

FIGHTING 69TH INFANTRY DIVISION

★★★★ Association, Inc.



VOLUME 49, NO. 3

MAY — JUNE — JULY — AUGUST
1996

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

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

bulletin

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*Deceased

CHOW TIME!



News From The Editor's Desk



By Clarence Marshall
Co-Editor

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

Thomas R. Smith, 16380 Kelly Cove Drive, Unit # 300, Fort Myers, Florida 33908 — Hq., 881st: Several items in the most recent issue of the "Bulletin" piqued my interest. We are just packing to fly back to our summer home tomorrow but I must stop and write my thoughts

Steve Rojcewicz's memories (page 44) about venison on the menu for the 881st Field Artillery recalled the following. Chief Littlehoop was a corporal in the Headquarters Battery. Near the close of the war, when rations were sparse, he would take several of us deer hunting. In late afternoon he would post us about 100 yards apart lying in the forest along the edge of wheat fields. At dusk the deer would come out of the timber into the wheat fields to graze and then we would shoot what was needed for rations. We would dress them and take them back to the **Mess Sergeant Shyrook**. On one particular occasion one of the "Chief's hunters" shot at a Belgian hare which of course frightened all the deer away for the evening. I can still recall Chief's disgust (disgust hell, he was downright mad) with his novice deer hunting crew on that occasion and his insistence that future hunting parties would obey his directions explicitly or he would get a new group of volunteers. Chief Littlehoop was an excellent hunter and incidentally an excellent soldier. I still remember the thrill of shooting my first deer.

Gene Tabacchi's article, "Basketball Champs" (page 37) and his reference to **Bill Mulroy** reminded me that **Mulroy** was the consummate athlete. When he was with the 881st Headquarters Battery at any and every opportunity he had any able bodied soldier playing softball, touch football and anything else competitive. He was player-manager, umpire, referee or whatever it took to make the games go on. Obviously, he was the best known man in the outfit. If you have an address for **Mulroy**, I certainly would appreciate your sending it or printing it in the next bulletin.

You requested information on participation in the Battle of the Bulge. (page 2) I was in the Headquarters Battery 881st Field Artillery. We were in a camp near Sissone, France when the Bulge was happening, as I recall. The 82nd Airborne Division was in the same camp. My memory is vague on this matter but I recall some of

us leaving being temporarily attached to the 82nd. I believe they moved up to replace troops that took the brunt of the first German hit. We left the camp, along with elements of the 82nd, in the middle of the night. Somewhere along the way the convoy was stopped and the officer in charge came to the back of the truck and told us to all get out and disperse, and that a German convoy was going down to the other side of the highway. I have no recollection of the geography or the sequence of subsequent events.

The Headquarters Battery, 881st Field Artillery, was represented at the 1995 reunion by only one member and his wife, **Cecil and Mary Lou Ammons** of Alabama! Hi Cecil, send me your address.

I do enjoy reading the bulletin. Keep up the good work.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Cecil's address is 4309 Bell Hill Road, Bessemer, Alabama 35023-6943.)

Homer D. Rager, 2469 28th Street S.W., Akron, Ohio 44314-1609 — Co. G, 273rd: Hello Clarence. We survived another winter. I hope all is well with you. So far we had 90.4 inches in the "snow belt," a bit less in Akron. It was hard on the deer herd here. The Game Commission is finding a lot of dead ones, plus the road kills.

I am going back Interstate 80 through Clarion, Pennsylvania (Clarence has a camp there). Of course, I'll stop at the Clipper. That's 124 miles from Akron and it will be lunch time. I will be there for trout season. I only go for moral support and I will stay at the Homestead. My brother and sister still live there. It's at the foot of the 7 Mts. Camp which is usually full, plus all the locals. I'll keep the fire going at camp, the coffee hot for passers by and the fish pan handy for my limit. Ha!

My old legs don't make it anymore. I am still on the cane but no crutches yet. My eyes are bad also. My first cataract surgery was unsuccessful. The retina nerve was dead. I will have the cataract removed from the other eye soon. Maybe I'll be able to see better.

Clarence, there are so many names in "Taps" anymore. We can still be thankful. I still enjoy the Bulletin and it gets close to where I have been with the stories I read and the pictures I see. So, I am wishing you continued good health and keep on writing.

Here's a little jingle to cheer up those old 69ers and ladies.

*Today dear Lord I'm 80 and there's much I haven't done.
I hope dear Lord you'll let me live until I'm 81.
But then if I haven't finished all I want to do
would you let me stay awhile — until I'm 82?
So many places I want to go, so very much to see —
Do you think that you could manage to make it 83?
The world is changing very fast, there is so much in store
I'd like it very much to live until I'm 84.
And if by then I'm still alive I'd like to stay till 85 —
More planes will be up in the air, so I'd really like to stick
and see what happens to the world when I'm 86.
I know dear Lord it's much to ask
(and it must be nice in heaven)
But I would really like to stay until I'm 87.
I know by then I won't be fast and sometimes will be late;
But it would be so pleasant to be around at 88.
So, I'm sure that I'll be willing to leave at 89 - maybe!
But wait, I think it might be thrilling to stay till 99!*

(Continued on Page 3)

NEWS FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

(Continued from Page 2)

Bernard Dikter, 3065 Carambola Circle S., Coconut Creek, Florida 33066 — Hq., 2nd Bn., 271st: I resent the implication in the letter by Mr. Haynie (Vol. 49, No. 2) that ASTP veterans were not involved in combat operations with the 69th Infantry Division.

I was an enlistee, regular army, and during the term of my service, selected the ASTP over the choice of OCS. I was a college graduate prior to my enlistment. Those of us in my ASTP were placed into the 69th and went overseas into combat with the Division. I was proud to be a combat infantryman.

Mr. Haynie, even though I was fortunate enough not to have been wounded, I was awarded the Bronze Star Medal for HEROIC ACHIEVEMENT during a combat mission in Weisenfels, Germany. Therefore, do not minimize the valor and loyalty of us combat veterans who were part of the Army Specialized Training Program.

John Barnett, 6374 Brandywine Trail, Norcross, Georgia 30092 — Btry. A, 880th F.A.: It is always a pleasure to get my 69th Bulletin. I'd be willing to bet that it is the best Division bulletin in the U.S. Thanks to all of you who labor in the trenches and a leaky "blivet" to those who will not pay their dues and support their division!

Allen Speir, 8 Evergreen Terrace, Durham, Connecticut 06422-1403 — Co. H, 272nd: I was one of the first replacements sent out of Camp Shelby. I went to Headquarters Advance Section (ADSEC) Comm Zone, Bristol, England, then to France. - D + 10 Utah Beach.

Martha Harwood, R.R. #1, Box 23F, North Springfield, Vermont 05150, widow of **James Harwood** — Div. Hq.: Sorry I'm late with this, but this past year has been awfully messed up. Our daughter insisted she take Jim out of the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington to her South Carolina one. He lost 35 pounds in 6 weeks. There he had a heart attack, developed anemia and did not get much care. There was nothing I could do to prevent his going, as I could not do it after 19 months and no help and only 32 hours total off day and night duty in all that time. Jim had schizophrenia, paranoia and many other problems. She sent him back to the Vermont Veterans Home in February. I saw him as often as I could - he weighed only 131 lbs. I talked to him the day he died. He walked to the desk phone at 6:00 p.m. on March 19th and died suddenly as he got out of bed at 7:20 p.m., just about an hour and 15 minutes later.

Jim was a donor. They got someone for his eyes. His vision was there but stroke prevented him from seeing much. He asked to be cremated. He wanted no service, no showing - so we did as he wished.

I shall miss him very much. Please notify **Keith Curtis**, **Walt Doernbach** and "**Tad**" **Frank Harrison**. I hope all is O.K. with you.

William R. Matlach, (*The 69th's present Association Treasurer*), 19 Barberry Road, West Islip, New York 11795 — Co. E-273rd: When you resigned from the position of Membership Chairman and were replaced by Bob Kurtzman, I assumed you were not able to perform any work at all for the Association. I did not find out until much later that you are still functioning as Co-Editor of the Bulletin. I think that you are to be commended for all that you are accomplishing in spite of your severe handicaps and I trust that things are going reasonably well for you.

New Men Relocated Since Our Last Bulletin

Richard B. Wilber — Cannon Company, 273rd Infantry
1219 Van Buren Drive
Ft. Washington, Maryland 20744

George M. Haddad — Company E, 272nd Infantry
30180 Cheviot Hills Drive, Franklin, Michigan 48025

Melvin C. Buschman — Company C, 273rd Infantry
351 Southlawn, East Lansing, Michigan 48823

John L. Brockwell — Anti-Tank, 272nd Infantry
4060 South Unity Road, Polo, Illinois 61064-9307

Sylvan L. Katz — Company H, 273rd Infantry
111 Marguerita Avenue
Santa Monica, California 90402

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: 330/359-5487

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 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: 412/455-2901

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

Message from the President



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

By the time you read this our Schaumburg Reunion will be finalized, and the Reunion Committee members in a state of high anxiety. **Ernest and Mary Krause**, Chairpersons, have assembled a large dedicated group to serve on their Committees. Every possible lesson learned from past Reunions have been checked and re-checked to insure this Reunion is among the best. However, "the best laid plans of mice or men!"

Henry and Jean Putala are running the wheels off their car driving between Connecticut and Massachusetts in preparation for our 50th annual Reunion. Their Reunion Committee had its first planning meeting in March where assignments were made and plans developed. The Tara Ferncrest Resort is a beautiful property that may long be remembered as the best Reunion location ever. Arrangements for hotel-related events and activities have, in the main, been finalized. Selecting tours and events are more difficult because cost variances and choices are so numerous. Rest assured, your Committee will make the best choices.


Since 1997 will be the Association's Golden Anniversary Reunion, it is my goal to make this our most memorable Reunion. I am already considering innovations and events never offered before. Cost is always a consideration, however, I have negotiated well for this Reunion in order to have a few extra bucks in the budget to splurge for the good of the order. Mark your calendars, this will be the big one.

Several officers have made the point that we need to recruit new blood in the organization as Officers and Directors. Most members are unaware of the internal operation of the Association and are unwilling to step forward and become involved. Consequently, the same Officers and dedicated members are forced to move from one position to another to keep the Association in operation. Look at the list of Officers and the Board of Directors and you will recognize the same names holding different jobs over the past 10-15 years. Every year we pick up First Timers who may be interested in becoming active in the Association. If anyone is sincere enough to want to learn how the Association functions, and become involved in its planning and future direction, then please

contact an Officer or Director. Discuss the organization and responsibilities of its Officers and if you are seriously interested, offer your name as a candidate.

Speaking of open positions, the Souvenir Committee Chairmanship is available. Anyone interested can contact myself, **Frank Nemeth**, or **Bill Sheavly** who can fill you in on the tasks and responsibilities of the job. Incentive - a half-paid hotel room each year you attend a Reunion and manage the Souvenir Sales operation.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: In a letter that President Pierce had sent to myself and other officers of the 69th, he mentioned that he had discussed Charter Membership of the 69th at a California Western Chapter meeting. Mr. Richard Levy, Hq. Co., 2nd Bn., 271st mentioned that he was also a Charter Member and had a copy of the original Association Membership listing. Below lists the original Officers and Honorary Life Members. However, he did not send a complete list of the Charter Members and we do not want to publish a partial list.)

<div style="text-align: center;"> DIRECTORY OF THE SIXTY-NINTH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION  1949 </div>	<div style="text-align: center;"> OFFICERS PRESIDENT EMIL F. REINHARDT ★ VICE-PRESIDENTS Lester J. Milich Cecil J. Kennedy W. Eldon Hazard ★ SECRETARY-TREASURER Leo Andelman ★ BOARD OF DIRECTORS </div>

- HONORARY LIFE MEMBERS**
- Mrs. Charles D. Beckman (Widow of Lieut. Charles Beckman)
47 N. 21st St., East Orange, New Jersey
Andre Boucher (French Liaison Officer)
108 Boulevard de Courcelles, Paris V XII, France
F. Caumo (Durch NCO with 69th Division)
Kanstraat 37, Ubach over Worms, Holland-Limburg
- Mrs. Daniel W. Dawson (Widow of Lt. Col. Daniel W. Dawson)
46 Chester Streer, Oceanside, L.I., N.Y.
- Mr. and Mrs. Chris P. Fox (Parents of Lieut. Chris P. Fox, Jr.)
1107 Kelly Way, El Paso, Texas
- Most Reverend R.O. Gerow (Bishop of Natchez)
107 S. Union St., Natchez, Miss.
- Mrs. Lloyd H. Gibbons (Widow of Brig Gen. Lloyd H. Gibbons)
5018 Wareka Drive, Dallas, Texas
Miss Lillian Keir (Army Red Cross)
921 E. 12th St., Brooklyn, N.Y.
- Mrs. Robert E. Lee (Widow of Sgr. Robert E. Lee)
2511 Newkirk Ave., Brooklyn 26, N.Y.
- Mr. and Mrs. Frank MacKenzie
51 Fairfield, North Cambridge, Mass.
- Mrs. Grant Schleich (Mariam Minton - Army Red Cross)
35 Colony Road, West Springfield, Mass.
- The Rev. Frank Quinn (Brother of Father Peter Quinn)
Sr. James Catholic Church, Leland, Miss.

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

Our last reunion was in October, 2 months later than we generally have them, delaying some Association tasks scheduled after the reunion such as issuing the News Bulletin and sending out the first Dues Notice. I gave priority to my write-up for the Bulletin, completed it, recorded all the financial transactions which had taken place at the reunion, and sent out the first Dues Notice of the year. I then buried myself in the flood of dues payments coming in and failed to realize that **Earl Witzleb** and **Clarence Marshall** had accelerated preparation of the second Bulletin to try to catch up to our normal schedule. When I thought about writing my column for the second bulletin, it was already in printing and too late for me to submit anything. I suppose that was no great loss to the readers!

A little over a year ago, I turned 70 in age which most of you have also accomplished, and I had to make arrangements for my withdrawal of funds from the investment plan in which I had participated at my place of employment, a procedure which Uncle Sam makes mandatory at that age because he wants to collect his taxes. One of my options was that I could make my withdrawals gradually over the period of years of my "life expectancy," which turned out to be 16 at the age of 70. This means that although a man's average length of life is on the order of 72 years, if he is one of those who manage to reach 70, the odds are that he has another 16 years to go. This set me to thinking about our membership and how it is affected by this statistic. Our mailing list is about 5300, and if we divide that by 16 years the result is that we shall lose an average of about 330 members per year from now on! This thought may be a little morbid, but it sort of makes you sit up and take notice of where we are. Of course, my calculation is oversimplified, does not take into consideration other ages, and the phenomenon probably follows a "bell" shaped curve, increasing gradually to a peak rate and then decreasing as our roster approaches phase-out. Response to my second Dues Notice has started to come in and I was struck by the

number of dues envelopes returned and marked "Deceased." I checked the last Bulletin and found that the page and a half of "Taps" totaled 72 names, which is not out of line with my crude calculations. What can we do about it? Not much except to do what we can while we can, and one of those things to do is to attend a 69th Division Reunion!

Reservations for the Schaumburg reunion are coming in; as a matter of fact, I received the first one about three days after I received the Bulletin which had the Reservation Form. It promises to be another outstanding reunion — do not miss it! And meanwhile, if you have not done so, send in your dues for the current year, 1995-96. The Regular Dues are \$10.00, the Auxiliary \$5.00, and any donations to our Postage/Bulletin Fund will be appreciated. Make checks payable to the 69th Infantry Division Association.

OLD DUES YEAR

1995-1996

August 1, 1995 to July 31, 1996

NEW DUES YEAR!

1996-1997

August 1, 1996 to July 31, 1997

If you haven't paid your dues for 1995-1996, then you might as well send in for both years as our current dues notice is up at the end of July!

Keep the Bulletin Coming!

Notice to all 69ers - WE NEED BULLETIN MATERIAL!

Come on fellows, send in your stories and memories from your infantry days. Send us a story about the closest call you had. Or perhaps the funniest thing that happened to you when you were in the service.

If you want to see more articles on your particular unit, then send them in. All of the material you see printed in the bulletin is sent to us by you, the members. We do not single out or show preference to any particular unit. It is just that some of the units send in material and others don't.

Also, if you have old newspaper articles from the 40's or even from the Stars and Stripes, send those in. They make excellent reading. We are waiting to hear from you, so don't disappoint us.

In order to keep up the Bulletin, we need to hear from you for **YOU ARE THE BULLETIN!**

A SPECIAL NOTE FROM YOUR EDITORS: DON'T FORGET TO PUT YOUR NAMES ON THE BACKS OF YOUR PHOTOS SO WE KNOW WHO TO CREDIT AND WHO TO RETURN THEM TO. THANK YOU!

69th Infantry Division 49th Annual Reunion

461st AAA BN. - 661st TD BN. -
777th TANK BN.

AUGUST 18TH TO 25TH, 1996

**HYATT REGENCY
WOODFIELD HOTEL**

SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS

Ernest H. and Mary Krause, Chairpersons
444 Pioneer Drive, Addison, Illinois 60101
Telephone: 708/543-6811



SCHAUMBURG (CHICAGO) welcomes the 69th Infantry Division to their 49th Reunion. The Hyatt Regency Hotel is located at the crossroads of Route 53 (I290) and the Northwest tollway (I90), 15 minutes west of O'Hare International Airport, 35 minutes from Chicago's loop and the great Magnificent Mile (Michigan Avenue). The hotel has a tempting array of dining and gourmet food. It is located across from the Woodfield Shopping Center, the world's largest, with a free shuttle bus to the shopping center.

Golf will be at Poplar Creek Golf Course. Chicago abounds in many attractions including: The Chicago White Sox and the Chicago Cubs, The beautiful Arlington Race Track, Grand Victoria Gambling Boat and many restaurants.

Our tour committee has selected an excellent tour agenda for our reunion. It would be impossible to cover all the exciting sights in a short week. So you don't miss out, come early, bring your smiles, and we will have a "HOT TIME IN THE OLD TOWN."

Transportation from Airport

For transportation by limousine to or from the O'Hare International Airport, call *My Chauffer* at 1-800-824-5055 to reserve a personalized, on time pick up (\$17.00 per person each way). Make reservations in advance upon arrival, pick up luggage, then call 1-800-244-6120. The hotel has no shuttle bus service.

TOUR HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 1996 SCHAUMBURG REUNION

TUESDAY, AUGUST 20th

9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Shop in the quaint village of Long Grove. This village was settled in the early 1800's and is now a crossroads of unique shops and restaurants housed in historic landmarks or new buildings conforming to the architecture of the period. Lunch on your own. Then on to the Chicago Botanic Gardens, where over twenty spectacular display gardens offer something for everyone. Everywhere you look, from the Water Fall Garden to the English Walled Garden, the glory of plant life at its peak awaits you. A tram ride of the gardens is included.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21st

9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Cruise the lake front and see Chicago from a unique viewpoint and enjoy the commentary. Lunch included. Enjoy a live floor show and dance band on the Spirit Of Chicago. After the cruise visit the newly renovated Navy Pier. View the Crystal Garden, ride the 150 ft. ferris wheel or the gigantic carousel. Free performances of music, comedy and mime.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21st

6:45 p.m. to 10:45 pm.

Come to the speakeasy for an Italian feast and great entertainment. Funny mobsters, gorgeous flappers, a hot jazz band and a great meal made by da Mayors mudda! Singing and dancing to the music of Cole Porter, George Gershwin and Duke Ellington. Experience the 20's Chicago style.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 22nd

9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Chicago Tour "IT'S A WONDERFUL TOWN." A tour of the Loop and Michigan Avenue will be narrated by a professional tour guide and will include scheduled stops. Time will be allowed for shopping and lunch (on your own) on the Magnificent Mile or a trip to the top of the John Hancock Building.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 23rd

9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Journey to nearby Cantigny, the magnificent estate of Colonel Robert McCormick, the former editor and publisher of the Chicago Tribune. Visit the formal gardens and the Georgian mansion. Then take a memorial tour through the "THE BIG RED ONE," First Division Museum, a new state of the art facility which portrays the division's history since 1917. You will see interactive displays, videos, exhibits and experience the sights and sounds of division life at such places as Cantigny, France, Omaha Beach and a jungle in Vietnam.

REUNION COMMITTEE

Ernest Krause, Chairman

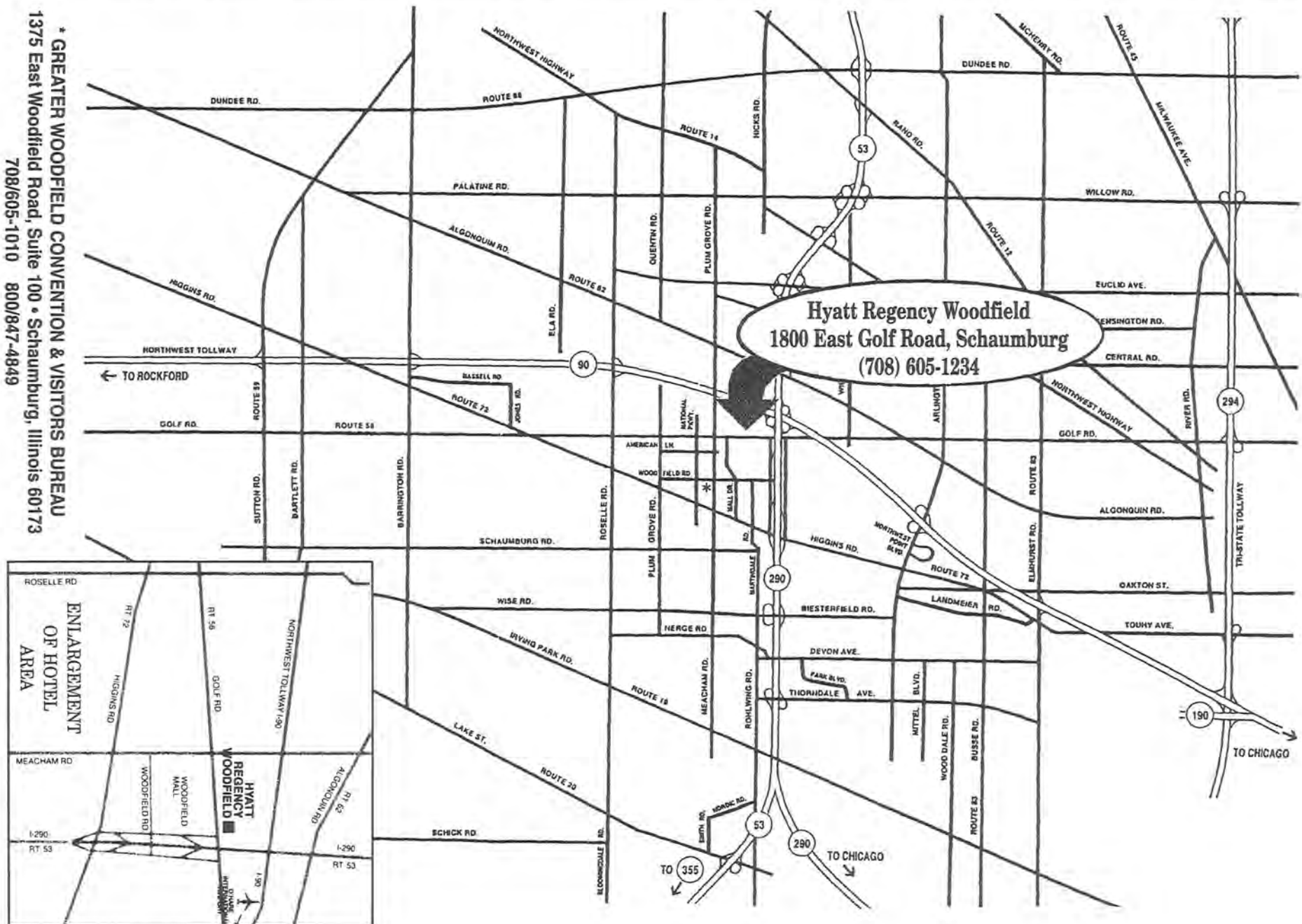
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Well folks, looks like we goofed it again!

