



John D. Bowen Editor

ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

Mar/Apr 2015

GET WELL SOON

Douglas Dillard
Earle O. Edmunds
Neil Thompson

Please keep them in your prayers.

DECEASED MEMBERS

This Memorial Day please remember also those who gave their all to keep us free and all our Bulge Veterans who have answered the call for their last assignment in Post Everlasting.

JONES, Thomas F.
818 Combat MP Co
5 Apr 1925—Sep 2015

May they all rest in Peace!

APRIL MEETING

Sunday

10 April 2016

BASTA PASTA

Timonium MD

11:00-2:00

Business Meeting
at 1:00 PM

Future Meetings

12 Jun 2016

14 Aug 2016

16 Oct 2016

11 Dec 2016

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PPres	+Woody Purcell
PPres	+Darrell Kuhn
PPres	+CA Blaquie Culp
PPres	+Clancy Lyle
PPres	Neil B Thompson

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

APRIL 2016	APRIL 2016	APRIL 2016
0401 ALTER, W Edwin 3 ArmdD 36 Inf 1 Bn Med	0408 WRIGHT, John E 482 Engr Maint Co	0415 JOHNSON, Irwin W. 87th InfD 345 Inf Co K
0402 KORAL, John 796 AAA AW Bn A Btry	0411 DARAGO, Jr., Albert A 143 AAA Gun Bn	0419 ZEITCHIK, Herman 4 InfD 42 FA Bn Hq Btry
MAY 2016	MAY 2016	MAY 2016
0509 BLADEN, John A 106 InfD 423 Inf C	0528 JONES, Robert O 75 InfD 290 Inf C	0531 BAUERLIEN, Vickie D Dau 6 ArmdD 50 AIB
0523 ELLIOTT, Jr, Richard 90 InfD 357 Inf C	0529 SHAFFNER, Robert W Son 106th InfD 589 FA	*65 yrs * 70 yrs *** 80 Yrs, **** 85 Yrs ● 90 yrs

Spring Luncheon, Sunday April 10th 2016
BASTA PASTA
60 West Timonium Road, Timonium MD 21093
11:00 AM

Bring your family to our MD/DC April Luncheon/Meeting. Your children and grandchildren are welcomed also. We will have an outstanding speaker, Frank Armiger, Historian, on what actually happened at the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

We will have a choice of one of four entrée items which includes salad dessert, beverage and coffee.

Chicken Umbertina, w/asparagus spears, artichokes, cherry tomatoes sautéed in EVOO garlic wine sauce & side of pasta

Orange Roughy Francaise, egg dipped, pan seared, finished w/lemon sauce and side of pasta

Shrimp Scampi, sautéed shrimp in their scampi sauce and tossed with linguine

Veal Parmigiana, breaded, topped with marinara, mozzarella and side of pasta

Dessert — Choice of Strawberry Cheesecake, Tiramisu or Sorbet

Alcoholic Drinks are available at addition cost to the individual.

Reservations: Please make your Luncheon reservations by **Wednesday, 06 April 2016** by calling **John Schaffner** at **410-584-2754** or by e-mail to **pumexim2@verizon.net**. John Schaffner has an answering system so if he is not at home leave a message with your name and phone number. A menu will be distributed by the server to make your choice of the four entrees above at the luncheon. **The luncheon will be \$30 payable on the day of the event.** Luncheon guests should plan to arrive by 11:00 AM. For those wishing to attend the meeting only, please plan to be there before 12:30 PM.

DIRECTIONS: **BASTA Pasta is at 60 West Timonium Road, Timonium MD 21093.** It is just off Interstate 83 N Exit #16A, at **Timonium Rd East** and **quickly** move into the leftmost lane. Cross Deerco Road and the restaurant will be on your immediate LEFT, adjacent to the **SUNOCO** station. Access to parking is in front, side and rear. See you there! Bring the family!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

A special treat awaits us at our meeting April 10, 2016. Our own A special treat awaits us at our meeting April 10, 2016. Our own Frank Armiger, Military Historian extraordinaire, (among other attributes), made a trip out west to the site of *Custer's Last Stand* with the purpose in mind to discover what actually happened there. In recent years the National Park Service and other interested organizations have gone to great pains to survey the area around the Little Bighorn battle site in Montana, using satellite photos and metal detectors to determine what actually happened during the fighting. The extensive investigations have turned up hard evidence never before available that tell us much more about that fateful event in our nation's history. We all know the outcome of the battle from our history lessons and, of course, Hollywood has given its usual spin to the story. (What would we do without Errol Flynn and all of those Swash Bucklers of his time?) Be sure to come and hear Frank tell you what actually happened at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. It is an amazing story and one that I am sure you have never heard.

Those of us with an interest in the Second World War are always seeing statistics in the various materials that come before us. After reading so many, the numbers simply don't have the impact that they should. It is difficult to think of those numbers as real, live, people, who have been sacrificed for a cause. Here is one paragraph from the book, "Voices from the Third Reich" by Steinhoff, Pechel, and Showalter:

"Twenty million tons of merchant shipping left American yards in 1943, double the figure expected by the Germans. Radio intelligence laid bare Donitz's plans and orders. Long range airplanes and escort carriers closed the Atlantic gap. Hunter-killer groups began stalking the U-boats on their own ground. Losses multiplied while the rate of sinkings fell. In March more than 600,000 tons of Allied shipping went to the bottom. In April that figure dropped by almost half. Fifteen U-boats were sunk in April, a 10% loss in ratio. In May, 41 failed to return from patrol. This represented a quarter of the operational strength.

