

# The BULGE BUGLE

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

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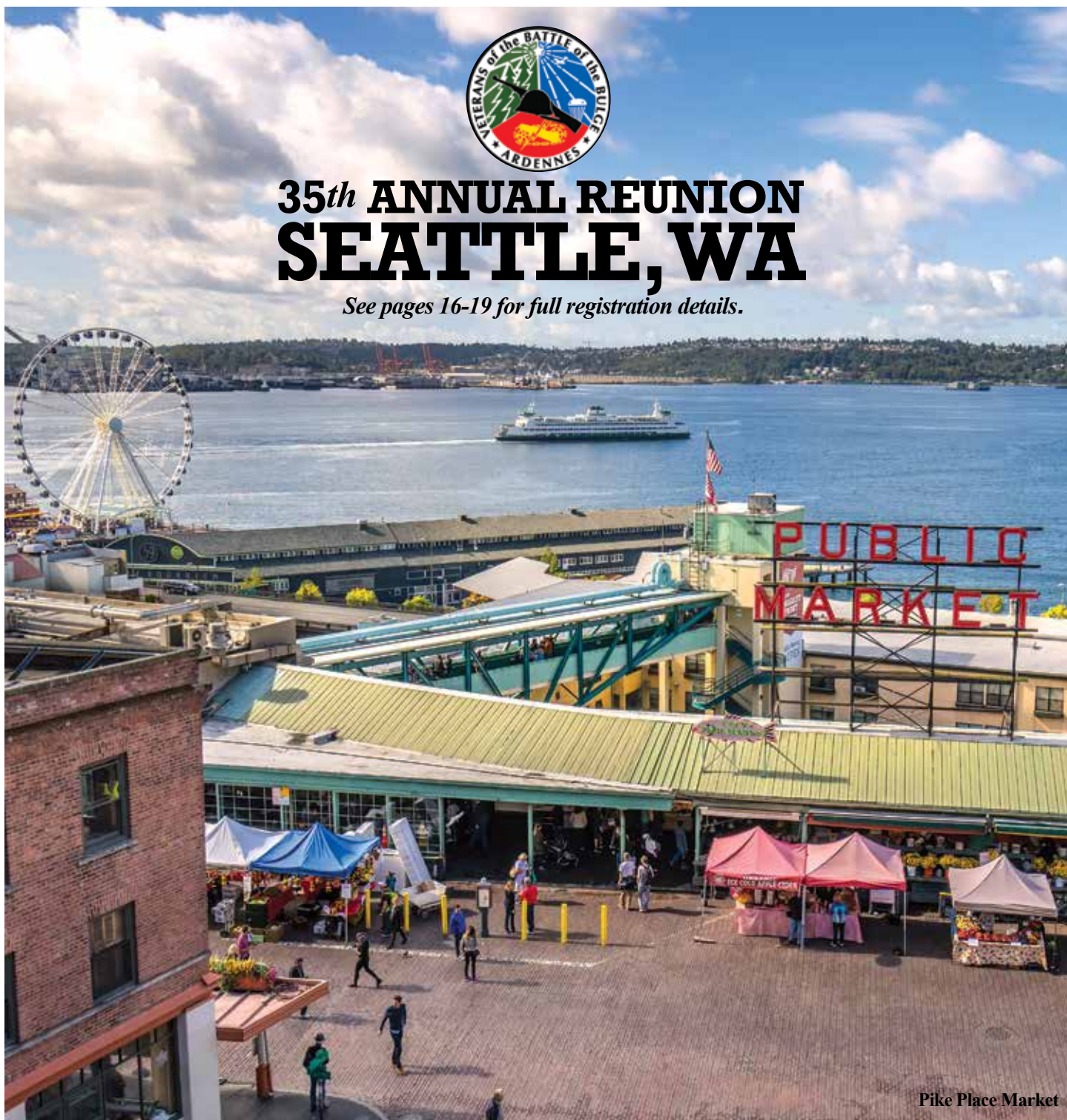
THE ARDENNES CAMPAIGN

MAY 2016



## 35<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL REUNION SEATTLE, WA

*See pages 16-19 for full registration details.*







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

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*For dues, certificates, quartermaster, donations, membership, and articles or letters for inclusion in "The Bulge Bugle":*  
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**VBOB WEB SITE:** [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org) or [www.vbob.org](http://www.vbob.org)

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Douglas Dillard 2012-14  
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No current information as of  
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## **IN THIS ISSUE**

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <b>2.</b> Contacts, Exec. Council,<br>Chapter Listings                   | <b>10.</b> Service a la Mode<br>Warriors Turned Worriers | <b>23.</b> Welcome, New Members!<br>Tours Planned for 2016 |
| <b>4.</b> President's Message<br>How to Submit to the <i>Bugle</i>       | <b>11.</b> The War Remembered<br>Through Poetry          | <b>24.</b> One Small Corner of the Bulge                   |
| <b>5.</b> Letters to VBOB  | <b>106 INFD/104 INFD Reunion</b>                         | <b>25.</b> Sharpshooting and<br>Sharp Whittling            |
| <b>6.</b> Members In Memoriam  | <b>12.</b> Chapter News                                  | <b>26.</b> My Battle of the Bulge                          |
| <b>7.</b> Quilts of Valor<br>Combat Medical Badge<br>Honoring the Fallen | <b>13.</b> VBOB Monuments                                | <b>28.</b> The VBOB Certificate                            |
| <b>8.</b> World War II Survivor<br>Building Bridges                      | <b>15.</b> Letters to a War Bride                        | <b>29.</b> A Guardian Angel on<br>His Shoulder             |
| <b>9.</b> Remembering Roy L. Sweet                                       | <b>16.</b> 2016 VBOB Annual Reunion                      | <b>30.</b> Task Force Ezell                                |
|  | <b>20.</b> My Nightmare Lasted 61 Years                  | <b>31.</b> Quartermaster Merchandise                       |
|  | <b>22.</b> Rage Kills<br>VBOB Book of Your Stories       |  |



# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Alan Cunningham, Associate



HELLO AND HAPPY SPRING. I hope you like the full-color or revamped *Bulge Bugle*. By switching printers and using more updated digital technology, we are now able to bring it to you in living color at no added expense. *The Bugle* is especially impressive when you look at the photographs. I hope you enjoy!

As you are aware, we need to reorganize due to the laws and IRS regulations pertaining to Veterans Organizations. I want to thank those of you who provided feedback to me with your thoughts and suggestions. These suggestions will be added to those of the Alabama Chapter and others received earlier, and will be considered by the Executive Council at our next two meetings as we try to finalize the path to reorganization. The general recommendation is to change the name to "Battle of the Bulge Association"; however, there are several other ideas including leaving the name as VBOB. We will be considering all options and will let you know in the near future what the final decision is. We need to act soon if we want to regain our status as an organization that can accept tax exempt contributions. This will affect our efforts to co-sponsor the Battle of the Bulge exhibit planned for the new National Museum of the United States Army being built at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. The Luxembourg government has already become a co-sponsor of the exhibit by pledging \$125,000 for it. I would like for VBOB to also be a co-sponsor of this exhibit, but we have to work out our ability to accept tax-exempt donations.

Other reorganization issues we will be tackling are: Impact on the chapters, all of the members, and quartermaster sales; ability to recruit new members; ability to open new chapters; how do we help chapters who are having trouble staying open; and the path forward to perpetuate the memory of the Battle of the Bulge.

The 2016 reunion, which will be in Seattle, Washington, October 5-9, 2016 (Wednesday through Sunday), is looking like it will be a very good reunion. It is a little longer than the last reunion in Williamsburg, Virginia but will have a lot to offer. This will be our first reunion in the northwest, and local government agencies are looking forward to our visiting the state of Washington for the first time. See all of the details in this issue [pages 16-19] along with the reservation form.

We have a lot to do this year with the reorganization, requirement for new bylaws and corporation paperwork, and other issues like the impact on all of our chapters and quartermaster items. Be well and I hope to see you at our reunion in October.

## How to submit stories for "The Bulge Bugle"

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

**Stories and letters:** Please send typewritten (not handwritten) text whenever possible. We reserve the right to edit for length or clarity. Clippings/articles from newspapers or other periodicals must contain the name & date of publication so we can obtain reprint permission.

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

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

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

**Send material to:** Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc; PO Box 27430; Philadelphia, PA 19118-0430; or by email to: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)

**QUESTIONS? Please contact Tracey Diehl, 703-528-4058, or by email: [tracey@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:tracey@battleofthebulge.org)**



# LETTERS TO VBOB

## THE NEW BULGE BUGLE

I have a compliment I would like to pass on.



**Major General  
John S. Wood**

I like the new *Bulge Bugle*—the slick paper, color and format. Please pass on to those responsible for such a great change, my compliments for a job “well done.” Very professional.

A bit of personal info: I am now in my 97th year. I am extremely proud to have served in such a famous division (4th Armored) during WWII. Our beloved commander was Major General John S. “Tiger Jack” Wood [pictured]. We would go to hell and back for him, and we did!!!

**John H. Harris, 4th Armored Division**

*NOTE: See p. 30 for John Harris’ Bulge story.*

## JOIN US AT THE WWII MEMORIAL

Please help the Friends of the National World War II Memorial bring honor and recognition to our “Greatest Generation” by joining us at the WWII Memorial in Washington, DC for special ceremonies and commemoration throughout the year.

2016 promises to be a historic year at the Memorial, as we prepare to kick-off a four-year 75th anniversary commemoration of World War II, beginning on December 7, 2016 and concluding on September 2, 2020. To learn more about the WWII 75th Anniversary Commemoration, go to: <http://www.wwiimemorialfriends.org/75th-anniversary-commemoration>.

### Below is the 2016 Schedule of Events:

Sun., May 8	V-E Day (Mother’s Day)	11:00 a.m.
Tues., May 17	U.S. Army Blues	6:00 p.m.
Mon., May 30	Memorial Day	9:00 a.m.
Mon., June 6	D-Day Commemoration Wreath Laying	10:00 a.m.
Thurs., Aug. 25	U.S. Army Blues	6:00 p.m.
Fri., Sept. 2	V-J Day	11:00 a.m.
Fri., Nov. 11	Veterans Day	9:00 a.m.
Tues., Dec. 6	4th Annual Haydn Williams WWII Memorial Legacy Lecture	TBD
Wed., Dec. 7	Pearl Harbor Day— 75th Anniversary Commemoration	1:53 p.m.

For more information or to register to attend a commemoration at the WWII Memorial, please visit the Friends website at <http://www.wwiimemorialfriends.org/>.

If you are a World War II veteran, or know of one, who would like to participate in a ceremony at the Memorial, please email me now at: [hrotondi@wwiimemorialfriends.org](mailto:hrotondi@wwiimemorialfriends.org)!

**Holly Rotondi, Executive Director,  
Friends of the National World War II Memorial**

## MEMBER ALFRED SHEHAB’S VIDEO AT AMERICAN VETERANS CENTER

Dear Fellow Patriot,

This week marks the 71st anniversary of the end of the Battle of the Bulge – Hitler’s month-long final offensive of the Second World War. The Battle was crucial to the Allied effort on the Western front, and would help pave the way for victory, if successful. Among the Allies

fighting through the Ardennes region was Lt. Col. Alfred Shehab of the U.S. Army’s 38th Cavalry Squadron. You may not have heard his name, but after hearing of his service, you won’t soon forget.

Lt. Col. Shehab was assigned to the 38th Cavalry Squadron, a reconnaissance unit tasked with patrolling the forests of the Ardennes region when the battle broke out on December 16, 1944. In addition to heavy fighting, Lt. Col. Shehab and his men endured several feet of snow throughout the campaign, continuing to advance in the brutal cold.

The battle saw over 80,000 American casualties – something that Alfred Shehab recognizes as “the cost of liberty.” Lt. Col. Shehab and veterans like him are the backbone of our great country. It is their fortitude and courage that have built our nation.

It is crucial that the stories of these veterans be passed on for generations to come and the American Veterans Center sets out to do just that. The American Veterans Center works rigorously to guard the legacies and honor the sacrifices of all American veterans. By doing so, we ensure that these extraordinary people and firsthand accounts of history will never be forgotten.

We look forward to sharing more stories like Shehab’s with you in the future. Be on the lookout for more heroic stories to come featuring American heroes such as the veterans of the 761st Tank Battalion.

You can watch Alfred Shehab’s video at: <http://www.american-veteranscenter.org/2016/01/lt-col-alfred-shehab/>

**Best Regards,**

**James C. Roberts,**

**President, American Veterans Center**

*For more on the American Veteran’s Center, go to: <http://www.american-veteranscenter.org/>*

## MORE ROSIES!

On behalf of all the Rosies, the Rosie the Riveter WWII/Home Front National Historical Park Staff, and all involved, I want to thank you for sending the copies of the magazine. We were proud of the picture of the Rosies and the story about the Park. It is a joy to volunteer there. Five Rosies volunteer every Friday, and one volunteers every other Saturday.

**Sincerely,**

**Marian Wynn, The Richmond Rosies**



Photo: Cheryl Buscaglia

CA Governor Jerry Brown (standing) signed the California Fair Pay Act on October 6, 2015 at the Rosie the Riveter WWII/Home Front National Historical Park with Richmond Rosies in attendance. Pictured from left (seated): Mary Torres, Kay Morrison, Agnes Moore, Marian Wynn, Priscilla Elder, Marian Sousa and her sister, Phyllis Gould.



## MEMBERS IN MEMORIAM

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

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

**We have been notified, as of March 31, 2016, that these members of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc. have also recently passed away:**

BAIRD, MARSHALL W.	82 ABND	JENSEN, WARREN M.	793 FA BN
BARFOOT, ARTHUR	8 FAO BN	MCGARVEY, CHARLES	180 ENGR HVY PT
BARNES, RALPH K.	106 INFD	MOCKFORD, ROGER	11 ARMDD
BEFORT, J.J.	87 INFD	MULVEY, JR., ROSCOE	4 ARMDD
BLALACK, HAROLD R.	106 INFD	NYMON, CHARLES	80 INFD
BLAZEJEWSKI, JR, STANLEY	9 ARMDD	POSCH, HERMAN	17 ABND
CASANOVA, PASQUALE J.	82 ABND	RANDALL, WALTER	10 ARMDD
DALSTROM, JR., STEN	529 QM	SANDIFER, JAMES M.	78 INFD
FELDHUSEN, ELIZABETH A.	131 EVAC HOSP	SANGREY, DAVID W.	75 INFD
FITZGERALD, EDWARD J.	83 INFD	STEELE, JOHN H.	84 INFD
GOLDBERG, ISADORE	1271 ENGR CMBT BN	WEINER, MILTON	106 INFD
HOYER, DAVID P.	1128 ENGR CMBT GP	WELKA, FELIX F.	83 INFD
HUSKEY, LEONARD	2 INFD	WILSON, EMMETT C.	28 INFD



VBOB member Tom Burgess was one of two WWII veterans, in a group of about 25 veterans, who were recently presented with a Quilt of Valor in the Cabarrus County, NC area.

