

FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ *Association, Inc.*



VOLUME 48, NO. 3

MAY — JUNE — JULY — AUGUST
1995

"THE THREE B'S"
BOLTE'S BIVOUACING BASTARDS

101 STEPHEN STREET
NEW KENSINGTON, PA 15068
412/335-3224

bulletin

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*Deceased



A Lithograph of the "Elbe River" Commemorative Stamp

Photo By:
Chet Yastrzemski

This commemorative stamp depicting the meeting of the 69th and the Russians at the Elbe River, will be released in the United States in September of 1995, as part of a set of stamps in a series commemorating World War II. Lithographs of the stamp were presented to Mayor Wolfgang Gerstenberg of Torgau and Mayor Andreas Haberland of Strehla when our tour group was over there for the 50th Anniversary Celebration. Also a bronze plaque was "Presented to the Citizens of Strehla on the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe and in Honor to The 69th Division."

See inside for more photos and many stories on the Tour of Europe, celebration at Arlington Cemetery and many other items commemorating our 50th Anniversary.

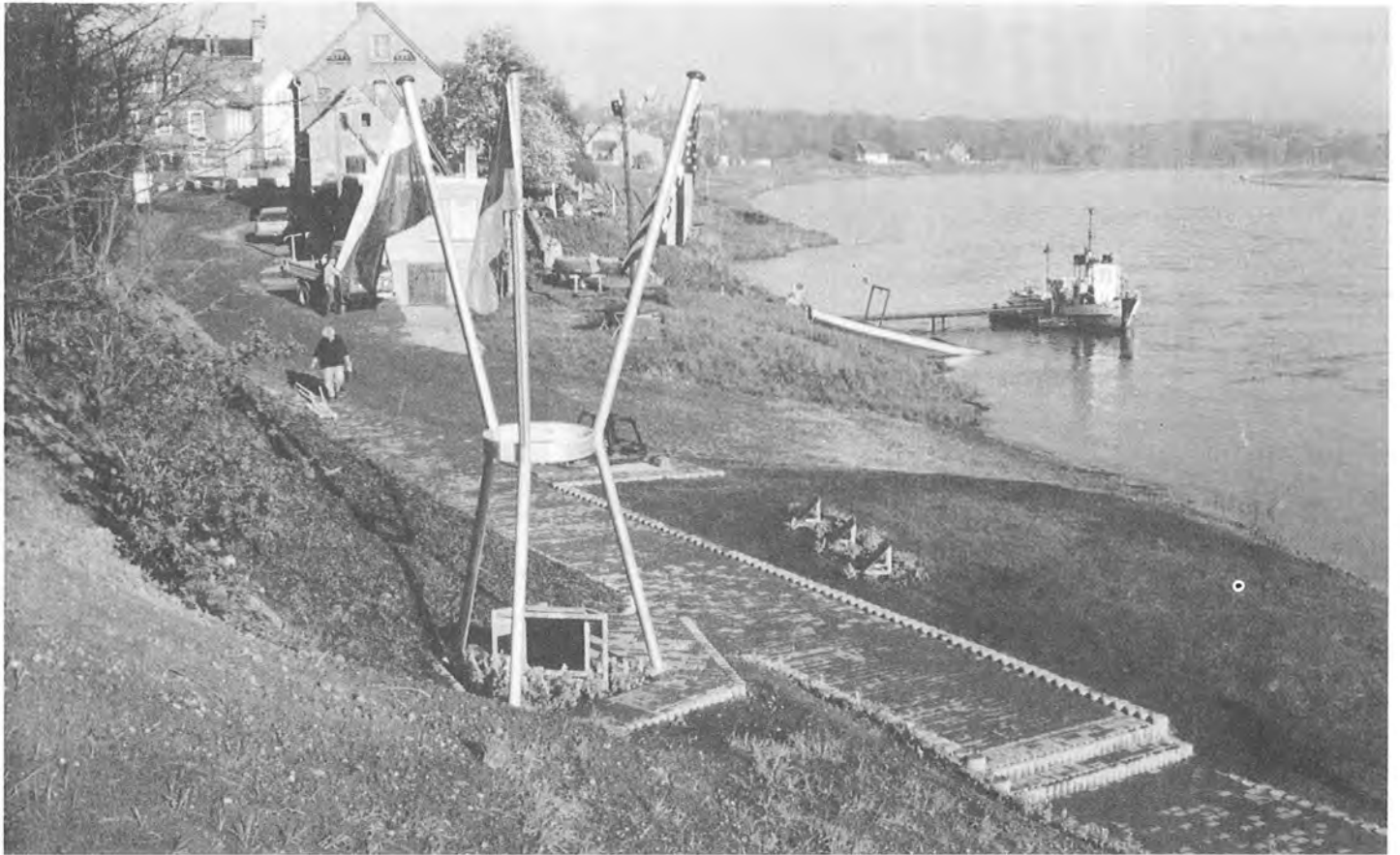
1995 69th Infantry Division Reunion
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
October 22nd thru 29th, 1995

Try and be there with us.
Lots to talk about at our 50th Anniversary.



50th Anniversary Celebration in Europe Our 69th Gang at Henri-Chappelle Cemetery

Photo Credit: Joao Freitas, of American Express, our Tour Arranger



Three flag poles at Strehla

Photo Credit: Chester Yastrzemski



Bill Beswick and Stamp Lithograph at Arlington Cemetery.

See Bill Beswick and Chester Yastrzemski's stories on the Tour of Europe elsewhere in the Bulletin. Also many others wrote short articles about how they celebrated the 50th Anniversary.



View of Memorial Park

Photo Credit: Bill Snidow



Bill Beswick giving his dedication speech: Interpreter, Bill Valodyia Suroutsev, Sculptor and Mayor Haberland.



Bill Beswick and Dillard Powell showing 69th Colors at Reception in Strehla.



Left and right sides of Memorial Plaque which is 21 x 7 feet in size.

Photo credit: Patricia Woody, Bill Snidow's daughter.



Bill Beswick and Bill Snidow with American Flag at Dragon's Teeth on the Siegfried Line. How well many of us can remember those dragon's teeth.



Bill Beswick presenting the Bronze Plaque to Mayor Haberland. Donated by 50th Anniversary Commemoration Committee, U.S. Army. It is in three languages. It was delivered to us in Strehla.

Photo Credit: Bill Snidow

News From The Editor's Desk



By Clarence Marshall
Membership Chairman

101 Stephen Street, New Kensington, PA 15068
Telephone: 412/335-3224

Stanley Fikes, 12391 East Paul, Clovis, California 93611 – I read with great interest the Jan.-Feb.-March-April 1995 issue of the Bulletin. It is the first one I have seen and came across it while going through my father's (**James Fikes**, 69th Recon Troop) things. It is somewhat ironic that his picture should appear on page two of this particular bulletin as he passed away on May 24, 1995.

I know that the time he spent with the 69th in Europe was special to him as he has traveled back through the area several times. Please blow Taps for **James A. Fikes**, 5420 North Forkner, #104, Fresno, California.

David L. Allen, P.O. Box 414, Hartsville, South Carolina 29551 – G-271st: Thanks for the good work all of you are doing with the Association. The Bulletin is great.

I saw an old 69er last year (**Dave Scatena**) when he came south to play golf. He and I were in the same platoon. It was the first time I had seen him since Winchester, England. I was one of those shipped out as a replacement in the 83rd Division. I was wounded in the Battle of the Bulge and sent back to England and then home. I have maintained a few 69th contacts. I plan to be in Myrtle Beach in October unless I have a conflict.

John Kurey, 17 Marlborough Drive, Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania 15012-9330 – H&S, 269th Eng.: Hi Clarence, remember me? I was wondering if you could help me out? In the course of two divorces, I lost all my medals, uniform, etc. I've replaced almost everything except the lapel and cap pins. We wore one on each lapel and one on our cap. I've even forgotten what they looked like. Do you know where I could obtain at least one?

Also, how do I find out where a buddy, last name **Rothman**, was killed while disarming a mine in Europe. I've always wanted to go there some day. I still have a picture of that little town in my mind. I believe he lived in York, Pennsylvania. Any help would be greatly appreciated.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone that can help John with any of his requests, please write to him at the address above.)

William A. Sangtinet, 217 Avon Road, Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08034: I'm writing to obtain information concerning the upcoming Fall 69th Infantry Division reunion. I saw the article in the February Legionnaire newspaper.

I was one of the guys pulled out of England (Basingstoke) and quickly shipped over to plug up the Bulge. I was then reassigned to the 78th Infantry and wound up in Berlin on occupation duty.

Bob Rabbitt, 49 North Fordham Road, Hicksville, New York 11801-6053 - I-273rd: The article in the July 1994 issue about "The Lone G.I.", Company I, 273rd Regiment, at Colditz brought back fond memories of "**Pappy**" **Hadaway**. I believe he was in the cadre assigned to Company I when I joined them in May of 1943, about a month before the division was activated. I was in the second platoon and he was Platoon Sergeant of our Weapons Platoon. I was with Company I until April of 1944 when a bunch of us were shipped out and eventually went overseas as infantry replacements. I joined the 29th Division a month after D-Day and was wounded July 31, 1944, my first day in Combat.

But getting back to **Sergeant Hadaway**, he was indeed a fine fellow. I never heard a bad thing uttered about him. I had heard about his demise when I was still overseas and was greatly saddened. I'm sure he was up front leading when he was killed. He was that kind of a guy.

Dean Daniels, 2231 Stahlwood Drive, Sandusky, Ohio 44870 - K-272nd: I joined the 69th in May of 1943 at Camp Shelby, Mississippi but I did not go across with them. I left the 69th May 1944 and ended up in Europe with the 83rd Division. What I would like to know is, does anyone have any records or pictures of the original Company K, 272nd Infantry at Camp Shelby? I don't think I ever see Company K, 272nd mentioned in the 69th Bulletin. Maybe 50 years is too late.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone that can help Dean out with his request, please do so. Dean, we print what we receive. If we receive information on Company K, 272nd, we will print it. All of our Bulletin information comes from our members.)

Bill Capozzoli, 19 West View Road, Old Saybrook, Connecticut 06475-2824 - T&T, 569th Signal Co.: I was in the T&T Section of the 569th Signal Company. I do not see any familiar names of late. Do you have any information on the following? **John Conklin**, **Harry Lewis**, **Gene Estrin**, **Leo Weisberg**, **Ken Steinel**, **Art Piguet**? I would sure like news of any of these men.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone from Signal Company with information for Bill, please write to him. Also, he has an article that he sent us elsewhere in this bulletin. Bill, you sent us photos of some of the men in the Signal Company. We cannot print Xerox copies of photos, therefore, they are not in this issue of the bulletin. If you would like to see your photos in the bulletin, please send the originals.)

Victor Ostrow, 1612 Lemontree Lane, Silver Springs, Maryland 20904-1440 - Hq. 2, 273rd: It took me several months to get my thoughts together and write you a letter. Things have been very hectic here lately, but thank God I can see the light at the end of the tunnel. Naturally, at our age, health always becomes a problem, as you are well aware of I am sure. My wife Olga, has been ill suffering a heart attack and stroke for the past 4 months and now she is showing vast improvement.

I am very appreciative of the articles I write which both you and Earl are kind enough to publish in the 69th Bulletin. So many interesting articles in the bulletin from the men who relate stories. It's amazing how we can remember after 50 years the places where all of the action took place.

We look forward to the Myrtle Beach reunion if Olga is fully recovered. Thanks to everyone for your many cards and letters. Sincere wishes to all.

To Members of the 1995 69th Tour of Europe

Did you receive your list of names of the people that were on our tour of Europe?

If you did not, please write to me. The West Point Post Office was burglarized the night that I mailed them. Lots of mail and checks were taken, one of mine.

I had been in Florida for a while and found this out on my return home.

Joao Freitas was unable to send them at the time. He thinks he is still 30 years old and still plays soccer. He was unfortunate, he was going for a goal and the opponent did not want him to, so he made a nasty tackle on Joao and broke his collar bone. Anyhow, we've tried.

Write to:

Bill Beswick

P.O. Box 576, West Point, Virginia 23181-0576

Sorry about that!!!

**FOUND A NEW MEMBER?
HAVE A CHANGE OF ADDRESS?
THIS SHOULD BE MAILED TO:**

Robert J. Kurtzman

P.O. Box 105

Wilmot, Ohio 44689

Telephone: 216/359-5487

MOVING

Please print your new address below:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Please send this form and your old address label to:

Robert Kurtzman

P.O. Box 105, Wilmot, Ohio 44689

Please allow six weeks advance notice.

NOTE: Earl Witzleb and Clarence Marshall are still our Editors, and therefore you should still send letters of interest, articles and photos to them at the addresses below.

Earl Witzleb, Jr.

P.O. Box 69

Champion, PA 15622-0069

Telephone: 412/445-2901

Clarence Marshall

101 Stephen Street

New Kensington, PA 15068

Telephone: 412/335-3224

Former News Journal editor dead at age 80

Allan Jackson, photo journalist, newspaper editor and foreign service officer, died at his residence on Pensacola Beach July 25, 1995, after a lengthy illness.

Mr. Jackson was the photo journalist who took the "second" most famous photo of World War II (after Rosenthal's Iwo Jima flag raising). His photo dramatized the link-up at Torgau of the U.S. and Russian troops at the River Elbe, signaling the end of the war in Europe.

The first photo journalist to graduate from the former San Jose State College in California, Mr. Jackson started his journalistic career on the Oakland Post Enquirer in 1937. He served as a photo journalist for International News and News Photos in World War II. From 1942 to 1945, he covered the South Pacific (from Guadalcanal to Bougainville) and survived the sinking of the USS Helena in the battle of the Kula Gulf in the northern Solomon Islands in July 1943. He was assigned to European campaigns, including the Battle of the Bulge and the liberation of Paris. He continued as a foreign correspondent in Europe for several months after the end of the war.

He was the recipient of the Hearst Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Award for Vietnam service with USIA, and commendations from the Secretary of War and the Secretary of the Navy.

Notice to All Members Sending in Bulletin Material & Photos

PLEASE, PLEASE! When sending in photos and material for the Bulletin, do not forget to put identifiers on them. Be sure to put your name and address on the backs of the photos or include them in a letter, and most importantly of all, the name of the unit, platoon or infantry that will identify the people in the photo and or article. We need the unit because just having even the full name is not enough. For example, we have 33 Smith's on our roster!

Lately, we have been receiving photos from some of you in envelopes with no return address and nothing on the backs of the photos to identify even the unit that they are from. Without this information, these photographs are vitually useless. Also, we have been receiving material from people who go on and on about John or Tom so and so, and they never let us know John or Tom who. Particularly from widows stating that their husband died, but only calling him by his first name in the letter to the bulletin.

Perhaps if you sent in information or photos and never saw them in print, this could very well be why. So let's be more careful. It will make you happy to see your information included in the bulletin and it will certainly make our job much easier. Thanks. **Earl Witzleb, Co-Editor**



Message from the President



Curtis E. Peterson, President

4900 Wallace Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53716
Telephone: 608/222-7957

This is being written at the time many of you are preparing for the trip to Europe and the 50th Anniversary of the Link-Up Meeting with the Russians. I sincerely hope that all goes well and am sure it will be a memorable trip.

An explanation is in order regarding the ceremony at Arlington Cemetery on April 8, 1995. I called Washington, D.C., as I had not received any detailed information, this information was then faxed to me. After a few more calls, the letter which you received, was written and sent to Direct Mailing Service, in Pittsburgh, for mailing. The letter was mailed about 32 weeks prior to April 8th, hoping many of you would receive it in time to consider attending.

Approximately 130 members, which included family members and friends, gathered at Arlington Cemetery to commemorate the historic Link-Up of American and Soviet Forces at the Elbe River and to honor the veterans who participated. A plaque was unveiled, trees were planted and a commemorative stamp was also presented. The ceremony took place within sight of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and is close to General Bolte's grave. This was an impressive ceremony and was covered by all major TV networks. After the ceremony, our Association Members and Guests, including the two Russian Generals, gathered at the Officers Club at Ft. Myer for socializing and lunch. Special thanks is given to Igor Belousovitch for making the arrangements at Ft. Myer.

CBS TV is making plans to cover the ceremonies at Torgau and plan to air it on the evening news with Dan Rather on Tuesday, April 25, 1995. For those who did not go to Torgau, I hope you were able to watch this news cast.

I have not received the final agenda for our reunion in Myrtle Beach. I am sure it will be another great reunion like the one in Nashville. Make your reservations as soon as possible and I hope to see you all in Myrtle Beach.

The Vice-President's Corner



Robert L. Pierce

144 Nashua Court
San Jose, California 95139-1236
Telephone: 408/226-8040

Our Members in the Greater Chicago Area have responded to our appeal for volunteers to conduct the 1996 Reunion in Schaumburg, Illinois.

Mr. Ernest H. Krause, supported by his wife, **Mary**, has accepted the responsibility of Reunion Committee Chairman. Following this commitment, **Ernest** gathered a Committee of the following members: **Ralph S. Plugge, Max Phillips, Robert Klein, Glenn L. Felner, Harold A. Pederson, George Rico, William J. Fannucchi, Marsh Mussay, and Al Koziol**. In addition,

there are six (6) other members who have suggested they may be willing to help out during the Reunion but are not available to work on one of the sub-committees. And yes, there are also several wives who have agreed to work with the Committees supporting both the Registration area and the Ladies Auxiliary activities.

The Reunion Site Selection Committee has decided not to pursue Atlanta as a site for the 1997 Reunion. The decision was based upon the package we were able to negotiate with a hotel in the Boston suburb of Danvers, Massachusetts. Hotels within the city of Boston are too costly; too many constraints controlling conferences; and, their room rates coupled with parking fees become prohibitive.

Henry and Jean Patula have done an outstanding job protecting our interests in maintaining reasonable costs for a successful Reunion. There is one word of caution to our members regarding future Reunions, "the price of hotel rooms will increase." The lodging industry has not increased their prices since 1987 because of low occupancy rate. This trend has changed to the point where a 305 percent increase per year is predicted over the next two years. This increase contingency has already been incorporated into hotel responses to our request for proposal. The bottom line is an increase of about \$5 or \$6 per night can be expected in 1997.

Henry is still looking for potential Committee members to assist him in the event the Boston Area is acceptable to the membership for our 1997 Reunion site. Please call if you are interested in supporting your Association.

Whoops!! Goofed Again!!

In the last issue of the Bulletin, Volume 48, No. 2, **Paul Staub**, of 20 Snowbird Lane, Levittown, New York, Headquarters, 1st Battalion, 273rd, was inadvertently listed in "Taps."

It should have been **Earl Staub**, 5544 Hanover Road, Hanover, Pennsylvania - A-881st.

Our apology to **Paul** and his friends for this blunder.



FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION ★★★★ *Association, Inc.*

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

101 Stephen Street, New Kensington, PA 15068 - Telephone: 412/335-3224

INSERT NEWS RELEASE:

From: **The Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association, Inc.**

TO THE EDITOR:

Our records show that a number of the 69th Infantry Division reside in your readership area. You will be doing them - and - us a real service if you can find space to publish the attached news release, or some portion of it. Thank you for your courtesy!

FIGHTING 69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION, INC. FOR RELEASE AT WILL

The Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association has announced that its 48th annual reunion will be held October 22 to October 29, 1995 at the Landmark Resort Hotel, A Best Western Hotel, 1501 South Ocean Boulevard, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, 19577.

The organization is made up of World War II Veterans from all over the United States who served in the 69th Infantry Division and its attached units the 461st AAA Battalion, 661st Tank Destroyers Battalion, and the 777th Tank Battalion.

The 69th Division was activated May 15, 1943 at Camp Shelby, Hattiesburg, Mississippi and trained by Major General Charles L. Bolte where they became known as, "Bolte's Bivouaching Bastards." The 69th distinguished itself in Germany with the First Army capturing the city of Leipzig and making the famed link-up with the Russian Army at Torgau on the Elbe River to end World War II in Europe. Leading the Division into battle beginning at the Battle of the Bulge was Major General E. F. Reinhardt. The Division was deactivated September 15, 1945 with its colors at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey.

President Curt E. Peterson expects a large turnout of members, wives, and guests for this reunion in the Eastern part of the United States. The majority of our membership lives in the East, Mid-West and South with a number coming from the West Coast.

Scheduled events include sightseeing tours, Early Bird Dinner, PX Party Night, Meeting of the Board of Directors, Ladies Auxiliary and General Membership, Units Night Out, Memorial Service, Banquet Dinner Dance and going home Good-bye Until Next Year Breakfast.

Chairpersons in charge of the reunion are Mr. and Mrs. George and Rita Wolff, 1132 Forest Drive, North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 29582 (Telephone 803-272-4247) and Mr. and Mrs. Fran and Joan Alfiero, 1394 Southwood Drive, Surfside, South Carolina 29575 (Telephone 803-650-7031).

New 69th readers who may be interested in membership to the Association should contact Membership Chairman: Robert Kurtzman, Sr., 610 West Maple Street, Box 105, Wilmot, Ohio 44689-0105 (Telephone 216-359-5487).

MEMBERS: Please copy the above notice and mail it to newspapers and publications in your area. We can locate a lot more new members with your help. There are still many fellows out there who don't even know that the 69th Infantry Division Association, Inc., exists. Remember how many of you joined up because of something you ran across in the paper or a veterans magazine. Thank You!

69th Infantry Division 48th Annual Reunion

MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA
THE LANDMARK RESORT HOTEL
October 22nd thru October 29th, 1995



The Myrtle Beach area, also known as the Grand Strand, stretches south from the South Carolina state line at Little River to Georgetown, South Carolina, along U.S. Highway 17. The area has an average of 215 days of sunshine annually with temperatures in the 80s from May through September.

The area boasts 1,800 restaurants, many specializing in seafood. There is much to do from beachcombing to golfing to fishing and sailing and of course sightseeing and shopping. Besides the planned tours, there are many other historic sites of the south that you can venture out to on your own or before or after the reunion. We are sure that none of you will be disappointed.

Your reunion committee will assist you in any way possible. If you have any questions, or need some assistance write to or call:

George and Rita Wolff, Co-Chairpersons
Company A, 271st Infantry
1132 Forest Drive
North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 29582
Telephone: 803/272-4247

or

Frank and Joan Alfiero, Co-Chairpersons
Battery B, 880th Field Artillery
1394 Southwood Drive
Surfside, South Carolina 29575
Telephone: 803/650-7031

We would love to see everyone make it. See you all in Myrtle Beach!

TOURS

CHARLESTON TRIP

Tuesday, October 24th, 1995

Enjoy the charm of Charleston, the wealthiest city in the Colonies, busiest seaport in the Old South and cradle of the Civil War.

The historic Charleston City Sightseeing Tour will be narrated by our guide. Market place shopping, browse through booths filled with wares in open-air markets. Walk on the narrow streets to the shops and galleries. Eat at quaint restaurants enjoying the southern cuisine.

MAGIC ON ICE SHOW

Wednesday, October 25th, 1995

Two hours of dazzling feats by Olympic and world champions. Also, skating clowns that will keep you on the edge of your seat. Illusions that delight and amaze.

BROOKGREEN GARDENS-PLANTATION

Thursday, October 26th, 1995

Brookgreen Gardens is a year round treasure. The Sculpture Gardens are situated on the grounds of a 200 year old rice plantation. Wildlife park, plants and animals are seen within their native swamp. National Historic Landmark.

Plantation Tour — Step back in time to the 1700-1800's and days of rice production and southern grandeur as you visit Hopsewee Plantation. See moss-draped live oaks, slave street with cabins and a chapel.

BAREFOOT LANDING SHOPPING

Friday, October 27th, 1995

Barefoot Landing is a shopping paradise of over 100 shops and excellent restaurants located on the Wetlands. This spot includes a floating bridge and overlooks the Inter-Coastal Waterway.

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Friday, October 27th, 1995

Golf at Whispering Pines, a former Air Force recreational golf course, one of eighty golf courses on the Grand Strand. Thirty-five dollar fee includes green fee, cart and prizes. The course is located by the hotel.

OTHER POINTS OF INTEREST

- Myrtle Beach Amusement Park
- Family Kingdom Amusement Park
- Ripley's Believe It Or Not Museum
- Myrtle Beach National Wax Museum
- Myrtle Waves Water Park
- Bellefield Nature Center and Museum
- Oceanic Adventures Aquarium
- Waccatee Zoological Farm
- Old Town Hall Museum, The Rice Museum, Kaminski House, Horry County Museum, etc.

Most of these attractions have handicap access.