A more flexible commander might have reappraised his situation. Donitz instead called for more U-Boats, for improved design, for greater dedication. Hitler was sufficiently impressed to keep the U-Boats at sea, if only for their nuisance value. By 1945, 785 German U-Boats had been sunk. Three-fourths of the 40,000 men who wore the submariner's badge did not return — the highest loss ration of any specialized service in World War II. Donitz, rewarded for his fanaticism by being named Hitler's successor, was tried and sentenced as a war criminal.

❖ WWII MUSINGS ❖

Volume 24 Issue 2

John D. Bowen, Editor

Mar/Apr 2016



In 2016 we will mark the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor, an event which propelled the United States into World War II and changed the course of our nation forever. And, throughout the four years that follow, significant battles and historic moments from World War II will also reach that 75-year milestone.

The Friends of the National World War II Memorial is now gearing up to kick-off an ambitious four-year *World War II 75th Anniversary Commemoration* from December 7, 2016 to September 2, 2020. The commemoration will be highlighted by reunions, symposiums, museum exhibits, and battle anniversary ceremonies.

As time marches on, and as we lose our treasured heroes of the WWII generation, it is ever more critical that we do everything we can now to remember, recognize, and honor the service and sacrifices of these men and women who advanced the cause of freedom for the world.

And, it is imperative that significant anniversaries of historic importance, like the *World War II 75th Anniversary Com-*

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Editor's Corner

MEMORIAL DAY 2016

This year, Memorial Day will be on the traditional date, Monday, May 30th instituted by General Logan to honor all of our fallen comrades. General Logan is entombed at the Military Cemetery of the Armed Forces Retirement Home along North Capitol Street in Washington DC.

Let us remember on this Memorial Day all of our Bulge Veterans who gave all their tomorrows so that we could live our today's in peace.

We especially remember our buddies and all those who survived the Bulge but who have since been called by God to His Post Everlasting.

We remember all Veterans, who have served to make this country great from those who served at Lexington & Concord to those today, to whom the torch has been passed, to protect and preserve this great Nation. Keep them from harm's way.

Let us pause on this day to decorate the graves of our family and loved ones and to remember those who have gone before us.

May all who have died have Eternal Rest, O'Lord We Pray.

MASSING OF COLORS

Our Chapter has been invited to a Memorial Day Remembrance Ceremony and will be participating in the Massing of the Colors at the Fort Meade Pavilion, at 2:30 PM, on Sunday, **May 22nd 2016.**

This Massing of Colors is a patriotic ceremony, sponsored by the Military Order of the World Wars, and is held to rededicate faith in the United States and support of our Armed Forces.

It includes the colors and color guards of Active, Reserve and National Guard military units; veteran, civic and patriotic organizations; ROTC units; auxiliary organizations; state militias; first responder organizations and Boy and Girl Scout organizations.

These participants assemble, *en masse*, under their own banners in a patriotic ceremony to provide a living tribute to our heritage and a memorial to all those who helped preserve it. It is a memorable event that symbolizes the ideals of patriotism and love of country, which our organization also honors.

Family and friends are welcome and refreshments are served immediately after the Massing. Please enter Fort Meade from the Llewellyn Avenue Gate from Route 175(Annapolis Road) . The Fort Meade Pavilion (Big White tent is just down from the Llewellyn Gate. You do not need a sticker to enter nor

will you have to be inspected. MPs will direct you to parking by the Pavilion.

MEMBER'S BOOKS

Our Chapter Member, Louis G. Sarris, (125th AAA AW attached to the 101st AbnD) has written a 635 page book, published in April 2015, available from Amazon, titled "Sunrise, Sunset, An Immigrant's American Odyssey." Five Chapters reflect his military life, including his service at the Battle of the Bulge.

Born in Greece and arriving in the United States at age five, he is proudly an American citizen having served not only in the military and the Battle of the Bulge but also thirty some years in the US State Department as an expert covering, as an intelligent agent, Greece, Vietnam and all of Southeast Asia. Lou was known as Mr. Vietnam as a result his knowledge of the country.

He retired as Director of Southeast Asia Division in the Department of State. The chapter on Vietnam reflects on the mismanagement of US officials to acknowledge the real situation in Vietnam and how his information was disavowed by the military, where they implored measures that stretched our involvement past necessity.

There is also a three chapter video memoir that can be accessed by going to Google and typing in Louis G. Sarris.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: His book in Paperback is \$22.10 on Amazon. The video memoirs on You Tube is fascinating. When you Google Louis G Sarris, select Lou Sarris Documentary and it will take you to the first of three acts in video by DocULife.US. You might also wish to click on "The Mouse That Roared" by the National Security Archive for a detailed analysis of what really was going on between the Pentagon & the State Department in the analysis of the situation in Vietnam. A real eye opener!)

Our Chapter Member Donald C. Rosenthal, (2nd InfD, 23rd Infantry, Company G) has written "A Life Lived Well: A Memoir," in paperback, 64 pages, published in Nov 2015, available from Amazon, for \$9.99 plus MD tax & shipping unless you are a Prime member where shipping is free.

