred to as Able, Baker, Charlie and Dog. There were 16 Howitzer guns in a Battalion—each Battery had four Howitzer guns and four Track Prime Movers. I belonged to Battery C, which was made the Registering Gun for the Battalion. The Registering Gun would go forward first to obtain the target coordinates needed to coordinate all 16 guns to fire on the targets. I was also a Track Prime Mover driver.

We left USA on a British Ship convoy for England. It took approximately 14 days. Three months later our artillery landed in Southampton, England. Our equipment was checked and then loaded on a ship to cross the English Channel to France, landing in France on December 18, 1944. We were ordered to go to the First Army in Belgium. We moved out immediately, reaching the Germany border Christmas Eve 1944, and began firing on the Germany target on Christmas Day. I remember being in an open field and venturing out in waist-deep snow in front of the registering gun, to line up the two aiming stakes used for coordinate calibration that required an adjustment so all the guns could line up simultaneously to fire at the same target. The two aiming stakes were about 100 ft. out. I was standing up, driving down the two stakes, and “screaming meemies” were landing all around me, sinking in the snow. My buddies were trying to alert me but I was so deep in concentration that I did not hear them nor the “meemies” landing all around me, completed my task, and returned crawling on my stomach. I remember another time when the Track Prime Mover I was driving hit a mine and the chain blew. We were ok, exited the vehicle and awaited for another vehicle to move the Registering Gun.

We found ourselves firing in a 360-degree circle, indicating we were in a pocket. We were aware of Malmedy, where 85 captured artillery American soldiers were shot dead after surrendering to Germany forces. The Captain then ordered us to pack-up and retreat. Thanks to God, good luck and the Captain, we managed to get out. As we retreated, General Patton’s 3rd Army was coming to help the 101st Airborne, also known as “The Band of Brothers.” At Bastogne, we were assigned to General Patton’s 3rd and the 809th Field Artillery Battalion remained in combat with them up until May 8, 1945, V.E. Day. The 809th Field Artillery Battalion received three battle stars; The Battle of The Bulge, The Battle of Central Europe, And The Battle of The Rhineland.

After V. E. Day, before the atomic bomb, our Colonel volunteered to go to Japan with his 809th Battalion. The Battalion was then split up and sent to different outfits. There was a point system that determined the order of which the soldiers could return home first. Soldiers received points for number of System Battle Stars earned, and if they were married, or if they had children. While I was waiting to return home, I was assigned to the 14th Infantry.

I lived in Augsburg, Munchen, Germany for six months, where I worked in a post office. I was finally shipped out on the Liberty Ship *New Bern Victory*. I arrived in the USA on February 22, 1946, and was honorably discharged in Fort Dix February 28, 1946.

SAVING LIVES ON THE FRONT

by Howard Klitgaard, 109th Evac Hosp



The 109th was not a combat unit, but it certainly had its rough times as it was near the front most of the War. It had 39 officers, of which about half were surgeons. There were 40 nurses and 217 enlisted men. The unit was formed and completed basic training at Camp Carson, Colorado in June 1943. It went overseas in April of 1944 and landed on Utah beach in Normandy in 1944.

The 109th Evacuation Hospital was a 400-bed unit, usually housed in tents, and called semi-mobile, since it could be dismantled, loaded onto trucks, moved, and set up again in a few hours. It was a complete hospital, since it had surgical staff and equipment to do any type of surgical procedure necessary in combat.

In the later part of 1944, the front was moving rather fast and the 109th was ordered to move to an area near Boulay, in Alsace-Lorraine on December 4th. The weather had turned very cold, so the unit set up in some buildings previous used as a prisoner of war camp hospital. The place looked like a prison, which it was, with barbed wire fences and pillboxes. Pot-bellied stoves made life good and the men got to sleep inside for the first time since landing in Normandy. Casualties were about what had been expected, ranging from about 50 to 100 each day.

On the afternoon of December 22th, the hospital was notified that it would again support Patton’s 3rd Army as it moved north to relieve the pressure of the German breakthrough. It was a go, go. Within hours, the hospital was retreating back to Metz, where it bivouacked until all of the supporting unit got organized for the Patton’s move north.

On December 28th, the 109th moved into some French Military Academy buildings in Montmedy, France. Montmedy was about six miles south of the Belgium border, and casualties were very heavy. Other supporting surgical teams were called in to help. Treatment was difficult because of several complicating factors. The ward medics were faced with as many as 40 wounded in each room coming out of anesthesia, and the Germans had dropped paratroopers behind the lines, so some of the medics had to do guard duty. Also, a number of the enlisted men were called up to serve as first aid men in various infantry units in the area, and there were several heavy snowstorms. Because of the heavy casualties, both German and American GI’s had to be placed in the same area, and this did not work as one would expect. Regardless of all the problems, nearly 3000 casualties received surgical treatment while at this location, with a very low death rate.

On 29 January, the 109th moved to a former Children’s Air and Sun School, Institute de Ode near Sprimont, Belgium, just ten miles from Bastogne. The fighting was over, but the results were overwhelming in terms of casualties and equipment. The 109th admitted more casualties and had the lowest death rate of any Evacuation Hospital in Europe. It received five Battle Stars, Meritorious Unit Commendation, and European Theater streamer.

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 do 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 for the tree.
- 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 the 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 the 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.
- 4:00 PM – 7:30 PM Bus leaves at 4:00 PM for Belgium Ambassador Residence, Washington DC, Reception from 5:00 – 6:30

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. 09/23/15

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? _____

If you haven't before?

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 _____			
Commemorative Banquet, DoubleTree Hotel Crystal City _____	X	\$59.00	\$ _____
6:00 PM - 10:00 PM Please make your Main Course selection(s):			
<input type="checkbox"/> Apple Brandy Pork Tenderloin _____ (Names) _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> Chicken Piccata _____ (Names) _____			
<input type="checkbox"/> 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 \$ _____

4:00 PM Bus to Belgium Ambassador Residence Reception _____ X \$25.00 \$ _____

(Note change in Time from Last Bugle - Reception will be from 5:00 to 6:30 PM)

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

09/23/15

VBOB 34TH ANNUAL REUNION IN WILLIAMSBURG, VA

by Madeleine Bryant, Associate



VBOB Members in front of the Spirit of '45 bus, with their bugler Auston O'Neill (far right), on their way to the wreath-laying ceremony at Williamsburg Memorial Park.



VBOB Member Hope Kirkendall, 16th GEN HOSP, braved the jump simulation at Ft. Lee's Rigger School.



Brigadier General Kurt J. Ryan, Chief of Ordinance, Ft Lee (right) presented each BoB veteran, including Tom Burgess, 87 INFD, with a certificate of appreciation for their service.

The 34th Annual Reunion, with 25 veterans of the Battle of the Bulge along with 68 family and friends, took place August 14-18, 2015, in Williamsburg, Virginia. Reunion headquarters was the historical Fort Magruder Hotel and Conference Center, located on the site of a Civil War redoubt. One could actually see the old earthworks as one strolled the lovely gardens, as well as view fascinating historic artifacts artfully displayed in the lobby.

Friday evening, everyone gathered eagerly in the hospitality room. After a long day of travel for most of us, it was indeed a happy respite to gather for a welcoming wine and cheese party. How wonderful to greet old friends and discover new ones!