## QUILTS OF VALOR

by Tom Burgess, 87th INFD, 345th INF REG

Founded in 2003 by Catherine Roberts, mother of an Army soldier deployed to Iraq who wanted her son and others welcomed home with love and gratitude, Quilts of Valor has spread nationwide. As of the first of 2016, nearly 200,000 Quilts of Valor have been presented to veterans. From her sewing room in Seaford, Delaware, Catherine's idea of linking quilt top makers with machine quilters has achieved her goal of awarding healing quilts to returning service men and women touched by war.

On February 3, 2016 quilts were presented to about twenty-five veterans in North Carolina by the local Group\*\* in Cabarrus County. Quilts are all made by local volunteer groups and are sewn with materials provided at no cost by the QOV Foundation, now headquartered in Lilburn, Georgia.

The Veterans honored included myself and one other WWII veteran, a 97-year-old former WAC whose service assignment was de-coding of messages! Other veterans there served from Korea to Afghanistan.

The Certificate presented with the Quilt reads:

*On behalf of the Quilts of Valor Foundation,  
In recognition of your service and sacrifice for  
This nation it is a privilege to serve  
Honor and comfort upon you through  
The award of a Quilt of Valor.*

*Though we may never know the depth of your sacrifice to  
Protect and defend The United States of America, as a gesture  
Of gratitude from a grateful nation,  
We award this Quilt of Valor to  
Thomas L. Burgess*

Each Quilt of Valor is an individual work of art and no two are alike. Before the presentation program began, each veteran was asked to pick the quilt we wanted to receive from a large display. When presented, the quilt was wrapped around our shoulders, with the expressed hope that it would give us a warm feeling of appreciation from the QOV Foundation and the volunteer who made the quilt.

\*\* "Group" is the designated term for local area quilters who make the quilts and arrange the presentation programs.

Go to [www.QOVF.org/group](http://www.QOVF.org/group) to locate and contact the nearest group, to learn of plans for future presentations and to provide the names of WWII veterans for award consideration. You can make a donation to Quilts of Valor at [www.QOVF.org/donate](http://www.QOVF.org/donate).

## COMBAT MEDICAL BADGE

Robert E. Arnold, 9th Infantry Division, 47th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Bn, E Co brought to our attention that the Combat Medical Badge was not included in the article about Awards and Citations in the February 2016 issue. We appreciate him bringing this to our attention. Here is information on this badge:

The Combat Medical Badge (CMB) was an award of the United States Army which was first created in January 1945. Any member of the Army Medical Department, at the rank of Colonel or below, who is assigned or attached to a ground Combat Arms unit of brigade or smaller size which provided medical support during any period in which the unit was engaged in active ground combat was eligible for the CMB. According to the award criterion, the individual must have performed medical duties while simultaneously being actively engaged by the enemy; strict adherence to this requirement and its interpretation (e.g., distant mortar rounds vs. direct small arms fire) varied by unit. It was retroactively awarded to medics who served as of 6 Dec 1941.



Each platoon had 44 infantry men and one of them was a medic. Each medic was eligible for this award.

—Submitted by Doris Davis, VBOB Executive Council,  
and approved by Robert E. Arnold  
(who is very proud to have been awarded this badge)

NOTE: Due to space limitations, we could not show every single award possible. We sincerely regret if any of our veterans felt slighted by the omission of an award they had received. It was certainly not our intention to minimize anyone's service awards—we are proud of you all!

## HONORING THE FALLEN



At the wreath laying event at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Arlington National Cemetery on December 16, 2015, VBOB was honored with the presence of Major General Bradley Becker, Commanding General of the Military District of Washington (far right), who accompanied Tom Ingram, 90th INFD (left) and J. David Bailey, 106th INFD (center).



# WORLD WAR II SURVIVOR: FROM A WARM DORM TO THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE

by Tony Doris

Reprinted with permission from "The Palm Beach Post"



George Fisher, 26th Infantry Division, then and now

George Fisher landed in Normandy 90 days after D-Day, with the 26th Infantry Division of General Patton's 3rd Army. His unit climbed past empty Nazi pillboxes and burned-out vehicles. They camped in France for a month of training before being ordered to the front lines in the frozen, forested hills of the Ardennes region of Belgium and Luxembourg. The Battle of the Bulge began Dec. 16, 1944 and wore on until Jan. 25, 1945. A turning point in World War II, the Americans held back the German advance but at a cost of 80,000 casualties, 19,000 dead. Fisher, now 91 and retired from the real estate business, lives in Palm Beach and serves as president of the Florida Southeast Chapter of Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge. The group, down from 400 members to 165, is gathering in West Palm Beach this weekend to commemorate the 71st anniversary of the battle that's with them every day.

**Q. You arrived just after D-Day?**

**A.** We got there by September and by the middle of November we were on the front lines and scared stiff. It was very scary for us because basic training doesn't tell you anything about being on the front lines. I came from college. They had something called the Army Specialized Training Program. That was supposed to teach us how to rebuild

Europe after the war. It was a three-year program. Unfortunately it ended after about nine months. Going from a dorm in a college to a mud field in Tennessee for basic training was like going from heaven to hell.

**Q. December in northern Europe?**

**A.** There were 200,000 Germans massed behind the lines and they attacked us at 5:30 a.m. The battle started so quickly we never got overcoats, mufflers, gloves, hats. A lot of the guys got frozen feet. It was a terrible situation.

The reason I'm in Florida: I don't want to see snow in my life anymore. It snowed for 10 or 12 consecutive days. It was so cold you couldn't dig a foxhole. We couldn't light a fire because the smoke would give us away. So there was no way to warm up. We urinated on the rifles in a circle to keep the bolts from freezing. Otherwise the rifles would not work.

**Q. How did it end for you?**

**A.** The entire thing was just one big nightmare. Luckily I was wounded. Shrapnel went through my legs in January — Jan. 3 to be exact. I spent almost a year in a hospital and then I was discharged.

**Q. Survivor's guilt?**

**A.** Most of the guys in my unit were either killed or wounded.... We were 19 and 20 years old.... Very few survived. The ones that did, I've been in touch with.

**Q. Does it trouble you that, as you say, most young people these days think the Battle of the Bulge is a diet?**

**A.** I've visited many, many schools. I speak to 10th graders, 11th graders. It's very important to get the younger generation to know what this is about. Ten years from now, you will never ever see a World War II veteran.

**Q. You lived to tell the tale.**

**A.** I met my wife in college in June of 1947 and we graduated together. We're celebrating our 68th anniversary. People ask how we stayed together so long. It's simple. We go out to dinner twice a week. I go Monday and Wednesday and she goes Tuesday and Thursday and it works out very well.

## BUILDING BRIDGES

From Fred Natzle, 148 ENGR CMBT BN, Co B: "We built a Bailey bridge across the Rhine River before the battle ... so Patton could get his tanks over there."

On the day the Ludendorff bridge collapsed, ten days after its capture, the 148th Engineer Combat Battalion, with the assistance of a company of the 291st Engineer Combat Battalion, began building a floating Bailey bridge [similar bridge shown at right] at Remagen, downstream from the Ludendorff. The 148th started the bridge at 0730 hours on the 18th and completed it in 48 hours. It was the first American Bailey bridge across the Rhine River. The 148th Engineer Combat Battalion was assigned to the 1110th Engineer Combat Group.





# REMEMBERING ROY LESLIE SWEET

by Jan Ross, Associate Member

*We, Jan Ross and Brad Peters, have created a comprehensive web site ([www.300thcombatengineersinwwii.com](http://www.300thcombatengineersinwwii.com)) over the past 10 years, to recognize Jan's father's unit that fought in the Battle of the Bulge. The following story was published in our Winter 2016 300th Quarterly newsletter and was the result of a recent inquiry to the web site.*

Again we have been contacted through the web site asking for information about a member of the 300th. In January, we received a brief e-mail inquiry as follows. "My name is Roy Sweet. Roy Leslie Sweet was killed on Dec. 23, 1944. I am trying to contact anyone who might know him or what happened on the day he was killed. Any help would be great. Roy." The name was familiar to us and our records on the web site confirmed this information about Roy Sweet. Since he was in Company B, we contacted Don Richter, who was clerk for B Company and a significant contributor to the web site. Don came through as he always does and his detailed memory of 70+ years ago gave us the information requested and more.

What follows is Don's response:



**Don Richter at the 2015 Reunion of the 300th Engineer Combat Battalion in Tyler, Texas.**

This is regarding Roy L. Sweet, Tec 4, killed in action Dec. 23, 1944 and buried in Henri-Chapelle Cemetery in Belgium. Roy Sweet was not a close friend of mine, but I recall that he was a very quiet man who stayed pretty much to himself, always working with the Company B radio equipment. He was Company B mail clerk in addition to being the company radio operator, the primary communication for the company. He always rode in the back seat of Company B Commander, Capt. Falvey's jeep [Capt. Gene P. Falvey] where all of the company radio equipment was installed.

I do know that when Companies A & B were out in front of

the main US Army & British Army defense line along the bank of the Meuse River, we encountered forward elements of the Germany Army advancing through the Ardennes Forest. We had roadblocks with bridges set for destruction upon the approach of the enemy. On December 23, 1944 Capt. Falvey, with his jeep driven by McGowan [Tech 5 Willie D. McGowan] and radio operator Sweet, were out checking on our various defense installations when they were approached by what appeared to be a US Army Sherman tank.

When it began firing on them, they quickly realized that it must be a tank that was captured by the Germans and was now the enemy. The jeep came to a sudden halt and McGowan and Capt. Falvey bailed out and took cover though both were wounded. Roy Sweet was mortally wounded and remained in back seat of the jeep. McGowan though wounded returned to the jeep, found Sweet dead and recovered the map case in which the defenses of Companies A & B were recorded. Capt. Falvey, though wounded, shot and killed a German soldier with his pistol. The two survivors were able to return to B Company where

medics treated their wounds. McGowan was hospitalized but later returned to duty.

I know these to be true facts as some weeks later, after I became B Company clerk, I took and typed depositions from both McGowan and Falvey. Both accounts of what happened to them and Sweet on Dec 23, 1944 were almost exactly the same. McGowan received a Bronze Star for returning to the jeep and recovering the map case while under enemy fire and also being wounded he received the Purple Heart. I am sure that Falvey also received the Purple Heart.

After Roy Sweet was killed, B Company clerk Kenneth Funk became B company mail Clerk, I became B Company clerk because I was the only one who could type, having learned in West High School, and was given MOS Clerk Typist at Camp White. Jerry Barton was transferred from H&S Company to B Company to become radio operator. It took two men to replace Roy Sweet.

I am glad to be able to help with the inquiry about Roy Sweet. I, along with all who knew Roy, mourned his death.

—Cpl. Don Richter, Company B, 300th ECB

## **Footnote: Warren Chancellor (300th ECB) Also Remembers Roy Sweet**

In December of 2004, Suzy and I [Warren Chancellor and his wife], along with about 150 other veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, went on a tour of Belgium and Luxembourg to commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge. The tour was sponsored by the governments of Belgium and Luxembourg. One of the stops on the tour was Ettelbruck, Luxembourg to visit an American WWII Museum. I was wearing a military style cap with 300th Engr., Combat Bn. embroidered on it. While walking around the museum, the curator noticed my cap and asked me if I was a member of the 300th. I replied I was. He told me that the museum had an article on display that had belonged to a member of the 300th and his name was Sweet.

My reply was, "Roy L. Sweet, a radio operator and he was killed by machine gun fire from a tank somewhere near the Belgium/Luxembourg border." He took me to a glass-covered display of smaller articles of American equipment and there was a canteen cover imprinted "Roy L. Sweet, 300th Engrs." I wanted to take a picture of it but I had left my camera on the motor coach and it was parked away from the museum. What a surprise! Here I was in Luxembourg and the curator happened to notice that I was a member of the 300th and he remembered that one particular item being there. Small world!

In March, the younger Roy Sweet wrote: "Thank you so much for the newsletter. It is wonderful to have a clear understanding of that day. I will share this with my entire family. Please keep me on the list. I would like to attend any events possible. On behalf of my uncle, my father, his father and mother. Thank you for keeping Roy alive through your organization. Sincerely, Roy Sweet"

## **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 fee of \$15!)**

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

## SERVICE A LA MODE

by Bernard Silverman, 4th Armored Division,  
35th Tank Battalion, Co C



"Your mission is to enter this territory, which may be infested with the enemy, and see that the tanks get their gas, ammo, rations and water. It is imperative that they get it tonight, because a counterattack is expected tomorrow morning." And with these few words, the Colonel had dismissed me, and I was on the way, with four trucks, into the blackness of a sporadically-lit sky, filled with the blasting roars and unknown terrors that accompany the front line.

Service Company again would brave the dangers which even Armored Vehicles would hesitate to encounter. Two and a half ton GMC trucks laden with precious supplies for the tankers were driven by unsung heroes, and their only comfort was an assistant who carried a MX machine gun, and was later seared to death.

Traveling on a dirt road under blackout conditions; training eyes on the vehicle in front; watching every spot of moving brush; and depending on the leader, who is going into territory he has never seen before in his life. A map was the only guide, but it was too dark to see it, and I could not chance showing a flicker of light. Depending on memory, not only as to where the roads were, and which turn to take, but also where the tanks were located according to the last report.

A Heinie burp gun goes off. It sounds close. Yes, darn close. If anything else can be heard, it's the pulling back of belts as each man becomes more alert and strains his eyes even more.

"Halt!" A figure with drawn rifle jumps out into the center of the road. Next, a screaming of brakes, and the cursing of the drivers. Thank God, it's a doughboy. "Give the password," and ask him if he has seen any tanks. The directions he gives are not the same we had received. But they could have moved—they're always moving.