After the prosperity of the "Roaring Twenties" came crashing down, young Donald C. Rosenthal experienced his coming of age in the austerity of the Great Depression and in the tumult of the Second World War. A decorated veteran injured during the Battle of the Bulge, Rosenthal met the love his life in England in the war's waning days and brought her home to the United States to enjoy the good life together. In "A Life Lived Well", Rosenthal reflects on the highs and lows over the ninety years he has experienced and witnessed. JDB

**WWII Musings is published for the enjoyment of WWII Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. It is based on the research of John D. Bowen, 613 Chichester Ln, Silver Spring MD 20904 -3331 in the Unit Records maintained at the National Archives and Records Administration. Proper credit should be given both to the researcher and to the National Archives. Your comments are welcome. 301-384-6533
E-mail johndbowen@earthlink.net**

E-MAIL ADDRESSES

The Chapter would like to move into the modern world of the Internet to communicate with you between newsletters. Please send us your e-mail. They will not be given to others. Please send yours to our Secretary/Editor at
johndbowen@earthlink.net

THE LITTLE CAN THAT COULD

By Richard M Daniel

During World War II the United States exported more tons of petroleum products than of all other war materiel combined. The mainstay of the enormous oil and gasoline transportation network that fed the war was the oceangoing tanker, supplemented on land by pipelines, railroad tank cars, and trucks. But for combat vehicles on the move, another link was crucial--smaller containers that could be carried and poured by hand and moved around a battle zone by trucks.

Hitler knew this. He perceived early on that the weakest link in his plans for blitzkrieg using his panzer divisions was fuel supply. He ordered his staff to design a fuel container that would minimize gasoline losses under combat conditions. As a result the German army had thousands of jerry cans, as they came to be called, stored and ready when hostilities began in 1939.

The jerry can had been developed under the strictest secrecy, and its unique features were many. It was flat-sided and rectangular in shape, consisting of two halves welded together as in a typical automobile gasoline tank. It had three handles, enabling one man to carry two cans and pass one to another man in bucket-brigade fashion. Its capacity was approximately five U.S. gallons; its weight filled, forty-five pounds. Thanks to an air chamber at the top, it would float on water if dropped overboard or from a plane. Its short spout was secured with a snap closure that could be propped open for pouring, making unnecessary any funnel or opener. A gasket made the mouth leak proof. An air-breathing tube from the spout to the air space kept the pouring smooth. And most important, the can's inside was lined with an impervious plastic material developed for the insides of steel beer barrels. This enabled the jerry can to be used alternately for gasoline and water.



The original German "Blitz" can, built w/ handles for two to carry.
Photo Library of Congress

Early in the summer of 1939, this secret weapon began a roundabout odyssey into American hands. An American engineer named Paul Pleiss, finishing up a manufacturing job in Berlin, persuaded a German colleague to join him on a vacation trip overland to India. The two bought an automobile chassis and built a body for it. As they prepared to leave on their journey, they realized that they had no provision for emergency water. The German engineer knew of and had access to thousands of jerry cans stored at Tempelhof Airport. He simply took three and mounted them on the underside of the car.

The two drove across eleven national borders without incident and were halfway across India when Field Marshal Goering sent a plane to take the German engineer back home. Before departing, the engineer compounded his treason by giving Pleiss complete specifications for the jerry can's manufacture. Pleiss continued on alone to Calcutta. Then he put the car in storage and returned to Philadelphia.

Back in the United States, Pleiss told military officials about the container, but without a sample can he could stir no interest, even though the war was now well under way. The risk

involved in having the cans removed from the car and shipped from Calcutta seemed too great, so he eventually had the complete vehicle sent to him, via Turkey and the Cape of Good Hope. It arrived in New York in the summer of 1940 with the three jerry cans intact.

Pleiss immediately sent one of the cans to Washington. The War Department looked at it but unwisely decided that an updated version of their World War I container would be good enough. That was a cylindrical ten-gallon can with two screw closures. It required a wrench and a funnel for pouring.

That one jerry can in the Army's possession was later sent to Camp Holabird, in Maryland. There it was poorly redesigned; the only features retained were the size, shape, and handles. The welded circumferential joint was replaced with rolled seams around the bottom and one side. Both a wrench and a funnel were required for its use. And it now had no lining. As any petroleum engineer knows, it is unsafe to store gasoline in a container with rolled seams. This ersatz can did not win wide acceptance.

The British first encountered the jerry can during the German invasion of Norway, in 1940, and gave it its English name (the Germans were, of course, the "Jerries"). Later that year Pleiss was in London and was asked by British officers if he knew anything about the can's design and manufacture. He ordered the second of his three jerry cans flown to London. Steps were taken to manufacture exact duplicates of it.

Two years later the United States was still oblivious of the can. Then, in September 1942, two quality-control officers posted to American refineries in the Modest ran smack into the problems being created by ignoring the jerry can. I was one of those two. Passing through Cairo two weeks before the start of the Battle of El Alamein, we learned that the British wanted no part of a planned U.S. Navy can; as far as they were concerned, the only container worth having was the Jerry can, even though their only supply was those captured in battle. The British were bitter; two years after the invasion of Norway there was still no evidence that their government had done anything about the jerry can.

My colleague and I learned quickly about the jerry can's advantages and the Allied can's costly disadvantages, and we sent a cable to naval officials in Washington stating that 40 percent of all the gasoline sent to Egypt was being lost through spillage and evaporation. We added that a detailed report would follow. The 40 percent figure was actually a guess intended to provoke alarm, but it worked. A cable came back immediately requesting confirmation.