Early Saturday morning, impressively escorted by American Legion motorcyclists, South Virginia Chapter (sponsored by American Legion Post 284, Colonial Heights, VA) via historic Virginia Route 5, 2 large bus loads arrived at Ft Lee. Our first stop was the Rigger School where, following a briefing, several brave participants, including veterans Hope Kirkendall, Dorothy Barre, and Jack Stützing, volunteered for the exciting jump simulation. Lunch took place in the Ordinance

Center Dining Facility where we were greeted by Major General Darrell K. Williams, the new Commanding General of the Combined Arms Support Command and Fort Lee. General Williams spoke to the group after lunch with the troops and gave out coins to the oldest veterans, Dorothy Barre and Fred Gordon (both 97 years old). We then went to the museums where the group split to visit the unique Women's Museum (opened that day just for VBOB!) — the only museum of its kind — and the notable Quartermaster Museum with artifacts from the Revolutionary War to the present. Brigadier General Kurt J. Ryan, Chief of Ordinance, welcomed us warmly and presented each BoB veteran with a certificate of appreciation from Ft. Lee. At the close of this full but exciting day, a ceremony took place at the Clamshell/Flagpole, including music by the Fort Lee 392nd Army Band, inspiring words from Chaplain Claude A. Crisp, a wreath laying and a 21 gun salute. We also observed the day's Retreat Ceremony where the flag was lowered for the day.

On Sunday morning, escorted by the Patriot Guard motorcyclists, we gathered, along with local dignitaries and visitors, at Williamsburg

Memorial Park, for the Spirit of '45 Wreath Laying Ceremony — one of 2,000 such ceremonies going on around the world and across the nation that day. Local Boy Scout Troop 155 welcomed each BoB veteran and escorted them to seating area. Alberta Prather's singing of the National Anthem and Staff Sgt. Ray Gresham's rendition of God Bless the USA gave us chills. Colonel William Galbraith, USAF, Commander, 733rd Mission Support Group, Langley-Fort Eustis was the guest speaker.

Upon return to the hotel, Chapter Presidents and Executive Council held their meetings. All participants came together for the General membership meeting to hear reports and to vote in the new slate of national officers, who will be installed at the December commemoration event in DC. A major agenda item dealt with need to change organization's IRS status from a 501c19 Veterans Group to a 501c3 non-profit as we no longer meet the "75% veterans" requirement. In addition, next year's reunion in Seattle, Washington was discussed, as well as the location of the reunion in 2017. Several locations were proposed and will be explored.

The always anticipated banquet was a happy event, beginning with music by members of the TRADOC Band (including playing of 3 National Anthems!) and an enjoyable photo slide show by Patrick Brion. All were touched by the warmhearted and personal presentation by Guest speaker Major General Robert Dyess, Deputy Director, ARCIC. Our appreciation also goes to VFW Post 4639 who presented/posted the Colors.

Monday was "tourist day." Groups were led by knowledgeable guides through the Jamestown settlement, America's first permanent English colony. Boarding one of the ships gave us a firsthand realization of how difficult travel across the ocean was for the early settlers of our nation. Prior to lunch, we had opportunity to tour sections of the impressive, interactive museum.

That afternoon, we traveled the scenic Williamsburg Parkway to Yorktown Victory Center which is in the process of being transformed into a new American Revolution Museum. Despite the intense heat of

the day, many of us ventured outside through a recreated 1780's farm and Continental Army camp (including a canon being fired!) What a marvelous day exploring some of our American history!

While some participants chose to continue touring the area, Tuesday morning found most participants returning home, tired but content and carrying many good memories.

We were delighted to have our European VBOB Associates Adjutant Patrick Brion, Belgian Army, and Patrick Hinchy, VBOB tour guide extraordinaire, travel across the Atlantic to join us in Williamsburg. For those of us fortunate to have attended the 70th anniversary commemoration events in Europe last December, this was a special treat. Also welcomed was Spirit of '45 Bugler Auston O'Neill, whose poignant playing of Taps at several events moved us deeply. We were honored to have the Spirit of '45 Express, which has traveled all over the USA, accompany us throughout our Reunion travels.

What draws me, a VBOB associate, to attend these annual reunions? In part, it is to honor my dear father, Fritz Kraemer, who fought valiantly with the 84th INF Div. in the Battle of the Bulge and who passed away in 2003, having shared very little about his experiences. But now it is primarily to honor and spend quality time with our dear veterans, who continue to inspire me with their courage, strength and remarkable energy. I am in awe of their amazing life stories. I treasure their friendship tremendously. The opportunity to meet their families, as well as others who care about these brave men and women and their histories, is precious to me. The various, well-planned reunion activities are a bonus. We express special thanks to President Alan Cunningham for his and his wife Judy's dedication and hard work in bringing us another successful reunion. Our appreciation also goes to Kevin and Tracey Diehl for registration and many other behind-the-scenes tasks.

We eagerly anticipate next year's reunion in Seattle in late summer or early fall — watch for details and do plan to join us!

—Photos courtesy Patrick Brion, Associate.

For more photos of the 2015 reunion, go to our website: www.vbob.org, click on: Attend Reunion.

COMBAT MEDIC

by Fred H. Moston, 317 Reg., 80th Div., 3rd Army

In December, 1944, as a replacement in the Infantry, I traveled to France and was assigned to the 80th Division of General Patton's 3rd Army. My first assignment was as a stretcher bearer for 2 days, then I was sent to join an infantry platoon. During the next 3 months I was "Doc" to these men, remaining with them through the Battle of the Bulge, the Saar Palatinate, and Central Europe campaigns. On the morning of March 22nd, I was transferred to the 5th Division. Near midnight, that company to which I had been newly assigned was sent to make a reconnaissance mission across the Rhine River near Hoffenheim, south of Mainz. General Patton wished to know enemy strength before making the first assault into Germany. The rubber boat I was in held 12 men and we had to paddle across, passing by a small island midstream. Unfortunately, the enemy tanks were waiting and my boat was hit, killing 7 of the 12. Me and another soldier, both wounded, were able to paddle to safety on that island. I administered help to those wounded, after checking the men that didn't make it. Then we managed to get to a bombed-out farmhouse on the island where there was relative safety from the continued shelling by the German forces. At daybreak, I went to the west end of that island and from there the 5 of us were rescued

and returned to the west bank. Because of my wounds, I was flown back to a hospital in England. For my efforts that night, I received the Bronze Star (60 years later!)

Most recently, on June 4th, the French government awarded 10 Bulge veterans the Legion of Honor medal at the state capital in Atlanta, GA. I feel much gratitude to the French people for this honor, recognizing all of us who served in that battle so many years ago.

One of the men I'd like to honor, with whom I served those 3 months, was PFC Michael Lendino from Teaneck, NJ. Mike and I stayed in touch until he passed away 4 years ago. He was my best friend during those difficult 3 months.



VBOB Member Fred H. Moston (right) with the French Ambassador at the Legion of Honor award ceremony.

DONORS

We appreciate the following generous members and donors who gave between June 1-Sept. 15, 2015:

Bailey, James David	106 InfD
Berlin, George	75 InfD
Bernovich, John	2 InfD
Bush, Darrell	75 InfD
Christensen, Clayton	99 InfD
Corbin, Garth	75 InfD
Cosgrove, William	Associate
Custard, Raymond	87 InfD
Elia, Mark	Donor
Elliott, Jr., Richard	90 InfD
Erath, H.	666 FA Bn
Farnan III, Edward A.	Donor
Giusti, Debby	Donor (IHO Frank Forth)
Kuhnen, Carl	511 Engr Lt Pontoon Co
Martin, Dolores	Donor
Melleno, Felix	955 FA Bn
Mohrmann, Patricia	Associate (IMO W Kent Stephens)
Moirano, Sergio A.	90 InfD
Mrugala, Bernard	Associate
Orth, Herbert	528 FA Bn
Serva, Casimer	87 InfD
Sharp, H.	1 InfD (IMO John K Blythe)
Wright, John	482 Engr Maint Co
Zimmer, Edward	440 Tp Carr Gp

A special thank you to these folks who donated generously to help defray the 2015 Annual Reunion expenses:

James David Bailey, 106 InfD
Betty Bishop, Associate
Mary Ann Smith, Associate, VA Crater Chapter (43) Pres.
VA Crater Chapter (43)

2-38 CAV REGT CASES UNIT COLORS

by Erin Rogers, *Fort Hood Sentinel* Staff

Troopers of the 2nd Squadron, 38th Cavalry Regiment, 504th Battlefield Surveillance Brigade cased the unit's colors Friday [May 29, 2015] during an inactivation ceremony on West Fort Hood.