I'll have to chance it. Can't afford to take a cumbersome truck through unexplored fields. "Joe, come with me. We'll take a recon on foot."

Stumbling along in the blackness, it seems like miles. Is that the outline of a tank? Maybe it's just a bush. Always seems like one in this damn darkness. "Sure, Joe, that's a 76mm sticking out. Better holler out, or they'll mow us down."

"Baker Company?" "Who goes?" comes the reply. We answer.

"Goddamn, you guys, always coming around in the middle of the night!" We know he doesn't mean half the profanity that's thrown our way—it's the strain. Anyway, we are so happy to have found him.

## WARRIORS TURNED WORRIERS

by Muriel Phillips Engelman, 16th General Hospital

On Dec. 16, 1944, German General von Rundstedt made his famous counterattack into Belgium, starting the Battle of the Bulge, which was to be the biggest, bloodiest and most decisive battle of World War II.

Our tent hospital, located on the outskirts of Liege, was one of the closest hospitals to the fighting lines, and the destination for the

German army to reach in order to cross the Meuse River there and head for the Port of Antwerp, where they could cut off all Allied supplies.

The week before Christmas, a sudden heavy dense fog fell over all of Belgium, creating an eerie, gray silent landscape. The only sounds we could hear were the muffled sounds of buzz bombs dropping as they flew over every twelve to fifteen minutes, twenty-four hours a day, each one carrying 2000 lbs. of explosives. Our hospital had already suffered two hits and was to soon receive a third, creating casualties among patients and hospital staff. This fog was so thick we couldn't see five feet in front of us, but the German tanks and infantry were able to move forward on the ground, and our planes couldn't get off the ground to bomb them.

Two days before Christmas, the Germans were ten miles from Liege and German paratroopers had already been dropped into the city. Many of the American hospitals in the area had already evacuated to France or Luxembourg, and we felt like sitting ducks, hoping and waiting for orders to evacuate that never came. Instead, we nurses were ordered to pack our musette bags with the warmest clothing we had and any first aid supplies, in the event we were captured by the Germans, and to be prepared to move out with ten minutes notice.

Of course we were scared. I was a little more so than the other nurses, because I had an "H" for Hebrew on my dog tags, the very ones Hitler wanted to annihilate. Our patients were furious that American women were so far up front. When we did get orders to evacuate our sickest bed patients to the rear, as we loaded them into trucks and ambulances, they begged us to change places with them.



Muriel Phillips Engelman, 16th Gen Hosp, holding the blackjack, homemade by her patient, in her right hand.

One of my patients, who was so concerned about my possible capture by the Germans, constructed a blackjack for me to carry with me at all times, and believe me, I did. You can see it in the enclosed photo, in my right hand. This was a ten-inch length of hosing, stuffed with lead sinkers and suspended from my wrist by a leather thong. His instructions were as follows: "If a Kraut gets near you, take this blackjack, slam it across his face and aim for the eyes."

Another patient gave me a spring-blade knife, which you can see outlined in my left pocket, and his directions were: "If a Kraut approaches, take this knife blade, plunge it into his belly and then run like hell."

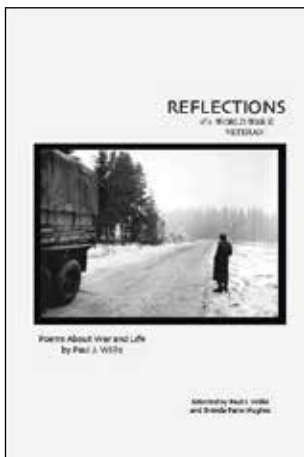
On Christmas Eve, the fog that had hung over all of Belgium for the past week had dissipated, and a full moon arose, lighting the sky with an almost daytime light. A lone German plane flew over our hospital tents and the enlisted men's tents that night, dropping anti-personnel bombs and strafing the tents, killing and wounding scores of patients and hospital personnel. Our planes were out in full force the following morning and soon outnumbered the German planes.

No, I never had to use my "weapons of protection," though I kept them in my possession for years, mementos of our wonderful, caring G.I. Joes.





Paul Willis, 83rd INFD, 329th REG now and then, and his book *Reflections of a World War II Veteran: Poems about War and Life*.



And so, *Reflections of a World War II Veteran: Poems About War and Life* was born and I must admit, I'm a proud parent! *Reflections* features sixteen poems, including two about the Battle of the Bulge. Here is one of them:

#### INFANTRY OF THE SNOWS

The bleak Ardennen wood shrouded  
In mist and snow. Snow, a winding  
Sheet for many. Yet life was there,  
Merging with the shadows. In this  
Solitude men moved among the trees.  
The infantry of the snows. There  
Amid the sounds of war borne on the  
Winter wind, in the dim morning  
Light they crossed the no mans land  
Into the baptism of fire. When at last  
The battle ended, for those who lived  
The forest released its hold upon them.  
For the sun in its course returned and  
In pity erased the fearful record. But  
To the living there remained always the  
Memory of the white wasteland, and the  
Infantry of the snows.

*Reflections* is one more way to remember the price of freedom and those who have so selflessly served. To you, I say, "Thank you!" and may your legacy live on through works such as this.

*NOTE: Reflections of a World War II Veteran, priced at \$9.95, is available at Brenda's website: [wetbirdproductions.com](http://wetbirdproductions.com). The documentary, Thank You, Eddie Hart, can also be purchased there.*

## THE WAR REMEMBERED THROUGH POETRY

by Brenda Hughes, Associate

In my "normal" life, I am a filmmaker and many of you know me through the World War II documentaries that I have produced:

*Marching Once More:* Veterans return to the battlefield 60 years after the Battle of the Bulge

*Thank You, Eddie Hart:* A Dutch woman, grateful for her freedom, makes a lifelong promise to care for the grave of a soldier she never knew

*North Carolina's World War II Experience:* Personal accounts of North Carolinians from both the battlefield and the home front

For me, sharing such stories has been a true honor as well as an opportunity to learn from those who have lived through such incredible times.

During one of those productions, I met Paul Willis – Company G, 329th Regiment, 83rd Infantry Division – who fought from Normandy, through the Hurtgen and Ardennes Forests, to the Elbe River in Germany, crossing just before the war's end. Not long after, Paul returned to his North Carolina home where he worked at a paper and fiber company and with his wife, Evelyn, raised their two sons. He also began writing poetry – first, little jingles for colleagues – and then, more thoughtful, inspiring poems reflecting his experiences and love of history. For the past sixty years, Paul has continued to write about the war, nature, the earth, and hope for the future. A year ago, he asked me if I would help him publish a book of his work. While I had never done anything like that before, how could I say no?



## JOINT 106TH INFD AND 104TH INFD REUNION 2016

The 70th annual reunion of the 106th Infantry Division will be jointly held with the 104th Infantry Division, Sept. 7 through 11, 2016 in Arlington, VA. For details, please visit: [106thinfdivassn.org/events.html#annual](http://106thinfdivassn.org/events.html#annual) or email [Host106th@106thInfDivAssn.org](mailto:Host106th@106thInfDivAssn.org), or call Wayne Dunn at 410-409-1141.

### 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.



### LONG ISLAND CHAPTER (63) DEDICATES VBOB MONUMENT

On December 23, 2015, the Long Island Chapter dedicated The Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge (VBOB) Monument in Eisenhower Park, East Meadow, NY, in memory of all who fought in that memorable WWII campaign. It was with a great display of emotion that many present recalled the terrible conditions and loss of life encountered. Of the thirty five Chapter members, ten were present to receive the Nassau County (NY) Citation for their service. Shown in the photo standing (left to right) with their Citations are Harold Hoffman, Irving Gregor, William Burke, Carmine Cardiello (partially hidden), Ralph Carl, David Marshall, Robert Schatz, Felix Iannaccone, Joseph Kagan and Chapter President Bill Mueller (seated in the wheelchair). Credit for the singular effort of the design, construction and placement of the monument is due David Marshall. Thank you, Dave. —Submitted by Bill Mueller, LI Chapter (63) President



The Hunts in front of the Miss. VBOB monument.

### MISSISSIPPI CHAPTER (33) VBOB MONUMENT

The Mississippi chapter VBOB Memorial is located in a beautiful place near the sidewalk leading into the entrance to the Armed Forces Museum at Camp Shelby, on Highway #49 about 15 miles south of Hattiesburg, Ms.

The veterans of the Miss. Chapter of VBOB, and banks all over Mississippi, made contributions, and raised over \$10,000.00 for the glorious project, chaired by Dr. James W. Hunt and Jane Hunt.

The Memorial is about 8 feet tall and was designed by the Baldwin Monument Company. It was designed by Travis A. Hamblin and his son, who installed it on March 17, 2001.

VBOB members Dr. James W. Hunt, Dr./Colonel (Ret.) Robert I. Gilbert, Tilson Blakeney, Dr. James Booth, and Kline Bedwell made large gifts to "start the ball rolling." The whole membership made significant contributions.

Another major contributor was General (Ret) Preston Jackson, writer of the "Tribute To Fallen Comrades" that appears on the Monument. It also has the names of all of the outfits that were in the B.O.B. listed.

John Thrash and James W. Hunt were Co-Chairs of this project. Our own Senator Trent Lott was our dedication speaker, and Jim's grandson Owen Hunt of Atlanta, Ga. led the Pledge of Allegiance.

—Submitted by James (Jim) Hunt, Chapter 33 President, and Jane Hunt



## BATTLE OF BULGE VETS RECALL WARTIME MEMORIES

by Jim McCarty

*Reprinted with permission from  
"The Cape May County Herald"*

It's the little things that war veterans recall most vividly. Generals and colonels fight their wars concerned with divisions, brigades and objectives on maps, while the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines who actually achieve the objectives set by those generals are concerned about themselves, their buddies and yes, achieving the mission.

Those mundane, yet life-changing memories of several combat survivors of the "Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Association" were exchanged at a special holiday luncheon held at the Mad Batter Restaurant in Cape May Dec. 18.

This year's event marks the 71st anniversary of that battle fought over Christmas and New Years in 1944 and 1945 as Allies closed in on the German heartland during World War II.

Association historian and 87th Infantry Division mortar squad veteran Gus Epplé described the battle that began Dec. 16, 1944 when 1,000 Panzer tanks with 250,000 German soldiers surged through the Ardennes forest that had been designated as an "R & R" location for exhausted American troops.

The area was lightly defended and Germans "blew into our weak defenses" before anyone realized that a major German offensive was underway.

Epplé described those little things they



From left: Robert Brooks Jackson, Nick Cooney, Joe Kasmark, Elmer Umbenhauer, Harry Kulkowitz, John Crosby, Ray Haigh, Al Magrowski, and Arlette Michaels.

Photo: Jim McCarty

recalled while talking about the bulge in the line that widened over the next four days because of the German assault. He spoke of frost-bitten feet that resulted from one of the coldest winters in that region's history; hip-high snow and piercing winds made everyone miserable.

He recalled that when their frozen feet began to thaw, trench foot then set in to complicate their daily grind as the bulge continued to grow. Epplé recalled how just one little piece of ice that got under the back of his collar seemed to freeze him all the way to his toes.

He remembered that when the supposed hot meals arrived, it was so cold that by the time the peas went from the server's ladle to his metal mess kit, the peas pinged like BBs

against the bottom of the kit; they had frozen solid before they hit the metal dish.

Epplé reminded attendees, some veterans, many family members and guests, that Americans suffered 19,000 killed and a total of 81,000 casualties during the period of Dec. 16 to Jan. 25 when the bulge was finally closed after desperate and bloody fighting.

The Germans had committed 500,000 troops to their last-ditch effort to win the war, and lost 100,000 killed and countless more wounded in their failed attempt to snatch victory from the Allied invasion of the German homeland.

Epplé ended his presentation by reading the names of dozens of Bulge veterans from South Jersey who survived the war, but who have since died. He had recollections of each one, such as Milt who was a truck driver who went all over the battlefield during the battle, of George West who later helped free a concentration camp and took movies to prove it, and Harry who was captured during the battle and survived a German POW camp until the war ended.

Memories of the little things that soldiers like Epplé remember most; memories that paint a picture of battles fought decades ago, and the everyday courage of men that will live on forever as long as these memories are preserved, re-told and celebrated by historians, family, and friends.

—Submitted by Ed Steinberg,  
South Jersey Chapter (61) President

### ATTENTION ALL VBOB MEMBERS: Looking for VBOB Memorials Information

We'd like to recognize all the VBOB Memorials (monuments, statues, benches, etc.) that our chapters have erected over the years, by compiling a comprehensive list of them. We would post the list of VBOB Memorials on our website, and publish in an upcoming issue of *The Bulge Bugle*. Then our members will know about all of them and can visit them.

We would need the Chapter name, brief description of memorial, location (name of park, if applicable, city and state) and who is in charge of the property. Include photos (as large as available) if possible, and contact information.

**Send typed/printed material to:** Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge, Inc; PO Box 27430; Philadelphia, PA 19118-0430; **or by email to:** tracey@battleofthebulge.org

**QUESTIONS? Please contact Tracey Diehl, 703-528-4058,  
or by email: tracey@battleofthebulge.org**



### SE FL CHAPTER (62) WELCOME KIT DONATION

The West Palm Beach VA Medical Center has created a program to create “welcome kits” for returning US Troops. The kits contain toiletry articles, and the program is funded by donations. Pictured is George Fisher, President of the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge Southeast Florida Chapter, presenting a donation on behalf of the chapter to Charlene Szabo, director of the Medical Center.

### HUDSON VALLEY CHAPTER (49) HOLDS DECEMBER LUNCHEON



Attendees at the Hudson Valley Chapter #49 December 16, 2015 luncheon included (1st Row, L to R): John Monahan, 731st field Artillery 3rd Army; William Butz, 6 Armored Division 3rd Army; Lilian Yonelly, Women Airforce Service Pilot; Robert Gusberti, Navy-Pacific; John Schillaci, 739th Field Artillery. (2nd Row, L to R): Matthew Swedick, Chapter President (Grandfather John Swedick, KIA 12/17/44 2nd Inf Div, 23rd Inf Rgmt); Edward Graffeo, 731 Field Artillery; Alan Atwell, 28th Division MP Platoon; William Leunig, 285th Engineer Combat Battalion; Col. Richard Goldenberg, Joint Force Headquarters, NY National Guard. — Submitted by Matthew J. Swedick, President

### SOUTH CAROLINA CHAPTER (7) KEEPS ACTIVE



Veterans in attendance at the 19 March meeting of the South Carolina Chapter were Joe Watson, Leif Maseng, David Hubbard, Walter Hedges, Chris Carawan, Jim Hubble, Thomas Estridge, Gerald White, Tom Burgess, and Vernon Brantley.