**For airline reservations to
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina**

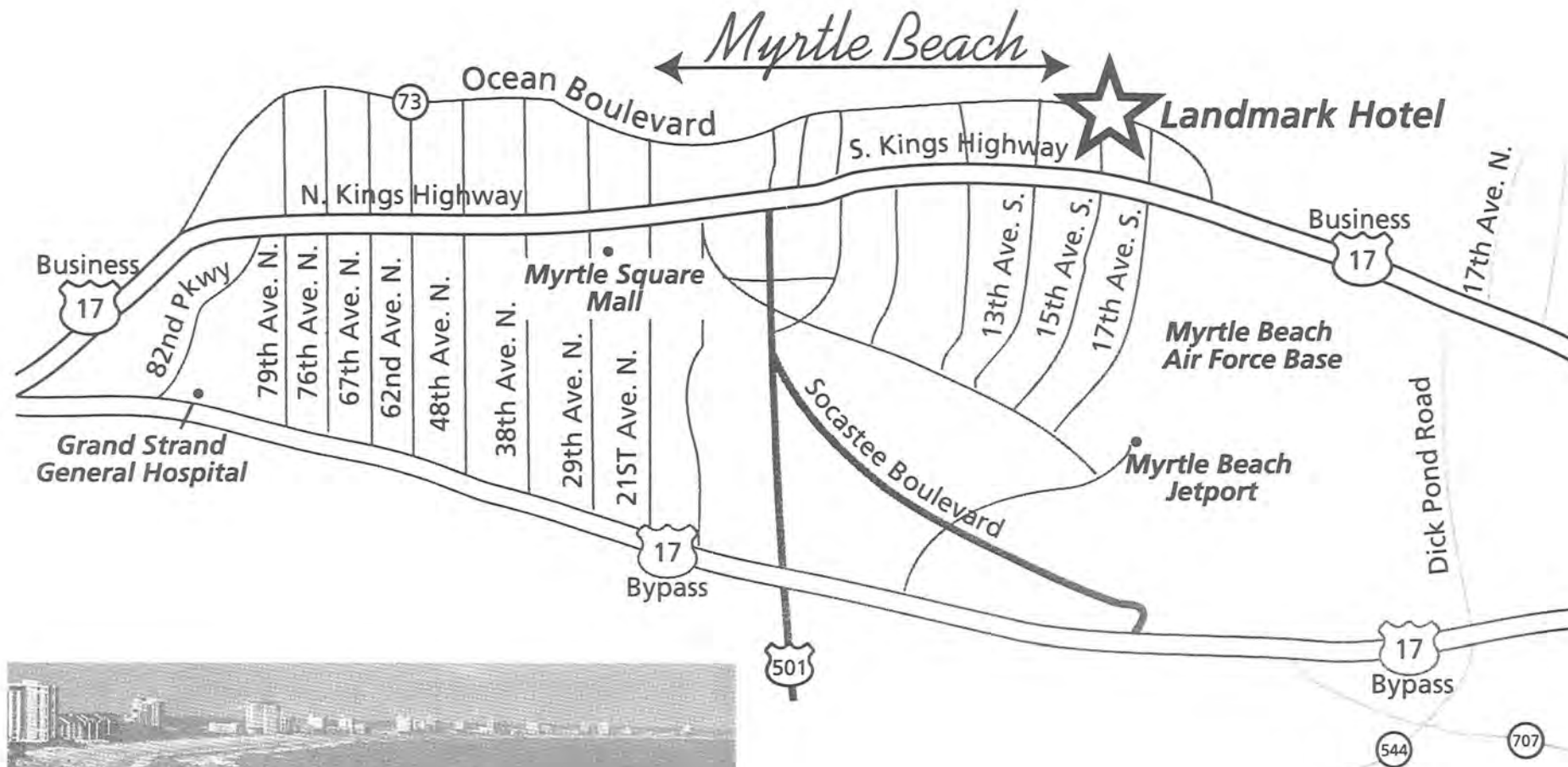
Contact: Sue Roberts

Attention: Empress Travel

25 East Main Street

Clinton, New Jersey 08809

Telephone: 908/735-4114



Myrtle Beach Area Map

This map is the best we could do for those of you traveling by car as the hotel did not supply us with a map. We suggest that you call AAA or contact a travel agency in your area and try to procure a better map of the area. Hopefully, this will be of some help though, as it does show the major highways in the vicinity of our hotel.

New Men Relocated Since Our Last Bulletin

Joseph T. Johnston — Cannon Company, 272nd Infantry
3605 16th Street, #27, Vero Beach, Florida 32960

Paul Seligman — Company B, 273rd Infantry
5 Hasbrouck Place, New Paltz, New York 12561-2126

Herb Walley — Service Company, 273rd Infantry
R.R. #8, Box 131, Lucedale, Mississippi 39452

Walter E. Zimmewicz — Headquarters 2, 273rd Infantry
4726 Larch Avenue, Glenview, Illinois 60025-1415

William A. Sanginette — Company I, 273rd Infantry
217 Avon Road, Cherry Hill, New Jersey 08034

Ernest Slovak — Company I, 272nd Infantry
704 West Street, Beaver Dam, Wisconsin 53916-1550

Wesly M. Taylor — Anti-Tank, 273rd Infantry
14650 Story Road, San Jose, California 95127

William Hammond — Company L, 271st Infantry
55 Olson Street, Abington, Massachusetts 02351

Norman Feinberg — Service Company, 273rd Infantry
50 Greens Road, Hollywood, Florida 33021

Richard L. Levy — Headquarters 2, 271st Infantry
15300 Ventura Boulevard, #522
Sherman Oaks, California 91403

John V. Fella — Company F, 273rd Infantry
507 Suzanna Street, Edna, Texas 77957-3242

Robert J. Rhoades
1422 Morovia Avenue, Holly Hill, Florida 32117-2318

Sallie Cynthia Manet — Colonel W.D. Buie's Daughter
213 Myrtle Drive, Thomasville, Georgia 31792

William A. Huber
2205 South Logans Point Drive
Hanover, Indiana 47243-9485

Emmet Withers
9304 Fairway Lakes Court, Tampa, Florida 33647-2470

Member of Patrol of Lieutenant Ricker Writes

Submitted by: Lawrence Verheye
3rd Platoon, Company F, 271st Regiment
12351 Pierce Road, Wakarusa, Indiana 46573-9616

I am writing about the article that appeared in the last bulletin about **Lieutenant Ricker** submitted by **Brian Lindner**. I was on the patrol with **Lieutenant Ricker**. I think I can straighten out a few things.

It was a 12 man patrol. We went into Buschen at daylight and met no resistance at first. **Lieutenant Ricker** wanted to take the town. Half of the patrol went to the left flank and half to the right flank. That's when all hell broke loose. Machine gun fire was everywhere. We were pinned down for a while. I was one of the few who escaped alive. I have a book, "*Trespass Against Them*," I got in Germany in 1945. I had written and kept notes in it and this information I am sending to you I wrote 50 years ago.

Some of the men who were on the patrol included:

T/Sergeant Gaetano Gambino - KIA
S/Sergeant Louis S. Roylisko - KIA

Private Milton J. Ulfeng - KIA
Lieutenant Ricker - KIA
Sergeant Peter Dunn
Pfc. Lawrence Verheye
T/Sergeant Alfred Young
Sergeant James McKenna

These are the men I know of who were on the patrol with **Lieutenant Ricker**. I don't know if this will help the matter or not, but I had to write. It was bothering me.

Writer of 661st Tank Destroyer Booklet Writes

Submitted by: George H. Straley
4830 Kennett Pike - 237, Wilmington, Delaware 19807



Dear Clarence:

My copy of the current issue of The Bulletin arrived the other day, and in going through it I noted with great interest that you have reprinted the History of the 661st Tank Destroyer Battalion as originally published in a souvenir booklet fifty years ago.

Hubert McEntee, who submitted this article, may have forgotten, or perhaps never knew, how it came into being. There may be many others who don't know. No doubt a lot of fellows lost their copies of the booklet; some may have never received it, although as I recall we tried to see that every man got a copy.

I wrote the booklet at Lutzen, Germany, while the 661st was temporarily occupying the town after the war - that is, sometime in June 1945. Battalion Headquarters was at a place called the Red Lion Inn, on Lutzen's main street. As Headquarters Company Clerk, I was stationed in the same building. During our occupation, things were pretty quiet, and one day **Colonel Miller** sent for me and showed me a sheaf of notes that he had written in longhand.

"**Straley**," he said, "take these notes and put them together so that we have a history of this outfit. I have in mind a souvenir booklet that could be printed right here in Lutzen and distributed to every man in the Battalion."

It was a hurry-up job. I wrote the story quickly and **Colonel Miller** approved it. He had called on **Sgt. Robert Gould** of Headquarters Co. to sketch the coat-of-arms and make a few other drawings, and then the art and the text were rushed to the captured German press of Otto Noack. As I recall, we got an incredibly fast delivery.

Thought you might be interested in this little sidelight on the 661st history's production. The booklet, by the way, is now a collector's item. Thanks for your continued good work in editing the Bulletin, Clarence.

**69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 1995
48th ANNUAL REUNION
461st AAA BN. - 661st T.D. BN. - 777th TANK BN.**

**Landmark Resort Hotel
MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA
OCTOBER 22nd thru OCTOBER 29th, 1995**

SEND THIS RESERVATION FORM TO THE LANDMARK RESORT HOTEL.

Reservations:

LANDMARK RESORT HOTEL, A BEST WESTERN HOTEL
1501 SOUTH OCEAN BOULEVARD
MYRTLE BEACH, SOUTH CAROLINA 29577

Telephone: 803/448-9441
or 800/845-0658
Fax: 803/448-6701

HOUSING: Please reserve one of the following:

OCEAN FRONT (single or double room) — \$52.00 _____ OCEAN VIEW (single or double room) \$42.00 _____
(All rooms plus 7% tax)

Print full names of ALL persons sharing room: _____

NOTE: Special accommodations required: (if available)

HANDICAPPED _____ NON-SMOKING _____ OTHER REQUEST _____

I / We plan to arrive (day) _____, October _____, 1995. (Check in after 3:00 P.M.)

I / We plan to depart (day) _____, October _____, 1995. (Check out time - 1:00 P.M.)

I/We will be bringing guest(s) _____ Adults _____ Children

If possible, I/We wish to be quartered near other guests: _____
(Specify guest(s) name)

Send Confirmation to: (Please Type or Print)

Name: _____

Street / R.D. / P.O. Box: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Telephone / Area Code: _____

IN ORDER TO CONFIRM RESERVATIONS, One of the Following MUST Accompany This Form:

Check or Money Order (One Night's Lodging) Payable to the LANDMARK RESORT HOTEL OR Major Credit Card Number and Date of Expiration.

The following Credit Cards are accepted: American Express, Master Card, Visa Card, Diner's Club, Carte Blanche and Discover.

Credit Card Name _____ Number _____ Expires _____

I authorize the LANDMARK RESORT HOTEL to make charges on my Credit Card.

Your Signature _____

If this form has been filled out by anyone other than the person for whom this reservation has been made, give the full name, address and telephone number of the person filling out this form.

Reservations must be received not later than September 22, 1995. If a particular type of room is unavailable, the next most suitable room will be assigned. No particular room, room type, or location can be guaranteed. Deposit returnable on 48 hours cancellation notice prior to your arrival date. If LANDMARK rooms have been filled when this form is received, it will automatically be turned over to the hotel right next door and you will receive your confirmation from them.

69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 1995 REUNION

48th ANNUAL REUNION

461st AAA BN. - 661st T.D. BN. - 777th TANK BN.

LANDMARK RESORT HOTEL — Myrtle Beach, SOUTH CAROLINA

OCTOBER 22nd thru OCTOBER 29th, 1995

Registration form to be mailed to: William R. Matlach, *Treasurer*

P.O. Box 474, West Islip, New York 11795-0474 • Telephone: 516/669-8077

I/we will attend the 69th Infantry Division Association Reunion in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina during the week of October 22nd-29th, 1995 and will attend the following activities.

Name: _____

Street / R.D. / P.O. Box: _____

City / State / Zip: _____

Telephone / Area Code: _____ First Timer ☐ Second Timer ☐ Old Timer ☐

Unit: _____ Wife's Name: _____

Guests: _____

	* * * * *	Per Person	Number Persons	Amount
Daily Events				
Registrations: Monday thru Saturday (Expo A Room), 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.				
Check Bulletin Board				NO CHARGE
Sunday, October 22nd — Early arrivals on your own. Check Bulletin Board.				
Monday, October 23rd — Check Bulletin Board and Hospitality/Social Room				
Tuesday, October 24th — CHARLESTON TOUR — 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. (Lunch on your own)		\$ 15.00		\$
Wednesday, October 25th — MAGIC ON ICE — 6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.		\$ 20.00		\$
Thursday, October 26th — BROOKGREEN GARDENS and HOPSEWEE				
PLANTATION — 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.		\$ 23.00		\$
(Lunch on your own)				
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING — 4:00 p.m.				
EARLY BIRD DINNER		\$ 26.00		\$
Friday, October 27th — BAREFOOT LANDING SHOPPING				
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. (Lunch on your own)		\$ 6.00		\$
GOLF TOURNAMENT — 9:00 a.m.		\$ 35.00		\$
P.X. BEER PARTY — 9:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m. (Tickets Required)		\$ 5.00		\$
Saturday, October 28th				
COFFEE AND DANISH — 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.				
GENERAL MEETINGS — 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon				
CASH BAR — 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Tickets Required)				
MEMORIAL SERVICE — 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.				
DINNER DANCE - 7:30 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.		\$ 30.00		\$
For Special Diets — FISH _____ VEG. _____				
Sunday, October 29th — FAREWELL BREAKFAST - 7:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.		\$ 11.00		\$
Y'ALL COME BACK				
Replacement Cost for Lost or Broken Permanent Badges		\$ 4.00		\$
SUPPORT YOUR HOSPITALITY ROOM: DONATIONS PLEASE!				\$
DUES				Reunion Sub-Total \$
New Dues Year - August 1, 1995 to July 31, 1996				
Regular Membership		\$10.00		\$
Ladies Auxiliary		\$ 5.00		\$
Postage and Bulletin Donation (up to you)				\$
				Total Amount Paid \$

Make Check or Money Order Payable to: 69th Infantry Division Association

ALL RESERVATIONS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED BY PAYMENT IN FULL — IF NOT — YOUR RESERVATION WILL BE LAID ASIDE UNTIL PAYMENT IS MADE AND THIS COULD RESULT IN YOUR REQUEST FOR SEATING AND FUNCTIONS BEING DENIED.

If you do not have a plastic badge from earlier Reunions, please check box. ☐

Permanent badges will only be made if your request is accompanied by an advance prepaid Reservation. Failure to attend Reunion will result in a \$4.00 charge for each badge ordered, and will be deducted from your refund. Please fill out this form and mail it with your payment in full, no later than thirty (30) days prior to the Reunion. By doing this, it will make our job much easier, and save you time at the Registration Desk.

Treasurer's Message



William R. and Jane Matlach

William R. Matlach, Treasurer
Post Office Box 474
West Islip, New York 11795-0474
Telephone: 516/669-8077

In the last bulletin, I stated that with Jane helping me right from the beginning of the year, I had fallen only one month behind in processing checks, instead of two months as the year before. Not true - eventually it did reach over a month and a half. A few weeks after the dues notices were issued, the response started to surge in, at one point reaching a peak of up to 200 envelopes per day! Even though we were better prepared than before, it still took quite a while to catch up. A few members wrote in, questioning whether I had received their check. In all cases, I had. The problem is not just processing the checks - it's the special cases requiring extra work: changes of address, inquiries, notes from special friends, correspondence with other officers of the Association, etc. I enjoy doing it, but it does take a lot of time. We are now in the process of preparing a set of mailing labels for issuing the second notice of the year. It should be out very shortly.

When members send me their dues, they sometimes include a short note, or even an extensive letter. Recently I received some which I found exceptionally interesting, so I would like to share them with you. **Oscar Morales** (B-271) sent me three letters; the following is the first, written to **Glenn L. Markham** (B-271):

"November 18, 1976

Hi,

Going through my Army junk, I found your address. I told you I'd write. Well here it is 30 years later, but here I am. How are you? If you receive this letter, write to me.

Your buddy
Oscar Morales"

The second letter was from **Glen Markham**:

"January 23, 1994

Dear **Oscar**,

I received your letter of Nov. 18, 1976. I was glad to hear from an Old Buddy and fully intended to answer it at the time, but I was in the process of moving at the time and misplaced your letter, and now it has turned up

among some of my old things. I tried to call you several times through the years, but was unable to come up with a telephone number.

I hope this old address finds you, because I would sure like to make contact with you. I have been in contact with a lot of the boys, and have been to some of the 69th Division conventions. If you get this, let me know.

A Buddy,
Glenn Markham"

Would you believe it? One round trip of communication only took a total of 50 years! **Morales** included a picture of himself with four buddies from B-271.

The next letter presented here was from **Clifton B. Stolpe** (SV-273):

"Hi Bill,

I thought this might be of interest to your readers - a once in a lifetime memory. I have looked over the years to find **Herb Walley** (SV-273) but was unable to do so. By accident I came on to a person who had a phone book from his home town. Within 24 hours I had him on the phone. The rest is in the story after contact was made, a diary that he made up.

Sincerely,
Cliff Stolpe"

The diary was too long (eight pages, hand written), and too detailed to be included here, but the gist of it is that two hours after the phone call on April 26, 1994, they met personally at Hattiesburg and **did not separate until May 2!** During this period they traveled through and investigated the entire area from Hattiesburg to Mobile, Alabama, stopping at Spanish Fort, Biloxi, Gulfport, Dauphin Island, and many other points of interest. They ate at some of the best restaurants in the area and had a great time, all on a minimum amount of sleep, trying to make up for the many years they had not seen each other. Since then, they keep in touch by telephone whenever one gets the urge.

So what is the point to all this? The point is that time flies rapidly, and before you know it, 50 years have gone by and you never managed to look up that best buddy from 1945, or you never got around to attending a 69th Division Reunion. Gentlemen, let me tell you, time is now flying faster than ever, and there is not that much of it left for some of us, so if you are ever going to make that contact, or visit that reunion, you had better do it now! You may be missing some great experiences!

In closing, to those of you who have not yet sent in your dues: Current dues are \$10.00 per year, Ladies Auxiliary dues are \$5.00, and we will appreciate any donations to our Postage/Bulletin fund. Checks should be made out to the 69th Infantry Division Association, Inc. and sent to **William R. Matlach** at the address shown at the beginning of this article.

William R. Matlach
Treasurer

NEW DUES YEAR

1995-1996

August 1, 1995 to July 31, 1996

Keep the Bulletin Coming!



Dottie Witzleb

THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE

by - **Dottie Witzleb**
Ladies Auxiliary Editor
 P.O. Box 69
 Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069
 or
 R.D. #3, Box 477
 Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606
 Home Telephone: 412/455-2901



Edith Zaffern, Sunshine Lady
 22555 Hallcroft Trail
 Southfield, Michigan 48034-2011
 Telephone: 810/357-4611



Alice Wolthoff, President
 5609 14th Avenue South
 St. Petersburg, Florida 33707-3418
 Telephone: 813/347-6975

Ellen McCann, Secretary
 39 Mayflower Road
 Woburn, Massachusetts 01801
 Telephone: 617/933-2312



Edith Chapman, Vice President
 7412 Exmore Street
 Springfield, Virginia 22150
 Telephone: 703/451-1904

Edith (Jean) Brannan, Chaplain
 720 Grand Bay Wilmer Road
 North Mobile, Alabama 36608
 Telephone: 205/649-1611

Margaret Kormas, Asst. Chaplain
 12500 Edgewater Drive
 Apartment #503
 Lakewood, Ohio 44107
 Telephone: 216/228-6024

A Message from your Auxiliary President, Alice R. Wolthoff

Dear Ladies of the Auxiliary:

Time sure flies and once again, it's time to write greetings to all you ladies.

By now everyone has read the bulletin of the coming events - reunion at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Simply a reminder, don't forget our fellows in the V.A. hospital. The robes and slippers sure are appreciated. Robes are 36 x 45.

Also, another reminder "dues." Ladies, when your husbands send in their reservations for the reunion, kindly remind them to include the \$5.00 for the Auxiliary dues.

Last but not least our gift exchange which we have at our Auxiliary Meeting. Please bring a small gift costing between \$3.00 and \$5.00. **Rita Wolff**, Co-Chairperson, has something of interest planned for us.

Looking forward to seeing everyone once again.

Sincerely,
Alice R. Wolthoff, President
Ladies Auxiliary

P.S. May all of our shut-ins be on the road to recovery and able to join us at Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

A Note from Dottie

Earl still has back copies of bulletins for several years, if any member would care to have them. This is particularly for our newer members. Postage would cost \$1.50 for the first one and \$1.00 for each additional bulletin. We are going to start getting rid of the older ones since we want to clean out our attic. There are three bulletins per year and we do have many copies of some years.

We are now carrying our own "Ladies Taps" column as you see below. Please men, send names of your wives to **Dottie Witzleb** at the address below.

Hope to see you all at Myrtle Beach this October.

- In Memoriam -

It was voted on and passed at the Ladies Auxiliary Meeting in Nashville that an "In Memoriam" column be started on the Ladies' Auxiliary Page. In the passing of a member's loved one, please notify: **Dorothy Witzleb**, P.O. Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069. Telephone: 412/455-2901.

"LADIES' TAPS"

RUTH AUK

wife of **Stanley Auk**, Company B, 269th Engineers

GENEVIEVE GOLIAS

wife of **George Golias**, Company M, 272nd Infantry

PAT RUEBSAMEN

wife of **Bill Ruebsamen**, Battery A, 724th Field Artillery

Why Mementos Matter

Understanding history through a father's wartime story

NEWSWEEK

April 17, 1995

Submitted by: **Nicholas A. Giannone**

Company B, 272nd Infantry
2501 Marina Isle Way, #303
Jupiter, Florida 33477-9425

Written by: **RICHARD K. BETTS**

THE SWORD AND THE FLAG ARE GONE. After being lugged from one apartment and house to another for 20 years, they must have been lost in the move from Washington to New Jersey. Having searched the house, I accept this, and tell myself that souvenirs are not important. But I accept it with a special twinge of sadness as April 25th approaches. On that day 50 years ago in Torgau, Germany, my father's battalion of the 69th Division, coming from the west, linked up with the Red Army, coming from the east. That meeting signaled the end of World War II, the greatest human catastrophe in modern history.

Dad liberated the dress sword from a German officer in the final days of the war. The last time I saw it, long and imposing in its black-and-silver scabbard capped by a swastika and an eagle, a few specks of rust were just beginning to invade its sheen. The flag, its stars and stripes folded snugly in a compact triangle, was presented to my four siblings and me by the Army honor guard at Dad's funeral in 1971.

Despondent after my mother's death six months earlier, Dad had skirted doctor's orders, played tennis and keeled over on the court. The Veterans Administration ruled that his death was due to a chest injury in April 1945. An anti-tank round had blown him off the armored vehicle his squad was riding into the Battle of Leipzig. Until Dad briefed his two oldest kids on the family finances after Mom died, I didn't know that for most of the time I was growing up the wartime damage to his heart had provided a 30 percent disability pension from Uncle Sam. It was a princely \$90 a month by 1971.

The sword and flag are gone, but I have his dog tags, campaign ribbon, Bronze star and citation "for heroic achievement . . . during an armored infantry attack through murderous enemy panzerfaust and machine gun fire." There is no Purple Heart in the collection - ironic, since the wound ultimately killed him - because Dad hadn't bothered to ask for one.

The citation, now crumpled and yellowing, was banged out on a dirty typewriter in a field headquarters two days after the war in Europe ended. It describes how, despite injury, Dad handled prisoners, reorganized the shattered squad that had been cut off behind German lines and got the group out through sniper-covered streets. "Under heavy fire," it reads, "his courage, leadership and devotion to duty at the risk of his life, reflect the highest credit upon **Staff Sergeant Betts** and the armed forces of the United States."

Writing from Leipzig, Dad circumvented censorship to let his parents know where he was by drawing a picture of the obelisk they would remember from a prewar trip to the city. Then the division continued eastward. When the lead elements of Dad's battalion entered Torgau they saw troops on the opposite bank of the Elbe. They exchanged a few shots until both sides realized they had met Allies instead of Germans. I remember Dad recalling the euphoria of the meeting with the Russians: lots of hugging, dancing, singing, drinking.

World War II was over, but the cold war was coming. Dad was one of the first Americans to run into the Iron Curtain. After he was released from the hospital, he was assigned light duty as a chaplain's aide. Realizing they were near Wittenberg, the chaplain wanted to visit Martin Luther's church. (Little did he know that Dad, in a move shocking to some of the staunch Protestants in his family, was about to marry a *Catholic*). They piled into a Jeep and took off, only to be stopped at a checkpoint by two submachine-gun-toting teenage Soviet soldiers who couldn't be budged by any of the Americans' pleading.

The war was not a big topic in my father's later life, nor would his humble style have suggested to anyone that he was a minor hero. But I was always aware that this history professor's small role in the liberation of Europe made him a part of history, and for me that made history real. The intensity of personal experience that marks combat veterans of any war was uniquely connected to world-shaping events for veterans of the world's biggest war. The reasons I made the study of war and peace my profession were mainly Vietnam, nuclear terror and the crises of my own lifetime. But sensing that connection between the personal and the epochal in my father's life must have had something to do with it.