2-38 Cav. has a long history of excellence, dating back to World War II, before the war ended for the unit and it was demobilized in 1945. The squadron would not be reactivated until June of 2010, when it began another round of significant contributions to the military, and to America as a whole.

Col. Ryan Janovic, 504th BfSB commander, was the first to speak at the ceremony and credited the unit's recent accomplishments to the efforts of the 2-38 command team, Lt. Col. John Cogbill and Command Sgt. Maj. Lewis Bayles.

"(Cogbill and Bayles) forged a cohesive outfit, deployed it, ... built coalition partnerships in a way that few could have, and all the while amassed a warrior spirit in the hearts of the men and women

before you," he said. "This is unsurpassed in our Army; there are other units as good, but there are none finer."

Retired Lt. Col. Alfred Shehab, the honorary colonel of the 38th Cav. Regt., began his time in the service in August of 1942 as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Cavalry. Shehab was part of the unit during WWII, when the squadron earned the nickname, "The Lucky 38th." He attended the ceremony Friday and he told the guests and troops in formation that seeing his unit go away was incredibly frustrating.

"I took an oath, to uphold the Constitution of the United States and to defend this country. Once you take an oath, it's with you for life – it doesn't leave when you retire or whatever the case may be. You either die or it stays with you until you do die," Shehab said. "Now, this regiment, this squadron, has been honed, trained, disciplined, ready to defend this nation – that's why we exist. And I'll tell you, it's a pity that we have to case the colors.

"The country needs people like you," he added.

Shehab was sentimental about his time in the unit during the '40s, and as Cogbill took the podium, he made it clear that he shared similar sentiments about the unit, 71 years later.



VBOB Member Alfred Shehab, honorary colonel of the 38th Cav. Regt., speaks to the troops in formation during the 2-38 Cav. Regt. inactivation ceremony at West Fort Hood.

"This morning we cased our colors, and we prepare to ship them off to the Center of Military History for safekeeping ..." he said. "This is not a task we take lightly and not one we would have chosen, but it's part of a larger Army plan, and we do our duty with professionalism, with the same standard of excellence that has been our hallmark since this unit was born in 1942."

Cogbill helped tell the story of the Lucky 38, before getting into the unit's more recent accomplishments, ones he said he was proud to have been a part of.

"At Normandy, the squadron fought its way out of the hedgerows taking 108 casualties in one day. In northern France, the squadron seized the V Corps objective of Tinchebray with hardly any casualties, using speed and audacity to outmaneuver the German defenders," he said, explaining Shehab's Lucky 38th, along with a dozen other incredible feats made by the unit in WWII.

When the unit was reactivated in 2010 to support the Global War on Terror, it headed down range to conduct more than 600 patrols and 26 air assaults, to capture high-value targets, and to seize tons of homemade explosives and illegal narcotics before redeploying in 2012.

Fast-forwarding another two years, under the Cogbill and Bayles command team, the unit deployed in 2014 to Kosovo, where they conducted 12 named operations, including three sets of free elections, a crowd-riot control mission in Mitrovica, Kosovo, a series of

reconnaissance missions to expose illegal smuggling networks in the north, five airborne operations – the first in more than 10 years in Kosovo – two special purpose insertion extraction operations, countless sling-load missions and combined air assaults, and more.

“As you can see, this is a little squadron with a big mission – leading the charge across Europe for V Corps, screening the eastern border for (the International Security Assistance Force), winning the peace in the Balkans for NATO, or conducting long-range reconnaissance for the III Corps commanding general. This little squadron has had a major impact,” Cogbill said.

Shehab said he prayed the night before the ceremony for the good of the squadron.

“I prayed, ‘My squadron is going to be spread out all over the world, and as long as they have those sabers on, I want you to look after them. Take care of them and bring them back no matter where they go,’” he said. “I asked the Lord to look after my Army, to look after my squadron ... to take care of our country and to bring this squadron back to life again.

“This outfit is trained and disciplined – they have a real leader, Cogbill is a real leader. He knows what it takes,” Shehab added. “We want our Soldiers to understand their main mission in life is defense of the United States. Period. And it takes training and it takes discipline, and above all, dedication. I’ve never seen such a spirit (as in this unit). To take a unit like this that’s really ready, and to furl their colors is too bad. I can’t explain how I feel, standing there, to see the Soldiers in formation with the sabers on their hats, it just made me feel good. Really. I got very sad when the colors were cased, and angry, but I’m happy I was here for this.”

Before Cogbill and Bayles cased the colors, Janovic closed with what he called the singular idea that when America needs heroes and warriors in the future, “the colors of 2-38 will almost assuredly be called upon again, to uncage and fly toward the sound of the guns in any direction.”

“Colors can be cased, artifacts can be stored, equipment can be turned in and personnel can be reassigned, but memories, shared experiences, joy, pain, pride, a sense of accomplishment, and a camaraderie that only a Soldier will ever know will live on forever in every one of you,” Cogbill concluded. “So when our nation calls again, ... the men and women of the Phantom Recon Squadron stand ready.

“Break glass in case of war.”

—Photo by Erin Rogers, Sentinel Staff

BATTLE OF THE BULGE PLUS 70

by Clinton C Barnard, 11th AD, 63rd AIB, Co B

For my 90th birthday in January 2015 I gave myself a trip to Belgium to retrace my steps in the Battle of the Bulge. I was part of the 11th Armored Division 63rd Armored Infantry Battalion, Company B Patton’s Third Army.

My son and I took the trip in May 2015 not only on the 70th anniversary of the Battle but also VE Day.

We stayed in a hotel on McAuliffe Square in Bastogne – the Sherman tank on display there is an 11th Armored Division tank and took day trips to the battle sites.

The site of our first attack on December 30, 1944 was a bloody hillside near Remagne where we were pinned down without any artillery support. We went to Rechrival and Houmont. At Longchamps

we relieved a unit of the 101st Airborne and attacked through the forest toward Bertogne. Following the capture we moved on to Compogne and Mabompre and then to Houffalize. We were relieved there by the 17th airborne Division and we turned east to attack Buret.

There we were told the battle had ended and we began to get the Stars and Stripes GI paper. It informed us that the ordeal we had been through was being called The Battle of the Bulge.

During our recent day trips I was able to identify several landmarks that I remembered, a church, a bridge, a hillside. The countryside in the Ardennes was beautiful in May, lots of green pastures and beautiful with cattle. Some fields were recently cultivated; others were golden yellow with mustard. There were lots of forest patches. To admire that scenery was a far cry from the knee deep snow I remembered and the night time temperatures of below 0 degrees.

In Bastogne the Mardasson Monument is impressive, a tribute to our 50 states and to each division which fought in the Bulge. Two outstanding museums, The Bastogne War Museum and The Old Belgian Barracks, have marvelous displays.

We fought to defeat the German army but to the Belgians it was being liberated from the Nazis. It is very much in their heritage. I wore my veteran’s cap to both museums and was surprised when total strangers came up to shake my hand and say thank you or Merci.