We then arranged a visit to several fuel-handling depots at the rear of Montgomery's army and found there that conditions were indeed appalling. Fuel arrived by rail from the sea in fifty-five-gallon steel drums with rolled seams and friction-sealed metallic mouths. The drums were handled violently by local laborers. Many leaked. The next link in the chain was the infamous five-gallon "petrol tin." This was a square can of tin plate that had been used for decades to supply lamp kerosene. It was hardly useful for gasoline. In the hot desert sun, it tended to swell up, burst at the seams, and leak. Since a funnel

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HUNTING HITLER Part III:

The Bunker (Morning, 30 April 1945)

This post was written by Dr. Greg Bradsher, Archivist at the National Archives in College Park MD in a multi-part series

In the early hours of April 30, 1945, Hitler continued saying his goodbyes in his bunker. The next group would consist of many people closest to him. This gathering consisted of Joseph and Frau Goebbels; Martin Bormann; Generals Wilhelm Burgdorf, Hans Krebs, Wilhelm Mohnke, and Johann Rattenhuber; Vice Admiral Hans-Erich Voss; Dr. Ludwig Stumpfegger (his physician); State Secretary Werner Naumann; Ambassador Walther Hewel; Junge and Christian (the secretaries), Miss Manziarly (his vegetarian cook); Hans Bauer and Georg Betz (his personal pilots); and several high-ranking SS officers; at least twenty people in all.

Hitler shook hands with each, making a personal comment to each one, spoken barely above a whisper, so softly that people could hardly understand what he said. Then addressing the group, he said he did not want to fall into Russian hands and therefore he had decided to commit suicide. Everyone present was freed from his or her oath to him. He hoped they would be able to reach the British or American lines. [1] SS-Unterscharführer Maximilian Koelz of the bodyguard later testified that from the foot of the stairs he saw Hitler saying goodbye to his entourage. Immediately following this scene, according to Koelz, one of the participants told him that Hitler would now shortly kill himself. "This information did not surprise me in the least: in recent days we older officers had reached the conclusion that the relief [of Berlin] could no longer be counted upon..." [2]

Around 1:30am Hitler asked that all the medical staff of the hospital at the Reichs Chancellery visit him. By 2am they were gathered in the lobby of the bunker outside of Hitler's quarters. In this group were Chief physician of the hospital- Obersturmfuehrer Dr. Haase; Senior physician of the hospital- Standartenfuehrer Dr. Schenck; the second physician of the hospital Sturmbannfuehrer Dr. Kunz; surgical nurses Erna Flegel, Liselotte Chervinska, and, Elisabeth Lyndhurst; another surgical nurse Rut (full name not known); Frau Heusermann (Dr. Blaschke's dental assistant); and perhaps another 15 to 20 nurses and some other women, including Baroness von Varo (apparently the mistress of an officer of Hitler's escort commando). Schenck recalled Hitler's clothes were "sloppy, food-stained." He "could see Hitler's hunched spine, the curved shoulders that seemed to twitch and tremble." "He struck me as an agonized Atlas with a mountain on his back."

Hitler seemed hardly able to shuffle the two paces forward to greet them. "His eyes although he was looking directly at me, did not seem to be focusing... The whites were bloodshot... Drooping black sacks under his eyes betrayed loss of sleep..." Hitler then greeted them individually, inquiring about the names of the persons whom he did not know. According to von Varo, Hitler's eyes "were glaring into emptiness," "his left hand trembled," and that Hitler did not seem to look at the person when he shook hands. After greeting each person individually, Hitler then thanked all of whom that had earlier in the night had been decorated for their services. This greeting lasted four or five minutes. Then Hitler dismissed them, and asked Haase to join him in his room. [3]

Dr. Schenck believed that it was with Haase that Hitler

discussed the manner and method of his own suicide. "I know this because Professor Haase told me so, the day after the suicide." They also, according to Schenck, were discussing the problem of how to destroy the bodies. [4] When Hitler and Haase withdrew from the room, everyone, according to von Varo, asked each other what the meaning of it could be, and they concluded that it must be the preliminary to suicide. She added that she and her colleagues stayed up all night, contemplating what they would do and talking about how Hitler would commit suicide. "We waited for it. It had to come." [5] After the meeting with Hitler, Schenck was invited to join a party that was taking place. Guensche, whom he knew, introduced him to the others. Among them were Bormann, the Goebbels, Krebs, Burgdorf, Bauer, Rattenhuber, Axmann, Hewel, Voss, Linge, and Kempka. He recalled Krebs remarking that it was his guess that the Red Army would want to wait another 24 hours, until May Day, so that Russian Marshal Zhukov could present the big prize (Berlin) to Stalin. "This touch of gallows humor drew rather hollow laughs." [6]

At 3am Field Marshal Keitel sent a message by radio telling of the failure of Wenck's Twelfth Army to break through for the relief of Berlin and the Ninth Army being fully encircled; thus, nothing could be expected from the relief armies. This message clearly indicated that all hope was gone. Whether this message was seen in the bunker is not clear, but undoubtedly the occupants, including Hitler, realized at this point there would be no armies coming to their rescue. [7] Junge recalled that morning they knew "there was no hope left for the Army Wenk (sic)." [8] At 3:15am, Bormann sent a message to Doenitz:

"Doenitz!-Our impression grows daily stronger that the divisions in the Berlin theatre have been standing idle for several days. All the report we receive are controlled, suppressed, or distorted by Teilhaus [codename for Keitel]...The Fuehrer orders you to proceed at once, and mercilessly, against all traitors.-Bormann." [9]

A postscript contained the words: "The Fuehrer is alive, and is conducting the defense of Berlin." Undoubtedly, according to H. Trevor Roper, Bormann saw his power coming to an end with the death of Hitler and was trying to drag things out until he could be sure a courier had reached Doenitz and thus have his power renewed as called for in Hitler's political testament. [10]

While Hitler was saying his goodbyes in the early morning of April 30th, Mohnke managed to repel all Russian attacks, although suffering heavy losses. [11]

Between 3:00am and 3:30am Hitler once again queried Haase on the foolproof method of suicide he had recommended, telling him that it was his wish that the double deaths be simultaneous - "We both want to go together when we go." After speaking with Hitler, Haase visited Eva Braun in her chambers and told her "Simply bite quickly into your capsule the moment you hear a shot." [12]

Then, around 3:30am Hitler and Eva had tea in Hitler's study with Frau Christian, Frau Junge, and Fraeulein Manziarly. Around 4:30am the secretaries and Manziarly left Hitler's study with tears in their eyes. Junge reported to Guensche that Hitler wanted to shoot himself that day, because the Russians could

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(Continued from page 5, *The Little Can That Could*)

was needed for pouring, spillage was also a problem.