His flag and sword are gone. And so perhaps will the rapt attention to World War II, briefly widened by the anniversary celebrations of the past few years, soon be gone. Generational arithmetic steadily makes that war less a matter of personal participation in history in the minds of living citizens and more a matter of just plain history.

Even the cold war is fading into history, though middle-aged colleagues and I still occasionally slip and refer to the Soviet Union in the present tense. This year, half my students didn't know what the My Lai massacre was. When my youngest son was born on the 50th anniversary of Pearl Harbor, I joked that no one would have trouble remembering his birthday. Then it dawned on me that for his generation, December 7th, 1941, will mean nothing special. It will be as remote to them as the sinking of the *Maine* is to me.

But maybe not. Students may know little about My Lai, but they all know about the Holocaust. Some of them are surprised to hear that at least 50 million people died in World War II, but most know that it shaped the world more than anything else in this century. Maybe the Normandy celebrations and other anniversaries, or stories heard at grandparents' knees, have transmitted the sense of awe to one more generation.

On what would have been his 77th birthday, I read Dad's citation to my 5-year-old. She listened respectfully but blankly. After all, to her Dad is only an old black-and-white photograph. And she also had to ask me, "Daddy, what's a war?" When she's older, maybe she'll understand why I read it to her, and why my voice cracked. That's what souvenirs are for. I think I'll take one more look for the sword and the flag.

BETTS is professor of political science at Columbia University and author of "Military Readiness" (Brookings Institution, 1995).

- SICK CALL -

Warren Alford who formerly served in Division Headquarters and Headquarters Company and in the 69th Quartermaster, recently suffered a stroke. He would like to hear from former members who served with him or anyone who would like to write. His address is:

Warren Alford

114 East Randall Court, Gretna, Louisiana 70053

The 50th Anniversary Tour of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association, Inc.

APRIL 11th to APRIL 28th, 1995

Written by: **William Beswick**
P.O. Box 576

West Point, Virginia 23181

Photos by: **Chet Yastrzemski**

The 50th Anniversary of the 69th Infantry Division Association's arrival on the Elbe River at Torgau and Strehla prompted **Jo** and **Bill Beswick** to organize a "RETURN TO THE ELBE" tour with Joao Freitas of American Express, after many requests. It was decided to organize it to be between April 11th and April 28th, 1995. **Bill Beswick** and **Bill Snidow** met with and discussed the details of the Elbe Reunion with Mayor Wolfgang Gerstenberg of Torgau and Mayor Andreas Haberland of Strehla in April 1994.

Bud Parsons and **Delbert Philpott** also journeyed to Torgau and Strehla in April 1994 to assist in making some of the arrangements. **Delbert** made the arrangements at the "Monument of Nations" in Leipzig. **Bud** checked on the three flagpole assembly and Memorial Park, among other points. **Bill Robertson** did plenty of letter writing to the Germans and the Russian Federation of War Veterans.

The main body of the tour, about forty couples, left Dulles Airport, Washington, D.C. at 6:25 p.m. April 11th, 1995 for London's Heathrow Airport, London, England, arriving at 6:15 a.m. on the morning of the 12th. Boy!! That's a real ten mile hike through that airport. It reminds me of an Army obstacle course, up and down stairs and the 100 yard dash, etc.

After checking through customs, we drove to the Mount Royal Hotel for a light lunch, plus tea, coffee, or some type of soft drink. Afterward leaving for a tour of London. It was the best tour of London that I have ever been on. On arrival back at our hotels, we had the balance of the day to meander on our own to visit other sights and try out any of the famous cafe's of London.

The following day we journeyed to the famous Winchester and Salisbury Cathedrals. I'm sure they brought back memories to many of our group.

On Friday, after a very early breakfast (I am not an early riser, unless it's nine or ten o'clock), we left for Waterloo

Station to board the EXPRESS Eurostar train for Paris at 7:14 a.m. going through the new English Channel Tunnel, referred to as the English Chunnel, arriving at Paris four hours later. I never had any idea that it would take that long. The train engineer came on the intercom after we had entered France with the announcement that we were traveling one hundred eighty-six (186) miles per hour. That was really moving. On arriving in Paris' Nord Station, we boarded our buses for Caen, France. The fields were a wide expanse of flat countryside. You could almost see forever, except for some of the hedgerows.

We visited Caen's Memorial Museum on our arrival, with all of it's display of memorabilia of World War II, very impressive. From Caen, we went to Omaha Beach at St. Laurent-aux-Mer to visit the fabulously kept U.S. Military Cemetery.

Our next stop was to be Mont St. Michel. Which is a humongous Abbey, built on an extremely large conglomeration of granite, in the Bay of Concale, off the coast of Manche, France and is connected to the mainland by a causeway. The Abbey was founded in the year 709. The buildings date chiefly from the year 1203. Some of the fellows climbed up to the second height, it almost reaches to the clouds.



Mont. St. Michel, France

We then traveled on to Chartres, France and the Notre Dame Cathedral at Chartres. It is supposed to have the most beautiful stained glass windows in the world, installed in the 13th century. The church is about 55 miles Southwest of Paris. It was constructed in the 10th and 13th centuries. This was also the church where Henry IV was crowned King of France in the year 1594. Most of us attended church services there Easter Sunday, both Catholic and non-Catholic.

(Continued on Page 18)



Salisbury

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

(Continued from Page 17)



Chartres Cathedral, France

After Chartres Cathedral and a few miles later, the buses left the super highway, then went to a very small road. It was, at least for our buses, entering a gate into the woods. Everyone was wondering where we were going. Some of them asked me and I replied "I'm not going to tell you." Just about that time, a very beautiful Chateau, the Au Chateau d' Esclimont appeared in the opening ahead, surrounded by a moat. We entered the building and saw some magnificently prepared tables for our Easter Sunday lunch. I believe it was a complete surprise to everyone. We did not breathe it to a soul. We had champagne, two kinds of wine, etc., along with excellent service.

We continued on toward Paris after our delightful lunch, about ninety miles down the road. After our arrival in Paris, we found the other group of people from the west, they were to join us for the balance of the tour. They had missed an excellent portion of it. We did have several westerners that had joined us from the beginning. Although one couple said they couldn't be away from work for the complete tour.

We visited many places in Paris, among them were the Eiffel Tower, we took the first elevator to the first landing, then some of the people took a second elevator to the next level. I was already high enough. All of Paris could easily be seen. We took a sight-seeing tour of Paris. You could also go on your own to Notre Dame, the Louvre or any other sight that you desired. The line at the Louvre was about three quarters of a mile long, it took over an hour, after you got in line.

On the night of April 17th, we visited the Paradis Latin for dinner and a show. It is one of Paris's top variety shows. I believe everyone enjoyed it. One portion of it depicted our Discovery Satellite and the recovery of it. At least that was my interpretation of it. I must not forget the many lovely ladies. Especially, I must not forget the black person. I never did figure if it was a HE or SHE.

The following day, we visited the beautiful castle Versailles. It was certainly a sight to behold. No pictures were supposed to be taken inside. Restoration was in full progress.

After returning to Paris, we had a free afternoon to rest up for the evening of the Dinner-Dance on a cruise on the beautiful Seine River. Exciting and romantic for young senior citizens. We could see all of the historic and interesting sights along the river. The lighted model of the Statue of Liberty, the well lit Eiffel Tower and Notre Dame Cathedral. Certainly exhilarating.

We must not forget the Medieval city of Bruges, Belgium with its many shops and canals. Some of the canals are still in use for shipping. Seeing the sights of the Basilica of the Holy Blood and the famous Memling Museum. Bruges was founded before the year 837. Many of us visited the restaurants to try their local cuisine. The next day, we took an orientation drive around Brussels, stopping for a brief rest stop and picture taking.

April 20th, 1995 was the day for us to visit Henri-Chappelle Cemetery to place our Memorial Wreath. **Leland Jones, Sherman Raines and Bert Eckert** were the wreath bearers. Then we traveled to Margraten Cemetery where we had a very impressive ceremony, the wreath bearers were **John Havey, Chet Yastrzemski and Ralph Goebel**. We were all Honored to visit these two cemeteries. Many fellows looked up the grave of their long ago friends and I am sure they had a brief prayer of their own.

We visited Aachen, which I am sure many of you remember. It was the home of Charlemagne, Emperor of much of Western Europe. After our visit here, we went to Malmedy for a walk around town. Then we went to the Memorial of Bagniez, the sight of the Malmedy massacre, one hundred fifty Americans were shot here.

Then we traveled south to the Meischied, Reischied area, stopping to walk among the Dragons teeth of the old "Seigfried Line," with memories and picture taking. **Dillard Powell** and his daughter Judy were walking down the road when a German farmer came after them with a "PITCH FORK", shouting "verboden, verboden!" He could not catch them, then he went after his tractor, nothing happened, so I guess the farmer gave up. From here, we went to Hollerath and had a coffee-beer break, then continued on toward Cologne to visit the Cologne Cathedral and lunch.

(Continued on Page 19)



Palace of the Sun King, Versailles

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

(Continued from Page 18)

We stopped at the Remagen Bridge for picture taking and to visit the museum. Continuing on to Koblenz for the night, shopping, eating and just plain looking. Jo and I had dinner in a nice quaint Greek Restaurant with excellent food. When we went in, there was no one else there. We stopped **Dorothy Wright** and **Catherine Trushel** to join us, then we had **Ralph** and **Doris Bock** come join us. But, shortly, it filled up with their regular customers. We had picked a winner and it was enjoyed by all.

Bad Ems was an excellent place for lunch and souvenirs. The only thing wrong with purchasing souvenirs is that you must carry them and they will break. Bad Ems is one of the famous SPAS of world renown. We also went to Boppard for a walk and to purchase souvenirs.



Boppard on the Rhine River

The Hercules Monument at Kassel is a monstrous statue. Larger than anything that you can imagine. The long water falls had not been turned on, on our visit. I'll bet its beautiful when running.

We passed right through where the old Frontier (WALL & FENCE) was located, near Eisenach. The area is still easily recognizable, but won't be for long. It's growing up with trees, etc.

We stopped at Buchenwald Concentration Camp, a part of the Holocaust, that many people say it was not true. If they had been there, they would have a different attitude. Our fellows knew it to be so. We had already traveled through Weimar. Anyhow, Buchenwald now has a very large museum. It has an elaborate display of artifacts that have been donated by former inmates. The ovens are still in their original state. Some buildings have been erected since our visit in 1985, a library, cafeteria, offices and apartments. We placed a wreath at the British Memorial in Buchenwald. The wreath bearers were **Harold Ruck**, **Ed Sarcione** and **Mike Musich**. The wreath was placed at the British Memorial, because there is not any American Memorial, the British was our closest Ally. We had also placed a wreath there in 1985.

We were to arrive at Leipzig on the afternoon of April 23rd, 1995 to attend a concert at "Napoleon's Tomb" or "Monument of Nations", or as the Germans call it "Voelkerschlactdenkmal." It was a truly fine performance. **Delbert Philpott** made these arrangements with a German lady that he had met in Torgau in 1993. We all enjoyed the dinner at the hotel that had been arranged in case we arrived at a late hour.

I had been contacted on several occasions at home by the DOD 50th Anniversary Commemoration Committee, headed by Lt. General Claude M. Kicklighter. I had been informed at the Arlington Cemetery that two Lithographs of the Elbe River stamp would be delivered to me in Leipzig, Torgau and/or Strehla. Also a bronze plaque. I was to present one of the stamp lithographs to Mayor Wolfgang Gerstenberg of Torgau and was to present the second stamp lithograph and Bronze plaque to Mayor Andreas Haberland of Strehla, Germany. They were well received. Major Tom Rigsbee had contacted me in Leipzig, came to my room and showed me the lithographs. The bronze plaque weighing 140 pounds was in the trunk of his rented car. He delivered these to me along with our new Division Colors that **President Curt Peterson** authorized to be made, so we would have our Colors flying in Germany again. They were carried by the Color Guard. Major Rigsbee picked it up for me in Alexandria, Virginia on April 21st and delivered it to me in Leipzig. That is what you would call "Above and beyond the call of duty".

April 24th was a day of leisure in the morning, departing Leipzig around one o'clock, arriving in Torgau about two o'clock. We were received by Mayor Gerstenberg, the town officials, citizens and many children, handing out flowers to our group. Mayor Gerstenberg came to greet Jo and me, we have been friends since 1983.

After welcoming speeches, etc., we took a walking tour of the town, including Hartenfels Castle, Bear Pit, Castle Church and St. Mary's Church, which was erected between the years 1475 to 1515. The town of Torgau was founded prior to the date of June 11, 973. On the walk around town, many of us got dry or thirsty and stopped at a small bar for a coke or beer, according to your preference.

We continued to the town square for music by the 3rd Infantry Division Band, from Berlin, of quite a few renditions of Glenn Miller and several other top American Bands. Several of the women of the band sang songs of the Andrew Sisters. At their completion, I took the mike and thanked them for their great performance. The German folks enjoyed it as much as we did.

Following the band performance, we went to the Kulturhaus (Culture House) for our 50th Anniversary Dinner. We had 138 people on the tour and were joined by 23 members and their wives that had come on their own. There were seventy-five Russians, Ukrainians, Belarussians and Georgians present. Many of the former Soviet people came on their own, without any assistance.

I had invited ten German Veterans, they did not arrive before the doors were locked. Joao Freitas spotted them attempting to enter. He came to me and asked if they could join us, I said "Certainly, Why not". Joao was very pleased, he returned to let them in. They entered and they were extremely pleased. Isn't that what it was all about? All of the Torgau citizens were welcome. In fact, we had a packed house.

Jo and I had dinner with Mayor Gerstenberg, the Governor of Saxony, the oldest living former Mayor of Torgau and a Russian General that I had met in Arlington Cemetery on the Elbe Day held there. He and **Bill Robertson** had addressed the crowd.

After the dinner, we boarded our buses for our hotel or motel in Strehla and Reisa. One of the hotels was built in the 600's.

I was asked to address the crowd in the Kulturhaus, again without prior notice. I presented the Mayor with the Lithograph stamp of the ELBE River. Then I made a personal

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FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY TOUR

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presentation from my family. My daughter Sandra had made a flag of the town Crest of Torgau and I think it was well done.

I then introduced **Robert Pierce**, Vice President of the 69th to the Mayor and crowd. He gave a brief acknowledgement.

On the morning of April 25th, we returned to the Elbe River Monument, for the Memorial Services, a wreath placement by **Mike Kutzmonich**, **Robert Pierce** and **Joe Ezzo**, honoring our Veterans and speeches by the Governor of the State of Saxony, Mayor Wolfgang Gerstenberg of Torgau and **Bill Beswick**. I never knew that I was supposed to make a speech until my arrival in Torgau. I was not prepared and hope that I did not embarrass the 69'ers. I would not want to do that, anyhow I tried.

We boarded the buses for the Russian Cemetery. A wreath was placed by **Archie Brooke**, **Forrest Frentress** and **Hilton Spokony**, in honor of the many Americans and Soviets that lost their lives in the area.

After returning to the Kulturhaus, I had been told to pick fifteen people to accompany me to the City Hall to observe **Bill Robertson** of Culver City, California and **Alexander Silvashko** of Kletz, Belarus made Honorary Citizens of Torgau. These were the two people that received credit for making the first contact on the Elbe River, between the United States 69th Infantry Division and the 58th Guard Division of the First Ukrainian Front, (front refers to Army in The Ukraine.) I had asked about twenty-five or thirty to go, as many more as I felt that I dared. We had a goodly sum to observe. At the presentation, the news media were their usual selves, monopolizing all the space. I don't know how many people could see it. Anyhow, I thought it was great.

After the citizenship awards, we returned to the Kulturhaus for our official reception and lunch. Mayor Gerstenberg waited for me to return. I was given the honor of opening the door for the reception and lunch. I am reasonably sure there was an excess of three hundred people. Following dinner, lots of discussion was had between Joao Freikas, Iris Davies, Head Tour Guide, me and the German lady that was in charge of the lunch. We came up with the figure of one hundred seventy 69'ers and ten Russian Delegates.

The seventy Veterans from the former Soviet Union had some women Veterans also and they were headed up by Lt. Gen. Shtort, I think that was his name. The Russian government said they were sending a delegation of ten people. I was also told that many of them had traveled on their own.

I had been cautioned by the European Command of Bonn, Germany that there may be some discussion whether a Russian flag or a Ukrainian flag may be flown. Anyhow, we were covered. I took Russian, German, Soviet, Ukrainian and four American flags. The American flags were flown over the Washington Capitol. Three will be held in reserve. That was settled when the Russians, etc. decided to fly the Russian flag. The rest were returned to the dealer where they were purchased.

After lunch, we traveled to Strehla for the dedication of the "First Link-Up Memorial Park". I thought that it was very impressive, even though it rained. It appears that it always rains on our parade. The Park was not exactly as Architect **Sam Lewis** had drawn. But, I understand it was erected according to the flood plain in case the Elbe River flooded. **Sam Lewis** gave a very impressive speech, then I was asked to give a dedication speech, only this time I was

prepared. There was several hundred at the dedication. **Bud Parsons**, **Dillard Powell** and **Bill Snidow** placed the wreath at the new Memorial.

After the dedication we went to the reception in Strehla, but we were beat there. The Russians had already cleared the tables of food, but it was gradually replenished.

A Lithograph of the "Elbe River" commemorative stamp was presented to Mayor Andreas Haberland of Strehla. This stamp will be released in September, 1995, as a part of a set of stamps in a series. It was "Presented to the Citizens of Strehla on the 50th Anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe" and in Honor to The 69th Division. It is printed in English, Russian and German.

April 25th had been a long day for many of the people in our group and some even continued to party or just plain talking, until very late or early, depending on how you look at it. The greater part went to bed for some much needed rest. **Jo** and I sat in the hotel dining room and talked with Iris Davies, the tour guide on our bus. She is a well learned person and great to talk with.

I forgot to mention that we were given a police escort for the three buses, to make sure we found our correct route around Torgau and then took us to the edge of town, on our departure. Someone joked that maybe the Torgau officials wanted to be sure we left town. I don't believe so. Because we were treated ROYALLY.

As we left Torgau, it was a two hour ride to Wittenberg. I for one did not know it was as large a city as it is. It has a long history, dating back over a thousand years. It is a reasonably up to date city. Martin Luther had nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church. He was also excommunicated in the year 1520.

We continued to Berlin and our hotels, where we spent our two final nights in Germany. After our arrival, we checked in and had the rest of the day to look around and find a nice restaurant to have dinner.

April 27th was to be a full day of sightseeing in Berlin, visiting old "Check Point Charlie," going down Unter den Linden Avenue through "Brandenberg Gate." Brandenberg Gate was the dividing line between East and West Germany. We visited Pergamon Museum, viewing ancient ruins of Pergamon and ancient Babylon. We also visited San Souci Palace in Potsdam.

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Brandenburg Gate



Torgau

We finished our tour by having a farewell dinner at the hotel. It gave everyone the opportunity to reminisce about our trip around and across Europe.

The date April 25th, 1995 ended fifty years of our thoughts and reminisces, since our trip into Torgau on April 25th, 1945. We have gone full circle. We visited our friends' graves in Henri Chappelle and Margraten Cemeteries, we each said our own prayer at their graves and most of all, we've never forgotten them.

We traveled 5,009 Kms. on the continent, plus 300 miles in England. Which is about 3673 miles and about 480 Km. in England. That is what we traveled on the tour. The people that went on to Switzerland went much further. Twenty-six of us went on to Switzerland.

I want to recognize a few of the fellows that assisted in making the trip memorable: **Joao Freitas** of American Express, for his timeless work on the tour. He even continued to assist me in Europe. I want to thank **Lt. General Claude M. Kicklighter**, the person in charge of the 50th Anniversary Commemorative Committee and his very able assistant, **Major Tom Rigsbee** who brought the Stamp Lithographs and Bronze plaque to me in Germany. Also the balance of their Staff who helped make the whole Shebang a complete success. **Bill Snidow** was a tremendous asset to the entire operation and even went with me in April of 1994 to help me make arrangements for our activities there. **Delbert Philpott** for the help he gave, including organizing the activities at the "Monument of Nations", with his friend in Leipzig. **Bud Parsons** for all of his help, consolation and his advice on many occasions. For his checking the flag poles and the "First Link-Up Memorial Park" in Strehla. **Bud** kept the people on the second bus interested with his brief talks about various incidents of World War II, history, etc. In this case, (etc.) means many things. **Bud** is a well learned man. Listen to him sometime, you'll see. **Bill Robertson**, for his correspondence to the two Mayors and to the Russian Federation of War Veterans.

There is a couple more men that I must not forget to thank, **Bert Eckert** and **Joe Ezzo**, for pitching in with their knowledge and expertise to help **Alice Busche**, when she fell down on the steps at the hotel, until an ambulance arrived. That made everyone feel better.

Most of all, I must not forget my wife, **Jo**, for the help she gave and tolerating with me while I was working on the tour, instead of helping her. She's a Princess, to even put up with me. You know, when you are doing something voluntarily and without pay, you tend to put more time into it than you realize. Anyhow, thanks for the memories,

Bill and Jo Beswick

Replica of Elbe Flagpoles Available

Sam B. Lewis
Company B, 273rd Infantry
1403 West San Antonio Street
Lockhart, Texas 78644
Telephone: 512/ 376-9412



Sam Lewis holding a model of his flagpoles.

Mrs. Lewis and I attended the 50th ceremonies at Torgau and Strehla. We were there for five days and helped with getting the Flagpoles and plaques ready.

You see here a picture of me holding a model of my flagpoles. I made 50 of these to take with us to the Elbe. A friend made the wood base, and I made all the rest. They are also available to anyone wishing a souvenir of the event. I will also include an 8 x 10 copy on parchment type paper of the cast metal plaque we took over in 1990, and one of the Flagpole symbolism which duplicates in full size, the temporary plastic sign, also 8 x 10, which will be attached to the flagpoles; one in English, and one in German.

The purpose of this, quite frankly, is to help me recoup some of the out-of-pocket expenses incurred in my Aggie fund raising campaign. The actual Elbe flagpole construction was paid for when I went to Torgau. It was agreed that the final payment to the manufacturer was due when we arrived in Torgau.

I consider myself to have been most fortunate to have been assigned to, and to have had my combat experience with the 69th Division. I am hoping some will be interested in these replicas. I know for myself, that I want to have as complete a history as possible of our Division as I can.

Now that the April affair is over, I hope to share some more photos and tales from my war memoirs with the members through The Bulletin.

My best wishes to all and to the Bulletin staff. Keep up the good work!

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Anyone interested in purchasing a replica of the flagpoles, write to Sam Lewis at the address above. Hopefully, they are still available, as we received this letter on March 1, 1995, before the Elbe celebration.)

Historic Hook-Up Remembered

By Chet Yastrzemski

Company E, 272nd Infantry Regiment
29 Skinner Street
Southampton, New York 11968

All photos by Chet

This article, written by Chet, who also went on the 50th anniversary tour, apparently appeared in a newspaper in his area. Good job, Chet.

The 69th Infantry Division was activated on May 15, 1943 and during 1944 and 1945 operated in France, Belgium and Germany. I was a rifleman with E Company, 272nd Infantry Regiment.

On April 25, 1945, a patrol squad from the 69th Division, led by **Lt. William Robertson** of California, met with Lt. Alexander Silvasko of Odessa from the Soviet 58th Guard of the 1st Ukrainian Army, which was to become the first historic link-up between the two allies at the Elbe River in Torgau, Germany.

One hundred and thirty members of the 69th Infantry Division Association, including wives, sons, daughters, grandchildren, representing many states, assembled on April 11, 1995, at Kennedy Airport in New York and Dulles International Airport, for a first leg of a 16 day tour of Europe including England, France, Holland, Belgium and Germany.

In London, we took a guided tour to see the Imperial War Museum with special exhibitions to mark D-Day in Europe, Victory in Europe Day and Victory in Japan.

We traveled to France on the 07:14 Eurostar train to Paris through the Chunnel. The train would reach speeds of 185 m.p.h. on our journey to Paris Nord Station and took four hours travel time. We arrived at Paris Nord Station and boarded our buses to drive through the fields of northern France to Caen.

Caen was a major objective of the Allies on D-Day, but strong German resistance forced the British 3rd Division to halt three miles from the city. We visited the impressive Memorial Museum.

From Caen we traveled to St. Laurent-sur Mer to visit the U.S. Military cemetery above Omaha Beach. This cemetery is very impressive and beautiful but sad in a way when we remember those killed in action, many of whom were 18 and 20 year olds. I visited the grave site of Norman C. Sanford, formerly of Water Mill, where I was born and raised. Norman served with the 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Division. He was killed in action on June 7, 1944.

I took video and pictures of the grave site. A prayer was said over the marker and tears welled in my eyes as I said goodbye to a former resident of Water Mill. May you rest in peace, Norman C. Sanford.