Our last two visits were to the American Cemeteries at Hamm in the Luxembourg City and Henri Chapelle near Leige where several of my platoon members are buried. A group of Belgians have adopted many gravesites and decorate them several times a year. We met the Belgian couple who adopted the grave site of a close friend. They invited us to have lunch with them and we had a wonderful time in their company.

The trip rekindled old memories and shaped new ones. I treasure both.

10TH ARMORED DIVISION VETERANS –WESTERN CHAPTER FINAL SALUTE REUNION



The 10th Armored Division Veterans – Western Chapter will hold their Final Salute reunion at the Clarion Hotel, Phoenix, AZ on April 21 – 23, 2016. All 10th Armored veterans, their friends, family, and anyone with a connection to the division are invited to attend. The Executive Committee will be working to make this a memorable event.

Additional details will be posted on the chapter website closer to the date: <http://10tharmored.com/> Please mark your calendars now to be in Phoenix in April. You will not want to miss this unique opportunity to honor our veterans and all those who served in the 10th Armored Division.

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



TOURS PLANNED FOR 2016

2016 PILSEN LIBERATION FESTIVAL & PRAGUE (10 days (approximately), May 1-10, 2016) The tour begins in Frankfurt. The itinerary includes a visit to Nuremberg with its Nazi Rally ruins and War Crimes Courthouse. Our participants will be honored guests at the world famous

Pilsen Liberation Festival (see many YouTube reports) in the Czech Republic where Pilsen festively thanks America for its May 6, 1945 liberation by General Patton and Third Army. The tour ends in the beautiful historic Czech capital, Prague.

2016 MEMORIAL DAY & NORTHERN BULGE, RHINE AND MUNICH TOUR (May 26 - June 5, 2016) The tour begins in Brussels. Our participants will be honored guests in the spectacular Memorial Day ceremonies at Henri-Chapelle Cemetery, the Battle of the Bulge American Cemetery. The tour includes seeing sites in the area where the Northern Bulge was fought - Malmedy, La Gleize, Parkers Crossroads and St. Vith. We will also visit the famous National Museum of Military History in Diekirch as well as visit Bastogne and see the Siegfried Line. This will be followed by a Rhine cruise and a visit to Nuremberg with its Nazi Rally ruins and War Crimes Courthouse, Dachau Concentration Camp and visiting magnificent, historic Munich. The tour ends in Munich.

2016 LAFW SOUTHERN BULGE TOUR (June 16 - 24, 2016) The tour begins and ends in Luxembourg where we participate in the Luxembourg American Friendship Week (LAFW) organized by the US Friends of Luxembourg. We will cover the area where the Third Army (lead by General Patton) fought in the Southern Bulge. We will see the Pescatore (Gen. Patton's Third Army HQ), Luxembourg American Cemetery (Patton's gravesite), Diekirch (National Museum of Military History), Bastogne (with General McAuliffe's headquarters), Schumanns Eck National Monument, Ettelbruck (Gen. Patton Museum), the Siegfried Line, Clervaux (GI monument) and Dahl.

If you have any areas of special interest, please let us know and we will try to include them in the tour - or we will try to arrange an escort to the area. Advance notice is needed.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, contact Doris Davis, VBOB Vice President and President VBOB Golden Gate (San Francisco) Chapter. Email address: doris@battleofthebulge.org; Tel (650) 654-0101 (PST).

VBOB ASSOCIATE REPRESENTS KEEP THE SPIRIT OF '45 ALIVE AT 70TH COMMEMORATION OF THE BATTLE FOR IWO JIMA

On 19 February 1945, the United States of America and the Empire of Japan met in conflict on the island of Iwo Jima. During the Battle of Iwo Jima, the Japanese lost 21,570 and the United States lost 6,821 and suffered 26,038 casualties.

Forty years later, these nations met again on Iwo Jima, this time to bring together the veterans of this battle in a "Reunion of Honor" and to dedicate a monument in recognition of the sacrifices and lives both nations gave during this engagement.

In 1945, the surviving veterans of the U.S. Iwo Jima Association and the Japanese IwiTo Association agreed to meet every year to commemorate the conflict with a "Reunion of Honor." This year marks the 70th Anniversary Commemoration of the Battle of Iwo Jima fought from 19 February to 26 March 1945.

VBOB Associate Mary Virginia McCormick Pittman-Waller represented the Navy League of the United States and Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive, while attending this joint commemoration. Ms. Pittman-Waller, who is a national director and representative of the Navy League of the United States and Navy League Austin, as well as advocate for the Keep the Spirit of '45 organization, is no stranger to honoring our veterans, remembering their battles and sacrifices, and tending to their needs where she can. She earlier attended ceremonies in Belgium and Luxembourg in commemoration of the Battle of the Bulge's 70th anniversary, also honoring her Father, Colonel James E. McCormick Pittman, M.D., United States Army.

Ms. Pittman-Waller was present for the healing words and wreath laying ceremonies by the representatives from each nation.



Ms. Pittman-Waller at the American Reunion of Honor Memorial on Iwo Jima.

In attendance were Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus, 36th Commandant of the Marine Corps General Joseph Dunsford and LTGEN Larry Snowden, USMC (Ret.), Chairman Emeritus, Iwo Jima Association of America. Captain Jerry Yellin, USAAC (Ret.), a veteran pilot who flew the last mission of World War II from Iwo Jima attended, also representing Keep the Spirit of '45 Alive.

The ceremony was moving and difficult for many, as it brought back troubling memories. The

Japanese delegation remained stoic, while Americans unashamedly revealed their emotions and some tears.

Ms. Pittman-Waller reminded, "A nation who does not honor its ancestors and live their noble heritage is lost and will perish ... Let freedom ring!"

PFC WILMER H. GRETZINGER, 28TH INFANTRY DIVISION

by Richard C. Gretzinger, Associate



**Wilmer H. Gretzinger, 28th
InfD, 109th Inf Reg, Co I**

When my father returned from WW II, he spoke very little about his experiences. Consequently, I knew almost nothing about his service. After his death, I contacted the military National Personnel Records Center in St. Louis; however, I was advised his records were lost in a fire at the center on 12 July 1973. All they could provide was a certification of his military service dates. I did locate his company executive officer, Captain William

Pena, who had written his memories titled, *As Far as Schleiden*. I also corresponded with my dad's company commander, Captain Bruce W. Paul. Much of the following summary was obtained from these two officers.

My father, Wilmer H. Gretzinger, entered the US Army on 7 March 1944. He was 32 years old. After basic training, he was sent to Europe and was assigned to the 28th Infantry Division, 109th Regiment, Company I. He arrived in England on 25 August 1944.

PFC Gretzinger participated in four WW II campaigns. The first was in the Huertgen Forest, the second in the Ardennes (Battle of the Bulge), the third in the Liberation of Colmar, France and the last in Schleiden, Germany.

In early December 1944, the regimental commander, Colonel Jesse L. Gibney, of the 109th was replaced by LTC James Earl Rudder. The 3rd Battalion of the 109th Regiment held a position in Bettendorf, Luxembourg that was part of a 25-mile defensive line in this region of the Ardennes. Each of the three battalions of the 109th had about eight miles to defend. This distance, eight miles, was much too long to be adequately defended by one regiment, particularly in view of the German counterattack that began on 16 December.

In the first two days of the battle, Company I had lost one rifle platoon. Under intense enemy pressure, the 109th was ordered to regroup at Ettelbruck, about two miles further west. Because of heavy losses, the 3rd Battalion had to reorganize into three task forces—L, K and I. Task Force I was commanded by Captain Bruce W. Paul. He replaced First Lieutenant (1LT) Dulac, who was wounded on 2 November. Company I (my dad's unit) was assigned to this Task Force. 1LT Tropp commanded Task Force K and Captain Fossum commanded Task Force L.