Allied soldiers in Africa knew that the only gasoline container worth having was German. Similar tins were carried on Liberator bombers in flight. They leaked out perhaps a third of the fuel they carried. Because of this, General Wavell's defeat

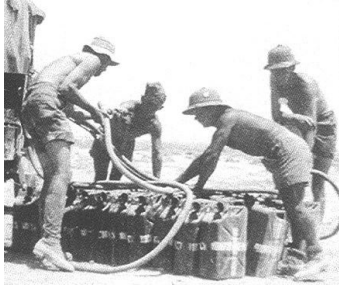


Photo from National Archives



of the Italians in North Africa in 1940 had come to naught. His planes and combat vehicles had literally run out of gas. Likewise

in 1941, General Auchinleck's victory over Rommel had withered away. In 1942, General Montgomery saw to it that he had enough supplies, including gasoline, to whip Rommel in spite of terrific wastage. And he was helped by captured jerry cans.

The British historian Desmond Young later confirmed the great importance of oil cans in the early African part of the



Photo from National Archives

war. "No one who did not serve in the desert," he wrote, "can realize to what extent the difference between complete and partial success rested on the simplest item of our equipment--and the worst. Whoever sent our troops into desert warfare with the [five-gallon]

petrol tin has much to answer for. General Auchinleck estimates that this 'flimsy and ill construct-

ed container' led to the loss of thirty per cent of petrol between base and consumer. ... The overall loss was almost incalculable. To calculate the tanks destroyed, the number of men who were killed or went into captivity because of shortage of petrol at some crucial moment, the ships and merchant seamen lost in carrying it, would be quite impossible."

After my colleague and I made our report, a new five-gallon container under consideration in Washington was canceled. Meanwhile the British were finally gearing up for mass production. Two



Photo from National Archives

million British jerry cans were sent to North Africa in early 1943, and by early 1944 they were being manufactured in the Middle East. Since the British had such a head start, the Allies agreed to let them produce all the cans needed for the invasion of Europe. Millions were ready by D-Day. By V - E Day, some twenty-one million Allied jerry cans had been scattered all over Europe. President Roosevelt observed in November 1944, "Without these cans it would have been impossible for our armies to cut their way across France at a lightning pace which exceeded the German Blitz of 1940."

In Washington little about the jerry can appears in the official record. A military report says simply, "A sample of the jerry can was brought to the office of the Quartermaster General in the summer of 1940."

Richard M. Daniel is a retired Commander in the U.S. Naval Reserve and a chemical engineer.

IF IT AIN'T BROKE, DON'T FIX IT!

MEMORIES

When we were young and strong
Things were different then,
We thought we'd live forever
That the good times would never end.

But now we see things differently,
We look back, not just ahead
Recalling as if it was yesterday
Things we've done and said.

We find things neatly stored away
In the recesses of our minds,
And each time we search we're overwhelmed
By the treasures that we find.

There are all our yesterdays
Laid neatly in a row,
Filled to the brim with all those things
We put there long ago.

There are all our yesterdays
Laid neatly in a row,
Filled to the brim with all those things
We put there long ago.

This treasure house of memories
Is held exclusively for we,
No one else can use them
We have the only key.

Matching half-remembered stories
With half-remembered faces,
We begin to place them once again
In those half-forgotten places.

We relive those precious moments
Laid aside so long before
But now brought back, through the miracle of memory,
To enrich our lives once more!

By Gordon A Knapp Ex-Office Yeoman , USN BB55

2016 Nation's St Patrick's Parade

VBOB HONORED AND THRILLS THE CROWDS

Our VBOB MD/DC Chapter marchers were a hit again in the 45th annual St Patrick's Parade in our Nation's Capital, on 13th March. The theme this year was "Irish Heart in the Nation's Capital." The temperature rose into the mid-60s and the rain held off until after the parade ended. Our flag bearers Dick Whalen who again carried the American Flag, at age 93, and Griffen Diday, at age 15, who carried the Irish Flag. This year our VBOB chapter banner carriers again were Katie Kilmer and .Tory Medina. Three of Dick Whalen's daughters dressed as Rosies the Riveters worked the curbs along with two re-enactors in WWII uniforms revving up the crowds. Mike Levin rode in one of the two WWII Jeep, driven by reenactors of the Washington Area Collectors of Military Vehicles/Blue Gray Mil Vehicle Trust. John Bowen drove as back-up with large VBOB emblems on both sides of the vehicle.



The two hour parade was a delight to the children and adults as floats, marching bands, drill teams, Irish step dancers and a wide variety of revelers took over Constitution Ave, NW between 7th and 17th Sts,

It was a beautiful Irish Parade and the public was particularly pleased to see our two veterans and applauded and cheered the group



Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it

USS Dwight D Eisenhower CVN 69,

USS George H. W. Bush CVN 77,

USS Enterprise CVN 65, USS Harry S Truman CVN 75

USS Abraham Lincoln CVN 72

US Naval Station, Norfolk VA

Evidently they no longer teach about Pearl Harbor at the Naval Academy!