From France we traveled to Belgium to visit Henri-Chappelle Military Cemetery where deceased members of the 69th are buried. A rose and American flag were placed at each grave site. A wreath laying ceremony was held and **Chaplain Bill Snidow** of Virginia said a prayer for our deceased members. We then proceeded to Margraten Military Cemetery where once again a rose and American



Memorial Museum - Caen, France

flag were presented at each grave site. I was chosen to place the wreath at the Chapel Memorial. The chimes from the Chapel Memorial played the National Anthem followed by taps.

Many of the 69th members are buried here at Margraten.



Chet placing a wreath at the tree in Margraten Cemetery.

From Belgium we continued on to Germany, taking a course along the River Rhine to Remagen, where we visited the remains of the bridge over the Rhine River and the Bridge Museum, commemorating the bridge the retreating Germans just could not blow up. We then continued along the Rhine to Koblenz, the confluence of the Rhine and Mosel Rivers, which today is called the German Corner. From the bridge I could see Festung Ehrenbreitstein where I had stayed for four days in April 2, 1945, in preparation for the flag raising ceremony on Army Day, April 6th. I was one of

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HISTORIC HOOK-UP REMEMBERED

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Edward Sarcione, Harold Ruck and Michael Musich at Buchenwald Camp.

two hand-picked men from my company to represent two platoons of 60 men of the 69th Division.

The next morning our travels took us to the former capital of Germany, Weimar, to Buchenwald concentration camp. We had a wreath-laying ceremony to those who perished in this terrible place. Leaving Weimar we continued on to Leipzig, in what was formerly East Germany, held in check by the Soviet Union for more than 45 years, and then to Torgau, the site of the link-up at the Elbe 50 years ago.

On our arrival we were greeted by young German girls and boys who presented each of us with a rose. We were also welcomed by Russian and German veterans, including local Germans who were dressed in uniforms of World War II and Russian veterans who were dressed in the appropriate uniform of that period. We exchanged medals with the Russian and German veterans. We then proceeded to the Elbe Memorial

by the Elbe River, where wreaths were placed by the respective countries. Speeches were given by the dignitaries and interpreted in the language of the three countries.

After lunch we proceeded to Strehla for a dedication service at the Elbe Memorial. The three flags at the monument were raised by veterans of the 69th, Russia and Germany. These flags will be flown permanently on the banks of the Elbe River. The Germans donated the land. The monument and artifacts there were provided by donations from members of the 69th. Prior to moving out from East Germany, the Soviet Union donated the time to clear the land and to put up the memorial.

Our 16-day tour ended in Berlin.

I have been vice-president of the 69th Infantry Division Association, secretary for many years, chair of the nominating committee and director for many years. I have traveled to Europe to meet with the Soviet veterans at the Elbe River in Torgau, Germany, each April 25th during the years 1965, 1969, 1975, 1985, 1990 and 1995.

I don't know what the future years may bring for me, but the past years have brought many fond memories traveling with our association and the meetings at the Elbe River with the Russian veterans.



Meisheid, Germany



3rd Division Honor Guard



Chet with Colonel Kimmel, Army Attache, Bonn Germany

Faces of the 50th Anniversary Tour

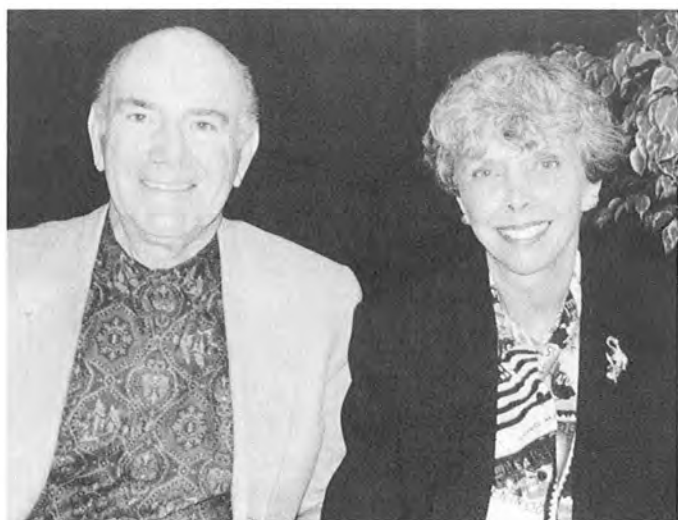
All photos by CHET YASTRZEMSKI



Howard Crowley and Neal Crowley, Waterloo Station.



Bus Drivers Gilbert, Look and Eric.



Vincent and Rosemarie Mazza



Bert and Rhoda Eckert



Robert, Jean and David Rosane



Marsh Muslay and Wife

Faces of the 50th Anniversary Tour

All photos by CHET YASTRZEMSKI



Ralph and Doris Utermoehlen



Archie Brook and daughter Vivian Bailey



Howard and Ethel Ruck



Janet and Ray Sansoucy



General Spurgeon and Alice Neel



Ralph and Ursula Goebel at Mt. St. Michel with 69er.

Our Own Bill Robertson Travels to Moscow with President Clinton on Air Force One to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of World War II

For those of you who don't know, Bill Robertson led a four man patrol that linked up with the Soviet Army at Torgau at the Elbe in Germany.

By Bill Robertson

*Headquarters 1, 273rd Infantry Regiment
5103 Copperfield Lane, Culver City, California 90230*

In many ways, my story is like the tale of Cinderella and the Glass Slipper. But this is a true story, and though it seems unlikely, it did happen. And though it was a distinction which honored me, it is, more truly, an honor earned by our 69th Division. The background is our patrol's link-up at the Elbe River with the Red Army at Torgau, April 25, 1945, 50 years ago.

It all started this year with our 69th Division Tour to Europe and Torgau to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the 69th's link-up on the Elbe. Our celebrations were to take place in Torgau and included the Dedication of the Strehla Monument at the Elbe to **Lt. Buck Kotzebue's** link-up patrol. We had the support of the DOD's 50th Anniversary Commemorative Committee.

Bill Beswick's American Express Tour was to start in London on April 12, 1995. The Pentagon's 50th Anniversary Committee planned to have a Commemorative plaque unveiled at Arlington National Cemetery in Washington, D.C., on April 8th, with a tree planting, and to introduce a WWII postage stamp showing the Elbe Link-up bridge at Torgau. The event honored our link-up with the Red Army, and various other U.S. help afforded the Russians in that war. Various dignitaries were to be there, including Secretary of Defense Perry, the Postmaster General, Russian Ambassador Vorontsov, and our Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Shalikashvili.

I was asked by the DOD to make a short speech on this occasion, and to introduce General Shalikashvili. I was surprised at the honor (I couldn't even spell his name!) but agreed. So my plan to fly to England on the 7th was changed, and I flew to Washington, instead. At his kind invitation, I overnighted at Igor Belousovitch's home. There must have been at least 150 69ers present at the Ceremony, an excellent turnout. Everything went off as planned. Igor had made arrangements at Ft. Myer to have a get-together brunch for us all, and it was a huge success! I departed that night for England.

I thought I'd been invited by the Russians to Moscow for the May 9th Celebration of V.E. Day there. But at the Arlington Ceremony, the lady from the Russian Embassy said she still did not have "official" confirmation. I was then hauled off to one side by Col. John L. Sullivan, of the DOD, who told me that I was invited to join a DOD trip to London, Cambridge, Paris and Berlin, with the Vice-President, for the V.E. Day Commemorations. I accepted. So I returned home from Europe on Friday, the 28th of April, unpacked, did laundry, started to catch up on unpaid bills, etc., and waited to hear more. The Russian invitation did arrive, and two 69ers, **Bud Parsons**, and Igor Belousovitch were in Moscow.

On Sunday, two days later, the phone rang. A voice said; "This is the White House calling." I suspected a prank, and I said: "Of course, and I am General Douglas MacArthur."



Clinton in our compartment, chatting with Bill Detweiler.

But it proved to be a true call, and I was invited to go to Moscow, and Kiev, Ukraine, as our President's guest on Air Force One, all expenses paid! I was absolutely astonished! Of course, how could I refuse such an honor!

I packed again, to depart on Saturday, May 6th, on a Prepaid American Airline Coach ticket. I was met at Dulles Airport by Colonel Roger King, taken to the Ritz-Carlton Hotel, Pentagon City, where I became the responsibility of the State Department. May 7th was a day of leisure except for a couple of TV interviews. I met another WWII Vet, who was to be on our tour; Bill Paty, from Hawaii, who was in the 101st Airborne, and jumped at Normandy. Bill was captured by the Wermacht, ended up in a POW camp in Poland, then escaped when they were marched toward Germany, then was picked up by the Polish Resistance, joined a Russian tank battalion and rode a T 34.

Bill got to Kiev, then the Black Sea, where he and other Americans were shipped to Egypt, and finally to Italy, where he rejoined U.S. Forces. What an adventure!

Let's return to the President's Tour. Our first duty was on Monday, May 8th, V.E. Day. We, and other WWII Veterans, were to join the President at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington Cemetery, where he was to lay a wreath at 8:00 a.m. Enroute positions, all were frisked, packages opened, an exposure made on all cameras. Very tight security! The wreath was placed with due ceremony, and we proceeded to Fort Myer for breakfast. The President went back to the White House to attend to other business. We then proceeded to Summerall Field, Fort Myer, where the President was scheduled to make his V.E. Day speech to our Nation. Do

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BILL ROBERTSON'S AIR FORCE ONE TRIP

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you recall the criticism he got for not going to London on the 8th, because the British were our prime Allies during the War? And yet his first obligation would surely be to address our own nation! How could he be in two places at once, on the 8th?

Bright sunlight at Summerall Field. There were massed bands, a parade of troops, and each State's Flag was paraded. Very colorful. I thought he gave an excellent speech. There must have been 5000 WWII Vets in stands around the field. Bill Paty and I were impressed to be in the stand just behind the President. Five feet in front of us was General Colin Powell. We sat directly behind three Vets of WWII who held the Congressional Medal of Honor. We were in very high company, indeed.

Then our group all hustled off in vans in the President's Motorcade to the Helipad at the nearby Pentagon for take-off via chopper (Marine One, and Highhawk II) for Andrews Air Force Base to board Air Force One. It may interest you to know that there are actually two Air Force "Ones," each identical 747's. And whichever one the President is on is automatically "Air Force One." Both planes always fly together, with other people on #2. And there is a third plane, a huge Air Force Cargo plane, on which go the two limousines, other equipment, and the big black Ford Bronco that carries all the communications gear. We took off at 2:00 p.m. for Moscow, to arrive at 7:00 a.m., May 9th, at Vnukovo Airport.

But let me tell you about Air Force One, now my most favorite Airline. I just wish they had a "frequent flyer" program. It was almost as convenient and comfortable as being at home. All the seats are magnificent. They are leather, with fabric, soft, wide, with comfortable backs. They adjust

10" forward and aft. Of course, they tilt back for sleep, and they swivel 180° for ease in talking or getting up. We had a large table in front of our four seats facing each other. Beside us were another 4 seats and table. The edges folded up for take-off or landing. On the table were "Welcome" notes and orientation brochures in front of each of us. In our minor VIP compartment there were 10 seats, 8 in the center, and 2 at the sides, all with tables. On the forward wall there was a 21" TV, on which you could play any of about 30 movies, if all could agree on the selection. There was an electronic headphone on which you could select any of a wide selection of types of music. And between the seats was a telephone, from which you could call anyone anywhere in the world!

There was storage space, and hanging lockers. And a very large bathroom, stainless, with spare razors, etc., and big enough so that one could dress! Plenty of room. Real towels! Quite outstanding! We were taken on a tour of the plane (later, when everyone else was away). On the top deck, the flight deck, we saw the cockpit, chatted with the pilot, saw the flight crew quarters, with bunks and seats, and a mini-galley. On the flight deck, we saw the fantastic Communications Section (through which our phone calls, or any other more important calls, were routed) with 3 operators, and banks of toggle switches, screens, oscilloscopes, LED's, etc. Telex and Fax capability. Very impressive!

On the passenger deck, beginning at the front, was the "1st Cabin" for the President and Hillary. In addition to two comfortable beds, was a desk and two of the usual chairs. We were told that Hillary used this desk as her office. Aft was their bathroom (two showers) and dressing quarters, with storage, and behind this was the President's Office. Moving aft, there are quarters for true VIP's, such as Sec. State Christopher, Sec. Treasury Rubin, etc. There is a large room

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We depart Vnukovo Airport, Moscow, enroute to Kiev 11 May 1995. Both Air Force One's are visible. (Reporters on 2nd)

BILL ROBERTSON'S AIR FORCE ONE TRIP

(Continued from Page 27)

with a center table, which can be used as a dining room, conference room or Press Room. It must seat 15-20 people. Then there is a "secretaries" room, with computers, typewriters, etc., an area with a copying machine. Somewhere forward is another galley; it may be up on the top deck. I should mention that along the port (L) side of the plane is the corridor, with a couple of small tables and seats by windows. Along the starboard side (R) are seats for many officials.

Next was our minor VIP compartment, and I described that above. Aft of us, there were two aisles. In the section immediately behind us, were seats for the Secret Service (perhaps 20). Behind them were seated the Air Force Service Crew. Then came the rear galley. It was very impressive (but did not have a Barbecue!). All food was prepared from scratch. There were two ovens, and a range, as well as microwave ovens. A number of refrigerators and freezers, and lots of storage. We were told they could prepare 70 meals from this galley alone (and there is another forward). All the personnel are Air Force.

Behind this aft galley, sits the press, TV and print. The plane holds about 75 passengers, plus crew. Space aboard was planned for three of the national press services: ABC, CBS, NBC. But now there is another, and with CNN, there are four, so they have to rotate, and the "odd one out" flies in the other aircraft for any particular trip, other press, and ancillary people. I have only a few more comments about my favorite airline. It's range is 10,000 miles, commands an international corridor for its flight plan, and can re-fuel in flight. It flies at @ 700 mph.

While on the plane, I met the President, the First Lady, Sec. Christopher, Sec. Rubin, Strobe Talbot, Mike McCurry, and many others. Interestingly, it was a very friendly atmosphere. There was no feeling of "hierarchy", no "posturing." Everyone was dressed in jeans. I felt comfortable. My only comment is that many of the first assistants seemed very young! There were not many "greyheads" amongst us.

Now to return to the purpose of the trip, a celebration of our mutual victory in World War II, and a recognition of the sacrifices of the Russian people. V.E. Day is celebrated in Russia on May the 9th. We landed at Vnukovo Airport. We Vets had to be dressed, shaved, and ready to go by landing time. We first went to the Tomb of the Unknown to get into position at the Kremlin wall before the arrival of the President, who was to lay a wreath. In addition to the Russians present, our officials consisted of Sec. State Christopher, Sec. Defense Perry, our Ambassador Pickering, and our Security Advisor, John Vessey, Sec. of the Army, Togo West, and others. It went off without a problem.

We then walked over to Red Square to witness the parade of the Soviet Veterans of WWII. I was absolutely astonished when we walked onto the Square to see a huge cloth painting depicting Alexander Sylvashko and me, embracing as we did on April 25, 1945. It was the "famous" photo, again. It hung on the front of the State Museum (where Lenin's picture used to be) at the end of Red Square opposite St. Basil's. The parade of 5000 Soviet veterans was impressive. I trust we all recall that President Clinton, and other foreign dignitaries, objected to a traditional Russian VE Day Military Parade because of the military situation in Chechniya, so there were no tanks, artillery, or fly-over.

(Continued on Page 29)



9 May 1995, Red Square: Note hanging on the State Museum (where Lenin's picture hung) Lt. Sylvashko and Bill Robertson at the Elbe.!

BILL ROBERTSON'S AIR FORCE ONE TRIP
(Continued from Page 28)



"Bill" and Hillary

We then went to our Hotel-the Radisson Slayjanskaya in Moscow. The Radisson is the best hotel at which I've ever stayed in Moscow. It's completely modern, and up to U.S. standards. The water is safe in Moscow, but rusty from ancient pipes. Our hotel filters it's own water, so it is clear. The plumbing is modern. Our President's party occupies three floors, and blocks elevators at the center floor. Which means that all access must be through the stairways, and these are guarded by the Secret Service.

Names, notices about schedule and baggage changes are taped to each person's door, and there is a central office. At the elevator lobby level on each of our floors, a Continental Breakfast with coffee is available in the morning. Meals are also served at various hotel dining rooms. The U.S. Embassy ran a small store in a hotel room which sold cold beer, sandwiches, soft drinks, bottled water, as well as selected small knick-knacks of gift interest. Very helpful.

There were many Ceremonies, etc., during our 20 days in Moscow. I was especially honored when the President mentioned my name at the Dedication of a new Russian War Museum in Moscow. The President gave a speech at Moscow University. To my delight, I was invited to attend the State Dinner given by Pres. Yeltsin for the Clintons. We went through the Receiving Line, and met Pres. Yeltsin, Chernomyrden, President Clinton and Hillary. I shared a table with Molly Raiser, our State Department Chief of Protocol, and 5 Russians, including the Chief of the Russian Academy of Science, and Yevgeny Primakov, the current head of the Russian Intelligence Service (the Russian spy agency). The dinner and the surroundings (Kremlin Hall of Facets) were truly magnificent, and of course there was caviar and vodka, and wines.

In addition to various ceremonies, to some of which we were invited, this was a "working" meeting as well. The President and Sec. Christopher were trying to get Yeltsin to back away from selling nuclear production equipment to Iran. They had only limited success.

Thursday, May 11th, we took off for Kiev, Ukraine, now an Independent State, but within the Commonwealth of

Russia. We landed at Borispol Airport, to a reception line of Ukraine officials and Ukrainian girls carrying bread and salt, a tradition of welcome. The President's motorcade departs for Mariinskyi Palace to meet with President Kuchma. The President stays at the official Guest House. The rest of us stay at the Kievskaya Hotel, formerly the Intourist Hotel. It is a very poor hotel, clean but dark and cold, with old plumbing. We are told not to drink the water in Kiev, not even to brush our teeth in it, and urged to buy bottled water.

We were invited to another State Dinner at Mariinski Palace, via the Reception line. And a very excellent dinner it was, with entertainment provided by very young people, with solos, orchestra, and a jazz band. Again ceremonies to attend, including a get together of U.S. and Soviet Vets of WWII. The President spoke at Shevchenko University. Kiev is a very beautiful city, while Moscow is pretty drab. And the Ukrainians seem to be more friendly than people in Moscow. Here there were crowds lining the streets for the president's motorcade, cheering and waving. That did not happen in Moscow.

We visited the Babi Yar Memorial, The President spoke again, and this was a very solemn visit. Babi Yar is where the Nazis massacred over 100,000 Jews and other Ukrainians in WWII, and dumped the bodies into a ravine.

The afternoon of May 12th we flew back to Washington, arriving about 8:00 p.m., and again went to the Ritz-Carlton for the night, with my flight home scheduled for Saturday. Home again,-after a memorable experience which I'll never forget.

Video Available of World War II Footage

Submitted by: James E. Boris

Headquarters, 881st Field Artillery

6800 Henry Avenue, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19128

Telephone: 215/483-2064

I often sit and wonder what I will tell my grandchildren when they ask me what I did in the big war, World War II.

Sure, we had our small share of combat, but I think the one thing that will stay with us always will be April 25th, 1945 when east met west on the Elbe at Torgau.

I asked Earl for this space in the bulletin to give you all an opportunity to obtain a video record of that historic meeting in history.

George Stevens, a Hollywood director, took a camera crew and recorded the American Army's March across Europe. I have a small segment of this filming called, "Normandy to Berlin," which runs about an hour, and shows our meeting on the Elbe.

Let me make one thing very clear. This is not a money-making deal. It's to make available from one 69er to another this tape of this historic event. I will charge the price of the tape plus a small charge for a friend of mine to copy and review each tape to make sure each is a good copy. I would say it will cost, right off the top of my head, about five to seven dollars if purchased at the reunion in Myrtle Beach. If you are not attending and want me to mail you a copy, that cost would also include a postal fee.

To have them ready at Myrtle Beach I would have to know as soon as possible if you are interested, so please contact me by phone or send a postcard. I think calling would be best to give my friend more time to work on them.



Company I, 273rd Infantry Division - Camp Shelby, Mississippi, October 1943

Submitted By: William J. Heagney - 40 Lake Forest Drive, Pinehurst, North Carolina 28374-9536

Bill Heagney is in the top row, third from the right. Others who are identified are: #1 - Company Commander, #2 - Lieutenant Ryan, 3rd Platoon; #3 - Sergeant Bower, 3rd Platoon; #4 - Sergeant Martel; #5 Mess Sergeant; #6 - Nick Villacci; #7 - Bozzelli; #8 - Brickman; #9 O'Neil (O'Neal?); #10 - Llewellyn; #11 - Lee; #12 - Steed; #13 - Trepton; #14 - Gladish; #15 - Young; #16 - Humerik; #17 - Stakis; #18 - Spatz; #19 - Polk; #20 - First Sergeant of Company I - name unknown.



General Charles Bolte's gravesite at Arlington.



George Phillips of Company G, 271st Infantry, his wife, Doris Phillips, and Margaret Mynes.



Unknown 69th member with Russian General.

Wording from the 1995 Arlington WW II 50th Anniversary Booklet

On April 25th, 1945, a patrol of American soldiers from the 69th Infantry Division met Soviet soldiers from the 173rd Rifle Regiment. This link-up occurred near the towns of Strehla and Torgau, Germany. It remains one of the most significant and remembered events of World War II, for it cut Nazi Germany in two and symbolized the success of the Allied efforts to liberate Europe.

In addition to the veterans of the Elbe, today we thank and honor all the veterans who served in this theatre of war: The Navy and Merchant Seamen who sailed the hazardous North Atlantic Convoy missions to Murmansk; the Persian Gulf Command soldiers manning the critical supply lines through the Middle East to Russia; and finally, the airmen who flew the dangerous long-range shuttle bombing missions across Europe to recover and relaunch from Russian airfields.

Today, our grateful Nations remember the sacrifice and dedication of these veterans and we come together again in the Spirit of the Elbe.

SPIRIT OF THE ELBE

Arlington National Cemetery

April 8th, 1995

CEREMONY

Prelude

Arrival of Official Party

Invocation

Opening Remarks

National Anthem

Remarks

Plaque Dedication

Tree Planting

Benediction

Conclusion of Ceremony

Postlude

**Paul Staub of H1, 273rd Was Thrilled to be
at Arlington and sent the photo below**



Bill Robertson and Paul Staub in front of rendering of new U.S. Stamp.

Speech Given by Bill Robertson at the Commemoration of the Elbe Link-Up at Arlington National Cemetery



Lieutenant Bill Robertson was the Patrol Leader of Headquarters 1, 273rd Infantry, who led the 2nd Contact Patrol of the Russian Army at Torgau, Germany - Elbe River Crossing, April 25th, 1945.

The WWII Commemorative Committee asked me to come to Washington, D.C., to speak at the Ceremony at the unveiling of a plaque to the Elbe link-up. I also was asked to introduce the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Shalikashvili. There were about 150 members of the 69th Division present, and representatives of the Navy-Merchant Marine Murmansk Convoys and the Persian Gulf Command that supplied the Russians via Iran during WWII.

These are my comments: "I speak today on behalf of the Veterans of the 69th Division, and for all of the ground troops of WWII. On April 25, 1945, I led a four man patrol that linked up with the Soviet Army at Torgau at the Elbe River in Germany.

That link-up at the Elbe became a symbol of the cooperation possible between the Western Allies and the Soviet Nation in the battle to defeat a common enemy, Nazi Germany.

It was a scene difficult to describe; excitement, celebration, triumph, curiosity, great jubilation. We slapped each other on the back, shook hands, jabbered at each other without understanding, drank toasts to our leaders. We did appreciate the symbolism of the event; the Wehrmacht had been cut in half! We were Victors! We could see peace ahead.

That war was not won by ground troops alone, and we pay honor to those who helped in this common effort, many here today. A great many helped supply Russia during the war, and they are represented here today. Under Naval Convoy, our Merchant Marine faced great danger in shipping supplies to Murmansk via the Barents Sea. There were many who also supplied the Soviets via the Persian Gulf Command by truck through Iran.

And, not least, was the Army Air Corps (now the U.S. Air Force) which flew shuttle bombing missions across Germany to Poltava in the Ukraine. The Soviets gave fighter cover beyond the range of our fighters. All of these are examples of our cooperation.

All of us here today have seen unimaginable changes since 1945. We've lived through the Cold War with its anxieties, we've seen space explored, satellites spinning in orbit, and a communication revolution, with TV, Fax, Computers, and a plastics revolution, when all we had before was Bakelite and Nylon.

But these are all technological advances. Our human needs remain the same: Freedom, hope for the future, security in our homes, and peace. We still need each other to provide reasonable solutions to mutual problems and to ensure Peace and Order in the world.