Task Force I took a defensive position about one mile east of Ettelbruck. The weather was so bad that the Allied planes could not support our ground troops. At first the battle went well for the Germans. They pushed the US 1st Army back creating a bulge in the line. This attack became known as the "Battle of the Bulge."

However, the 110th Infantry Regiment of the 28th Division with 2,000 men stopped four German regiments with over 10,000 men. German Gen. Heinz Kokott later praised the 28th Division for delaying and stopping the German assault.

By 21 December, Company I was down to 50 men from an authorized level of 289. Allied reinforcements were brought in, and the weather cleared. Patton's 3rd Army moved in to relieve the regiments of the 29th Division. Patton's army would continue its move north to relieve the city of Bastogne, Belgium that was

surrounded and under heavy attack by the Germans.

Relief of the 109th Regiment was completed on 23 December, and the regiment was ordered from Ettelbruck to Moestrof, Luxembourg. The commander of Company I, Captain Paul, was ordered to send a patrol into Moestrof to determine if the enemy was still in the town. The Germans, however, had evacuated the town so it was relatively quiet for the 109th for the next few days. Christmas Day, a Monday, for the regiment was a special day. As reported in Pena's memories, the troops were served a turkey dinner with all the trimmings.

Companies I, J and K of the 109th Regiment were on the move by truck from Moestrof to Sedan, France by way of Libramont, Belgium. My dad's company (Co. I) arrived in Libramont on 27 December.

As previously mentioned, I located Capitan Pena, who was then retired from the military and living in Houston, Texas. He sent me a copy of his memories and a picture, but said he did not remember my father, and he did not recall the other soldiers in the photo.

When I look closely at the photo, I can see my dad had a cigar in his mouth. In many of the "Care Packages" we sent to him during the war, my grandfather always included a box of cigars. Because of my dad's cigar habit, he was nicknamed "Churchill" by his Army buddies.

The tide of the Battle of the Bulge turned. The weather cleared, and air support was possible. After leaving Libramont, Belgium, my dad's unit arrived in Sedan, France, on 3 January 1945.

The Bulge was over for the 109th. The regiment lost 1,174 men of a total authorized level of 3,257. The Germans, under the command of General Von Rumstead, were unable to advance any further because their major supply route, Bastogne, was now in Allied hands thanks to Patton's 3rd Army.

My dad's regiment went on to fight in the battle of the "Colmar Pocket" whose objective was to liberate the city of Colmar, France, a key transportation center. The German army with about 50,000 men occupied the area around Colmar. The attack on Colmar began at 11 PM on 1 February and by 3 AM on 2 February, Company I of the 109th was the first unit to arrive in the city of Colmar. As planned, a French Armored unit then swept through the city and by nightfall on 2 February, Colmar was liberated. There were only 125 Allied casualties because the night offensive caught the Germans off-guard.

A victory celebration took place on 8 February. Company I was chosen to lead the parade through Colmar that was led by LTC James E. Rudder (*see photo, below*).

(Continued)



WILMER GRETZINGER, 28TH INF (Continued)

Ten days after the parade, LTC Rudder was promoted to Colonel. He was born in 1910. In 1957 he was promoted to Major General in the United States Army Reserves. Rudder died in 1970 and is buried at College Station Cemetery, Brazos County, Texas.

For the distinguished service in the Battle of Colmar, the 109th was awarded the Croix de Guerre (War Cross). The citation was awarded 27 March 1945 by General Charles de Gaulle, the President of the Provisional Government of France.

After the liberation of Colmar, the 109th was moved north 165 miles by motor and rail to Bransfield, Germany, over looking the Olef River, about one-half mile from the city of Schleiden. After numerous patrols toward Schleiden, the 109th discovered the Germans were leaving the city and moving east across the Olef River. They did not realize it, but the shooting war for the 109th Regiment was over.

On 19 March, the regiment was ordered to Koblenz to relieve the 87th Division. The following day the 109th was ordered to Nickenich. At 7 AM on departure day, one company was missing at roll call. It was later learned that the missing company discovered a large cache of fine wine in the cellar of the building to which they were assigned. The company slept very soundly that night.

By 7 April, it was clear to higher HQ that the 28th division would not be needed in the final fighting. On 19 April, the 109th began a 215-mile motor and rail move to an occupation area. The 3rd Battalion of the 109th Regiment was assigned to areas around Frankenthal, about 15-miles north of Ludwigshafen.

A key area of occupation control was the Ludwigshafen-Mannheim Bridge over the Rhine River. (In 1995, my wife and I sailed under this bridge while we were on a Rhine River cruise.) Occupation control of the bridge included German-speaking soldiers from the 109th. My dad, who spoke German with his parents back home, did say he served as an interpreter during the war, and it may have been here where he was involved in this activity.

Company I established a Company Command Post (CCP) in the town of Weidenthal, about 20-miles southwest of Worms. In a letter, Captain Pena informed me that a picture was taken of several men at the CCP. He also said that Captain Bruce W. Paul, commander of Company I, was retired at the rank of colonel and was living in Laguna Hills, California. I contacted Colonel Paul and he sent me a photo of the staff assigned to the CCP. He said the picture was taken in front of the CCP, a home owned by a local doctor. Captain Paul was born in 1922 and died in 2000. He is buried at Fairhaven Memorial Park, Santa Ana, Orange County, California.

The war in Europe ended on 7 May 1945 (V-E Day) with the surrender of Germany. To determine which of the GIs were going home, a point system, called the Adjusted Service Rating (ASR), was used. Points were given for length of service, time overseas, combat decorations and the number of dependent children. An ASR of 85 or greater meant the soldier would go home.

My dad's ASR was 86. He was going home! He arrived in the United States on 6 August and was given a 30-day leave. While on leave, atomic bombs were dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, which lead to Japan's surrender on 14 August 1945. After his leave, my dad was ordered to the separation center at Fort Indiantown Gap Military Reservation. He was discharged there on 12 September 1945. My father, Wilmer H. Gretzinger, had survived WWII. He died 18 years later on 30 July 1963.

—Additional photos from this story can be seen on our website. Go to: www.vbob.org, then search: Gretzinger

MY SHORT EPISODE IN THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

by Damon F. Young, 106th InfD 423rd Reg, Co D



I was in Battery D, 53rd Coast Artillery in Ft Lauderdale, Florida, when it disbanded in March 1944, and then moved to Camp Pendleton, Virginia to become Field Artillery. There I volunteered for the 106th Infantry Division in Camp Atterbury, Indiana, and I went with the division overseas.

On about the 11th or 12th of December, our division relieved the 2d Infantry Division. It was moving north for the next campaign into the Ruhr Valley. We were deployed in the St. Vith area of Belgium. After the German offense started on the 16th of December, our 1st Battalion, 423rd Infantry Regiment moved out, westward, to what I understood was a mission to block a German unit maneuvering north towards St. Vith. During the night of the 17th of December, our Battalion was hit hard by the German artillery. Myself and 11 others were wounded, and a medic got us together and did what he could to take care of our wounds.

We stayed in that area during that night, and the next morning the medic took out a white flag and the Germans, who knew we were there, came and we became POWs. (US Control to Enemy Control.) To my understanding, the German unit was the 18th Volksgrenadier Division of the 5th Panzer Army. The place of capture was in or near Buchet, or Radsheid—not really sure.

From there we were transported mostly by rail boxcars to Stalag XIB (11B) near Bremen, and from there, across country to Stalag IIA (2A) at Neubrandenburg. 40 of us were picked out and transferred to the small village of Zilslow, where in a forest we cut trees and stacked them into cords. ("Zillow Wood Cutters.") On the first day of May, we stopped working, and still under guard, started marching by foot north and west toward the American lines, along with thousands of Germans trying to escape the Russians, who were killing the Germans and raping the women.