### VALENTINES FOR VETS PROGRAM

Gerald White gives students a first-hand history lesson about his experiences in World War II during the Valentines for Vets program at Richland Northeast High School in Columbia, SC. The Valentines for Vets Program provides students with an opportunity to discuss history with veterans who served in the Armed Forces in all conflicts and time periods from World War II up to the present day. Other veterans participating included South Carolina Chapter members Vernon Brantley and David Hubbard, and associate members Ed Lundeen and Nelson McLeod. As David Hubbard said, “The students enjoyed it, the veterans enjoyed it, and we convinced them that we had a little to do with winning World War II.”

—Submitted by Nelson McLeod, President, South Carolina Chapter



# LETTERS TO A WAR BRIDE

by Tim McKay, Associate

*In 1999, not long after my mother's death, my brothers and I found a box of letters with a note on top in my mother's handwriting: "Letters to a War Bride." The box held nearly all the letters my father, Captain Robert James McKay Jr., wrote during his 20 months in Europe, during and after World War II. My father was Battalion Surgeon for the 275th Engineer Combat Battalion of the 75th Infantry Division. They landed at Le Havre in early December, 1944, and soon were thrown into the Battle of the Bulge on the northern flank. I went on a quest to uncover his wartime history, which would culminate in my 2015 book "Letters to a War Bride." Here is an excerpt, from Christmas week, 1944.*

**23 Dec 1944** We are in a country village [Chardeneux] so small that there is not even a store. It makes the last one practically seem like a city. I can't say I mind though, because it just makes it that much less a probable target. The Medical Detachment is set up in a small barn. We have a central part with a clear floor about thirty by fourteen feet. On one side is straw stacked from the floor up with several levels on which the men can sleep. On the other side we are separated by an eighteen inch stone and brick wall which separates us from the stable where the cows are. Over the cows is a hay loft which is reached by a ladder from our central part of the barn. We have rather a dim electric light (twenty five watt bulb), but our Coleman lantern gives off a pretty good light. We have our trailer with us, containing most of our supplies. Fletcher and Mirando sleep on the truck some distance away.

The old Belgian whose barn we are using is friendly and hospitable as anything. Unfortunately he only possesses a three room house (all small) or we could have a real inside dispensary. However, the boys can go in and warm up from time to time.

Chardeneux remains a small village to this day. I spent a magical month in 2014 tracing the places and people my father encountered 69 years earlier. When I visited Chardeneux, it was clear that the whole village knows well the story of Christmas 1944, when every building in town housed soldiers of the 275th.

**Christmas Eve!** It is a beautiful, clear, cold day. We have been watching the U.S. Army Air Force's Christmas present to the German People go over and believe me, no one is unhappy about it. When you get over here and undergo the discomfort and unpleasantness of what this war has forced upon us and think of how different it is at home, you really boil. You feel that truly nothing is too bad to wish on the people who have wished this on us. I'm sure that the cold and discomfort of a winter campaign are going to make the fighting just that much more vicious. From our standpoint it is a good thing, because we have been, if anything, too easy on them.

The family whose barn we are using have invited us in to share their warm front room with them. It is certainly appreciated, because it does give us a chance to get really warm now and then. The family are farmers. There are the father, mother, and eighteen year old daughter. They are very nice, simple, straightforward, hardworking people, who are scared stiff of the war and the Germans. I can't say that I blame them.

**Christmas Day, 1944** Dearest Liz: Well, Christmas Day turned out to be another beautiful clear day. Your husband, contrarily, has been in a terrible humor all day. I suspect that it's because he is upset and fed up that he is not with you. Also there is a certain amount of nervous strain connected with this war business.

The war is funny. The destruction of war is as remarkable in its absence as in its presence. The impression we have at home of a

countryside completely laid waste is not true at all. There is always a great deal more time and space where it is safe than there is where it is not.

Our Belgian farmer continues to be very cooperative and hospitable. Most of us are sleeping on the floor of his two small front rooms. All the boys are impressed with how hard the daughter, Angèle, works.

The farmer and his wife and other old people in the town have never seen a typewriter and are now busy watching Hanna type out a requisition on it.

I had hoped to meet Angèle on my visit. A Belgian friend helped me search, found the family, and the two of us paid them a visit on a lovely April evening. Unfortunately, Angèle died in 2012, but her son Marc Breda was there, living in the house where my father and his comrades once stayed. The barn my father described has been converted into a community café, but retains the original structure. Marc called Suzanne, a longtime friend of his mother, who joined us at the barn/café.



Robert McKay, Jr. 75th INFD,  
275th Engr Cmbt Bn

Suzanne was only eight at Christmas in 1944. She remembers the chocolate the soldiers gave the children, which was momentous because they had not seen chocolate since the Germans invaded in May of 1940. And she remembers the room in her house where no civilians were allowed, which must have served as battalion headquarters that week. Small children at the time, Suzanne and a friend were able to sneak a peek and saw the walls lined with maps.

Marc disappeared into the house and emerged with a framed photo of his mother as a young woman, and another of her in later years tending sheep. As I read them the description my father had written of Angèle, Marc and Suzanne confirmed her sunny disposition, which she retained all her life. I was thrilled to make this connection to my father, sitting in the barn/café and easily able to picture it as it was, with stacks of hay filling one end and cows just on the other side of the wall.

**26 Dec, 1944** It is now nine o'clock and I have been going continuously since about seven thirty this morning. I organized an SOP (standard operating procedure). Afterward I had sick call. Then went up to the front lines to see how the aid men were doing in the companies. Getting back here was like getting completely out of the war. We really have it made where we are.

The whole aid station gang has been watching Angèle all evening. She is spinning wool yarn with which she knits herself socks and sweaters. She has also knitted herself a dress!

*A few days later, the 275th departed Chardeneux and moved to La Forge, close to the front line between Grandmenil and Hotton. On the 28th, the battalion suffered its first casualties, three men who were killed by a German machine gun while laying mines. The 275th and the rest of the 75th Division fought their way east from Grandmenil to Vielsalm and then on to Commanster.*

*Through my father's letters, his memories, and my own research, I was able to trace his activities throughout the 20 months he was in Europe. I'd love to hear from anyone connected with the 75th Division, particularly the 275th Engineer Combat Battalion. I'm sure you'd be interested in "Letters to a War Bride," available on Amazon and elsewhere. Check it out at [www.letterstoawarbride.com](http://www.letterstoawarbride.com).*



# WELCOME TO SEATTLE, WA

## VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE 35th ANNUAL REUNION

**October 5 - 10, 2016**

### HIGHLIGHTS AND SCHEDULE INFORMATION

#### REGISTRATION FEE

All attendees must pay the registration fee (see Registration Form). The fee covers the expenses of name tags, programs, table decorations, Hospitality Room, etc.

#### WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5

Registration and complimentary Wine and Cheese Reception.

#### THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6

Visit the **Joint Base Lewis-McChord Military Base (JBLM)** - home of the Corps and 62nd Airlift Wing. The facility is an amalgamation of the US Army's Fort Lewis and US Air Force McChord Air Force Base. This Base is a training and mobilization center for all services and is the only Army power injection base west of the Rocky Mountains. Its location provides rapid access to deep water ports for deploying equipment. The Joint Base Headquarters (JBHQ) operates the installation in support of war fighting units, their families and the extended military community. From 1942- 1946, it was used as a training base (including training for the Anti-Aircraft Artillery) and a clearing station for planes headed for Alaska and the South Pacific. If you were ever stationed at Ft. Lewis (as it was known in WWII era), we would like to hear your story during the bus trip to the Base. *For more information about JBLM, their web site is: <http://www.lewis-mcchord.army.mil/about.html>*

#### IMPORTANT: IDENTIFICATION & DEADLINE

If you plan to join us on the tour of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, you will need to:

- 1) Sign up by August 25, 2016 (No exceptions. Late registrants cannot be accommodated.)**
- 2) Bring a government issued photo ID** (e.g., driver's license, U.S. passport or passport card, military ID). Children under age 18: bring school photo ID card.
- 3) If a non-US citizen, bring foreign passport with current arrival-departure record.**
- 4) If a foreign national, please bring permanent resident card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (INS Form I-551).**

*For questions, please call the VBOB office, 703-528-4058 or email [doris@battleofthebulge.org](mailto:doris@battleofthebulge.org).*



Beautiful Seattle view with the Space Needle

#### FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7

After breakfast, please attend the **Membership Meeting**. Important issues will be discussed about the future of VBOB, and we value your input. Following the Membership Meeting, we will have **lunch in the Hospitality Room**. You can choose to have lunch in the restaurant, but if you join us, you will be sure to be on time for the bus departure for the tours. You have **3 choices for the tours** (choose 1): (a) take a bus tour of Seattle (stay-on-bus tour, 3 hours) or (b) explore Pike Place Market (on your own) or (c) go to the Seattle Space Needle [and the Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum.] The Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum is located at the base of the Space Needle and was voted as the #1 place to visit in Seattle by TripAdvisor. Please keep in mind that Pike Place Market is a busy place and the pavement is uneven. It is not wheelchair-friendly. In the evening, we'll go for a **BBQ feast at Famous Dave's** (close to the hotel). If you prefer, stay at the hotel or take the hotel shuttle to a different neighboring restaurant. *For more information, Pike Place Market: [pikeplacemarket.org](http://pikeplacemarket.org); Seattle Space Needle: [www.spaceneedle.com/home](http://www.spaceneedle.com/home); Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum: [www.chihulygardenandglass.com](http://www.chihulygardenandglass.com)*

*NOTE: Please bring rain gear (raincoat and umbrella) in case it rains—although we hope that we will be ahead of their rainy season, but it is best to be prepared.*



An exhibit at Boeing's Museum of Flight

#### SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8

Visit the **Boeing Museum of Flight** (the #2 place to see in Seattle by Trip Advisor). It is the largest private air and space museum in the world (150 aircraft). They have 25 aircraft from WWI and WWII on display. It has the largest collection of model aircraft, including every plane from both wars. They have a cafe where we can have lunch (at your own timing). *For more information about the Boeing Museum of Flight: [www.museumofflight.org/](http://www.museumofflight.org/).* After free time in the afternoon, we will have our traditional **Reception and Banquet** at the hotel.

#### SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9

Again, you have a choice of 1 of 3 options from the agenda that was offered on Friday, so you can enjoy your 2nd choice. We will return back to the hotel no later than 1:00 PM. If you have a flight out of Seattle in the afternoon, please allow plenty of time between returning to the hotel and catching the shuttle to the airport. If you want to stay and visit in the Hospitality Room, it will be open.

#### MONDAY, OCTOBER 10

After breakfast at the hotel, stay for additional days to see beautiful Seattle, or depart for home.

Space Needle: Howard Frisk Photography/Visit Seattle



# VBOB REUNION REGISTRATION FORM

## DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION FOR REUNION: **SEPTEMBER 28, 2016**

**There are two options for registering for the reunion:** Complete this form OR register online at [www.battleofthebulge.org](http://www.battleofthebulge.org) (Click on "Attend Reunion" and complete the Registration Form.) Registration for the Reunion must be received no later than **September 28, 2016**. However, you must register by **August 25, 2016** if you plan on going to Lewis-McChord Base. There is no penalty for canceling up to the day of arrival. Go to page 19 for the hotel registration information. **(Hotel reservation cut-off is September 21, 2016.)**

**VBOB registration desk at the hotel will be open on Wed October 5 from 2 pm - 6 pm, and on Thurs October 6 from 8 am - 5 pm.**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

Guest(s) (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

<b>IMPORTANT: Please indicate No. of People attending <i>free</i> events as well!</b>	<b>No. of People</b>	<b>Cost per Person</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
<b>Registration Fee</b> (all attendees must pay the Registration Fee)			
Adult (21 and Over)	_____	\$45	_____
Child (20 and Under)	_____	\$25	_____
<b>Late registration fee after September 28 - add \$20 per person</b>	_____	\$20	_____
<b>Wednesday, October 5, 2016</b>			
Wine and cheese reception in the Hospitality Room	_____	free	_____
<b>Thursday, October 6, 2016</b>			
Tour of JB Lewis-McChord Military Base (includes bus and lunch)	_____	\$40	_____
<b>Friday, October 7, 2016</b>			
Lunch in the Hospitality Room	_____	\$22	_____
Bus Trips (choose one option):			
Bus tour of Seattle (a stay-on bus tour)	_____	\$40	_____
Trip to Pike Place Market	_____	\$25	_____
Trip to Space Needle:			
Space Needle only	_____	\$45	_____
Space Needle & Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum	_____	\$55	_____
Dinner at Famous Dave's BBQ	_____	\$25	_____
<b>Saturday, October 8, 2016</b>			
Tour of Boeing Museum of Flight	_____	\$43	_____
(includes bus and museum admission; lunch is on your own at museum cafe.)			
Reception	_____	cash bar	_____
Banquet (choose entree below)			
Lemon Seared Pacific Salmon	_____	\$45	_____
Herb Roasted Tri-Tip of Beef	_____	\$45	_____
<b>Sunday, October 9, 2016</b>			
Bus Trips (choose one option):			
Bus tour of Seattle (a stay-on bus tour)	_____	\$40	_____
Trip to Pike Place Market	_____	\$25	_____
Trip to Space Needle:			
Space Needle only	_____	\$45	_____
Space Needle & Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum	_____	\$55	_____
<b>TOTAL</b>			_____

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



# 2016 VBOB REUNION IN SEATTLE, WA

## OCTOBER 5 - 10, 2016

### REUNION PROGRAM

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2016**

2:00 PM - 6:00 PM Registration open  
2:00 PM - 10:00 PM Hospitality Room open (Summit I & II)  
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM Wine and Cheese Reception in Hospitality Room  
Dinner on your own (at hotel or nearby restaurants)

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2016**

8:00 AM - 5:00 PM Registration open  
8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Hospitality Room open (Summit I & II)  
7:00 AM - 9:00 AM Breakfast at hotel  
9:00 AM Bus Departs for Joint Base Lewis-McChord Military Base\*  
Visit the Museum and see WW II Vehicles on the Base  
12:00 Noon Lunch on Base (with the soldiers)  
2:00 PM - 3:00 PM Tour of the Base  
4:00 PM - 4:15 PM Arrival back to the hotel  
Dinner on your own

**\*Important note:** To visit the Military Base, you must bring a government-issued photo ID and you **MUST** sign up for this trip no later than **August 25, 2016** (6 weeks prior to Oct 6). This deadline was issued by the base and it is due to heightened security at Military Bases. No exceptions. Late registrants cannot be accommodated. Hospitality Room will be open if you do not go on the Tour. Please see page 16 for more information.