In the last issue of the bulletin, we published an article in the Editor's column sent in by **Leon Ebert**. It was an article that he wrote and had published in his local newspaper entitled Food for Thought. All in all, his article was in praise of the National Rifle Association. We only reprinted the article he sent and expressed no opinion on it in one way or another.

By publishing Leon's article, we in no way intended to project the idea that we endorse the NRA. We received several letters from 69ers who were upset with us for reprinting his article. We also received letters from some fellows who stand behind Leon's beliefs. Whatever.

We apologize to those who were upset by our publishing this article. In no way do we state or have we ever stated that we endorse the beliefs of every one or any one of our members.

We have, over the years, received many letters from many members about many, many articles. When we print articles about the happenings in Germany - for example, an article that concerned some of the controversial events that took place in France, then we receive letters from members stating that we are against and hate the French. When we cover news on some of the events that took place at the Concentration Camps, we receive letters stating that we are insensitive to the Jews. When we talk about the actions of the Russian soldiers, as many of you have reported in your memoirs, we receive letters from members of Russian descent saying that we are out to make all Russians look like barbaric monsters.

When we publish articles about simple things such as the Camp Shelby museum, there are those members who don't think we should endorse such a thing as a museum commemorating World War II. When we published articles about donating money for our 69th Memorial at Shelby, and especially the Memorial Park on the Elbe River, there were also those of you who thought that had no place in the bulletin, stating that we should not fraternize with Germans in any way. But there are those members who made friends of German soldiers over the years and they brought this idea to life. We could go on and on.

For those of you who would like to know, each time we print a member's recollection of a certain battle, sure enough we get many letters stating that that member sent us "lies" concerning that battle and how could we publish such a thing when it was actually their unit that won the war and that particular battle. It never fails. And then there is the issue of "who was first to meet the Russians." This is an ongoing issue. It always brings in a flood of letters attacking us for rewriting history. Hey, we aren't writing this stuff, you are, 69ers, collectively!

We apologize to all those that we have offended over the years. We just can't please everybody. If we tried not to offend anyone in any way, there would be no bulletin!

All in all, the point is this. This bulletin is a collection of the thoughts, ideas, memories and views of members of the 69th. It is a place for you to send in a part of yourself and share it with other 69ers. Our job is to collect this information and send it on to you in the best possible context that we can. We do our best, and we apologize again. We in no way meant to offend anyone and we never have. We are not expert World War II historians nor are we political mental giants. We are just a couple of dedicated 69ers that years ago were willing to take on the task of seeing to it that all members of the 69th were able to keep

in touch with each other. And quite a task it is! One thing though members, we do believe in freedom of the press!

Below is an article sent in by **Franklin Haught**. Once again, we don't mean to offend anyone by publishing this, but since we inadvertently did offend some members by publishing Leon Ebert's article, we feel that it is only fair that we also publish the other side of this most controversial coin. Here we go . . . again! . . .

LEARN FROM HISTORY

Each time I have read a piece praising the National Rifle Association, it is always preceded by an anti-government statement. It is their jaded membership drive slogan (Join us to stop those people in Washington from taking away our right to own and bear arms.) Ours is the greatest government in the world, warts and all, so instead of speaking ill of it by randomly citing "The Government," "The People in Washington," cite if you can, the name of any person or persons who have proposed an amendment to the Constitution that would take away any of our freedoms including our right to own and bear arms. I, for one, do not believe it has ever happened.

CAUSES AND EFFECTS

This kind of anti-government rhetoric has spawned the kooks running around in the woods spewing anti-government garbage and calling themselves the militia, the freemen, etc. In part it has encouraged the terrorists, the Waco pedophile, the Oklahoma tragedy, and on and on. Worst of all in my mind it lends credence to the skin-heads and neo-nazi movement. This brings to mind the statement, "We answered the call fifty years ago, to fight for the right to own and bear arms." All the glory and praise for this goes to our forefathers who fought, shed blood and died TO GIVE US THESE RIGHTS that are guaranteed by our Constitution. Fifty years ago we went to war to put Tojo and Hitler back in the manure pile where they belonged. Don't rewrite history, learn from it.

LEARN FROM HISTORY

Let's look at some history from just before World War II. Dillinger, Baby Faced Nelson, Pretty Boy Floyd, Machine Gun Kelly and others of their ilk, were terrorizing America with sub-machine guns. These guns were banned and the problem was soon under control. No law abiding citizen lost any of his rights.

ASSAULT WEAPONS

Like sub-machine guns, assault rifles are not made for hunting or sport. They are produced for mass killing of human beings. The arms and munitions dealers today are the largest unregulated organizations in the world. They, along with their radical spokespersons such as today's NRA, have an agenda based on the almighty dollar to put in the hands of every man, woman and child, regardless of age, an assault weapon. I believe there are just two words that cause any fear to gun dealers, "World Peace."

LEARN FROM RECENT HISTORY

In every state of our great nation a large majority of loyal, patriotic Americans, with many hours, day, months and years of sweat and tears, petitioned their legislators to bring about a Constitutional change to protect "Old Glory." Although it was passed in every state, this noble and worthy cause was defeated in Congress by three votes. And as you know, this cause is not dead yet. Can anyone imagine in your wildest dreams, a petition to take away any of our freedoms getting passed in a single state.

Thank you Clarence and Earl for all your dedication and hard work in producing this great 69th Bulletin. I look forward to each new issue.

Franklin Haught - Company A, 271st Infantry
27277 N. Lake Pleasant Road, Peoria, Arizona 85382-9724

Dottie and Me



Earl and Dottie Witzleb, Jr.

Earl and Dottie Witzleb, Jr., *Bulletin Coordinating Manager*
Post Office Box 69
Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069
or
R.D. #3, Box 477
Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606
Telephone: 412/455-2901
(Evenings after 7:00 p.m. and Weekends)
Exit 9 on the Pennsylvania Turnpike

We attended the Tri-State weekend in Monroe, Michigan and had a good time with all attending. Some of the regular attendees for various reasons, were unable to attend this year. They were missed. We hope that next year we will see some of you. We then went to Bay City to visit with some relatives. We were both surprised how flat the land was. I guess we think every state is hilly like Pennsylvania. On our way home, we visited Frankenmuth. This is a Bavarian settlement in Michigan. We also visited Brunners Christmas Village. This is a 4-acre building with all types of Christmas decorations from all over the world. We also visited Huckleberry Railroad along with 3000 third and fourth graders on a field trip.

Now for the reunion. Please get your reservations in soon. There are some who do not make advanced reservations and when the events are all booked up, they get upset. An advanced reservation will take care of this.

Please, also get some army stories and pictures that you feel will make a good article, and send them to me or Clarence. Please remember to put your name and address on the backs of your photos so we can return them. A return address label is a good way to do this.

Following are a couple of letters that we received. Hope to see you all in Schaumburg.

* * * * *

Mr. name is **John Brockwell**. I am a friend of **Ray Sancoucy**. He was telling me about the 69th reunion. I didn't know it existed until last fall.

I am sending my information on to Mr. Kurtzman tonight. I am enclosing a check with this letter. I hope this is the proper way to do it.

I would like to receive information about the reunion in Schaumburg. I plan on attending.

I was a truck driver in the Anti-Tank Company, 3rd Platoon (I think), 272nd Regiment. My truck number was AT 12. I don't know if I will recognize anyone, but I will try.

John Brockwell
4060 South Unity Road
Polo, Illinois 61064-9307

Thanks for the good work that the leadership of the 69th Association is doing. I think that the 69th Bulletin is outstanding!

David Allen
Company G, 271st Infantry
P.O. Box 414
Hartsville, South Carolina 29551

- In Memoriam - Victor Ostrow



Ted Schiffner, Victor Ostrow, Olga Ostrow, Ursula Schiffner in 1987 in Lexington, Kentucky.

It is with deep sorrow that we found out about the passing of our dear comrade, **Victor Ostrow**. Victor was a member of Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 273rd Infantry Regiment.

He was one of our faithful. He always attended our mini and divisional reunions. He always wrote such good reviews for the bulletin, especially after a reunion. Without Victor, many times there would have been no report at all. He was always there when you needed him. He will be missed by all of us now that he has gone to the House not built by human hands. God will surely be good to him, until we all meet again.

Submitted by,
Ex. Sgt. Ted Schiffner
1825 Spring Ridge Lane
Lancaster, Pennsylvania 17603

49TH ANNUAL REUNION
August 18 to 25, 1996
Hyatt Regency Woodfield
Schaumburg, Illinois
Try to Make It!
A Good Time Guaranteed!

69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 1996 49th ANNUAL REUNION

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

Hyatt Regency Woodfield
SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 18th thru AUGUST 25th, 1996

SEND THIS RESERVATION FORM TO THE HYATT REGENCY WOODFIELD

Reservations:

HYATT REGENCY WOODFIELD
1800 EAST GOLF ROAD
SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS 60173

Reservations: 1/800-233-1234
Hotel: 708/605-1234

HOUSING: Please reserve one of the following:

Single: \$71.00 _____ Double: \$71.00 _____ Triple: \$71.00 _____ Quad: \$71.00 _____
(Add 10% tax to room rate)

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) _____, August _____, 1996. (Check in after 3:00 P.M.)

I / We plan to depart (day) _____, August _____, 1996. (Check out time - 12:00 noon)

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 HYATT REGENCY WOODFIELD OR Major Credit Card and Date of Expiration:

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

Credit Card Name _____ Number _____ Expires _____

I authorize the HYATT REGENCY WOODFIELD to make charges to 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 name, address and telephone number of the person filling out this form.

A block of rooms has been reserved at the Hyatt Regency Woodfield until **July 18th, 1996**. Your reservation must be made prior to this date and before the group block is filled to assure room accommodations and the preferred rate. Reservations accepted after July 18th, 1996 are subject to availability. Rooms may still be available after this date but not necessarily at the preferred rate. All reservations are subject to state sales tax and are held until 6:00 p.m. unless held by credit card, check or money order for one night's room and tax. Reservations not canceled by 6:00 p.m. the day of arrival are subject to a one night room and tax charge. Early check-ins subject to room availability. Bed type provided based on availability at time of arrival. We will make every effort to honor your request, but cannot guarantee bed type.

69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION 1996

49th ANNUAL REUNION

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

HYATT REGENCY WOODFIELD - SCHAUMBURG, ILLINOIS

AUGUST 18th thru AUGUST 25th, 1996

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 Schaumburg, Illinois during the week of August 18th thru 25th, 1996 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: _____

Daily Events

	Per Person	Number Persons	Amount
Registration: Monday thru Friday , Schaumburg Room 9:00 to Noon and 1:00 to 4:00 p.m. For Saturday, Check the Bulletin Board.		NO CHARGE	
Sunday, August 18th — Early Arrivals on your own.			
Monday, August 19th — Check Bulletin Board and Hospitality Room.			
Tuesday, August 20th — LONG GROVE AND CHICAGO BOTANICAL GARDENS - 9:00 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Lunch on your own.	\$ 15.00		\$
Wednesday, August 21st — LAKE MICHIGAN AND NAVY PIER - 9:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Lunch on The Spirit of Chicago.	\$ 42.00		\$
GANGSTERTOWN - 6:45 p.m. to 10:45 p.m., Dinner Show, Seating limited	\$ 43.00		\$
Thursday, August 22nd — CHICAGO CITY TOUR - 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Lunch on your own.	\$ 30.00		\$
EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING — 4:00 p.m.			
EARLY BIRD DINNER , Cash Bar-6:30, Dinner 7 to 9 p.m., Ticket Required	\$ 35.00		\$
Friday, August 23rd — CANTIGNY TOUR - 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Lunch on your own.	\$ 12.00		\$
GOLF TOURNAMENT — 8:30 a.m. Check Registration for details.	\$ 38.00		\$
PX BEER PARTY — 9:00 p.m. to 12:00 a.m., Ticket Required	\$ 5.00		\$
Saturday, August 24th			
COFFEE AND DANISH - 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.			
GENERAL MEETING - 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 Noon			
CASH BAR - 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Banquet Ticket Required)			
MEMORIAL SERVICE - 7:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.			
DINNER DANCE BANQUET - 7:30 p.m. to 12:00 a.m.	\$ 33.00		\$
Sunday, August 25th — FAREWELL BREAKFAST - 7:00 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.	\$ 14.00		\$
Y'ALL COME BACK			
Replacement Cost for Lost or Broken Permanent Badges	\$ 4.00		\$
SUPPORT YOUR HOSPITALITY ROOM: DONATIONS PLEASE!			\$
DUES New Dues Year - August 1, 1996 to July 31, 1997			
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. NO CHARGE CARDS ACCEPTED FOR EVENTS.

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

Permanent badges will 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.

David Allen writes . . .

David L. Allen

Company G, 271st Infantry

P.O. Box 414

Hartsville, South Carolina 29551-0414

Dear Clarence,

I received my copy of the most recent issue of the 69th Division Association Bulletin several days ago and as always, I enjoyed it. You and **Earl Witzleb** are to be commended for your efforts in putting the publication together.

I was particularly interested in the report of the reunion held last October in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I noticed on the list of attendees the names of several people from my old unit, Company G, 271st, that I remembered. I would have attended the reunion since I live in South Carolina, but a previous commitment to a meeting in Vermont prevented my attendance. I was a member of Company G, 271st Infantry from January 1944 until December 1944. I was one of the buck sergeants that were sent to the 83rd Division in Belgium as a replacement. We were stationed at Winchester barracks prior to my leaving Co. G. I had a very short stay with the 83rd. I was wounded in Belgium on January 17, 1945 and sent back to England and from there back to the United States in April 1945. I have maintained contact with several members of Co. G. over the years, namely **Dave Scatena**, **Ed Bayus** and **Bill McCague**. I have seen **Scatena** and **McCague** once each since December 1944 at Winchester.

The main purpose of this letter is to tell an interesting story that has just recently occurred in my life concerning a former member of Company G. I was in Technical Sergeant **John Aichele's** platoon. The last time I saw him was in Winchester, England in December 1944. I remember how badly he hated to see some of "his men" taken and sent to Belgium as replacements rather than going with the group that had trained together so long. I learned through contacts in Company G after the war ended that **Sergeant Aichele** had been awarded a battlefield commission. In December 1973, I read in the obituary column of one of our large state newspapers the account of a **Colonel John Aichele's** death. I believe the account listed him as retired. The account said enough about him that I was reasonably sure that that must be the former **T/Sgt. Aichele** that I had known and served with. I waited until March 1974 and wrote to Mrs. Aichele in Columbia, South Carolina whose address had been given in the obituary notice. I explained to her my interest and raised the question as to whether or not the notice did actually refer to the person that I had known. I wrote the letter fully aware of the possibility that I might not get any reply and I could easily understand that. I kept a copy of my letter in my files. I had no reply to my letter until February 1996. I had a very nice letter from John Aichele's daughter who told me that the person to whom I referred was indeed the **John Aichele** that I had known. It is indeed a small world. The daughter lives very close to where my only daughter lives in Irmo, South Carolina. We have exchanged a couple of letters and photos and will probably see each other when my wife and I visit our daughter on some future visit. John's daughter's letter to me was a lovely one and also very gracious and I appreciated it very much. I felt that this story was too good not to be shared and John's daughter agreed.

The thing that made this incident so unusual to me was the fact that I remembered that he was a Long Island native and to see that name in a South Carolina paper, it just didn't figure that it would be the same man, but then the obit stated that he was a Long Island native. Evidently, he must have made the Army a career, possibly serving at Fort Jackson, South Carolina near Columbia, and then retired there.

Here are a few photos from my Shelby days.



Ed Bayus and David Allen at Camp Shelby



David Allen and David Scatena taken in April 1994 at Allen's home.



Camp Shelby in 1944

Unfading Memories

By: Lt. Colonel R. C. Trimble
2809 Prince George Road
Hattiesburg, Mississippi 39401

It was a very cold and bitter winter. But true to their dedication to Freedom, Liberty, and Justice, America's young soldiers were there. Without doubt they were America's "Creme de la Creme." And they were there putting their lives on the line. It was the latter part of January 1945 and the place I found myself in was a war-torn town named Forges Les Eaux in the northwestern part of France. It was our unit's first stop after crossing the English Channel. I was a member of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division. I was assigned to Division Headquarters, duty with the AG Section, as OIC of the Officers Section. In December, while the Division elements were stationed in England, several hundred men from the Division's three Infantry Regiments were mustered as replacements and shipped to the front line in Belgium. They were reinforcements for the beleaguered troops in the fighting surrounding Bastogne. Their support along with reinforcements from other units proved an effective defensive action against the Germans in what was later to be eternally referred to as "The Battle of the Bulge."

At this time neither by the grape vine nor official word was there any confirmation of the status of the onslaught of the Battle of the Bulge that had taken place at Bastogne in the middle of December. The snow covered all the ground around our pup tents. What strange force motivated me to pitch my tent outside the French office building escapes me. As I reflect on that hostile period of time some 50 years ago, I recollect some of my thoughts of the time. I remember thinking that my presence there in January 1945, when viewed by the overlords of time, must be seen as a re-run of 1917-1919. Back then it started with the out-cry of the French proclaiming "The Yanks are coming," and later changing to "The Yanks are here!" while back home was heard the cry of our loved ones, "Over there, Over there!" As for my personal loved ones back home in Greene County Mississippi, my wife had given birth in the Army Hospital at Camp Shelby, Mississippi to a baby daughter on 11 January, 1945; though I did not learn of the blessed event until sometime around the following Mother's Day. And then in that frigid Yule Tide season of 1944, I found myself acrimoniously thinking, "Over here, Over here!"

That by and large wars are fought by young men is an undeniable historical fact. The living proof can be testified to by any of the dwindling number of the remaining million young Americans who went "Over there!", and are now in the 70 to 80 year age bracket with the majority of them holding that title of deprivation referred to as the "notch babies."

As I lay heavily laden in Army wool clothing covered with several layers of more Army wool (Nylon, Dacron and Polyester had not made the scene yet), I cannot seriously claim to have suffered any great degree of physical discomfort. But I know now it was not the amount of covering that made the going bearable, it was the vigorous stamina possessed by all living creatures as they reach the apex of their maturing period in the cycle of their lives. So it was as I can best recall that I must have slept sound for several hours. I had bedded down around midnight after completing my assigned tasks. Other soldiers

had slipped into their tents several hours earlier. The Division had landed in Normandy six months after "D" day and was now fighting its way through France, Belgium and eventually would end up at Leipzig, Germany. The Division Headquarters occupied a large building which had been recently vacated by some type of German Military Unit which was part of the German Army of Occupation. No heat, no water and no light. But at least we had walls to shelter our military gear and office equipment (Mimeograph machines and vintage 1940 manual typewriters) from the blistering cold winter storms which now prevailed throughout most of the area of the European Theatre of Operations.

It had been perfect weather for the infiltration of German units into the Battle of the Bulge area. Shortly after midnight the snowfall must have increased intensely and by 5:00 a.m. you had to dig yourself out through the front flap of the pup tent. At early dawn I was awakened by muffled yet audible clanking sounds of aluminum canteens and tin mess gear. The deep blanket of soft snow covering was a natural sound barrier to noise. Even the sound of nearby truck motors seemed to be far off. The clanking noise was made by some of the men sitting around in 10 to 12 inches of snow. They were headed for the mess tent. I did not have to get up this early I said to myself. I felt secure because we had been briefed the night before by G-2 (Intelligence) and were told that the front line was several hundred miles away. It was the weather that was holding the progress of the Fighting 69th Infantry Division forward elements.

Being below the average height (5' 5") and weighing 120 lbs., was to my advantage in that I could shed or put on my army outer garments while remaining like a cocoon inside the confines of my zipped-up GI sleeping bag. So it was that I got dressed and it was then I realized I had made a serious mistake. My combat boots!...., I forgot to bring them inside my sleeping bag when I bedded down. I found them outside within arms reach, but they were frozen stiff. The real problem was lacing them up. The moisture saturated laces were stiff as flat strips of metal which tended to crack but not break apart.

By the time I surfaced from my pup tent several of the men had returned from the mess tent. Some with their mess gear needing to be run through a wash again. A couple of enterprising men from the AG section had built an open fire with strewn wood debris (surrounding wood structures were in shambles thus firewood was no problem) and placed a 10 gallon can over it to melt some snow to get water. Surprise!...., though the container was topped with snow when it melted down there was less than half an inch of water at the bottom of the container. As I walked off in the direction of the mess tent I heard some of the men say, "How could such a large mass of snow produce such a negligible amount of water. Surely the container must have a leak." They were not convinced that the result of their efforts was physically correct. To this day I can see the look on the face of one of the soldiers who was from Brooklyn who kept saying, "You Guys see this, you Guys see this, I don't believe it."

At the mess tent I was asked by one of my fellow officers, "Trimble, why did you decide to sleep outside?" I do not remember what my response was, but to this day, hard as I may try, I fail to find the true answer to this question. It is said that you solve your problems in life in the manner you learn to do during your formative years.