After midnight, and after about 65 miles by foot, we came to an American roadblock manned by the 82nd Airborne Division in the city of Ludwigslust. (Enemy Control to US Control.) We had to prove we were American soldiers. From there we were taken by C-47s to "Camp Lucky Strike" in Le Havre, France for processing and then on to the USA by ship.

So, combat time was from the 11th of December to the 18th of December 1944, a very short time. I ended up with frostbitten toes, which give me some discomfort to this day, at age 91.

I accomplished what I wanted to be—a professional soldier, serving from 1942 to 1972: Coast Artillery, Infantry, Signal Corps, and the Corps of Engineers. I served with HHC, I & R Platoon, 1st Bn, 26th Inf Reg, 1st InfD in the German Occupation, the Cold War, and the Nazi war crimes trials, Nuremberg. A veteran of World War II; Korea 1952-53, 809th EAB; Vietnam 1966-1967, 79th Engr Gp, and 71-72, 92nd Engr Bn.

My motto: No excuses, no alibis—they don't accomplish the mission.

Welcome, New Members!

These new members joined VBOB as of September 15, 2015:

Aikman, Albert C	Associate
Binder, Meta	Associate
Campos, Robert	Associate
Cartwright, Tom	Associate
Clooney, Andrew	Associate
DeChristopher, Patrick	Associate
Gervais, Norman	87 INFD
Giarrusso, Joe	Associate
Gieske, William	Associate
Gillooly, David K	10 ARMDD
Guilmart, Linda Sings	Associate
Jacobson, Laura M	Associate
Koehn, Mrs. Donald L	Associate
Kuhn, John W	Associate
Martinez, Lou	264 FABN

Mears, Jim	Associate
Russell, Patrick	Associate
Schoenmann, William	9 ARMDD
Shaw, Lisa	Associate
White, Matt	Associate
Young, Dean	Associate
Ornberg, Eric	Associate
Pate Jr, William W	Associate
Rose, Dianne	Associate
Stump, Wanda	Associate
Tambone, Frank	2 ARMDD
Turner, Alma	Associate
Van Luyn, William J	1303 GS ENGRS
Wenzel, Astrid	Associate
Young, Allen	Associate

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 December Commemoration Event in Washington, DC (See pages 16-17 for full details.)

2016 BULGE REENACTMENT 71st Anniversary Commemoration Battle to Honor Veterans of World War II & The Battle of The Bulge FORT INDIANTOWN GAP PA, 27 JANUARY – 31 JANUARY 2016

The World War II Historical Association [www.wwiia.org] invites all to the Veterans to the Battle of the Bulge Reenactment this coming January. We will be honoring all WWII Veterans during the week.

Veterans may arrive after 1500 hours on **Wednesday, 27 Jan 2016**. As usual, the Veterans will have a hospitality suite set up in their barracks, as well as memorabilia & WWII videos.

Veterans should bring a pillow, sheets and a blanket (or a sleeping bag) for their bunk, as well as wash cloth and towel and shower clogs. Enjoy a week of camaraderie, relaxation, WWII videos, stories and hospitality and a chance to relive your basic training days in newly updated original WWII Barracks. Enjoy the transformation of the barracks area to WWII period by the reenactors and enjoy the many restored WWII vehicles. Observe reenactors' formations in period uniforms and equipment. Meet reenactors who are interested in learning from WWII veterans about the period, as well as expressing the respect that they hold for you. The reenactors cover a broad spectrum of our society and even includes British, French, Canadian and German citizens. The reenactor community includes business leaders, professionals (such as doctors and engineers), current, former and retired military.

Thurs, the 28th of Jan, we will be transported by bus to Williams Valley Jr. High School at 0800 hours for a Vet Program. Breakfast will be provided on the bus. The Flea Market will open at 0800

hours and will remain open to 2200 hours.

Fri, the 29th of Jan, the WWII Historical Assn will salute the Veterans with a Pass in Review at 1500 hours. At 1630 hours, there will be a Wreath Laying at the VBOB Monument by the Community Club, followed by a free reception there, also for WWII Veterans, at 1700 hours.

Sat, 30 Jan at 1030 hours, buses will load for a Veteran Tour of the Battlefield, departing at 1100 and returning by 1200 hours. At 1700, buses will begin shuttling from the barracks area to the Community Club, for the Dinner which starts at 1800 hours. At 2000 hours, period entertainment & talent shows will begin and will be followed by dancing to the 40's big band music. Buses will return from the Community Club until 0100 hours 31 Jan.

The cost of the event is **Free to Veterans**, which includes 4 nights bunk in the barracks, the Friday Reception and the Dinner and a Period Entertainment USO-type show on Saturday night.

WWII Veterans will be free. However, Vets must register by the deadline, which is extended to 20 Dec 2015 for Veterans.

Contact John D. Bowen for registration forms at 301-384-6533, or e-mail johndbowen@earthlink.net, or go to: www.wwiia.org/index.php/events/battle-bulge-fig/ for on-line registration or optional mail-in registration forms.

FROM THE BULGE TO THE ELBE

by V. L. Auld, 84th Infantry Division



After breaching the Siegfried Line, the next major obstacle for the 84th was the crossing of the Roer River, which proved to be quite an obstacle. We were closing in on the Roer on 16 December 1944 when the Germans launched their biggest offensive in the battle of Western Europe known as the Battle of the Bulge. We continued to accomplish our objective in our assigned sector, and our planes would fly over the front lines from daylight till dark

looking for targets and communicating with our Infantry.

Our planes were popular targets for the Germans because they knew we could observe their movement. We could adjust on them faster than our observers on the ground; our position in the air added a third dimension to the adjustment. They shot at us with just about everything they had from rifle fire to 88mm cannons and mortar fire.

Around 18 or 19 December 1944, the 84th Division was ordered to take up positions around Marche, Belgium, and establish a line of defense between Marche and Hotton. I took the Air Section's only 6-by-6 truck and three or four of our crew, and we joined the advance party to go south toward the Ardennes in search of our front line. We arrived just outside the town of Marche at the same time some German tanks drove up to the outskirts of Marche from another direction. They did drop a few rounds on the town, but, fortunately for us, they were not daring enough to enter the town. By the next morning, elements of our Division started rolling in. The troop shortage was so bad that even our Division Commander General Bolling was directing traffic.

On 21 December 1944, I took my crew and truck, and we backtracked about 2000 yards looking for a landing strip. The terrain was hilly and covered with snow, but we finally found a place on the side of a hill. We had to land by putting the plane into a slip over a bunch of tall popular trees so it was a tricky place to land and take off.

The night before our planes arrived from the Geilenkirchen area, there was a tank battle down on the other side of the hill from our selected airstrip. It turned out that this battle was the farthest point the Germans were able to penetrate during the Battle of the Bulge. It was the 24th of December, and my small crew and I were very grateful when the tank battle was over. After our planes arrived and we set up our schedule, we began to fly the line between Marche and Hotten, and I recall flying the line on Christmas Day.

We moved our airstrip several times during the Battle of the Bulge, and, at one point, we had moved back from the front to a place just outside of Liege, Belgium. We occupied a chateau with about 20 bedrooms, and it turned out to be right in the line of fire of the buzz bombs. The Germans were trying to hit our big ammunition dump close to Liege. They never did, but one bomb landed about 15 feet from my plane and twisted it up like you twist a newspaper.