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2016**

7:00 AM - 9:00 AM Breakfast at hotel  
8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Hospitality Room open (Summit I & II)  
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Membership Meeting (Monterey Room)  
11:00 AM - 12:00 Noon Lunch in Hospitality Room (Summit I & II)  
12:30 PM Buses depart, three options (choose one)  
(a) Bus Tour of Seattle (stay-on Bus tour)  
(b) Trip to Pike Place Market  
(c) Trip to Seattle Space Needle [and Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum]  
3:30 PM - 4:00 PM Return to hotel (arrival around 4:00 PM)  
6:00 PM Depart for Dinner at Famous Dave's BBQ (or dinner on your own)  
8:30 PM Return to Hotel

**SATURDAY, OCTOBER 8, 2016**

7:00 AM - 9:00 AM Breakfast at hotel  
8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Hospitality Room open (Summit I & II)  
9:00 AM Bus Departs for Boeing Museum of Flight  
Lunch at the Museum Cafe (on your own timing)  
1:00 PM - 1:15 PM Return to hotel (arrival around 1:30 PM)  
6:00 PM - 7:00 PM Reception (cash bar)  
7:00 PM - 9:00 PM Banquet at hotel (Monterey Room)

**SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2016**

7:00 AM - 9:00 AM Breakfast at hotel  
8:00 AM - 10:00 PM Hospitality Room open (Summit I & II)  
9:00 AM Buses depart, three options (choose one)  
(a) Bus Tour of Seattle (stay-on Bus tour)  
(b) Trip to Pike Place Market  
(c) Trip to Seattle Space Needle [and Chihuly Garden and Glass Museum]  
1:00 PM Return to hotel (1:00 PM approximate time)  
Dinner on your own

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 10, 2016**

7:00 AM - 10:30 AM Breakfast at hotel  
Depart or stay longer and enjoy beautiful Seattle

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





## DOUBLETREE SUITES BY HILTON, SEATTLE AIRPORT – SOUTHCENTER

16500 Southcenter Parkway

Seattle, WA 98188

website: [www.seattle.doubletree.com](http://www.seattle.doubletree.com)

Phone: 206-575-8220

**RESERVATION DEADLINE FOR GROUP RATE:  
Wednesday, September 21, 2016**

### Hotel Information

The DoubleTree Suites By Hilton Hotel Seattle Airport – Southcenter is located 3 miles from the Seattle Tacoma International Airport (SEATAC). Every suite has 2 rooms – the bedroom and a living room (with a pocket door between the rooms). The living room has a sofa sleeper that can accommodate an additional guest. The bedroom has either 1 king bed or 2 double beds. Each room has a refrigerator. Microwave ovens can be provided upon availability.

The hotel is holding three different types of ADA suites: 5 rooms with 1 king bed, and 3 rooms with 2 double beds. If you need an ADA room, please book your room early. ADA rooms are also suites with a sofa sleeper in the living room.

<b>ROOM RATE:</b>	<b>Single</b>	<b>Double</b>	<b>Triple</b>	<b>Quad</b>
Regular room	\$109	\$109	\$119	\$129
King Corner	\$139	\$139	\$149	\$159

Our rooms are the Regular room (Row 1.) The same rate applies to ADA rooms. If you want to upgrade, you may reserve a King Corner room (Row 2), but they are outside of our room block and subject to availability. King Corner rooms are larger rooms (about 25% larger).

Our room rate is available for up to 3 nights prior to our Reunion and 3 nights following our reunion, but the rooms are subject to availability. If you want to extend your stay in beautiful Seattle, please book your rooms early.

#### RESERVATIONS

**By phone:** call 1-800-222-8733 and say you are with the Veterans of the Battle of the Bulge group or give them a group code of VBB. Or call the hotel direct at 206-575-8220 and you will be transferred to 'reservations.'

**Online:** <http://doubletree.hilton.com/en/dt/groups/personalized/S/SEASPD-VBB-20161005/index.jhtml>

(For online reservations, the group code is also VBB).

All major credit cards accepted. Use the above information to book a Regular Room. If you want to book a King Corner Room, call Laurel (Rooms coordinator) at 206-575-8220 Ext 1124.

Reservations must be made by Wednesday, September 21, 2016 to guarantee the group rate. After September 21, reservations will be made on a space-available basis. In the event you need to cancel your reservation, please inform the hotel by calling 1-800-222-8733 at least 24 hours in advance of your arrival. Individual room cancellations made less than 24 hours prior to arrival and 'no shows' will incur a

1-night room and tax cancellation fee. Please have your confirmation number available if you have to call (1-800-222-8733) and cancel.

#### HOTEL AMENITIES

- Full hot breakfast in the Northwest Landing Restaurant (included)
- Complimentary standard room guest internet access
- Complimentary parking for day and overnight use
- Complimentary Hotel Shuttle (24 hours a day) from airport, and to anyplace within 1 mile of hotel (based on availability)
- Complimentary use of large fitness facility and business center
- Baggage handling and storage (recommended gratuity \$3/bag)
- Very close to the largest shopping center in Seattle
- ATM Machine
- Sundry Shop (offering beverages, snacks and sundry items)
- Beautiful, newly remodeled pool, hot tub, showers, and bathrooms

#### DIRECTIONS TO THE HOTEL

**Airport Shuttle:** Complimentary airport shuttle from SEATAC Airport. After you have retrieved your luggage, go to "Courtesy Pick-up" on the 3rd floor of the parking garage. (Directions: Go up 1 floor from baggage claim, cross the sky bridge, then go down 1 floor. See "Ground Transportation") Go to Island #1 or #3 and call 206-575-8220 from the courtesy phone and the hotel staff will tell you how soon they will be there for you. Please note which Island you are near (#1 or #3).

**Driving Directions:** Hotel is 3 miles from Seattle/Tacoma. Follow signs to all freeways. Take Hwy 518 East to the Southcenter Parkway exit. Turn right at the stop sign. Go through 2 lights and turn right onto Southcenter Parkway. Turn left at 2nd light into the hotel parking lot.

If you use a GPS, enter the town name Tukwila into your GPS (not Seattle--the hotel is actually in Tukwila.)

#### RENTAL CARS

Seattle is a beautiful place. Feel free to add a few days before the Reunion or after the Reunion to explore more of Seattle. Our discounted room rate will be honored for 3 days before the Reunion and 3 days after the Reunion. If you need to rent a car, all major car rental companies are located at the airport (and the hotel shuttle can take you there). Enterprise Car Rental has a location nearby at 1110 SW Grady Way, Renton, WA (425-277-5702). They are 2.6 miles (6 min) from the hotel, and this is outside of the parameter that the hotel shuttle bus serves (but Enterprise might be able to bring the car to you.) Parking at the hotel is free.

# MY NIGHTMARE LASTED 61 YEARS

by Robert E. Thomas, 90th ID, 358th IR



When I received my draft notice during World War II, my father Stephen J. Thomas, who had served as a Chief Radio Operator in World War I, advised me to request the Navy instead of the Army. I remember him saying, "Son, you will almost always have a hot meal and a warm bed." At the induction center they agreed and stamped "U.S. Naval Forces" all over my induction papers, ushered fifty of us into a large auditorium where a Navy Chief with service stripes all the way up to his armpit told us how lucky we were to be in the Navy.

Suddenly, two large doors in the rear flew open and an Army First Sergeant ran down the aisle shouting, "Hold it Chief, I want these men." We had just experienced the shortest career in the Navy anyone had ever experienced. We were then taken to Camp Roberts in California for seventeen weeks of infantry training. Upon completion of our training we were shipped to New York for embarkment to Europe.

One cold dark morning in New York harbor, ten thousand of us boarded the *Queen Mary*. We were a full division of infantry replacements. I recall a very cold January 1945. Once on board, I stood outside by the railing. As we passed the Statue of Liberty, the cold wind blew away my tears. The vibration of the engine and the sound of the water splashing against the hull made me wonder if I would ever see her again. The *Queen* was fast, so we had no escort. For eleven days we zigzagged to avoid subs. Almost all the troops were seasick. The bunks were stacked four high.

We landed at Firth of Clyde in Scotland, where we climbed down the sides on cargo nets onto flat steel decks of landing crafts that were bobbing up and down. We traveled by train across Scotland and England, arriving in Southampton. Six of us and all of our equipment were stacked in the train compartment when suddenly the door opened and an English Red Cross Lady stuck her head in and said in a thick English/Scottish brogue, "Laddies wud ya like sum coffee?" One fellow held out his cup, took a swig and said, "Ugh, you English call this coffee?" Her reply was, "Laddy, if ya con't drink it, ya con wash ur feet in it."

Transferred to a boat, we approached Le Havre, France, which was heavily damaged by bombing. Here we were loaded aboard boxcars left over from World War One called "forty and eights." They held forty men or eight horses and traveled across France. The train would slow down as we approached the intersections where the French people would be waiting. They would hand us long loaves of bread and long-neck bottles of wine.

Walking alone and dragging my bags to a replacement camp at Metz, France I entered a long, dark tunnel with a dim light at the far end. It was very quiet. I could hear my boots hit the stone floor. A deep voice from behind me asked, "Can I help you sir?" I turned around to see a dark skinned fellow about 6' 7" tall with a turban around his head. I was shocked, because he had made no sound as he approached me from the rear, that I just stood there. He took my bags and led me to the light at the end of the tunnel. I entered a huge dark courtyard, surrounded by tall stone buildings with fires burning under large kettles of water. I was handed a rifle wrapped in orange wax paper covered with a thick grease called cosmoline and instructed to boil it in water and clean it. Later about twelve of us were loaded aboard a truck and driven to the front.

After many hours of traveling, we began to hear explosions and see flashes of light in the distance. As we got closer, the sounds were much louder, the flashes seemed unreal, and we could now hear small arms fire. About a mile or so later the truck stopped and we were told to get out and wait for the "old men." The old men were fellows who had been on the line for a month. We followed the four of them in single file, arm on shoulder arm on shoulder. Even with all the flashes of light, we could not see a thing. Some guys fell into shell holes.

After enduring a long walk in the freezing cold, we arrived at the Siegfried Line, which was built by the Germans. It was a series of below-ground fortifications, gun ports, concrete bunkers, mined and booby trapped areas, and "Dragons Teeth." They were large concrete pyramid shaped objects used to block entry of tanks. All of this was connected by trenches. The Germans had the artillery coordinates on each bunker so as soon as we took each one, the artillery would come in and hole us up inside for hours or days. When there was a lull in artillery fire, we would go down the trench to the next bunker. As we entered the foul smelling, dimly lit bunker, there were many small fires burning. The walls were covered with black soot, water running down the sides. GIs were lying all over. Many were burning small handfuls of C-2 explosive. The fires gave off light, but gave everyone headaches. A weary-looking 2nd Lieutenant stood up, and amid the explosions and vibrations outside welcomed us into General George S. Patton's 3rd Army, 90th Division and the Battle of the Bulge.

The Lieutenant explained the plan. We were to work our way down the trenches to the next fort in line, supply cover fire for the explosive engineer, blow the heavy steel door(s) and roust out the soldiers. The Germans ate well, as evidenced by canned hams and beef from Denmark, black brot (bread) and schnapps. Since we had no rations, and were forced to live off of the land, we would rush in, grab the food, and hole up until the artillery would stop, and then move to the next bunker.

"Dead Eye" was our explosive engineer, a short, funny guy with two canvas pouches criss-crossed across his chest—one carrying the plastic explosive C-2, and the other detonators.

He wore a steel helmet with a bullet hole in the front where he had caught a round. It looked as if he had been shot in the forehead, but since he also wore a plastic helmet liner below the steel helmet, the round went between the two layers and popped out the back of the steel helmet. He was unharmed but it knocked him out cold. From then on, he would not wear any other helmet. It was his lucky "rabbit's foot" helmet. He would run up to the steel door, plant the charge and blow the door. He was very good at that—that's how he got his name. He was a very brave man. On occasions, we could not get to the steel door, so we called a "TD" (also called a tank destroyer,) which was a tank with a big gun up front. The TD driver would pull up to the steel door and fire a few rounds. This would kill most of the soldiers inside, but it would solve our problem.

Near the end of the Siegfried Line, after the door was blown, I was the first one through the door, followed by my buddies. As I cleared the doorway into the bunker, there was this small nine- or ten-year-old child about twelve feet away, kneeling on one knee, a large uniform dwarfing his small body, a huge helmet framing the very small face, and his eyes were looking right at me. He was pointing a submachine ("burp") gun at me. I shot him and ran out of the bunker.

After the Siegfried campaign, we started to clear the villages and continued on our search for food. At one farmhouse we found lots of eggs,



but no animals. We hardboiled a batch and looked around for anything else. I ate one dozen of the hard boiled eggs and half of a jar of gooseberries. I did not know what they were at the time. Delicious. It was late in the afternoon when we came upon the last farm to clear and everyone was bushed, so we decided to take cover and konk out in the barn loft. As I started to lie down, I looked out the barn opening and saw this outhouse down below, about fifty yards away perched on the edge of a dry riverbed. That was a luxury I could not pass up. As I pulled my pants down and started to sit, I heard the sound of a motor and the squeaking of tracks nearby. Looking through the cracks in the boards of the outhouse, I could see this tank coming towards me in the riverbed. When it was about to pass, it turned and the flasher on the end of the barrel came to within inches of knocking the outhouse over. It was a King Tiger tank. As it crested the edge of the bank, it began firing at the barn loft. I ran out, headed up the riverbed and joined some of the guys. I lost some real friends that afternoon.