Here, today we honor all the dead, and the survivors of WWII, who defeated the Axis Powers and preserved our futures. For these reasons, it is necessary for us to maintain a strong defensive capability - Army, Navy, Air Force.



Bill Robertson and Officers at the Tree Planting Ceremony



Igor Belousovitch and the two Russian Generals during lunch after the ceremony.

***** Division Association Chapters, Units, Companies, and Group Mini-Weekends Across the United States *****

We are interested in all news from Chapters, Groups, Branches, Companies, Battalions, Regiments, Recon, Artillery, AAA, Units, T.D.'s and minis for this column. Mail your date(s), location, banquet cost, activities and room rates, plus a good write-up to **Earl Witzleb, Jr., Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069 or R.D. #3, Box 477, Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606**, as early as possible. Then follow through with a write-up immediately after the event(s).

***** Battery C, 724th Field Artillery Battalion *****

Coy Horton, News Reporter
1705-A Highview Street
Burlington, North Carolina 27215-5652
Telephone: 910/227-7785

The Battery "C" 724th Reunion will be held in conjunction with the 69th Infantry Division's Annual Reunion October 22nd through October 29th, 1995 in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Battery C, 724th will have a dinner meeting Friday, October 27th. The place and exact time will be announced later. It is requested that the fellows and their spouses who plan to attend this reunion, please contact:

John Turner	or	Coy Horton
P.O. Box 1645		1705-A Highview Street
Decatur, Georgia 30031		Burlington, North Carolina 27215
Telephone: 404/378-3543		Telephone: 910/227-7785

***** 69th Cavalry Recon Troop *****

Harold L. Gardner, News Reporter
2929 Mason Avenue
Independence, Missouri 64052-2962
Telephone: 816/ 254-4816

To you Troopers who have not made your reservations for the 44th Annual Recon Reunion, it is still not too late if you hurry. This reunion will be held at the **LEXINGTON HOTEL SUITES** in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The dates are September 6-9, 1995. The hotel is offering very reasonable rates which will actually be honored September 4th-11th. So come early and stay late for the same rate. One bedroom suites are \$49.00; two bedroom suites are \$69.00 and if you would want a studio suite, they are only \$39.00. It is really a nice set-up any way you go.

Charlie Rice and **Lloyd Abbott** report the following Troopers and their ladies are set to be there:

Lloyd Abbott	Jerry Leib
Joe Elliget	Mike Moscaritolo
Boyd Ellsworth	Herb Norman
Charles Fox	Floyd Opdyke
Wayne Frazier	Wally Pepper
Hugh Fuller	Charlie Rice
Harold Gardner	Bob Schueler
Al Gold	Lewis Vaughan
Lewis Hill	

Other "maybes" are **Elmer McClain** and **Hap Stambaugh**.

You Troopers that are still undecided, the fellows would sure like to see you. Come on down to "Okie" land and be with your "family." The Cherokees haven't scalped anyone for years. In fact, the wild west is actually pretty tame these days.

The telephone number for the Lexington Hotel in Oklahoma City is 405/943-7800 and their Fax is 405/943-8346. Phone in your reservation and join us for our second reunion West of the Mississippi!

***** 269th Engineers *****

Frank and Stefania Nemeth, Coordinators
66 Gaping Rock Road
Levittown, Pennsylvania 19057
Telephone: 215/945-3809

Hi Engineers:

We attended the Tri-State Reunion in Canton, Ohio in June and had a good time enjoying seeing everyone once again. The Hall of Fame was well worth seeing, especially if you are a "Pro Football Fan" and getting souvenirs for the grandchildren. The tours were just great and the Amish meal just topped it all off. The Committee did a great job on this one.

As far as I know, everybody is doing alright and I missed not seeing a good buddy who couldn't make it. The best to **Bill "Sadie" Corpman**.

Enclosed is a photo of the Engineers who attended: **Ray Hull, Co. A; Ward Peterson, Co. B; Bill Clayton, Co. A** and **H & S; and Frank Nemeth, Co. B**. The photos of **Bill** and **Freda Clayton** and **Ray** and **Leona Hull** were taken at our banquet in Canton. (See following page)



Ray Hull, Ward Peterson, Bill Clayton and Frank Nemeth at the Tri-State this year.

(Continued on Page 36)

**DIVISION ASSOCIATION CHAPTERS, UNITS,
COMPANIES AND GROUP MINI-WEEKENDS
ACROSS THE UNITED STATES**

(Continued from Page 35)

We did finally get to see **John and Florence Pszekaza** after nearly 50 years and it was good to spend some time with them. They had to go to a wedding so they missed the banquet. It was good to hear some old war stories and we had plenty of laughs. **John** was our driver in the second platoon and received the Bronze Star while on the combat team backing the Infantry troops. **John** plans to make it to the Myrtle Beach Reunion in October and might even play golf with us. We sure need help.

It was good to see **Dottie Eibling** at the Tri-State and we followed her home and stayed a few days and really enjoyed that and thank her for supplying some photos that we can use in the bulletin.

So take care and hope to see ya all in Myrtle Beach in October and bring your golf sticks and enjoy yourselves.



Bill and Freda Clayton, Company A and H & S

269th Engineers "Oldies"



Florence and John Pszekaza of Company B



*Jim Eibling
Company A and H & S*



*Captain Duncan
Company B*



Ray and Leona Hull, Company A



Sergeant Ralph Kitchings of Company A

(Continued on Page 37)

**DIVISION ASSOCIATION CHAPTERS, UNITS,
COMPANIES AND GROUP MINI-WEEKENDS
ACROSS THE UNITED STATES**
(Continued from Page 36)



Radio in Command Car with Marty Stepicevic, Co. H & S

Eugene Butterfield writes and reminisces

Eugene Butterfield, Division Headquarters
22449 Lake Road
Rocky River, Ohio 44116

While at The Tri-State Reunion in Canton last week I stopped to think of what I have gotten out of being a member of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association.

The first thing that came to my mind was something that **"Dutch" Hawn** mentioned to me the following day in conversation.

It was the number of cities that we had visited over the past 15 years and the great memories that we had taken from each one of them. I remember Phoenix vividly, as well as the great food that we had in Milwaukee. And sitting with our gang of golfers after our tournament was over and eating and downing pitchers of beer while we sat by a picture window overlooking the First Tee and watched all of the clowns who teed up and tried to "kill" the ball with a lake in front of them. The women were less funny. They couldn't hit the ball as far and did not have to drive across any part of the Lake, so they hit more naturally, and some of them got fairly decent tee shots. Others just dubbed the ball a few feet down the fairway, but after the horrible day I had had, it made me feel good. I remember the following year in Phoenix. I got a Trophy for being the most improved Golfer?

Other than the new cities that we have seen by going to the National Convention most of those 15 years, the most precious gift I have received is the friends that we either knew during the war, such as **"Dutch" Hawn**, **Colonel Casper**, **Jack Duffy**, and **Bob Myers** (members of my Platoon would be terribly surprised to learn that Captain Myers and I became good friends at the first reunion I attended). And I failed to mention **Clarence Marshall** and our First Sergeant, **Millard Harris**. And the host of new friends that we have made who now seem like "Family", some we look forward to seeing at each Reunion.



Krinkelt, Belgium: Catholic Church with overturned "Tiger Tank" in right foreground. February 19th, 1945

Now for all of the past and present friends of **"Jack" Duffy** who served in the Third Squad of the Division Combat Platoon, Division Headquarters Company, and who, with his wife Mary, Co-Chaired the Reunion we had in Rochester, New York in 1993.

At the Tri-State I learned that **Jack** had had a stroke. When I got home on Sunday I called to see if I could talk to him, and got his wife, Mary. She told me that he had had a stroke in November of last year and was recovering from it and looking forward to going to the National at Myrtle Beach in October. He had his golf clubs out and was getting ready when he had another stroke in February. After a longer hospitalization than the first time, he was moved to a Nursing home.

Friends who wish to send messages may address them to: **Jack Duffy**, at his home, 28 Cypress Street, Rochester, New York 14620-2306.



Company B, 271st

Oscar Morales, Octavius Cary, Medendorf, McMullen,
Unknown.
Sent by: William Matlach

United in Combat

Integrated unit broke race wall in World War II

From THE REPORTER February 18, 1995
Vacaville, CA

Submitted by: Frank Barbee

Company G, 273rd Infantry

801 Franklin 1413, Oakland, California 94607-4239

By Ben Patterson

Staff Writer

The last time **Frank Barbee** and **Homer Lind** saw each other, they were on the other side of the world fighting an enemy that seemed to show no mercy. It took the heavy American casualties in the Battle of the Bulge to bring **Pfc. Frank Barbee** and **Lt. Homer Lind** together.

A half-century later, retired **1st Sgt. Barbee** and retired **Army Col. Lind**, who both served in one of the first racially integrated infantry divisions, were reunited at Travis Air Force Base to remember their time together in the conflict known as World War II. **Barbee** chose Travis AFB as the meeting place because his daughter serves there as a technical sergeant.

They leafed through old Stars and Stripes newspapers and pictures from the 69th Infantry Division and of course, the stories began pouring out.

Barbee, who now lives in Oakland and found **Lind's** name on an old reunion list, remembers being caught in the bathroom of a German house when he heard someone shout "Tanks!" — a warning of enemy forces on the way. It turned out the tanks in question were the Army's, but **Barbee** still remembers the scare.

"I thought I'd been caught with my britches down," he joked.

Lind, **Barbee's** platoon leader who now lives in Grass Valley, remembered different stories. Like the time the platoon was pinned down in a gully by heavy German mortar fire, or when he saw a white soldier — "as Southern as they come" — working with a black fellow soldier to clean equipment.

Barbee was one of the first to volunteer in an Army "experiment" to racially integrate combat duty personnel.

Barbee described **Lind** as a good lieutenant who listened to his non-coms. **Lind** called **Barbee** a very good infantryman.

Barbee joined the Army in 1942, spending 2 and a half years in a quartermaster battalion following the troops from North Africa to France.

In December 1944, the German Wehrmacht hammered the American Army in the Battle of the Bulge. Up to then, the only blacks allowed to fight were in a single tank battalion; the all-black 861st Tank Battalion.

The brutal winter fighting in the Ardennes Forest decimated the combat infantry ranks, forcing General Dwight Eisenhower to strip rear area units of anyone trained and willing to carry a rifle.

Only then did Eisenhower ask the black rear area units for volunteers. Even then, the blacks were put into segregated rifle platoons attached as a fifth platoon to four-platoon companies. **Barbee**, then a supply sergeant, not only volunteered for one of the platoons, but "took a bust" to private to get in. "I figured if it was going to help us win, I'd do it."

From March to May of 1945, black volunteers were assigned to eight Army infantry divisions and two armored divisions, serving as one of five platoons in each division.



Barbee and Lind spent Friday afternoon reminiscing about their experiences during the Battle of the Bulge.

Barbee joked that he joined up to help white soldiers "finish up" what they had begun. "I thought I'd be a hero," he quipped.

Meanwhile, **Lind** learned that he had been assigned to **Barbee's** platoon after finishing his training at the University of California, Los Angeles. **Lind** was simply told by his commanding officer in Company G, 273rd Infantry, to go to the replacement depot and pick up an extra platoon being assigned to the company.

"I didn't have a reaction" to serving with the black platoon, said **Lind**, who added that he was probably picked for the position because he came from Southern California rather than the South. "I figured, this is my job."

Everyone in the unit had a common goal — to get home alive. But that doesn't mean racial discrimination came to an end.

The black infantry cut their hair into mohawks to unsettle their German foes, **Barbee** said. It had the same effect on the German civilians they encountered. One German housewife who peered out as the troops passed by her home spotted the mohawks and cried "Mein Gott, they are sending savages," **Barbee** said.

Barbee and his compatriots were such a radical change for the Army that one time when he was wounded and the only black combat infantryman convalescing in a field hospital, some of the white patients would troop over from other beds just to see what a black infantryman looked like.

Barbee tells of a commanding officer who described blacks as people who cut holes in their shoes to relieve the pain of corns. He called the officer aside to tell him the platoon "wasn't too happy with the remark." The officer didn't repeat it.

Despite the discrimination, many black soldiers still experienced, they excelled in the war.

"Most of them already had overseas experience," said **Lind**. "They may not have been in the front lines as infantrymen (before joining the platoon) ... but they were still a target."

Barbee returned home to Virginia to find racism still intact, his achievements ignored, his rights violated daily.

But ask him if the Army's "experiment" in integration was a success and **Barbee** will laugh exuberantly. Just look at retired Gen. Colin Powell, he says.

"We as a country waste more manpower fighting stupidity — we waste more talent that way," **Barbee** said.

"The way things should work is simple, said **Barbee**: "If you're a good person, I want you."

LIBERATION

By W.M. Ferda

(Thoughts of an ex-German, who has lived in Canada for 44 years, on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the liberation of his home town, Leipzig, and of the Elbe River Link-up)

I too shall be celebrating a 50th Anniversary of an occasion which has burnished itself into my memory, only mine will be on a different date.

On April 18, 1945, at 1 900h Central European Time, I saw the first American soldiers enter my neighborhood in my hometown of Leipzig in Germany. That moment spelled not only the end of the war for me, but release from the stranglehold of an oppressive regime. That was not all. It meant, too, that my life could continue, not end abruptly in a German concentration camp like that of my father who died in Auschwitz. On that day, I was a 14 year old German kid who had yearned for the end of the war, for the end of fear, for freedom which up to that point had only been an empty word.

The brave men of the US Army's Fighting 69th liberated my home-town and for this I shall be eternally grateful.

It is strange how some things in life are easily forgotten while others remain sharply focused for an eternity. So it is that April 18, 1945 stands out vividly as if it had happened only yesterday.

About a week before you arrived in Leipzig, U.S. artillery kept pounding the city, totally disrupting what was left of an already disrupted lifestyle. School had stopped (I was in high school then) and in order to be on the safe side, we had all moved into the air-raid shelter (the vaulted ceiling basement of our apartment house). Every so often, when it became quiet outside, we would come topsides like a bunch of rats to see what was going on, and to get a breath of fresh air.

And so it remained until the 18th rolled around in the month of April. It was an absolutely beautiful spring day - bright, sunny and warm. Some flowers were already blooming. The linden trees, for which Leipzig was named, were in full leaf throughout the city. As the day progressed, it became ominously quiet, almost too quiet compared with the air raids and pounding of the previous few days. The people gathered on the sidewalk enjoying the warmth of the sun. There was an expectant feeling in the air of imminent change - some, like me, dared to hope for something better, for a brighter future.

It was in the afternoon, I can't remember the exact time, when we heard the rattling noise of steel on cobblestones, the obvious sounds of tank treads. Could this be the change I had longed for - or were we about to be leveled totally. And then the tank appeared, just a single tank with a German officer in the turret and beside him - a wild looking woman in civies with disheveled hair and a crazed look in her eyes waving a Luger in her hand. This happened about 150 feet from my home, at the junction of Dresdner Strasse (a main street) and Wurzner Strasse which led to Wurzen and Torgau. A few of us approached the tank and asked what was going on. The German officer and his wild sidekick wondered where the German lines were because they were trying to link up with their unit. Since we didn't know if any German army or tank units still existed, never mind where they were, we sent them westward thinking that it would end the war faster for us if they fell into American hands. While all this was going on, a spotter aircraft had been circling the road junction. Just as the tank was taking leave and we were preparing to go back to our respective houses, it happened -

an artillery shell exploded just above us. The fright almost paralyzed me. I literally was unable to run. Fortunately, no one was hurt, but to this day I still don't know if it was American or German fire. From then on, I did not venture too far from the house. I became aware that down the street the first white flags were being draped out of windows and figured that we were close to the end of the war and our ordeal. I raced upstairs and grabbed one of my mother's bedsheets and draped it outside by squishing it between the windows and then back down to the street again.

By about 1900h, there were quite a few people on the sidewalk, just milling around and waiting, and wanting not to miss what would happen next. And then they came - the "Amis" (which was a short form for the word "Amerikaner" or American). They came slowly and cautiously - the foot soldiers, the true fighting machine.

By then, there was hardly a house which did not have a white flag hanging out the window. Some people on the sidewalk were holding small white flags as well. Young girls, in their 20s had white lilac which they offered to the soldiers. There were sporadic cheers, but otherwise it was pretty quiet. There were no shots fired in my area, no resistance at all. I do not know how it was in the rest of the city. Then came the Sherman tanks and more troops. By nightfall my city had been liberated or as some others called it, the city had fallen. For me and my Mom, however, it was definitely a day of celebration.

On the occasion of the 50th Anniversary, I want to thank all of you who interrupted your own lives - university educations, jobs, and left sweethearts and families behind to risk your lives to liberate unknown people, thousands of miles away, to release them from terror and tyranny. To those of you who read this, and to those who no longer are among us, I wish to acknowledge with profound gratitude the incredible sacrifices which you made.

Thanks for a job well done! I will never forget.

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Remembrance shared of link-up incident

One of the little known and never published incidents that happened shortly after the "link-up" with the Russians on the Elbe River in Torgau, Germany was a gift from Russian General Jadov and Marshal Koniev, of a Russian Cavalry horse for General Eisenhower.

It was delivered to Colonel Casper of Special Troops Headquarters where I was sergeant major at Naunhof just across the street from General Staff Headquarters and we had to take care of it for several days until General Bradley sent for it.

Fortunately we had an officer from the University of Illinois with a Cavalry background and it was his job to exercise the horse and have it fed in a field nearby. In a few days they sent a two-and-one-half ton truck with a built-in stall which carried the horse back to General Bradley's headquarters.

Colonel Casper, my boss, and our General Staff housing officer is said to have remarked, "It was the first time he had ever had to furnish quarters and rations for a horse."

Joe Wright

Division Headquarters

After 50 years, he'll meet the woman in the picture



Submitted by: **Michael Kertis**
Company G, 272nd Infantry

12 Camille Lane, Millsboro, Delaware 19966-8806

From the HARTFORD COURANT: Sunday, May 7, 1995

By ALIX BIEL, *Courant Staff Writer*

OLD SAYBROOK - It was the day to celebrate victory in Europe. **Bill Capozzoli**, a member of the 69th Infantry, which had met Russian troops at the Elbe River only days before, was as happy as anyone.

Strolling down the road with two buddies, he spotted three Russian women who had been forced to work for the Germans in Leipzig. With the help of an Army manual on German language, he chatted with the women and snapped a few pictures.

Capozzoli, a 73-year-old widower who lives in Old Saybrook, liked to look at the fading photographs, especially the one of the young woman he knew as Lydia from Leningrad. He couldn't remember the other women's names or the first names of his buddies.

"She was pretty," he said, grinning. "I have to say I was the aggressor. I promoted the whole deal."

The brief encounter - 30 minutes start to finish, **Capozzoli** estimated - did not become a big deal until 1984, when **Capozzoli** traveled to Russia with students from the Loomis Chaffee School in Windsor. He showed the snapshot to a Russian educator who had a friend who was a journalist. Before long, the photograph was running in Russian newspapers with a caption asking if anyone knew the young woman or her current whereabouts.

Lydia Pavlovna Klyavina burst into tears when she saw the photograph. She remembered herself as a young woman, the trials of the war, the day she and two friends met the trio of soldiers on the road. And she was touched that an American serviceman thought enough of her to save the memento.



Through the Russian educator - who is fluent in English and Russian and is now **Capozzoli's** friend, pen pal and translator - Klyavina and **Capozzoli** have exchanged a few letters over the years. Friday, **Capozzoli** flew to St. Petersburg - formerly called Leningrad - to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of V-E Day - called Victory Day in Russia - with Klyavina and educator Mikhail Kulis.

"Sure I'm nervous," **Capozzoli** said last week on the trip. "I have a lot of apprehensions about this." But it was the long trip and precarious conditions in Russia that worried **Capozzoli**.

"I'm not apprehensive about meeting Lydia. We wrote to each other [that] we're not pretty anymore," he said.

Capozzoli was more surprised by the Russian media's attention to his story than he was the fact that he found Klyavina after all these years.

"This amazes me that they make such a big deal of it," he said. "I knew them for about half an hour ... [Russians] just love human interest stories."

The published photograph also reunited Klyavina with one of the other women she was on the road with on that victorious day. A woman named Tanya recognized the photo of her friend and has since re-established their friendship. The third woman remained in Germany after the war.

Kathy Sanders, a clinical hypnotherapist in Old Saybrook who taught **Capozzoli** in an adult education program, is not sure the reunion is entirely coincidental.

"I just believe things happen in patterns," she said. "I just think this was meant to be."

While Sanders would not say that **Capozzoli** and Klyavina will be lifelong soul mates, she allowed that it was a possibility.

"I believe this is Earth school," Sanders aid, "and the people we come into contact with we come into contact with for a reason: to help us learn life's lessons."

50th Anniversary Visit to Colditz

Submitted by: Michael Booker
50 Edgehill Road, Mitcham
Surrey CR4 2HU, England



Friday the 14th April 1995, was a damp, overcast evening, when I arrived at Berlin Airport, with fifteen members of the Colditz Society. Our purpose was to visit the town of Colditz, exactly 50 years on from that momentous occasion in the lives of hundreds of young men, liberated as Prisoners of War, from the cold gray walls of Colditz Castle. The Battle of Colditz was won on the morning of 16th April 1945, by men of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division.

Amongst our group, were relatives of Colditz Prisoners, Military Historians and young people, still interested in that period when soldiers, not much older than many of them, of all nationalities, died, both mentally and physically, within the boundaries of that small town that lays within the eastern part of Germany.

We were indeed fortunate to be joined in Berlin, by Jack Hagaman of Seattle, U.S.A. who had flown in with his son Phillip. Jack, a Dutchman was held in Colditz and had flown from his home town, to return to the castle for the first time since his liberation. Also present, from England, was Tommy Elliott, an escapee held in Colditz. He was alone

in his memories, as controversy had reigned in England for some weeks prior to the Anniversary, as the Colditz Association refused to attend the functions laid on by the mayor of Colditz. Their concern was that the town would try to make a carnival of the publicity from their visit, to promote Colditz. As the Secretary Kenneth Lockwood stated on Television "We can forgive, but NEVER forget".

As a consolation, they agreed to the Colditz Society attending. On Saturday there was a wreath laying at the carving made into the boundary wall of the church grave yard. This commemorated the Political Prisoners. The area of the wall was now consecrated ground, which it had not been during the War, on orders of the Nazis. There was a further service within the grave yard, for the Allied Prisoners who had died at Colditz, their remains having been moved after the War to Military Cemeteries within Western Germany, mainly Berlin. Representatives from Belgium, France, England and America (by Colonel Robert S. Garnett, Jr. for the 9th Armored Division Combat Command 'R' Task Force) were present for this Ceremony. See Photograph.

A further religious function was held in Colditz church. The flags of all nations were present and clergy of different religions read short lessons. There was a youth band from Dresden, who played the first performance in Europe, of a band score dedicated to the Spirit of Colditz.

We attended two receptions. The first, at a hotel, which during the War held White Russians, whom the Germans hoped would join their German Legions in the fight against Russia. The food and drink there was excellent, which saved paying the high prices now being commanded in Eastern Germany, since reunification. I remember a visit in 1980, when I couldn't get rid of all the East German marks, and paid for it at the Eastern border, but that is another story.

The Mayor's reception was the highlight of the visit, for the town. There were speeches by various representatives of different nations, including the Colditz Society. We all exchanged souvenirs. Colonel Garnett, Jr. spoke on behalf of the American Forces who liberated Colditz. His speech was very eloquent and was well received by everyone, he was a good emissary.

Once the official functions were set to one side, I found the town people of Colditz most welcoming. They have had over 43 years of restraint on their lives, now the Freedom of the Western World. Unfortunately the bitter pill of competition is hard to swallow and many of the towns folk are unemployed. The Ceramic Factory, for which they were famous (as good, if not better than Dresden), is no longer producing. The Colditz Beer factory has cut back. This is a shame, as I highly recommend their beer, being an expert on the subject. Tourism is all they can really hope for. The countryside is magnificent, the close proximity of Dresden and Leipzig is a bonus and of course the CASTLE is a tourist attraction.

There is a Tower that stands prominent on a rise in a wood, just outside of Colditz town. From the top of this tower, you can see a sweep of the valley and castle. You can also see the two woods, by the River Mulde, one, where the 69th Infantry gathered, prior to their strike and the second where the heavy artillery was stationed. I was in that tower, surveying the scene, when I got into conversation with a local resident. He was a retired school teacher and fortunately could speak English. Few of the towns people can and sadly, as a typical Englishman, I can only speak English and American (after the films). As a young man and member of the Hitler Youth, as all the youngsters in the town had to be,

(Continued on Page 42)

50th ANNIVERSARY VISIT TO COLDITZ (Continued from Page 41)

so I was told, he was present during the final assault. And among the things he spoke of, was his friend Wolf, who tried to rush the Hitler Bridge that spanned into the town, where an American machine gun nest had been stationed. He ignored all the warnings and died for his effort. He also spoke of visits to a friend who lived in a factory just outside the town. There he saw Hungarian Jews who worked in the armaments factory, who resembled skeletons. They live in shame, he said, of some things done in their name.