(Continued on Page 14)

UNFADABLE MEMORIES

(Continued from Page 13)

It is also believed that our current behavior pattern is subconsciously guided by our past experiences. If that is true there may be some credibility to my thinking that it was due to my childhood experiences that made me choose to sleep outdoors on that bitterly cold night in January 1945. During my childhood from the age of 6 to 12 I lived alone with my Father (Alex Trimble 1859-1933) who was past 60. He passed away in 1933 when he was 73 and I was 13 years old. He was a retired Texas lawman with an inborn passionate lust for the outdoors. As a fearless young Texas Peace Officer and later a career horseback US Border Patrol and Emigration Inspector traveling along the Rio Grande River, you could rightly say he lived in the saddle most of his life. Climate in this southwest Texas region made it possible and feasible to live in an outdoor life setting during most of the year. I especially remember vividly those peaceful and clear Texas nights when we would gaze up at the Milky Way, the Big Dipper and the vast array of surrounding stars, while I listened to my Father relate to me many tales of life in Texas during his youth. I would soon fall asleep, listening to the distant haunting howl of a coyote, as we were bedded down in the open prairie after a long day's javelin (Wild Boar) hunt.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lt. Col. R. C. Trimble is a retired military officer with 28 years experience in Military Army Administration. He was an instructor at the Army's Adjutant School. His military service included WWII in Europe, Korean War, Dominican Republic involvement and the Vietnam conflict. Following his engagement in these hostile periods of military service he served as a Federal Auditor/Investigator for the U.S. Department of Commerce. After Federal retirement he served as Fiscal Officer for a Mississippi state Agency and retired in 1994. He devotes his time to church and veterans' civic activities and is a member of the Mississippi State Guard.

Anyone interested in a Caribbean Cruise Tour in the Spring of 1997?

Some 69ers have shown an interest in a Caribbean Cruise Tour or as we will call it, the 69th INFANTRY DIVISION ROYAL CRUISE.

This cruise could be a six, seven or four day tour. We feel that the seven day tour would be best. Two days at sea and five nights visiting the interesting and relaxing sights of San Juan, Haiti, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands and the Bahamas.

THINK ABOUT IT!!

IF INTERESTED, PLEASE CALL

BILL BESWICK at 804-843-2696 or write to
P.O. Box 576, West Point, Virginia 23181-0576
for more information.

NOW, GIVE IT SOME MORE THOUGHT. We won't be able to do things like this much longer.

Small World for Atwood and Tounger



John Tounger and Eldon Atwood holding up the original program for the "Follies of '46."

Eldon M. Atwood

2909 First Avenue, No. 4-B
San Diego, California 92103
Telephone: 619/291-5097

Enclosed is a picture of myself and **John Tounger** taken this past week (April of 1996) while we were attending the spring round-up of the California Western Chapter of the 69th Infantry Division at Palm Desert, California.

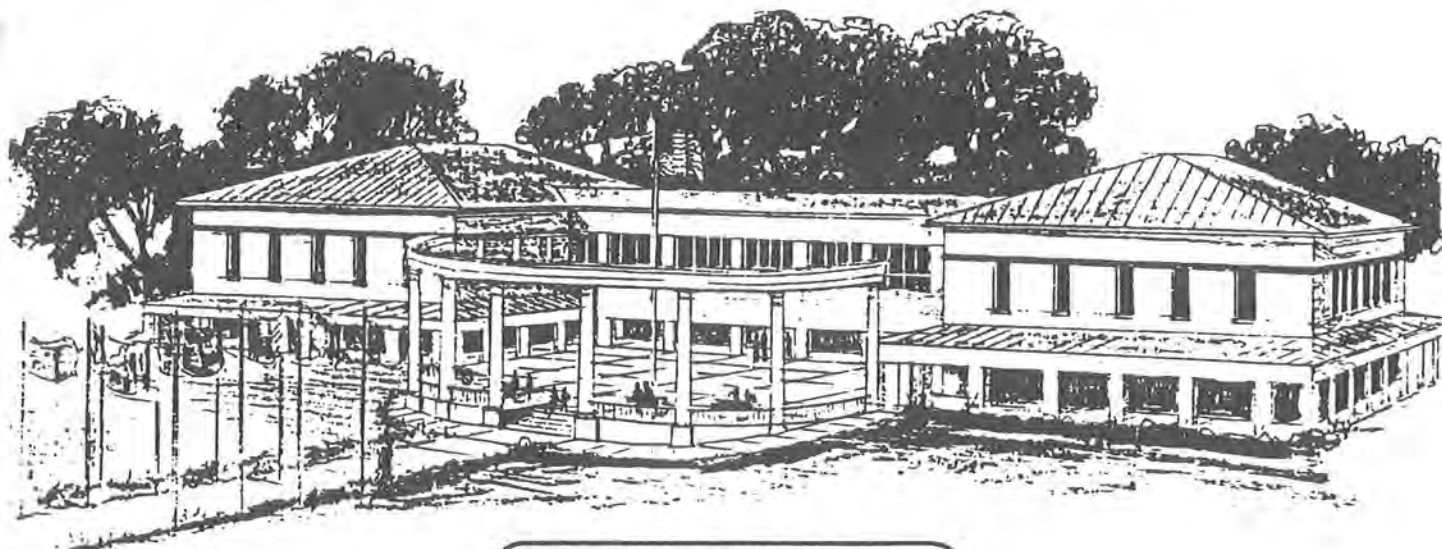
Just a week prior to our meeting I accidentally ran across a program of the "FOLLIES OF '46," which was a production produced and staged by the men of the 18th Ordnance M.M. Company for our New Year's Eve party at Vegesack, Germany, solely for our own men in our own club.

However, the show became so popular with the G.I.'s throughout the area, that subsequent productions were performed to an enthusiastic response.

The enclosed photograph shows **Tounger** and myself holding the original program for the Command Performance for Thursday, January 10th, 1946, at the Castle Theatre at Einswarden, Germany.

Amazingly enough, although **John Tounger** and I have been friends and members in the California Western Chapter for a number of years, and toured Europe with the 69th in April of 1995, neither one of us was aware the other fellow was attached to the 18th Ordnance M.M. Company, nor that we both had appeared and performed in the "FOLLIES" until I ran across the program some fifty-plus years later, which goes to prove, it's a really small world after all.

Proposed New Museum for Camp Shelby, Mississippi



GODFREY, BASSETT,
KUYKENDALL & CAMPBELL

73rd FA BDE	99th DIV	94th DIV	85th DIV	63rd DIV	43rd DIV	442nd RCT	37th DIV	38th DIV	69th DIV	31st DIV	65th DIV
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Memorial Drive

OTHERS DESIRING SPACE FOR THEIR MONUMENTS

Medal of Honor Assn.
81st Chemical Mortar Battalion
135th Medical Regiment
166th RCT
1101st Engineer Group
568th AAA Battalion

Dutch Flyer Squadron
POW
American Hostages
USO
Holocaust
Red Cross

Navy Units
Marine Corps Units
Coast Guard Units
Army Air Corps
USAF
Purple Heart Assn.

American Legion
VFW
World War I Vets
Sons of Confederate Vets
Disabled American Vets
Others

This Bill will be placed on the Docket in the Senate as an appropriate bill. This method of raising funds for our new building will not affect the National Guard's annual budget, but will be an additional appropriation. We plan to submit the same bill in the House as a Bond Bill, this way we think we will have two shots at getting one approved.

SENATE BILL NO. _____

AN ACT MAKING AN APPROPRIATION TO THE MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD FOR CONSTRUCTION OF A MEMORIAL DRIVE AND MUSEUM BUILDINGS AT CAMP SHELBY, FOR FISCAL YEAR 1996; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Mississippi:

SECTION 1. The following sum, or so much thereof as may be necessary, is hereby appropriated out of any money in the State General Fund not otherwise

appropriated, to the Mississippi National Guard for construction of a memorial drive and building at Camp Shelby to house the existing Armed Forces Museum located at such training facility, for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 1995, and ending June 30, 1996 \$2,500,000.00.

SECTION 2. The money herein appropriated shall be paid by the State Treasurer out of any money in the State General Fund not otherwise appropriated, upon warrants issued by the State Fiscal Office; and the State Fiscal Office shall issue his warrants upon requisitions signed by the proper person, officer or officers, in the manner provided by law.

SECTION 3. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after July 1, 1995.

NOTE: All are supportive and the possibility of getting it passed looks good.

Information Concerning the Armed Forces Museum

We are currently enjoying our Armed Forces Museum located in Building #350 and we are pleased with the increased visitation and overwhelming acceptance by the public. We are proud of what we have accomplished in a relatively short period of time. However, it is apparent to your museum Board we are outgrowing this facility and require more space for memorabilia and artifacts promised us. Another problem with which we are continually confronted is the need for an adequate climate controlled storage area. We have visited similar museums in several states and find that all admit they do not have adequate storage space.

The objective of your Armed Forces Museum Foundation is to construct a permanent state of the art museum with facilities second to none. Here, our military history will be preserved for posterity while serving as a tool to educate our youth on the realities of war. It will always remind them of their brave ancestors who answered the call to duty. With very little publicity, we have enjoyed about 15,000 recorded visitors during the past year. With about 250,000 living veterans in our state alone, visitation would exceed all expectations with adequate facilities. The foundation's purpose is to educate the public while promoting patriotism and pride in this nation's military accomplishments and is dedicated to every veteran that has or will serve our country in all branches of the Armed Services.

Exhibits will illustrate all phases of world conflicts; wars and skirmishes, holocaust, POW's, Atomic Warfare, Space Exploration, plus history of units of all branches of service and the heroic efforts of individuals to keep our country free. There are currently 9,000 items on inventory to be displayed plus thirty outside vehicles. Thirty more are in storage awaiting renovation. Memorial Drive has six recently installed Division Monuments in place with possibilities of twenty more. The 69th Division has over 7,000 members.

Before a spade is turned we plan to have commitments from all units, organizations and services desiring to participate. We plan to establish priorities for space to follow a sequence: units that trained at Shelby, followed by units that were stationed in this area but no longer have a facility they can call home. Two famous Divisions have retired their colors to our museum already. Some units have trained at more than one installation and have retired their colors to another location but will desire to participate because so many of their members have roots at Camp Shelby. Major branches of service will be provided space as required, more history will be provided in the museum's library.

This rendering and suggested floor plan is to inform the public of the Board's intentions to raise funds for a state of the art museum. The Board has selected a site on the high ground behind the monuments now in place on Memorial Drive. Before any funds are spent on construction, your Board plans to employ a nationally recognized Museum Architect and Planner to advise us on aspects of this project. Time frames for completion will be announced at that time.

If funding dictates, this project can be constructed as three separate units. That is: Building "A" (approx. 9500 sq. ft.) and Building "B" could be the first units, the two could handle the total function. The Administration Building "B" would be the second unit followed by Building "C," the second display building. Building "B" referred to as the Administration Building will include facilities for office space, rest rooms, gift shop, food concession stand, theater, display or renovation room. The entire rear section of Building "B" will be a huge climate controlled storage area. However, it would be desirable to construct the total facility as one project but funding is the key.

The exterior is planned to be done in "Old Brick," the interior would be most impressive in "Old Brick" also, however concrete masonry in attractive patterns would suffice.

The total structure will be wall bearing with steel and concrete second floors. The roof framing of the display buildings will be steel trusses strong enough to withstand strong hurricane force winds and design reminiscent of the military buildings existing. The roof will be standing seam metal of commercial nature. We will plan to have nothing combustible.

The open plan with mezzanine will allow for mounted manikins with flags and guidons. The open area heights will accommodate suspended displays such as a PL-19-A, L-19 Aircrafts, etc. The planning is based on the museum at Jackson Barracks in New Orleans.

The soil at Camp Shelby is sand-clay and will allow for shallow spread footings. The mild climate requires only that the bearing be approximately one and one half feet below the finished grade. Drainage is excellent on this site. Access will allow work throughout wet seasons. Building costs average about twenty percent less than in Northern States.

The colonnade will tie the three buildings together and give the entire complex a "Belonging" atmosphere to visitors. The colonnade recalls the old headquarters buildings of WWII. The small windows are for general lighting only. Light tends to fade color in fabrics and darken wood. The Arcade will shade the windows while allowing covered circulation around the perimeter. Tanks, Artillery and other heavy items of equipment can be placed adjacent to the structure. The Arcade will allow some viewing during inclement weather.

Some of the advantages of the Camp Shelby site is that it is on State land, eliminating that cost. Camp Shelby has full time base security, maintenance and utilities on post. It is envisioned that this museum alone with the many camp items of interest will provide a total days family visit.

When visiting the current museum in Building #350, as you enter or leave the foyer we request you observe the excellent rendering done by an architectural firm in Jackson; Godfrey, Bassett, Kuykendall and Campbell. This firm has been working several years with your Board with our future in mind. The plans submitted herewith answer the needs for our museum for decades to come. The Board's plans for expansion will be included in future projects as needs arise.

Camp Shelby Armed Forces Museum Foundation

Anyone wishing to join the Armed Forces Museum Foundation can write to:

Armed Forces Museum Foundation
Attn.: MS-DSR-PA
Post Office box 5027
Jackson, Mississippi 39296-5027

They do need donations for the proposed new museum but also, you can write to them in order to receive information if you would like to visit the museum. They also have memberships starting at \$10.00 per year. They have many artifacts from World War II, including vehicles, photos, etc. If you are looking for a vacation spot, this is the place!

Cold Prickles

Did you ever hear what porcupines do when trying to get through a severe winter? They huddle together for warmth. But there's a problem . . . After a while their sharp quills prick one another. So they pull away until they get deathly cold once again.

To survive they have to continuously keep adjusting their closeness and distance to keep from freezing and also from getting pricked by their fellow porcupines. The pain and comfort of one another is worth it for their survival.

Being an active member of the 69th Infantry Division Association often is like that also. We wanted to be active members but once we are close, we find that our individual personalities and temperaments cause friction - we prick one another.

There will always be pricks in our Association life - just as there are in our family at home. We can - not only *can* but we *must* learn to adjust to the irking personalities and idiosyncrasies that some of us have.

Pulling away - staying away from meetings - even for a short time like the porcupine when it was pricked, is not the answer.

The answer is to return to active participation in our 69th Division Association family. If we isolate ourselves - for whatever reason - our enthusiasm about our Association will eventually grow cold and be destroyed . . . frozen out like an unwise porcupine. Let us think of each "prick" as a challenge to prove our love for each other.

Let us try to adjust to the unique personalities that God has given to each one of us. We need each other for the survival as is given to each one of us. We need each other for the survival as a 69er and as the 69th Division Association. Is not the pain and the occasional prick more than offset by the comfort and warmth that we receive from the camaraderie and lasting friendships of being an active member of our beloved 69th Division Association. How about you?

REMEMBER THE PORCUPINE!

(Reprinted from 29th Infantry Division newsletter)

69th Infantry Division Elbe Memorial Fund Needs Your Help

Submitted by: **Edgar A. "Bud" Parsons**
Company A, 272nd Infantry
1913 South Lakeshore Drive
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514
Telephone: 919/942-5472

This is a plea from the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund for additional funds - hopefully \$1415; and a report on recent activities of the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Inc. It will be recalled that this fund was authorized at the General Membership meeting in Biloxi, Mississippi, and is not to use any monies from the Fighting 69th Infantry Division Association, but to obtain all financing from individual 69ers and others that may desire to memorialize the role of the 69th Infantry Division.

At the time Bill Beswick last requested funds through the BULLETIN, it was estimated that \$2000 was needed to terminate all 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Inc., activities. In response to that request, \$585 was received. The additional funds are needed primarily for facilitating the permanent display of the American flag on the Elbe River, as well as the casting and Elbe River emplacement of a bronze plaque, in English, German, and Russian that explicitly identifies the role of the 69th Infantry Division in the link-up.

None of the plaques at Torgau, for example, mention the 69th Infantry Division. The references are all to the "American" and "Allied" forces.

As you know from past reports, almost all of the funds raised so far have been expended on the sculpture, casting, and transportation of the huge (2 meters by 10 meters) bas relief on the Elbe River embankment stone wall of the First Link-Up Memorial Park in Strehla, Germany. Most of those costs were defrayed by the Russian and German Governments and some private corporations. The contribution from the 69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund amounted to substantially less than 10 per cent of the total cost.

Please help us keep our American flag flying on the banks of the Elbe River, and to permanently record, in bronze, and adjacent to that American flag, the role of the 69th Infantry Division in the April 25, 1945 link-up. Checks should be sent to:

69th Infantry Division Memorial Fund, Inc.
c/o William Beswick
Box 576
West Point, Virginia 23181

This is a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation.

Thank you for your time. We appreciate anything you can send along.



Who remembers this house in Torgau? Once Headquarters to 272nd

Sent By: Bill Beswick

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

Do you, by chance, recognize this house, front door and gramophone in these pictures?

They are still the same today as they were in April 1945, no changes - even to the marks below the door knob that were made when the door was broken open in 1945.

Members of the 272nd Regiment had their headquarters in this house in Torgau, with a large amount of wires coming out the front door. Herr Gunter Schone lives in this house today, and was a young boy of nine years old and lived there in 1945.

He recalls that the sixty-niners watered his mother's house plants and set his cousin's picture on the table.

Gunter is interested in learning if anyone is living today that stayed in his home in 1945 and may have some photos of his home from that time.

If you remember, please contact Gunter at:

Herr Gunter Schone
Ringstrasse 2, 04860
Torgau, Germany

or you can contact me at the above address.



An old English gramophone used by the 272nd Infantry Regiment and later by the Russians. Bought by Schone's parents in 1929.



ATTENTION:

Be sure to send your Bulletin material in on time so we can get the Bulletin to you on time!



Dottie Witzleb

THE AUXILIARY'S PAGE

by - **Dottie Witzleb**
Ladies Auxiliary Editor
 P.O. Box 69
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 or
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 Telephone: 810/357-4611

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 Davidsonville, Maryland 21035
 Telephone: (Please send to Dottie)

Gloria Czyzyk, Secretary
 30 Duke Drive
 New Hyde Park, New York 11040
 Telephone: (Please send to Dottie)

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

A Message from your Auxiliary President, Edith Chapman

Dear Ladies of the Auxiliary and Friends,

Time has arrived for all of us to be planning our trip to Schaumburg. I am looking forward to all the interesting places to shop, such as the quaint village of Long Grove and the big city of Chicago. There are several gardens to see on the sightseeing tours, such as Chicago's Botanical Gardens and Navy Pier's Crystal Gardens.

There are also several interesting places to visit, such as the top of the John Hancock Building, the estate of Colonel Robert McCormick - former editor of the Chicago Tribune, and the 1st Division Museum with the division's history since 1917.

I am planning a board meeting for 4:00 pm. on Thursday, August 22nd (the same time as the men's board meeting). The place will be posted on the bulletin board.

On Saturday morning, August 24th, our General Meeting starts at 9:00 a.m. Come and enjoy a continental breakfast. Each person is requested to bring a small exchange gift costing \$5.00 or less. We are looking forward to an interesting program planned by our hostess, Mary Krause. Don't forget to bring your lap robes. The size is 36 x45."

Please have your husband send in your dues of \$5.00.

I look forward to seeing all of you in August.

Edith Chapman
Ladies Auxiliary President

The following is a list of the Past Presidents of the Ladies Auxiliary

Iris Galuten	Edith Carbonari
Bess Goldstein	Mary Young
Mariam Lilien	Virginia Weston
Paulene Gejewski	Doris Ober
Ida Levin	Mary Balzano
Evelyn Buie	Emily Fletcher
Mariam Rosenblitt	Margaret Kormas
Doris Baron	Ann Walters
Adele Quickle	Vivian Kurtzman
Florence Keller	Ellen Snidow
Wanda Olszewski	Maria Keller
Dot Starry	Alice Wolthoff

I am sorry if I have missed anyone. Please let me know and you will be added into the next Bulletin.

Thank you,
 Dottie

- In Memoriam -

"LADIES' TAPS"

RHODA GREEN
 wife of Nathan Green, Co. G, 271st Infantry Regiment

A member of the 29th Infantry Division attended our Business Meeting at the Myrtle Beach reunion in 1995, and expressed his thoughts in their bulletin as follows.

29th Division Report

By: **John Hagstrom**, Cmdr Post 94 HQ3g15

I visited Myrtle Beach, SC, the last week in October 1995 and met some 69ers on the beach while surf fishing. I was invited to their Hospitality Room and visited their registration center.

There I met Charles Wentz, Cannon Co., 115th. I also met **Bill Matlach**, who is a 29er and Treasurer of the 69th Infantry Division Association. I asked Bill if I could attend their Business Meeting. He said okay and would let me talk about the 29th Infantry Division Association.

I learned from the meeting that:

- a. The 69th Division Association is structured along corporate lines, i.e., President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and Board of Directors.
- b. Their membership for 1995 was 5,317, down 336 from 1994. Associate membership is limited to male relatives.
- c. Dues are \$10.00 per year (income September 1995 - \$20,694.50)
- d. Total resources amount to \$48,450.51 as of the end of 1994.
- e. They expect a 5% increase in hotel rates and food each year for the next 5 years.
- f. They intend to enjoy future reunions. Going to look for good deals - not skimp on future hotel rooms and meals.
- g. In this regard they voted to eliminate charitable donations, e.g., "Charity begins at home."
- h. 825 registered at the Landmark Hotel for the reunion.
- i. It appeared there were over 400 members in attendance at the Business Meeting.
- j. One big problem: Their bulletin, like our "Twenty-Niner" was being returned in large numbers, due to wrong addresses, "no longer there", "deceased" and "address unknown." A lot of money was being wasted. Being looked into.
- k. Last year's budget was based on a calendar year. Total receipts - \$125,166.60, total disbursement \$124,324.20 for a profit of \$842.48. Total cash resources for 1995 year \$48,450.51.
- l. Members (and myself) who had something to say had to go to a microphone in the center aisle of the meeting room. So all could hear. (good idea)
- m. It was also voted on and approved that when the Association got down to four (4) members, they could take the Association's bank balance and have one last reunion and spend it all! Now that's thinking ahead, and giving their members a good incentive to stay alive.

At the end of the business meeting, I was allowed to take the floor. After explaining the structure and mission of the 29th Division Association, I asked for a show of hands of men who were assigned at one time or another to the 29th Infantry Division. Out of the 400 attendees a cell of 30 men raised their hands. Three (3) other men in the room raised their hands for a total of 33 men. I asked how many were now members of the 29th Division

Association? Three raised their hands. I asked how many would like to be members? The remaining 30 raised their hands. I told them to see me after the Business Meeting with their names and addresses and I would send them an application for membership. I am in the process of sending out applications.