(Continued from page 6 Hunting Hitler Part III, The Bunker Morning 30 Apr)

force their way into the bunker at any moment. She recounted that Eva had given her several valuable things—clothes and the fur she had worn at her wedding. In addition she had made her a present of a little pistol, that Hitler had once given her. Junge handed them [probably meant the pistol] over to Guensche. ^[13]

Hitler retired and laid down on top of his bed, not under the covers, just before 4:30am. At 5:00am Soviet artillery again opened up on the government district. It had by now zeroed in on the Chancellery and took it under constant fire. It sounded like heavy thunder to those in the bunker. ^[14]

At 6:00am Sergeant Rochus Misch called Mohnke and told him Hitler wished to see him alone in his quarters and immediately. Mohnke asked about Hitler's temper. Misch replied that Hitler was then in a calm and relaxed mood and no one else was with him. Misch said he did not think Hitler had been able to sleep at all the whole night and that twice within the last hour he had come out to chat with him. Just a moment ago he said he wanted to have a talk with his old friend Mohnke. After a quick cup of coffee, Mohnke, headed for the bunker, realizing that he had to give Hitler the bad news that he could no longer hang on. He expected the Russians to make a major assault on May 1. He surmised this must be what Hitler's summons was about. Upon arriving in the bunker around 6:30am Misch told Mohnke that Hitler had told him that he wanted to receive him informally in his bedroom. Hitler rose politely to greet Mohnke. He moved from the bed to the only chair in the room, then motioned to Mohnke to take a seat on the bed. Mohnke noticed that the bed had not been slept in. At least, the blankets were not rumpled. For most of the time, Hitler gazed straight ahead, past Mohnke toward the wall. Hitler's left arm was trembling now and then, but only slightly. He was grasping the arm of the chair and he used his right arm freely to gesture.

Mohnke began with a brief situation report. Hitler listened for five minutes or so in silence. The Russians had reached the Wilhelmstrasse, in the area of the Adlon Hotel, about four blocks away. Russian Infantrymen had penetrated into the subway tubes under both the Friedrichstrasse and the Voss-Strasse. Most of the vast, wooded Tiergarten was now in Russian hands. Russian assault troops had all but encircled the German positions on the Potsdamer Platz, only 300 meters from the Reich Chancellery. Hitler took it all in, intently, calmly. He asked no questions. Finally, Mohnke told Hitler that he could guarantee that his exhausted, battle-weary troops could hold for more than one more day. "I now expect a frontal, massed-tank attack tomorrow at dawn, May 1. You know what May 1 means to Russians." Hitler said, "I know. Let me say that your troops have fought splendidly, and I have no complaints." Hitler then launched into a monologue, denouncing the western democracies, reviewing his whole career, and explaining why National Socialism had failed and how the war had been forced upon him. He then proceeded to criticize his military leaders and the betrayal of Goering and Himmler. Then he thanked Mohnke for his service and wished him the best. Mohnke then returned to his command post. ^[15]

After meeting with Mohnke, which ended around 7:00am, Hitler wandered about the Bunker listlessly, his eyes cast to the floor, his hands clasped behind his back. Misch, who witnessed this for about an hour, reported that Hitler seemed like a frustrated animal in a cage. ^[16]

Towards 8:00am heavy artillery fired against the Chancellery and the fear of an impending Russian ground attack mounted. The guards in the Chancellery were increased at the entrances to the bunkers, at the air locks and in the corridors. The corridors in the bunkers were barricaded by SS men. Hand grenades and sub-machine guns were distributed to the members of the bodyguard and the security guards. ^[17]

Sometime during mid-morning, Ambassador Hewel (permanent representative of Foreign Ministry to Hitler at Fuehrer headquarters) met with Hitler for the last time. They chatted for half-an-hour about the old days. Then Hitler told Hewel that he felt confident that if he fell into Russian hands, he would be "squeezed until the pips squeak and then displayed in the Moscow zoo." He said "Hewel, they will torture and kill you and mount you in a waxworks." At this point Hewel swore to take his own life rather than fall into Red Army hands. ^[18] Also sometime in the morning Guenther Schwaegermann, adjutant to Goebbels, was told by a member of Hitler's escort commando that Hitler had said goodbye to his entire entourage. He reported that Blondi had already been killed the previous day. After hearing this, Schwaegermann recalled that he knew that the death of Hitler was imminent. ^[19]

Krebs now came up with a situation report even more alarming than that given to Hitler by Mohnke only three hours before. Krebs reported how the Red Army troops had taken both sides of the Leipziger Strasse, the city's main commercial thoroughfare, which ran parallel to the Unter den Linden and was one block closer to the Reich Chancellery. The Anhalter railroad station had also, by now, been stormed. ^[20] According to those present, Hitler listened in apathetic silence as Krebs droned on. He did not even ask any questions. ^[21]

About 10:00am Rattenhuber went to check the sentries. Going upstairs he approached the SS guard on duty, Mengershausen, who was standing at the exit from the Reich Chancellery to the garden. Mengershausen reported to him that at about 8:00am Eva Braun came up from the Bunker, said "good morning" and went out into the garden, returning approximately 15 minutes later. She explained her visit to the garden by saying "I want to see the sun for the last time." Then she said goodbye to him and, upset, went down into the bunker. At the time the grounds of the Reich Chancellery were already under Russian rifle fire. Then Rattenhuber went to Hitler's reception room. He recalled that "The situation was very tense" and the Russians were expected to reach the grounds of the Reich Chancellery at any moment. ^[22]