The Ardennes forest was filled with Christmas fir trees. (They looked like Christmas fir trees, but they did not smell like Christmas fir trees.) It was very quiet, no artillery, no birds or animals, and it was dark. Dawn was approaching. We were stretched out in a line perpendicular to the road next to me, waiting for armored support (tanks) to come so we could advance on the village from which we were receiving a lot of fire. Finally, we could faintly hear the motor and the squeaks of the tracks as a tank approached. We were expecting a Sherman tank, but it turned out to be a Tiger. It passed without firing a shot. Before panic engulfed our group, a soldier on horseback ran after the tank. Some of the guys fired at the rider. As we advanced, I looked to my right and saw the horse standing there with multiple bleeding bullet wounds on his rear flank. The soldier was on the ground. We cleared the village. There were no other tanks. We knew they were running out of petrol.

About five or six of us were requested to string a wire and phone out on the side of a mountain to act as a forward observation post to report any enemy action. It took four guys just to carry the stick and spool of wire. It was very quiet and cold. Suddenly rockets started to come in. We called these rockets "screaming meemies" because of the terrible sounds they make. I huddled on the ground clutching my helmet, trying to climb into it for protection. I awoke in an evacuation center on a stretcher on the floor. I was in a state of deep vertigo. It seemed as though the room was spinning. I was bleeding from both ears and I was very nauseated. I had a concussion due to a head injury. My condition was diagnosed as Acoustic Blast Trauma. After being hospitalized, they placed me on limited assignment and sent me to a holding center. Early one morning a Lieutenant Dostilick (may be wrong name) came into the tent. He was the 90th Division headquarters officer. His assignment was to reconnoiter the surrounding areas that had already been cleared and report to division headquarters. He asked me to ride "shotgun" on the back of his Harley Motorcycle, handed me a "grease gun" (45 cal. submachine gun) and away we went. After riding several hours through the winding mountain passes, we saw a small village. As we passed, people started to put white flags out of the top windows of their houses. At the end of the street was a factory building with a tall smokestack. It was surrounded by chain link fence and barbed wire. We parked the cycle and approached the gate. About 7 or 8 men in long white coats started milling around. The Lieutenant asked who was in charge, and one man pointed across the street. There stood a tall Victorian house with a bay window sticking out on the top floor. A kind elderly lady took us upstairs to the top floor in front, and closed the door. The room was empty. We stood there for several minutes in silence. Suddenly the curtain covering the bay window pulled back, exposing a tall crew cut civilian. He spoke good English—he was the

Mine Director. Lieutenant asked for a tour. It was a large complex. As we toured the lab, we passed a microwave-sized kiln. The Director opened a small door, showing us some tobacco leaves he had just roasted—he laughed and said, "For my smoking." He said this facility was part of a large salt mine complex and that he would take us down the elevator for an inspection tomorrow. We agreed, told him we would be back the next day, and rode off. A few miles away, we stopped and discussed the situation. We both came to the conclusion that we had wandered onto an area not yet taken by the 90th division, hence the white flags out the windows, men in long white coats milling around (we were told later they had automatic weapons under their coats) and the cooperation of the mine director. They must have thought we were the advanced scouts of a large American force—otherwise they would have shot us. On that basis, the Lieutenant decided to give a few hours to get up steam, and go back.

Later as we neared the mine, we could see volumes of steam arising from the tall smokestack. When the large freight elevator reached the bottom of the shaft, all of the lights were on, and we could see cavernous rooms, long tunnels, high ceilings and small gauge tracks. There were crates, bags and all kinds of items stacked about. The Director led the Lieutenant into a room on the left while I explored one on the right. The room was stacked floor to ceiling with rows and rows of many different types of books. I selected two parchment covered books, one in German "Hoffgerichts Ordnung year 1578", and one in Latin "Borcholten J Amsterdamse Secretary, Amsterdam year 1726." I still have both volumes. We returned to base and reported the find.

The next day, the Lieutenant and I went back to the mine, followed by other members of the 90th Division Headquarters staff. I was instructed to take the cycle and ride out a few miles to the crossroad. I was to wait there and direct some trucks to the mine. Some time passed before I saw many semi-trucks winding down the mountain pass. I watched the displaced persons, i.e: former slave laborers ("DP's"), bring up contents of the mine and load the trucks. I was ordered back to the holding center.

It was revealed later that, in the Battle of the Bulge, Hitler decided to make a last major effort to win the war, so he had called in all available forces, including old men and young boys. When I shot that ten-year-old child in that bunker, it was my belief that I had killed an untrained, innocent child, unwillingly conscripted into service. For sixty-one years the guilt I have felt from that terrible act has haunted me, until last year. In 2005, the 90th Infantry Division had their reunion in Corpus Christi, Texas. I was privileged to attend. I met many outstanding veterans, two of whom made a change in my life.

Verne Schmidt introduced me to a former Hitler Youth, Bruno Ehlick (author of "Born on the Wrong Side of the Fence"), who at the age of nine years was one of Hitler's boy soldiers. Bruno stressed the fact that the child I saw was a well-trained, highly-motivated killer, who without hesitation would have killed me and all of my buddies behind me.

General George S. Patton has my deepest respect. As General of the Army, he was an outstanding tactician. He once said "All real Americans love the sting and clash of battle" and that "Battle is the most magnificent competition in which a human being can indulge." That may be true, but I was an eighteen-year-old kid fresh out of high school. To me combat was fear, severe cold, hunger, diarrhea, confusion and of course, survival, in that order.

I was awarded the Combat Infantryman Badge, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Medal, Bronze Star, European-African-Middle Eastern Campaign Medal with 3 Bronze Battle Stars, World War II Victory Medal and the Army Occupation Medal for Germany.

—Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be/](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be/)

# RAGE KILLS

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

The Battle of The Bulge was raging full force and swirling all around us. "I" Company, 424th Infantry Regiment was holding a blocking position across a small valley on the edge of a river. The company was spread from the high ground on the right of the line, down to and across a road leading to a critical bridge on the left. We were holding the bridge, to enable friendly forces to withdraw through our lines to the next blocking position. A series of strategic withdrawals had been forced on us by the massive assault launched by three German Armies on 16 December.

Engineers were preparing the bridge for destruction in the face of imminent attack. Wild Bill Hissong and I were the company Sniper Team, sent to the river's edge to cover the engineers as they placed explosives under the bridge. As bad luck would have it, a two-man, German scout party on motorcycles came roaring around a hill and made it to the bridge just as Bill and I got into position. "Bill, you take the guy on the right, I'll get the other one," I said quietly. With two shots we dropped them. The engineers continued their work.

About ten minutes later, an American half-track came around the hill and up to the bridge where the scouts were sprawled out. A head emerged to survey the situation. It was a German officer. Apparently, he thought the road ahead was clear since the scouts had not reported any enemy. "Take him, Bill! I'll get the driver!" Two shots rang out. The officer dropped dead and the half-track swerved and stalled on the hillside to the right. I had put a bullet through the driver's 4 X 8 inch side vision aperture—a direct hit to the head. The engineers finished setting the explosives and ran the detonating wires over the road to our position. All was quiet for a while. We took turns surveying the valley from where the scouts and half-track had come. We snoozed, taking advantage of the opportunity, since none of us had much sleep over the past week.

About noon a small, open German Volkswagen "jeep" came around the hill cautiously, followed by two large trucks with troops and several larger trucks loaded with heavy equipment. Obviously, it was an engineer detachment sent to repair bridges over the river, wherever they found them damaged. We took them under fire. The "jeep" spun around and darted behind the trucks. The troops poured out of the vehicles and spread out. The engineers blew the bridge. We dashed back up the hill to our positions to await an attack, but no attack came.

However, the enemy bombarded us all afternoon and all night with artillery and "screaming meemies," a particularly loud and scary high trajectory weapon that dropped shells in scattered patterns. We never knew where they would hit next. My dugout was large enough for

three, covered with logs and dirt, and had two openings each about three feet wide and nine to ten inches high. Through these apertures we could observe and shoot to the left and straight ahead. My companions were armed with a BAR (Browning Automatic Rifle) and an M1 semi-automatic rifle. I had my sniper rifle with telescopic sight. No attack by foot soldiers came, while all the shelling continued, so we took turns on watch, allowing two to try to get some sleep. The sub-freezing temperature made it difficult, even when snuggled up against a buddy. We shared one thin blanket. At dawn, I was on watch. I looked out the two firing apertures, and was surprised to see eight inches of new snow.

The shelling had stopped. It was so quiet it was eerie. Fog hugged the ground, concealing everything beyond sixty to eighty yards. Since all seemed quiet, I snuck out the back of the dugout, stepping carefully over the two huddled at the bottom of the hole. I kicked around in the snow looking for an empty ration can to fill with dirt, so we could pour a little gasoline in it to warm water. It was now light and a fire wouldn't give away our position. Suddenly, a dozen bullets snapped and cracked around me. I dove head-first into the dugout's front aperture. I'll never know how I squeezed through that slit. (Thank God, I had lost a lot of weight.)

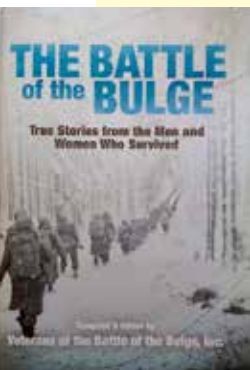
How dare they shoot at me? I took it very personally. I jumped up, grabbed the BAR and looked for the assailants. I'd make them pay. Enemy bullets struck all around the parapet in front, kicking up frozen dirt, rocks and snow. One rock hit my forehead, another just above my right eye. It hurt like hell and blood streamed down my face. Thank God, I wasn't hit above the left eye, since I shot left-handed. I paid no attention to the wounds.

A twelve man patrol had sneaked up on us under cover of fog. I aimed the automatic rifle down the hill to where I thought the shots had come. Nobody there—nobody! Then I remembered a terrace below us in the open field. The bastards were hiding behind it. I fired a few shots in their direction, kicking up dirt and snow above them. Then, I saw the backs of men running hunched over along the terrace, heading downhill to our left. I couldn't get in a good, clear shot. Then I recalled a cut in the terrace for wagons to go up and down the hill. The Krauts would be exposed crossing that eight foot wide space. Now I had them. I laid the rifle on the left side of the cut and waited. My trigger finger itched, my head throbbed and my blood boiled. One by one they ran across the opening seeking safety on the other side. And one by one I shot them. Four made the crossing, running shoulder to shoulder behind a buddy.

By now our whole defense line was awake and alert. The four remaining Germans sprang from behind the terrace and made a dash into a large culvert under the road near the blown bridge. We had them now. Our men on the other side of the road penned them in. I screamed up the hill, "Pete, bring your bazooka and come down here." Pete Yuch was our anti-tank rocket gunner, and a damn good one. He ran, and I hobbled down the wagon road behind our positions until we were about a hundred yards from the culvert. I was still seething with rage as I loaded a rocket into the bazooka and wound the wires on the electrical terminals. I tapped Pete on the shoulder. "Ready to fire. Get those sneaky Krauts for me, Pete," I yelled.

The bazooka roared. The rocket struck the ground with a dull boom about twenty yards short, the sound muffled by the snow. I loaded another rocket, wired it and tapped him on the shoulder. "Up just a hair, Pete and we'll make mince-meat of them." The bazooka roared again, the rocket hissed and slammed into the culvert. There was one helluva blast, that echoed back and forth across the valley. "Good shooting, Pete. I guess we cleaned their clock." I was still in a rage.

—Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be/](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be/)



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# WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!

These new members joined VBOB, as of March 31, 2016\*:

Aguilar, Diana Bennett	Associate	Fusco, Joseph L	Associate	Millard, Guy	87 INFD
Amor, Louisa P	Associate	Gliha, Evelyn	Associate	Miller, Harry F	740 TK BN
Bernovich, Jeffrey	Associate	Grasberger, Frank	106 INFD	Morris, Beverly	Associate
Bernovich, Guy	Associate	Grunert, Charles L	2 ARMDD	Palmiere, Florence	Associate
Bock, Jim	Associate.	Hathaway, Mable	Associate	Patton, Judd	Associate
Burby, James V	Associate	Hawkins, Lorraine	Associate	Pierson, Jeffrey	Associate
Cerce Jr, Louis	Associate	Hurt, Matthew	Associate	Pollet, Bruno	Associate
Chauvet, Maurice	8 ARMDD	Huseman, William K	8 ARMDD	Ryan, Cheryl	Associate
Clair, Richard S	Associate	Kennedy III, Joseph W	Associate	Schulman, Roger	Associate
Cobb, Louise	Associate	Kennedy, Karen A.	Associate	Simpson, Arthur	Associate
Crandall, Joan M	Associate	Lefemine, James	Associate	Smith, Gregory	Associate
Dahlberg, Patrik	Associate	Levin, Steven	Associate	Stein, Thomas	Associate
Davis, Claude O	119 AAA Bn	Levin, Suzanne	Associate	Turner, Francis C	2 ARMDD
Feinberg, Samuel	106 INFD	Linchet, Dominique	Associate	Vranken, Frederik	Associate
Fluck, Willard H	84 INFD	Loesing, Richard	Associate	Whalen, Barbara	Associate
Fournier, Joseph	Associate	Medbury, Dan	Associate	Williamson, Donna	Associate
Franco, John	Associate	Meigs, Robert W	99 INFD	Zani, Delio	76 INFD
Fravel, Frederic D	Associate	Merrick, Cody W	Associate		

\* Due to a production error, some new members were omitted from the February 2016 issue. We are including them here and apologize for the error.

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](http://www.vbob.org)
- Sending us articles to be included in *The Bulge Bugle*
- Plan to attend our Annual Reunion in Seattle, WA, October 2016 (See pages 16-19 for details.)

## TOURS PLANNED FOR 2016

### NUREMBERG, PILSEN LIBERATION FESTIVAL & PRAGUE TOUR May 1 - 10, 2016

The tour begins in Frankfurt. We see Nuremberg with its Nazi Rally ruins and War Crimes Courthouse, and participate as honored guests in the world famous Pilsen Liberation Festival (see many YouTube reports) in the Czech Republic when 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.



### LUXEMBOURG-AMERICAN FRIENDSHIP WEEK June 20 – 27, 2016

The US Veterans Friends of Luxembourg warmly invite all American WW II Veterans, their families and friends to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg for the Luxembourg-American Friendship Week. Visit the Pescatore (Gen. Patton's HQ), Oetrange with the Chapel of the 4 Chaplains, Hamm American Cemetery, Diekirch National Museum of Military History, Vianden Castle, Dahl for National Day celebrations, 80th ID wreath laying in Heiderscheid and Mertzig, Ahn winery dinner and Bastogne.