I also placed an "announcement" in their next bulletin to contact me for additional membership applications.

Retirement From a Child's View

Submitted by: **Howitzer Al Kormas**

After a spring break, a teacher asked her young pupils how they spent their holidays. One small child wrote the following:

We always used to spend holidays with Grandpa and Grandma. They used to live here in a big brick home, but Grandpa got retarded and they moved to Florida. Now they live in a place with a lot of other retarded people. They all live in little tin boxes. They ride on big 3-wheeled tricycles and they all wear name tags because they don't know who they are. They go to a big building called a wrecked hall, but they must have got it fixed, because it's all right now. They play games and do exercises there, but they don't do them very good. There is a swimming pool there, but they stand in it with their hats on. I guess they don't know how to swim.

As you go into their park, there is a doll house with a little man sitting in it. He watches all day so they can't get out without him seeing them. When they can sneak out, they go to the beach and pick up shells that they think are dollars.

My Grandma used to bake cookies and stuff, but I guess she forgot how. Nobody cooks, they just eat out. They eat the same thing every night - early birds. Some of the people are so retarded that they don't know how to cook at all, so my Grandma and Grandpa bring food into the wrecked hall and they call it "pot luck."

My Grandma says Grandpa worked all his life and earned his retardant. I wish they would move back up here, but I guess the little man in the doll house won't let them out.

Attention Ladies WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER FROM THE WAR??

Ladies, if you can think of anything that happened to you that might be of interest to other women of the Ladies Auxiliary, please write a short story and we will include it in the Ladies Auxiliary pages.

We are particularly interested in memories of Camp Shelby or Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Please send them to Dottie Witzleb: P.O. Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069.

Park M. Fellers writes ...

Park M. Fellers

935 Jefferson, Box 396
Hillsboro, Illinois 62049
Telephone: 217/532-3328

Finally, here are the pictures I mentioned when we talked on the phone a few weeks ago.

I was among those who were transferred from Camp Adair, Oregon, to Camp Shelby in March of 1943. I was with the 69th from its activation in May 1943 until V-E Day in Germany. Not long after that, I was transferred with a number of other low pointers to the 29th Division in Bremen where I stayed until January 1, 1946. That day we boarded the S. S. John Erikson, at Bremerhaven and headed for the states. Incidentally, the Erikson was the same boat I went over on back in November of 1944.

When I joined the 69th, I was first assigned to 3rd Battalion of the 273rd Regiment as battalion sergeant major. Later, after receiving my warrant officer's appointment, I was transferred to fill a vacancy at the 272nd Regimental Headquarters. There I served as assistant to the adjutant, **Captain Earl Kendle**. **Captain Kendle** was

a real nice chap to work with, in fact, all of the personnel there were a nice bunch to be with. I have often wondered why I didn't write down more of their home addresses, etc. and keep in touch.

Due to my work schedule over the years, I was never able to attend any of the 69th Division Association reunions until Biloxi in 1991. Being retired by then, my wife, Vi, and I did make it down there for a few days. Although I did not recognize very many of them, being 69ers they were all old friends very quickly. We had a great time! We especially enjoyed the bus trip back to the old camp, which we could hardly recognize. We now plan to make the reunion this August in Schaumburg. The Lord willing, and if old man "Arthur Ritis" doesn't lower the boom, we hope to be there. And we hope to see more of you. We did see **Captain Allen "A.C." Williams** and his lovely wife, Dorothy, at the '91 reunion. Also had a brief visit with **Colonel Bob Trimble** who was an assistant to **Colonel Pengeley** in division headquarters during the war. Hope they make it this year.

Of course we hope to see you, Clarence, in Schaumburg. Hope those eyes stay with you so you can make it. Keep in touch. I'll do the same.



CWO Fellers, Service Company, 272nd Infantry, at the Elbe River at Torgau, Germany - May 1945.



Front row: Major Welles, Major Zimmerman, Capt. Kendle. Back row: Lt. Col. Kennedy, Col. Buie, Major Green. Officers of the 272nd at Danesbury Downs, England.



69th Division Parade

3 officers in front taking salute are General Maraist, General Bolte and General Parks.

Division Band is in background. Back rows are officers and enlisted personnel.

Camp Shelby Mississippi - 1943



Lt. Graham Garren of the 272nd Infantry Regiment at the Elbe River in Torgau, Germany - May 1945.



Front row: Major Wells, Major Zimmerman, Lt. Hinds, Lt. Kendle, Captain Gildner. Back row: Lt. Col. Kennedy, Major Green, Capt. Lamoree, Capt. Bartling, CWO Fellers



Color Guard in Review for parade down 4th Avenue at Camp Shelby. 272nd Infantry Regiment - 1945.



Front: Col. Lanham, Lt. Col. Halter. Back: Major Zimmerman, Major Sacks, Captain Lipsius. Headquarters Staff, 272nd, at Camp Shelby in 1944.

NEWS MATERIAL AND PICTURES FOR THE BULLETIN SHOULD BE MAILED TO:

CLARENCE MARSHALL, 101 Stephen Street, New Kensington, Pennsylvania 15068
EARL E. WITZLEB, JR., P.O. Box 69, Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069
 or R.D. #3, Box 477, Acme, Pennsylvania 15610-9606

**ADDRESS CHANGES, NEW MEN AND TAPS SHOULD BE
MAILED TO OUR MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN:**

ROBERT KURTZMAN, P.O. Box 105, Wilmot, Ohio 44689

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).

California/ Western Chapter

Delbert E. Philpott, President and Reporter
P.O. Box 2014
Sunnydale, California 94087-0014
Telephone: 408/739-0308

Our fourth Annual Spring Round-Up was held in Palm Desert, California, at the Vacation Inn April 24th to 27th, 1996. Arrangements were made by the Site Selection Committee Representative **Bob Pierce** with assistance from his wife, **Teresa**.

Not only is the Palm Desert area noted as a shopper's paradise, but it is also the home of numerous golf courses. The Thursday evening Village Fest in downtown Palm Springs provided an opportunity for everyone to sample the food and wares as the main street was closed for about a mile to transform the city into an old-time Street Fair. There was a Farmers' Market, crafts, antiques and artwork in addition to the live entertainment sponsored by the city. Restaurants and businesses put their tables and wares on the street. Over 100 vendors participate in this event each week.

To break the jinx (wind and cold temperatures) on our Friday evening pool parties, the program was changed this year. Naturally, temperatures soared into the 100+ degree range. Nonetheless, we enjoyed a fantastic time at the Fantasy Springs Casino feasting on a prime rib dinner followed by entertainment in their showroom "Festivale" with showgirls and special effects. Many tried their luck afterwards in the Las Vegas style casino.

The Business Meeting was held Saturday morning. The Secretary and Treasurer's reports were followed by discussion of future Round-Up sites. Next year's event is to be in Monterey, California. Volunteers are investigating possibilities for 1998's meeting in the Southern California area. New Board Members were elected. **Harold Faulkner, Al Gwynne, and Walt Harpain** will serve 3 year terms. A banner to display at future meeting sites was proposed. The Board of Directors will evaluate the merits and act accordingly. The **Stacy's** provided a bottle of wine to be given to the attendee who traveled the greatest distance. The recipient was **Ken Sawyer** from Florida.

The Saturday Evening Dinner was held across the street from the Vacation Inn at the Embassy Suites. The Memorial Service was conducted by Assistant Chaplain **Al Gwynne** as our Chaplain **John Pereira** was unable to attend due to family health problems. Excess wine and nuts from the Hospitality Room were given away in a drawing at the dinner.



California / Western Chapter. Back row: Secretary Sam Johnson, Board of Directors Walt Harpain, Past President Bob Pierce, currently 69th National President. Front row: President Del Philpott, Board of Directors Al Gwynne, Vice President John Tounger. Missing are Treasurer Lee Wilson and Board of Directors Harold Faulkner.

A complimentary breakfast of coffee, orange and apple juices, muffins, Danish, and croissants was served each morning in the Hospitality Room. Afternoon/evening fare included snacks and hors d'oeuvres in addition to the fully stocked bar.

Our Round-Up attendance of 62 members represented Arizona, California, Florida, Iowa, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Washington. A few letters of regret were sent from some members who were unable to attend.

Attendees were:

Cy Abrams	and Terry Carlton	....	Woodland Hills, CA
Eldon	and Marjie Atwood	.....	San Diego, CA
* Anees	and Barbara Barakat	.....	Dallas, PA
* Jim	and Mary Battin	.....	Monterey Park, CA
and guests Chick and Eileen Holmes			
* David	and Edith Cohen	.....	Canoga Park, CA
* Wade	and Marcia Drysdale	.....	Sunnyside, WA
* William	and Dottie Duncan	.....	Alameda, CA
Harold	and Nancy Faulkner	.....	Walnut Creek, CA
* Ralph	and Georgia Bradford	.....	Orange, CA
Grant Brown		.....	Prescott, AZ
* Eddie Gildner		.....	Desert Hot Springs, CA
Epi, Connie	and Ron Granillo	.....	Mesa, AZ

(Continued on Page 24)

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

(Continued from Page 23)

Al and Bobbie Gwynne	Novato, CA
Walt and Shirley Harpain	Fresno, CA
Stan and Lois Hawk	Lemoore, CA
Roland and Janice Hendrickson	Salem, OR
Sam and Ethel Johnson	Huntington Beach, CA
*Sylvan Katz and Jeanne Berger	Santa Monica, CA
*Ray Lehman and Eva Benson	Cedar Rapids, IA
*Dick and Judy Levy	Encino, CA
Keith and Mary Loo Mower	Van Nuys, CA
*Inga Mottaz	Calimesa, CA
Del and Donna Philpott	Sunnyvale, CA
Bob and Theresa Pierce	San Jose, CA
Earl and Matilde Ramsey	Sylmar, CA
Bill Robertson	Culver City, CA
John Rosenbrock	North Hollywood, CA
Bill Ruebsamen	Murrieta, CA
*Ken Sawyer and Fran Collard	Melbourne, FL
Jim and Dottie Stacy	Escondido, CA
John and Dena Tounger	Oakland, CA
*Ed and Lee Wallin	Covina, CA
Lee Wilson	Stockton, CA

* = California Western Chapter First-Timers

The California Western Chapter has no dues. It is supported entirely by the generous contributions of members. We wish to thank all who contributed.



Fantasy Springs Casino Show Hostess "Shirley" with California Western Chapter President, Del Philpott. Del's reaction to how he felt on stage with Shirley: "My socks are going up and down!"



This poster, which was put together by John Tounger of Company D, 271st Infantry, appeared in the lobby of the Vacation Inn at the California/Western Chapter reunion in Palm Desert, California.

269th Engineers

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

Hi Y'all:

Hope you are all doing well and looking forward to making the next reunion, some place soon.

Just got back from the "Tri-State" Reunion in Monroe, Michigan and had a wonderful time and it felt good to get rid of our cabin fever. It's just too bad more people couldn't make it due to their Memorial Day activities in their areas. It was good to see and talk to those that were there once again and know they are doing just fine. We only had a few people from the 269th there. **Marion and Ward Peterson** who is doing real good after his heart episode, but he can still eat. **Dottie Eibling** spent a few days with us and it was nice seeing her again. **Ted** and I got in a lot of golf and had a great time. The weather was a little "brisk" and it put a little more speed in your step when you got outside. **Ray Szkudlarek** did a fine job setting up the "Tri-State," the banquet was a real joy - the food was the greatest I've ever eaten at a banquet.

(Continued on Page 25)

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

(Continued from Page 24)

The entertainment was super, lots of laughs by all. It was a pleasure to meet all the Szkudlarek family and we enjoyed their company.

Hope you're going to be at the next reunion in August, outside of Chicago, Illinois.

Tri-State Group

All states are welcome to Tri-State Group functions!

Raymond Szkudlarek, News Reporter

3525 Muirfield

Toledo, Ohio 43614

The Tri-State weekend was held at the Holiday Inn in Monroe, Michigan on May 23rd, 24th and 25th. The hospitality room was opened on Thursday with an array of favorite snacks. On Friday, a tour of the Greenfield Village and Ford Museum was held. Saturday golf and on your own day. A banquet was held on Saturday night and a magician was the entertainment. Much thanks to **Ray Szkudlarek** and his family for a good time.

The following is a list of the persons that attended:

Bob and Vivian Kurtzman

Frank and Ted Nemeth

Bob and Jean Shaffer

Ward and Marian Peterson

Robert and Wanda Grimm

Charles E. Weaver

Cecil and Alene Cottle

Lester Hart

Harold Wepler and Edna Butzin

John and Esther Roth

Gerald and Bernice Gilgenback

Earl and Dottie Witzleb

Brownie and Ann Parsons

Dorothy Beetham Eibling

Roger and Ruth West

Thomas Yelcich, Jr.

Guest of Ray Szkudlarek

Paul and Barbara Szkudlarek, son Raymond, daughters

Robin and Rene

John and Cathy Szkudlarek

Lynette Szkudlarek and Joe Middleton

Carl and Sherry Szkudlarek

Bill and Amy Harrison and daughter Kayla

Roger and Lisa Wallace and daughter Tiffany

Joe and Terri Wozniak

All members of the 69th are welcome to join the Tri-State group for all functions. Our group is a conglomerate of folks who just like to get together with other members of the 69th to get away from home and enjoy themselves with their old buddies.

You can write to Earl and Dottie Witzleb at the address below and they will put you in touch with who is in charge of the latest get-together.

Earl and Dottie Witzleb

Post Office Box 69

Champion, Pennsylvania 15622-0069

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Jim Kidd writes on 271st Infantry History

Submitted by: **James R. Kidd**

222 Al-Fan Court

Winchester, Kentucky 40391

I am sending you the following to clarify something that appeared in the 271st Infantry Regiment's history, **TRESPASS AGAINST THEM.**

On Page 19 of the 271st Regiment's history, *Trespass Against Them*, there is this statement (about the middle of the page): "...Fighting of great intensity raged when the bridgehead was made..."

That may have been what it sounded like at Battalion or Regimental levels (wherever they were), but it was not a battle as such. Here is what happened:

Men of my company had spent the night of April 12, 1945 in a mine in a hillside and in a paper factory just across the road from the mine's opening. While we were waiting for orders on the morning of the 13th, we heard news that President Roosevelt had died. At about that time, the F Company commander called platoon leaders together and said to me, "Kidd, your platoon will make the river crossing." He was speaking of the Saale River just behind the paper mill. The only added information was that assault boats would arrive soon.

Since no details of support or other information were given, I essentially took over the company and directed the other platoon leaders to have their men out along the river and when I gave them the signal, to have all fire they could deliver aimed at structures on the opposite shore.

I made a quick reconnoiter of the area where we would make the assault, and a truck loaded with assault boats arrived. I directed it to a large wood gate near the river. I shot off the gate's lock and gave the order for the company to fire. Several anti-tank guns were present and the crews asked permission to fire also. I told them to fire. As my platoon's first assault boat moved from shore, the driver of the engineer truck tried to get his truck-mounted machine gun to fire. In his excitement, his first burst hit quite close to the boatload of my men.

As all of the weapons poured fire on the opposite shore, my First Platoon men got across and moved into the houses near the landing point. When enough of the platoon was across and into the houses, I signaled for a cease fire.

My platoon lost one man on that crossing. He was in the first boat. Without the supporting fire, one or two enemy soldiers could wipe out boatloads of our soldiers as they crossed the stream.

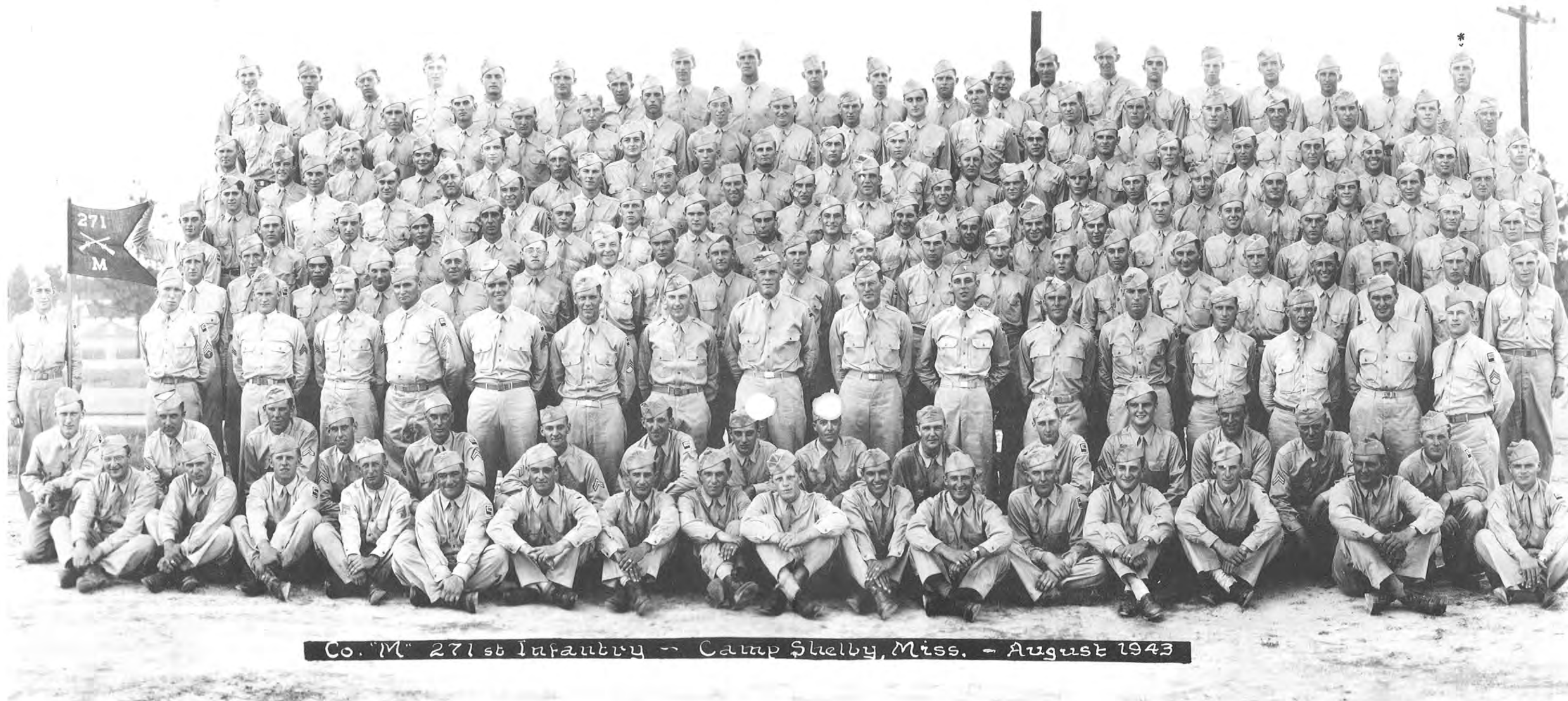
I think this proves that heavy covering fire can be helpful in supporting a crossing such as over a stream or over open terrain.

Pardon me for rewriting history. I felt some clarification was needed.

Jim Kidd

Leader

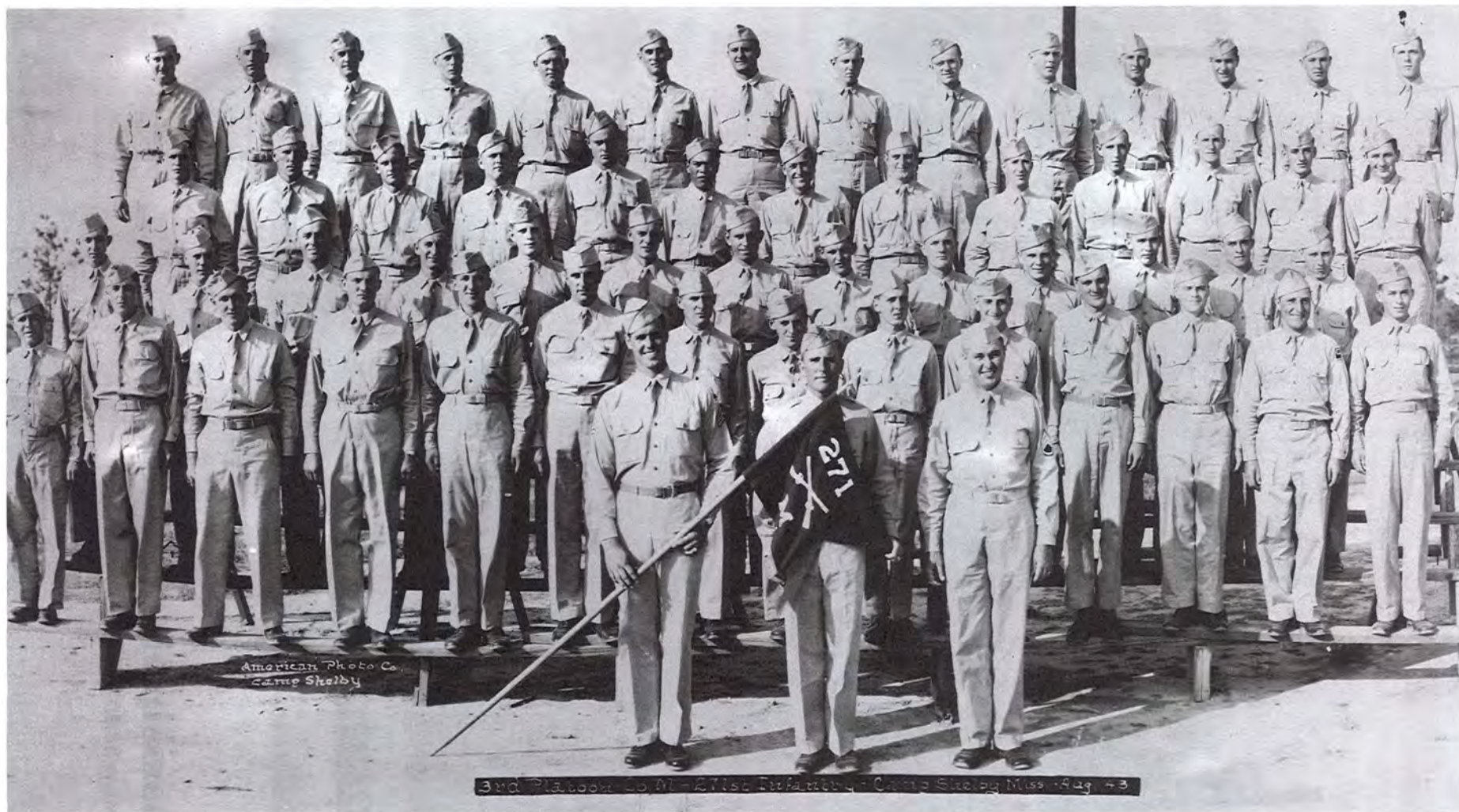
1st Platoon, F Company, 271st



Co. "M" 271st Infantry - Camp Shelby, Miss. - August 1943

Company M, 271st Infantry Division - Camp Shelby, Mississippi - August 1943

Submitted By: Lt. Col. Norman F. Essick, USA Retired - P.O. Box 395, Lexington, North Carolina 27293-0395



3rd Platoon, Company M - 271st Infantry Regiment
Camp Shelby, Mississippi - August 1943

Sent by: Lt. Col. Norman F. Essick, *USA Retired* (then Private)
P.O. Box 395, Lexington, North Carolina 27293-0395

So this is Camp Shelby

Climbing down the train steps, stumbling off into the warm Mississippi night under the burden of a barracks bag and a heavy suitcase and probably three or four crumpled paper bags - that was your first impression of the new 69th Infantry Division. That and the sharp urging of sergeants standing under flood lights, "Form a line! Close it up! Keep moving, keep moving!"