Colditz Town has its shadows, as so many towns in Germany, but the Castle has a mystic of its own. It was the ultimate in security for prisoners in Germany, which was reflected by the men held there. You can still feel, in the quiet of the night, the ghosts of men, of all nationalities, thrown together to pit their wits against their tormentors and winning the final battle of survival. We left Colditz, I felt the visit was too brief. But, homage had been paid to those brave young men who had died, so many years ago, for their Country and Freedom. I shall no doubt return one day.

I am still endeavouring to obtain for my Colditz collection, a letter or card with an A.P.O. for April 1945, or there abouts, from the 69th Infantry Division. If anyone can help I would be very grateful and will pay any costs involved. Thank you.

Werts Named to state WW II Committee

From the Junction City Daily Union

April 7, 1995

Here's one of our fellow 69ers who got involved in the 50th anniversary. Hope all went well, Merrill!



TOPEKA (AP) - **Merrill Werts**, of Junction City, has been appointed chairperson of the World War II Commemoration Committee created by Gov. Bill Graves on Thursday.

Graves signed an executive order Thursday creating the statewide committee and appointed nine members to it.

The committee will work with the Kansas Holocaust Commission to coordinate a state observance of the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II in August.

Along with **Werts**, the other eight members of the committee are Halsey Hines, Charles Carpenter, Marilyn Browning, E. Newton Vickers and Verena Seberg, all of Topeka; William Kurtis, Independence; Ed Sullivan, Wichita, and Ruth Nance Elbrader, Lawrence.

Senator Bob Dole will be honorary chairman, the governor's announcement said.

"This is an impressive group of people, and I'm pleased they've all agreed to serve on this very important committee," Graves said in a press release announcing the appointments. "Paying homage to those who served their country with distinguished military service is important. I'm confident the veterans appointed to this committee will treat the commemoration with the honor and attention it deserves."

Merrill Werts

*I Company & Headquarters, 3rd Battalion, 271st Infantry
1228 Miller Drive
Junction City, Kansas 66441*

Company D, 273rd Infantry at the Link-Up Celebration

Submitted by: **Kenneth A. Sawyer**
2935 Turtle Mound Road
Melbourne, Florida 32934
Telephone 407/254-7175



D Company in Vienna. Left to right: Jan and Roland Hendrickson, Fran Collard, Ken Sawyer, Betty Jo and Bob McCarty.

There were four Company D members among the celebrants at the Link-Up at the Elbe River on April 25th. **Bob McCarty, Roland Hendrickson, Lew Tenney** and I all hauled from the second platoon, so we had lots of fond memories to share. Three ladies accompanied us: **Betty Jo McCarty, Jan Hendrickson** and **Fran Collard**. By now they can probably tell our stories better than we can.

Lew Tenney accompanied **Bill Beswick's** group through England, France, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland. The other six of us met in Frankfurt on April 21st; the **Hendricksons** by train from Paris where they had spent a few days and the others by plane from the USA. The six of us traveled around Germany for a week with two rental cars, joining the big group in Leipzig on the 23rd. On the 26th we hit the autobahn again for a return to Frankfurt by way of the Rhine Valley.

The six of us concluded our European tour with a two week bus trip through much of Germany, Austria and Switzerland, with a few excursions into Italy. We were blessed with the same beautiful weather that had prevailed during our first week in Germany. The Alpine splendor was a great follow-up to the impressive Link-Up observance.

If all the good intentions of fellow D Company members with whom I have been in contact these past few months come to fruition, we should have a big turnout this October in Myrtle Beach. The **Chandlers** from the state of Washington and the **Hendricksons** from the state of Oregon plan to be there. Most of us are within a day or two's drive from South Carolina. There were a lot of fellows who lived in the Carolinas that we have not seen in fifty years. If they are unable to join us for a night or two, it still would be wonderful to have them just stop by to say hello. Many of us will arrive early in the week, allowing for plenty of time to linkup with old buddies.

Service Company Personnel, 272nd Infantry Regiment

Submitted by: **Allen C. Williams, Col. Inf. USAR (Ret.)**
2922 Pasture Lane, Sugarland, Texas 77479

SERVICE COMPANY ROSTER

OFFICERS

Major George H. Welles S-4
Captain Samuel E. Gildner Personnel Officer
Captain Joseph B. Provost Company Commander
Captain Allen C. Williams Transportation Officer
1 Lt. Maurice E. Cates Asst. Transportation Officer
1 Lt. Phillip N. Donelson Munition Officer
1 Lt. Graham A. Garren 2 Bn. S-4
1 Lt. Samuel J. Hindes SSO.
1 Lt. Donald F. Spry 3 Bn. S-4
1 Lt. Donald C. Swan 1 Bn. S-4
2 Lt. James A. Dimitriades
CWO. Michael A. Baltier Asst. S-1
CWO. Park M. Fellers Asst. S-4
CWO. Harvey E. Thayer Asst. Motor Officer
WOJG. Charles T. Leary Asst. Mun. Officer

Dear **Clarence**,

Enclosed is a copy of a picture of the Personnel in Service Company, 272nd Regiment with a roster of all who were assigned to it during World War II. The picture was copied from the 272nd Infantry History Book which was published in Germany by the Regiment soon after V-E Day. The picture was taken in Weissenfels, Germany during the latter part of May or early June, 1945.

Dorothy and I sincerely appreciate the work you and **Earl** are doing in getting the Bulletin published. We look forward to receiving it each quarter.

Surely do hope your health is continuing to improve, and we hope to see you in Myrtle Beach for the reunion in October.

ENLISTED MEN

M/Sgt. Martin J. Dorman
M/Sgt. Milton J. Moxness
M/Sgt. Robert B. Shearer
M/Sgt. Anthony L. Teves
1st Sgt. William C. Herron
T/Sgt. Francis J. Haney
T/Sgt. Henry Madison
T/Sgt. Henry W. Richard
S/Sgt. Raymond L. Johnson
S/Sgt. Joseph E. Mileur, Jr.
S/Sgt. Wallace F. Penrose
S/Sgt. Alpha C. Powell
S/Sgt. Eric W. Rasmussen
S/Sgt. Michael J. Zag
Sgt. Kurt Bernheim
Sgt. Francis J. Hipple, Jr.
Sgt. Walter H. Lyons
Sgt. Claude E. Seagraves
Tec. 4 Melvin C. Arnold
Tec. 4 Ralph M. Ayers
Tec. 4 Roy H. Benner
Tec. 4 Theodore Bohlke
Tec. 4 Jerre N. Burton
Tec. 4 Edgar W. Carpenter
Tec. 4 William F. Cope

Tec. 4 Kermit E. Evilsizor
Tec. 4 Frederick B. Hays
Tec. 4 Eugene B. Hughes
Tec. 4 Luzin J. Lecamu
Tec. 4 Virgil Newberry
Tec. 4 Eugene Orr
Tec. 4 Basil D. Price
Tec. 4 Ronald L. Smith
Tec. 4 Lawrence C. Timberlake
Cpl. Victor O. Alto
Cpl. Vincent C. Maroney
Cpl. Phillip E. Mente
Cpl. William Siref
Cpl. John E. Swenson
Tec. 5 Robert L. Batchelder
Tec. 5 Kenton G. Berkley
Tec. 5 Curtis P. Burnett
Tec. 5 Dale A. Carlson
Tec. 5 Frank R. Cataen, Jr.
Tec. 5 Virgel M. Cowger
Tec. 5 Haywood E. Dedman
Tec. 5 Joseph A. Engasser
Tec. 5 Claude W. Evans
Tec. 5 Conrad M. Faust
Tec. 5 Leopold F. Fournier

Tec. 5 James L. French
Tec. 5 Coleman Gibbs
Tec. 5 Hyman E. Goldstein
Tec. 5 Vernie H. Gray
Tec. 5 James W. Harden
Tec. 5 Elden H. Hartje
Tec. 5 Daniel F. Keay, Sr.
Tec. 5 William E. Kilgore
Tec. 5 Daniel F. Leary
Tec. 5 William H. Lyne
Tec. 5 Walter Orloff
Tec. 5 Antoine B. Perez
Tec. 5 Leo A. Pettigrew
Tec. 5 Henry J. Povinelli
Tec. 5 Robert E. Schultz
Tec. 5 Maynard D. Scott
Tec. 5 Laurence G. Semmler
Tec. 5 Frank E. Shipman
Tec. 5 Charles B. Taylor
Tec. 5 Joseph R. Tompkins
Tec. 5 Henry F. Winkfein
Tec. 5 George A. Yocum, Jr.
Pfc. William E. Baker
Pfc. Herbert H. Blum
Pfc. Marijan Chulig

Pfc. Carl A. Dotson
Pfc. Arthur J. Edgley
Pfc. Harry R. Foster
Pfc. Harold M. Gambrel
Pfc. Virgil Jones
Pfc. Andrew J. Kirylych
Pfc. Anthony Lenkiewicz
Pfc. Edward F. Mahan, Jr.
Pfc. Paul Mitchell
Pfc. Elmer K. Nelson
Pfc. Douglas M. Olson
Pfc. Floyd M. Parker
Pfc. Sherman D. Raines
Pfc. Harry D. Ravenscroft
Pfc. Martin J. Ryan
Pfc. Gail M. Stalker
Pfc. Rainy Trembley
Pvt. Frank E. Haling, Jr.
Pvt. Donald Hotaling
Pvt. John W. McCleaf
Pvt. Nelson Pauley, Jr.
Pvt. Bobby Robison
Pvt. John B. Skelton
Pvt. Raymond L. Stowell



Reunion of Company D, 273rd Infantry and the 58th Russian Guard Division in Germany

Submitted by: **Robert O. McCarty, Jr.**
2152 Guardian Avenue, Terrytown, Louisiana 70056



Presenting the document and flag to Colonel Anatoliy Yaromich, with Kenneth Sawyer and Anatoliy's grandson, Paul Petzichenko on April 25th, 1995 in Torgau, Germany.

On April 25th, 1995, Company D, 273rd Infantry Division members visited with the 58th Guard Division in Torgau and Strehla, Germany.

Our friend, Colonel Anatoliy S. Yaromich, (Ret.), whom we have been corresponding with for the last five years, and his 19 year old grandson, Paul Petzichenko, made the trip from Odessa, Ukraine to attend and participate in the 50th anniversary celebration.

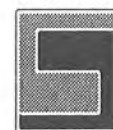
A framed document and an American flag were presented to Colonel Yaromich and members of the "Elbe-45" Odessa-American Friendship Club. Colonel Yaromich also presented me with a flag and memorabilia from Russia and also articles about their club, etc.

Those in attendance were: **Kenneth Sawyer, Roland Hendrickson and Lewis Tenney.**

This was a memorable and historic event for all of us.

Below is a copy of the document.

69th Infantry Division
USA



58th Guard Division
USSR

FIGHTING 69TH

**To Our Friend Colonel Anatoliy S. Yaromich, Ret.
and members of the**

"Elbe-45" Odessa-American Friendship Club

The Soviet and American Veterans of World War II have assembled in Strehla, Germany, on April 25th, 1995, to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the meeting of Soviet and American troops on the Elbe River - April 25th, 1945.

On this day we honor our soldiers, Soviet and American, who gave their lives for peace - always to be remembered.

May we take this opportunity to renew and reaffirm our friendship and continue to strive for world peace.

This American flag is donated to the "Elbe-45" Club in remembrance of this historic event.

Robert O. McCarty, Jr.
Company D, 273rd Infantry Regiment
69th Division



Torgau, Germany: April 25th, 1995. From left: Kenneth Sawyer, Fran Collard, Paul Petzichenko, Anatoliy Yaromich, Betty Jo McCarty and Roland Hendrickson.

We Meet Again

Submitted by: **John S. Tounger**, *Company D, 271st Infantry*
#1 Pine Hills Court, Oakland, California 94611

Enclosed are two pictures taken of me with a Russian. The black and white picture was taken in Torgau on the Elbe River shortly after the first contact was made by **Lieutenant Bill Robertson** on April 25, 1945. The colored picture was taken in Torgau on April 25, 1995. We were with the **Beswick Tour**. We could not communicate since I do not know Russian and he could not speak English but I am almost certain it is the same soldier I had my arms around on April 25, 1945.





Company B, 269th Engineers

Sergeant Hall, Sergeant Hood, Sergeant Papka, Sergeant Sorenson, Sergeant Christner, Sergeant Whitaker, Sergeant Foster, Pfc. Stevens, Sergeant Wriggle. From Herman Burkett's photos, who is deceased. This was sent in by his brother.

Company G, 273rd Infantry at the Elbe Celebration

Submitted by: **Al Aronson**
200 Winston Drive #1019, Cliffside
Park, New Jersey 07010

Those Representing Company G-273rd Infantry at the 50th Anniversary of the "Link-Up" with the Russians at the Elbe were: **Al and Betty Aronson** from New Jersey; **Jim and Betty Kane** from Pennsylvania and **Joe and Diane Panganiban** from California.

We arranged our own tour itinerary because we felt the one presented by Bill Beswick and American Express included too much European traveling for the time allotted. We limited our stopovers to two cities: Berlin (5 days) and Leipzig (8 days), where we rented two automobiles for our transportation needs.

During our stay in Leipzig we enjoyed a private guided walking tour of the "Innerstadt" (Inner City) and took day trips to Trebsen, Grimma, Torgau, Dresden and Seelingstadt that brought back memories of bygone years.

On April 25th we attended the 50th Anniversary celebrations at Torgau and Strehla. In Torgau, there was a wreath laying ceremony and speeches at the monument erected near the site of the Elbe river bridge where **Lt. Robertson** first met the Russians. Following these events, we went to the Town Hall where **Lt. Robertson** was named an honorary citizen of the city of Torgau.

After a lunch hosted by Torgau's Mayor Gerstenberg, there were wreath laying ceremonies at both the Russian cemetery and at **Joseph Polowsky's** gravesite in the civilian cemetery, before proceeding to Strehla.

Upon arrival at the main square of Strehla, in front of its Town Hall, the U.S. Army band was performing a Pops Concert for the local residents. In spite of intermittent rain showers, the crowd stayed to its conclusion and moved down to the Elbe river for the dedication of the three flag "Ring of Friendship" Monument and Memorial Park near the site where **Lt. Albert "Buck" Kotzebue** crossed the Elbe 50 years ago en route to his historic "Link-Up" with the Russians.

Unfortunately, the weather was not cooperative for the speeches, wreath laying nor the flag raising on the "Ring of Friendship" Monument by the three nations represented: United States, Russia and Germany. However, the thought provoking speeches of good will among these nations, the simultaneous raising of the flags of the three nations to the music of "Shenandoah" and the sounding of "Taps" at its conclusion was a great tribute. I'm sure "**Buck**" was pleased.

It seemed appropriate for **Alexander Olshansky**, who was the Russian counterpart to greet "**Buck**" **Kotzebue** at the first "Link-Up" of the American and Russian forces, to represent Russia during this dedication. However, I found it somewhat short sighted of the planners of the Strehla dedication not to include any participation by **Kotzebue** patrol members from G and H Companies, who were present. This short sightedness also exists in the recent publication, "Hands Across the Elbe" edited by Mr. Philpott, in which there is no commentary by any member of **Lt. Kotzebue's** patrol. However, **Lt. Kotzebue** and **Joe Polowsky** are represented in the book by articles written by their respective daughters. C'est la vie!!!



Left to right: Betty Kane, Jim Kane, Diane Panganiban, Joe Panganiban, Betty Aronson and Al Aronson.

69th Soldier Center of Display

Submitted by: **Roger D. West**
Company E, 272nd Infantry

1387 Marlboro, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104

Enclosed is a photo of a display that was set up at the Van Buren Flywheeler's Antique Tractor Show which I attended in Hartford, Michigan last fall.

I was surprised to see this at a tractor show, but pleased to see our Division patch the center of the display.



Do any of you 69ers who were transferred to the 903rd, 78th Lightning Division in Berlin remember where you lived?

This Place We Live (Lived) In

BY PFC. LAWRENCE MARTIN

Submitted by: **Arthur Moore**
881st Field Artillery Battalion
91 Campfield Avenue
Hartford, Connecticut 06114-1836

This article and photo appeared in the 78th Division newspaper, The Lightning, circa 1945/46.

This place we live in is the Gardeschutreserue. What is, or, more appropriately was, the Gardeschutreserue? That's a good question, brother. At any rate, you won't find the answer in German Government archives - they were lost in the shuffle.

But one Herr Doktor Dietrich von Schmallitz, former professor of electronics here, tells it thusly:

In 1869, Bismarck, then Berlin's Big Boss, ordered the German General Staff to institute an artillery school in Berlin. After three years of Ja's by the Old Guard the first buildings were finished. After an elaborate ceremony during which a long and brave speech was made by a cousin of the Kaiser, the first candidate was entered. This candidate's children migrated to America in the late 19th century upon hearing about Milwaukee's famous beer.

As the years rolled by new buildings were added to the already proud compound. During the Franco-Prussian War the school turned out thousands of artillery officers. This plan by which officers could be trained on an assembly line basis was later adopted by the United States Army in 1941.

With Kaiser Bill, the Gardeschutreserue became the most ultra artillery school in Germany. It found itself so crowded with young men anxious to die for the Fatherland that it had to expand. Two more buildings were built.

In 1918 the defeat of Germany almost caused the school's closing; but a certain Kurt von Runstedt came to its rescue. So, it limped along.

In the peaceful years between 1920 and 1929 the Gardeschutreserue was manned by a small skeleton staff. This was in accordance with the Versailles Treaty. Many of its buildings were boarded. One section posed as a technical school of engineering.



On leave in Switzerland. Left to right: Art Moore, Sergeant Hanna, Unknown.



The Gardeschutreserue or Feuerwerkerschule

In those years the old place was on the way out, but in 1930 another man came along and saved the day. Adolph Hitler. He ordered the Gardeschutreserue to be enlarged and its name changed to Feuerwerkerschule - literally, "fire worker school." It soon came alive with hundreds of voices chanting the Horst Wessel Song. These voices were the youth of Germany who were learning to be artillery non-commissioned and commissioned officers. By 1939 the school had oriented 110,000 soldiers - men in whose minds had been implanted the idea of race hatred, intolerance and greed. They had responded with enthusiasm, and in comparatively a few days they started to spread their "culture" throughout Europe. Their ultimate aim: a world of German militarism.

During the "glorious" German era when all the world seemed doomed to the Nazi onslaught the Feuerwerkerschule prospered. People of victim nations became slaves for the officers and men who were trained here. After the raids began in 1943, these slaves, men, women and children, were put to work, at 50 pfennigs a day, repairing bombed buildings in Berlin.

Between 1943 and 1945 the Feuerwerkerschule was shaken by the concussion of British block-busters and American 2000 pounders. The old place was lucky during the bombings and was hit only six times. Then came the Russians. In March and April the compound was shelled by Russian Artillery. On a beautiful spring day in mid April the Feuerwerkerschule was deserted, its officers and men having surrendered or died. It remained deserted until July when the first American troops, the Second Armored Division, occupied Berlin. Since then, this place we live in has echoed with the laughter and griping of GI's.

If you are interested in the English meaning of Gardeschutreserue, its "heavy artillery college." Translated into Dutch, Hindu or Russian it comes out the same. Odd isn't it?

(Continued on Page 48)

Checking With Charlie

The men whose names appear in the old 'news bulletin' below were all members of the 881st Field Artillery Battalion while attached with the 29th Division in Nordenham.

If you noticed **Lt. Neilond** flying around the other day, as if to avoid arrest, he was but getting ready to take a rest, on a few minutes notice, in the land of figs and olives - the Riviera.

Pendell and **Shollenberger** are in Bremen on a detail that concerns German ammo officially and American recreation un ditto.

Our man of the mess, **Swanitz**, is back; now we have no doubt that our food will be as perfect as our most excellent dining room.

Guard called nine of our best to Ellswerden last week to uphold law and order and according to the fine points of the very enjoyable demonstration given by the 110th which all of us recently witnesses. They were **Sergeant Horvath**, **Corporal Jara** and **Corporal Molinari** and soldiers **Aspery**, **Mosay**, **Rollins**, **Facio**, **Calderon** and **Ryan**.

As you men know, **MacDaniels**, **Curry** and **Simmons** are doing a fine job in our riding academy. They have gone "above and beyond the well known call" and expedited, borrowed and bought everything from a horseshoe to a haystack. Those little donations you make go towards paying for the care and feeding of the score-odd steeds. Hm, wonder if it is dangerous?

That grand new sign telling all that they now have the privilege of being in Charley battery area, comes to us through the courtesy of **Jim Boris**, to whose abilities there seems to be no end.

Hughes, **Peterson** and **Simmons** have returned from Holland while **Ishino** and your **Abie** have done likewise from Brussels and Paris, respectively.

We commend all the men who did such good work in landscaping, construction, engineering and architecture around the battery area last week. The army being what it is, no one was surprised to see **T/5 Guerrieri** supervising while **Sgt. Destefano** made with the physical effort. The new and sturdy little fences look much better in Germany than do tank traps. **Shorty Conner** and **Papa Bauer** lent a hand - naturally the arty engineers theme song was "Don't Fence Me In."



Standing for retreat. That's me, your retreat bugler near the ancient cannon, Art. Moore. This was in Berlin at the Feuerwerkerschule.

Corporal Gordon, currently sweating out a furlough to visit his parents over here, used only a couple of the languages he speaks to have the floors painted and the rooms made over for supply to move into. The move will be made any day now.

Our lighting system in the motor pool, barracks and rec hall is somewhat erratic but works swell in the day time.

"Red" **Reteneller**, C-Battery's own fugitive from radio, stage and screen, is in huge demand to sing swing songs at battalion affairs as only he can render them. What a voice!

Latest official figures (from **Sergeant Whitaker**) affirms that there are six permanent canine guests in the battery and two perpetual visitors. His "Susie" and **Pritzker's** "Nazi" are not too friendly right now but peace is inevitable.

"Shake" **Mallard**, punster, photographer, and pal, fixed the machinery so well that the detail was halted for twenty-two minutes one wet morning. Aren't we entitled to two ten-minute breaks once in our military career?

Popular **S/Sgt. Yarnell** has returned from Switzerland. He is loud in his praise of the tour and things Swiss and thoroughly enjoyed the lakes, mountains and scenery. "Like home," says he.

We understand that a trip, especially on Sunday, to Bremen is insurance for a wonderful day at the unsurpassed Red Cross Club there. Swell movie, swimming pool, snacks and service for those in the Service.

Our bugler, **Moore**, has his nose to the grindstone, his eyes on the ball and his lips on the mouthpiece from reveille to taps. One of the battery's finest men, always in all ways.



On leave in Switzerland. 2nd from left - Sergeant Hanna.



Sergeant Hanna - Dauchaw, Germany - 1946.

Arthur S. Moore of C-Battery, 881st F.A. Sent These Photos

Arthur S. Moore

91 Campfield Avenue, Hartford, Connecticut 06114



Gun mechanic Sergeant Paul Hunter and fire direction center line operator Art Moore of Battery C, 881st Field Artillery taking a break from duties.



T-5 Art Moore teaching his replacement, Lester Riehlman, how to process Battery mail. Other duties T-5 Moore had were Battery Bugler and driver for Battery Commander, 1st Lieutenant Joe H. Neal, Jr.

1995 69th Division Reunion
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
October 22nd thru 29th, 1995
PLEASE TRY TO MAKE IT!

A 1945 View of the 69th Infantry Division

Submitted by: Colonel Thomas C. Damron

5119 -A Leesburg Pike, #288

Falls Church, Virginia 22041

This article was derived from a book entitled "The Infantry Journal," written by CWO E.J. Kahn, Jr. and TSGT Henry McLemore, Washington, D.C., December 1945.

From the moment the Allies landed on the smoking beaches of Normandy on June 6, 1944, everyone knew what one of their principal objectives was - to slash deep into Germany itself and cut the Nazis' defenses in two by joining hands with the Russian armies driving from the eastern front.

More than ten months later, on April 25, 1945, the dream came true.

A patrol of the 69th Division - the "Fighting Sixty-ninth" of this war - jumping from the Division's positions on the Mulde River across the Elbe, climbed to the top of an old tower at Torgau, on the west bank of the Elbe, and saw some Russian soldiers across the river.

A few minutes later American and Russian hands were clasped halfway across a battered bridge that spanned the river, and official contact had been made between the two Allies.

There were other meetings with the Russians by other men of the Fighting Sixty-ninth, but Torgau was dubbed the "official" junction. The Division itself will probably never stop arguing as to which of its units first joined up with the Red Army - but no other division can dispute that honor with the 69th.