Towards noon Hitler's last briefing began. Weidling came over from his command post in the bunker in Bendlerstrasse and reported that Soviet troops were storming the Reichstag. There was fighting in the Red City Hall, the Friedrichstrasse station had been reached by Soviet forces and the Russians had penetrated the tunnel in Voss-strasse (close to the Reich Chancellery). Weidling said that in all probability the battle for Berlin would be over by that evening. Weidling then again mentioned the possibility of a breakout and told Hitler that perhaps he should try to get out and break through to join Wenck's army near Potsdam. Hitler, who had received the report without emotion, said it was useless; "Anyway, nobody is carrying out my orders."

When Weidling asked for instructions in case all their

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(Continued from page 9, *Hunting Hitler Part III, The Bunker Morning 30 Apr*) reserve munitions were exhausted, which would happen no later than the evening of May 1, Hitler said he would never capitulate. Wenck and all other commanders were not to surrender. After a short exchange with Krebs, Hitler replied that only then, after the reserve munitions were exhausted, could a breakout in small groups be considered because he refused to surrender Berlin. Weidling was then allowed to go. A little later the last "Fuehrer command" was delivered to Weidling:

"In case the defenders of the capital city of the Reich face a lack of munitions and supplies, I give my consent for a breakout. They must break out in small groups, and must look for units that are still fighting and join them. If they cannot find any, the small groups are to continue fighting in the forests." ^[23]

After the noon briefing Hitler met in his quarters for about twenty minutes with Bormann, Krebs, Burgdorf, and Goebbels. Afterwards, Guensche met with Bormann and two others, probably Krebs and Burgdorf. They were in a highly emotional state when they told him about the conversation. ^[24]

A radio message was received at 12:50pm from Berlin to Doenitz's headquarters: "No possibility of retreat." ^[25] Hitler, having no intention of retreating (or escaping Berlin), now turned his attention to the time of his death that afternoon, and how his and Eva's bodies would be destroyed beyond recognition.

Footnotes

- [1] [Interrogation of] Gertraud [Gertrude] Junge, Munich, February 7, 1948, pp. 42, 43, Interrogations of Hitler Associates, Musmanno Collection, Gumberg Library Digital Collections, Duquesne University; Fest, *Inside Hitler's Bunker*, p. 108; Joachimsthaler, *The Last Days of Hitler*, pp. 137, 138.
- [2] Joachimsthaler, *The Last Days of Hitler*, pp. 137-138.
- [3] Strategic Services Unit, War Department, Intelligence Dissemination No. A-65458, Subject: Interview with Erna Flegel, Red Cross Nurse in Hitler's Shelter, Date of Report: December 11, 1945, Distributed: February 25, 1946, File: 0240346, **Army Intelligence Document Files** ([NAID 305269](#)), RG 319; Interrogation of the Baroness von Varo, October 1, 1945, enclosure to Memorandum, Brigadier [no name given], Counter Intelligence Bureau (CIB), GSI (b), Headquarters, British Army of the Rhine to Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2 (CI), Headquarters, US Forces European Theater, Subject: Investigation into the Death of Hitler, November 22, 1945, Document No. CIB/B3/PF.582, File: Major Trevor-Roper Interrogations, **Reports Relating to POW Interrogations, 1943-1945** ([NAID 2790598](#)), RG 165; Interrogation of Baroness von Varo, Stein Castle, Stein, 2000-2330 Hours, March 10, 1948, pp. 5-7, Interrogations of Hitler Associates, Musmanno Collection, Gumberg Library Digital Collections, Duquesne University; Record of Interrogation of the Reich Chancellery Physician Helmut Kunz, by 4th Section of the Smersh Counter-Espionage Department of the 1st Byelorussian Front, May 7, 1945, in Vinograd, Pogonyi, and Teptzov, *Hitler's Death*, pp. 59, 61; Evidence of the Head of Hitler's Bodyguard Hans Rattenhuber, Moscow, May 20, 1945 in Vinograd, Pogonyi, and Teptzov, *Hitler's Death*, p. 194; O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, pp. 192-195; Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, p. 197; Joachimsthaler, *The Last Days of Hitler*, p. 139;
- [4] O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, p. 198.

[5] Interrogation of Baroness von Varo, Stein Castle, Stein, 2000-2330 Hours, March 10, 1948, pp. 5, 8, Interrogations of Hitler Associates, Musmanno Collection, Gumberg Library Digital Collections, Duquesne University

[6] O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, p. 195.

[7] Charles B. MacDonald, *The Last Offensive*, United States Army in World War II, European Theater of Operations (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1973), p. 459; Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, p. 199; Fest, *Inside Hitler's Bunker*, p. 108.

[8] Memorandum, Karl Sussman, CIC Special Agent, Region IV, Garmish Sub-Region, Headquarters Counter Intelligence Corps, United States Forces European Theater to Commanding Officer, Garmish Sub-Region, Subject: Interrogation of Junge, Gertrude, August 30, 1946, p. 5, File: XA085512, Junge, Gertrude, Personal Name File, Security Classified Intelligence and Investigative Dossiers, 1939-1976, Records of the Investigative Records Repository, Records of the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-2, Intelligence, Records of the Army Staff, Record Group 319.