The line seemed to be miles long and your burdens grew heavier with every step. You wondered how long the war would last, and which direction was which, and how the hell you got into this mess in the first place. You wondered where you were going and why you didn't ride in one of those trucks parked there instead of walking all this way.

And the next thing you knew you were in one of the trucks. "This is the 69th Division," somebody said. "So what?" a voice growled down at the end of the truck.

"So it's the 69th Division," was the answer.

You didn't give a damn what division it was then. Divisions and squads all sounded alike. What you wanted was sleep.

"It's a new Division," somebody volunteered. Brother, he was right! It was a brand-new Division. It didn't have any history. It was up to you to make the history of the 69th. You didn't know it then and if you had known it you wouldn't have cared. 69 was just a number.

The trucks pulled out. You couldn't see much out the back except a lot of lights and buildings. Too many buildings, and they all looked alike.

Through the windows you saw guys inside. Guys doing things cleaning guns - half dressed - sitting around batting the breeze. The truck slowed down and you passed a column of troops marching along in the dark. Those men looked tired and you wondered how far they had walked. How long would it be until you -

"This is Camp Shelby," somebody said, interrupting your thoughts.

"The hell with Camp Shelby," a voice answered.

"What cha have to do to get a furlough?"

"Jeez, the guy's been in the army maybe a week and already he's talking about furloughs."

"How long does it take before we go across the pond; that's what I want to know?"

The truck stopped and a guide led you to a building. In a couple of minutes you were sitting on a bunk. There was a bar of candy somewhere down in your barracks bag and you wanted it, but you remembered the last thing you had tried to find in that bag, the mess it was in, and how hard it was to find. So instead of fishing for the candy you sighed and stretched out on the bunk.

Man, that bed felt good! You stretched and sighed again. Some sleep would feel good right now.

"Everybody strip! You're going to take a bath!"

That made you mad. Where the hell did the army get off - telling you to take a bath! You took baths without being told!



"And after that you take another physical."

With a groan you climbed out of the bunk and began to unbutton your shirt. Life was just one damned physical after another.

"And after the physical there will be hot coffee and doughnuts in the mess hall!"

That night, after the lights were out and you were trying to go to sleep, you tried to remember what it was somebody had said you belonged to. Sixty-ninth something or other it seemed like. Sixtynine - sixty-nine? 69th Division! Yeah, that was it. And like the guy in the truck you said, "So what?"

Then you went to sleep.

PROCESSING

You thought you were settled — but you weren't. No, in the morning after breakfast they lined you up and marched you around corners until you were completely lost. There were the other barracks bags alphabetically arranged.

You picked yours out and marched back to your hut. And you had no more than got your bag down than you had to line up outside again. Only this time you picked up the cigarette butts you had dropped last night. Then they let you lie around for a half-day and you decided the army wasn't such a bad life if they'd just keep that up.

"What's an eagle mean?"

"That's a colonel."

"Do you salute colonels?"

"Hell, yes!"

"But how do you tell whether it's an eagle or what unless you're right on top of the guy?"

"Play safe, Buddy! Salute every damn thing that's got any brass or tin on its collar!"

A half-hour later you were walking back from the latrine and you were face to face with an old guy and he had brass on both sides of his collar. You wished you were in hell! You had to salute but you didn't know how. Do you

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SO THIS IS CAMP SHELBY

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stop to salute or do you keep on walking? How close should you get first? Hell, he was almost on top of you already. You took a deep breath, you flattened out your hand and you let fly.

The old boy grinned and saluted back. And as he dashed by he said, "That's the spirit, soldier!"

That made you feel good. When you got back to your hut you asked, "What's a gold thing that looks sort of like a leaf?"

"That's a major! A sergeant came in while you were gone and there's a chart over there on the wall that shows what every rank is. He said we don't have to salute until after they have taught us how."

You didn't say anything more about it. But you weren't sorry you had saluted the major. What the hell, you were a soldier now, weren't you!

In the middle of the afternoon they lined you up again only this time you carried both barracks bags and every other thing you owned. And it was hot. The sweat didn't dry off - it stayed right on you. Your little group joined a lot of other sweating little groups. Somebody stood out in front and began calling out names. When a name was called the man went out of his group and was given some papers and then he went away. But they didn't call your name right away. You had to stand and broil a while.

Then some men on horses came by. You thought everybody rode in tanks and halftacks now, but there were horses. You looked at the man in front and saw that he had two white stars sewed into his collar. He was sweating just as hard as you were.

"That's the General, the top man in the Division."

A general! You looked again, because you had never seen a general before in your life and you thought that in the course of a war you'd probably see a general four or five times. How wrong you were. Hardly a week went by that you didn't see those familiar figures on horseback, appearing from nowhere and watching your platoon, your squad, you yourself as you trained and learned to become a soldier.

Someone called your name.

You went out and got your papers, you joined a different group, you carried those bags to a truck and after a while you had a bunk in a different hut in a different part of the camp. You threw the bags onto your trunk and sat down, wiping the sweat from your face, wishing you could get a drink of decent-tasting water just once more. That Shelby water!

A sergeant with stripes all over his sleeves came in. He wiped the sweat off his face and said, "This is the end. You are going to live right here, so start unpacking and getting settled down. You won't have anything else to do until supper."

"What a mess of snafu!" somebody said.

The sergeant grinned and sat down. "That ain't snafu," he said. "You've just seen one sweet job of reception and processing. Think it over - fifteen thousand men arriving in mixed lots from all over the country - fifteen thousand men to sort out and get put in the right places, with the truck drivers, where the truck drivers belong, with the riflemen where they belong, and so forth - trains coming in at all hours of the day or night. Think it over - officers

meeting the trains a hundred miles away from camp to start the sorting and shuffling of the mixed groups - plans made and rehearsed weeks in advance - food ordered to be here when you got here - blankets - sheets - a thousand things. When your train pulled in the trucks were waiting for you, you didn't have to wait while somebody telephoned for trucks. There was a bed all made up and ready for you that first night. Hot coffee and doughnuts or cokes ready and waiting. Within a day or two your own individual place in the Division located and you taken to that place. Hell, you can't call that snafu!"

"What I don't see," somebody said, "is why we had to take a physical examination in the middle of the night!"

"Think that one over, too," said the sergeant. "Suppose some guy caught scarlet fever on the way down here. Would you want him to spend that night in bed next to yours?"

"I get it."

The sergeant wiped the sweat off his face again. That made three of you who did plenty of sweating - you and the sergeant and the general. You understood something then - when you've got a war on your hands everybody sweats. It's the only damn way to win a war!



BASIC TRAINING

When you first came into the army you probably thought that you'd spend hours and days drilling - marching up and down a drill field, doing the manual of arms. When you heard "army" you thought of "drill." And so, when Basic Training began, you expected to drill all the time. But you did not drill.

Altogether during your entire time in the army you have probably spent comparatively few hours at it. The reason is simple; you don't win wars by drilling; you win wars by fighting. And from the start the army has trained you to fight, not to parade. You learned how your weapons operated; you learned to shoot them, and more important, you learned to take care of them. You learned to use the equipment the army furnished you, to take orders, to dig slit trenches, to march long lines, to find your way in the dark.

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SO THIS IS CAMP SHELBY

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The weather was insufferably hot for men accustomed to a cooler climate. You could start out in the morning in a fresh set of fatigues and within a half an hour, you'd be soaking wet. Then the dust would settle on you and in another half an hour you would be muddy. Sweat ran down the grime on your face in little white rivers. Gnats bit your ears and chiggers chewed your legs. From time to time you broke out in strawberry-colored heat rashes. You walked so many miles and worked so hard and dug so many holes that you thought this life would make a wreck of you.

Instead, it made you strong and tough and rugged. The weight that had been around your middle moved to your shoulders. Your arms and legs grew wiry. The first day you wore a full field pack it weighed a ton. The second day it weighed two tons. And then, a few weeks later, you put it on as casually as you did your shoes.

During Basic Training you acquired the primary elements of battlecraft. You learned to be a soldier, and learned it fast. "Hell," somebody said one time during a short rest period, "they keep you going so fast around here you don't have time to blow your nose."

"Yeah," said the little fat guy in the second squad, holding up his hands. "Look at my finger nails - ten nice long rosy fingernails. Used to be I bit my nails - kept 'em chewed right down to a nub. Now look, long fingernails! Why, the army doesn't even give you time to bite your nails!"

"I'll bet other divisions don't have to work like this!"

"Maybe not. But if they don't work hard they're gonna be a crummy outfit."

"Yeah. I guess so."

"Well, I'm glad I'm not in a crummy outfit!"

"Anyway, one thing I've found out. We can take it!"

So you learned to crawl on your belly in the mud, you learned to service a gun, to adjust fire, to roll a truck over rough country without hurting it. You spent broiling days on the firing ranges moving your shots nearer and nearer where you wanted them to go. You learned the Judo tricks of unarmed defense. You learned to sleep on bumpy ground after doing more work in a day than you'd ever done in a week before.

That was Basic Training, a period of transition from civilian to military life, a trying period when old ideas and conceptions gave way to new ones. It was the first grade of the school whose graduation exercises will be the Victory Parade.

LETTERS FROM HOME

There were several highlights in the ordinary working day; chow call when you were hungry was one, and another was the command, "Dismissed," which meant that you were through for the day.



Mail Call

But the best was mail call. Somebody would yell, "Mail!" and at once be surrounded by a widening circle of expectant faces. Maybe you got a letter and maybe not. If you didn't get one you would wait until the last letter was called and then look on the ground to see if possibly one had been dropped. You wanted mail - any kind of mail, anything from home. It could be a letter from the girl or your mother or the kid sister, or even a bill from some hometown store. Anything from home! And when you got it you went off into a little world of your own while you read it - a world far removed from this new harsh army world. Maybe you sat on your bunk to read it or you went off to an empty drill field and sat under a tree.

First you opened it, and if you were like most soldiers, you had a special way of opening a letter. You didn't rip it open; you went about it slowly, savoring every happy moment of it. You looked the outside over, slowly reading the postmark, the return address, noticing the color of the ink and the exact style of handwriting, and wondering just what was inside. And then, when you could wait no longer, you tore open the envelope and plunged into the words from home.

UNIT TRAINING

Basic training had made civilians into soldiers; next came Unit Training, which made soldiers into cooperating members of a fighting team. This involved longer stays in the field away from camp, individuals participating as parts of larger units in field exercises.

In this period hills and stream lines were "taken" by day and by night, flanking movements were made by concealed routes, rolling barrages were fired, widespread communication nets established.

It was here that men learned to live in the field for considerable periods of time and gained familiarity with their parts in the teamwork of company, battalion, and regiment in combat.

You hiked all night and maneuvered all day. You rode convoys until the dust was an inch deep all over. You serviced guns until you could do it in your sleep - if you had any sleep. You shaved in your helmet or in a stream or you shaved dry. You carried mortar tubes uphill. You put machine guns into action.

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SO THIS IS CAMP SHELBY

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Unit Training was expressed in three words by a dusty private crawling into his shelter tent one night at 2300 hours.

"Jeez, I'm tired!" he said.

"Go 'way" you said. "Gettup!" he said.

So you got up. It was your time for K.P., and you were expecting the worst. You sort of put on your pants and you sort of tied your shoes and you sort of combed your hair. You were still half asleep when you staggered into the mess hall.

"Go wash!" said the mess sergeant indelicately. "This is a clean kitchen." When you got back the cook put a pail and a cloth in your hands, "Hot soapy water. Cleana refrigerator!" You washed twenty-seven acres of white porcelain. Inch by inch! When you were done the cook pounced.

"Look!" he screamed. "A spot!"

Inch by inch you washed those twenty-seven acres of gleaming white porcelain again. The cook gave you a brush to go in your pail. "Scrubba table!"

You scrubbed the table. You scrubbed it on top and on the ends and on the sides, and you scrubbed underneath. You stepped back to admire your work.

The cook pounced. "Look!" he screamed. "A crumb!"

You scrubbed it some more. Lots more. In fact, you scrubbed the devil out of it. The cook led you into the storeroom and put a spray gun in your hands. "Killa roaches!"

First you sprayed all the roaches in sight. Sixteen of them by actual count. By that time the roaches had got wise to your intentions and they hid. You hunted them. You lifted every tin can, you moved every box, you shook out each crate. You killed every roach in the storeroom. You thought!

The cook came in. "Look!" he screamed. "A roach!"

So you sprayed some more roaches. The cook took you to a sink and a mountain of dirty cups. "Washa cups!" One by one the mountain of dirty cups was converted into a mountain of clean cups. Finally you finished the last one. You held your breath, waiting for the cook to pounce.



He did! He snatched a cup from the mountain. "Look!" he screamed. "A stain!"

"Hey," you protested, "can't just one little tiny thing be just a little tiny bit dirty around here!"

The cook looked at you with genuine anguish in his eyes. He gave you a kettle half as big as an ordinary suburban home. It was covered with brown specks inside and out. "Scoura specks!"

The specks wouldn't wash off in mass. They wouldn't vanish under broad strokes of the cleaning cloth. No, the specks had to be worked over one by one. Each speck had to have individual attention.

Some of them could be removed with hammer and cold chisel - others required dynamite. You removed singly and individually well over three million specks.

The cook pounced. "Look!" he screamed. "A —."

"Yeah," you interrupted him wearily. "I know, I know." You fixed him with a magnetic eye. "I know," you screamed. "A speck!"

Hundreds and hundreds of hours later that day you finished your K.P. and crawled, aching and weary, into bed. And as you went to sleep you made a vow. "If ever this war is over," you swore, "I'll be a hermit! I'll live in a hidden cave on the side of a remote and unknown mountain! I'll live on roots and berries and I'll eat with my fingers. And I'll never wash another thing as long as I live!"

COMBAT FIRING

The end of Unit Training came on a foggy, rainy day, with the Division Combat Firing Exercise, when the entire Division, down to the smallest unit, engaged in one big field exercise, working out the problem with live ammunition and simulating nothing except the enemy, which was represented by thousands of toy balloons. If Hitler had seen the balloons vanishing under that fire he would have slept poorly that night.

For the 69th Infantry Division had learned to Fight!!



World War II, The Big One

By: **Howitzer Al Kormas**
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Some years back, Howitzer Al wrote Part I of this story and it appeared in the Bulletin. However, this Part II can stand alone.

The first part of this trip took us from Camp Kilmer to the English shore for six weeks leaving behind wonderful people, the pubs and the English lasses. By LST, as most of us did, over to Le Havre, and up the Seine River to Rouen and debarking to the great battlefields of World War I, every mile of the way telling a story of suffering, horrible combat deaths and fields spewed with blood. Then the soon scary road marches to the Ardennes.

Each one kept to his own thoughts and to his own God, praying to be able to survive and be victorious. We looked to our closest buddies for comfort and assurance, now becoming even closer in these frightening times, a closeness that would last for the rest of our lives. Civilian life has no counterpart to this "buddyship."

We finally got to the combat area, the Siegfried Line, or Purple Heart corner as it was sometimes called. We started hearing small arms fire, artillery, air power - not outgoing as at Camp Shelby, but incoming. And we soon found out that our green, inexperienced pilots could bomb and strafe us as well as the enemy. Is this where the term "friendly fire" originated? History shows that over 15% of our casualties were due to this so called "friendly fire."

Getting through and up to the Rhine River, the famous river of Europe, was no easy task. It was early spring - cold, damp, wet, rainy and the enemy desperately trying every means possible to destroy the Remagen Bridge, and then the tactical pontoon bridge built by combat engineers from another division. The signs signified to stay 35 yards apart, going 20 miles per hour. Like many army orders it was B.S. I was in the jeep following an army heavy wrecker that made the bridge sag deeply. The cables holding it were groaning and stretched to the limit, with the river flowing swiftly underneath me. That was the longest tactical bridge in the world.

I came ashore and lo and behold, the engineers who had built the bridge were shooting craps on a GI blanket with a few little German kids watching and wondering. Well, welcome to the east side of the Rhine. We all knew that the initial crossing at Remagen shortened the war by many months, and saved thousands of casualties, for which we were thankful, but that bridge . . .

As we turned south along the river, the scenery was picturesque - the river flowing, steep terraced vineyards, the winding roadway, small villages, roads twisting and turning and sporadically, German shells would land in the river. Everywhere the word "Luftshutraum" (air raid shelter) was painted on the homes and other structures.

We entered the town of Vallendar and quartered there for the evening. **Parker, Gray, Hartman, Juggy Powers, Andrews and Pankop** were in a hillside home - the front faced the river. There was no back to the home as it was built right into the hillside. **Oberst**, who prowled the house and basement, found wine in the cellar and a quantity of home bottled cherries. His greatest dessert was

cherry pie. Finding flour, crude sugar and lard, he went up to the kitchen on the second floor and proceeded to make a fire and put together a massive cherry pie. When it was ready to go into the oven, with our blessings and toasts, a few shells came closer but went into the river. Then one came through the roof, then went into the river and exploded. It must have been an armor piercing shell. We all made for the basement, but **Oberst** stayed upstairs on the second floor saying "nothing will move me from my pie." We loved that pie and ate it all.

We left the next morning and started receiving artillery fire so we broke convoy and some of us scampered into a hillside cave. It was quite large and we found an ample supply of great local wine. Naturally, we took a quantity with us as we had been warned to beware of local water. In coffee, the water was O.K. as it was boiled. We gladly complied with the water warning. We were getting near Koblenz where the Moselle River joined the Rhine. There was a large German statue in the center of the river depicting a soldier, built after World War I. About 4 or 5 jeeps took a trail that pitched steeply and just as they were about to come over the top, small arms fire erupted over our heads. I was second in line and we were below the hilltop yet and safe while the infantry engaged them and cleared the problem. The lieutenant I was driving was waving his 45 around and I told him to put it away before he kills someone. We turned around in limited space and went back up the hill later.

There was Fort Ehrenbreitstein, a very large military post from World War I and when our World War I occupation pulled out of Germany, this was the place where our flag came down. Somewhere I read this flag was kept and after V.E. Day, the flag was flown there in a ceremony.

Now that we were on our way eastward, we moved fast. Having never kept a diary, it is hard for me to keep this in chronological order, but I will keep the progress of the 69th on events, incidents, etc. correct. If you still have the map of our progress, you can easily picture these days in your recollections. We were on the move, hardly staying more than one night in one area and on the go constantly.

On guard at night and if we were on the outskirts of a village, we would have a pleasant time sitting in an upstairs window on a soft, easy chair, with a little wine or cognac to ward off the night chill. We would be up very early and when the cooks were able to keep up with us, it was a pleasant experience. They would make every effort to get us at least two hot meals a day. Plus we usually had C's, K's, or later on, the new innovation - the great 10-in-ones. Plus we were also able to scrounge from homes. There was plenty of potatoes, eggs and smoked meats on poles in the attics. Contrary to all we were told, the Germans in the small villages and farms had plenty of chow. Also, wine and cognac was plentiful.

One day we discovered a German officer's food supply full of "non-enlisted men rations," i.e., stubby cigars, perfumed cigarettes, chocolate, cheeses and canned skinless sardines, which tasted great. Naturally, we helped ourselves handsomely.

One day when we called it a day, our gang was assigned to a house for the night. We sat around a table, with our muddy boots on the table. The frau of the home came in and said in a clear English voice, "Will you soldiers please keep your muddy boots off of my table." We were all quite surprised and quickly pulled our feet off

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WORLD WAR II, THE BIG ONE

(Continued from Page 33)

of the table, except for **Big Foot Parker**. He began to question her. She told him her husband came over from the states in 1939 as a paid engineer and she said that they were forced to stay there. We knew this was a lie. Big Foot told her to leave on the double and quick, raus. She got the message. We left the next morning with no damage to the house. Some of the fellows felt we should have demolished it but we had to leave in a hurry.

Now we started to work with the 9th Armored Division as a team. When we got the Stars and Stripes, the GI paper, it noted the fact that the 9th sweeps 10 miles one day, and 15 the next, etc. What it did not say was when they ran into a heavily defended position, they would go around and we would go up and clean it out. One time when two major dirt roads came together to make one, there was our general and the 9th Division's general arguing about who had the road. Here it was, thousands of GIs on either side of the road in the fields waiting while they argued. I was nearby and could hear them. A little artillery fire came in and they made a dive for terra firma. One dud landed just a few feet from the argument but buried itself into hot mud. This naturally expedited the road situation pronto.

One day coming around a bend with quite a few fresh enemy dead, I came upon a sight I will never forget. There was one dead German lying on his stomach and his whole keester was blown away so perfectly, that a football could have fit into the hole perfectly. Amazing how back home the few times the American people viewed bodies, it was always whole bodies, not as we saw them.

There was a time when we had just entered a newly conquered village. There at the entrance to the village was a true Aryan blonde god with the greatest blonde hair waving in the wind. We stopped for a while and DP's stationed there told us he was going to fight us to the end, which he did, ha ha.

The route going westward turned in all directions as pockets of enemy were all over - sometimes behind us and on the sides. Only the Stars and Stripes informed us of the war's events. To us, all we knew was the field we were in at the time, the village over night, the river or the barn. Even the people back home knew exactly where we were and had details, while we had no knowledge to speak of of what was going on. The great old U.S. Army.