The "Fighting Sixty-ninth" first saw action on March 8, in the Siegfried Line, when two regiments crashed the fortified line on a 2,000-yard front. The Doughboys of the 69th took 200 prisoners on their first day in combat, and shortly captured Rescheid, Jamberg, Dickeerscheid, and Honningen, among other towns. That was the official start of the battle for the 69th, but many weeks earlier, while the Division was waiting in France for its chance to show its stuff, four members of the 69th's quartermaster company had made an unofficial start when, on a routine trip to Reims for supplies, they had bagged some Germans hiding out in a French farmhouse.

At the junction of the Moselle and Rhine Rivers, the 69th took the ancient fortress of Ehrenbreitstein, but their first important victory was at Leipzig. There, on April 19th, the 69th, along with the 11th Armored Division, finally forced the surrender of fanatical German defenders who fought a last bloody stand at the base of Napoleon's monument until they were blasted out by heavy fire from self-propelled guns.

There are many high points in the 69th's combat chronicle - the capture intact of a 70-ton bridge across the Weser River, and the occupation of dozens of small German towns like Nissmitz and Furstenwalde and Maidenbressen, for instance - but until something better comes along the Fighting Sixty-ninth, and the Russians who held the other side of the Elbe, will always put Torgau at the top of their list.

April 25th was really a red-letter day.

The Question of the First Scholarship Award

Bruce Young

*Service Battery, 879th Field Artillery Battalion
114 Still Meadow Drive, Pikeview West
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401*

Dear Clarence,

First and foremost, I hope this finds your health improved. Mary and I miss you at our reunions. The three of us go WAY BACK to the 40's. We certainly appreciate the time and effort you put in to our 69th Association.

To give you a little background, my wife and I attended our first reunion in 1948 and the next eighteen without missing any, and then the grandchildren started to come along. I believe it was during the 60's, that **Mary** was president of the Auxiliary. I was Secretary during the presidency of **Al Carbonari** and served on the Board of Directors prior to that.

Clarence, in our last bulletin, in the message from our treasurer, Bill (Bill goes back a long time also) received a letter from **Joseph Monteleone**, stating two Scholarship Award Medals were given in 1958, and were the first given out from our 69th Division Association. I was present at our reunion in 1958 and do not recall any such award. In fact, I do not understand these awards. That could be true, but please note the attached copy of the article that appeared in our bulletin in 1961. As you will note, our daughter received the first "69th Infantry Division Association Scholarship," during the Chairmanship of **Murry Galuten**. Our daughter has since received her Master degree in Counseling, married, raised a family of three daughters and one son. (Her daughter is married and is expecting in August.) Margaret has taught school over twenty years, taking time out to have her four children. We also have another daughter, Judy, who is married, has a daughter and two sons. (Her one daughter is married and has a daughter 16 months.) When your own children are grandparents, boy, does that make us feel old.

Clarence, I will cut this off and would appreciate this appearing in the bulletin. Our President, **Curt**, myself, **Kenneth Manning** and the late **Earl Ambreter** have certainly enjoyed this Association over the past years.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Below is the article exactly as it appeared in our Bulletin in 1961.)

FIRST SCHOLARSHIP AWARD

We salute **Margaret Young** of Martinsburg, West Virginia, the first recipient of the 69th Infantry Division Association Scholarship.

Margaret, daughter of **Bruce** and **Mary Young**, is at present a student at Shepherd College, West Virginia, where she is studying for her Bachelor of Arts degree in Education and Psychology.

Margaret was graduated from Martinsburg High School with a B-plus average and was among the top one-fifth of her class. In addition, she was active in school affairs, church and honorary societies and was most highly recommended by her school and religious leaders.

We are therefore pleased to have awarded this \$500.00 scholarship to Margaret Young and will take pride in her future accomplishments.

Congratulations to Bruce and Mary and best of luck to our scholarship girl - Margaret.

An additional note to our members re: Scholarship. If you are a member in good standing, and have a son or daughter preparing to enter an accredited college or university next fall, write to us for detailed information and application forms pertaining to our scholarship.

69th Infantry Division Association Scholarship is here and prepared to stay. We plan to award 1-4 scholarships a year. Each scholarship to be worth \$500.00 in total, payable at \$125.00 each of the 4 years. We have only one big "IF" in regards to the plan of these scholarships. You and you alone are the answer to this big "IF" Lest you forget: JOURNAL ADS make our scholarship program feasible. We want to continue this plan, even enlarge it. Go out and get your ads for '62 and send them in now. This program shall Rise or Fall through your efforts.

Murry Galuten

Chairman - Scholarship Committee

Just saying "sorry" is far from enough

(The following article was sent to us by Sylvia Goldstein. Her husband David Goldstein, a member of the 69th, wrote the article which appeared in THE NEWS, a newspaper out of Boca Raton, Florida.)

Since Robert McNamara has written a book about his part in the Vietnam decisions, costing 58,000 military personnel their lives and limbs, I suggest the following:

1. McNamara, if you are looking to cleanse your body and soul by saying you are sorry - it is just not enough.
2. Want to repent and look sad while getting all kinds of publicity for your book? Then donate all proceeds from said book to the Vietnam veterans to help those who are still suffering from the effects of that war.
3. Everyone connected with the Vietnam fiasco at the top government levels, who have acquired millions, should in good conscience donate part of their millions to those veterans. It's not enough to say "I'm sorry" and shed crocodile tears.

God protect us from all those "whiz-kids" who made life-and-death decisions pertaining to other people's lives while snugly protecting their own behinds.

Want to be forgiven? Then go to the wall each morning and ask each name inscribed thereon, individually, to forgive you. If they can answer you with forgiveness, then I am certain God will too.

David Goldstein

*1st Lieutenant, 569th Signal Company
22155 Woodset Way
Boca Raton, Florida 33428-3830*

Again, We Remind You DO NOT SEND XEROX COPIES OF PHOTOS

Members continue to send xerox copies of photographs. We cannot reproduce these. Therefore, if you send xerox copies of photos, and you don't see them in print, just don't be disappointed. As we have said in the past, if you send your originals, we will see to it that you get them back. Thank You.

Your Bulletin Staff

Fifty Years Ago at the Elbe

By C. Lamar Wallis
365 Kenilworth Place
Memphis, Tennessee 38112

I wrote this in honor of Lieutenant Colonel Fred Craig, S-3, 273rd, who was the brightest, most talented and bravest man I knew in World War II. Hope some of our men of the 69th will enjoy reading it. Thank you.

Fifty years ago next month, April 25, 1945, my regiment, the 273rd Infantry, 69th Infantry Division, made the first "link-up" with Russian troops at the Elbe River to virtually end World War II in Europe. While I was not a member of the patrols who made the contacts that day, I was present at the regimental command post when the first Russians were brought in to meet our commanding officer to make the hook-up official. As a matter of fact, as assistant adjutant and lowest ranking headquarters staff officer it was my job to make sure that there was sufficient vodka on hand for the celebration, a war-time mission which I performed, if I do say so myself, both meritoriously and heroically. So meritoriously, in fact, that the Russian Major's Sergeant and I managed to communicate through international body language sufficiently enough to exchange souvenirs of the occasion, although I confess that I have not the slightest idea of what-ever happened to the broken piece of pewter watch chain that he swapped to me for a nondescript American penknife.

So, you see, this paper will not be the usual philosophical treatise you have been accustomed to hearing, but, instead, a very personal account of an exciting dash through Hitler's Fatherland with sidelights on the comedy, stupidity and heartbreak of war. I am approaching eighty years of age, and this is my ninth paper before this august group, so I will offer no apologies for reminiscing for once in the first person. And I want to make it perfectly clear at the outset that I was not a soldier under fire and did nothing heroic in combat. My Bronze Star was for "meritorious service in combat operations against the enemy" which is a far cry from the Bronze Star that was awarded for heroism under fire. The former was given rather generously to the likes of us who staffed administrative posts in combat zones, but the latter was earned only by heroism in battle. My Combat Infantryman's Badge was given simply because I was with a combat infantry outfit, and I earned my Expert Rifleman Badge because as a farm boy I could shoot a squirrel out of the tallest tree and had a special love for rifles.

I don't believe I was shot at but once in World War II and that was when one of our P-38 pilots got lost and strafed our rear headquarters. But I still have a vivid memory of those bullets kicking up pine needles in a straight row right toward me until I jumped behind the largest tree in the Hurtgen Forest. And to add insult to injury, this guy made two more passes at us and then shot up the rear kitchen tent for good measure.

I wrote this paper, first, because next month will be the fiftieth anniversary of the link-up and end of the War, and, second, because I wanted to pay tribute to the bravest and most brilliant fighter I knew in that war. **Major Fred Wilson Craig** was from Friendship and Alamo, Tennessee (I did not learn this until some time after we met at Camp Shelby, Mississippi). I had been upgraded to combat service and sent across camp to the cadre of the newly activated 69th Infantry Division from Camp Shelby's Reception Center, where I had spent almost a year administering tests to new inductees, probably because my record showed that I was drafted while teaching English at Tulane. Like **Fred**

Craig I had been labeled slightly color blind when I volunteered for the Navy Air Corps, so I waited for the draft in 1942, whereas **Craig** had already volunteered a year earlier from his job as Principal of Tigrett Elementary School. He came from Camp Adair, Oregon, to Camp Shelby as part of the officer cadre in April, 1943, and served variously as 273rd Regimental I and R Platoon Leader; Headquarters Company Commander; Regimental Intelligence Officer; Operations Officer; Personnel Officer; Acting Regimental Executive Officer, and 2nd Battalion Executive Officer. Later when we went into combat in the European Theater, he was our Regimental S-3 (Operations Officer) and, also, Commanding Officer of a combat team, Executive Officer of our 2nd Battalion, and for a brief period Acting Operations Officer at 69th Division Headquarters. In many of our planning sessions it was obvious that he was in reality the regimental commander. I am convinced that if **Fred Craig** had gone to West Point instead of U. T. Martin, he would have wound up as a high ranking staff officer in the Pentagon. Since he didn't stay in long after the War, I believe his highest rank was Lieutenant Colonel.

When I was sent over to the new division in the spring of 1943, I'm sure I would have presented a pathetic example of an infantryman to **Craig**, had we met then, for he had three years of infantry under his belt and had risen to the rank of lieutenant in command of the Regiment's wild, high-riding Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon. He would have enjoyed seeing the 119-pound clerk, who had had only a clerk's abbreviated basic training, breaking ground at the head of 3rd Battalion's column on the first 25-mile night hike (I had been promoted without warning from K Company Clerk to 3rd Battalion Sergeant-Major, and the West Point Battalion Commander said, "My sergeant-major always leads the march!"). Somehow I survived that night while some of the "Yankee boys" fell by the wayside, but the worst was yet to come. The Colonel informed me next day that he wanted to have a formal guard mount with a band and all the correct military shenanigans and that the sergeant-major would be in charge of the show. When I meekly informed him that I had never even seen a formal guard mount, he yelled, "Sergeant-major, read your manual!" At the time, the battalion adjutant, **Captain Smith**, was in arrest in quarters for drunken brawling off the post, so he informed me that he had no interest whatsoever in the proceedings and would count on me to whisper to him what moves to make and what commands to give during the ceremony. I sat up all night memorizing the manual on guard mount and somehow got a hungover **Captain Smith** and myself through it. **Fred Craig** would have split his sides laughing, had he known the situation, for he had a good sense of humor and loved to poke fun at military pomp and circumstance.

Not long after I was sent across camp to the infantry, an order came to the Reception Center appointing me to the rank of Warrant Officer Junior Grade and assigning me to a Reception Center in Tennessee, but some dumb clerk returned the order to Army Headquarters marked "transferred" instead of routing it to the 273rd, and the order was rescinded. When a friend told me later how I missed a promotion out of the infantry, I really hit bottom. But it was not many months later when a surprise order came through for the same promotion that moved me from 3rd Battalion to Regimental Headquarters as Assistant Adjutant, and it was there that I first got to know **Fred Craig**, our S-3 (Operations Officer). Training was really in full swing, and **Fred** was the brains behind most of the Regiment's plans.

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FIFTY YEARS AGO AT THE ELBE

(Continued from Page 51)

We lived in the field in 1943 and most of 1944, marching back and forth from Hattiesburg to Biloxi. Someone dubbed us the "Three B's - Bolte's Bivouac-ing Bastards" (**Major-General Charles L. Bolte** was the hard-driving, distinguished commander of the 69th before going on to greater glory in the ETO). Time after time we shipped out trained enlisted men and officers and started all over with replacements. Most of the regimental staff stayed with the unit at Camp Shelby. I was promoted to Chief Warrant Officer, and I married my fiancée of six years on February 22, 1944. Our regiment finally left for overseas November 3, 1944.

From Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, we sailed to England and spent December, '44 and January, '45 near Winchester, where I prowled the bookshops and Winchester Cathedral. Life there was not completely unpleasant. My wife and I have gone back twice in later years, once in 1971 when my wife's friend, whose husband was a three-star general in the Pentagon, arranged for the war-time mayor of Winchester, whom they had known, to have us for tea in her 400-year-old home. The second visit was in 1989 when some strange quirk of fate had us stop at the statue of King Alfred where the current mayor was having a fun gathering of his faithful. When I told him I had been in Winchester in WW II, he called the TV cameras over and got in some good politicking welcoming a Yank who had returned after 45 years.

Before Rundstedt broke through in the Battle of the Bulge, I managed a two-day pass to London. My most vivid memories of that weekend were, first, the V-bomb that fell on a department store (Selfridge's I think), and, second, seeing John Gielgud play Hamlet at the Haymarket Theater.

But suddenly the war took a frightening turn. We were sending young kids into the Bulge in the morning and seeing them back at a hospital near us by nightfall. And then on January 22, 1945, long after the thousands had fought and died on the beaches and in the hedgerows of Normandy, we finally got our orders to move across France to the border of Belgium and Germany and the Siegfried Line.

Fred Craig tells in his handwritten history (on scrapbook pages interspersed with snapshots made in action) of being called to Division Headquarters as Acting G-3 to plan that move across France and into the Siegfried Line to relieve the divisions that were overrun in the Rundstedt "Breakthrough." We began pushing the enemy back in the Ardennes south of Aachen and north of Bastogne recapturing Belgian towns with familiar names such as Verviers, Malmedy and St. Vith. In the Siegfried Line east of Malmedy we relieved the 99th, the 28th, and the 106th Infantry Divisions, which had been badly hurt in the breakthrough. On February 12th, the day we moved into the Line, as he was getting his M Company in place, my friend, **Captain Parris**, was the first man in the Division to die, hit by shrapnel from a barrage laid down by 88's and "Screaming Meemies" (Nebelwurfers). I also remember only too well my first sight of dead American GIs: four frozen bodies from the overrun units, each with a small blue hole in the middle of the forehead - Kraut assassin style. That first night I tremblingly rolled out my down-filled, waterproof sleeping bag on a soft snowdrift under a small fir tree and, to my amazement, slept soundly for almost eight hours.

The Siegfried Line consisted of two rows of bunkers, pillboxes and dragon's teeth to stop tanks. Some pillboxes were empty, some had to be taken with light to moderate casualties, but #17 near the village of Udenbreth was almost impregnable. It was a 12-room command post of concrete and steel housing 20 men. V Corps and Division pressed

Major Craig to take it out. Two assault teams tried on two successive days and were turned back with casualties. On February 22 **Craig** planned with A Company to assault the fortress at midnight in total darkness with "Satchel" and "Beehive" explosive charges. The carefully chosen team of 26 men crowded into a farmhouse with some B Company men for last minute instructions - and something happened. No one is sure how the charges were set off, but **Craig's** journal says 68 died in the explosion and 100 were injured. **Craig** sat up all night reporting to Division the progress in removing the dead. The next morning the order came down from Division to take #17 the following night. **Craig's** reply recorded in the Division G-3 journal reads: "Although it will be a difficult task, it will be done." And it was done. With #17 destroyed we soon were able to break through to the second row of bunkers and begin mopping up the defenses there and in the towns and villages in and beyond the Line.

The 45-mile race to the Rhine was slowed at times when small towns offered resistance, but casualties were mainly light to moderate. On March 5 our 2nd Battalion took Bad Neuenahr, a resort spa for all western Germany and located just a few miles from Remagen, site of the famous Rhine bridge which Americans captured just before German explosive charges were set to blow it. The Remagen bridge accommodated Allied traffic for three days before it finally collapsed, but we were ordered to hold and later crossed on the "Victor" pontoon bridge.

In war the unexpected, the strange, the weird, the dumb, the heroic, the comic and the tragic - it all happens from time to time and at the unlikely moments. Probably the biggest comic opera in the 273rd's saga was played out just after crossing the Rhine. **Colonel Buie**, Commanding Officer of the 271st Regiment, got his troops across on April 10th and turned south of Remagen to prepare to capture famed Ft. Ehrenbreitstein, and the CO of our 1st Battalion was ordered to join the 271st in an assembly area east of the Rhine and 12 miles south of Remagen. Our 1st Battalion CO commandeered some cable operated ferries which got all snarled up so that his troops had to wade 50 yards to shore. They then proceeded to the assembly area but took up a position between **Colonel Buie** and the historic fort of our World War I occupation army. Elaborate preparations were made for the attack as described in **Craig's** journal: "(they) began a dawn 11 April rehearsal or dry-run of attack scheduled for 13 April. Two days' ammunition and rations were brought well forward under priority, elaborate attack plans were drawn with detailed sketches, overlays, and fire-coordinating plans; staffs and commanders were briefed, debriefed and critiqued - and where the Hell was **Bill Salladin**, 1st Battalion Commander, 273rd Infantry ...? **Bill** and **Belousevitch** were horribly and unequivocally lost, so **Bill** found an operating barbershop and got a haircut. The barber just happened to mention he lived at the Fort, so **Bill** and **Belousevitch** (his driver who had 'borrowed' an MP jeep at the bridge on April 10) went home (for schnapps and supper) with the barber. The Command of Ft. Ehrenbreitstein 'surrendered a 1200-man garrison to **Bill**, the 271st I & R Platoon got drunk, the chemical mortar (ed. note: containing tear gas) was not used, and **Colonel Buie** prepared charges against **Bill**, later dismissed. General Ike came two days later to raise 'old Glory' and private Hell."

The Rhine also brought a delightful respite to our Personnel unit when we arrived at a little resort named Niederlahnstein, where a bombed out hotel looked like a good overnight bivouac. A group of liberated Polish workers told our **Pfc. Stan Olszewski** (who, incidentally) was elected

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FIFTY YEARS AGO AT THE ELBE

(Continued from Page 52)

President of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association in 1975) that there was a large wine cellar only a half-block away. I felt it my duty as ranking officer present to conduct a reconnoitering party of said cellar, and we found to our delight rack after rack of fine Rhine wines and stacks of wooden cases of champagne. You can imagine the reaction of tired, dirty, thirsty GIs who hadn't tasted wine or champagne for at least four months. We detailed two men to each case of champagne and to each twin-bedded hotel room. Of course, there was no electricity and, therefore, no water anywhere, but I solved that problem for **Capt. William Hooper** and myself in our room, which had a lavatory. In those days we had no cans of shaving foam, so I proposed that we use champagne to work up a lather. **Hooper** was skeptical, but after one bottle each we agreed it might work, and it did - a bit sticky but effective! But Regimental Sergeant-Major **Paul Murdoch** had the best idea of all. He proposed that we dump nearly a truck load of regimental rosters prepared for embarkation in New York and fill the space with champagne. It was probably the soundest decision that we made during the entire war.

Another comic, but temporarily frightening, incident occurred, again, with **Murdoch** and **Olszewski** (or maybe it was Corporal **Opsut** instead of **Stan**), when the three of us rode into a German village in a jeep armed with a total of two M-1 rifles and my carbine and .45 pistol. **Major Craig** had sent me to scout for a large, comfortable house that would be suitable for our regimental command post. As sometimes quartering officer I always tried to locate the chief Nazi in town, for he invariably owned the best house where we would have room to pin up our maps, set up phones and radios, etc. And besides, we didn't mind in the least inconveniencing party members for a day or two. **Craig** had assured me that this particular village had already surrendered to infantry and armored units on the run. We were driving down the main (and probably only) street when I saw our sergeant-major grab his rifle and hop up on the jeep's spare tire for a better look-out position. "This town's not been taken," he warned and pointed to the white sheets beginning to appear in upper windows. I was suddenly aware that all was strangely quiet and then recalled the stories of snipers, many of them female, who had taken their toll of our riflemen in small towns. We didn't dare turn around that far along but decided to bluff it out.

We told a frightened bystander to take us to the burgo-meister, who was, in turn, as frightened as our guide. He somehow understood our concern about German soldiers on leave and in hiding and repeatedly assured us that there were no soldiers in the village. We briefly ordered him to have all weapons in town brought into his office but felt it the better part of valor to take our departure without further delay. I gave **Craig** hell for sending us into a bypassed area, but he thought it was a great joke that the scared villagers put out white flags a second time and for three guys like us. At any rate, I have never felt quite up to claiming that three clerks captured a German town.

After the Rhine crossing our regiment experienced a new kind of warfare. With the older divisions ahead of us running out of supplies we were ordered to "run like hell - don't walk" right through the Ruhr valley to close the Ruhr pocket which contained the heart of Germany's industrial, mining and manufacturing capability. We were to move at top speed under cover of darkness on every available unit of transportation into an area containing "20 German infantry divisions, 9 armored divisions, and about three-quarters of

1,000,000 soldiers and their equipment," **Craig** wrote in his journal. Our objective was the giant Fritzlar airfield about 20 miles southeast of Kassel, from which the enemy was rushing to evacuate his troops back home to Leipzig and Berlin. I remember one night when my jeep covered about 100 miles in total blackout. According to **Craig's** account there were no air attacks or infantry to worry about at night, but the artillery would spot moving columns with any lights at all. **Craig** raced on with Combat Team 273rd to join **General Robinson's** veteran 2nd Division for planning the attack on Fritzlar's airfield next day. **General Robinson** was so impressed that he assigned a scout car and an MP escort to "that damned crazy **Craig**." It was from that point on until he met the Russians that **Craig** was so heavily involved in scouting the enemy and engaging in firefights and wild dashes into enemy territory. At Hann Munden and North Kassel in three days of heavy fighting he and his I and R unit were awarded Silver Stars. All told, **Major Craig** won the Bronze Star with Oak Leaf Cluster and the Silver Star with Oak Leaf Cluster, which adds up to four separate occasions when he was cited for bravery under fire. The dates he gives in his journal are March 10, April 12, April 16, and April 25.

The biggest engagement for the Fighting 69th was the Battle of Leipzig in Germany's fifth largest city noted for its publishing industry and its university, libraries, music, arts, and a famous Battle of the Nations monument dedicated in 1913 to those who fell in the Napoleonic wars a hundred years earlier. This giant monument was to play a major role in the 273rd Infantry's struggle to subdue the city's SS defenders. Plans called for the battle-hardened 2nd Division to attack on the western edge while the 69th was to make the main thrust from the south and southeast and capture the city hall, which was a fortress itself and defended by Hitler's dedicated storm troopers.

It is accepted in military operations of this size that if anything can go wrong, it most certainly will, and the very beginning of our move proved this axiom. I was standing by **Col. Charles M. Adams**, Regimental CO, about noon on April 18, when Division's **General Reinhardt** telephoned the order to attack. **Colonel Adams** protested the plan as firmly as his rank permitted. "But General, there are anti-aircraft 88's lowered for ground fire all along that route!" And then the inevitable, "Yes, sir! Yes, sir!" He handed the phone to me and turned to the tank officer attached to our regiment and advised him that we were to put F Company aboard his tanks and tank destroyers and barrel down Prussia Strasse and take City Hall. The battle weary tank commander cut loose a string of unprintable descriptions of the stupidity of Division Headquarters Staff: "I told G-2 that three of my five tanks had no bogey wheels, and he said to me, 'Colonel, what's a bogey wheel?'" The same question flashed through my mind, but I waited until we were out of earshot to find out that it is the little wheel that controls the tension and direction of the tracks and that without it a tank is very difficult to maneuver.

F Company climbed aboard and soon encountered the heavy fire **Colonel Adams** had predicted. Also, Division had supplied maps that did not show a city park in the route to City Hall, so **Lieutenant Farrar** had to get his lead tank turned around while the enemy laid down heavy fire on F Company's officers and men. But the worst incident was at the Battle of Nations (or Napoleon) monument. SS troops swarmed out of the bowels of that 600 ft. square structure and blasted the exposed rifles, men and tanks with machine guns and panzerfausts as they passed, capturing 17 to be

(Continued on Page 54)

FIFTY YEARS AGO AT THE ELBE

(Continued from Page 53)

held as hostages and killing more. When the task force finally reached City Hall before dark, the 2nd Division took care of the wounded still clinging to the tanks while F-Company fought on through the night with the help of 1st and 2nd Battalions after they completed their missions in other parts of the city. Early the following morning the City Hall surrendered, and our guys found a grim picture inside. Its staff, evidently all Nazi party members, had committed suicide. The mayor, his wife and daughter were seated around his desk frozen upright, all victims of self-administered cyanide. Sixty-seven members of F Company were dead or wounded.