[9] Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, p. 199. According to a British report Bormann said in his last cable to Doenitz that "Teilhaus (Keitel) controls suppresses and "colors" all messages...The Fuehrer orders that you smash the traitors quickly and regardlessly." Document Section (GAD/C), Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, Ref. No. 54, Subject: Fragments of a "White Book" by the "Doenitz Government" on the German surrender and the last communicates exchanged with the Hitler Government in Berlin, August 20, 1945, File: No. 143123, **Regular Intelligence Reports** ([NAID 6050264](#)), 1941-1945, RG 226.

[10] Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, p. 199.

[11] Handwritten Statement by the Commander of the "Adolf Hitler" Division, Chief of the Central Berlin Defense Region, Wilhelm Mohnke, Moscow, May 18, 1945 in Vinograd, Pogonyi, and Teptzov, *Hitler's Death*, p. 178.

[12] O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, pp. 254-256. It has been suggested that Haase had given Hitler, when he last seen him, a shot of morphine; or at least a very strong tranquilizer to face the end. O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, p. 210, 349.

[13] Eberle and Uhl, eds., *The Hitler Book*, p. 267.

[14] O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, p. 242; Joachimsthaler, *The Last Days of Hitler*, p. 140; Eberle and Uhl, eds., *The Hitler Book*, p. 268.

[15] O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, pp. 205-208, 210, 211; Joachimsthaler, *The Last Days of Hitler*, p. 140. According to Fest, Mohnke told Hitler they could not hold out more than a few hours because the Russians had advanced to within a few hundred yards on all sides, though for the moment their progress had been halted. Fest, *Inside Hitler's Bunker*, pp. 108-109. According to Linge he went to Hitler, who was opening the door as he arrived. He had lain on the bed fully dressed and awake as he had done the night before. While Bormann, Krebs and Burgdorf dozed on sofas near his door, and the female secretaries made themselves as comfortable as possible while awaiting the events that must soon come, Hitler asked him to accompany him, finger to his lips, indicating that he should be careful not to disturb the sleeping people. They went to the telephone exchange, where Hitler rang the commandant, who told him that the defense of

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(Continued from page 10 *Hunting Hitler Part III, The Bunker Morning 30 Apr*) Berlin had already collapsed. Linge, *With Hitler to the End*, p. 197.

[16] O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, p. 242. According to Fest, sometime after 7am Hitler decided to exit the bunker, but when he reached the top of the stairs, the shelling became heavier again, and he turned back. Fest, *Inside Hitler's Bunker*, p. 109.

[17] Joachimsthaler, *The Last Days of Hitler*, p. 140.

[18] O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, p. 351.

[19] Personal History of the Adjutant of Schwaegermann, Guenther, Adjutant of the Minister Dr. Goebbels, n.d., ca. October or November 1945, p. 10, enclosure to Despatch No. 1487, U.S. Political Adviser for Germany, Berlin to Secretary of State, Subject: Statement by Guenther Schwaegermann, December 3, 1945, File: 740.00116 EW/12-345, **Central Decimal Files (NAID 302021)**, 1945-1949, RG 59; Translation of statement made by Guenther Schwaegermann, Immenstadt, February 16, 1948, p. 7, Interrogations of Hitler Associates, Musmanno Collection, Gumberg Library Digital Collections, Duquesne University.

[20] O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, p. 244.

[21] O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, p. 245.

[22] Evidence of the Head of Hitler's Bodyguard Hans Rattenhuber, Moscow, May 20, 1945 in Vinograd, Pogonyi, and Teptzov, *Hitler's Death*, pp. 194-195.

[23] Joachimsthaler, *The Last Days of Hitler*, pp. 141, 142; Fest, *Inside Hitler's Bunker*, pp. 109-110; Jochen von Lang, with the assistance of Claus Sibyll, trans. By Christa Armstrong and Peter White, *The Secretary, Martin Bormann: The Man Who Manipulated Hitler* (New York: Random House, 1979), p. 329; Anthony Beevor, *The Fall of Berlin 1945* (New York: Penguin Books, 2003), pp. 357-358; Trevor-Roper, *The Last Days of Hitler*, p. 199.

[24] Manuscript Statement by Hitler's Aide-de-Camp, Otto Guensch, May 17, 1945 in Vinograd, Pogonyi, and Teptzov, *Hitler's Death*, p. 163; O'Donnell, *The Berlin Bunker*, p. 247.

[25] Document Section (GAD/C), Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, Ref. No. 54, Subject: Fragments of a "White Book" by the "Doenitz Government" on the German surrender and the last communications exchanged with the Hitler Government in Berlin, August 20, 1945, File: No. 143123, [\(NAID 6050264\)](#)

TO BE CONTINUED

(Continued from page 3 *World War II 75th Anniversary*)

memoration, be the catalyst to spark the interest and imagination of America's young people. With support, Friends is ready to ignite that spark that will demonstrate the potential of the American people when they are united in spirit, purpose, and commitment to a common and noble cause.

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Below is the 2016 Schedule of Events:

08 May, Sun	V-E Day (Mother's Day)	1100 hrs
17 May, Tues	US Army Blues Concert	1800 hrs
30 May, Mon	Memorial Day	0900 hrs
06 Jun, Mon	D-Day Wreath Laying	1000 hrs
25 Aug, Thurs	US Army Blues Concert	1800 hrs
02 Sep, Fri	V-J Day	1100 hrs
11 Nov, Fri	Veterans Day	0900 hrs
07 Dec, Wed	Pearl Harbor Day—75 Anniv.	1353 hrs
	Commemoration starts	

To register to attend a commemoration at the WWII Memorial please go to www.wwiimemorialfriends.org



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