I recall a couple of times in the war torn Siegfried area and the Dragon's Teeth, that more than once I ran my jeep over the enemy dead that were in the mud. There would be so many vehicles doing this that they resembled a filthy, muddy flattened rag doll.

One could also tell where the U.S. Army was on the roads as they would leave a trail of ration cans, boxes, cigarette butts, wrappers and empty bottles. Encountering a clean road let one know you were the first GIs there - a little scary comrades.

Some days were not so bad, not too many problems, but some were pretty hairy. One day we dug in on a hillside for the night about sundown. On the other side of us there was a town and down in the valley an SS gang was holding up some of our doughboys. They were ordered to pull out and in came 4 or 5 P-51s. We did not know their business. About 5 of us stood up with sun behind us, a perfect target for machine gunners in the town right on top of the

hill. The 51s followed each other in, hitting some tanks and gun positions. We enjoyed watching this, like the idiots we were. After a few passes when the planes were circling for another pass, all of a sudden I and my buddies felt it - right past my left ear. I heard this "crack" and felt a hot, heavy breath on my left side. We quickly hit the dirt and rolled over to the safe side. See how careless one gets, as this had become a way of life for us.

The next morning from the same position, I had cut my hand and went to our favorite medic, **Glenn Ellefson** (now gone) and as he was bandaging it, a German fighter came low to the ground coming up the valley. I immediately jumped into his foxhole. He said, "Al, that's mine." I yelled, "Jump on me, don't be a fool." So he did. The AAA was firing at the German fighter, plus some of our 50's. He was knocked down. It was amazing how many people took credit for it. Bring out the paint for decorating 90mm and 50 caliber gun barrels.

Now we had not had a bath in months. No one noticed though, as we all stunk alike. We were told we were going to a portable GI facility. It was a unit bringing together a few 6x6 trucks and we were led into an area inside with muddy floors to strip and put our clothes on our boots, and quick too. We had only 3 minutes to wash, 2 to rinse and 5 to get out. There was a large pile of used, clean clothing in the corner and we were allowed to help ourselves. We all had a fresh bar of soap in our packs and quickly luxuriated in the hot shower. I used up all of it as most of us did. God it was heaven - washing off pounds of filth and seeing pink skin. And now, how did they expect us to put on our filthy clothes standing in mud and still stay clean. What was the sense. They were supposed to have a floor bed, but of course did not. None of us took any of the used clothing. Our great army could not even provide us with new clothing. We yelled our old battle cry "48-49-50 some s - -t." Needless to say, this was the last bath until the end of combat.

One day coming back from a recon with a pilot from our Maytag airplanes, the Piper Cub, we passed our survey crew setting up the 105 gun positions in an apple orchard. We passed and blew the horn and they followed. They started taking on artillery fire and piled out of the 3/4 ton truck into a deep ditch and a few of the shells lobbed at them. Then a few minutes later I saw **Juggy** run across the road and he had a few bottles in his hands and then in jumped into the ditch. He told his buddies that if he was going to die, it won't be while he's sober. He came into the army at the age of 38 and made every hike, etc. He was a real character, very rare, and we all loved him. After the war I visited him many times when I was working through his area. We enjoyed many a drink at the Monongahela Pennsylvania Legion and at various other clubs. We would also go deer hunting on occasion in north central Pennsylvania and we fished together. Being in the army exposed us to all types of men and indeed, when **Juggy** was born, they broke the mold as there was no other like him. I still write to his widow. They had a military wedding back in Shelby.

One day **Parker, Hartman** and I were riding in the jeep. We had a little time to ourselves and we came around a forest hilltop to a small German military area. There were a few barracks but no soldiers. DP's surrounded us, a few hundred or so. They were wood cutters for the army and their keepers had left only a few

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moments prior. They were all Greek prisoners. I told my buddies not to reveal my Greek heritage. But they just laughed at me and went ahead and told them. They were all trying to hug and kiss me and wanted to go with us and fight. I had a heck of a time breaking free and getting out of there, but we did give them all of our smokes, candy, a little wine and I told them in my American Greek to stay there and we would notify our superiors of their position. My buddies, none better - my greatest comrades, as many of you know.

Now the weather was improving making things much more tolerable and conditions a lot nicer. One evening we halted in a small stadt and into a large farm compound. The farm slave laborers told us the German Wehrmacht had just pulled out moments before. There must have been about 50 of them, all Polish, and extremely happy to be liberated. They told us they worked on various farms for 2 or 3 years now and could not travel to nearby farms on weekends or days off to see friends. It was up to the farmer's discretion to allow them a few hours' visit. Being deprived of alcoholic beverages for so long and many on a meager diet and starved for meat, they asked if they could kill one of the cattle in the barn and have a great big ox roast, first draining off the blood for their beloved blood soup. Our first sergeant **Stark** told them through an interpreter to take the one they wanted and they took a young steer under a chain fall and shot it right between the eyes. It fell down with a dead thud and the Poles hoisted it immediately with a chain, slit the throat for the blood. They were now quite exuberant and feeling no pain with the wine they had drunk, etc. We partied right with them.

Late that night we were somewhere playing cards, and lo and behold, there was "filthy Gray" playing some card game with three of the prisoners and they were all dead serious. They were all talking and couldn't understand each other. But it was a deadly game of serious poker. Many of us finally climbed into a large hay mound and proceeded to bury ourselves. Oh what a wonderful feeling of luxury. Shortly after dawn, the first sergeant was "blessing us." No one roused until he grabbed a hay rake and threatened to start using it if we did not come out, so naturally, we came out. We left the slave laborers who wanted to come with us, but no deal. What an evening that was - wow.

The front, whatever that was, was fluid, and in many moves at night, we were cautioned to be absolutely quiet. One dark night we stopped on one side of the autobahn for the customary "you know what call." No smoking, the usual precautions. We heard a convoy on the other side of the autobahn rolling by the other way. It was pitch black, and we could not see them but as they passed, we heard German voices. This information was passed on and they were intercepted further down the road. One totally black night we were told no one knew exactly where the Germans were and to ensure our safety, we would move up in small units. In short order on these dirt roads and trails, many units became lost and started to bump into each other and get all tangled up. Finally word came down for absolute quiet and to stay as we were until there was some light so that the units could be sorted out and vehicles untangled.

Constantly on the move and never staying more than one night in an area was the norm. Now we got to a position at dusk and my battery was given this beautiful chateau for the evening. **Colonel Allen** instructed **Stark** to keep the troops out so he could inspect it, but actually he probably meant to do a little "liberating." But there was no holding back the men. We entered from the back through the French doors and clambered in. The men immediately thought of the wine cellar. We went through a basement window and discovered a real wine cellar with thousands of dusty bottles of wine. We immediately found boards and nailed the basement door shut so our troops would not bother us. We had hit the jackpot. Much later at night we carried a good supply to the survey truck and my jeep. **Stark** assigned my gang to a cozy flat way up in the attic. It was comfort first class containing the largest bed we had ever seen in our lives. We decided that only two would have the bed. **Parker** and I won, but come dawn, lo and behold, we were all asleep on the floor. We had our morning chow and we still had a few hours until we had to leave. We discovered two large lakes in back and good old **Juggy** had fishing hooks and lines from back home. He and I went fishing with worms, cutting six foot branches for poles. I guess by luck I caught about a 6 inch long sucker type fish. The boys were making fun of **Juggy**, who was fishless. He became irritated and the next thing I knew, I was propelled chin high into the cold water and he proceeded to beat me on my helmet with "choice words" and the boys thought it was great fun. We hated to leave but we all left with an ample supply of fine beverages and a few souvenirs.

Now we were in on the taking of the large city of Kassel. It was totally destroyed by air and convoys had a hard time winding through the city. We spent the night supposedly on the outskirts and a GI sniffed out a warehouse in a bombed building full of cognac. We certainly got our share and that evening in a German army installation with a fancy officers bar, we had a great time. The C.P. was next door and lights were provided by our portable generator. **Daniels**, the kitchen truck driver, was responsible for it. It ran out of gas and there went the lights. Thank goodness the C.P. was quiet as we were in a little rest area now and **Parker** told **Daniels** that he had to go out for a latrine call and he would fill it and get it going. Reluctantly **Daniels** said O.K. and in the dark good old Big Foot **Parker** picked up the wrong can and put in oil instead of gas. The next day **Daniels** stripped the generator and cleaned it. That was another day.

There were a few German small squad-size metal boats with outboard motors. The men manned them and went out on the river and ran them up the beach full tilt. Nearby, Charley battery, 880th, found a large German band school and at dusk paraded up and down the strasse in band uniforms and all had an instrument. Can you imagine what that sounded like? One characteristic of our army was its great humor and the ability to think on its own, putting aside the army book on how to do things. We finally left Kassel after 3 days instead of just one night.

Constantly on the move, taking care of some of the 9th Armored pockets, we moved on. We realized that victory was just a short time away but also that casualties could occur right up to the last moment. We took a large cave with railroad tracks running into it, which in peacetime,

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produced some of France's famous cheeses and now was devoted to poison gas. It produced one-third of Germany's production. After the Rhine we heard that the wehrmacht had discarded their gas masks, so we did too. Towards the end they started carrying them, while most of the American army discarded them. This was a cause for concern. Remember the poison gas used in World War I.

Soon after driving an officer on a small recon around dusk, we ran into a factory. All the work was done in the hillside and they had many, many slave laborers producing small weapons. We, along with a few other jeeps, were the first ones there. The Germans had just left again, and we were immediately swarmed over by the liberated workers. There were only a handful of Yanks and there was upwards of a thousand there, mostly women. Many had been there for a few years, living in small barracks, working 12 hours a day, 6 days a week. They went wild on being freed. We stayed that evening for the festivities. It was hard to imagine their joy and the amount of partying. We left the next day and reports came down that the army had soon posted MPs there right away. Wow, nuff said. Fortunes of war. An evening never to be forgotten!

One afternoon in a small village and after missing a few meals, we were all very hungry. My buddy Big Foot opened a pack of K-rations - cardboard crackers. I asked for one and he turned me down - my closest buddy. A few words were spoken, and still no, boy did this hurt. Remember Big Foot?

Going back a little ways, we were involved in a furious attack and got a lot of artillery fire. **Captain Koblenz**, a great man and liked by all, in his little forward observer group, always thought of his men first. He was killed by enemy artillery, taking off his head and shoulder area and his right hand. An enlisted man reported it via radio, and another officer, **Lt. Stubbs**, was sent up to replace **Koblenz** and he was killed by artillery fire on the way up. Both were well like and respected officers. When the enlisted man finally got back to the C.P. a few days later, he had what appeared to be scratch marks on his face, which he claimed were small shrapnel wounds. Many who knew him concluded that he probably had done it to himself so he could get a Purple Heart, etc. and in a few days he was wearing some of **Koblenz's** clothing. Many felt this way about him as he had never been a popular man.

One evening in a farmhouse for the night, we ran out of wine but discovered some sweet Spanish rum - sickening sweet and had a nice B.S. session until very late. Big **Andy Andrews** who could hold his drinks, wound up on the floor and could not get up and then went into a laughing jag. We would not help him and that is where he slept.

Now getting serious, we entered the city of Leipzig, a city that had several hundred 88s ringing the city. One of four of the fiercest battles ensued there. We and another division took the city. Normal radio communications for us with our equipment was about 4 miles, but the guns were about 7 miles behind. A radio group established a net halfway up. They were **Schnozz Schoepf**, (now gone), **Pillinger**, **McGinnis** and **Wyler**. It was the colonel's own 3/4 truck and relaying fire missions back, we soon got sniper fire. **Schnozz** was on the radio and he kept trying to dodge the fire on his hands and knees. He was finally

hit and came close to losing his leg. The rest were captured except for **Wyler** who actually ran down an open road and somehow did not get hit. **Schnozz** was put into a home we had just left and attended by a German medic who had no medicine to speak of. He did what he could and they took the truck which had candy, rations and libations. **Schnozz** was not found until about 10 days later with the medic still doing what he could. About a dozen and a half Germans who had wandered in to the house surrendered to him, wanting no more of the war. Here he was in bed with an infected leg, and finally an armored column came into the house. He was naked and very feverish. He had no dog tags as he had left them somewhere and all he had on were some heavy liberated German socks. He had a hard time convincing them he was not the enemy. For "capturing" the Germans, which should have given him a medal or two for heroic action, plus still relaying artillery fire missions, he got no recognition at all - even to this day. Oh, the great American army "48-49-50 some s - - t!" The captured were taken to the Leipzig city jail and imprisoned under the care of the mayor by order of the SS. In all, there were about 200 GIs. He was told to execute them all. He refused under the threat of death, but committed suicide with his family there. Their lives were saved due to this heroic man, sacrificing himself and his family.

An officer named **McDonald** who joined our infantry later in combat, having been on D-Day, etc. wrote a book called "Company Commander" and in it he said some of his fiercest fighting was in the Leipzig area. As the infantry pushed into the city, they were rebuffed by the SS in the great monument, called the Napoleon I think. They were fanatical SS and ensued with our artillery firing on them point blank. They would not surrender until a few days later. All who were in this area will remember this vividly.

Now we pushed on towards the soon to be conclusion of hostilities. At dusk in a small cow town, me and some of my gang were out walking and up comes a jeep and asks for 879th Battalion Headquarters. He had officers liquor rations which they received even in combat and he said "I want to get this stuff off and get out of here or it will be dark before I get to my unit." We immediately told him that headquarters was a ways off and that we would gladly sign for it and he agreed, then beat a hasty retreat. Now we have two boxes of Gordons Gin in pint bottles. What to do? Foolish question. We enjoyed it slowly, never hearing anything about it. And we felt great about it, naturally.

Now into the Eilenburg attack. The fighting was fierce and army headquarters said to pull back and level the town by artillery fire to save lives. All division artillery and corps guns pounded the town for a few days, night and day, leveling the town. Our C.P. had many men also plotting and shooting the guns. This was in a large farmhouse. The C.P. was upstairs and many of us were in a large kitchen below. Firing orders upstairs continuously, we found food stuffs below and late at night the guys decided that **Juggy** and I should make a hunter's stew with a pot the size that our cooks used. We found a ham, vegetables, potatoes and I must have cut about a bushel of potatoes for french fries. Someone tossed in a few bottles of canned cherries and pears. We loved it. The aroma

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traveled upstairs and the officers called down wanting to know if we had any extra. I refused to take it up with Juggy due to the cherries and pears in it, so he took it and they loved it also. So the battle of Eilenburg was now over with a minimum of casualties (even one is too many).

Now moving up to the Elbe and down around Halle and Leipzig again, there was an artificial rubber factory complex called BUNA. It was very large and still in operation the day before we got there. Why was this a target not to be hit? What about the great Cologne Cathedral on the Rhine where German artillery observers continuously called fire on our troops? Now it is a great tourist attraction. What about the great I.G. Farben complex which became Ike's headquarters later, and right near Bremen and so close to England, the great Shell refinery with its massive tanks stretching endlessly? Will history ever give us the true facts here? I doubt it. Now we are realizing, now that international politics are coming forward.

We all know full well our joy on meeting the Russians on the Elbe at Torgau on April 25th, now a famous city due to our being the first allied troops to meet our allies, the Russians. We soon found that they were not the allies we thought. On a jeep patrol with Juggy and one other, we met a Russian counterpart and they asked to fire our

weapons and we let them do so. Then they brought out their vodka and Juggy passed it to me. I took a drink and as Juggy said, my reaction to that liquid dynamite killed his desire, wow. It was almost straight alcohol. Never again. We offered them cognac in return. They took it and declared it voda (water).

The war was now rapidly ending. Finally we got the word, the war was over - and listening to short wave radio, picked up all the celebrations and parties going on throughout the world, and here we were in a cow town, and believe it or not, without a drop to drink. We went through some homes to find a little wine, and just sat around very quiet, in a world of our own just trying to realize that it was over. I'll tell you, it just did not sink in.

From the draft board to Shelby to Europe, and now it was all over. It probably took a few days to realize the significance and not only what it meant to the outside world, but to ourselves, our loved ones back home, and our comrades. V-E Day, bells rang out all over, thank God.

For those of you who will read this, it is a collection of our daily lives at this time. There was a lot of humor or we would have all been Section Eights. My buddies tell me, Howitzer Al, you should also write about Post War Germany, non-fraternization, etc.

Many of you can also compare this with similar events you went through, but in conclusion, we all prayed the same prayer, PLEASE GOD, NO MORE.

1st Squad, 3rd Platoon, I Company, 272nd Regiment



Taken on July 10th, 1945 at Krossen, Germany. Top row, left to right - S. Sgt. Harold E. Ruck, Pfc. Glenn C. Simpson, Pvt. Frank D. Hull, Pfc. John P. Conklin, Pfc. Melburn H. Harms, Sgt. Fred E. Fiedler. Second row, from top - Pfc. William J. Edge, Pfc. Albert F. Mueck, Pfc. James T. Pierce, Pvt. Lowell D. Neibarger, Pvt. John E. Duespohl, and missing from photo is Pvt. Roe Jenkins who was wounded in action by mortar shells on the outskirts of Bad Kosen. Picture compliments of Pfc. Ernest Slovack, Platoon Runner and submitted by: **Bill Edge**, 525 Woodbury Way, Bel Air, Maryland 21014-4451

269th Engineers

Submitted by; Frank Nemeth - 66 Gaping Rock Road, Levittown, Pennsylvania 19057-3410
ALL PHOTOS FROM THE ALBUM OF JAMES EIBLING



269th OFFICERS - Forges Les Eaux, France - January 1945

First row: Battalion Commander Major Holmlin, Captain Wolske (Co. A), Captain Depersia (Dentist), Captain Duncan (Co. B), Captain Ogles (Co. C), Captain Locke (H&S Co.), Captain Hostetter (S-4), Captain Eibling (S-3), Major Davis (Ex O)

Second row: Lieutenant Burciaga (Co. B), Lieutenant O'Neill, Lieutenant Mantz (S-1), Lieutenant Clark (Co. C), Lieutenant McEneaney (Co. C), W/O Bickerstaff, Lieutenant Twork

Third row: Lieutenant Pruett, Lieutenant Ray Lottie (Co. A), Lieutenant McCarty, Lieutenant Blair, Lieutenant Daboll

Top row: Lieutenant Peterson, Lieutenant Bowne, Lieutenant Nehmer (Co. B), W/O O'Haggerty, Lieutenant Cutrell (Co. C)

Missing from photo: Captain Thornton (S-2),
Lieutenant Lane (Co. B), Captain Christopherson (Surgeon)



19 July 45 - 121st Engineer C Battalion Field Day at
Ike Stadium, Bremen. General Gerhardt-29th Division,
Lieutenant Colonel Jacobs - 121st Engineers



Air Raid Shelter before and after being blown up by the Engineers while in the Army of OCC.

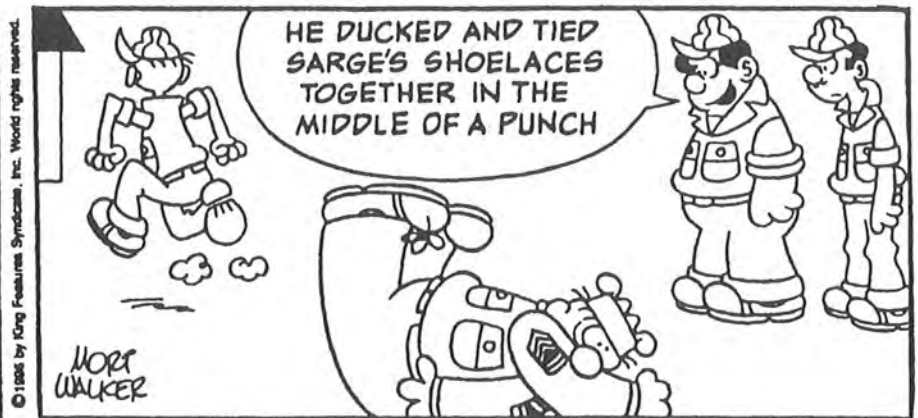
Submitted by: **William T. McCague**
1327 35th Avenue
San Francisco, California 94122

Anyone remember Bob Freeland of Company G, 271st?

Along with a self-explanatory letter from his son, I also received a photo of **Bob Freeland** of Company G, 271st Infantry. He is center bottom of photo. If anyone in the Association remembers Bob, I'm sure his son **James** would greatly appreciate hearing from you. It is my impression that this photo was taken of Bob during ASTP training at Syracuse University prior to his joining the 69th at Camp Shelby, Mississippi. Any of you "Flaming Bedpans" guys recognize yourselves? Also, anybody else that remembers Bob from Camp Shelby, Winchester, England or during combat and the occupation of Germany, please contact Bob's son at the following address. This is very important to him, so if you have info, get those letters going.

James N. Freeland
120 E. 73rd Street, Apt. 3A
New York, NY 10021-4236
Telephone: 212/861-7301







**Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion
271st Infantry Regiment, 69th Infantry Division
November 1944
Camp Kilmer, New Jersey**

Sent by: Richard L. Levy (see story following pages)

Richard Levy writes...

Headquarters Company, 2nd Battalion, 271st Infantry
5316 Lindley Avenue
Encino, California 91316
Telephone: 1-800/289-5389

Ever since the reunion at Myrtle Beach, I have been looking for some reason to write. At last, the opportunity presents itself.

First of all, my wife and I enjoyed ourselves tremendously at our first 69th Division Reunion, coming in contact with **Don Connelly** (Sergeant) and **Earl Fox** (Lieutenant) of our Company, Headquarters, 2nd Battalion, 271st Infantry Regiment. A photo of the three of us is below.



Richard Levy, T-5, at that time Gas NCO, Don Connelly, Sergeant, A & P Platoon and Earl Fox, Lieutenant, A & P Platoon, together at the Myrtle Beach Reunion.

Secondly, I've been told that no picture of our Company has ever been published in the Fighting 69th Division Bulletin. So enclosed find a picture of the Company taken at Camp Kilmer, New Jersey in November 1944 prior to going overseas to England and Europe (shown on previous page).

Lt. Col. A. McCormick was our Battalion Commander and **Captain John Garrell**, the Captain Commander. Finally, after being in touch with **James May** (Captain) and Chaplain of the 2nd Battalion since last summer, he was kind enough to send to me three letters he found that he had sent back to his family, of the many he wrote.

I have received permission from **Chaplain May**, who has retired from his pulpit, to send them to you for use in the Bulletin. I found them fascinating as they offer a different view of our time spent in Germany in the spring of 1945. These are much more like vivid accounts of what went on than letters. I hope other members enjoy them as much as I did.