The Battle of Leipzig was over with one exception. The SS garrison at the big monument was holding out 17 GPs and refusing to surrender with the rest of the city. I watched from an upstairs window while our infantry stormed up the steep slopes and twice were driven back by the defenders, who had carefully dug foxholes around the base from which they could fire point blank at our men charging up the high mound upon which the monument stood. Its walls were up to 14 ft. thick and made of solid granite slabs. Its base was 600 ft. along each of four sides, and it stood nearly 900 ft. high. The statues themselves at the top of the monument were 86 ft. high, and 88 mm. guns were carried by elevators to fire from embrasures above the statues.

Our artillery commander, **General Maraist**, requested permission to take the thing down with 105 mm. armor piercing shells. I saw them kick up white spots on the granite sides like a kid's slingshot against a concrete wall. The commander then called Corps for a new 240 mm. siege gun just sent over from Aberdeen Proving Grounds. When it was brought up, **Colonel Brooks** called back the coordinates for a trial shot, and to everyone's surprise the 8" round went directly into the center of the monument, smashing a great hole in the decorative grill opening but doing no structural damage. We watched with great anticipation, but further shots from the monster only chipped away small slivers of granite. Finally, it was decided to call off the attack, leave a guard unit around the monument, and move on from Leipzig.

But there was still the problem of the hostages somewhere inside this impregnable bastion. We happened to have with us a brilliant POW interrogator (I believe he was a German professor from one of the Ivy League colleges) who accompanied our regimental executive officer up to the monument carrying a white flag for a parley along about midnight. The SS commander for Leipzig received them politely, wine and dined them in his comfortable quarters underground and listened to the professor's arguments for surrendering. He was reminded of the German prince of long ago who concluded it was better to surrender and live to restore his country than to die, for we intended to keep a guard until they starved. The commandant picked up a phone and explained his situation to Hitler's staff in Berlin, and at 2:00 a.m. the garrison and their American hostages filed out. The Battle of Leipzig was over.

The next day I drove around the shattered city with my "liberated" Rolliflex and saw the knee deep rubble that had once been the famed university's library and the new German national library, where Craig's task force encountered machine gun and rifle fire at almost every window. I was especially interested in the old 15th century St. Thomas Church where Johann Sebastian Bach was organist. I have a prized snapshot I made of the statue outside the church of Bach with upraised arm holding aloft a scroll of music over

which our communications crews had irreverently strung about a dozen field telephone wires. This photo speaks volumes to me about the absurdity of war. A day or two later some of us were invited to a concert of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in the same Thomas Kirche, and the absurdity of it all really hit me again - the victors with rifles at their feet being entertained by the world famous, highly talented vanquished.

General MacArthur said, "Old soldiers never die; they just fade away." By now you are probably thinking that they just write and write and read and read, for I have rambled on until there is little time left to tell about the link-up at the Elbe River. The whole affair was another typical army SNAFU.

After we left Leipzig we began to hear rumors and pick up Russian radio chatter. Word came down from Army, Corps, and Division that German strength between us and the Elbe was uncertain, and that patrols were to be limited to five miles. But excitement was in the air, and reporters and photographers began to converge on our headquarters at the little town of Tresben, on the Mulde River about 20 miles west of the Elbe. "Maggie" Higgins, the well known photographer, wanted to buy my Rolliflex. **Hal Boyle** was pumping out stories about the 273rd, and Ernest Hemingway was trying to use my phone instead of the ones we had rigged up in a press room. At least, that's the story I used to tell women's book clubs until I met Mary Hemingway at our first Book and Author Dinner in Memphis. She pointed out that her husband was on the farm in Cuba on April 25th and that imposters had used his name to gain an advantage over other newsmen (I still say that he looked exactly like Hemingway's pictures).

On the morning of April 25 three patrols headed east from the Mulde. One led by **Lt. Albert Kotzebue** of G Company consisted of five jeeps but with the radio jeep left at the company CP to communicate with Regiment. **Kotzebue** encountered only very light resistance, most of the German soldiers surrendering quickly, so he pressed on beyond the five-mile limit in his eagerness to meet the Russians (neither the patrols nor Regiment and Division knew that the Russians were under strict orders of their own to wait at the east bank of the Elbe for the Americans). When **Kotzebue** reached the tiny village of Leckwitz, he came suddenly upon a Russian horseman. The time was 11:30, four and a half hours before **Lt. William Robertson** crawled down the girder of the blown bridge at Torgau in that famous photograph that hit Life magazine and front pages all over the world.

Kotzebue's Russian cavalryman reluctantly pointed toward his headquarters southeastward down the Elbe. The patrol took a liberated Pole as a volunteer guide and roared off to the town of Strehla, where **Kotzebue** could see soldiers with their medals glinting in the sun across the river. He was a student of the Russian military and knew they wore their medals in battle, so he hurriedly set about crossing the Elbe. By balancing a hand grenade on a knot of chains that held some boats and taking cover from the explosion, he, his two interpreters and four other enlisted men freed the boats, pushed across, and started up the east bank. Three suspicious Russians walked slowly down to meet them, one a major and one a captain, who was also a press photographer. After salutes and handshaking all around, the atmosphere warmed up quickly, and celebrations soon began. The time was 12:30, three and a half hours before **Bill Robertson's** link-up.

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FIFTY YEARS AGO AT THE ELBE

(Continued from Page 54)

But back at Regiment we sat wondering when a patrol would radio back something - anything! **Lt. William D. Robertson**, S-2 of 1st Battalion, had gone out on patrol about the same time as **Kotzebue**, but his mission was to try to restore some order to the bedlam created by released Allied prisoners celebrating, displaced persons clogging the roads with their carts, and German soldiers surrendering in droves to the Americans to avoid capture by the Russians. He took only one jeep, a driver, three enlisted men and no radio. The traffic situation began to clear up, when he heard from some freed British POWs that there were some wounded Americans and Allied POWs in Torgau. But at Torgau he learned that the American wounded had probably been moved in a wagon. His patrol headed toward the part of town near the river, where he could hear small arms fire.

Robertson's patrol spotted a castle near the Elbe which had a tower from which he might signal, but he had no rocket flares to fire as had been agreed upon for recognition. Nor did he have an American flag to wave. In desperation they broke through the door of an apothecary shop, found some red and blue water colors and fashioned a messy, but adequate flag with blue stars on a white background, using a bedsheet they had picked up earlier just in case. The Russians fired on the tower every time **Robertson** waved the flag (the Germans had tried to trick them with a flag the day before). Then he remembered hearing that there was a freed Russian prisoner back in town. His men found the Russian, the happy soldier yelled to his comrades in arms, and two flares went up on the east bank. That was it! They all ran down to the blown bridge, and **Lt. Robertson**, knowing no Russian, happily pounded the knees of the first Russian to crawl down the girder to meet him. The time was about 4:00 p.m.

Meanwhile, back at our CP came the following radio message from **Kotzebue**: "Mission accomplished. Making arrangements for meeting of CO's. Present location (870170). No casualties." It was timed at 1:30 and received at 3:15. The tension really began to grow at our headquarters. Nothing had been said in his message about enemy strength in the area or the situation with the Russians. Colonel Adams immediately called General Reinhardt, who was enraged to hear that his orders had been disobeyed. But he relayed the word to Corps, who notified Army, and no doubt the message went right on up to the White House, the Kremlin, and Number Ten Downing Street. I remember well how the pressure was building at our headquarters. Reporters and photographers could tell that something had happened, but **Colonel Adams** couldn't say much until he had better information, and **General Reinhardt** wanted more authentication before he went out on a limb with such big news. He also wanted to court-martial everybody involved.

Soon **Kotzebue** radioed a second message: "Arrangements not complete. Will contact you later." Of course, everything was perfectly clear to **Lieutenant Kotzebue** up where he was, but he didn't want to say on open radio that he had met the Russians or specify their units and their commanders' names, and such. Hence, the cryptic, brief report. When told of this second message, Division ordered **Colonel Adams** to proceed with preparations to meet his Russian counterpart, and then a few minutes later **General Reinhardt** called to stay the preparations order while he sent his G-3 in a small airplane to **Kotzebue's** location to verify the hook-up. There was just one thing wrong with that solution: **Lt. Kotzebue** had mistaken the town of Strehla for the town of Groba on his map and had given the wrong coordinates. The plane

flew over, saw no one, received small arms flak, and returned to Division. It could be fairly stated that the General was unhappy!

Meanwhile, there was no word from **Lieutenant Robertson's** patrol, although **Craig** had started reporting his position regularly and asking permission each time to proceed farther. He captured about four or five towns by approaching cautiously, sizing up the situation, and threatening the burgomeister with instant artillery destruction as soon as he pulled his seven jeeps out of range. That threat, along with the lie that the Russians had already met the Americans and were on their way at that very moment, worked wonders at every stop. Women would grab up their children and run into their houses to hang out white sheets. Some wept openly at the news of the Russians. V Corps' Information and Historical Officer, **Captain William J. Fox**, who accompanied **Craig**, wrote: "I don't know how long we're going to get away with this," **Craig** said with a grin, "but we might as well bluff while we can. Then we won't have any trouble." When Regiment finally told **Craig** not to proceed farther, he was meeting farm workers and freed POWs who were sure that the Russians were quite close. He stopped on a hill where he could see almost to the Elbe, when two jeeps from **Kotzebue's** patrol came roaring up to tell him they were already across the Elbe with the 175th Infantry Regiment commanded by one of Russia's most decorated heroes, Lt. Col. Alexander T. Gardiev. **Craig's** patrol took off in a cloud of dust to join them.

Back at Regiment **Colonel Adams** was sitting alone in a corner wondering just exactly what was going on some 20 miles east at the Elbe, when **Craig** radioed: "Have contacted **Lt. Kotzebue** who is in contact with the Russians." Later **Craig** asked if **Colonel Adams** was on his way to meet the Russian general who had already joined the Russian regimental commander. **Colonel Adams** radioed to **Craig** that he would leave as soon as arrangements were made. Then the phone rang. It was the 1st Battalion CO. The regimental journal records some of the conversation which I remember: "What? My, God. He has four Russians at his CP and wants to know what to do with them? Who brought them in? **Lt. Robertson**, S-2 of the battalion had gone out hunting prisoners and brought them in? Yes. Bring them to Regiment."

These were the Russians I told of seeing at the start of this paper. I know that by now you are as confused as all of us were a half century ago and probably much wearier for we were operating on adrenaline aided by what **Fred Craig** called class #6 supplies - spirited "refreshments." I'll try to wrap this thing up quickly (**Captain Fox's** official account required 52 single-spaced typewritten pages). **Robertson** had one jeep, no radio, and was not on a contact Russians mission, but he delivered four Russians and, therefore, got all the attention. The Russians were taken to Division Headquarters, **General Reinhardt** was convinced and finally gave up his idea of courtmartialing everybody - actually, he basked in the warm glow from all the publicity about the 69th. **Kotzebue** and **Craig** were forgotten while arrangements were made for all the brass on both sides to meet officially at Torgau, **Robertson's** contact point. **Colonel Adams** met **Colonel Rogol**, CO of the 173rd Infantry Regiment of the Russian army at 10:00 the next morning, April 26. At 4:00 that afternoon **General Reinhardt** met **General Rusakov**. Much toasting took place amid swarms of reporters and photographers. The Stars and Stripes' Paris office sent a reporter named Andy Rooney, who complains about things in general these days on TV's "Sixty Minutes."

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FIFTY YEARS AGO AT THE ELBE

(Continued from Page 55)

The two patrols who had made earlier contacts were waiting dissipatedly all of this time, sending inquiries back to Regiment wondering when someone was going to come out to them. Finally, **Lt. Col. George C. Knight**, 273rd Executive Officer, arrived at 5:00 p.m. to tell them of the other meeting. **Captain Fox's** account puts it mildly: "This was an anti-climax."

The world heard the official announcement on April 27 at 6:00 p.m., made simultaneously by President Harry S. Truman, Prime Minister Winston Churchill, and Soviet Marshal Joseph Stalin. **Lieutenant Robertson** was sent home to make tour appearances, and the war in Europe ended two weeks later.

For much of this paper I am indebted to the following: **Joe McMurtry**, Jackson, Tennessee, (271st Infantry, I-Co., and Co-Chair of the reunion of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division held in Nashville this past August), who introduced me to **Thomas Marshall Moore** of Alamo, Tennessee (M Company, 272nd Infantry), who showed me a copy of **Craig's** handwritten journal (history? scrapbook?) and arranged for me to meet **Craig's** sister, Miss Robbie Craig, in Alamo. Miss Craig kindly told me much about her brother for the years before and after World War II and gave me permission to copy and quote from his journal. **Fred Wilson Craig** died in 1973 and is survived by four sisters and one brother.

In concluding this tribute to **Fred Craig** I cannot end it without expressing my admiration for the ground soldiers everywhere - riflemen, artillerymen, medics, engineers,

MP's, all of those who lived in the snow and the mud, cold, hungry, hurting, and scared, but always moving toward the enemy. I get a lump in my throat when I think of those kids (most were eight to twelve years younger than I was) whom I saw day after day slogging eastward, taking the ground inch by inch and mile by mile, not for glory or medals but because the job had to be done so we could all go home.

Bill Mauldin portrayed them best in my favorite cartoon. Joe, the rifleman, is standing in front of a medic seated at a table with a medal and a ribbon. The caption reads: "Aw, just give me a coupla aspirins. I already got a Purple Heart."

Like my new friend **Tom Moore** in Alamo, I get mad when I hear civilians who were not there make disparaging remarks about the "dogfaces," the little hints that they were not very bright and couldn't have qualified for some of the other services. I knew privates who were very talented guys and who became quite successful after they got back home. They came from all backgrounds and after four years lost from their careers, they went back to rise to positions of leadership in dozens of occupations. We owe the foot soldiers a great debt for helping to make it possible for us to enjoy our comfortable lives a half century later. Ernie Pyle ended *Here Is Your War* with these words for those who could not go on from North Africa to the next battleground: "Medals and speeches and victories are nothing to them anymore. They died and others lived and nobody knows why it is so. They died and thereby the rest of us can go on and on. When we leave here for the next shore, there is nothing we can do for the ones beneath the wooden crosses except perhaps to pause and murmur, 'Thanks, pal.'"

3rd Platoon, Company F, 271st Infantry Regiment

Submitted By: Lawrence Verheye
12351 Pierce Road, Wakarusa, Indiana 46573-9616



TAKEN SOMEWHERE IN GERMANY IN 1945

Front Row: Lyons, Budlige, Quarry, Fleming, Bigsmoke. Middle Row: S/Sgt. Carey, S/Sgt. Stephens, Felton, Fasono, Wilke, Maloney, Pelegiam, Witkowski, Bender (Medic), Galant, S/Sgt. Miller. Back Row: Sgt. Vaughn, S/Sgt. March, Fift, Yasny, Gates, MacDade, Tawrence, Gizzy, Klein, Bewer, Lafave, Kinney, Davies, Hawkins.

Missing from photo: Lieutenant Lucious I. Murphree, Sergeant A.J. Albano and Lawrence Verheye.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We did our best to make out the names. We apologize for misspellings.)

CALENDAR OF COMING EVENTS AND COMMUNICATION SCHEDULE

May I just make note to all leaders of Chapters, Groups, Branches, Companies, Battalions, Regiments, Recon, Artillery, AAA, and T.D.'s to get your Activities Schedules to **Earl E. Witzleb, Jr., Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069 or R.D. #3, Box 477, Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606**, as soon as possible. We try to work at least a year ahead, as we only put out three Bulletins a year. When mailing in this information, do send your organization's name, person in charge (Chairman), address, city, state, zip, telephone numbers including area codes, dates, location, and anything else that you feel might be of interest for members to know.

1995

SEPTEMBER 6, 7, 8, 9, 1995
69th CAVALRY RECON TROOP

Lexington Hotel Suites
 1200 South Meridian
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73108
 Telephone: 405/943-7800
 Fax: 405/943-8346

Rates: \$39.00 Studio Suite
 \$49.00 One Bedroom Suite
 \$69.00 Two Bedroom Suite

Committee:
Charles Rice
 6220 Kingston Road
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma 73122
 Telephone: 405/721-2288
Lloyd Abbott
 8098 East 19th Street
 Bixby, Oklahoma 74008
 Telephone: 918/366-8767

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 8, 9, 10, 1995
BATTERY B,
724th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

(This is Captain Edward "Pop" Kaasmann's famous "B" Battery, 155mm Howitzers)

Location: Cleveland, Ohio
 Weekend after Labor Day

If Interested Contact Committee:
Al Bukovac
 146 East 272nd Street
 Euclid, Ohio 44132
 Telephone: 216/732-7130
All 69ers Welcome

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 11, 12, 13, 1995
BATTERY C, 880th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

The Carlisle Village Inn
Walnut Creek, Ohio
In the Heart of Amish Country

Committee:
Robert A. Williams
 1407 Narragansett Boulevard
 Lorain, Ohio 44053
 Telephone: 216/282-2810
Lowell E. McFarlin
 89 North High Street, Box 236
 Jeromesville, Ohio 44840
 Telephone: 419/368-7363

* * * * *

OCTOBER 7th, 1995

Deadline for news material and pictures for this bulletin
 Bulletin Volume 49, Number 1
 September, October, November, December 1995
 Bulletin expected mailing date in December due to
 October Reunion

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OCTOBER 13, 14, 15, 1995

HEADQUARTERS BATTERY,
MEDICAL DETACHMENT, 461st AAA AW Battalion

Quality Inn
Salem, Virginia 24153
 Motel Telephone: 703/562-1912 or 800/228-5151
 Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Leave Sunday or stay over.
 Leave I-81 at Exit 141 and go south on SR-419 to motel. A
 block of rooms have been reserved. Good rates. Be sure to
 specify 461st group.

Meeting Room will be the Montgomery/Franklin Room.

Committee:
Eddie C. Griffin, Chairman
 3880 Croydon Drive, N.W.
 Canton, Ohio 44718
 Telephone: 216/492-5376
Francis H. Breyette, News Reporter
 1137 Orkla Drive
 Golden Valley, Minnesota 55427-4441
 Telephone: 612/545-2281

* * * * *

OCTOBER 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 1995
HEADQUARTERS BATTERY,
880th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

In Conjunction with the 69th National Reunion
Landmark Resort Hotel
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina

Committee:
John O'Connor
 9321 Jefferson
 Brookfield, Illinois 60513
 Telephone: 708/387-7809
Robert McKee
 29 Sandy Point Road, Longpoint
 Earleville, Maryland 21919
 Telephone: 410/275-8627
Eugene McGreevy
 800 Shriver Avenue
 Cumberland, Maryland 21502
 Telephone: 301/724-3650

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(Continued on Page 58)

October 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 1995
69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
48th ANNUAL REUNION
Myrtle Beach, South Carolina
LANDMARK RESORT HOTEL

A BEST WESTERN HOTEL

1501 South Ocean Boulevard

Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 19577

Telephone: 803/448-9441 or 800/845-0658

The Landmark is right on the ocean. Water and air temperatures are very pleasant in October. The airport is about two miles away and the hotel has complimentary transportation to and from the airport. Myrtle Beach is well within driving distance from the middle Atlantic states - about 10 hours from Philadelphia Free Parking - Y'all Come!

RATES

Ocean Front: \$52.00 plus 7% Tax Ocean View: \$42.00 plus 7% tax

Hospitality Room- Tours - Early Bird Dinner - PX Party - Shows
Memorial Service - Banquet Dinner Dance - Golf - Shopping and More

See front of bulletin for other details.

COMMITTEE:

George and Rita Wolff, Co-Chairpersons
Company A, 271st Infantry
1132 Forest Drive
North Myrtle Beach, South Carolina 29582
Telephone: 803/272-4247

Frank and Joan Alfiero, CoChairpersons
Battery B. 880th Field Artillery
1394 Southwood Drive
Surfside, South Carolina 29575
Telephone: 803/650-7031

MORE COMMITTEE MEMBERS ARE NEEDED. PLEASE VOLUNTEER NOW, CAROLINIANS.

1996

AUGUST 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 1996 69th INFANTRY DIVISION 49th ANNUAL REUNION
HYATT REGENCY WOODFIELD, SCHAMBERG, ILLINOIS

Committee: Ernest H. and Mary Krause, Chairpersons
444 Pioneer Drive, Addison, Illinois 60101 • Telephone: (Please send to Earl)

Committee Members: Ralph S. Plugge, Max Phillips, Robert Klein, Glenn L. Felner, Harold A. Pederson,
George Rico, William J. Fannucchi, Marsh Mussay, Al Koziol

* * * * *

1997

Reunion Site Committee checking for city locations from a member who would be willing to be it's chairman.

A bid is being made for Boston with **Henry and Jean Patula** as Chairpersons.

If you have any ideas, or would like to help with this reunion, please contact us or be at Myrtle Beach with your suggestions.



"Taps"

The melody of TAPS was composed by a non-musical (musician with no formal knowledge) nor the technical names of any of the notes. Union General Daniel Butterfield whistled it for Brigadier General Oliver Norton who wrote the notes on the back of an envelope July 2, 1862. The plaintive bugle notes that bring an involuntary lump to the throat typifies our loss and feelings of these two great buglers.

THE WORDS TO "TAPS" SAY IT ALL

Day is done, gone the sun
From the lakes, from the hills,
from the skies.
All is well, safely rest, God is nigh.
Thanks and praise for our days
'neath the sun, 'neath the stars,
'neath the sky.
As we go, this we know. God is nigh.

Donald Turk
Wickliffe, Ohio
Unit Unknown

A. H. Weltman
104 Potomac Street
Cumberland, Maryland
B - 881st F.A.

Herbert Snow
809 West Park
Malden, Missouri
Unit Unknown

Alvin R. Ingram
17841 Garret Highway
Oakland, Maryland
B - 272nd

William L. Quirk
730 South 13th Street
Eunice, Louisiana
A - 369th

Conrad R. Saller
10819 West Gateway Drive
Frankfort, Illinois
K - 272nd

Stanley J. Rak
3551 S. Hermitage Avenue
Chicago, Illinois
H - 273rd

Nestor Keene
217 North Church Street
Boalsburg, Pennsylvania
I & Service - 272nd

Charles P. Bowne
4041 Colter Drive
Kokomo, Indiana
A - 269th

Charles F. Mekeel, Jr.
239 Blue Bird Lane
Folsom, Louisiana
69th Q.M.

Paul G. Fry
P.O. Box 5041
Roanoke, Virginia
AT - 271st

Harry Mermstein
18 Northview Drive
North Hills, Pennsylvania
H2 - 272nd

Donald R. Shiras
3694 Leonard Point Road
Oshkosh, Wisconsin
L - 271st

Henry D. Allen
1626 First Avenue
Bessemer, Alabama
B - 269th

James A. Emmi
Wilmington, Delaware
Unit Unknown

Earl Staub
5544 Hanover Road
Hanover, Pennsylvania
A - 881st F.A.

William Maher
P.O. Box 104
Greenpoint, New York
H - 272nd

Ray Gagle
1201 South Miller Avenue
Portland, Indiana
G - 273rd

Walter F. Johnson
3685 Churchview Avenue
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
B - 724th

Gilbert McIlvain
P.O. Box 5303
San Angelo, Texas
D - 461st

William Bowker
319 South Market Street
Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania
B - 461st

George Y. Brubaker
79 Wynnedale Road
Narberth, Pennsylvania
D - 272nd

Carl E. Colpean
1619 Chestnut
Saginaw, Michigan
Unit Unknown

James A. Dunn
5457 80th Avenue
Palmetto, Florida
K - 271st

James Harrold
65 Ridgewood Road
Elk Grove Village, Illinois
HQ. - 777th

Charles M. Shade
309 Mitchell Avenue
Petal, Mississippi
A - 881st

William Dunklin
P.O. Box 242
Uniontown, Alabama
C - 880th F.A.

David Hanrahn
8097 C.R. 86
Findlay, Ohio
C - 271st

Tom Berge
261 South Lennox
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Fort Pierce, Florida
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Edward Shelton
5568 Mayberry Lane
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Cannon - 273rd

Alfred Smith
1 Haywood Drive
Canton, North Carolina
D - 461st

Charles J. Boyd
1046 Ratliff Ferry Road
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Medic - 273rd

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John J. Roulette
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Fresno, California
69th Recon

Joseph L. Lantz
11227 Hollywood Road
Hagerstown, Maryland
B - 271st

Gaetano DeFeo
4295 Webster Avenue
New York, New York
69th Recon

Felix Slagowski
3700 North Capitol Street
Washington, D.C.
Medic - 271st

John English
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(Continued from Page 59)

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NOTE: For those of you who are unaware, the membership voted some time ago to limit the bulletin to 60 pages. If you submitted material for this bulletin, and did not see it published in this issue, it will be published in the next issue. We cannot always find room for everything that we receive. Please be patient and your number will come up soon. Thank You, **Clarence and Earl.**