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

# THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE: ONE SMALL CORNER

by John Fague, 11 Armdd, 21 AIB

*This is an excerpt from Fague's book of the same title, published by The Shippensburg Historical Society, 2008.*

The plan was for us to attack the hill in front of us. The battalion moved out from the road in basic training fashion, leaps and bounds and rushes, everything according to the book. We charged across the open ground and up the hill until we were ordered to stop. And now the officers decided that we were attacking the wrong hill! The Krauts were not up there. Somebody had made a miscalculation. I was told later that the tank commander yelled to battalion commander, Lt. Col. Hoffman, and asked him if he felt qualified to lead his men. His reply was, "I guess not."

Later I understood that Col. Hoffman accidentally let the tank hatch drop on his shoulder and he had to be evacuated. That took care of that problem. Col. Hoffman was succeeded by Major Tansey, a dashing West Point officer. I remember him walking around with his 45-caliber pistol strapped to his waist, screaming orders in his high-pitched voice, walking where the fighting was the thickest.

Since we had blundered in attacking the wrong hill, Major Tansey and Capt. Fabrick led our company along a railroad track around the hill. We walked down the railroad tracks in a column of two for several hundred yards and then cut cross-country up over the hill. I noticed several knocked out American tanks on the hill, but nothing more. Although I didn't know it then, we were heading toward the town of Chenogne, Belgium, which I presume was our original objective. This town was to witness the bloodiest fighting of our campaign in Belgium. Our company came across the hill in scattered formation, the first platoon leading the way. I remember wading through snowdrifts and crawling under several barbed wire fences. As I came over the top of that open hill, I little suspected the trap into which we were to be caught. Several times, shells burst in the pine trees 150 yard to my left and some shrapnel hit the snow around me. I couldn't figure out then if that was close support from our artillery or enemy fire. I guess it was the Jerries because they had spotted every move we made.

Suddenly I had an experience of horror. Again I got that sudden sickening in my stomach. There in front of me were two-man foxholes. I could make out the forms of American boys, GIs slumped over in a sitting position, dead. The snow had drifted over their bodies so I could hardly distinguish their features. I then realized there was something wrong with this place. Someone yelled that the 9th Armored Division had been driven out of here a few days before.

As we walked along, Capt. Fabrick yelled for someone to fire a few rounds into a haystack in front of us. Someone fired a few rounds, and this turned out to be very fortunate. The Jerries figured we had spotted them and they opened up with their machine gun. The sound of that gun I will never forget. The German machine gun has a much faster rate of fire than our gun and so they are easily distinguished. The sound of that gun echoed across the snow and everything in me seemed to stop. There were six of us in the first rank as we passed over the crest of the hill. We could see the town of Chenogne 300 yards in front of us. All of us instinctively dove for cover in the snow. I looked for a hole to crawl into, but there was none.

The first burst of gunfire had killed two men and wounded three, leaving me the lucky one. As I raised my head to look around, I saw boys to the left kicking and writhing in the snow. I knew they were



From left to right: S/Sgt John Fague, PFC Donald E. White, PFC Dock E. Deakle, and driver of the "BAT," T/5 Orvin P. Rasnic.

hit and I wanted to get to them but I couldn't. I knew approximately who they were, although I could not see their faces. Sgt. Carl E. Petersen from Oregon and William Kidney from Toledo, Ohio were dead. Bill Bassert and Charles Hocker from Philadelphia were badly wounded. Johnny Kale, who was lying near me, began to whine in pain. He yelled to me that he was hit. I crawled on my stomach through the snow to him. I found a bullet had hit him in the calf of the leg but it wasn't bleeding badly. It looked like a clean wound. I took the Carlisle bandage from his belt and bandaged his wound. I gave him his sulfa tablets to prevent infection, but the water to take the pills with was frozen in his canteen. I told him to eat snow with the pills. Remembering my basic training, I took the clips of rifle ammunition from his belt and told him to crawl to the rear. As soon as Kale was gone, my attention was again drawn to that Jerry machine gun. It was still spitting out death across the snow. I knew I had to get into a hole somewhere or that gun would get me. I spotted a hole 20 yards down the hill and made a run for it. It was filled with snow, but I flopped in.

My protection was just a shallow slit trench. Every time I heard that machine gun rip off a burst, I tried to draw my buttocks more into the hole or pull in a leg. At this time I experienced the loneliest and most desolate feeling I had ever gone through. I looked back and could see none of the rest of the platoon behind me. The few boys on my right had either been killed, or were lying face down and very still. On my left and in front there was nothing but Krauts. A few yards to my right lay a dead German. He must have been killed the day before, as he was frozen stiff.

The idea came into my head that maybe the company would withdraw and leave me there. I thought to myself, "Well Fague, it looks like the end is very near." My morale was at the lowest it had ever reached.

I had a weapon in my hand and I was determined to use it whatever happened. I saw some activity in the house ahead, Krauts running around. I opened up with my rifle. I fired one shot and my rifle jammed. While I had been giving Kale first aid, I dragged my rifle through the snow and got snow and dirt in the receiver. I had trouble drawing back the bolt, but I could still operate my rifle one round at a time. I doubt if I hit anything but it made me feel good to be shooting and doing something.

My isolated little battlefield soon came to life. I heard machine gun fire coming from my rear, and it was a wonderful sound. I saw those beautiful red tracer bullets from our guns arch across the snow into the Jerry position in front of me. I heard our tanks coming from the rear

and I knew I was no longer alone. What a wonderful feeling the sight of our tanks gave me! I felt like jumping up and charging the enemy position alone. I was so excited I was no longer afraid. Behind me I heard voices yelling, and commands. I saw buddies from my platoon moving over the bodies of those who had just been killed. They were moving in leaps and bounds from bushes to snowdrifts. When they came abreast of me, I went along with them. I rushed to an abandoned German tank 75 yards in front of me and took cover behind it.

At the tank I was soon joined by Frank H. Holquist. He brought his machine gun and set up for business. The next arrivals were Robert A. Fordyce, from Erie, Pennsylvania, and Paul L. Gentile. They were carrying ammunition for the machine gun. The sergeants soon joined us. Holquist now gave us a tune on his machine gun. He was keeping the Krauts busy, who were dug in around the house 50 yards in front of us. I decided this was the time to take my rifle apart and get the snow out of it.

## SHARPSHOOTING AND SHARP WHITTILING

Russell Hathaway from Ada, Ohio, spent 15 months in European Theatre and fought in The Battle of the Bulge.

Russell went across the English Channel in LST (flat open barge) to Normandy November 1, 1944. Back home in Ohio, a son ( Larry) was born to Russell and his wife Mable November 5, 1944.

Russell was a Private First Class with the "Railsplitters"—Anti Tank Company, 3rd Platoon, 335 Infantry Regiment, 84th Infantry



Division. He had seen a lot of destruction from the war, but had not been in combat until they got orders December 24, 1944 to "get out the best way you can." His unit had been held up in Bastogne, Belgium. They had been staying in a basement of a deserted house with their truck backed into the garage, out behind the house. He had one trip to

the garage and no time to take his duffle bag. The truck radiator had two holes from shrapnel. Russell whittled wood plugs to fill the holes. Two men rode on the front bumper to keep filling the radiator with water. They had gotten the order at 4p.m., and at 5p.m. six men plus the driver drove the truck out of the garage (pulling a 57 millimeter anti-tank gun like a trailer) while under fire from the enemy. A German tank (60 ton) had made deep tracks. This was Russell's first time in a combat situation. The men got out of the truck and into the tracks. Russell was laying in the track, head to head with Mac McQuin. Mac was shot in the head with a 30 caliber machine gun. Russell and other soldiers got him to back to the command post. They never heard anything more about Mac. They followed half-track tracks until dark, using black-out lights to travel after dark. Lt. Kelso got injured in leg (his driver was killed). Kelso ended up on Russell's truck.

This battle continued until January 31, 1945 and Russell's unit was there until the end. The unit crossed the Rhine for the final offense in Germany, ending up in Heidelberg, with temporary headquarters.

While waiting to return to the U.S., Russell competed in sharpshooting contests and qualified for several medals. On November 23, 1945, Russell headed for home from France on a small victory ship. A terrific storm was on them for three days after leaving the Mediterranean Sea and entering the Atlantic Ocean. The ship tipped 37 degrees during those days. (They capsize at 45 degrees). Most of the men were sick, but Russell was not. Russell received Honorable Discharge December 8, 1945.

Russell had never talked much about his wartime experiences until he acquired and read the book: *The 84th Infantry Division in the Battle of Germany from Nov. 1944-May 1945*, by Lt. Theodore Draper. With the help of this book, Russell could track his unit at different locations and time periods, and this made it easier for him to share his own experiences.

Russell went on the Honor Flight from Columbus, Ohio to Washington, D.C. on April 21, 2007.

On December 12, 2011, Russell and Mable celebrated 69 years of marriage, shortly before his death on December 25, 2011. He passed away in their Ohio home at the age of 92. He was surrounded by his family on that Christmas evening—67 years after spending his Christmas in The Battle of the Bulge.

—Submitted by Drena Hathaway Metzger, his daughter,  
and Mable Hathaway, his wife, Associate



Russell Hathaway, 84th INFD, 335th REG, sharpshooting (top photo), and on a tank, in Heidelberg, Germany, 1945. (far right, bottom photo).



# MY BATTLE OF THE BULGE

by Gus Blass II, 24 CAV RECON SQD 4 CAV GP



I doubt the Battle of the Bulge could take a back seat in the military career of any soldier. Being a part of this battle was the most memorable event of my military career. It came at Christmas time in 1944 and was Hitler's final offensive of the war. After it, the Germans were on defense, fighting and withdrawing deeper into their homeland.

Hitler's plan was to come out of the Ardennes in a swift move, break through the Allies line, turn north and capture Antwerp. This would cut off the English Army from that

of the American one. The Ardennes is an area where Germany and Belgium join along the Our River. Luxembourg and Belgium are to the south, and Aachen, Germany into the north.

Somehow, Hitler thought he might take Antwerp and negotiate some kind of peace. We had our gasoline stored at Liege, one of the German's main objectives. Hitler thought that by making such a wedge in our lines he could create another Dunkirk. The battle started on December 16. I remember most the cold and snow. The temperature was about 10 degrees above zero. We did not have air support for several days because our air force was "souped in" over in England. General Eisenhower had not expected a German offensive in this area, so many of the units there were unseasoned. One needs to understand the terrain of this area to properly imagine the battlefield. The terrain consists of forested hills, steep twisting valleys, rushing streams, and tiny quaint villages. There are few good or straight roads.

During the Battle of the Bulge, we were rushed to defend St. Vith, Belgium. I have always thought St. Vith was the most important town, even more so than Bastogne. In stopping the Germans at St Vith, we had denied them an important objective. If the Germans had a chance of success, it had to come in a lightning thrust. There was no room in their game plan for delay, and yet we stalled them.

Harrison Salisbury, writing in a history of World War II, noted: "All but cut off, the Americans failed to yield St. Vith on the right shoulder of the German breakthrough. The Germans drastically needed to overrun St Vith because it guarded the Allies' oil and gasoline supplies. In their quick strike the Nazis couldn't carry enough fuel on their own to fight a long battle. Unable to take St Vith, the Germans finally split their force and went around, which brought them to the crossroads town of Bastogne."

Bastogne was due west of us. The Germans encircled Bastogne and had it besieged when Patton and his Third Army arrived from the South on a dead run. But oddly it was the 101st Airborne Division, fighting a ground war, arrived first by an hour or so and beat the large German Panzer force of General Heinrich Von Luttwitz. Patton's forces came right behind them. Later, Von Luttwitz wrote, "I still don't understand how General Patton and the airborne leaders moved so many men and so much equipment as far as they did in no more time than they had."

Eisenhower was quick to realize that this was a major German offensive. "Tell George to send two divisions (of his 3rd Army),"

Eisenhower told Omar Bradley. At that moment, Patton was poised to strike into Germany's coal bin, the Saar. Patton's Army was intact, not having been shot up like the First Army, whose infantry, armor and artillery had really been hit hard. Discounting Patton, the only reserves that Ike had other than troops in England, which were too far away to be a factor, were the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions that were recovering from earlier fighting in camps located around Rheims. Both airborne divisions were told to move out and fight as foot soldiers. Meeting with Patton, Bradley and Jacob Devers, Eisenhower asked how soon Patton could wheel his army 90 degrees and strike north into the southern flank of the Bulge? "Two days," Patton answered. "Sure you don't need three?" asked Ike. "Not my style," said Patton. "Me and my men can do anything, even change direction. But, getting on with it is what we do best. " With a salute, he was gone.

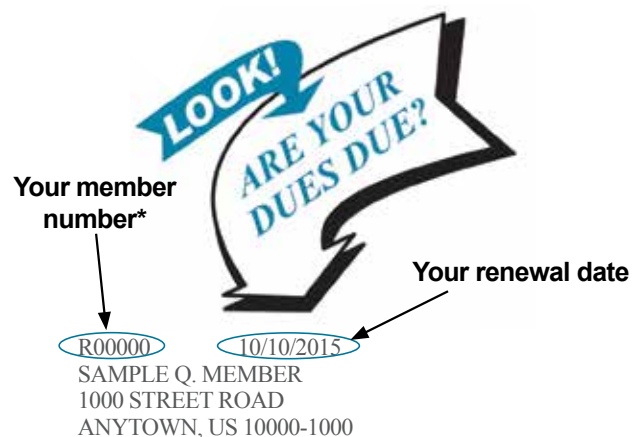
There are many things I recall about the Battle of the Bulge. One thing was that our Christmas presents were either lost or confiscated by the Germans. Another thing I remember is the severe cold that never rose above 10 degrees. We had fur-lined combat boots, which made your feet sweat. Often the perspiration froze and caused trench foot disease. Because my group was equipped with armored vehicles, we could remove our damp socks and dry them on warm equipment. The infantry outside did not have this luxury. Instead, they would sometimes take off their wet socks and wrap them around their waists or shoulders, hoping to get them dry. There were many cases where our nails would turn blue, and then our feet white, as trench foot set in. A number of men lost their toes, or feet up to the ankles as a result.