Since the reunion I have been in contact with a few more members of our Company and Battalion, but I would like to find all who are still around.

Anybody having this information, please write to me or call me at the address above.

Again, thanks for your time.

Memoirs of Chaplain James May

James W. May to Family and Friends
Welchneudorf, Germany
March 29th, 1945

Dear Folks,

This is a kind of joint enterprise - largely because of laziness, but also because Roy has already washed his feet and I myself am a little sleepy. So I'll answer a swell letter from Ralph and Frances, and one from Mother and Daddy Staley all in this same job. Gene, too, usually likes to know what I'm doing; so I'll throw in a copy for her. And one for Daddy May and Em and Suzanna in Union Springs. Roy kind of guessed what I was doing and suggested an additional carbon for Loretta. So here it is, Loretta, and for Ronnie, too.

Now we're living in a kitchen on the second floor. So many of these German houses seem to be two-family affairs, even out in the rural sections. They're always clean, too. You wonder how folks can keep their cows in or so near the house, and still have their houses so neat. This is the first time we've had a room with running water in it. And last night we appreciated the stove especially. Instead of getting a late C-Ration meal from the kitchen, we opened up a can of Screven County sausage and a can of date-nut bread, and heated that to go along with some odds and ends from Gene's and Loretta's boxes. We've put up a bed in here, too, and with our new gas lantern for light, the place is plumb cozy.

The old man who lived in one of the apartments comes twice a day to feed his stock and stands for a while to look up and wonder if we are taking care of things. He knows no English, but through a complex of gestures he said something like this to Roy the day he moved out and we moved in: "All right; you are the conqueror, and it's yours for the time being - but please don't break the furniture." Well, we haven't. The few odds and ends left, including some rheumatism medicine and tobacco, we carefully stored away in the kitchen cupboard. But they never left as much here as some of the civilians in other places.

If we paid a thousand dollars for a conducted tour, we could never see some of the things we have been running into recently. Like that wonderful trip over mountain trails today. Occasionally and especially when you are not so sure you are following your map precisely, you may feel a little jumpy, and I'll look down to see if Roy's weapon is ready for action. And you'll wonder a little if you can trust the directions given to you by civilians. But it was a beautiful drive, up, down, over and around these tall hills. Sometimes you look out and see four or five villages down below. Again there is a lovely view of the little winding river beneath, with the strip patches of green grain, freshly plowed ground, hardwood, evergreen wood, and pasture land making a checkerboard on the opposite hills.

The blue haze adds mystery to the colors, and all the more when an old castle tower stands out against bright sky. Or maybe it's a shrine that somebody built up there. And there's that early-blooming apple tree over there by the shell crater, and the new tops in the willows up the hill from that pile of Jerry clothes and gas masks. Do you

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MEMOIRS OF CHAPLAIN JAMES MAY

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suppose the bombardier knew there were pansies and daffodils, and those little beds of white flowers so close to his target?

Roy and I stopped at five different companies. Ate dinner with one. Had to deliver a Red Cross death message at another, and while there Roy got a clean pair of pants to wear on Easter. Next place I talked to the guy from Maine whom I had received into the Congregational Church and told him what his preacher had written me.

These things have happened at one time or another, but the censor wouldn't want me to say just when: The old hen walking up the little ladder to the hole where she enters the second floor of the barn. Pull the string and you shut the door behind her. . . . Me talking in broken German to the Frau talking in broken English, trying to find out where the priest lives, and would he have Good Friday services. . . . The dead German in the school house, still on the stretcher, with a shelter half thrown over his face. . . . These red mattresses. All of them are bright red, and when a big family hangs them from the clothes line for airing, it looks like a fire. . . . Children scavenging after the troops have moved out. . . . The little boy waving at passing Americans. . . . Those Jerry officers, still toting a high tail and mane, being brought to the PW cage on the back of a jeep. . . .

First meal I ever ate served over a bar. The company I visited had set up their mess in the village saloon. . . . Everybody wants to know: Where is (1) Patton, and (2) the Russians. . . . Shucks, I don't know. *Last Stars and Stripes* I saw was Tuesday's and that was printed Sunday! . . . Talking in French to a Belgian slave laborer, who translates what the Dutch slave laborer is trying to tell me about the Russian slave laborer. They've been eating nothing but bread and potatoes, and they're so proud to get an American cigarette. . . . Just a birdseye view of what must be multiplied tens of thousands of times. . . . Those pretty German twins, eight years old, perfect blondes, with golden plaited tresses down to their waists. . . . Gee, you'd like to love 'em a little, but it ain't worth sixty five dollars (fine for fraternizing).

The village monument to World War dead, some thirty of them, with five brothers at the bottom of the list, and almost fresh wreaths about the base. . . . And up on the hill behind it the cemetery, and lots of new crosses, with Jerry helmets on the top of each. . . . The wounded Moslem I prayed with. "Don't you have some prayers of your own you'd like to say?" I ask him. "No, please pray yours, and I'll pray with you." . . . The wounded Greek Orthodox fellow crossing himself after I had prayed with him. . . . And the holiness boy praying aloud all the time I was praying. We were saying different words about different things, but I figure the Lord was listening to both of us. . . .

Noon meal in the jeep, during a rest stop: cheese, peanut butter, candy bars, and matzos. Levy, the Jewish fellow riding with us, had the matzos for Passover. . . . And the litter on the sidewalk where we stopped another time: Lucky Strike packs, old K and C Ration cans and covers, Beechnut chewing gum wrappers, a Saturday Evening Post, some guy's box from home with cake crumbs still in it, orange peels, and a can marked "Chopped ham and eggs," and a pile of German bank notes of the inflation era. . . . The tall hills of grape

orchards down the river valley, neat rows, precisely pruned, many of them on narrow terraces behind century-old walls.

The magnificent Autobahn that Hitler built for troops, and not American troops. The road sign: "Here pass the finest men and equipment in the whole world." . . . And the other sign: "Drive slow, dammit!" . . . And the tire conservation signs like the Barbasol poetry signs you used to see in the States. . . . Germany's scientific forestry and beautiful forests. Some of them so dense and dark they remind you of Hansel and Gretel. . . . Last year's grain still unshucked in many places. . . . The great strawberry patch in the local Nazi bigwig's garden. . . . Little boys with shovels clearing a street of debris. . . . And the two-year old beside them playing with his toy wagon full of sand. . . . Three women midway between towns pushing baby carriages, a baby in one and belongings in the other two. . . . Four dead horses lying in a row in a ditch, and all of them smelling. . . . Two cows pulling a loaded cart down a village street, the man sitting on the cart, and his wife leading the cows. . . .

A feeling down inside you that all of us will go to hell if we do not quit voting for isolationist senators, and considering ourselves better than somebody else, and being so conceited about "the American way of life," and thinking that it's no concern of ours if people are poor and ignorant and get kicked around. Love to all of you.

Jimmy

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THE BATTLE OF EILENBURG

Within hours after the fall of Leipzig, the 69th Division was on the move again toward the East. Its mission was to relieve the 9th Armored Division and secure the east bank of the Mulde River. Little opposition was met except at Eilenburg, where 1200 fanatical German troops, Hitler Youth and Peoples Police, had dug in to defend the city.

On April 20th the Second Battalion of the 271st moved into defensive positions west of Eilenburg. On April 21st (Saturday) the First Battalion initiated the attack on the city. When its forward elements became pinned down by machine-gun and sniper fire, the battalion withdrew to reorganize, and the division command decided to level the city if necessary rather than risk the loss of more personnel. All day Sunday (April 22nd) division and corps artillery pounded Eilenburg. More than 10,000 rounds of white phosphorous and high explosive were fired. On April 23rd the Americans took the city.

On April 20th (Friday) Roy and I moved with the medics into Taucha, a large and pleasant town on the highway between Leipzig and Eilenburg. We continued there even after the fall of Eilenburg, since its quieter surroundings and more comfortable living arrangements enabled us to make headway on our mounting pile of paperwork. We made daily visits to Eilenburg, Weltewitz, Jesewitz, Groitz, and other places where our companies were billeted.

Incredible scenes of destruction confronted us in Eilenburg. Days after its surrender, bodies were still being recovered from the ruins and air-raid shelters. Bull-dozers excavated trenches for mass burial of the dead. Meanwhile, thousands of civilians and war prisoners, fleeing before the advancing Russians, massed on the

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MEMOIRS OF CHAPLAIN JAMES MAY

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west bank of the Mulde intent on making their way into areas under American military control.

It was on April 26th that junction was effected, at Torgau on the Elbe, between elements of the 69th Division and the Russians. In Eilenburg we stood on the curb watching as the convoy of high brass and news reporters crossed the Mulde bridge on the way to Torgau for the "link-up" celebration.

On Sunday, April 29th, in the historic old church in Eilenburg, we conducted the largest service we were to hold on the Continent, with 450 attending. The church had been savagely battered. (Artillery forward observers had directed fires from the church tower, and festoons of communications wire were still hanging from its walls on the day of the service.) **Captain John Austin** of Company A provided a detail to clear an area of the interior large enough to accommodate our service.

Our opening hymn was Martin Rinkart's "Now thank we all our God." It was several years later when I learned that Rinkart was Pastor and Arch-Deacon in Eilenburg during the course of the Thirty Years' War, another time of devastation and much suffering.

While in Taucha, Roy and I went out one day to visit the concentration camp, which had been burned by the SS troops on the approach of the Americans. Bodies of machine-gunned prisoners still hung on the barbed wire fences and lay in piles about the entrances to the fired barracks. We watched as a procession of local citizens, at the direction of the Military Government, walked through the desolate area.

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James W. May to Family and Friends
Taucha, Germany
April 22nd, 1945

Dear Folks:

While Roy finishes stewing up the dried peaches, raisins and figs, and warms up the last can of Miss Agnes' country sausage, I'll get off this report to the family and some of the rest of you who have been so good to write. I'm all clean tonight. A good bath in the dishpan last night, with a complete new issue of clothes. The pants are too short to stick in my boots, but there was plenty of bug powder in the underwear, and we won't have to worry about visitors.

Today has been cold and dark with only occasional patches of sunshine. Hail this afternoon. Roy and I got the medics up 30 minutes earlier for breakfast, and many of them came on up to the theater for our 9:30 service. Some of the Service Company men were there too. I preached on "In Danger of Living" - another borrowed idea. The three dangers we examined: (1) becoming a stuffed shirt, (2) becoming a stomach, and (3) missing the chief prize of life.

The two medical captains were there. They're fine men. **Captain Watkins** of Texas, had just finished his internship when the Army took him. **Captain Krogstedt**, a Norwegian, had practiced some in Montana. If an 88 landed 10 feet from **Krogstedt**, it might disturb him, but I don't think we'd know about it. In fact, everyone of these medics is likeable. **Lt. Tyree** has been fighting since invasion day. Formerly a medical sergeant, he was awarded a

battlefield commission just before he came to us. He circulates about and goes right out with the litter squads. Then there are the other fellows who were truck drivers before the war. Now they'll drive an ambulance under fire if necessary, or down a dark road cleared of Jerries only to the shoulders! And the station men might call a Jerry PW a few bad names, but they'll put the plasma in him just as efficiently as if he were one of our boys.

Had dinner with the officers at regiment in Weltewitz. There was a bowl of pea soup, hot coffee, and a box of K Rations. Found where the Pastor lived and told him we wanted to use his church for an afternoon service. Forty-eight now, the Pastor has been twenty years in this same parish. Probably wore the same suit most of that time. Said he was in college with Pastor Niemoeller. Has no idea where he is now. Probably dead. Heavy corps artillery was firing over the little church, and reverberations from the guns loosened pieces of plaster which fell upon us during the sermon. As we moved between services we were in sight of Eilenburg and high enough to spot artillery bursts as they fell upon the besieged city.

Following this service we headed for a battalion headquarters. Got off the route and wound up in a little village with no white flags hanging from the windows. Guess they were all properly pacified, though, for nothing happened as we backed up and turned about. At battalion I found 75 men waiting around in an upstairs room that must have once been a school auditorium. Some were sleeping on straw mattresses, some eating K-Rations, some writing V-Mails, and one fellow reading Hamlet. I said for those who wanted to attend a service to follow me to a corner room. To a man they all started out; so we stayed in the big room.

Our last service for the afternoon was with one of my own companies. The commanding officer and his exec (Episcopalian and Methodist) called for the men who wanted to attend, and twenty-five of them gathered in the barn and sat on the straw while I talked to them.

At one time or another: More liberated British Indian POWs, blackbearded, in OD uniforms with colored turbans. . . . Liberated Polish girl workers, wearing buttons reading "Red Cross Helped Us." . . . Big white arrows pointing downward on the outer wall of almost every house, indicating location of the cellar. . . . Signs on many houses indicating the number of persons the cellar accommodates. . . . German kids playing merry-go-round on what is left of a giant anti-aircraft searchlight. . . . A Pole trying to barter two eggs for American cigarettes. . . . The grin on the face of a Russian kid as he stands on the corner watching American armor drive through. A GI preparing for supper.

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James W. May to Family and Friends
Baumersroda, Germany
June 15th, 1945

Dear Folks:

Since newspaper reports have not yet indicated anything about the redeployment of the 69th, I'm not worrying about packing yet. Might even have plenty of time for that pass to Paris a couple of weeks - I hope - from now. I'll gather my field jacket and sweater closer about me and try to stay warm while writing about what Roy and I did yesterday.

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MEMOIRS OF CHAPLAIN JAMES MAY
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By 9:50 we were at the appointed road junction to join **Father Kelley** and **Ernie** for our trip. A beautiful day, some warmer, the top down. As usual the roads crowded with folks moving things, but especially did you notice it on the big highway connecting Halle and Nordhausen. Covered wagons pulled by three horses or two, or maybe just one, with men helping, women pushing, and children and old folks atop. Hay on top, too, for the horses. Streams of bicycles, hardly ever with fewer than two suitcases strapped on behind. And some just walking. Some stopped under the cherry trees to eat lunch. A cluster of loaded wagons and family groups about the gasthauses in small villages. Everything moving West. Maybe the Russians are coming! Our first question when we stopped in Nordhausen: Have you seen the Russians? Are they taking over? When? Fifty are here already!

Nordhausen before the war had 37,000 inhabitants. I'd say a third of the place has been bombed flat or burned out. It was a textile, machinery, and chewing-tobacco manufacturing center. It's halfway between Halle and Kassel and we by-passed it to the South when the 69th was chasing Germans to the East. Our main interest today was the Dora Camp and its factory, which has received so much publicity. We asked directions and as usual 40 folks gave them simultaneously, not all agreeing, in an avalanche of German. We took off the way the majority of them seemed to point, and after six kilometers we saw the camp at the base of the mountain. Polish and Russian guards did not stop us as we drove past the main check point. Past dozens of shabby barracks, piles of strange equipment and machinery - some wrecked, some rusty, some ready for use - past streams of every nationality moving in both directions, till we entered the main enclosure, parked the jeeps and took out our lunch.

Father and Ernie had wurst, cheese and jelly, and we had brought Gene's fruitcake and half a loaf of bread we had wangled from the mess sergeant.

Roy kept the children off while we set the table. No bad conscience, for trucks were unloading provisions near the UNRRA office, and at least 20 men passed us carrying huge cans of steaming coffee off toward the many shacks up the hill. All over that hill you saw strange flags hoisted over buildings - Polish, Czech, hammer & sickle, and others. And signs in diverse languages painted on walls and posted on bulletin boards. Mothers passed with new babies in their arms, and young girls who needed no encouragement to flirt. Bicycles, of course, and some without tires. The whole place enclosed in electrified barbed wire, and in any direction you saw high guard towers. The farther you went, the shabbier and filthier. People cooking behind and in front of barracks shacks, and laundry hung out everywhere. Down one side street you saw a drunk lying on the crushed rock roadway. Maybe it was bomb juice. A death or two per day, they say, from V-bomb fuel!

Four thousand more had shipped out the day before, they said. Most of the western Europeans had been re-patriated, and we assumed the place had been cleaned up extensively since it was liberated. We saw very few horror cases, and did not look for them. A dozen Poles, all in the striped inmates clothing, led us past the hospital, up a little hill to the crematorium. In the room to the right of the entrance was a great slab with plumbing

connections, on which (so the Poles said) the doctors could study postmortems. In the room behind were the two furnaces, each capable of handling 20 bodies per hour. A pile of bone ashes still lay beside one. Out to the rear was another pile of bone ashes partially filling an 8x8 excavation. Toward the last (so they said) they did not wait for the more feeble ones to die. Just gave them an injection and shoved them in the stove.

Well, there were plenty of horror stories, but the narrators were obviously appealing their case (which they had a right to) and working for cigarettes (which we gave them). I'm convinced that more perspective and study will tone down some of the horror experiences, though there was plenty of it, and don't forget, that I was not ready to see.

A friendly staff sergeant got in the jeep and directed us seven miles around the mountain to his CP, where we received permission to go into the tunnels. We parked the jeeps in the tunnel entrance and made off afoot. There are three main tunnels going through the mountain. The mouth of each is covered with huge camouflage nets and reinforced with thick aprons of concrete. The main tunnels are wide enough for a train to move past the assembly lines. I'd guess about 25 feet wide, 20 up to 30 feet high. Electric lights and elaborate ventilation system. The three main tunnels are connected by some 40 cross-tunnels, just as large, all hewn through solid rock, their walls white-washed and dusty.

Near our entrance was a long line of V-1s ready for shipping. Behind them many others in various stages of completion. The side-tunnels here were sub-assembly lines. Upstairs would be rows and rows, stacks and stacks, maybe just piles of parts, some of them having been assembled elsewhere and shipped in. A quarter of a mile farther back began the V-2 assembly. This will give you an idea of the immensity of the place: The rocket mid-section appeared to be about 25 feet long. Rows of them were stacked on end. And rows of tail-fin assemblies, each about ten feet high. Here we ran into millions of dollars worth of machinery - elaborate riveters, drills, presses, etc. One cross-tunnel would machine motor blocks, another just carburetors, etc. In one tunnel a couple of GIs were having the time of their lives in the cab of an electric crane running along the ceiling. A lone GI surrounded by a hundred drills in another tunnel was making a souvenir. A British lorry drove past us hauling out a tail fin. A 2 1/2 ton passed us loaded with Negro troops sightseeing.

You wonder how the workers ever stood the noise. We were told that at times they were kept in the tunnels for five months at a time to provide secrecy. They worked on twelve-hour shifts, apparently without benefit of any kind of heating in the winter. Of course there were enclosed offices here and there for bosses, records, etc. Every now and then I would feel, "What if the lights went out!"

We did not turn around until we saw daylight at the other end of the tunnel. It was fully a half-mile walk directly out. As we got back to our jeeps a diesel train was entering, with a big USA splashed in white paint on the side of the German cab.

On the way home we passed through Eisleben, where Martin Luther was born, and died. A great statue of Luther stands in the marketplace. We hope to go back there for an afternoon before we leave here. Love to all of you.

Jimmy

Emanuel Rind writes . . .

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I was a sergeant in the 69th Division who was sent as a replacement to the 99th Division. This occurred after the 69th Division was sent to England. I was in the 2nd platoon, Co. I, 272nd Infantry Regiment.

Enclosed is an account of one of the battles I was in with guys from the 99th Division. I've submitted this account to the 99th Division Assn. for publication in their paper. I am submitting this for publication in the 69th Division Assn. journal because it makes references to the 69th Division and the training that I received when I was in it.

When the 69th Division was at Camp Shelby, the discussion was whether we were overtrained or under-trained. My own personal feeling is that we got damned good training, probably, better than most other infantry divisions. I say this because, when I went into combat, I was so used to small arms fire and being shot at that small arms fire didn't bother me at all. It was just like the live ammo problems I had been through in the states. Shrapnel, of course, was another matter. It's multi-directional. This story of my experience tells how we coped with it when we were caught without cover.

I am proud to say that the 69ers that I knew, that were sent out as replacements, gave a good account of themselves.

I heard the one that got me

On January 14, 1945 about five of us sergeants were told to meet at A company's position on the line. We were told that we would survey the next day's route of attack on the Germans. The Germans were dug in in the woods of the Ardenne's forest. Company A was dug in on the forward slope of Elsenborn ridge facing them.

When I came up to Company A, I met John P. Scaglione. He had gone through basic training, ASTP, and more training with the 69th Division with me. We had shipped over to England with the 69th Division and both of us had been sent from Camp Lopcombe, Salisbury Plains, England, as replacements to the 99th Division.

At this time, somewhere between December 16 and December 25, 1945, 99th Division headquarters was in Verviers, Belgium. Regimental headquarters was at a farm about 10 miles behind the front lines. Battalion headquarters was in the town of Elsenborn which was 2½ miles behind the front lines.

I had lost contact with John since we had left Camp Lopcombe. We had a very pleasant but short reunion on the forward slope of that hill. No man's land was about 3000 feet wide. John told me that Company A's position was called Purple Heart Hill. I answered him that all hills were Purple Heart Hills. In the course of our brief conversation, John also said, "I'm scared shitless but I wouldn't miss this for the world." John is a very honest fellow with a good sense of humor; but shitless or not, he's the kind of guy I like supporting me in combat.

At this point, I was signalled to join about four other sergeants. I told John that I would be seeing him and I joined the other non-coms. About 150 feet from us there was a major and two or three subordinate officers. In the perverse way of the infantry, we noncoms bunched up. The major started yelling to us to spread out. We bunched closer. We were too good a target for the Germans to pass up. They sniped at us with their mortars. We heard pom-pom-pom and we knew that three mortar shells were in the air heading our way.

The snow was just below knee depth. I had cleaned my rifle a few hours before and I didn't want to dive into the snow and dirty or clog it up again. About 20 feet to my right was a shell hole. It was too far away to dive for it. To my right rear, two G.I.s were sitting on the edge of their foxhole. The first mortar shell landed and exploded about 15 feet behind them. Wordlessly one of the G.I.s, with his waist as an axis, toppled into the foxhole. The other one started yelling, "Medic, medic." At the same time I felt a small piece of shrapnel enter my scrotum. I knew that there were two more shells coming in so I ran and dove for the shell hole. Fortunately, the other two shells landed farther to the rear than the first one and no additional damage occurred. The medics came up with a sled and put the G.I. who had been hit on it and pulled him to the rear. I thought that he had been killed and felt guilty about it, since we had drawn the kraut fire by bunching up. Fifty years later, I learned from the book *Dauntless or the 99th Division Assoc. newspaper* that the G.I. had received only a minor wound and was not seriously hurt. For this, I was thankful. It was too cold to drop my britches to see how bad the shrapnel in my scrotum was. The piece is still in there today and is about 1/8 inch in diameter.