As the battle continued, we had to move along to be accessible

to the troops. Generally, we fought toward Bastogne, which was the area where the Germans had the 101st Airborne Division bottled up. This is the famous place where the Germans had sent a messenger to tell the Commanding General Anthony McAuliffe to give up. The General sent back his answer: "Nuts." As we were gradually pinched off by the 3rd Army on the right and other troops on our left, we were relieved to return to our positions in the north part of Germany in the vicinity of Geilenkirchen and the Roer River.

Now our attention had to be returned to crossing the Roer River, which varied in width from 60 to 260 feet and from 2 to 12 feet deep. The Germans managed to open the gates of the Hemback Dam and blow up Erft Reservoir, so the Roer was at its maximum height and width for about all of February.

The Air Section resumed the job of flying the front and engaging targets of opportunity or on any targets we might be directed to fire on by the Fire Direction Center of the Division Artillery, or of one of the Battalions. By doing this, we helped to force the enemy to keep their movements to a minimum. The 84th Artillery and our attached Battalions, which at times were as many as 36 battalions, pounded the far side of the Roer to prepare the way for our eventual crossing. The forward observers and air observers made it very costly for Germans to move around. The Infantry crossed the Roer under cover of darkness so we could not fly across, but we had helped to soften up the enemy during the daytime preparations.

Once we had our Infantry across the Roer, we moved in a generally north direction. From the Roer to the Rhine, it was move, shoot, and communicate, and we moved our air strip several times reaching the Rhine River about 5 March 1945.

Our front became the Rhine River, and we flew this path every day. We shot at everything that moved on the other side of the river for about a month while our Infantry rested. We were located directly across the Rhine from Duisburg. Dusseldorf was just south of Duisburg, and the whole east side in this area was industrial. Every time a train would try to move during the daytime, we would fire on it with our Artillery.

Our Division did not have the job of establishing the bridgehead on the other side of the Rhine. The 79th Infantry did that for us, so our Division crossed in the day time on the pontoon bridge established by the engineers.

The plan was for the 5th Armored to drive toward the Elbe River with the 84th close behind to clean up any pockets of resistance, but we still had to cross the Weser River before the Elbe.

General Eisenhower had ordered leaflets to be dropped with a message that if the Germans would display white flags, we would not shoot up their villages. As my observer and I were flying well beyond the leading elements of our troops to determine compliance with his request, I spotted the Weser River. We flew up over the river, and I had quite an eerie feeling about the territory down below. Just as I banked the plane to turn around, we caught a concentration of machine gun fire. I straightened up the plane and pushed forward on the stick to go down to a lower altitude, but nothing happened. They had shot out my elevator cables. Fortunately, I thought about the trim tab and used it to maneuver the plane.

When they hit us a second time, they knocked out our radio, and my observer got hit with several pieces of metal in the back of his head. How they managed to miss me, I'll never know. I guess that fellow upstairs decided it wasn't my time. The plane was damaged badly and could hardly fly, so I started looking for a place to land. I eased the plane down using the trim tab, helped the observer out,

and we walked over to a small civilian hospital (German). Luck was still with us as no German soldiers were around, and the hospital personnel took care of my observer. Then, we started walking down the road toward our lines. After a while, a jeep came along and took us back to our air strip.

As the Division moved up to the Weser River, the front stabilized for a few days. Hanover came into view from the air, and the enemy was defending more vigorously since the river gave them a good barrier. We pushed across the Weser and to the outlying area of Hanover. After we took Hanover and passed it by, our air strips were being moved forward toward the Elbe River. Near each air strip selected, we found German POW Camps and camps for displaced persons who were literally starving to death.

After we moved up close to the Elbe, a large building came into view and a large sign on the building disclosed that it was a Singer Sewing Machine manufacturing plant. I believe it was the town of Willenburg on the east side of the Elbe. General Eisenhower had made an agreement with the Russian Command to allow the Russians to take the territory on the other side of the river, so we sat there for several days since we beat them to the Elbe.

—Submitted by Lorene Auld, wife and Associate

TWO CHANCE ENCOUNTERS - IN 1945 AND IN 1992

Nick Zillas, 285th Combat Engineers, Company A tells of this fortunate meeting in 1945 and its surprising climax at the Nashville Reunion in 1992:

On 16 Feb 45, the Third Platoon of Company A was sent on a recon patrol toward Born, Luxembourg. The Company A patrol of one officer and 15 enlisted men was accompanied by a similar patrol of one officer and 15 enlisted men from Battery B of the 42nd Calvary.

We were going to go into a small village to find out if it was occupied by the enemy. At the last minute, the plan was changed and we did not enter the village after all. Our Company A 2d Lt. was in favor of going in, but the Calvary 1st Lt. talked him out of it. As it turned out, this was a very wise decision, because later it was discovered that the Germans did occupy the village and were lying in wait for us.

We completed our patrol and returned to our Platoon CP in the vicinity of Boursdorf, Luxembourg. Most of the patrol entered the CP Building, but I stopped to chat for a moment with a man whose name I forgot over the years. That moment of conversation may well have saved each of us from injury or even death—a rocket launcher round exploded inside the CP just before we turned to enter the building! One man, SSGT. Roy Sattetfield, was killed, and I believe about five others were injured, some seriously.

In October 1992 at the Nashville Reunion, someone came up to me and said, “Do you remember me?” I said no, I did not. Then he went on to say, “I want to thank you very much for saving my life!” Those words made no sense to me until he then explained that we were the two men who had stopped for the brief chat outside of the 3d Platoon CP, just before the deadly explosion! This man told me that if I had not stopped and spoken to him that day, he would have gone right into the building—just in time for the blast!

The man who thanked me for saving his life was Charlie Ransdell. His few words to me there in Nashville in 1992 took me back

in a flash to our very brief and fortunate encounter on 16 Feb 45. To meet Charlie after 47 years made the reunion in Nashville a very special occasion! By coincidence, it was Charlie’s birthday on the night of our banquet. This gave us a double reason to celebrate — one happy birthday and one warm reunion!”

—Submitted by Bessie Zillas, Associate, Nick’s wife
and Andrea Britton, Nick’s daughter



THE ARDENNES FOOT SOLDIER (The Winter of 1944-1945)

by John McAuliffe

The noise of battle summons all
Who hear the blare of trumpets call.
The soldier stands in ready ranks
In rows beside the mighty tanks.

The battleground in Ardennes green,
Now lain in winter’s snow-white sheen.
The stark bare foxhole is my bed.
With splintered fir boughs overhead.

Here I lie with body numbed
Protected from the German gun.
In sleepless night I lie and pray
Thinking of the dawn of day.

My prayers that come from half closed mouth
Are scared with curse words that I shout.
From snowy lair I leave each day
To meet the foe where death may lay.

From bitter woods to open field
I run the gamut without shield,
While shells of deadly eighty-eight
Before me burst to halt my gait.
The wind-blown snow blinds my eyes,
The low-hung fog dims the skies,
With bandoleers across my back,
My body strains against my pack.

My trigger hand is numb and still,
But ready fixed and trained to kill.

I cross the field of a yesterday—
Where soldiers’ frozen bodies lay—
Once in perfect battle lines they stood,
Now lay in grotesque form like logs of wood.

Lord, may I may live this day.
Spare me from a soldier’s grave.
Many are the battle dead;
o’er which some day
A soldier’s flag shall wave.

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ANIMAL KINGDOM CASUALTIES OF WAR

by Harry Wintemberg, 87th Infantry Division

In everything I have read about WWII, I do not recall reading anything about the suffering and casualties among household pets and farm animals. The noise of war would terrify animals and their natural instinct was to run and hide. Household pets would not respond to the call of their owners and were, out of necessity, left behind when the citizens would flee their homes and villages. Farm animals would just be abandoned and left to starve.