Not only were we fighting seasoned German troops, but adverse weather. In hot weather, at least you usually got cool nights. But in ten-degree day temperature, the nights are even colder. The ground was frozen, so you can imagine how tough it was to dig foxholes for protection. Luckily, we had armored cars, so during the Battle of the Bulge, I recall we slept under our vehicles. But we just couldn't get warm. And the snow! One could have made a small fortune selling sunglasses because the glare on the endless snow was unbelievable.

I really didn't realize we had a segregated army until I got in combat. The blacks in our area were mostly in the transportation corps.

## WHEN ARE MY DUES DUE?

Look at the back cover address label:



**\*PLEASE NOTE: If your member number starts with the letter "L", you are a LIFE MEMBER, and therefore do not owe any more dues, ever!**

This was what we called the Red Ball Express, which hauled endless loads of ammo, food, supplies, etc. Why the name? The maps were poor and printed in the metric system. So we devised a system of painting red dots on poles, trees and landmarks for them to follow. That is how the name Red Ball Express came about. There were many heroes among those black fellows driving, hauling and fighting. At St. Vith, they got out of their trucks and fought side-by-side with us.

At the Bulge we also had to worry about English-speaking German troops who dressed in captured American uniforms. They infiltrated our lines, cut phone lines, turned road signs the wrong way, directed American columns down the wrong road, and used other ruses to disrupt us. These counterfeit troops were the idea of SS Colonel Otto Skorzeny and the undertaking was designated Operation Grief. At the time, the Allies called Skorzeny “the most dangerous man in Europe.” Their activities got so bad that MPs were stopping everyone and asking them questions that they believed only real Americans would know. Two of the questions were: “How many home runs did Babe Ruth hit?” and “What’s the capital of Maryland?” A correspondent said “Baltimore” and was waved on before he could correct himself. However, MPs locked up Brigadier Bruce Clark of the 7th Armored briefly, because he kept insisting the Chicago Cubs were in the American League. The German infiltrators dressed in American uniforms were eventually all captured and shot. Wearing an enemy uniform is considered spying and totally against the rules of war. Once a soldier takes off his uniform to avoid discovery, he loses his rights as a prisoner of war under the Rules of the Geneva Convention.

One tragedy of this battle was the massacre of 140 Americans at Malmedy, just up the road from St Vith. The men, all of Battery B, 285th, Field Artillery Observation Battalion, ran into a tank column commanded by SS Colonel Joachim Peiper. Not equipped to fight, the spotters surrendered. Suddenly, several German machine guns opened up, massacring the men standing there with their hands in the air. Some of the Americans survived by feigning death.

Both Peiper and Skorzeny survived the war. Peiper was convicted of war crimes and sentenced to death, but the conviction was later commuted to life in prison. He was eventually released. Skorzeny was tried by a military court and acquitted. The massacre at Malmedy had a sobering effect on the American troops. Until that time, none of us were particularly mad at the Germans. They were doing their jobs and we were doing ours. But after Malmedy, there was a change in the attitude and behavior of our soldiers. It was hard to hold back some of our guys when they encountered prisoners.

When the Germans went on the surprise offensive even airborne troops were rushed into the breach. Private First Class Kurt Gabel of the 17th Airborne was fighting near the village of Houffalize when he saw two medics shot as they crawled forward in the snow to try and drag a wounded American to safety. Gabel, born in Germany but raised in California, was guarding a half dozen German POWs nearby

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when he witnessed the shooting. He promptly herded his German prisoners ahead of him at gunpoint to use as a shield while he rescued the three fallen Americans.

“That’s not in the Geneva Convention Rules,” yelled his lieutenant from behind a fallen tree. “Neither is shooting medics,” retorted PFC Gabel.

There was no further firing as Gabel proceeded forward. Speaking in German and holding his rifle steady, Gabel had his POWs carry the two medics and one fallen infantryman to safety.

One of my good friends was Captain Barrett Dillow, who commanded Company “C” of the 24th. He was one of the best, most fearless men I met during my time in the service. Wounded three times, he was awarded two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars and a Distinguished Service Cross.

As we were leaving the Ardennes Forest, Barrett was shot through the stomach. He sent for me and I arrived to see him bandaged from his hips to his armpits. “You are lucky, Barrett, because they will send you stateside to recover. By time you’re well, the war will be over,” I told him. He gave me a wan smile, saying, “Maybe, Gus, maybe.” A day or so later, I looked up from my armored car and there stood Dillow. He had gone AWOL (Absent Without Leave) from the hospital and rejoined us. “Barrett, what are you doing here? You had a ticket home,” I said in astonishment. Dillow answered, “Gus, I had to come look after you. Those fellows on the other side are tough soldiers, and mean! You are still green.”



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# A GUARDIAN ANGEL ON HIS SHOULDER

by Christian W. de Marcken, Associate Member



**Herbert H. Adams,  
82nd AbnD, 504th PIR,  
2nd Bn, CO D**

The following are the stories related by Herbert H. Adams, who was a Machine gunner of the 3rd Platoon, Company D, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, 82nd Airborne Division during the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium.

The von Rundstedt Offensive, also called the Battle of the Bulge, started at 5:30 AM on December 16, 1944. At that time, the 82nd Airborne Division was resting and rebuilding its ranks. It had landed behind the enemy lines on September 17, 1944 in the Netherlands, and had suffered heavy losses.

The Division was in an old French Military Complex located at Sissonne, north of Reims, France. During the night of December 17, 1944 Colonel Tucker was called at the 82nd Airborne Headquarters and told to be ready to move North by early morning. Typical of the Paratrooper attitude, nothing would slow them down. They could not wait for trucks to be assigned to them. Their non-commissioned officers went to the local SHEAF Motor Pool and literally kidnapped three hundred drivers and trucks, which were loaded with men by 7:00 AM on December 18, 1944. Thirteen hours later they were in Werbomont, Belgium. That night a defense perimeter was set up around this little town, while Company D hiked eight miles to Rahier.

Herbert remembers that on Christmas day the men were give a choice of being fed or resupplied with ammunition, which was brought to the front lines by little "Weasels." These were tracked vehicles that had no cover. These were also used to bring back injured soldiers to the U.S. Evacuation Hospitals. The travel path of the Division during the Battle of the Bulge was as follows: From Sissonne, France to Bastogne, Houffalize, Werbomont, Rahier, Cheneux, Trois Ponts, Lierneux, Bra, Fosse, Grand Halleux, Sougne-Remouchamps (two weeks of rest), Saint Vith, the Siegfried Line, Malmedy, and finally Schmithof and Bergstein in Germany.

The 2nd Battalion took part in the fierce battle of Cheneux. Herbert remembers being tired and hungry. The snow and the cold were awful, and as they rested for a few minutes, he could not find a dry place to sit. So as bad as it may seem, he sat on a German soldier who had just been killed—his body was still warm.

Company D took the high grounds around Fosse, Belgium. The Germans suffered heavy losses. Then on January 11, 1945 the Division was sent to rest for a weeks in Sougne-Remouchamps, where Herbert and his squad were housed along the Ambleve River at the home of a Mrs. Bechaimont. Mr. Bechaimont and their two oldest boys were prisoners in Germany at that time.

On January 26, 1945 the Division was moved to Saint Vith and attacked the Siegfried line. Herbert Adams' wife Beverly mentioned that her husband must have had a Guardian Angel sitting on his shoulder, because when the Paratroopers were assigned to support an Armored Division, they would ride on the tanks, as these were heading for the front lines. One day as Herbert and his squad were riding a tank, a German shell fell close to the tank, killing and injuring all the soldiers except Herbert Adams. Still today Herbert shakes his head in

disbelief. He cannot understand how he came out alive!

Herbert also related: "On February 5, 1945 Company D was relieved from combat. Somewhere in the Ardennes, we were told to walk back along a stream in total silence, and to make sure not to light up a cigarette for fear of getting spotted by the Germans, who were occupying a position parallel to our travel path. Unluckily, after roughly one hour, a soldier lit up a cigarette, and immediately the Germans started to shell our area. A shrapnel hit the pocket of my right leg, where I had ammunition. It tore the flesh off of my right leg. This injury was bad, and it took a few days before I landed in a hospital in Paris. At that time I had no feelings in my toes, and my feet were frozen. For the second time, my unit was not aware of what had happened to me, so the After Action Report listed me as 'Missing in Action' and Beverly was notified by the Defense Department that I was missing in action."

Herbert was in Paris for two days, and from Paris he was shipped to the 164th General Hospital in Cherbourg, France. He was very lucky to have a young American doctor who had been stationed in the Aleutians and had dealt with numerous cases of frozen limbs. Herbert credits this doctor for saving his feet, by forcing the soldiers who had their feet frozen to walk.

Herbert explained that his feet were completely black. At one point one of his feet literally blew up, and the fluid spewed onto one of the attending nurses. The smell was unbelievably bad. He was moved to another tent, and unbeknownst to Herbert, this was the V.D. Ward. The nurses in the Venereal Disease Ward were not too compassionate towards the patients, and there were not much communication between the nurses and the patients. One particular nurse gave a shot to Herbert that hurt him very much. He grabbed ahold of the nurse and asked why she was treating him this way, and showed the nurse his swollen black feet. The nurse realized she had made a terrible mistake and apologized. She asked Herbert where he came from, and she was surprised to hear that they both came from the same area of Maine. She was from the Farmington area, which is eighteen miles west of Norridgewock, Maine, where Herbert came from.

The doctor who had practiced in the Aleutians would place the frozen foot of a soldier in a five gallon bucket, lance the foot, and then would make the soldier walk. One soldier refused to walk, so the doctor called a military policeman and told him to shove his bayonet in the fanny of any soldier refusing to walk. Only when the soldier could not walk anymore would he be placed in an ambulance and brought back to the hospital, where the foot was massaged and maybe lanced again. Every soldier treated by this doctor recovered and did not lose a limb.

As the soldier's health progressed, some of them were give a "three-day-pass" to Paris, and Herbert was one of them. While in Paris, he met members of Company D 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment. These men were scheduled to head back to Germany that afternoon. Herbert found a way to reach the area where the trucks were waiting. Way before anyone was there, he climbed into one of the trucks and hid. Before departure time, the members of Company D piled up in the trucks and a lieutenant did a roll call. Obviously, Herbert stayed very quiet. When he reached the "orderly room" in Germany, Captain Adam A. Komosa said: "Sorry Adams, we cannot take you back, you are AWOL [Absent With Out Leave]." Herbert pulled out his three-day-pass, which had not expired. The Captain felt that if a soldier was

*(Continued)*

## GUARDIAN ANGEL *(continued)*

ready to go this far, he should close his eyes and take the soldier back into the unit, with no other question asked. For the 3rd time, poor Beverly had been notified that her husband was missing—this time the 164th General Hospital had listed him an AWOL.

Herbert remembers jumping during a big parachute exercise before leaving for Cologne. Then his unit was moved by rail to reach an area where it was to cross the Rhine River. He remember being part of the Paratroopers who liberated the Wobbelin Concentration camp, and seeing all the bodies of the prisoners who had been tortured by the Germans.

Company D met the Russian troops at the Elbe River on May 3, 1945. The War ended in Europe on May 8, 1945. Shortly after that, the 504th Regiment of the 82nd Airborne Division was sent back to Reims, France. After a while the Regiment was sent back to Berlin, Germany, where it was assigned to an outpost, with instructions to guard a bank full of “counterfeit” dollar bills. Since the soldiers were told it was German counterfeit money, they would use it to light their cigarettes. It did not take long before the military police came with trucks and long pickups to take all the money out of the bank. It was only at that time that Herbert and his fellow paratroopers found out that it was real U.S. currency. However, one soldier from Alaska had always stuffed his pockets with the money, which he managed to send back home. After the war, he told Herbert that all this money allowed him to purchase a boat back home in Alaska.

Herbert remembers getting into trouble while in Berlin. One day, he was with a buddy at the Brandenburg Monument when two Russian military policemen started giving Herbert and his friend a hard time. Luckily the Russians did not know English, so Herbert told his buddy to head for one side of one of the large columns, while he would go on the other side. During this maneuver, the two American paratroopers hit the Russians on the head and grabbed the Russian weapons, and took off in a hurry.

The next encounter was worse. This time two American military policemen took custody of Herbert and the fellow from Alaska. Herb carried a very small German 22-caliber pistol, attached to one of his ankles. This was an unusual weapon—it had two barrels and it could fold so as to conceal the pistol. Herbert and his buddy knew they were in trouble, so Herbert took out his pistol and threatened the MPs, who at first laughed the whole incident off. After Herbert had fired the first shot, the two military policemen knew better. They decided to cooperate and handed over their 45-caliber pistols. Herbert and his buddy told the two MPs to drive around the block, and that they could retrieve their weapons near a monument. By that time, the two paratroopers had disappeared.

Herbert's unit was eventually sent to a camp in Southern France called “Lucky Strike.” From there he boarded a Liberty Ship and was heading back to the good old United States. He was finally discharged on December 30, 1945.

—Source: [www.battleofthebulgememories.be/](http://www.battleofthebulgememories.be/)

## TASK FORCE EZELL

by John H. Harris, 4th Armored Div.,  
22d Armd FA Bn, Battery C



I was a part of Task Force Ezell. This TF was organized and ordered to proceed to Bastogne to render assistance to the 101st Airborne Division as needed. The TF consisted of the following units of the 4th Armored Division:

CO A, 8th Tank Bn

Co C, 10th Armd Inf Bn

Battery C, 22d Armd Field Artillery Bn (My Btry)

All of TF Ezell's actions were done on the 20th Dec. 1944. We proceeded to Bastogne early morning on the 20th Dec 44, without meeting any enemy resistance. I believe we arrived about noon. After Capt Bert Ezell reported to officials in Bastogne, he received an order to return the TF to their battalions. A strange order indeed. We returned to our parent battalions without meeting any enemy resistance again. However, we did see large tank tracks across our road on the way back. This turned out to be the closing of the circle around Bastogne, which the TF avoided. On 26 Dec 1944, elements of the 4th Armored Division broke the siege of Bastogne.



This tank is an M7 self-propelled 105mm Howitzer Artillery piece. (There are 6 of these in an Armored Field Artillery battery, or 18 to a battalion.)



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