I don't remember who told us but I think it was a tech sergeant. He said that we were launching a probing counter attack and that we would receive artillery and 50 caliber machine gun support firing in defilade behind our line. He said that if we punched a hole in the kraut lines, the 2nd Division and other divisions would come pouring through the hole. From sad experience we had learned to depend on ourselves and not on promises that didn't come to fruition. Accordingly, our squad took two Browning light machine guns and two BAR'S. Each man carried his ammo belt with ammunition plus four bandoliers plus two cans of machine gun ammo and hand grenades, if he wanted any. The squad leader told me that he was taking the bazooka so that I would be in charge of the squad which would initially be in reserve. He also told me that I would be the acting platoon guide.

We assembled in the A company area at about 0400 hours, January 15, 1945. A sergeant came up and produced two bottles of Calvados. He said that he had just come back from town and that we could all have a swig for breakfast. As I remember, some of the guys passed on the drink but it sure felt good warming my belly on that cold morning.

It was dark and the krauts were always launching flares of all colors during the night. Most of these were illuminating another area of our line which was fortunate for us. I don't remember the moon being out and it would be hours before sunrise; but, there seemed to be just enough light to make out a man's footsteps in front

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I HEARD THE ONE THAT GOT ME

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of you. I mention this because, in order not to step on a land mine, you tried to walk in the steps of the man in front of you.

We left the point of departure in two columns of ducks. They were about 20 to 30 feet apart and not the tactical 15 yards that we had been taught in training. Since one of the jobs of the platoon guide in combat is to see that nobody lags behind, I brought up the rear.

Nothing of consequence happened as we approached the mid-point of no man's land except that a call for the radio man was passed back along the column. I seemed to remember having heard that the radio was not working and I wondered why a runner wasn't being used. The call for the radio man became louder and noisier, as it progressed along the column, in the silence of the darkness. In addition the clank and clunk of the gear being carried and worn added to the din. I was sure that we had roused the whole Kraut army and we had. Mortar shells started raining down on us and the whizzing pieces of shrapnel sounded like angry bees near our ears. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Black holes appeared in the snow between our columns and to the outside of the columns. We were taught that the killing effective radius of an exploding mortar shell was 15 yards. These shells were exploding much closer to us than that. I looked around expecting to see men drop but none did and we kept advancing. I believe that the only thing that saved us was the depth of the snow. It deflected the shrapnel upward in a high bursting trajectory which passed over our heads.

Back in the 69th Division, the question always came up, "What would you do if you were caught on a flat assed field in an artillery barrage?" Well, now we were faced with the reality of the question because the shelling increased. If we kept standing we would be killed or wounded and if we dropped the same thing could happen. It was safer to drop which all of us did. I also prayed which I'm sure all of us did. As soon as the shelling eased up, we rose and started moving forward again. When the shelling increased, we dropped. What really bothered me was that I felt a shell would land smack in the middle of my back. It shouldn't have bothered me because if that had happened my worries would have been over.

About this time one of the men started straggling and lagging behind. I told him to move faster. He said that he was moving as fast as he could. I was carrying the same load that he was but I asked him if he needed any help in carrying anything. He answered, "No," and lagged farther behind. We were getting too far behind the column. When I told him to move faster and when he said that he was moving as fast as he could, I told him that my rifle butt or bayonet up his ass would make him move a little faster. He did. When we were far enough into no man's land where I figured it was too far to go back and that he wouldn't want to be left alone, I said, "So long, I'll be seeing you," and I lit out to catch up with the column. He came high tailing it after me.

Our troops entered the woods where the trees came out at about right angles to the main forest. A fire fight had begun at the front end of the column. While we were still outside of the woods, I ran into this young sergeant who was groping around blindly yelling, "Help me! Help me! I can't see." I tried to push him down on a log that lay on

the ground. I told him to wait there that we would pick him up on our way out. But he repeated, "Help me! Help me!" like he hadn't heard and I realized that he was not only blind but also deaf. His eyes were open and I pushed him down on the log, I didn't see any sign of wounds on him, so I figured that he had become hysterically deaf and blind. I had a squad to take care of and a fire fight to get into so I said to him, "So long." He didn't hear me but he felt that I was leaving him and he shouted, "Don't leave me! Don't leave me!" and that's the last I saw of him.

I told my reserve squad to stay outside of the woods and I moved forward to find out if they wanted my squad committed. What I found was chaos except for little pockets of control where the NCO's and privates were doing their job. This is not meant to be a reflection on our commissioned officers, as we only had one with us on this engagement. He was Lt. Lanahan and he was busily engaged in a fire fight in another part of the woods. Since there was no one around to ask about committing my squad, I decided to commit them myself. I ran back to where I had left them and I was quite breathless when I got there. I found that they were nowhere around.

At this point a sergeant came out of the woods moving quickly in my direction. He saw me. I had removed my sergeant's stripes so as not to be picked off by a sniper. He asked me what I was doing back here, implying by the tone of his voice that I was trying to take powder to the rear. I felt like asking him the same question. Rather than waste time, I moved into the woods to see if I could find my squad or give my support to the fire fight. I never found my squad; but, I came upon a staff sergeant who was pacing back and forth about 6 to 8 feet and directing the fire of a BAR man who was lying on the ground. I leaned against a tree and started laying down a field of grazing fire. I might add that the Germans were wearing snow suits or white sheets making them invisible, whereas we looked like dark blobs in the snow. It was starting to get lighter as the sun was starting to rise, although you could not see it. While I was leaning against the tree shooting, the BAR man was hit by small arms fire. He was about 5 feet away from me. Somebody yelled, "Medic," and he was carried out. At the same instant another man jumped in behind the BAR. The sergeant continued directing his fire. The 2nd BAR man yelled, "I'm hit." Another man jumped in behind the BAR and the 2nd man was carried off. I had all the slack taken up in my trigger and was about to fire when the sergeant's ear appeared in my sight. He was six feet away and never knew how close he had come to having his head blown off when he walked into my line of sight. I had run out of ammunition in my ammo belt and tried to get a clip from one of my bandoleers. I found all the clips frozen to their cardboard pouches and the pouches frozen to the cloth of the bandoleer. I wished that the military would have found a better way to store this ammo for cold weather fighting.

The action seemed to be easing up and men seemed to be withdrawing and moving back to our lines. I was in the woods near the trees that were at right angles holding with about 7 to 10 men. I looked around to see what we could do. Drifters started joining our group, coming from several directions, until we had about 20 men. The psychology of the dog face seems to be that he'd rather not be left all by himself - that he'd like to be with other friendly faces.

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I HEARD THE ONE THAT GOT ME

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At this point, Lt. Lanahan with about 8 men moved into our field of view about 150 feet away from us. He yelled in our direction, "Cover our withdrawal," as he headed deeper into the German positions. Some of the men wanted to leave but I told them that we were going to stay until the lieutenant and his men withdrew.

Shortly thereafter, I was facing the German positions with the 20 or so men, when I saw a movement out of the corner of my left eye. The lieutenant was running up the side of a low ridge with his men in a direction that I assumed was toward our lines. A medic was the last man in the group. At this point I'd like to say that it would have been nice for the U.S. Army to have issued each of us a nickel compass. I had no idea where our lines were but everyone else seemed to know. I ordered the men to get off their asses and get the hell out of there. At the same time we heard the pom-pom-pom of mortars. I knew that we had overstayed our welcome. As the men got up to go, I could hear a mortar shell breaking the branches of the tree I was kneeling under. I started to turn to look up when the shell exploded about an arm's length from my head. What happened in the next few instants is as follows but the details may not be in the proper chronological order. I heard cries of, "Medic, medic, can we help you?" I replied, "Scram. Get your asses the hell out of here." My rifle was blown out of my hands and my helmet was blown off my head. Blood was pouring into my eyes and mouth. Everybody around me had disappeared. I was alone in the German lines.

I was probably still in shock when I realized that the left side of my head had been blown off. I thought to myself that there was no point in living with half a head. I reached up with my left hand to see how much of my head was gone and to my surprise I felt that it was still there. Note: Over the years small pieces of shrapnel have worked their way out of my cheek. Some are still in my cheek and lip and probably in parts of my head. I have a scar above my right forehead where shrapnel tore through my helmet and cut a shallow groove in my skull and the left side of my face, fifty years later, it is still numb.

Needless to say, since my head was there I thought I ought to try to get out and head for our lines but my left hand felt funny. I removed my glove and there was my left ring finger hanging by a shred of flesh. It had been sheared at the base of the finger and the bone was showing. I was going to rip it off and throw it away but I happened to flex my fingers. It felt as if the finger was still there. Fifty years later, although the finger is gone, it still feels like it's there. So I said to myself, "The medics can sew it back on." I carefully tucked the hanging finger and the rest of my hand back into the glove and decided to get out of there. I couldn't understand why I was having such difficulty in walking. I may have moved out 30 to 50 feet, when I came upon this dead G.I. in my path. The corpse was on its back with its arms spread eagle still clutching a box of machine gun ammo in each hand. Its eyes were wide open and the whites were purple. The irises were black purple and the skin was a dark purplish color. I didn't see any wounds or blood on it from my position and wondered whether death occurred due to shock from a minor wound and the freezing temperature. I was going to close the eyelids and cross the corpse's arms but

I was beginning to feel very weak. I felt if I fooled with the corpse I'd fall on it and I wouldn't be able to raise myself off it. I walked around it and moved about 15 more feet when the Germans started sniping at me with a mortar. I knew if I remained standing I'd be killed and if I dropped prone I wouldn't be able to get up again. I dropped and they stopped firing.

It was about 0800 hours, January 15, 1945. The sun was rising. Unfortunately, I dropped to the ground with my back to it. I couldn't reach my first aid kit or my canteen. I loosened the hook and with great difficulty pulled the belt around to where I could get my sulfa pills. I just took two because I knew that you needed lots of water and I ate snow. I tried to get the cap off my canteen which was still in its felt lined case on my belt. I stuck it in my mouth to warm it. I was finally able to unscrew the cap only to discover that I had a block of ice in my canteen. I didn't take any more sulfa pills. I passed out and had a dream that I had been hit by a shell. I came to and realized that it wasn't a dream and that it had happened and was happening. I thought of my poor mother and girlfriend and how they'd react when they learned I was dead.

About 10 minutes had passed. I wanted to face the rising sun because I was starting to feel quite cold. I managed to turn with extreme difficulty.

About this time a G.I. came moving out of the woods. He was bent to his right almost at a 45 degree angle and he was moving pretty fast. He came up to where I was lying on the ground and said, "Could I help you get back to our lines?" I looked at him. He said that he was shot in the hip and he repeated, "Can I help you?" I answered, "You sure can. Scram and get the hell out of here!" He started moving away but still turning toward me he said, "I'll send help back." "You do that," I said, "and get the hell out of here." I was amazed at how fast he moved with the wound he had.

When I turned toward the sun, I found that I was not very far from the edge of the woods and I was facing the German lines. I was wondering when they would have guts enough to come out. There was a mist of cordite smoke in the air. I knew it was cordite because I could smell it and strangely, I liked the smell. I tried sucking on my canteen but the water was solid ice. I lay there this way freezing to death and I thought that this wasn't a bad way to die.

About a half hour had elapsed before the Krauts gathered up enough nerve to come out. Two of them came to the edge of the woods, leaned their rifles against a tree and donned a cloth sandwich sign over their heads. The sign had a red cross on their chest side and on their back. From where I was at a right angle to the woods, these Germans were on a diagonal about 100 to 120 feet away from me. They moved into the clearing speaking loudly enough for me to hear, "Totd, totd. Dead, dead." I then looked around and saw about eight scattered bodies lying about. They were G.I.s.

I figured that I would have frozen to death in about another 15 minutes. I was getting sleepy and numb and it felt rather pleasant. The Germans were slowly heading in my direction, as they examined the corpses. I had four hand grenades in my field jacket pockets. Since I was dying and they were riflemen turned corpsmen, I thought that I would surprise the hell out of them by pulling the pin on a grenade, holding it a few seconds, and lobbing it at them.

(Continued on Page 48)

I HEARD THE ONE THAT GOT ME

(Continued from Page 47)

The Germans looked toward me and said the equivalent of, "There's one that's still kicking," and headed toward me. I reached into the left breast pocket of my field jacket and pulled the grenade up to the top of my pocket. It slipped out of my hand and fell back into the pocket. I tried two more times and the same thing happened. I had been hit in both hands and lost a lot of blood. I didn't have the strength to lock on and hold the hand grenade. I never would have had the strength to pull the pin on it and decided to give up on using the grenade. When the Germans reached me I was sucking on my canteen. They took it out of my hands, placed me on a litter, and carried me about 75 feet to their company aid fox-hole. There were two other G.I.s lying in litters there and a third one may have been removed to their rear. They searched me and found my stripes and whistle in my pockets. As they came to each hand grenade, they gave me a dirty look, and cursed me. About half a dozen Krauts milled around the hole, the highest ranking one

being their equivalent of a tech sergeant. Of the two G.I.s remaining, one had a bloody head bandage with reddish blonde hair sticking out from under the bandages. His breathing was difficult and sounded raspy. He seemed to be in very bad shape and I didn't think that he would live. From what I heard later, I don't think that they carried him back because they thought he was a goner.

Having finished with me at their fox hole aid station, they placed me on a litter. Two German soldiers wearing shoulder harnesses that supported the litter carried me. Two others walked alongside to give them relief when they tired. I don't know how far they carried me because I blacked out. While I was conscious, I was on my back looking skyward. The pine tree branches, laden with snow, were beautiful. The only noise was the crunch of German boots in the snow and their breathing.

Why they went through so much trouble with me, I'll never know. I can only believe that the Holy Spirit was with me and with them and that God had a further purpose for my life.

I was now a guest of the Third Reich and that's another story. I'll end this chapter here.



Company E, 271st Infantry taken at the 1995 Myrtle Beach Reunion

Right to left:

Bing Poon - Washington, D.C.

Joe and Jane Kurt - Iowa

*Bill and Catherine McCall -
New Jersey*

Bob and Betty Dimmick - Georgia

Bill and Marjorie Taylor - Florida

*Elmer and Erma Broneske -
Colorado*

Irv and Etta Gotkin - Florida

*Left to right:
Irv Gotkin
Bill McCall
Elmer Broneske
Joe Kurt
Bob Dimmick*

*at the 1995
69th National Reunion
Myrtle Beach,
South Carolina*

Sent by:
William McCall
743 Purdue Avenue
Wenonah, NJ 08090



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.

1996

August 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 1996

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GOLF - SHOWS - SHOPPING AND MORE

SUNDAY GOING HOME BREAKFAST

COMMITTEE:

Ernest H. and Mary Krause, Co-Chairpersons

269th Engineers

444 Pioneer Drive

Addison, Illinois 60101

Telephone: 708/543-6811

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

LET'S GO MEMBERS, LET'S GET TO A REUNION BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!!

(Continued on Page 50)

SEPTEMBER 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th, 1996

69th CAVALRY RECON TROOP

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Committee:

Harold Gardner

2929 Mason Avenue, Independence, Missouri 64052-2962

Telephone: 816/254-4816

Mike Moscaritolo

19 Trotters Circle, Kissimmee, Florida 34743

Telephone: 407/348-6527

Robert Schueler

1484 Stahlheber Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45013-1916

Telephone: 513/869-6970

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th, 1996

BATTERY C, 880th FIELD ARTILLERY BATTALION

Lexington, Virginia

Committee:

Lewis and Fern Pugh

640 Grant Street

Cadiz, Ohio 43907

Telephone: 614/942-3721

* * * * *

SEPTEMBER 20th and 21st, 1996

BATTERY B, 461st ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTALION

Heath Lodge, Old Stone Inn

Waynesville, North Carolina

Committee:

Harry L. Booker

105 Keller Street, Waynesville, North Carolina 28786

Telephone: 704/452-7807

SEPTEMBER 30th, 1996

Deadline for news material and pictures for this bulletin

Bulletin Volume 50, Number 1

September, October, November, December 1996

Bulletin expected mailing date is late November or
early December

GET YOUR INFO IN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!!

* * * * *

OCTOBER 11th, 12th, and 13th, 1996

HEADQUARTERS BATTERY AND

MEDICAL DETACHMENT, 461st AAA AW Battalion

Quality Inn - Salem, Virginia 24153

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lin Room.

Committee:

Allen Whitley, Chairman

944 Cumberland Heights, Marion, Virginia 24354

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* * * * *

OCTOBER 17th, 18th and 19th, 1996

661st TANK DESTROYER REUNION

179 Sheraton Drive

Salem, Virginia 24153

I-81, Exit 141 at Route 419

Telephone: 540/562-1912

Reservations: 800/459-4949

Committee:

Bill and Ellen Snidow

Route One, Box 303

Pembroke, Virginia 24136

August 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 1997
69th INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
50th ANNUAL REUNION

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Henry and Jean Putala, Co-Chairpersons - C-777th Tank Battalion

1139 River Boulevard, Suffield, Connecticut 06078-1416 • Telephone: 860/668-0066

Committee Members: John and Ellen McCann, George and Jennie Vasil, Robert and Irene Bishop,
Robert and Jean Ross, Edward Gallagher, Robert Crowe, Stuart Mandell, Erwin and Carmen Sanborn



“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.

Ray Kirchmer
209 62nd Street
New York, New York
G - 273rd

Frederick H. Cook
30 Jefferson Place
Evansville, Indiana
AT - 272nd

Joseph R. Tompkins
189 Grove Park Circle
Danville, Virginia
SV - 272nd

H. Frank Tanquary, Jr.
3105 Sloan Square
Atlanta, Georgia
HQ - Divarty

Cecil J. Chislett
8 Cottage Road
Wayland, Massachusetts
L - 272nd

Dick Selvis
2005 Summit Avenue
Baltimore, Maryland
B - 461st AAA

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North Springfield, Vermont
Division HQ

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Hamburg, Pennsylvania
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Greenfield, Ohio
769th Ordnance

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San Francisco, California
HQ - Divarty

James R. Newcome
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Oregon City, Oregon
C - 724th F.A.

Philip J. Gagliardi
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Glen Olden, Pennsylvania
B - 661st T.D.

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Manasquan, New Jersey
K - 272nd

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7 Broad Wing Drive
Bowmanville, Pennsylvania
C - 881st F.A.

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I - 272nd

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C - 273rd

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Silver Spring, Maryland
HQ-2 - 273rd

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Perkasie, Pennsylvania
A - 269th

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Melbourne, Florida
HQ - Divarty

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133 South 5th Street
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B - 881st F.A.

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P.O. Box 116
Flint Hills, Virginia
H1 - 273rd

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M - 272nd

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A - 881st F.A.

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Medic - 273rd

Herman B. Eaves, Jr.
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Division HQ

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C - 369th Medical

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C - 777th

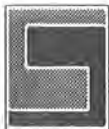
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A - 269th Engineers

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John Worman
5741 S. Old State Road
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G - 272nd

John A. Stanhope
133 Harlow Street, #221
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FACTS FROM THE FRONT

From "Outfit," a weekly U.S. Army publication, 1945

23 APRIL 45

69TH - One of the first four men of the division to cross the Rhine was **Pfc. Joseph J. Boyle**, Brooklyn, who made the trip on a recon mission of the 269th Engineer Bn.

30 APRIL 45

69TH - (269th Engr Bn) - A road recon team led by **Lt. James A. Johnson**, Minneapolis, was the first unit of the division to cross the Rhine.

7 MAY 45

69TH - Spearheads of the division entered the Saxon city of Leipzig, which contained more than a million Germans, most of them refugees. Teamed with other divisions, they had thrown a siege arc around the well defended city.

Co. E, 273rd Regt: The company captured intact a 70-ton bridge spanning the Weser River and also a drunken corporal left behind to blow it up. Before the corporal was captured, **Pvt. Edward Lang**, Boston, had cut three of the demolition wires. The befuddled Jerry pointed out the rest.

14 MAY 45

69TH - The 69th was the first US division to join the Russian armies. This meeting, with the Soviet 58th Guards Div., occurred at Torgau on the Elbe River, 75 miles south of Berlin. It was made in strength and according to plan. Previously it was thought the Russians would join the Yanks farther north where the 83d Inf Div and 2d Armd Div had bridgeheads.

272nd Regt: The formal surrender of Leipzig was made to **Col. Walter D. Buie**, CO of the 272d, 10 hours after self-propelled guns had blasted the last Nazi diehards from defense at Napoleon's monument. The 69th had swung south of Leipzig and entered it from the south and east. With the surrender, the division drove east and north toward the Elbe.

28 MAY 45

69TH - A second louey, a corporal and two privates walked into the headquarters of General Eisenhower and presented him with the American flag they used for identification when they made the first hook-up with the Russians at Torgau. They came out as a first louey, a sergeant and two corporals. The first louey is **William D. Robertson**, Los Angeles; the new sergeant, **James J. McDonnell**, Peabody, Mass., and the corporals, **Frank B. Huff**, Washington, Va., and **Paul Staub**, NYC. The General asked them the date of their rank and then promoted them on the spot, saying, "If there are no vacancies in the T/O of your outfit, I'm sure they can be made."

4 JUNE 45

69TH - Hundreds of Germans sought to escape the Russians by swimming the Elbe or crossing it in makeshift boats. Yank sharpshooters discouraged most of them but several frauleins did get across, swimming. They had come to the east bank of the river, calmly stripped and plunged in. Male swimmers who made the crossing and clambered up on the bank were unceremoniously given the heave-ho and forced to swim back. But the gals were not molested.

11 JUNE 45

69TH - A handful of MPs, led by **Cpl. George W. Salts**, Lafayette, Ind., and armed with tommyguns, captured the ancient fortress of Ehrenbratstein at the junction of the Moselle and Rhine. As soon as the fortress fell, the MPs slapped up "Off Limits" signs all over the place.

18 JUNE 45

69TH - It was a dull day in the division public relations office. Four of the typewriter commandos decided something should be done about it. That's why one German town surrendered before the arrival of regular combat troops. The four, **Pvt. Bill Poulsen**, **Pfcs. Arthur Burgess** and **R.G. Whaley**, and **Cpl. Bill Gallagher**, rode into the town. When they saw a bunch of white flags hanging from the windows they told civilians and soldiers that it would be perfectly all right if they just dumped their arms in a pile in the middle of the town square.