Cows would die an agonizing death when there was nobody to milk them. We probably saved many a cow by helping ourselves to fresh milk. Cats do not have the inherent self-preservation instincts that are displayed by dogs. This fact was brought to my attention one day when I saw a dog walk by with a human hand in his mouth. He was emaciated and would eat anything he could chew, a trait of most dogs. While they may have been friendly pets, they were now like wild animals and would attack at the slightest provocation. It was not uncommon that we would have to shoot them to protect ourselves and mercifully end their suffering. Cats seemed to just lay down and wait for starvation to end their life.

To the credit of cows and other forms of cattle, many a soldier's life was saved by driving these animals through mine fields and detonating planted anti-personnel mines. If an animal was wounded, we would shoot them. Often cattle would get caught in an artillery barrage and there would be too many wounded for us to handle. Sadly, they would be left to die a painful and agonizing death. Chickens rarely had an opportunity to face the random shrapnel of exploding shells. We would rob their coops of any eggs and kill the chickens in the hope that sometime we would be able to cook them. Some guys were good at gutting chickens, and with the cold weather they would freeze and keep for a period of time. With the snow and no one to feed them, they would have eventually died from the elements.

Many horses were saved by our dumping piles of hay down from the hay lofts in abandoned barns. It was not uncommon to sleep with the horses, as they exuded a great deal of heat. This was also true with cows. Plus the fact, cows were less restless than horses and would be better to sleep with, and your milk for the coffee would be right at hand! Due to the enormous suffering of people in a war zone, it is only natural that animals would be given little publicity, but I was impressed by the plight of their situation.

JWV JAMAICA POST #90

by Sheldon Tauben, 75th ID, 289th IR, 2nd Bn, HQ



I first became familiar with Post #90 as a child in the mid to late 1930's. I was about 10 years old and not really aware of what it was all about except for the simple fact that I liked their "Blue Plate Dinners". Several times during the year my father, William and my uncle Philip and perhaps one or two other post members climbed into my Uncle Abe's big sedan. We drove out to various towns on Long Island's south shore for a dinner meeting with other JWV posts.

Thus at an early age I was introduced to the taste and aroma of fried clams, oyster stew, hot dogs and French fries topped off with a delicious deep dish apple pie with vanilla ice cream. Fortunately for my nutritional needs, this dinner didn't present itself too often.

The JWV Jamaica Post #90 was founded in 1935 and one of many that were organized throughout the country in the years following the end of WWI in 1918. They rose independently in small towns and large cities usually by friends who were fortunate enough to have survived the war. They gathered to discuss their victories, losses and hopes for the future including the game of pinochle from time to time. By the end of 1935 there were 116 registered JWV Posts in the United States.

A cross section of America predominated as the post attracted local business owners, professionals, teachers and workers in all sorts of trades. Lawyers and local politicians were also attracted. As the post expanded, its members became a source of political support.

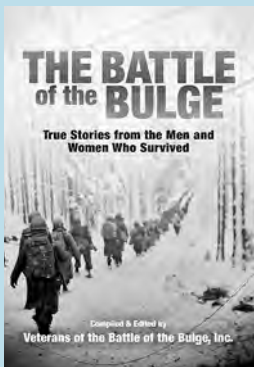
Everyone loves a parade. Jamaica residents would line the streets of Hillside Avenue when the post members marched along with other Veterans groups to celebrate the 4th of July and Armistice Day. All the officers of the post, and most of the members, wore olive drab Army dress uniforms replete with JWV insignia and military ribbons and medals proudly exhibited.

There were periodic visits to local Veterans hospitals and cemeteries. This function was an important part of their activity. Among the post's charter members were the three Tauben brothers, Abe (1890/1959), William (1893-1990) and Philip, the youngest, (1895-1988). William had served in the state side Army training for combat but WWI was over before he could be sent to France. However Abe and Philip did join the hundreds of thousands of US Army Infantry men that the government poured into France in 1917 to bolster the waning strength of the British and French divisions who had suffered monumental casualties since the war began in Aug 1914. During the war many American divisions earned recognition for spectacular bravery under fire. Among them was the 42nd division also known as the "Rainbow Division" because General Douglas MacArthur picked out the members of this division from the National Guard in every state in the union.

It was the entry of America into the war against Germany in April 1917, that turned the tide of battle in favor of the Allies leading to Germany's defeat and eventual surrender on November 11, 1918. Historians agree that the German battle plan at sea supporting unrestricted submarine warfare against all European bound shipping was the direct cause of the war declared by President Woodrow Wilson in 1917.

(Continued)

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In one of the early battles involving US Army units under their own command, it was Philip's fate to take a German machine gun bullet in his left leg just above the knee. He was evacuated to England and spent a year in British military hospitals undergoing operations and therapy before he recovered and returned home in 1918 with the leg intact and fully functional. As a result of the battle wound Philip was awarded a "Wound Chevron" in 1918. It was a yellow ribbon attached to the right breast of his Army tunic. This award was strictly limited to servicemen who were wounded in direct combat with the enemy. It wasn't until 1932 that Congress initiated the "Military Order of the Purple Heart." The year was chosen to commemorate George Washington's 200th birthday. Why it took so long is somewhat of a mystery. All holders of the WWI "Wound Chevron" could replace it in 1932 with the new Purple Heart.

At any rate, my uncle Philip was very proud of his Purple Heart and wore the medal prominently displayed with other medals and decorations.

Following WWII, Post 90 changed its name to the Sidney Hirsch Post #90 in honor of a local family whose son perished in the European conflict. I knew Sidney from Jamaica High School. In 1949 they merged with another Jamaica post "Arthur Gould" Post # 477, a new post devoted to returning Jewish Veterans of WWII. The new

post was dedicated as "Hirsch-Gould" Post #90 which continued operation until 1989. However, the Ladies Auxiliary was still going strong as the new millennium approached and finally closed down in 2003.

I would like to mention also the Tauben family devotion to the JWV extends to my sister Charlene and her husband Allen Ehrlich. In addition to his positions with the Jewish War Veterans and subsequently the American Legion, Allen was directly involved as an executive in the New York State Veterans Administration. His work as supervisor of veteran's claims at the state level enabled him to help many veterans secure benefits and compensation for their war service. My sister is still a devoted member of the National Ladies Auxiliary, serves as Past National President and continues extensive activities at this level on a regular basis.

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THANK YOU TO ADDITIONAL VBOB MEMBER AUTHORS

Over the years, many of our veterans have written books and stories describing their participation in the Battle of the Bulge. Due to their length, these could not be included in *The Bulge Bugle*. (However, some of these stories were published on our website.) We think it is appropriate to recognize and thank the following veterans for writing their Battle of the Bulge stories, to preserve the memories and sacrifices for posterity:

Don Addor, 10th Armored Division
Gus Blass, 3rd Armored Division
Robert M. Bowen, 101st Airborne Division
Tom Chambers, 9th Armored Division
Charles D. Curley, 2nd Infantry Division
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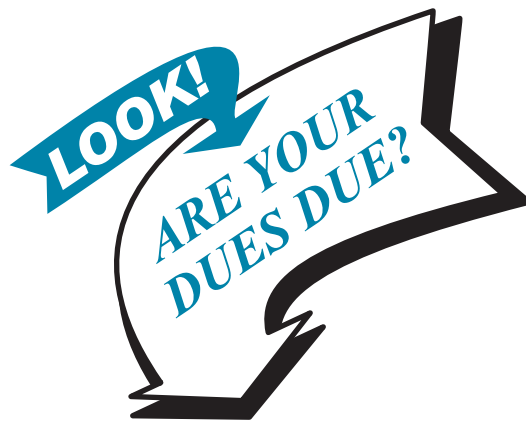
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